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Front Cover: The Statue of Richard Baxter by Thomas Brock (1875) at Kidderminster. (Photograph: Alison Price)

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D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, **iii**, 1959, 489–90

PRO: E302/1/5–6

VCH Salop, **I**, 337

C. D. Gilbert, 'Clubmen in South West Shropshire 1644–45', *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXVIII**, 1993, 95

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THE POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE -WARDINE AND -WIC PLACE-NAMES IN SHROPSHIRE

By T. G. HILL

Introduction

It has been suggested that the place-name element *-wardine* found in Shropshire and Herefordshire is synonymous with the element *-worth* or *-worthy* found in south-west England meaning an 'enclosed settlement'.¹ It has further been suggested that the element *-wic* as found in Wykey probably means a Saxon dairy farm or alternatively it may indicate a Roman *vicus*.²

The Location of *-wardine* Place-name Elements in Herefordshire

Serious study of the proximity of the Shropshire *-wardine* place-name elements to areas of Roman activity has been fairly limited. The work of Ruth Richardson, however, on 'Field-names with possible Roman Connections' in Herefordshire and the gathering together of disparate data on Roman roads in Shropshire by Susan Laflin shed new light on the subject. It has long been recognised that Leintwardine (Bravonium – SO 400740) on the southern arm of Watling Street was a Roman fort and settlement and it is clear that other *-wardine* place-names such as Blackwardine on Margary 613 have associations with Roman roads.³

Richardson's study not only reaches the conclusion that *-wardine* names have a Roman significance but also that in many cases they are a short distance from a river or brook.⁴ In her opening comment she also notes that the first element of the *-wardine* place-names is usually a natural feature and in her discussion on the apparent relationship between black field-names and Roman sites she comments that 'Bredwardine, Leintwardine and Lugwardine preserve *-wardine* in the parish name. A group of *blackwardine* field-names form part of Blackwardine Roman settlement, Bedwardine also has a *Blackwardine* field-name...The other *-wardine* names are diverse. Bodenham has *Carwardine*, Bullingham has *Ledwardine*, Brampton Bryan has *Pedwardine*, King's Pyon has *Barrowdine*, Ledbury has *Halladine*, and Whitbourne has *Starwardine*'.⁵

The Location of *-wardine* Place-name Elements in Shropshire

To study the location of *-wardine* place-name elements in Shropshire a database was prepared of all those listed in *Shropshire Place-names* and to these were added field-names culled from the volume of *Shropshire Field Names* (Table 1).⁶ The results were then mapped for Shropshire and the *-wardine* place-names from Herefordshire were added, with Roman roads, forts and settlements (Fig. 1).⁷ From this research it has become clear that many settlements having the *-wardine* suffix are close to, or on, major or minor Roman roads: Shrawardine, Stanwardine, Worthen, Wrockwardine, Belwardine, Bulwardine. Others, such as Cheswardine and Ridgwardine between Whitchurch and Penkridge, and Fouswardine, north of Wall Town near Cleobury, appear to be located further from known Roman roads. The probable *-wardine* field-names have also been plotted and many of these appear to be associated with Roman roads or settlements: for example *Hunterdine* at Buildwas is on the road north of the Severn from Wroxeter to Greensforge, and *Winterdyne* and *Ingardine* are found between Fouswardine and Wall Town.

It will be noted from Fig. 1 that a number of *-wardine* field-names are found in proximity to a line between Wroxeter, Ellerdine, Cheswardine and Ridgwardine. This may suggest the line of a further Roman road that has not

Table 1 Shropshire –wardine/-wic Place-names.

Place Name	Prefix ?	Suffix ?	Parish	County	Grid Ref	Site	River, Brook	Notes	Roman Road	Source
Belswardine	Bels	Wordign	Cressage	Sal	Sj 604033	Settlement	Harley Brook	Near Yarchester Villa	Possible Minor Road	Os Map
Bulwardine	Bul	Wordign	Claverley	Sal	So 799915	Farmstead	Worfe Tributary		Margary 192 & 193	Foxall Field Names
Carrodine		Wordign	Shawbury	Sal	Sj 549217	Farmstead	Roden			Foxall Field Names
Carrodine Bank		Wordign	Wellington	Sal	Sj 652134	Field	[Uncertain]			Foxall Field Names
Cheswardine	Ches	Wordign	Cheswardine	Sal	Sj 719299	Settlement	[Uncertain]		Margary 19	Gelling Shrop Place Names
Cheswardine Lane		Wordign	Stockton	Sal	So 728005	Lane/Field	[Stream]	Chisitor Lane - Tithe		Foxall Field Names
Ellerdine	Ella's	Wordign	Ellerdine	Sal	Sj 608208	Settlement	Lakemoor Brook		Margary 19 6a & 700	Os Gazetteer
Fallowdine		Wordign	Rodington	Sal	Sj 582147	Field	Roden			Foxall Field Names
Fouswardine	Fous	Wordign	Sidbury	Sal	So 675856	Settlement	Sidbury Brook			Gelling Shrop Place Names
Hannerdine		Wordign	Withington	Sal	Sj 573143	Field	Roden Tributary			Foxall Field Names
Horsadine		Wordign	Edgmond/Cherrington	Sal	Sj 672204	Field	Meese			Foxall Field Names
Hunterdine		Wordign	Buildwas	Sal	Sj 638050	Field	Severn			Foxall Field Names
Ingardine		Wordign	Stottesdon	Sal	So 629814	Farmstead	Ingardine Brook			Foxall Field Names
Lincadines		Wordign	Habberley	Sal	Sj 397034	Field	[Brook]			Foxall Field Names
Lonkadine		Wordign	Waters Upton	Sal	Sj 645195	Field	Meese			Foxall Field Names
Mazerdine		Wordign	Worfield	Sal	So 763965	Field	Worfe			Foxall Field Names
Nettledine		Wordign	Rodington	Sal	Sj 590138	Field	Roden			Foxall Field Names
Osterdine *		Wordign	Edgmond	Sal	Sj 720190	Field	Black Brook			Foxall Field Names
Pollardine		Wordign	Ratlinghope	Sal	Sj 391002	Field	East Onny			Foxall Field Names
Rickardine Hill		Wordign	Norton In Hales	Sal	Sj 714397	Field	Tern			Foxall Field Names
Ridgwardine		Wordign	Drayton In Hales	Sal	Sj 680382	Farmstead	Tern			Foxall Field Names
Shrawardine	Shraw	Wordign	Shrawardine	Sal	Sj 400153	Settlement	Severn			Gelling Shrop Place Names
Spittledine		Wordign	Meole Brace	Sal	Sj 493115	Field	Rea Brook			Foxall Field Names
Stanwardine	Stan	Wordign	Baschurch	Sal	Sj 414240	Settlement	Perry			Gelling Shrop Place Names
Syldine Meadow		Wordign	Greete	Sal	So 588714	Field	Ledwyck Brook			Foxall Field Names
The Worthens		Wordign	Ruyton Xi Towns	Sal	Sj 365230	Field	Perry			Foxall Field Names
Trilwardine	Tril	Wordign	Shifnal	Sal	Sj 730078	Field	[Stream]			Tgh Study Shifnal
Warden		Wordign	Coreley	Sal	So 620748	Field	Corn Brook			Foxall Field Names
Warden		Wordign	Chetton	Sal	So 695904	Field	Borle Brook			Foxall Field Names
Wardens		Wordign	Caynam	Sal	So 544718	Field	Ledwyck Brook			Foxall Field Names
Wardens		Wordign	Quatford	Sal	So 717912	Field	Severn			Foxall Field Names
Winterdyne *		Wordign	Stottesdon	Sal	So 650850	Field	Winterbourne Brook			Foxall Field Names
Worthen		Wordign	Worthen	Sal	Sj 329047	Settlement	Rea Brook North			Foxall Field Names
Worthen		Wordign	Shrawardine	Sal	Sj 380164	Field	Severn			Foxall Field Names
Worthen		Wordign	Lydbury North	Sal	So 338864	Field	Kenp			Foxall Field Names
Worthen		Wordign	Bromfield	Sal	So 480772	Field	Onny			Foxall Field Names
Worthings		Wordign	Bucknell	Sal	So 365746	Field	Teme			Foxall Field Names
Wrockwardine	Wrock	Wordign	Wrockwardine	Sal	Sj 625120	Settlement	Tern		Margary 1h	Gelling Shrop Place Names
The Wyke	Wick ?	Ham?	Shifnal	Sal	Sj 730068	Settlement	Westly Brook Tributary		Next to Hamme	Os Gazetteer
Wig Wig		Wic	Much Wenlock	Sal	Sj 608015	Township	Harley Brook	Yarchester Villa		Os Gazetteer
Wyke		Wic	Much Wenlock	Sal	Sj 648021	Settlement	[Stream]			Os Gazetteer
Wyken		Wic	Worfield	Sal	So 762950	Settlement	Worfe			Os Gazetteer
Wykey			Ruyton Xi Towns	Sal	Sj 391249	Settlement	Perry			Gelling Shrop Place Names

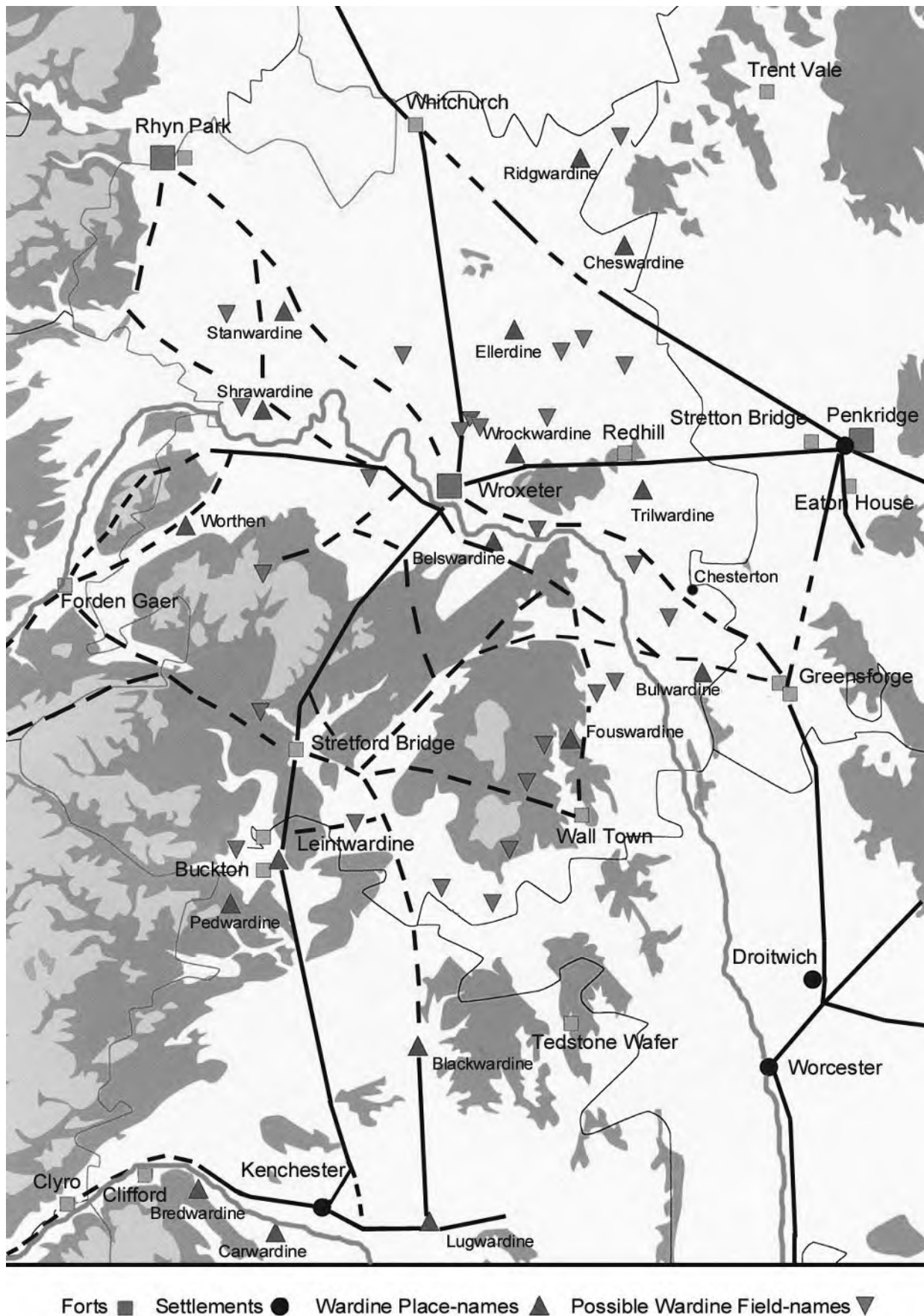


Figure 1 -wardine Place-names and their Proximity to Roman Roads and Settlements

as yet been discovered. Also there appears to be a line of *-wardine* field names between Titterstone Clee Hill and the Worcestershire border. This could either be an indication of a road linking Wall Town to the known road from Stretford Bridge to Blackwardine or of significance for a link to the mineral deposits on the southern slopes of Titterstone Clee Hill. A further minor road may also link the road from Greensforge through Trilwardine to the fort on Redhill [see below].

The Location of *-wic* Place-name Elements in mid-Shropshire

In Shropshire five *-wic* place-names have been studied and listed in Table 1. It will be noted that most of these, such as Wykey and Wyken are in close proximity to Roman roads or settlements. Another significant example is Wig Wig which lies just east of Belwardine and on a minor road that leads towards Wyke in the parish of Much Wenlock. Further, close to this road on the Wig Wig township boundary with Harley parish is the Roman villa site of Yarchester (SJ 607008).

In 1967 Margaret Gelling published results of her seminal study of the distribution of *wicham* and *wichtun* place-names and their association with Roman roads and settlements. She stated 'There are twenty-eight place-names in England which derive from the Old English *wicham*...Of these twenty-four are situated on, or not more than a mile from, a known Roman road. This is not a random distribution'. From the evidence she argued that these place-names were related to the Roman settlement known as a '*vicus*'. She wrote 'The evidence seems to me to suggest that in the earliest period at which English place-names arose there was a type of settlement called a '*wicham*' which occurred close to Roman roads and usually near small Romano-British settlements, and which derived its name from a connection with the '*vici*' of Roman Britain'.⁸

Since Gelling's article was published further research has noted how other combinations with the element *-wic* can also be associated with Roman roads and settlements. For example in the Chobham area of Surrey David Stokes records three *-wic* place-names '*greten wic*', '*blaken wic*' and *Littlewick*' which appear to be associated with Romano-British settlements.⁹ He comments that Littlewick is located 'on a very barren and dry heathland – hardly likely to be a dairy farm'.¹⁰ In Dorset the village of Shapwick is on a Roman road and close to the crossing point of the River Stour and in Somerset the village of Shapwick is not only located by a Roman road, but in 1998 a Roman coin hoard was found and subsequent excavation has revealed Roman buildings.¹¹

Gelling also pointed out that the association of *wicham* and *wictun* place-names appears to relate to early Saxon settlements and as such they appear generally in the south-eastern part of England. It appears unlikely therefore that such combinations would be found in Shropshire, but in Shifnal the settlement called The Wyke (SJ 730068) is coterminous with the settlement called The Hem (SJ 730059), but as *wic* can mean a Saxon dairy farm and *hamm* can mean a water meadow this proximity of the two elements may be pure chance. However the grid-like pattern of The Wyke settlement in Shifnal does suggest an element of planning which, as at Leintwardine, may be based on a Roman planned settlement or *vicus*. Furthermore the proximity of the lost settlement of Trilwardine (SJ 732078) may also be significant.¹² These two sites [The Wyke/Hem and Trilwardine] are about two miles (3.22 km.) from the fort of Redhill on Watling Street and it is possible that a minor Roman road linking the Greensforge-Wroxeter road to Redhill passed through Shifnal. This road was suggested in the Victoria County History as far back as 1908, but this may have been antiquarian guesswork.¹³ Macneill's report on the 'Road from London to Holyhead' dated 9 April 1835, however, makes an intriguing comment on the Shifnal Trust. He states that the road in the town had a good surface 'but part of the street is still paved, and although it is in good order; still it would be an improvement, for the sake of uniformity, to have it removed.'¹⁴ Whether that paved stretch of road was of Roman origin we may never know; only archaeological exploration would prove or disprove this hypothesis.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is suggested that the place-name elements of *-wardine* and *-wic* in Shropshire have potential Roman connotations and some may reveal a yet unrecorded Roman *vicus*. So it is argued that further investigation by place-name experts, local historians and archaeologists could yield interesting results.

Notes

- 1 K. Cameron, *English Place-Names*, 1961, Batsford paperback revised edition, 1988, 149.
- 2 M. Gelling, in collaboration with H. D. G. Foxall, *The Place-Names of Shropshire* (E.P.N.S., 1990), 331–2.
- 3 R. E. Richardson, 'Using Field-names', *Landscapes*, 3, number 2 (autumn 2002), 70–83, and 'Field-names with possible Roman Connections', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, XLVIII, part III, 1996, 453–469; S. Laflin,

- 'Roman Roads and Ford place-names in Shropshire', *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXVI**, 2001, 1–10; I. D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain*, **11**, first published 1957, 1973 edn., Map of the West and North Midland Network, Fig. 1, 14.
- 4 Richardson, *Op. Cit.*, 465.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Gelling, *Op. Cit.*, 331–2.
- 7 The Roman roads and sites were culled from the Ordnance Survey, Roman Britain South Sheet (1978), updated for Shropshire from Fig. 15 in R. White and P. Barker, *Wroxeter, Life and Death of a Roman City*, 1998, 37, and from the text and the 'Map of Roman Roads in Shropshire', in S. Laflin, *Op. Cit.*, 8.
- 8 M. Gelling, 'English Place-names derived from the compound wicham', reprinted from *Medieval Archaeology*, **XI**, 1967, 87–104. in K. Cameron, *Place-name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and Scandinavian Settlements* (E. P. N. S., 1987), 8–26.
- 9 Saxon Administration - David Stokes, www.chobham.info/saxons.htm (Chobham History web-site).
- 10 David Stokes of Chobham: pers. comm.
- 11 From discussions held with Somerset based archaeologists when the author was associated with the Shapwick Project at the University of Bristol 1994–96. The Shapwick Roman coin-hoard and villa site were discovered in September 1998: 'In Brief', *British Archaeology*, **50** (December 1999), 4.
- 12 The lost settlement of Trilwardine is remembered in the field-name 'Tillerdine'.
- 13 *VCH Salop*, **I**, 273.
- 14 Mr. Macneill's Report 9 April 1835: C *The Road from London to Holyhead*, Appendix 1, 35.

THE HERMITAGE CAVES, BRIDGNORTH – A MYTH EXPLAINED?

By DAVID HOROVITZ

Abstract: Since the time of the antiquary John Leland (c.1506–52), who first recorded the legend, the Hermitage caves at Bridgnorth have been associated with a brother of King Athelstan (924–39), who is said to have lived there as a hermit. An analysis of historical sources has failed to trace any evidence to support the legend, which was perhaps based on the fictional tale of Guy of Warwick, increasingly popular from the thirteenth century, and his supposed hermitage at Warwick.

High above the Severn at Bridgnorth, dug out of the sandstone cliffs on the east side of the river near the road to Wolverhampton, are ancient cave dwellings known as the Hermitage which look out across the town.¹ By tradition these man-made caves, all now badly eroded and vandalised (and since a tragic accident in 2009 sealed off or blocked with earth to prevent public access), but occupied well into the twentieth century, were occupied by a brother of King Athelstan, the eldest (and third surviving) son of Edward the Elder, King of Wessex 899–924, in the early part of the tenth century, and that tradition is now establishing a tenuous foothold in academic studies of the period.²

The tradition is now considered in some detail, for this was an important period in the history of the Bridgnorth area: it is closely associated with the Danes, who in 895–6 wintered at *Cwatbrycge*³ (probably to be identified as Quatford⁴), and with Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, who was effectively ruler of Mercia after her husband's death in 911 until her own death seven years later, and who is said to have built a *burh* or fortification at *Cwatbrycge* in 912.⁵ She was the aunt of King Athelstan and his brothers.

Edward the Elder had died at Farndon-on-Dee on 17 July 924, aged about 52, and his body was taken to Winchester, the seat of the West Saxon kingdom, for burial. William of Malmesbury tells us that he died suddenly from sickness after repressing a revolt in Chester in alliance with the Welsh. Edward had fathered at least seventeen children and left sons by three women on his death. With his first wife Ecgwynn (to whom it was later said, probably maliciously and inaccurately, that he was not married, but who in fact may have been an *illustris femini* related to his family⁶) he had Athelstan, his eldest son, who would have been thirty in 924.⁷ With Ælfflæd, his second wife, he had Ælfweard and Eadwine, who were perhaps in their early twenties in 924. By Eadifu, his third wife, he had Edmund and Eadred, who were probably under five in 924.

According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, sixteen days after Edward's death, Ælfweard, the elder son of his second wife, died at Oxford, presumably on his way to Winchester, where he too was buried.⁸ No early chronicler gives any explanation for Ælfweard's death, but it seems possible that he might have been accompanying his father on campaign (a practice not uncommon at the time) and died from the same illness as his father.⁹ If any brother of Athelstan might have been a hermit, we must assume that it was Ælfweard, for he had supposedly been a bookish youth,¹⁰ and there is no suggestion that either of the other surviving brothers might have been a hermit. We shall also see that the names of the Hermitage at Bridgnorth found in early records might incorporate names having a superficial resemblance to the name Ælfweard.

Little is known of Ælfweard, but some apparently independent sources suggest that he was 'crowned with royal tokens': he is described as a king in the Winchester New Minster *Liber Vitæ*,¹¹ and a list of West Saxon kings in the twelfth century *Textus Roffensis* mentions Ælfweard as his father's successor, with a reign of four weeks.¹²

William of Malmesbury, writing in about 1124, is the source which tells us that Athelstan had been a favourite of his grandfather, King Alfred, and at Alfred's request was raised by Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, at her court at Gloucester.¹³ Furthermore, Athelstan's father, Edward the Elder, supposedly nominated

Athelstan as his successor in a testament.¹⁴ As a result Athelstan received the loyalty of the Mercians, and (according to the Mercian Register) after the death of his brother Ælfweard was proclaimed King of the Mercians at Kingston,¹⁵ doubtless because it was there that his father Edward had been crowned. In the meantime the West Saxon *witan* continued to deliberate on its choice of king.

But as a historian William of Malmesbury was neither impartial nor objective, and indeed has been described as ‘a treacherous witness...for all the praise heaped on him in modern times’.¹⁶ He was devoted to the monastery of Malmesbury, where he had lived since childhood, and held Athelstan in high esteem as a great benefactor to the monastery, who had expressed his intention to be buried there. William even tells us that he had gazed upon the face of the King in his tomb. The source for William’s information about the King was supposedly a *Life* of King Athelstan, a mysterious manuscript which William claims to have found ‘in a certain ancient volume’ which has not survived,¹⁷ and doubts have been raised about the authenticity of this lost source.¹⁸ No testament of Edward survives or is known, and moreover there is no evidence that major constitutional decisions – including succession to the kingship – were ever settled by a royal testament.¹⁹ Certainly Alfred does not mention the West Saxon kingship in his own will, and if Athelstan was indeed 30 when he came to the throne (as William of Malmesbury asserts), he must have been only 5 when Alfred died in 899, and he was the only grandchild that Alfred could have known: the other grandchildren were born after his death. In truth, Alfred and Edward were heavily preoccupied with the threat from the Danes and the Welsh, internal rebellion, and other matters of state, and it is inconceivable that either would have formed any view, let alone expressed it in writing, that a son and grandson of such tender years had shown the sort of talents and abilities that would mark him out as a future king.

What is certain, and particularly significant, is that Athelstan was not confirmed as King of the West Saxons until some months after his accession in Mercia, and even then was not crowned by the West Saxons until 4 September 925, more than a year later.

The fact that only Winchester sources record Ælfweard’s kingship almost certainly indicates that Winchester supported Ælfweard and Eadwine, and opposed Athelstan. Indeed, it has been suggested that on the death of Edward his dominions may have been divided amongst his sons, with Ælfweard taking Mercia, Athelstan having Wessex, and perhaps Eadwine Kent,²⁰ and that the delay in Athelstan’s coronation might have been caused by armed hostilities between Mercians and West Saxons, with the Mercians favouring Athelstan and the West Saxons supporting Ælfweard’s brother Eadwine,²¹ though there is no direct evidence to support that contention, which may be overstating the positions taken by the parties.

What is clear is that the issues surrounding the succession after the death of Edward were much more complicated than the terse entries in the section of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle known as the Mercian Register (compiled with Mercian bias) would have us believe.²² We are expected to understand that Ælfweard was the natural successor to his father and the first choice of the West Saxon *witan*, and that Athelstan’s election after Ælfweard’s unexpected death had not been pre-planned. There is a later suggestion (doubtless originating in Wessex) that he might have been murdered at Oxford at the instigation of his brother Athelstan, perhaps based on suspicions fed by the subsequent forced exile and mysterious death of Eadwine, who (according to William of Malmesbury) in 933 was alleged to have been implicated in a conspiracy with a certain Alfred to seize and blind Athelstan, and was accordingly driven from the realm by Athelstan, supposedly in a small unseaworthy boat, with a single attendant and no oars, and drowned after leaping into the sea in despair during a storm.²³

Following the death of Edward the Elder and Ælfweard there had evidently been a prolonged struggle for power between the followers of Athelstan on the one hand and those of his brother Eadwine and a magnate called Alfred on the other which had delayed a coronation by the West Saxons. William of Malmesbury tells us that ‘a certain Alfred (Eluredus) with his factious party’ attempted to prevent Athelstan’s coronation at Kingston because Athelstan was not a legitimate son of Edward. William also tells us that this Alfred was ‘a man of uncommon insolence, disdaining to be governed by a sovereign whom he had not voluntarily chosen, secretly opposed with his party to the very utmost’.²⁴ We cannot identify this Alfred with any certainty, since the aristocratic name was common among magnates of tenth century Wessex. Such was the background to the short life of Ælfweard, who was probably in his early twenties when he died.

As to the hermitage at Bridgnorth, the earliest references which mention it date from the first half of the fourteenth century. All the references are contained in the Patent Rolls, since it lay within the royal Forest of Morfe:²⁵

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 2 February 1328 | ‘Grant to John de Oxenden, hermit, of the hermitage of <i>Atherildston</i> ’ by Bridggenorth, for life’. ²⁶ |
| 29 July 1333 | ‘Grant for life to Andrew de Corbrigge, hermit, of the custody of the king’s hermitage of <i>Adlaston</i> , by Bruggenorth’. |
| 4 April 1335 | ‘Grant to brother Edmund de la Mare of the hermitage of <i>Athelardeston</i> by Bruggenorth, with all its rights and appurtenances’. |

- 24 May 1346 'Whereas Roger de Burghon, chaplain, inflamed with the fervour of devotion, has arranged to take the habit of a hermit and has made instant supplication to the king to grant him for life the hermitage at *Atherlaston* on the high road by Bruggenorth now void, wherein to dwell; that he may pray for the king, Queen Philippa and their children: the king has granted his petition'.
- 15 March 1383 'Grant for life, to William Chamberleyne, chaplain, of the hermitage of Athelardestone in the forest of Morfe'.

In addition, on 24 November 1367 a Licence for an oratory within the hermitage was granted to Richard de Callyley, hermit, for two years by Robert de Stretton, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.²⁷ An oratory at this period was a private chapel.

Apart from the names of these six hermits, little more is known of the medieval history of the Hermitage, but in the early fifteenth century it may have been occupied by a Dominican friar and Lollard sympathiser named John Grace.²⁸

The earliest reference to the legend of Athelstan's brother and the Hermitage appears to be by John Leland, the antiquary, whose interest in regional legends during his travels to survey England's antiquities between 1534 and 1543, that is before, during and in the wake of the monstrous cultural vandalism associated with the dissolution of the monasteries, with many of the great monastic libraries scattered to the winds, is self-evident. He recorded c.1540: 'In this forest or wood [of Morfe] (as some constantly affirme) Kynge Ethelstane's brother ledde in a rokke for a tyme an heremite's lyfe. The place is yet sene and is caulld the Heremitage'.²⁹ It will be noticed that Leland does not identify Athelstan's brother by name, presumably because his informant(s) were unable to supply that detail, and tells us only that he led for a time a hermit's life 'in a rock'.

Although the caves themselves are not specifically mentioned before Leland's reference in the sixteenth century, the Hermitage evidently utilised one or more of the numerous man-made chambers cut into three sandstone terraces on the steep hillside. By tradition the Hermitage is said to have consisted of four rock caves or chambers, one described as an oratory or chapel with a roughly arched ceiling.³⁰ (Plate 1) No datable architectural features or other decoration can be made out on early engravings or later photographs of the crudely excavated caves, some of which, modified as necessary with brick frontages, chimneys and fittings, were inhabited well into the twentieth century. A spring-fed 'Hermit's Well', a little over five feet long and two feet wide, lined with sandstone blocks and shaded by an ancient hawthorn tree, lay just over the crest of the hill to the east until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.³¹

The curious legend of Bridgnorth Hermitage and its royal Anglo-Saxon hermit, which has been known for over 450 years, is clearly deserving of further investigation. Is there any likelihood that Ælfweard/'Ethelweard', brother of Athelstan, could have lived as a hermit at Bridgnorth?

The name of Athelstan's brother Ælfweard who died in 924 is given variously as Aelfwerdus, Aelwerd, Ælfweard (eight times), and Ælfwe (twice) in contemporary charters,³² and as Alfward(e) by both Henry of Huntingdon and Florence (or John) of Worcester writing in the first half of the twelfth century.³³ We might note especially that the chronicler William of Malmesbury uses the name Ethelward for Ælfweard.³⁴ Ælfweard was clearly a common name in the late Anglo-Saxon period,³⁵ but there was evidently confusion in the sources between the names Ælfweard and Ethelweard,³⁶ which seem to have become conflated by later chroniclers.

The disparate names *Atherildston*', *Adlaston*, *Athelardeston(e)*, and *Atherlaston* which were applied to the Hermitage in the fourteenth century³⁷ evidently incorporate a personal name as the first element.³⁸ The differing forms do not enable us to deduce a derivation with certainty, but they do not point towards a derivation from the name Ælfweard.³⁹ The root of the names is more likely to be the Old English name *Æðelheard*, found as the surname Athelard or Adelard in the post-Conquest period.⁴⁰ The second element of the names is almost certainly Old English *stān* 'a stone, a rock, an outcrop' (referring to the sandstone outcrop into which the caves have been carved) rather than Old English *tūn* (which becomes *ton*) 'a farmstead, an enclosure, an estate, a village'.⁴¹ While the names might be older, even much older, than the fourteenth century – they seem to have the ring of antiquity, and even the disparate spellings might point towards an original name, confused in the memory locally, of some age – there is no evidence to show when they might have originated, but whatever their age, they are not habitative: they were attached to a landscape feature, and when originally coined did not necessarily denote a site of habitation.⁴²

We have seen that there is no contemporary evidence to support the tradition that Athelstan was raised in Mercia by his aunt Æthelflæd, and there is no reason to suppose, and certainly no evidence, that Ælfweard/'Ethelward' was similarly brought up in Mercia. It may be pertinent that William of Malmesbury makes no mention of any hermitage or suspicions about Ethelward's death, and indeed provides little information of any kind about 'Ethelward'. The only 'facts' he gives, apart from recording that he was a legitimate son who died soon after his father, are that he was 'deeply versed in literature', as he put it,⁴³ which might arguably suggest his suitability for

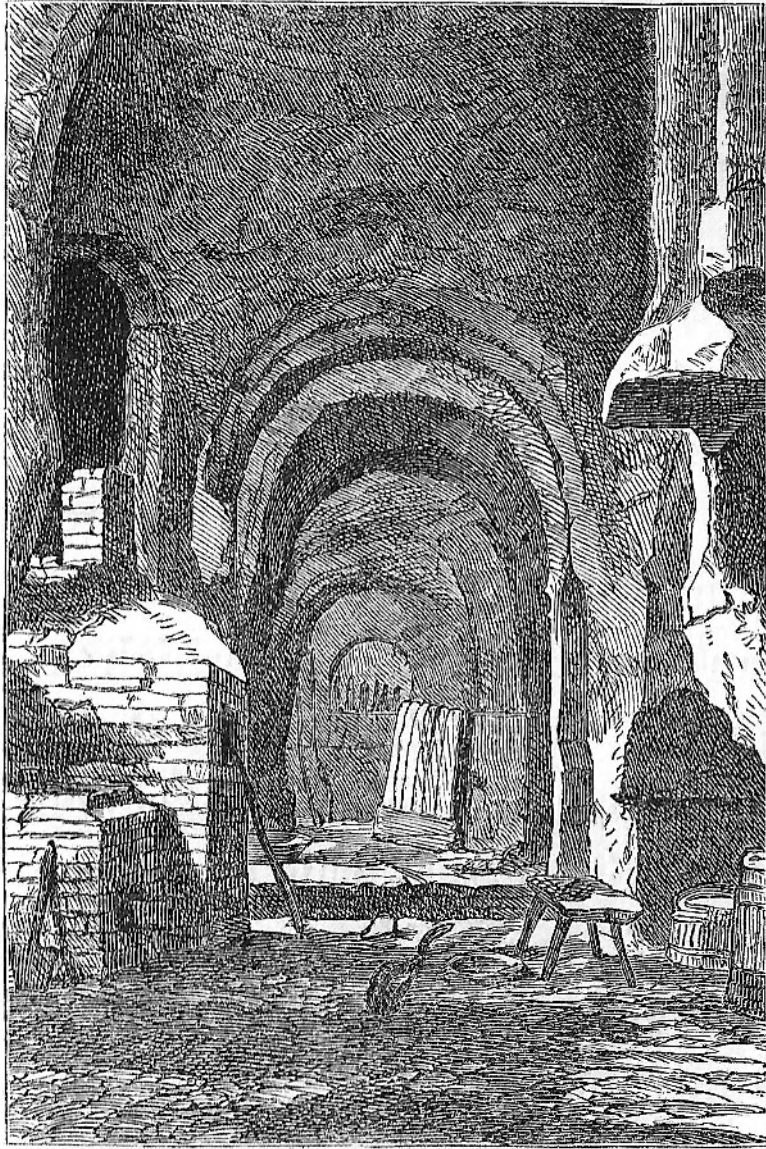


Plate 1 The Hermitage Cave, from a woodcut published in G. Bellett, *Antiquities of Bridgnorth*, 1856.

the eremitic life – or, perhaps, by the circular argument that the fact that he had been a hermit led to his being described as ‘bookish’. But we have no evidence at all that Ælfweard, whose roots were firmly in Wessex, had any strong links with Mercia, or that he was ever a hermit, and hermits in any event were usually of some age and maturity, not young men. That he died at Oxford soon after his father may possibly be relevant: Oxford might be seen as a point *en route* between Bridgnorth and Winchester, the seat of the West Saxon kingdom, which would be the place of any crowning. But Oxford would also be on the road from many other places, including Farndon-on-Dee, to Winchester.

The early chroniclers were always keen to record curious material relating to royal families in particular, and we might suppose that if the legend of Ælfweard/‘Ethelweard’ as a hermit at Bridgnorth is based on fact, it would have been seized upon and recorded by at least one of the early chroniclers. None mentions the story. Though many ancient legends can be shown to have some factual basis, the earliest account associating a brother of Athelstan with Bridgnorth is over 600 years after the event, although the legend was seemingly well-established by the time Leland reached the area.

Hermitages certainly existed from an early date as monastic offshoots, and an eremitic tradition is implied by the reference by the historian Gildas in the first half of the sixth century to the ‘caves and consolations of holy men’, and to the supposed home of St. Sampson (d.565) in a Cornish cave,⁴⁴ but fewer are recorded in England than in Wales and Cornwall, although that evidence may be misleading. But in Old English, a cave used as a dwelling place would have been referred to as *brocchol*, *cleofa*, *cofa*, *eorphūs*, or *eorpscræf*, and a hermit’s cell as *āncorstōw*, *āncorsetl*, *ānseld/ānsetl*, or *sundorsetl*.⁴⁵

The word 'hermitage' is Middle English from Old French, unrecorded before 1290,⁴⁶ and when used of this place in the early fourteenth century was evidently applied as a descriptive functional term, rather than a place-name. Some hermitages in England with names that compound an Old English personal name (such as the fourteenth-century names of Bridgnorth Hermitage) may preserve the memory of free-functioning hermits, but none is known to pre-date the tenth century, by which time the normal term for a religious establishment was *stow*.⁴⁷ Furthermore, no record has been traced of any reference to a hermit or the Hermitage at Bridgnorth before the fourteenth century, which might suggest that it is unlikely to pre-date that period, for as part of the royal Forest of Morfe we would expect any grant to a hermit to be formally recorded in the central archives. The cave dwellings may, however, be considerably older.

Curious and inexplicable legends sometimes by their very improbability carry the ring of truth, and it is noteworthy that four of Edward's daughters (Eadflæd, Elfleda, Ethelfleda and Ethelhilda) became nuns.⁴⁸ Eyton, who attaches some credence to the Bridgnorth legend (and whose opinions cannot lightly be dismissed), believed the Hermitage to be of Saxon origin, and raised the possibility that Ælfweard/'Ethelward' or some sixth and unnamed brother of Athelstan might have become a hermit.⁴⁹ All we can say for certain is that a hermitage under royal patronage existed at Bridgnorth in the first half of the fourteenth century and at that date seems to have been associated with an individual with an Anglo-Saxon name (or a name derived from an Anglo-Saxon one), probably Æthelweard, and that some two centuries later there was a popular belief in the Bridgnorth area that it was a brother of King Athelstan who had lived in the Hermitage in the early part of the tenth century, though the wording in parentheses in Leland's account – '(as some constantly affirme)' – might suggest that he was unwilling to lend credulity to the legend. While there is no contemporary evidence of any kind to support the legend of Bridgnorth Hermitage recorded by Leland, it could be seen as evidence, albeit tenuous in the extreme, for the existence of an otherwise unknown son of Edward the Elder.⁵⁰

How, then, do we explain the puzzling legend linking Athelstan's brother with Bridgnorth Hermitage? The answer may lie in another tradition, from the same region, about a hermit who lived in a cave in a sandstone cliff above a river and was associated with King Athelstan.

Guy of Warwick is a fictional adventurer of the early tenth century whose story is told in a long Anglo-Norman verse romance,⁵¹ *Gui de Warewic*, which was written c.1232–1242, possibly by a canon of Osney, as an ancestral panegyric for Thomas, Earl of Warwick, who died in 1242.⁵² Guy, we are told in the romance, was the son of Syward of Wallingford, steward to Rohaut, Earl of Warwick. He undertakes various exploits to win the hand of Felice, daughter of the earl, but is rejected because of his inferior standing. He travels abroad and returns after a few years laden with honours, but is again spurned. Leaving England, he proves himself in tournaments overseas, rescues the daughter of the Emperor of Germany (and declines her hand), fights against the Saracens, and kills the Soldan (sultan). Returning to his homeland after seven years, he is honourably received by King Athelstan, at whose request he rids Northumbria of an insatiable dragon, after which he wins the hand of Felice, but soon after, filled with remorse for the violence of his past life, he embarks on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he has many fantastical adventures before returning to England as a palmer to find Athelstan facing a Danish threat from the army of Anlaf.⁵³ Guy famously confronts and slays the giant Colbrand, champion of the Danes who are besieging Winchester, thus saving the kingdom. After slaying the Dun Cow,⁵⁴ a savage beast, on Dunsmore Heath near Dunchurch, he sets out for Warwick, and finding his wife engaged in works of charity, retires to a nearby hermitage where, unrecognised, he is provided with food by Felice who is only reunited with the dying Guy after he sends her a ring by which she recognises him. Felice dies two weeks after his death, and they are buried in the same grave.⁵⁵

Gui de Warewic was well received as a tale after its circulation in the late thirteenth century, was known to Chaucer,⁵⁶ and was even incorporated into histories compiled by chroniclers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,⁵⁷ but it became particularly popular from the early 1500s, at the time when the name *Guyes Cliffe* was adopted in place of *Gybcliff* for the low sandstone cliff above the Avon, a little over a mile from Warwick, housing the caves in which the fictional Guy supposedly spent his last years.⁵⁸ Just as Leland recorded the legend of Bridgnorth's Hermitage, so he had set down the story of Warwick's caves, which he visited *en route* to Bridgnorth:⁵⁹

'This place of some is caulyd Gibclif, of some Guy-clif; and old fame remaynethe with the people there, that Guydo Erle of Warwike in K. Athelstan's dayes had a great devotion to this place, and made an oratory there. Some adde unto [it] that after he had done great victories in outward partes, and had bene so long absent that he was thought to have bene deade, he came and lyved in this place lyke an heremite, onknowne to his wife Felicia ontyll at the article of his deathe he shewyd what he was. Men shew a cave there in a rok hard on Avon ripe, where they say that he usyd to slepe...This place had fore the tyme of Richard E. of Warwike only a smaull chappelle and a cottage wherein an heremite dwellyd'.⁶⁰

The story of Guy (who was numbered among the Nine Worthies, including King Arthur) enjoyed increased popularity after it appeared in print in English early in the reign of Elizabeth I as *The Booke of the Most Victorious Prince Guy of Warwick*,⁶¹ shortly after Leland began his great survey, and was subsequently issued as a ballad and then a chapbook.⁶² The name Athelstan had become more widely known after the publication in the early fifteenth century of *Athelston* (*sic*), a Middle English verse romance where Athelston is portrayed as a tyrant Anglo-Saxon king who discovers the benefits of taking advice.⁶³

It is not difficult to imagine how some garbled and much abbreviated version of Warwick's legend, not featuring the poor son of a steward in King Athelstan's time, as at Warwick, but no less a figure than Athelstan's own brother, had been taken up in Bridgnorth (some forty-five miles from Warwick) and applied to Bridgnorth Hermitage at some period before Leland's visit, thereby eclipsing the legend proudly recounted by the citizens of Warwick and elevating the prestige of Bridgnorth. It was that terse and enigmatic Bridgnorth legend, ardently and doubtless innocently promoted by at least some of the townsfolk, perhaps long acquainted with the local tale, that John Leland recorded, not entirely confidently, for posterity – a myth built on a fiction that has been repeated by credulous writers and historians for the better part of half a millennium, though we may observe that the perceptive antiquary William Camden (1551–1623), who himself visited Bridgnorth at some date before 1586 and was familiar with Leland's writings, makes no mention of the legend, nor indeed (and more surprisingly) of the Hermitage.⁶⁴ Camden's failure to mention the intriguing legend perhaps tells us all we need to know: that some four decades after Leland's visit the legend of Athelstan's brother living as a hermit at Bridgnorth was seen to be baseless.

In summary, therefore, while it is very possible that the cave dwellings at Bridgnorth Hermitage predate – perhaps long pre-date – their first recorded mention in the fourteenth century, we have no credible evidence that they were occupied as a hermitage in the Anglo-Saxon period, or, as legend claims, associated with any brother of the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan. That tale may have developed at some date before the mid-sixteenth century as a mangled version of a popular verse romance about a fictional hero who became Athelstan's champion and retired to a hermitage cave above the river at Warwick.

Notes

- 1 For a detailed account of the caves see Jewitt *et al.*, 1879, 70; Powell, 2002, 91–205. As at many historic sites, nonsensical legends have been recorded of the Hermitage from at least the early 18th century, including accounts of underground passages from the caves to buried treasure or to other local sites, such as Bridgnorth Castle or the White Friars, both on the opposite side of the Severn: *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **I**, 1878, 165–6; *Ibid.*, **IX**, 1886, 196–7; Burne, 1883, 85–7.
- 2 See, for example, Zaluckyj, 2001, 260.
- 3 Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **I**, 89.
- 4 See *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXXIII**, 2008, 1–17.
- 5 Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **I**, 96; *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXXIII**, 2008, 1–17.
- 6 Yorke, 2011, 32.
- 7 On Athelstan and his family, see especially Foot, 2011.
- 8 Williams, Smyth and Kirby, 1991, 128; Ashley, 1999, 5, 472–3, 791; Foot, 2011, 37–40.
- 9 Athelstan's brother Edmund was 16 when he participated in the decisive battle of Brunanburh in 937: Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **I**, 106–7. In the tenth century Otto III is known to have been on the field of battle against the Slavs at the age of six: Campbell, 2003, 6.
- 10 Giles, 1847, 124.
- 11 F.9V, cited in Yorke, 1988; Foot, 2011, 39. The Book of Hyde mentions a certain Alfred or Ælfredus as a son of Edward the Elder who was a king during Edward's lifetime, and whose name has otherwise (and most improbably, given Ælfweard's early death) been taken to be an erroneous form of Ælfweard: Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **II**, 121; see also Foot, 2011, 40–41.
- 12 Dumville, 1992, 146.
- 13 Giles, 1847, 131, 134. On William of Malmesbury generally see Thomson, 2003. There is no evidence that Æthelstan ever visited the Bridgnorth area. The closest he is known to have come is a visit to Tamworth in July 926 when he and Sihtric Caech, King of Northumbria, assembled at Tamworth for the shortlived marriage of Æthelstan's sister Edith to Sihtric (see Foot, 2011, 259–66), but we know very little about the travels of kings of this period.
- 14 Giles, 1847, 131.
- 15 Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **I**, 105.
- 16 Dumville, 1992, 146.
- 17 Gransden, 1996, 53–5; Yorke, 2001, 29.
- 18 See especially Foot, 2011, 251–8.
- 19 Although Asser, King Alfred's biographer, claims that King Æthelwulf of Wessex had a document drawn up c.857 to record the succession to the two parts of his kingdom after his death: Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, 72–3.
- 20 Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **II**, 121.
- 21 Miller, 1999, 16.
- 22 See in particular Stafford, 2008.

- 23 Eyton, 1864–60, **I**, 353, fn. 430; Giles, 1847, 140. The later 10th century *Acts of the Abbots of St. Bertin's* (Eadwine was buried at St. Bertin's in Saint-Omer) records that 'King' Eadwine was driven out of his kingdom by some disturbance: Foot, 2011, 41–3.
- 24 Giles, 1847, 131; Foot, 2011, 40–41; 145. See also note 11 above.
- 25 *VCH Salop*, **II**, 23.
- 26 It is unclear whether this is John de Oxenden, who was presented to the church of Trengre (Tring, Hertfordshire) the previous year: *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edward III, **I**, 23.
- 27 *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, 4th Series, **I**, 1911, 167; *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, New Series, **VIII**, 40.
- 28 *VCH Salop*, **II**, 23. John Grace achieved some notoriety as a monk, a friar and a hermit before becoming an itinerant preacher sympathetic to the Lollards. In the autumn of 1424 he delivered sermons in Lichfield, Walsall, Coleshill, and Coventry. It was in Coventry that a major disturbance broke out when the Prior of Coventry and a grey friar claimed that Grace was not licenced to preach, which so angered the crowd that the Prior and friar were almost killed by the enraged mob, and the Franciscans who opposed him went in fear for their safety. The Mayor of Coventry attempted to play down the matter, but the authorities in London took a firm line and issued a warrant for Grace's arrest for sedition. He was released from the Tower of London only after fifty Coventry artisans undertook to keep the peace and reject Lollardy: Jurkowski, 2006, 157–8. These events are presumably to be associated with 'preachings to which the people much resort, [so that] riots and unlawful assemblies have increased', mentioned in writs issued in 1424 to the sheriffs of Staffordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire: *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Henry VI, **I**, 275–6.
- 29 Toulmin Smith, 1964: **II**, 86. John Leland was clearly familiar with the work of William of Malmesbury, describing him as 'an elegant, learned, and faithful historian', even though William's chronicle did not appear in print (in Latin) until 1596: Giles, 1847, v; Stephenson, 1853, 6; Gross, 1900, 291. Florence (or John) of Worcester's chronicle was not printed until 1592, and Henry of Huntingdon's chronicle remained unpublished until 1596: Gross, 1900, 295–6. A considerable portion of the work had been printed anonymously (as a continuation of Bede) at Heidelberg in 1587: Giles, 1847, xv. Existing copies of the chronicle and references in early library catalogues show that during his lifetime William's works were known throughout southern England, and by 1200 were found all over the country, with only Bede and Geoffrey of Monmouth more widely used by those compiling chronicles of English and European history: Thomson, 2003, 39.
- 30 Clay, 1914, 35–7.
- 31 *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **I**, 1878, 168.
- 32 *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* website, accessed 6 July 2011, which identifies Athelstan's brother as 'Ælfweard 5'.
- 33 Arnold, 1879, 159. The name is also found as Eswaldus in the *Chronicon Abbatie Ramesiensis*, edited by Gale, 1691, 14; Searle, 1899, 346.
- 34 Arnold, 1879, 159; Stephenson, 1853, 79. In his translation of Henry of Huntingdon, however, Arnold, perhaps accidentally influenced by the name of Edward (the Elder) which appears a few lines later, gives the name Edward for Ælfweard: Arnold, 1853, 169.
- 35 Searle, 1897, 25–6. The *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* website, accessed 6 July 2011, gives 74 men of this name.
- 36 To complicate matters further, some charters are signed by Ælfweard as '*filius regis*' in the time of King Edward, which are also signed by Æthelweard, and others are attested by Æthelweard, described as '*filius regis*', according to Earle and Plummer, 1892–9, **II**, 121; see also Foot, 2011, 37–40, but *filius* should probably be read as *frater*: Edward had a younger brother, Æthelweard, who seems to have died c.922: Williams, Smyth and Kirby, 1991, xxvii; Ashley, 1999, 468.
- 37 None of the place-names, or any similar, has been traced in other records relating to Bridgnorth or the Forest of Morfe, but for completeness it might be noted that Atherstone in White Lackington, Somerset, is frequently recorded in early deeds as Athelardeston.
- 38 Eyton, 1854–60, **I**, 353 gives the slightly different spellings *Athelwildston* (1328), *Adlaston* (1333), and *Athelardeston* (1335). He gives no spelling for the 1346 reference, and does not mention the records of 1367 and 1383.
- 39 As recognised by Eyton, who suggests the names Athelward or Ethelward: Eyton, 1854–60, **I**, 353.
- 40 Reaney, 1997, 3 *sub nom* Adlard, etc.
- 41 Roberts and Kay, 1995, **I**, 6. Intriguingly, and coincidentally (we might suppose), the name of Pendlestone, which lies at the foot of sandstone cliffs on the east bank of the Severn, half a mile north-west of the Hermitage, and first recorded in the early thirteenth century, may incorporate the Anglo-Saxon personal name Penda, the name of the King of Mercia (c.626–55), with Old English *stān*: Horovitz, 2005, 62, 431, *sub nom* Pendeford, Pendlestone.
- 42 Bridgnorth itself seems not to have existed until c.1101: *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXXIII**, 2008, 1–17.
- 43 Giles, 1847, 124.
- 44 Blair, 2005, 18–19.
- 45 Clark Hall, 1960, 19, 106, 189; Roberts and Kay, 1995, **I**, 6, 691.
- 46 *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971, **I**, 1295.
- 47 Blair, 2005, 216–220.
- 48 Giles, 1847, 124–5; Ashley, 1999, 473.
- 49 Eyton, 1854–60, **I**, 353, fn. 430.
- 50 It may not be entirely irrelevant to note that Æthelweard, King Alfred's youngest son and brother of Edward the Elder, received a notable literary, judicial and religious education 'second to none' in Wessex (possibly Glastonbury) by *magistri* in a *schola*, and was well versed in both Latin and English: Yorke, 2001, 27; Bailey, 2001, 114. The possibility that this 'bookish' Æthelweard, Athelstan's *uncle*, came to be associated in some way with the Bridgnorth Hermitage can almost certainly be rejected, since (as far as we know) Æthelweard spent his life in Wessex and probably died c.922, in his early twenties, before Æthelstan succeeded to the throne, although we have no information about his later years, which might conceivably have been spent as a hermit in the Midlands, though such a curiosity would surely not have gone unrecorded by an early chronicler.
- 51 Guy (with King Arthur and Robin Hood) is one of the few fictional figures to have a biography in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Many early historians such as Langtoft, Gerald of Wales, Holinshed, Stow and even Dugdale

accepted the legend as authentic. It has been shown that the story is based on the legends of soldier saints such as St. Eustachius and St. Alexius, and that the Anlaf of the story is probably Olaf Tryggvason who, with Sweyn of Denmark, harried the southern counties of England in 993: Richmond, 1996. Topographical allusions show the poem's author to have been more familiar with the Wallingford area than Warwick.

- 52 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, sub. nom. Guy of Warwick.
- 53 The reference to Athelstan and Anlaf shows that the legend sought to incorporate memories of the battle of Brunanburh in 937, when Athelstan defeated a formidable coalition including an army of Olaf (named as Anlaf by William of Malmesbury). It is of interest that during the battle, which took place on the Wirral, Athelstan's uncle, named by William of Malmesbury as Ethelward, was killed. See Giles, 1847, 136; Foot, 2011, 169–83.
- 54 This episode, not in the original tale, was added to later versions of the legend.
- 55 See especially Richmond, 1996; Wiggins and Field, 2007. It has been suggested that 'Guy' is a Norman attempt at the Old English name Wigod, and that the original Guy may have been Wigod of Wallingford, Edward the Confessor's cupbearer, who had some link with land to the sheriff of Warwick. The return of a husband unrecognised by his wife, his life as a hermit, and recognition by means of a ring all appear in the tale of a hero called Guido in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and it may be that he and Guy are one. The Dun Cow became part of the story much later, being first mentioned in 1579: Westwood, 1985, 220–23.
- 56 Westwood, 1985, 221.
- 57 The Additions to Camden's *Britannia* of 1806 include a perceptive analysis by Dr. Pegge of the veracity of the legend which mentions chroniclers who had cited the tale in their histories: Camden, 1806, II, 453–6.
- 58 Gover *et al.*, 1936, 264–5. The Warwick antiquary Master John Rous (d.1491), whose *Historia Regum Anglie* was eventually published in 1716, spent his last years at the hermitage in Guy's Cliffe as a chaplain, and records that a cave to the east of the chapel, which had seemingly housed a hermitage in 1334 (a date contemporary with the Bridgnorth hermits, which may be more than coincidence) had once been the home of St. Dubricius (Welsh Dyfrig), an important 6th-century saint in the Hereford-Gwent area who died and was buried at Bardney: 'Colleges: St. Mary, Warwick', *VCH Warwicks.*, II, 124–9; 'The Borough of Warwick Churches', *Ibid.*, VIII, 522–35; Westwood, 1985, 222–3; Farmer, 1992, 14–1. It is unlikely that any pre-Conquest hermitage existed at Guy's Cliffe.
- 59 Toulmin Smith, 1964, V, map III.
- 60 Toulmin Smith, 1964, II, 45–6.
- 61 Richmond, 1996, 473.
- 62 Westwood, 1985, 221.
- 63 See Rouse, 2005, 129–34. In medieval chronicles Athelstan was generally depicted as a wise and courageous king: Treharne, 2000, 551–68; Foot, 2011, 228–34.
- 64 Camden, 1806, III, 4. His *Britannia* was completed in 1586. It is worthy of note that after mentioning Guy of Warwick and Guy's Cliffe and its hermit, Camden notes that 'Persons better informed think the place had its name from Guido de Beauchamp, a much later person': Camden, 1806, II, 444–5.

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CONCERNING THE LANGLAND FAMILY OF KINLET

By GWYNETH NAIR AND DAVID POYNER

Abstract: William Langland, the author of *Piers Plowman*, has been associated with the Cleobury Mortimer area since the mid 16th century. Evidence from deeds demonstrates that a Longland family was present at the Birch, in the parish of Kinlet, by 1399. In this article, the family holding is shown to be to the west of the modern Birch farm, in an outlier of the manor of Highley, largely surrounded by the manor of Earnwood. Both of these were part of the Liberty of Cleobury, in the ownership of the Mortimer family. A Roger Longland can be identified as a substantial farmer with holdings in both the manors of Highley and Earnwood from 1378/9; he lived in Highley, probably within the Birch enclave. He is representative of a number of individuals who prospered in the area in the second half of the 14th century and who established socially mobile dynasties that flourished in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

In 1966, the *Transactions* of the Shropshire Archaeological Society published an article by John Corbett on the probable birthplace of the poet William Langland, author of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*.¹ Langland was a contemporary of Chaucer, living it is now thought from about 1330 to 1387. Tradition has long maintained that he was born at Cleobury Mortimer, in South Shropshire, but corroborative documentary evidence is lacking. Corbett's argument had three strands: a birthplace in or near Cleobury Mortimer is not inconsistent with surviving biographical notes in early texts of Langland's work; Langland was probably educated at Woodhouse Priory near Cleobury; and a Langland (or Longelonde) family did indeed live in the area, in the parish of Kinlet, five miles west of Cleobury. More recently, a family historian, L. G. Chorley, has added to our knowledge of the Kinlet family, chiefly in the sixteenth century.² The current article provides further information about the Langlands, particularly the location of their holdings and their status in the fourteenth century. In turn it sheds light on social and economic mobility in the late medieval period in this part of Shropshire.

Corbett's initial finding of a medieval Langland family at Kinlet was particularly significant in the light of the failure of earlier scholars to trace any such family in Shropshire, or indeed in the West Midlands. Very little is known about the life of William Langland. Even his name is something of a guess, from his own pun 'I have lyved in londe...my name is longe wille' – thus William Longelonde. The first printed version of *Piers Plowman* was published in 1550 by Robert Crowley, who states in his introduction that Langland was 'a Shropshire man borne in Claybirie, aboute viii myles from Malverne hilles'.³ Of course, Cleobury is considerably more than eight miles from the Malvern Hills. Corbett argued a complex case for a misreading of 'Malverne Hulle' as 'Malvern Quatte' – the parish of Quatt Malvern is somewhat nearer to Cleobury, and also in south Shropshire. A simpler explanation involves a misreading of Roman numerals: VIII could have been XVIII or XXII in the original, both giving a more realistic distance.⁴ That Crowley was unaware of the real distance of Cleobury from Malvern is in any case of little relevance. He mentions Malvern because the poet states that 'I' in the poem was weary from wandering when he arrived at the hills. What remains is that Crowley believed that Langland was born at a place called 'Claybire'.

Another difficulty – and a more damaging one – is the complete absence of the name Langland or any possible variation of it from extant documentary evidence relating to Cleobury. The 1327 and 1332 Lay Subsidy Returns mention none; neither does the 1380 Poll Tax.⁵ In fact the only family of this name in the entire Hundred of Stottesdon (covering a large area of south east Shropshire, including Cleobury Mortimer) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would appear to be that noted by Corbett at the Birch in the parish of Kinlet. Their name was recorded as Longelonde, consistent with the pun used by the poet himself.

Before looking in more detail at this family, it is profitable to examine the situation of the farm called the Birch (Figure 1).

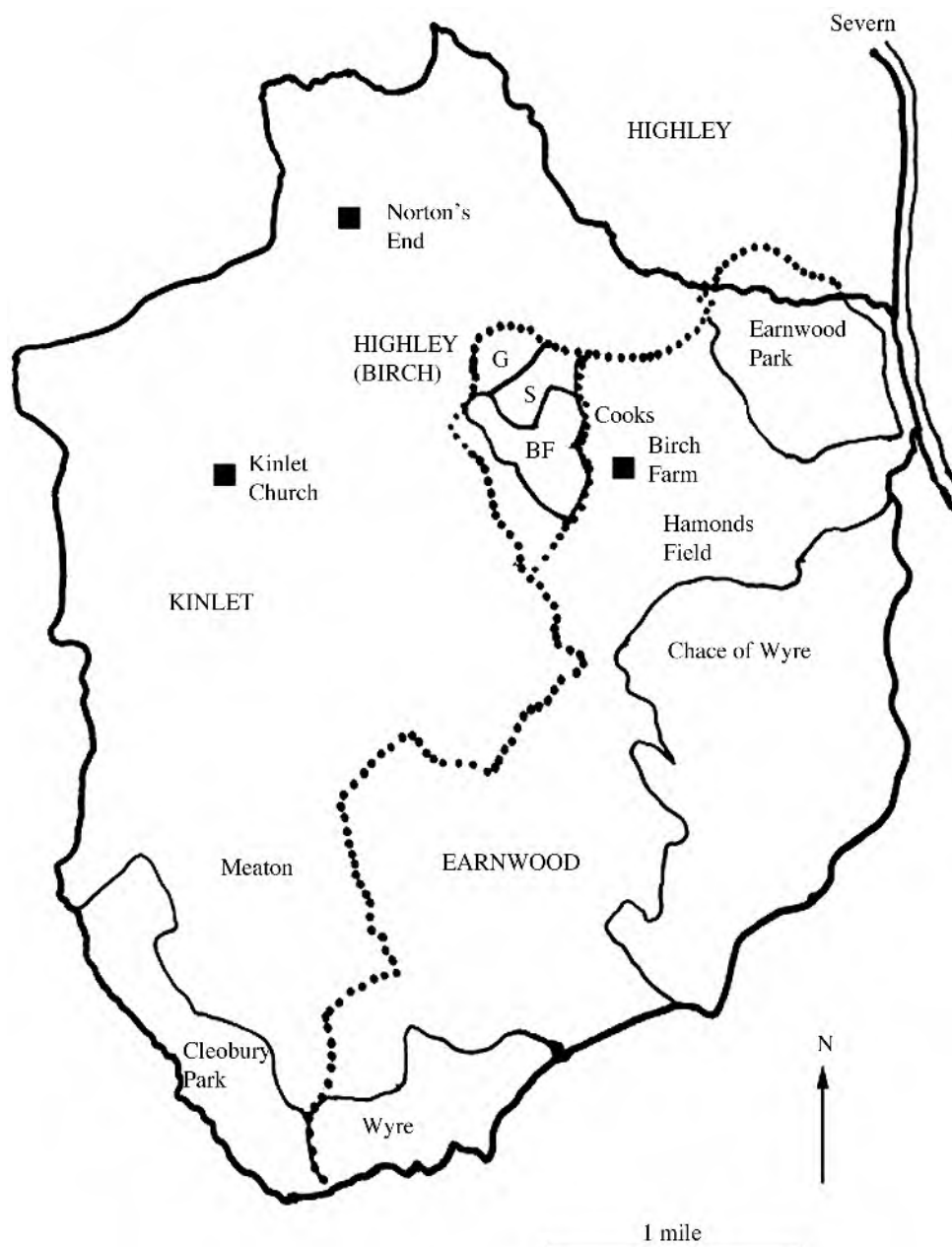


Figure 1 The Birch and its relationship to Highley, Earnwood and Kinlet. The boundaries of Earnwood are based on a survey of 1643 (SA: 3320/58/2). The boundaries of the manor of Highley within the Birch are reconstructed from a survey contained in the manor court roll for Sept 11 James I (Birmingham Reference Library, 377992). Field names are taken from the Kinlet tithe map. Bold lines are parish boundaries, dotted lines are manorial boundaries. G, Gathill; S, Great and Little Stanwall; BF, Birch Fields. The current location of the Birch Farm is shown; this probably corresponds to 'High Birches' in the 1643 survey. The boundaries of the Wyre Forest are those which it had at the time of the tithe map. Earnwood Park is assumed to correspond to the later Severn Lodge Farm. Within the Highley enclave of the Birch there is evidence for post-medieval houses in Gathill and Stanhill, and two immediately to the west of the Birch Fields; they are associated with a thin scatter of medieval pottery (D. Poyner and A. Johnson, 'Bank House, Kinlet', *West Midland Archaeology*, 49, 2006, 56).

It lies in the north east of the parish of Kinlet, towards the Borle Brook, which forms the boundary with the parish of Highley. Kinlet was anciently divided into two lordships, Kinlet and Earnwood, and the Birch was situated in the latter. Kinlet, Earnwood and Highley were all 'members' of the manor of Cleobury Mortimer and were under the jurisdiction of the Court Baron at Cleobury until the seventeenth century. This arrangement had as its origins the withdrawal of the Shropshire manors of Roger de Mortimer from royal jurisdiction into the liberty of Cleobury in 1266.⁶ It might be, therefore, that the Birch could legitimately be considered to have been 'in Cleobury' in at least one sense. Furthermore, in the fourteenth century the lordship of Earnwood, as well as being distinct from Kinlet in whose parish it lay, was sometimes recorded together with Highley. The 1327 and 1332 Lay Subsidy Returns, for example, record 'Highley and Earnwood' together, and make no distinction between residents

of either. One reason for this may lie in a further manorial complication. The manor of Highley was not quite coterminous with the parish. A tongue of Earnwood Park extruded into the parish but not into the manor. Perhaps to make up for this, certain lands in Earnwood Lordship were part of the manor of Highley. These lands were at the Birch. They continued to form a detached portion of the manor into the seventeenth century.⁷ Indeed, there is evidence that the manor of Kinlet also had an interest in land at the Birch.⁸

The farm at the Birch, then, where Corbett identified a Longelonde family in the fifteenth century, may be said to have had multiple identities. It was part of the liberty (Court Baron) of Cleobury, it was in the parish of Kinlet, it was enclosed by the lordship of Earnwood and finally it belonged to the manor (Court Leet) of Highley. This is important in two respects. First, if Langland's birthplace was indeed The Birch, it would be perhaps loose but not strictly inaccurate to assert that he came from 'Claybire'. Second, we might therefore expect mentions of a family resident at the Birch to occur in records not only of Cleobury, but also of Kinlet, Earnwood and Highley.

Corbett located most of the mentions of the Longelond family at the Birch in the manuscripts of the Childe family of Kinlet Hall. Four deeds involve the family directly, and it is worth quoting them more fully:

- 1) 10 Sept. 1437, John Longlonde to Thomas his son, a messuage and lands in Le Byrche in the manor of Highley and a nook in the manor of Kinlet.⁹
- 2) 1524, Thomas Longlond to Thomas his son, a messuage and a nook and 6 acres of land 'in Le Birche' in the manors of Highley and Kinlet.¹⁰
- 3) 1577, Richard Longland of Cuddyngton, Bucks., to Thomas Longland son of William Longland, a messuage called the Hunte Howse, one nook and 6 acres of land in the occupation of William Longland in the '*vill, hamlet et campus*' of Highley and Earnwood as well as Great and Little Stanwell, Pyrley meadow and lands in the three Birch fields, also in the occupation of William.¹¹
- 4) 1581, Thomas Longland the younger to Humphrey Dallow and William Mason, both of Kinlet, a tenement called The Hunte House the Longland meadow, a leasow called the Wheatacre, half of the leasows called Tyttie Gattell, the Redinge and Dallowes Hill, half the meadow called the Impeyard and arable lands in the three Birch fields in Kinlet and Highley.¹²

In addition, a sale of 1558/9 from John Pate (a relation of the Langlands¹³) to Sir George Blount, Lord of Kinlet, of a messuage in the Birch in the manor of Highley is annotated on the back (in a secretary hand) as being the sale of William Longland's house.¹⁴ There was also an estate based on Gathill adjacent to the Birch (Figure 1) which had formerly been owned by Wigmore Abbey, but which in the sixteenth century was in the occupation of William.¹⁵ Manorial records from Highley further add to the picture. A 1587 rental of the manor of Highley records Humphrey Dallow holding an estate formerly of William Longland, and in 1601 this is specified as including Hunthouse, le Longland, Wheatacre, Tittigatell, Le Redding, Dallowhill, the Impeyard and lands in Nether and Over Birch fields. This corresponds to the estate that was partly sold in 1581 by William Longland to Dallow and Mason.¹⁶ Humphrey paid 10s. in rent for this; his neighbour at the Birch paid 5s. for an estate consisting of a messuage and 30 acres. Around 1550 there were two branches of the Langland family in the Earnwood area.¹⁷ In Earnwood there were the descendants of Thomas of the Hunthouse; this branch of the family moved away in the late 16th century. The deeds and rentals noted above all refer to this branch of the family. In Kinlet there were the descendants of William, brother of Thomas of Hunthouse. They lived at the farm of called Norton's or Hanleys¹⁸ but had gone by the early 17th century.

Collectively this evidence is very significant: it shows that a family variously recorded as Longland or Longlond(e) held lands at the Birch from the mid-fifteenth century. It gets over the difficulty of no family of Longlands being traceable in the West Midlands. Furthermore, it is possible to go beyond the work of Corbett and Chorley to identify the location of the estate by reference to the Kinlet tithe map and a survey of 1788 (Figure 1).¹⁹ It lay to the west of the modern Birch farm, stretching to a small stream which marked the boundary with the manor of Kinlet. But it does not take us back quite to the lifetime of the poet in the fourteenth century. There is, however, one further deed of interest in this group, also noted by Chorley. In 1399, a deed of sale of land at Highley was witnessed by Roger de Longelonde. This land was apparently also near the Highley/Earnwood boundary, and the deed was preserved in the Childe papers as part of their right of title to lands in this area.²⁰ Whilst this demonstrates the presence of the Langland family in the area at the very end of the fourteenth century, it does not show where they were living; as a witness, Roger would not necessarily have had to be resident in Kinlet or Highley. However, it is possible to show that Roger was a resident of Highley, almost certainly living at the Birch on the same holding as his sixteenth century descendants.

The 1380 Poll Tax lists no Longelondes at Kinlet or Earnwood. However, we have seen that the Birch was in the manor of Highley and in the tax return for Highley we find Roger Longelond and Petronilla his wife.²¹ We have, therefore, a family of the same name as the poet, living probably at The Birch, during his lifetime. Roger might, indeed, have been his brother or nephew. Roger Longlond features in reeve's accounts of Earnwood in the late

fourteenth century. In 1378/9 he is listed as one of the six customary tenants who owed ploughing and other services.²² However, it does not seem that Roger owed this service on account of his tenancy in Earnwood itself. Instead the services were owed as he was an outside tenant who pastured his cattle in the Wyre Forest. This is exactly what would be expected of someone living at the Birch, in the manor of Highley but physically located in Earnwood. The service was in fact very light, consisting of one day's ploughing in Lent and one in winter. All the tenants appeared to have paid 8*d.* each to commute these services. Roger still owed the ploughing service in 1383/4, the last time those owing this service are listed by name.²³

Although owing service as a foreign tenant of Earnwood, it is clear that Roger also held land in Earnwood itself. In 1384/5, the reeve noted the loss of 3*s.* for a nook of land (nominally 7½ acres), formerly held by him and now in the hands of the estate for the first year, for lack of a tenant. The land lay within the Wyre Forest and it was proposed to lease this in subsequent years at 1*s.*²⁴ By 1394/5, enough tenants had been found to regain 18*d.* worth of income from this land but now there was another loss of 18*d.* rent from land formerly of Roger. This was a parcel called 'Hamondsland', again described as in the Wyre Forest.²⁵ Late fifteenth century accounts still noted an 18*d.* loss for the nook of land, although this was balanced by the increased rent a new tenant was paying since 1465 on ½ a virgate and a messuage, formerly of William Longland.²⁶

The picture that emerges from the Earnwood accounts is of Roger as a well-off farmer. The total income lost to the manor of Earnwood when he gave up his two holdings was 4*s.* 6*d.*, and this is the largest such sum recorded in the accounts. Of course, the accounts are not a rental, but they do provide some kind of guide as to the size of his holding. He may have retained some land in Earnwood; in the sixteenth century, William Longland held an estate called Cooks, adjacent to the Highley lands of the Birch (Figure 1).²⁷ No fourteenth-century manor records of Kinlet survive, but as noted above, in the mid sixteenth century the family also had a farm in the manor of Kinlet. By the sixteenth century the Longlands seem to have held around two thirds of the land within the Highley enclave of the Birch. Whilst Roger may not have held all this land, at the very least it is clear that he had estates in both Earnwood and Highley.

The prominence of Roger in the late fourteenth century makes the absence of the Langland family in the early 14th century more striking. They do not feature in Lay Subsidies, list of jurors at inquests or as witnesses of deeds. However, they are not alone in this. The 1380 Poll Tax returns for Highley, Kinlet and Earnwood have 73 legible names; only 37% of these individuals share surnames with those listed on the 1327 Lay Subsidy role. The 1327 lay subsidy was levied on the better-off members of the community, whereas the poll tax was nominally payable by all adults. However, the Langlands are not the only significant property-owner not present in the earlier records. The fourteenth century was a pivotal time in the Middle Ages, when the growth in population which had been taking place since before the Conquest was thrown into reverse, most notably by the Black Death. Earnwood was created post-Domesday by forest clearance, and this process was continuing apace well into the fourteenth century. In 1304 there were three freeholders who contributed a total of 12*s.* in rent and the demesne had 120 acres of arable land; by 1332 the rents of the freeholders had increased to over £6 and the demesne was 200 acres.²⁸ The response to the Black Death on the demesne lands was dramatic; by 1378/9 it seems that all arable cultivation had been abandoned, the demesne itself had been reduced to around 60 acres of pasture and meadow and in all probability the remainder had been incorporated into Earnwood Park.²⁹ Throughout the entire fourteenth century, Earnwood was subject to change; there were likely to be opportunities for entrepreneurially-minded incomers, in the first part of the period to take advantage of the new lands created by assarting, in the second half by picking up estates left vacant by plague or other misfortune.³⁰ This provides the context for the rise of the Langlands.

Indeed, some of this ferment can be identified from the records. 'Hamondsland', returned by Roger to the manor by 1394/5, almost certainly was an assart created by a member of the Hamond family and subsequently obtained by Roger or his ancestors. There are parallels between the Hamond and Langland families. The Hamonds are also untraceable in the area until 1351. They were active in the land market from this period onwards; they gave their name to a farm in the south of the Earnwood and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were substantial freeholders.³¹ As has been pointed out, the author of *Piers Plowman* associates himself with the third order, of medieval society; those who worked the land as opposed to knights and priests whom he disliked. He also drew a sharp distinction between the peasant farmers and the day labourers who might be employed by such men. In the poem many of the latter are driven to work only by the threat of hunger. These are exactly the views which might be expected of men such as Roger de Longland. Roger might also share the poet's dislike of 'bores and...brockes that breketh adowne myne hegges'³²; the small hedged croft worked by Piers in the poem would bear a resemblance to many of the assarts in Earnwood.

A further factor that might have helped mobility is the ownership of Earnwood and Highley by a great family, the Mortimers. An able farmer on a fully developed manor might find encouragement to move to an expanding manor, where he could prosper and in turn generate more income for the lord. There was also opportunity for social advancement; the Mortimers, like many of the great families, were happy to employ able tenants as administrators, and these individuals could rise through the ranks.³³ Indeed, this happened in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries to members of the Langland family. Chorley has demonstrated that John Langland (1473–1547), Bishop of Lincoln, recognised the Earnwood Langlands as kinsmen. Bishop John was the son of a Thomas Langland of Henley on Thames; this might have been the same Thomas who was a servant of William Lovell, Lord Moreley. Moreley had Shropshire estates³⁴ and in 1478 he gave his servant Thomas Langland an annuity of 40s. a year from Wellington ‘under Wrekin’. This suggests that Thomas might have been a younger son or from a cadet line of the Earnwood Langlands, who achieved promotion by attaching himself to the Lovell household.³⁵ Another of the family was John Langland (1516–89), Archdeacon of Buckingham, son of William of Kinlet and nephew to Thomas of Hunthouse.³⁶ Whilst the family at Earnwood remained of yeoman status, they were well connected and able members were allowed to flourish.³⁷ In *Piers Plowman*, the narrator declares himself to have been of humble origins. The history of the Langland family of Kinlet shows that it was perfectly possible to attain education and clerical status from such origins.

We have strayed rather a long way from the lifetime of William Langland, author of *Piers Plowman*. Let us return to it, and to Corbett’s suggestions as to the poet’s origins. He argues that Langland was educated at the Priory of the Austin Friars at Woodhouse adjoining Cleobury Mortimer. The Woodhouse Friary was founded in 1250, and Corbett mentions two Austin Friars who were named ‘de Woodhouse’ after it. One, Robert de Wodehouse, went on to become Archdeacon of Richmond, and found the Augustinian Friary in Stamford, Lincs., in 1342.³⁸ However, it is possible to find evidence for activity of probable members of the Friary closer to home. The 1327 Lay Subsidy in Cleobury was collected by a John de Wodehous, and this is likely to be the same man who served on the various inquest juries held in Ludlow and Earnwood in 1332 after the execution of Roger de Mortimer.³⁹

Corbett further makes the valuable observation that in 1354, the Prior of the London house of the Austin Friars (it seems probable that William Langland was a lay brother in London) was one John de Arderne; and that a John de Arderne is listed on the 1327 Lay Subsidy Roll for Kinlet and Earnwood.

In fact, we can show a closer connection than that between the families of Longelond and de Arderne. The de Arderne family is one of the most prominent in surviving documentation for Highley and Kinlet in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They seem to have been both more numerous and more prosperous than the Longelondes. A John de Arderne, either the man of 1327 or his father, was one of the wealthiest freeholders of Kinlet parish in 1304.⁴⁰ There were two families of that name in Highley in 1380, one headed by John and another by his son Roger. The relationship is confirmed in a deed of 1399, when land in the manor of Highley was sold to Roger son of John de Arderne – the same deed which was witnessed by Roger de Longelonde.⁴¹ John also had land at Earnwood, where in April 1381 he surrendered a cottage and land to the lady of the manor.⁴² Thus the de Ardernes and the Longelondes were near neighbours; and we can show a connection between the two families within the lifetime of the poet.

To recap, then. Far from an absence of the surname Langland or Longelonde in the West Midlands, we can show a family resident in an area close to Cleobury Mortimer (named as the birthplace of the poet) and owing suit of court to that manor. This was not a short-lived residence: the Longelondes were here during Langland’s lifetime and for two centuries afterwards, still holding the same lands. They were near neighbours of the de Arderne family, a member of which was Prior of the Austin Friars’ house in London which, as Corbett has shown, would have been a logical destination for the Woodhouse-educated young Langland.

Other places have been suggested as the birthplace of the poet. Much is made of a comment in a Dublin manuscript version of the poem that Langland’s father was Stacy (Eustace) de Rokayle of Shipton under Wychwood in Oxfordshire. Corbett in his original article suggested that Rokayle may have been Langland’s ‘patronus’ (patron) in the abbreviated Latin of the annotation, not his ‘pater’ (father). Corbett suggested that the comment was written by Walter de Brugge, parson of Trim, Prebendary of St Patrick’s cathedral and guardian to Roger de Mortimer, Lord of Trim as well as of Highley, Earnwood and Cleobury. It may be worth noting that Brugge had been in the service of the Mortimer family for around a quarter of a century and his name may imply that he (or his family) came from Bridgnorth.⁴³ Thus he could have had direct knowledge of the Langland family.

Colwall and Ledbury, both in Herefordshire, have also been put forward as possible places of Langland’s origin. Their claims are supported by internal evidence of the dialect in which the poem is written, and by proximity to Malvern.⁴⁴ But no local Langland family has been identified to add substance to these claims.

It is unlikely that any proof of the poet’s origins will ever be other than circumstantial: the amount of circumstantial detail which can now be assembled, however, makes the case for the family at the Birch look increasingly strong.

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank Dr Martin Speight for comments on the text.

Notes

- 1 John Corbett, 'William Langland – poet and hermit', *Trans. Shrops. Arch. Soc.*, **57**, 1964, 224–9.
- 2 L. G. Chorley, *The Langland Story; Six Centuries in the Life of a Family*, 2001, 4–13, 30–32, 73–104, available at <http://www.notadog.org.uk/longland.html>
- 3 W. W. Skeat (ed.), *Langland's Vision of Piers the Plowman; the Crowley Text*, 1869, xxxii; C. Brewer, *Editing Piers Plowman; the Evolution of the Text*, 1996, 11–12. Crowley probably relied on John Bale, who in his *Index of British and Other Writers*, produced after 1546, repeatedly claims that Piers Plowman was written by a Robert Langland, born in Cleobury, 8 miles from Malvern. Bale quotes his contemporary Nicholas Brigham as his source for this information; Brigham was an avid collector of medieval manuscripts which included a 15th century copy of Piers Plowman: J. Alsop, 'Nicholas Brigham [d. 1558], Scholar, Antiquary, and Crown Servant', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, **12**, 1981, 49–67.
- 4 G. Kane, *Piers Plowman, the Evidence for Authorship*, 1965, 40.
- 5 W. D. G. Fletcher, 'The Shropshire Lay Subsidy Roll of I Edward III (1327); Stottesdon Hundred', *Trans. Shrops. Arch. Soc.*, 3rd Series, **6**, 1909, 123–154; The National Archives (TNA): E179/166/2, E179/166/26. There is little difference between the 1327 and 1332 Lay Subsidies.
- 6 C. Hopkinson and M. Speight, *The Mortimers: Lords of the March*, 2002, 65.
- 7 TNA: LR2/185, ff 144–6v; Survey of Highley 1601.
- 8 The manor court roll of Kinlet for 3 Eliz 1 (Shropshire archives [SA] 3320/58/5 f3) contains an order for the jurors to inspect the boundaries of the 'Earnwood lands', formerly of John Pate and in the occupation of William Longland. As will be seen below, this holding was probably at the Birch.
- 9 SA: 3320/16/4.
- 10 SA: 3320/16/7.
- 11 SA: 3320/16/10.
- 12 SA: 3320/16/11.
- 13 Chorley, 85–7.
- 14 SA: 3320/16/8; the mention of John Pate is significant in view of the entry just a few years later for the Kinlet jurors to inspect the Earnwood lands, formerly owned by Pate.
- 15 SA: 3320/18B/5; Chorley, 8.
- 16 Birmingham Reference Library (BRL): 351963; TNA: LR2/185.
- 17 Chorley, 4–13.
- 18 SA: 3320/58/5 f5. Norton's may be connected with the later farm of Norton's End (Figure 1).
- 19 SA: MIC 207; the original is in private hands in Kinlet.
- 20 SA: 3320/16/3.
- 21 TNA: E179/166/26.
- 22 TNA: SC 6/967/4.
- 23 TNA: SC 6/967/6.
- 24 TNA: SC 6/967/7.
- 25 TNA: SC 6/967/14. In 1841 Hammonds Field (Figure 1) was part of the Birch Farm.
- 26 TNA: SC 6/966/12.
- 27 TNA: SP12/36, f1.
- 28 TNA: C133/114; C133/29.
- 29 TNA: SC 6/967/4.
- 30 For an overview of rural economy in the 14th century, see C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*, 2002, 349–65.
- 31 SA: 3320/131/1,2; 3320/58/2; TNA: SP12/36, f1.
- 32 Dyer, 281–2; Skeat, 94 (Passus VI, line 31 of *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*).
- 33 Hopkinson and Speight, 151–155.
- 34 The nearest Lovell holding to Kinlet was probably at Eudon Burnell (SA: 2867/1).
- 35 Chorley, 73–104.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 30–32.
- 37 By the late 15th century, the former Mortimer estates had become the property of the Crown. Furthermore, the Blounts, resident owners of Kinlet, were royal courtiers and a daughter of the family bore an illegitimate son of Henry VIII. (See article on Sir George Blount in S. T. Bindoff (ed.), *History of Parliament: the Commons, 1509–1558*, **1**, 1982, 445–7, and also in this volume, 21–26).
- 38 *VCH Lincs.*, **II**, 225–230.
- 39 TNA: C135/29; E142/68.
- 40 TNA: C113/115.
- 41 SA: 3320/16/3.
- 42 TNA: SC 2/197/106.
- 43 Hopkinson and Speight, 152.
- 44 Whilst the evidence for a connection between William Langland and Malvern is tenuous, it should be noted that Malvern priory owned land at Meaton, in the south of Kinlet (Figure 1), as well as the entire parish and manor of Dowles, just three miles south of Birch Farm.

ELIZABETH BLOUNT OF KINLET: AN IMAGE OF HENRY VIII'S MISTRESS IDENTIFIED

By ELIZABETH NORTON

Abstract: The following paper contains a study of the sixteenth century tomb of Sir John Blount and his wife, Katherine Pershall, in Kinlet Church, as well as surviving Blount family documents. The analysis focuses on the most prominent member of the family, Elizabeth Blount, who was the mistress of Henry VIII and the mother of his only acknowledged illegitimate child, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond. Elizabeth's date of birth is considered through an analysis of the birth order of her siblings. Through this, it appears likely that Elizabeth was the eldest daughter and, as such, is represented in the figure of the eldest daughter depicted on the side of her parents' tomb. The depictions of the daughters on the side of the tomb appear to have been attempted likenesses. This allows us to view a representation of Elizabeth, of whom no portrait survives, in her youth for the first time, at around the age that she first came to the attention of the King.

The Blount family of Kinlet was, during the latter half of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century, one of the leading families in Shropshire. For a brief period they also developed a national importance because of the relationship of Elizabeth Blount of Kinlet, the most famous member of the family, with Henry VIII. In spite of her historical importance, knowledge of Elizabeth's life is scant. Through an analysis of the Blount family monuments in Kinlet Church and surviving documents relating to the family, it has been possible to build a greater understanding of Elizabeth and, for the first time, to identify an image of her, showing her as she appeared in her youth.

The Blounts of Kinlet

From the mid-fifteenth century the interests and activities of the Blount family were focussed on Kinlet, then, as now, a small, rural settlement. The family's prominence was great enough to be noticed by the antiquary William Camden in the late sixteenth century, when he recorded that, amongst the hills of Shropshire, 'we see Kinlet, a seat formerly of the Blunts, a name famous in these parts, taken first from their Golden Locks'.¹ The manor of Kinlet was, by the reign of Henry I in the twelfth century, in the possession of the Brampton family.² By 1309 the manor had passed to the Cornwall family, who were the descendants of an illegitimate grandson of King John, through the marriage of Edmund de Cornwall to Elizabeth de Brampton. The Blount family obtained possession of the manor of Kinlet through the marriage of Sir John Blount of Sodington to Isabella Cornwall of Kinlet, who inherited the family estates on the death of her niece's husband, Sir William Lycheheld in 1450.

The Blount family were of gentry status and, although of considerable local importance, they had no input on a national stage until the birth, in 1519, of Henry Fitzroy, the only acknowledged illegitimate child of Henry VIII by his mistress, Elizabeth Blount of Kinlet. Henry Fitzroy, who was later created Duke of Richmond and Somerset by his father, was raised as a prince and there was speculation, in the months leading up to his early death in July 1536 that Henry VIII intended to make him his heir.³

Elizabeth, or Bessie, as she was more commonly known, was the most notable member of the Blount family. In spite of this, little is known about her and no portrait of her is believed to exist. The only positively identified representation of her is her funeral brass, which is preserved in the British Museum, and which shows a mature

woman wearing a French hood, the most fashionable headwear for a noblewoman in the 1530s and 1540s. The woman depicted, whilst still of striking appearance, is far removed from the young girl referred to by the contemporary chronicler, Edward Hall, as ‘a faire damosell called Elizabeth Blunt, daughter to sir Jhon (*sic*) Blunt knyght, whiche damosell in syngyng, daunsyng, and in all goodly pastymes, exceded all other, by the which goodly pastymes, she wan the kynges harte’.⁴

It is not widely recognised that there is another representation of Elizabeth, depicting her in her youth, as she was likely to have appeared at about the time of her relationship with Henry VIII. The medieval manor house and much of the village of Kinlet no longer exists, and the only building that would have been familiar to Elizabeth and her family is the church, which stood close to the old manor house.⁵ The church is unique for its well-preserved monuments to the Blount family. The three main tombs in the church contain the remains of Elizabeth’s great-grandfather, Sir Humphrey Blount and his wife, Elizabeth Winnington, Elizabeth’s parents, Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall (or Peshall), and her brother, George Blount, and his wife.

The Tomb of Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall

The tomb of Elizabeth’s parents is the second of the two large tombs in the centre of the church. The reclining figures of Sir John Blount and his wife, Katherine Pershall, are represented side by side. (Plate 1)⁶ Sir John, who died in 1531, is depicted wearing armour of the early Tudor period. Katherine Pershall’s dress, which is particularly elaborately carved, is also consistent with this date. She wears a gable hood, fashionable in the latter years of Henry VII’s reign and the first half of that of Henry VIII. Although her sleeves have been described as approaching an Elizabethan form, they are also consistent with a date in Henry VIII’s reign, and they show thick hanging outer sleeves over more elaborate under sleeves. There is therefore nothing about the dress of the figures to suggest that the tomb was completed at a later period, and it is likely that work began on the tomb soon after the death of John Blount, or perhaps even in his lifetime. The carving of the faces of the two figures is highly detailed and they were intended to be accurate representations.



Plate 1 The Tomb of Sir John Blount and his Wife, Katherine Pershall.

In accordance with common custom in the late medieval and early Tudor period, the sides of the tomb are decorated with representations of the couple's children.⁷ The panels beneath the figure of Sir John depict five male figures in armour. The panels beneath Katherine, closest to the wall of the church, depict six female figures, all wearing English gable hoods similar to that of their mother and dresses that, stylistically, are appropriate for the reign of Henry VIII. Beside each figure there is a scroll, which originally bore their names. The scrolls for the male figures are completely smooth and nothing survives of the names. The scrolls are also considerably worn for the female figures, although some of the lettering remains. (Plates 2 and 3.) The scroll for the second daughter clearly reads 'Anne' and that for the fifth daughter, although much less distinct, appears to say 'Albora'. The first daughter's scroll, although no longer legible, is considerably longer and suggests a longer name. In contrast, the third daughter's scroll is as short as that for Anne, implying a shorter name. The daughters are grouped in sets of three and depicted in various poses.

The names of eight of the children of Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall survive: George, William, Henry, Elizabeth, Anne, Rose, Isabel and Albora. The eldest surviving son, George Blount, is known to have been born in 1513. No other birth dates for the children survive. Elizabeth's earliest biographer, William Childe-Pemberton, refers to her as the second daughter, and this has been followed more recently in a biography of her son, Henry Fitzroy, and in other works.⁸ Childe-Pemberton, a descendant of Elizabeth's sister, Anne, states that the names of the daughters were no longer legible in his time, although there is no evidence that he examined the tomb himself. It appears that he based his assertion that Elizabeth was the second daughter solely on the fact that it was Rowland Lacon, the son of Elizabeth's sister, Anne, who succeeded their brother, Sir George Blount, to Kinlet and the other family estates.⁹ This would indeed usually imply that Anne was the eldest daughter. However, it is in fact clear that George was not motivated by strict hereditary rules in his selection of Rowland as his heir. Although George had no living son at the time of his death, he did leave a daughter, Dorothy, the wife of John Purslowe of Sidbury, whom he had decided to disinherit for an unrecorded reason.¹⁰ He also passed over the claims of Dorothy's children and of his nephew, George Blount, the son of his younger brother, Henry, who was living at the time of his uncle's death in 1581. It is therefore not unlikely that George ignored the claims of some of his sisters, instead making his choice of Rowland Lacon as his heir on personal grounds. Elizabeth Blount died in about 1540, and she



Plate 2 The Eldest Three Daughters.



Plate 3 The Youngest Three Daughters.

was survived only by daughters. It appears that George Blount required a male heir, and his selection of Rowland Lacon cannot be taken as evidence that Anne was the eldest sister.

Given that the second daughter on the tomb of John Blount and Katherine Pershall is named as Anne, it is almost certain that she was the second daughter to be born. Few details survive of the remaining daughters. Rose had married a William Gryslyng by 1540, when he is mentioned in Katherine Pershall's will and had already borne children, who, although not named, were mentioned by their grandmother.¹¹ Isabel married William Reed of Shepperton, in a marriage arranged by her father, in 1528.¹² By the time of her husband's death in 1534 she had produced five children, and was expecting a sixth, before apparently dying young.¹³ The final daughter, Albora, was unmarried at the time of her mother's death and, in her will, Katherine Pershall made detailed provision for her inheritance, to be paid in the event of her marriage. No further details of Albora Blount survive.

The fact that Isabel was not married until 1528, nearly ten years after Elizabeth bore her first child, indicates that she might have been younger than her more famous sister. The detailed provisions which Katherine Pershall made for Albora in her will, in which she required her daughter to 'be ordered and advised by myn executors and by my daughter Anne Lacon in her marriage', also suggest that Albora might have been the youngest daughter, or one of the youngest daughters, although, as with Isabel, this is not conclusive. This is, however, supported by the fact that the surviving lettering on the scroll for the fifth daughter appears to read 'Albora'. The fact that the third scroll on the tomb is as short as that for Anne, suggests that it might have originally named Rose or, perhaps, Isabel.

In the *Inquisition Post Mortem* for Sir Thomas Blount, who died in 1524, his son was described as being 'aged 40 years and upwards'. Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall were married in 1491. Based on the evidence of the *Inquisition Post Mortem*, Sir John could have been as young as seven years old, and he was, at most, around ten years old. The bride was of a similar age.¹⁴ The earliest possible date for the birth of the couple's first child can therefore be only about 1496 or 1497, and it is more likely to have been later. Elizabeth came to court to serve Queen Catherine of Aragon in 1512, a position for which the minimum age was twelve. She therefore cannot have been born later than 1500 and, as the considerably better connected Lady Lisle found in the 1530s, it could take considerable time for a family to secure such a coveted position for their daughters.¹⁵ It is probable that Elizabeth was born some time before 1500. Since the name of the second daughter is known, and the scroll for the third

name is too short to have contained 'Elizabeth', if she was not the eldest daughter, she must have been the fourth or younger. Based on what is known about her father's birth date, this is just possible and a contemporary of Elizabeth's parents, Sir Thomas Boleyn, recalled that his wife brought him a child every year after marriage. Elizabeth's own sister, Isabel, also produced a child every year after her own wedding. Given the extreme youth of her parents, it is more probable that Elizabeth was the eldest daughter. It would usually have been the eldest daughter who was given the prestigious post of serving the Queen, and there is also a clue in the names which Sir John Blount and his wife gave to their daughters. At the time of the births of their eldest children the most senior lady living in the household at Kinlet would have been Sir John's widowed grandmother, Dame Elizabeth Blount (née Winnington), who died in 1503.¹⁶ After Dame Elizabeth, the next most senior lady was Anne Croft, John Blount's mother. In choosing the name Elizabeth for their eldest daughter, Sir John and Katherine would have been honouring the most senior female member of the household. From Katherine Pershall's point of view, there might have been an added incentive: her own mother, Isabel Stanley, is known to have used on occasion the name 'Elizabeth', which has the same etymological origins as the name 'Isabel' or 'Isabella', and was often used interchangeably.¹⁷ Naming their eldest daughter after the Queen, Elizabeth of York, might also have been an attraction, and Sir John's grandfather, Sir Richard Croft, certainly had royal links, later being appointed to act as steward for Arthur, Prince of Wales, when he took up residence in Ludlow.¹⁸ Whilst George was the eldest surviving son, and was not given a family name, his late birth in 1513 suggests that the two unnamed sons on his parents' tomb, who apparently died in their infancy, might have been older than him and, perhaps, bore the names Thomas and John, in honour of their grandfather and father. By placing Elizabeth in the family as the eldest daughter she would have been, at most, the third child of her parents (after her two unnamed brothers). She could very plausibly have been their eldest.

An Image of Elizabeth Blount

It is probable that Elizabeth Blount was the eldest daughter of Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall, and she is therefore depicted as the first daughter on their tomb, something which has not been recognised before now. It is next necessary to consider whether the depiction may be considered to be a true likeness of Elizabeth. The five sons, two of whom died in their infancy, are all depicted as men in similar poses and clothing, and it is unlikely that they can be considered true likenesses. All six daughters are portrayed in the same dress, wearing simplified versions of their mother's clothes. They are all placed in different poses. The face of the third sister is damaged, but the faces of the remaining sisters show enough differences to suggest that true likenesses may have been attempted. The difference between the faces of the eldest daughter and Anne are particularly striking, and it is clear that some attempt was made to differentiate them. Anne is portrayed in a more lively position, whilst the eldest stands passively with downcast eyes. Whilst it is unlikely that, given the likely wide age differences between them, the sisters were ever all together, it is possible that the sculptor attempted true likenesses based on memory and drawings of the sisters. The fact that the sixth, unnamed sister, who apparently died in infancy, is also represented as an adult should not be considered too prejudicial to the possibility that likenesses of the other sisters were attempted.

Elizabeth Blount of Kinlet, Mistress of Henry VIII

Surviving information on Elizabeth Blount is scarce, and with the early death of her son in 1536 her importance as the mother of a potential future king was lost. A re-examination of the sources surrounding her family and the tomb of her parents does, however, shed light on her early life, and by fixing her birth date at c.1498, rather than the later date usually favoured by historians, it is possible to reinterpret her relationship with the King which began soon after her arrival at court. This new birth date for Elizabeth places the birth of her son to her early twenties, rather than her teenage years. More importantly, by examining the sources on the daughters of Sir John Blount and his wife, it is possible, in the figure of the first daughter on their tomb at Kinlet, to see, for the first time, in the figure of the first daughter on their tomb at Kinlet, a likeness of the famous Elizabeth Blount, mistress of Henry VIII in her youth (Plate 4).

Notes

- 1 W. Camden, *Britannia*, II, 1701, 581.
- 2 R. W. Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, IV, 1857, 240–256.
- 3 The Second Act of Succession, 1536, included the unprecedented provision of allowing the King to nominate his own successor in default of issue by his third, and any subsequent, wife. It also confirmed the illegitimacy of Henry VIII's



Plate 4 A Close-up of the Eldest Daughter.

daughters by his first two wives. (An extract from the Act is printed in C. H. Williams (ed.), *English Historical Documents*, V, 1967, 452–456.)

- 4 E. Hall in C. Whibley (ed.), *Henry VIII*, II, 1904, 49.
- 5 S. Leighton, *Shropshire Houses Past and Present*, 1901, 42.
- 6 The tomb is discussed in D. H. S. Cranage, *An Architectural Account of the Churches of Shropshire*, I, 1900, 320.
- 7 The tomb of Sir John's paternal grandparents, which is adjacent to his tomb, also depicts the children of the deceased, as does the tomb of his maternal grandparents, Sir Richard and Lady Croft, in the chapel at nearby Croft Castle.
- 8 W. S. Childe-Pemberton, *Elizabeth Blount and Henry VIII*, 1913, 20, and B. A. Murphy, *Bastard Prince: Henry VIII's Lost Son*, 2002, 18.
- 9 Details of the settlement on Rowland Lacon are in George Blount's Will: PRO: 11/63.
- 10 G. T. O. Bridgeman, 'Some Account of the Parish of Church Eaton in the County of Stafford', in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, IV, 1883, 78–83.
- 11 Katherine Pershall's will: PRO: 11/28.
- 12 Marriage Settlement between William Reed of Shepperton and Isabel Blount: Somerset Archive and Records: DD\WHb/2986.
- 13 William Reed's will notes the couple's children: PRO: 11/25. PRO: C1/1262/8 and PRO: C4/93/78 detail chancery cases brought by Isabel's daughters, Anne and Joan Reed, against their uncle by marriage, William Gryslyng.
- 14 Details of the marriage of Elizabeth's parents are contained in the *Inquisition Post-Mortem* of Sir Thomas Blount of Kinlet (printed in Childe-Pemberton, 1913, 269–272).
- 15 Lady Lisle's attempts to secure positions at court for her daughters, Anne and Katherine Bassett, with, first Anne Boleyn and then Jane Seymour, are detailed in her correspondence, published in M. St. Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters*, IV B, 1981, 104–199.
- 16 Elizabeth Blount's will: PRO: 11/13.
- 17 Isabel Stanley is referred to as Dame Elizabeth Pershall in a court case brought by Mary Judd, the daughter of her second husband, John Russhe, and her husband, Thomas Judd of Wickford (PRO: C1/530/20).
- 18 Croft's appointment is noted in G. Kipling, (ed.), *The Recept of the Ladie Kateryne*, 1990, 82.

All photographs by the author.

RICHARD BAXTER (1615–1691) AND THE GODLY TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

By BARBARA COULTON

Abstract: The epithet applied to Shrewsbury in the title of this piece was Baxter's own. His relationship to the town was close, beginning when he was about twenty; he owed his early conviction of Nonconformity to leading figures in the town; in return he helped the town to establish Nonconformist ministries during the period of the Commonwealth. Baxter became important nationally as a preacher, writer and politically involved cleric, facing crucial developments in church and state during the periods of the Commonwealth and Restoration: this has obscured his constant rapport with Shrewsbury. This article aims to redress this situation, revealing neglected aspects of Baxter's life while throwing further light on religious affairs in Shrewsbury during the seventeenth century.

In *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (1650) Baxter refers to 'his Love of his Native Soyl, And to his many Godly and Faithfull Friends there living' – he was referring to Shrewsbury and north Shropshire. He dedicated part of this treatise to his

Dearly beloved friends in the Lord,
The Inhabitants of the Town of
SHREWSBURY,
Both Magistrates, Ministers, and People, As also
Of the neighbouring Parts.

Baxter prayed that these godly people would build up the House of God, and that they would 'be approved in this tryall, and not be found Light when God shall weigh them'. The time of trial was, of course, the year following the execution of Charles I, but Baxter's connection with Shrewsbury went back to pre-Civil War days, to the mid-1630s. He became a national figure, publishing numerous works and writing vast numbers of letters – a cleric respected in godly circles and in the political sphere. There have been studies of Baxter by leading scholars, but his links to Shrewsbury have not been fully considered, in part because the religious history of the town has until recently been neglected. Baxter was such an influential and inspirational figure in the development of post-Civil War nonconformity that earlier influences on him and his influence in Shropshire merit consideration.

For his early years we are reliant on the memoirs written by Baxter after the Restoration; these were edited and published after Baxter's death by Matthew Sylvester, as *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696). There is a much-quoted account of his early years at High Ercall, in north-east Shropshire, where on a Sunday, after brief reading of the Common Prayer, villagers spent most of the day eating or dancing under a great tree, the noise of tabor and pipe outside disturbing the family's attempt at Bible-reading. There was a shortage of preachers in the area, but when he was about fifteen Baxter was awakened to God through reading devotional works. One of these was *The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax* (1630) by Richard Sibbes. As yet Baxter was not aware of the godly preaching in Shrewsbury, where there were young men who had met Sibbes.¹ Baxter attended the school at Wroxeter founded by Sir Richard Newport of Eyton and High Ercall, the most important landowner in the area. The Newport family were early proponents of Protestantism in Shropshire. In Wroxeter church Baxter could have read the epitaph devised for himself by Andrew Newport (1563–1611, MP for Shrewsbury). He 'lived and died in the faith of Jesus Christ [a] true professor of the doctrine according to the best reformed churches in the time wherein he lived, ever hating and detesting the imposture and abominations of the Church of Rome as now it standeth'.² Baxter next spent

time in the household of the chaplain to the Council in the Marches of Wales, at Ludlow, and in the London household of Newport's kinsman Sir Henry Herbert (Master of the Revels). Neither experience satisfied the young Baxter, but he found much to comfort him in religious books. He had doubts about his salvation but found 'some Reverend peaceable Divines' when he returned to Shropshire. Then when he was about twenty, he became acquainted with 'very zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury, and the adjoining parts'.³

Shrewsbury was to prove of great importance in Baxter's life, and the time that he went there (1635–6) was a troubling one for the godly group in the town. A leading figure was the man referred to by Baxter as his 'Dear Friend Mr William Rowley'. Admitted burgess of Shrewsbury in 1594, at the age of twenty-two, Rowley became a member of the powerful Drapers' Company and of the borough council.⁴ At first, as a parishioner of St Chad's, he had as pastor Thomas Price, a godly preacher there for forty years. Borough politics brought a change in the 1620s, when a vehement anti-puritan, Peter Studley, was made curate. The other main church, St Mary's, a royal peculiar in the control of the borough, had a succession of godly preachers, mainly Cambridge-educated. Rowley was instrumental in bringing in an extra preacher to Shrewsbury in 1616–7, unbeneficed and maintained by lay contributions, chiefly an annuity from a Shrewsbury-born London merchant, Rowland Heylyn. Heylyn was later associated with Sibbes and others in a scheme for establishing godly preachers throughout the land, at a time when Bishop Laud (of London) was suppressing such preachers.⁵ For seventeen years the preacher brought in by Rowley, Julines Hering, was a leader of the godly in the town. His memorialist, Samuel Clarke, wrote that he also attracted other preachers to Shrewsbury. He preached twice a week at St Alkmund's, repeating his sermon at the homes of leading townsmen, such as Rowley. His own home, Drapers' Hall (leased to him by the Company) was also a centre of his ministry.⁶

One hostile observer of Hering's preaching was Peter Studley of St Chad's. At the bishop's visitation in 1626 he complained of Rowley and of George Wright, a bailiff. They 'do admit the people of divers families into their howses to hear the sermon repeated, to sing psalms and prayer [sic], most Sunday nights in the year'. His complaint endorses the testimony of Samuel Clarke, but Studley suggested that this gathering together might be termed a 'conventicle', an illegal activity. Until 1632, however, the diocese of Lichfield had a bishop sympathetic to godly preachers, Thomas Morton, who was removed to Durham. He was replaced by Robert Wright, just as William Laud was about to be promoted to Canterbury, in 1633. At the visitation that year Studley denounced Rowley, George Wright and the lawyer Humfrey Mackworth for not bowing their heads at the name of Jesus and not kneeling to receive communion, practices which smacked of Catholicism to puritans, but which Laud tried to enforce.⁷ It was during Bishop Wright's visitation that Studley was encouraged to publish his account of two family murders at Clun. Studley visited the accused, a young man named Enoch, in prison, claiming that the prisoner had blamed 'puritanism' for his actions. This gratuitous and unsupported claim seems suspiciously convenient for Studley's argument. He also accused godly preachers of being 'depraved with error and sinister surmises.' *The Looking-Glasse of Schisme*, published in London in 1634, was the vehicle for the attack on the godly of Shrewsbury and of Clun. Richard More of Bishop's Castle answered Studley: those who knew Enoch considered him deranged. More's manuscript was not licensed for publication but Studley's book was reissued in 1635. Early in 1635 Hering was forced to leave Shrewsbury. A general visitation in that year, on behalf of Laud, resulted in the displacement of numerous preachers, including Richard Lee of Wolverhampton who found refuge in Shrewsbury, serving as a 'lector' at St Julian's.⁸

These events influenced Richard Baxter. He later wrote: 'Till this time I was satisfied in the Matter of Conformity', but the people he met at Shrewsbury and their situation gave him pause for thought. Among other visitors were two suspended Welsh clerics, Richard Symonds and Walter Cradock. Geoffrey Nuttall writes that it is plain that the 'very zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury' made a deep impression on Baxter; 'in view of Baxter's eventual, though reluctant, acceptance of the necessity for Nonconformity, they deserve more than passing attention'.⁹ Baxter might also have met Rowley's younger associates, men in their thirties who were becoming prominent in the town's affairs. Thomas Hunt and Humfrey Mackworth were two of the Old Salopians who had studied at Queens' College, Cambridge, where John Preston was tutor, and at Gray's Inn where Sibbes was preacher.¹⁰ Baxter's own ministry came about through Shrewsbury friends. James Berry helped to procure a teaching post at Dudley for Baxter which gave the young man the necessary title for ordination. This took place at Worcester in December 1638.¹¹ William Rowley's influence can be seen the following year when Baxter became assistant preacher at Bridgnorth to William Madstard, Rowley's kinsman.¹² In his memoirs, Baxter recalled the widespread protests when Laud tried to impose new canons on the clergy in May 1640, after the dismissal of the Short Parliament, the first to be called for eleven years. Among various grievances the Commons had challenged the king's authority to empower convocation to make new canons. The most contentious item was the order to the clergy that they were to swear not to alter 'the government of the Church by archbishops, bishops, deans and archdeacons, etc.'. This would stop any Church reform.¹³

Baxter was in the thick of the debate, since the Shropshire ministers met at Bridgnorth to consider the issue. Rowley sent Baxter works by church reformers: the early fifteenth century French conciliarist Jean Gerson and the

contemporary Scottish presbyterian David Calderwood. Baxter became convinced ‘that the English Diocesan frame, was guilty of the Corruption of Churches and ministry, and of the ruine of the true Church Discipline’.¹⁴ This was a critical time for the Church and the nation – all three kingdoms. The king was already at war with the Scottish Covenanters who had refused to accept the English Prayer Book. At home the Commons was challenging him – the Long Parliament began sitting in November 1640 – and there was also a powerful group of nobles who opposed him. Archbishop Laud was imprisoned in the Tower in March 1641 (he was tried and beheaded four years later).¹⁵ In the autumn of 1641 there was a Catholic rebellion in Ireland; some believed the king to be implicated. Whatever the truth of the allegation, the perception influenced events. According to Baxter’s later recollections the fear of a Popish invasion (a serious threat for Shropshire) was a major factor in his own decision to support Parliament’s side in the Civil War.¹⁶ In the autumn of 1642 the king came with his court and his army to Shrewsbury, settling for three weeks while he raised men and money. Naturally, the leaders of the Parliamentary party in the town left the scene. Baxter, who in 1641 had answered an invitation from Kidderminster to become preacher there, now sought refuge in Coventry, where he met up with Humfrey Mackworth and Thomas Hunt. The Shropshire headquarters was established at Wem, where Baxter agreed to act as a temporary chaplain. He later acted as chaplain in the Cromwellian army.¹⁷

In February 1645 the Shropshire Parliamentary Committee regained the town of Shrewsbury, where Baxter’s father was imprisoned. Baxter saw this relief as part of the ‘Abundance of strange Providences’ he was witnessing. Before he could return to Kidderminster to resume the ministry begun before the war, Baxter suffered a serious illness (in 1647) when, in valedictory mood, he began his first book, *The Saints Everlasting Rest*. He dedicated parts of the book to the people of Kidderminster, Bridgnorth, Coventry and Shrewsbury, his main concern being to act as a pastor. ‘I find in the daily Practice and Experience of my soul, that the Knowledge of God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the Truth of Scripture, and the Life to come, and of a Holy Life, is more to me than all the most curious Speculations.’ He returned to Kidderminster in the summer of 1647.¹⁸ We can read of his pastoral work in Worcestershire in his memoirs and in his *Christian Concord: or the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire* (1653). This voluntary association of ministers was aimed at giving authority to the system of church discipline, with catechising and visits to homes, which Baxter set up. His book *The Reformed Pastor* (1656) proved to be hugely influential, reaching beyond Worcestershire. He wished to bring together men ‘adhering to no Faction; neither Episcopal, Presbyterian nor Independent, as to Parties; but desiring Union, and loving that which is good in all’.¹⁹

During these years Shrewsbury took a different course, instituting classical Presbyterianism in its parishes. Although this was not Baxter’s preferred system, his interest in the town and its sincere godly people meant that he continued this association and lent his influence and help when required. The period 1647 to 1660 is the next phase of our study. The parish register of St Chad’s in Shrewsbury records the burial of William Rowley on 7 July 1646; he may therefore have played a part in the appointment of a new preacher in the parish. The man favoured was Julines Hering, pastor at Amsterdam, but he was too ill to return. His co-pastor there was Thomas Paget, the man named as minister in St Chad’s parish records in 1646. On 26 August 1646 the borough assembly elected Samuel Fisher MA ‘to be publick preacher of this town instead and in place of Dr Ja[m]es Betton DD the last publick preacher who is now settled in the parish of Worthen’. Fisher, a Birmingham man, had preached what Peter Studley called a ‘factious sermon’ at St Mary’s in 1633; in the early 1640s he had been curate to Thomas Blake at Withington, near Shrewsbury; he had spent the war years in London.²⁰ Richard Lee returned to St Julian’s briefly – he died in 1650. Thomas Blake was brought from Tamworth to St Alkmund’s. With the appointment of Richard Pigott as headmaster, Shrewsbury School was said to be ‘under the government of the Saints’.²¹ What we see here is the commitment of Shrewsbury’s puritans to the presbyterian system of church government, even before this was being instituted on a national, if partial, basis. (We should remember that there were many who disagreed.) In 1641 Thomas Paget had published a book by his late brother John (co-pastor with Hering at Amsterdam), dedicating it to the English parliament; it was entitled *A Defence of Church-Government, exercised in Presbyteriall, Classical, & Synodal Assemblies*. With his own experience at Amsterdam behind him, Thomas Paget published a book of his own in 1643: *A Demonstration of Family-Duties*. Baxter was to find Paget a somewhat formidable figure, someone he avoided, perhaps a rival in authority to Baxter himself.

With the Church of England dismantled, the government had set up the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In 1645 this body produced a Directory of Public Worship, to replace the Book of Common Prayer. The Assembly presented its Confession of Faith by early 1647. The parliamentary order of June 1646 allowing a presbyterian system was not mandatory and was not applied everywhere.²² Lancashire presented a petition for such a system on 25 August 1646; nine classical presbyteries were set up, chiefly through the efforts of Richard Heyrick and Richard Hollinworth of Manchester, the principal town of the first Lancashire classis. Their first meeting was held on 17 November at Preston.²³ Shropshire’s six classes were not officially approved until 29 April 1647, so two new ministers were ordained by the Manchester classis; they were among a group of seven (three from Lancashire, one from Yorkshire and one from Cheshire) who were ordained on 15 April 1647. The two new Shropshire ministers

belonged to the fourth, or north, Shropshire classis, contiguous to Shrewsbury. It is the only one of the six classes in the county known to have operated fully throughout the interregnum, ordaining over sixty ministers in twelve years. The leading ministers were Thomas Porter at Whitchurch, a minister in the area since 1626; Andrew Parsons at Wem, sent to the garrison from London in 1643–4; and Richard Sadler at Prees.²⁴ The system operated in Shrewsbury, at St Chad's, St Mary's, St Julian's and St Alkmund's, but it is clear from later correspondence between Richard Baxter and John Bryan the younger that parishioners at Holy Cross (the former Abbey) refused to elect elders. If this was the case just outside the walls of the town, there was probably resistance in other towns and in villages, or even in the country area of the four Shrewsbury parishes. A similar situation prevented Cheshire ministers from forming a presbytery.²⁵

During this period there were contacts between Baxter and Shrewsbury. One we know of only from a later reference: in about 1647 he made an approach to the governor of Shrewsbury, Humfrey Mackworth, about establishing a college 'with Academicall privileges for Wales'. He judged Shrewsbury to be the best place to site it, but nothing came of the idea.²⁶ The time was perhaps inopportune, with the final phase of the Civil War being waged. In 1650, after the king's execution, a new oath of loyalty was imposed on all adult males. This Oath of Engagement caused a good deal of contention. Baxter preached in Worcestershire against taking the oath. In Shrewsbury there was division. Thomas Paget (who had published a book defending the regicide) preached at St Chad's in support of the Engagement, but two fellow ministers, Blake and Fisher, opposed the oath. 'At the Day of the publick Fast kept in one of their Churches, there was another mock Fast kept in the other two Churches by agreement of the Ministers, and the two Sermons preached in them purposely to disturb the Fast enjoined by Authority.'²⁷ Blake and Fisher were allowed to remain in Shrewsbury to minister to the people during the summer plague, but were then made to leave. They were welcomed at Myddle in Shropshire, where they were able to preach.²⁸

There were now four vacant churches in Shrewsbury, Moses Leigh of Holy Cross having left the town in 1650. The position at St Alkmund's was filled by Richard Heath, then at Hopesay; he was recommended by Mackworth and John Milton (with whom he had been at Cambridge). It is the only occurrence of the poet's name in the register of the Commissioners of the Great Seal. While at Shrewsbury Heath was working on the Arabic and Aramaic sections of the Cromwellian Polyglot Bible.²⁹ The St Mary's post took longer to fill. In 1652 the borough assembly and the parishioners chose Francis Tallents of Magdalene College, Cambridge, a London Presbyterian divine. Samuel Fisher, formerly of St Mary's, wrote to headmaster Richard Pigott to assure him of 'his earnest desire to have Mr. Tallents settle with them'. Richard Baxter added his voice, writing to Tallents, although he had not met him: 'If my testimony can do any thing to turn the scales, I do assure you, impartially, that were I loose, I know not one congregacion in England that I would sooner choose'. He praised the godly in Shrewsbury as 'very serious, sober Christians'. He praised St Mary's church as very convenient for preaching. There were many godly ministers in the neighbourhood, and Shrewsbury itself was a place of great resort. Its governor, Mackworth (with whom Baxter cannot always have seen eye to eye over politics), was 'a very Godly, Judicious, Orthodox man'. In fact, Mackworth gave strong support, asking his son Thomas to arrange with the London authorities that Tallents' salary be augmented to the sum of £150 yearly.³⁰ Tallents moved to Shrewsbury in November 1652, the month of his thirty-third birthday. He found Baxter's assurances fulfilled, making good friends of Shrewsbury people, and of Baxter himself. He married a niece of Samuel Hildersam (one of the godly ministers in the county) and settled down to apply himself to the work of the ministry (to use the words of Matthew Henry, one of his pupils).³¹

One reason for Baxter's readiness to approach Tallents was his part in depriving Shrewsbury of a prior choice of public preacher. In May 1652 Humphrey Burton of Coventry had written to Baxter requesting his good offices on behalf of the parish of Holy Trinity, to dissuade their pastor, Dr John Bryan, from leaving. He had conditionally engaged himself to move to Shrewsbury, but over 200 parishioners and ten or more Warwickshire divines supported this appeal for Bryan to stay at Coventry. With Baxter's help this was achieved. Dr Bryan's brother Jarvis was a member of Baxter's Worcestershire Association. Dr Bryan's son John became vicar of Holy Cross, Shrewsbury, in November 1654.³² Perhaps Baxter was instrumental in this move. In 1656 the Holy Cross parishioners were still refusing to elect elders. On account of this the young minister felt unable to administer the sacrament. It was to Baxter that he turned for help. Baxter wrote a very long letter of advice, on preaching and church government. He held that lay elders were not necessary: 'It is not the worke of a Classis or any Church Governours to Judge whether God should be worshipped in his Ordinances or not'. Since Bryan did not want to fall out with the other ministers in Shrewsbury, Baxter advised a meeting with them.³³ Bryan and Tallents were later to share a long ministry in Shrewsbury, which doubtless pleased Richard Baxter.

Baxter's closest friends in Shrewsbury were probably Thomas and Elizabeth Hunt. He may have met Thomas in 1635; he certainly knew him in the early years of the Civil War, in Coventry and at Wem. Recalling this time Baxter described Thomas Hunt as 'a plain hearted, honest, godly Man, entirely beloved, and trusted by the Soldiers'. As an MP for Shrewsbury Hunt was involved in the critical years preceding the king's trial and death. When the Long Parliament was 'purged' of those opposing these measures Hunt withdrew from the political scene.

Instead he served as a godly magistrate, and as an elder at St Alkmund's, where the Hunts' younger children were baptised (Mary in 1646, Nathaniel in 1652). Thomas Hunt was called on to play a public role when the Protectorate set up a new system of regional government, under twelve major generals. The man in charge of Wales and adjacent English counties was James Berry, one-time bosom friend of Baxter; they had fallen out, in part over religious issues. It was Berry who persuaded Hunt to become sheriff in January 1656: 'he is an honest man and will doe good', Berry assured Secretary of State John Thurloe. During the few months he was in office Hunt presided over the spring assizes; he invited Baxter to preach. The text chosen was from 2 Chronicles 19. 6: 'And [Jehoshaphat] said to the judges, Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment'. This was an apt theme for the new regime of moral reform. Baxter stressed the need to suppress drunkenness, swearing and profanation of the Lord's Day – sins prevalent in Shrewsbury as at Baxter's Kidderminster.³⁴

There were other problems, especially the success of Quaker preachers in the town and the garrison.³⁵ More urgent orthodox preaching was needed to counteract this threat. It was probably this which prompted Hunt to invite a Cheshire minister to come to Shrewsbury to preach, in June 1656. This was Henry Newcome, a diffident young man who was nevertheless a sensation in the pulpit. He was welcomed by Francis Tallents and others. He preached at St Mary's and St Alkmund's, to such effect that the vacant living of St Julian's was offered to him, repairs being carried out to the church to make the offer more attractive. Newcome hesitated, so Baxter was once again employed as a go-between. We are able to follow the whole business, the letters having been published in full. As with Tallents, Baxter was writing to a man he had not met, speaking on behalf of Shrewsbury. The town was offering £80 or £100 a year as a temporary measure, until Newcome could succeed Thomas Paget at St Chad's, where there was a larger congregation and a fuller maintenance. Baxter was going too far in this latter offer: Paget knew nothing about it, nor was he ready to quit the scene, old though he may have been. For his part, Newcome was in awe of the scholarly clerics and parishioners of Shrewsbury, despite his own popularity as a preacher. Baxter assured him that Paget was not as awkward as reputed, though as yet he had not approached him. There is an odd naivety about Baxter's letters, while his request that they be destroyed indicates his own unease. The whole sequence of letters gives an unusual insight into the characters and conflicts in the town. Newcome's dilemma was resolved, at the risk of offending Shrewsbury, by his accepting a rival offer from Manchester, then a less significant town than Shrewsbury, but (according to Baxter) better supplied with preachers. Newcome was unhappy at having to decline Shrewsbury's offer, especially as he had great regard for 'precious Mr. Baxter', but he had a long and successful ministry at the Collegiate Church in Manchester, until his death there in 1695. Nor did some of the people in Shrewsbury blame Newcome. Thomas and Elizabeth Hunt, Richard Heath and Francis Tallents remained his friends; he was welcomed back to Shrewsbury to preach in later years. When Thomas Paget was promoted to the rich living of Stockport in 1659, Newcome and Richard Heyrick paid him a friendly visit.³⁶

That promotion came about through the patronage of John Bradshaw (the regicide) at a time when events were taking a confused course, following Cromwell's death in September 1658. John Bryan of Holy Cross was promoted to St Chad's. Thomas Hunt was made governor of Shrewsbury, in which capacity he welcomed the return of Charles Stuart. On 11 May 1660 the borough council ordered that Charles II should be proclaimed king.³⁷ With the king restored in May 1660 there were widespread hopes among Presbyterians that he would keep the promise made at Breda in April for liberty of conscience in religion. In November Baxter wrote to Lord Chancellor Hyde in hope of a 'happy Union' of moderate Episcopalians and Presbyterians. During the previous six months Baxter had preached before the Commons and the king, 'the summit of his worldly career'. This initial success was followed by 'growing disillusion' as the Cavalier Parliament (another long parliament, 1661–79) passed measures against ministers who would not conform to the now-Anglican Church. After his silencing at Kidderminster, Baxter and his wife (he married in September 1662) lived near London. He preached and gave instruction in his own house until the Declaration of Indulgence of 1672, when he was licensed as a 'Nonconforming Minister'.³⁸ The ministers in Shrewsbury were also affected by what Francis Tallents called the 'new barriers' erected by the Act of Uniformity of 1662. The requirement for episcopal ordination and subscription to the Book of Common Prayer caused him and others to be separated from the restored Church of England. He believed that God would, however, show them that they could 'carry on his Work another way, and multiply his People'. Thomas Hunt died at his Shrewsbury home on 12 April 1669, having attended public services the day before (a Sunday) and worshipping God with his family at home in the evening. This was a compromise adopted by many Presbyterians. Godly work continued despite the difficulties of ejection from livings. Baxter memorialised many Shropshire ministers who suffered in this way, including three Shrewsbury men: 'Mr. Heath, an ancient, grave minister, moderate, sedate, quiet, religious, eminent for his skill in the Oriental Languages'; Francis Tallents, 'a good Schollar, a godly, blameless Divine'; and John Bryan, 'a Godly, able Preacher, of a quick and active Temper, but very Humble'.³⁹

Richard Heath died at Wellington in 1666, but Tallents and Bryan survived the vicissitudes of the Restoration to carry on their ministry in Shrewsbury. Baxter was based in London and extremely busy with correspondence, so

Tallents refrained from bothering him until he needed his friend's help in 1666 when rumours were being spread that Tallents was a Jesuit. Baxter defended numerous Shropshire Nonconformist ministers from another charge in 1674: none of those he named, including Samuel Hildersam, Samuel Fisher, Francis Tallents and John Bryan of Shrewsbury, had wished the death of Charles I. Other godly ministers in the region included Philip Henry, ordained by the fourth Shropshire classis. Henry's son Matthew and Samuel Lawrence (son of Edward Lawrence of Baschurch) were pupils of Francis Tallents; they maintained contact with Baxter. When they visited him in November 1685 he was technically in prison at Southwark, but they found him 'in pretty comfortable circumstances' in a private house near the prison. They sat with him for an hour or so as he asked about his Shropshire friends. 'He said we who are young are apt to count upon *great* things, but we must not look for it.' The two young men also visited Tallents, who must himself have been on a visit to the capital; he probably called on Baxter. Once he was free Baxter, widowed since 1681, remained in London, preaching and writing his memoirs. He witnessed the brief reign of the Catholic James II (which benefited the Nonconformists) and the flight of James in 1688. The accession of the Protestant William III and his wife Mary (daughter of James II) was followed by the Toleration Act of 1689. This was welcomed by Nonconformists, but the toleration did not extend to Catholics, Quakers or Unitarians. Richard Baxter died in February 1691. Matthew Henry tells us that Tallents 'highly valued that great man', Baxter, 'for his learning and piety, and the service he had done the church by his practical writings'. In Shrewsbury, Tallents and Bryan shared a joint meeting, first in the house of Elizabeth Hunt. After her death in October 1690 they met in Tallents' own house until a special meeting house was opened in 1691. On its walls they had these words painted: 'This place was not built for a faction or a party, but to promote repentance and faith in communion with all others who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Our help is in the name of the Lord'. Their deaths ended the century: John Bryan was buried at St Chad's in 1699, Tallents at St Mary's in 1708.⁴⁰

This brief narrative covers over six decades of turbulent political and religious national history, focused through the experiences of one individual and one urban community. Issues important for both are revealed. It was not until Baxter met the godly group in Shrewsbury that he confronted the question of conformity to extreme Laudian demands, a problem already faced by his new friends in the town. It was now also that he embarked on his life as a minister and preacher. The further experiences, of Baxter and of Shrewsbury, were dramatic: civil war and the dismantling of the established church, followed by the regicide and the interregnum. The Church of England had, from the time of the Elizabethan settlement of religion, an inherent fault-line dividing those of a conservative or catholic tendency from those wanting thorough reform. The 1650s saw the partial establishment of a presbyterian system of church government, while Baxter devised his own association of ministers. There was tolerance between members of Baxter's association and classis members in north Shropshire, but sects, such as Baptists and Quakers, were outside the pale, as of course were Papists. Given these exceptions we should note Baxter's efforts at harmony within the Restoration church, and the failure of like-minded people, such as Francis Tallents, to reconcile Anglicans (as we can now term them) and Nonconformists. The history of Nonconformity has its roots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so the study of Baxter and Shrewsbury helps to provide continuity with post-Restoration developments. It also illustrates how the godly communities which survived the split in the Church of England retained contacts with each other, preparing the way, through longevity, for eighteenth century developments.

Notes

- 1 B. Coulton, 'Rivalry and Religion: The Borough of Shrewsbury in the Early Stuart Period', *Midland History*, **XXVIII**, 2003, 28–50.
- 2 B. Coulton, 'The Establishment of Protestantism in Shrewsbury', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, **XXVII**, 1996, 307–35; P. W. Hasler, (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603*, **II**, 1981, 130–1: Andrew was brother to Magdalene Herbert and uncle of Sir Richard Newport.
- 3 Matthew Sylvester (ed.), *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 1696, 1–13.
- 4 H. E. Forrest, 'The Rowley Family', *Transactions of the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club*, **VI**, 1915–16, 170–77. I am grateful to W. Champion for bringing this article to my attention.
- 5 E. W. Kirby, 'The Lay Feoffees: A Study in Militant Puritanism', *Journal of Modern History*, **XIV**, 1942, 1–25.
- 6 Samuel Clarke, *A Generall Martyrologie ... [with] The Lives of Sundry Modern Divines*, 1651, 464–9.
- 7 Coulton, 'Rivalry and Religion'; Lichfield Record Office: B/V/1/48, fos 18, 24; B/V/1/53, fos 9–21.
- 8 Coulton, 'Rivalry and Religion'; Richard More, *A True relation of the Murders committed in the Parish of Clunne*, 1641. More was then an MP. For the 1635 visitation see *Calendar of State Papers, 1635*, xxxvi–xxxvii. For Lee, Lichfield R. O.: B/V/1/57, Liber clerici 1636, fo. 38.
- 9 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 13; Geoffrey Nuttall, *Richard Baxter*, 1965, 12.
- 10 Coulton, 'Rivalry and Religion', 43–44. For Preston and Sibbes, see Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 1990, 234–66.
- 11 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 13; A. G. Matthews (ed.), *Calamy Revised*, 1988 ed., 39.
- 12 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 14–15.

- 13 Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625–1660*, 2002, 130–7.
- 14 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 15–16; for Gerson, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., 1974, 561–2; *Oxford DNB*, David Calderwood.
- 15 John Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I*, 2007; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud*, 2nd ed., 1962, 405–15.
- 16 William Lamont, ‘Richard Baxter, “Popery” and the Origins of the English Civil War’, *History*, **87**, 2002, 336–52.
- 17 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 43–5.
- 18 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 53–4; J. T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Saints Everlasting Rest*, 1962. See also J. William Black, *Reformation Pastors: Richard Baxter and the Ideal of the Reformed Pastor*, 2004.
- 19 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 84–95; John T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Reformed Pastor*, 1950 (including the terms of the Worcestershire Association, Appendix 1); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, ‘The Worcestershire Association: its Membership’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, **I**, 1950, 197–206.
- 20 *Shropshire Parish Registers, Lichfield Diocese. St Chad’s*, 171, xviii; Borough Assembly Minutes: Shropshire Archives [SA], not paginated. Fisher was ordained in 1630: Lichfield Record Office: B/A/4/18; his institution is recorded in B/V/1/62, Liber clerici 1639, fo. 24. A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, perpetuates Anthony Wood’s mistaken surmise that he was Samuel Fisher of Stratford; discrepancies of date and age are apparent. For Hering and Paget, A. C. Carter, *The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, 1964, 95.
- 21 For Lee’s death, Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, **I**, 3, 64; *Oxford DNB*, Thomas Blake, Samuel Fisher; G. W. Fisher, *Annals of Shrewsbury School*, 1899, 173–6.
- 22 W. A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church 1640–1660*, **I**, 1900, 122–205.
- 23 W. A. Shaw, *Minutes of the Manchester Presbyterian Classis*, **I**, Chetham Society, new series **20**, 1890.
- 24 *Minutes of Manchester Classis*, **I**, 26–39; B. Coulton, ‘The Fourth Shropshire Presbyterian Classis’, *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXIII**, 1998, 33–43.
- 25 Alexander Gordon (ed.), *Cheshire Classis Minutes 1691–1745*, 1919, 104–5.
- 26 Geoffrey Nuttall, ‘The Correspondence of John Lewis, Glasrug, with Richard Baxter and with John Ellis, Dolgelley’, *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, **2**, 1954, 130–1.
- 27 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 64; Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, 1732, 444. Paget’s treatise appeared first in 1649: *A Religious Scrutiny* by ‘Theophilus Philopatrius’, a Presbyterian Minister; it was republished in 1650 under his own name.
- 28 Fisher recorded their Shrewsbury experience in *A love-token for mourners*, 1655, 183; Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle*, 1981, 467.
- 29 H. Owen and J. B. Blakeway, *A History of Shrewsbury*, **II**, 1825, 147, Leigh; Austin Woolrych, ‘Milton and Richard Heath’, *Philological Quarterly*, **53**, 1974, 132–5. The register dates Heath’s appointment 23 June 1651. There was another connection between Milton and Shrewsbury: his physician and friend Nathan Paget was a son of Thomas Paget, and his third wife was related to the Pagets.
- 30 N. H. Keeble and Geoffrey Nuttall (eds.), *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, **I**, 1991, 82.
- 31 *Calamy Revised*, Tallents; Matthew Henry, *Complete Works*, **I**, 1859, 600–30. Samuel Hildersam was the son of Arthur, a famous puritan preacher and mentor of Julines Hering.
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- 34 B. Coulton, ‘Thomas Hunt of Shrewsbury and Boreatton 1599–1669’, *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXIV**, 1999, 33–42; Sir James Berry and S. G. Lee, *A Cromwellian Major-General*, 1938, 135–6; F. J. Powicke, *A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter*, 1924, 108–9.
- 35 Swarthmore [sic] MSS, Friends’ House, London, **I**, 1, 64, 179; **III**, 9: the missions were organised from Swarthmoor [sic] Hall in Lancashire.
- 36 Coulton, ‘Thomas Hunt’, 37; Henry Newcome, *Autobiography*, Chetham Society, **26**, 57–66; **27**, 352–72. Also F. J. Powicke, ‘An Episode in the Ministry of the Rev. Henry Newcome, and his Connection with the Rev. Richard Baxter’, reprinted from *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, **13**, 1929; *Oxford DNB*, Henry Newcome.
- 37 Coulton, ‘Thomas Hunt’, 38.
- 38 N. H. Keeble, ‘Richard Baxter’s Preaching Ministry’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, **XXXV**, 1984, 540–7.
- 39 Matthew Henry, *Complete Works*, **II**, 619–20, 755; *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 94.
- 40 *Cal. Corresp. Baxt.*, **II**, 163–4, 304; Matthew Henry, *Complete Works*, **I**, 623–8; *Calamy Revised*, Bryan and Tallents. For Toleration, see Edward Vallance, *The Glorious Revolution*, 2006, 244.

SHROPSHIRE ICE HOUSES GAZETTEER

By BOB JARRETT

Abstract: This gazetteer does not set out to be a comprehensive survey of ice houses in Shropshire; rather it is desktop-based, relying on secondary sources, since little original fieldwork was carried out for this survey. Nine types of ice houses are identified. These are assigned to sites where sufficient information makes this possible. Sites which lack concise locational evidence are included, in the hope that further work will eventually locate them. The listing is alphabetical by parish, most sites having a six figure National Grid Reference, and, where applicable, the Historic Environment (Sites and Monuments) number is given.

Introduction

In March 2009 an ice house was partly excavated in Rectory Wood, Church Stretton. The prime objectives of the investigation were to ascertain the condition of the remains with a view to carrying out a full excavation in the future, and to learn as much as possible from the limited nature of the investigation. A small amount of research concerning ice houses in general followed on from this. However, it was soon recognized that Shropshire, being a large county with a high number of country estates, is an ideal county in which to carry out a survey, most sites being situated in parkland. Thus a gazetteer of ice houses in the county was mooted.

What is an ice house? It has been known for centuries that keeping food cool prolongs its life. Thus, as the name suggests, it was a place where ice was stored until required to keep food fresh. The concept of keeping food cool is not a new one. The first ice houses can be found 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia (Beamon and Roaf, 7), and the latest just before the introduction of electricity. Prehistoric Britons relied on burying things in large insulated pits, which might have been quite efficient, but they did not, as far as we know, use ice. By the time the Romans were in Britain they were using ice houses, although there is only one recorded example from this period, that at Caerleon in South Wales, and that is not from a Roman source but from Giraldus (Beamon and Roaf, 17). Following this, there are no recorded ice houses until the early medieval period, when they appear in monastic contexts (Beamon and Roaf, 17). One of the first with a monastic origin is at Bishop's Cleeve in Gloucestershire (Beamon and Roaf, 17). By the 17th century more sophisticated types of ice house were introduced into Britain. The large ice house we see today partly evolved from the examples on the manors of rich French families (Beamon and Roaf, 17). Two of the earliest secular sites to appear in Britain are at Omerod in Lancashire, which may date to the construction of the house in 1595, and Ashby Hall, Lincolnshire similarly dated at 1595 (Beamon and Roaf, 17).

By the eighteenth century ice houses had become large, in some cases very large, constructions, some sporting classical frontages. As well as the primary use for ice to preserve food, luxury items such as iced drinks and ice carvings for the table were to appear at this time. The interior of an ice house often had a large brick built egg-shaped chamber topped by a circular dome. It was becoming more and more expensive to construct a large brick built ice house; costs were on average £200–£300. Owners of large estates would not be concerned about this, however, but smaller farmers and small landowners would find the cost prohibitive. William Cobbett, farmer and soldier, proposed an answer to this. He had been to America and there observed people building ice houses for a few dollars. In 1822 he drew up a design which he claimed would provide an ice house for a few pounds. He did away with the large egg-shaped chamber, which was so expensive to construct, and also the circular domed roof. In their place he proposed a roof of saplings and very thick thatch (Beamon and Roaf, 32). We have records of many thatched-roof ice houses but how influenced they were by Cobbett is difficult to ascertain. Such structures are

difficult to detect archaeologically, but from documentary evidence they appear to be relatively common-place. Certainly such ice houses appear to be more frequently found in poorer countries, where materials for thatching were more readily to hand than bricks.

For the purpose of this study similar site types have been included, although they are not strictly speaking ice houses. For example, at Walcot Park two sites are termed 'vegetable stores' and 'game store' respectively. When a site is almost certainly for a completely different purpose it is excluded. An example of this may be seen at Haughmond Abbey, where it is recorded on good authority that a site near to one of the ponds is a 'lodge or gatehouse', and not an ice house as was previously thought.

Typologies may be difficult as many examples are unique, being constructed at the whim of the landowner. Some of the larger examples may be influenced by formal landscaping. However, Beamon and Roaf have identified nine types, the most common probably being the dome structures with egg or globe shaped ice chambers. Given enough information some research may be possible in this area; it is hoped that this study will promote further work and contribute to the knowledge of this important landscape feature.

It should be noted that most of the sites listed in this gazetteer are on private land and the landowner's permission should be sought before accessing the area.

Key:

NGR: National Grid Reference (where known).

HER: Historic Environment Record number where listed (formerly SMR).

Type: Ice House Types are taken from Beamon & Roaf (see below.) Types have been assigned according to available evidence and are in some cases subjective:

- A Cup & Dome
- B Circular Chambers
- C Square & Rectangular Chambers
- D Tunnel shaped chambers
- E Timber & Thatched
- F Unique Structures
- G Temporary Structures
- H Urban Ice Cellars
- J Doubtful Structures.

References:

General sources quoted:

- 1 The Historic Environment Record
- 2 S. P. Beamon and S. Roaf, *The Ice Houses of Britain* (1990).
- 3 Unpublished primary source material.
- 4 Other.

Acton Burnell

Acton Burnell Park

NGR: SJ 539 017

HER No: 18398

Type: C

- 1 An 18th/19th century ice house approximately 550m. to the south-east of Acton Burnell Hall on the northern slope of Acton Burnell Hill. The plan is rectangular with an entrance to the north. The construction is red brick coursed sandstone rubble flanking the entrance, and a barrel vaulted interior. Rubble retaining walls flank a segmental entrance arch leading to a low doorway. The whole is contained within a low earth mound above.
- 2 A square-shaped ice house cum grotto is situated on the hill east of Acton Burnell Castle ruins.
- 4 Site appears on OS 1903.

Adderley
Pool House Farm

NGR: SJ 663 404

HER No: 1042

Type: A

- 1 Castle Hill, a natural mound 75m. north-west of Pool House, was used in the construction of a motte and bailey castle. The 18th century icehouse is situated in the east-south-east scarp of the motte and is of red brick construction, with a barrel vaulted entrance passage leading to a domed central chamber. There was no door at the time of the survey. (1986)
- 2 The structure is situated below Castle Hill and Castle Hill Pool, between Adderley railway station and the south union canal. It is completely underground, reported to have a depth of 20m., and is constructed of brick, stone, earth, and sand with an east-facing entrance. The source of ice was the pool. (1980s)

Atcham
Attingham Park 1

NGR: SJ 551 099

HER No: 18137

Type: A

- 1 & 2 This site is approximately 70m. to the south-east of Attingham Hall. It has a very complex history with occupation from as early as the 13th century, when there was probably a corn mill here. Between 1710 and 1750 there was a well-documented ironworks on the site known as the Tern ironworks after the nearby river. Quantities of iron slag have been found confirming the use of the site for this purpose. Construction of the ice house began some time after 1797 during the general landscaping of the grounds of Attingham Park. In c.1850, owing to its close proximity to the river, it was prone to flooding, and had a short life as an ice house. In 1856 it was converted into a pumping house used to pump water to Attingham Hall. The iron wheel of the pump, which can be seen today, is a replacement made in 1939. The ice house was repaired in 2005 when an archaeological excavation was carried out. The investigation involved a desk-based assessment, an earthwork survey, a magnetometer survey, an architectural and building survey, a mechanical survey of the waterwheel and pump, and excavation. The construction of the dome is of red brick beneath an earth mound approached by an L-shaped barrel-vaulted tunnel from the north-west with 6 stone steps down to a boarded door. The interior is a barrel-vaulted passage. The total dimensions of the site are 73.2m. × 64m.
- 3 Thatching was carried out in 1803 (either at this site or at Attingham 2): Shropshire Archives (hereafter SA): 112/6/59/253.
- 4 Attingham Park Archaeological Survey and Excavation, 2005.
 S. Roper, 'The Ice House at Attingham Park', *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXX**, 162–175.

Atcham
Attingham Park 2

NGR: SJ 548 101

HER No:

Type: E

- 2 The second ice house in Attingham Park is in woodland near the stable block. It is in a dilapidated condition (1980s). In 2008 it was utilized as a part of a contemporary art exhibition called 'Give me Shelter', organized by Meadow Arts. A wooden superstructure has replaced the original, but the ice shaft is incorporated into the art work. This is approximately 3m. deep with a maximum diameter of 3.65m. at the top, tapering to about 2.7m. at the bottom. In the centre of the base is a round hole 0.6m. across and 0.46m. deep which presumably led to a drain.
- 3 Thatching was carried out in 1803 (either at this site or at Attingham 1): SA: 112/6/59/253.
- 4 The exhibition is by Meadow Arts. The art work utilizing the ice house is called 'Cellakabin', by Henry Krokatsis. (Site literature and display board.)

Atcham
Attingham Park, Longnor Hall

NGR: SJ 528 110

HER No: 18158

Type:

- 1 This site represents a mid-19th century game larder, an icehouse of post-medieval date, and courtyard walls and tower by John Nash c.1803. The game larder and ice house are of red brick with a pyramidal plain tile roof and octagonal plan. They are one storey over a semi-basement. Features are a high chamfered plinth, deep eaves, octagonal wooden cupola with louvred arched lights, moulded cornice to battlemented parapet and ogee lead dome. Square windows with paired arched lights and chamfered reveals. The entrance to the ice house is

in the basement adjoining steps to the right with a depressed brick arch. The interior of the game larder is complete with low shelves around the walls and wrought iron hanging rack.

Badger

Badger Dingle

NGR: SO 769 997

HER No: 19932

Type: A

- 1 Ice house. Probably early-18th century. A rectangular opening about 2m. high and 1.2m. wide leads to a short passage at the end of which is a large egg-shaped cavity excavated out of the natural sandstone. The entrance was sealed up with concrete blocks in 1978.
- 2 The ice house, which was used until the 1930s, was built into the sandstone rock of the north wall in Badger Dingle. The entrance was through a 2m. high × 1.2 m. wide × 3.2m. long tunnel. The tunnel had 3 doorways, the last of which opened into an egg-shaped ice chamber measuring 4.1m. at its widest and 7.5m. deep. Nearby was a stream which was dammed to create a series of ponds for the management of ice (see extended account in Beamon and Roaf, 383–4).

Baschurch

Boreaton Park

NGR: SJ 401 239

HER No:

Type:

- 2 A structure situated below the terrace in the park, may be classified as an ice house. It is now used for storage.

Beckbury

Beckbury Hall

NGR: SJ 765 014

HER No: 17693

Type: A?

- 1 Ice house or beer cellar. Probably mid-19th century. Plain unemphasized exteriors with large sandstone lintel. Interior approached by single flight of steps, has brick barrel vault, supported on red brick piers; compartments cut out of bedrock.

Berrington

Berrington Hall

NGR: SJ 529 068?

HER No:

Type: E

- 3 Receipt dated 1819 for 7 days thatching and 2 days repairing an ice house at Berrington: SA: 112/6/box 67/117.
- 4 No evidence seen from the footpath adjacent to the lake (Bob Jarrett 23.05.09).

Bicton

Onslow Hall, Bicton Heath

NGR: SJ 437 129

HER No:

Type:

- 2 No details available except that the ice house is close to the Hall (1981).

Bucknell

The Olde Farm (Plate 1 on next page)

NGR: SO 355 739

HER No: 18008 (motte 19201)

Type: B?

- 1 The ice house is located south-east of the Old Farmhouse and is cut into the north-north-west side of a Norman motte castle. The mound, probably originally circular in plan, is now truncated on south side with a rubble revetment wall. It is probably early-19th century, constructed of roughly coursed limestone rubble with a segmental headed entrance to tunnel, blocked at the far end. Stone lined 1.3m. high and 6m. deep.
- 2 Appears to on an OS map (N.D.) The structure is now used as a donkey shelter. (1980s)
- 4 The entrance façade has been restored and doors added. (See HER photograph of site prior to restoration.) Internally a concrete floor has been laid. There is consequently no indication of the depth of the ice shaft which may be at the far end. (Bob Jarrett 8.08.09)



Plate 1 An Example of an Ice House which was Part of a Large Farm Complex at Bucknell. (Photograph: Bob Jarrett)

Burwarton

Burwarton Park

NGR: SO 610 854

HER No:

Type:

- 2 A mound near Weir Bridge Pool, Dairy Farm, shows the situation of the ice house. It has been confirmed by the estate that it still exists.

Calverhall

Cloverley Park 1

NGR: SJ 611 366

HER No:

Type:

- 2 The first ice house at this site is south-west of the Hall in a wooded mound. There are no further details available.

Calverhall

Cloverley Park 2

NGR: SJ 617 369

HER No:

Type:

- 2 Close by Cloverley Pool is the second ice house, south-east of the Hall. There are no further details available.

Chetwynd

Chetwynd Park

NGR: SJ 73 21

HER No:

Type:

- 2 No details available.



Plate 2 The Excavation of an Ice House at Church Stretton, March 2009. (Photograph: Bob Jarrett)

Church Stretton

Rectory Wood (Plate 2)

NGR: SO 450 938

HER No: 07722 (historic park)

Type: B?

- 2 The ice house situated west-north-west of the rectory, 300m. away in a wooded mound south of the pool. All that can be seen is a hollow in the hillside. Appears on OS maps up to early 20th century. (1981/4)
- 4 Excavation 16–27 March 2009. The site of the ice house was partly excavated to assess the possibility of a full excavation at some time in the future. The chamber was cut into the bedrock on the hillside overlooking a yew-ringed pool. This comprised a circular chamber approximately 3.6m. in diameter with an inner diameter of 3m. The core of the chamber was filled with loosely packed brick rubble that almost certainly represented the collapsed roof of the structure. The depth of the chamber was not excavated and is therefore unknown. It was entered by way of an entrance passage 2.6m. long and 1.1m. wide (internally.) The excavations were partially backfilled.

H. R. Hannaford, *Archaeological Investigations at Rectory Wood, Church Stretton, Shropshire*, Archaeology Service Report No. 267, June 2009.

Clive

Sansaw

NGR: SJ 510 234

HER No: 18894

Type: B

- 1 The ice house lies approximately 330m. to the north east of Sansaw and is probably late-18th century. It is circular in plan, being excavated from natural grey sandstone, and has an earth-covered red brick dome. The entrance is to the north- west (arch partly collapsed at time of survey – December 1985) with flanking low brick retaining walls. The ice house stands some distance away from Sansaw Hall, which is dated 1773.
- 3 An ice house is recorded in the Journal of Thomas Brocas, 1786. It is not known if this is the same site: SA: 5492/1/p.35.

Condover
Condover Hall

NGR: SJ 497 054

HER No: 18247

Type: A

- 1 The ice house is approximately 5m. north-east of Longridge. The site represents a garden shed and an icehouse, both of post medieval date. The ice house is probably late-18th or early-19th century, with later repairs and alterations. The construction is red brick under an earth-covered mound. The dome is approximately 14m. in diameter, approached by a short tunnel, now truncated, and with a round-arched entrance.
- 2 The ice house is situated in a private garden 250m. from Condover Hall. It is in excellent condition with a soil covering. The mound is 1.8m. above ground level and 1m. below, covering an egg-shaped structure. It is estimated that a further 1.1m.-1.5m. lies beneath the infilled soil floor of today. There is a short north- west facing entrance way, closed by stout doors, which opens into the ice chamber, 4.25m. in diameter, built of brick and lime mortar. Ice was collected from Cound Brook 60m. away. The structure is now used as a garden store. (1981)

Donington
Neach Hill

NGR: SJ 78 06

HER No:

Type:

- 2 At the exit from Neachley Pool, almost totally obscured by undergrowth, is a brick structure in a ruinous condition. It housed a hydraulic ram which, until the 1840s, pumped water to Neach Hill, a mansion standing on high ground to the east. The pipe passed close to a farm where, partially buried in the bank south of the buildings, is an ice house, now completely filled in. (1980)

Frodesley
Lodge Hill Coppice

NGR: SO 521 996

HER No: 4539

Type:

- 1 Ice house seen in Lodge Coppice in April 1992. Not on transcription of Tithe Award Map or 1902 OS. No further details.

Great Ness
Felton Butler Farm

NGR: SJ 392 175

HER No: 16763

Type:

- 1 The site lies to the north-west of Felton Butler Farmhouse. It represents a possible 18th century ice house constructed from regular blocks of sandstone with a turf covering. Below ground level it is partially collapsed, exposing the inner chamber. In plan it is long and narrow with curved ends. It was used by the owner of Felton Butler Farm for potato storage in the early 20th century. The ice house lies within a possible manorial enclosure which requires further investigation.

Hodnet
Hawkstone Farm, Moat Bank

NGR: SJ 594 294

HER No: 1649

Type:

- 1 There are recorded remains of a circular moat at Hawkstone Farm. The feature is a flat topped irregular mound whose purpose appears to have been to cover a large brick chamber. Adjoining it on the north-west is a comparably large pit. No trace of a moat was found. (1962). One of these features was interpreted as a late-18th century potato house.

Hodnet
Hodnet Hall

NGR: SJ 610 284

HER No:

Type:

- 2 A mound encloses the ice house which is incorporated in the landscaping to the south east of the Hall. No further information available.

Holdgate**Holdgate Castle**

NGR: SO 562 896

HER No: 183

Type: C

- 1 Ice house built into a large medieval motte (details of the motte on HER).
- 2 Probably constructed to serve a 17th century house.
- 4 A stone built ice house built into the eastern side of a large medieval motte. Stone exterior steps lead to a brick vaulted entrance passage. Stone blocking approximately 3m. from the entrance may seal off the ice chamber. A pond lies 200m. to the north-west (Bob Jarrett 31.01.09).

Hopesay**Aston on Clun, The Old Courthouse**

NGR: SO 393 817

HER No: 13608 (adjoining farmhouse)

Type: A?

- 1 Late-18th century farmhouse known as *The Old Courthouse*. House built of uncoursed limestone rubble.
- 2 The ice house is stone built appearing externally to be rectangular. Internally the roof is domed. It has an arched doorway. (1981)
- 4 The building, which adjoins the farmhouse on its south-west side and a barn to the north-east, might have been an ice house. Externally it measures 6m. × 2m. with a central doorway 0.8m. wide and 1.7m. high, on the north-west side. There is no evidence of an ice chamber although complete examination was not possible due to storage material. The roof is of tile which is in bad repair. It runs down close to ground level on the south-east side. The owner says that there were two ponds in the area, one of which appears on OS 1903, the second, filled in, lying between the site of the ice house and the Kangaroo Inn to the south-east. (Bob Jarrett 11.05.09)

Lilleshall**Lilleshall Hall**

NGR: SJ 754 146

HER No:

Type: C

- 2 The ice house is situated about half a mile due east of Lilleshall Hall, now part of a golf course. It is built into the southern bank of a pool, of rectangular shape, lined with bricks and has a barrel-shaped roof, also of brick. It does not seem to be as well insulated against rising temperature as other ice houses in the Worfe valley, particularly the splendid ice house in Badger Dingle. (1980)

Llanymynech**Llwyntidmon Hall**

NGR: SJ 289 207

HER No: 19378

Type: D?

- 1 The ice house is approximately 10m. north-east of Llwyntidmon Hall. It is probably late-18th century and built of roughly coursed limestone rubble. It has a barrel vault with voussoirs to the arch.

Longdon on Tern**Longdon House**

NGR: SJ 62 15

HER No:

Type:

2. On the west side of the house are two tunnels, probably ice houses, dug into the rock. The walls and ceilings are of rough brick, and the tunnels are high enough to stand in. The main house was built by one of the Dukes of Sutherland just over a hundred years ago (1982).

Longford**Longford Hall**

NGR: SJ 729 182

HER No:

Type:

- 2 The ice house is situated in the south-east corner away from the Hall. No further information available.

Ludford
Ludford

NGR: SO 51 74

HER No:

Type:

- 2 Field name evidence: *Ice house meadow*. No further information available.

Ludlow
Ludlow Castle

NGR: SO 508 745

HER No: 6177 (castle)

Type:

- 1 Ludlow Castle is 11th century, probably begun by Roger Lacy.
- 2 A structure in the moat side may be identified as an ice house.
- 4 Formerly used as a magazine, now (c.1930) an ice house. C. Oman, *Castles*, 1926, 134–141.

Lydbury North
Walcot Hall 1

NGR: SO 346 851

HER No: 17810

Type: C

- 1 Ice house, vegetable and potato stores now disused, c.1763. Uncoursed limestone rubble and turfed earth mound above with graded stone slates at eaves. Square plan. 2 segmental-arched entrances to north and one with boarded door to east. Coursed limestone wall adjoining to south, approximately 60 m. long and 2 m. high. Interior: brick barrel-vaulted tunnel leading to large brick domed circular ice house at north-east corner; brick barrel-vaulted potato store to west and brick barrel-vaulted vegetable store at right angles to south with low shelves, both with cavity brick walls. (DOE 1985.)
- 2 A building located inside a wooded area may be a potato store or an ice house (1981).

Lydbury North
Walcot Hall 2

NGR: SO 348 850

HER No: 14776

Type:

- 1 Former Game Store, now disused, approx. 40m. to north-west of Walcot Hall. Mid- to late-19th century. Painted timber frame with deep eaves to pyramidal graded stone slate roof. Octagonal plan. Solid rectangular lower panels and open square top panels with wire netting, probably formerly with gauze screens; 6 flush-panelled door to south-east.

Market Drayton
Buntingsdale Hall

NGR: SJ 653 326

HER No: 19239

Type: A,B,C

- 1 The ice house is approximately 120m. north-west of Buntingsdale Hall. Site dates from c.1721, with a possible enlargement c.1857. Red brick with 2 separate chambers. The first is square with a brick barrel vault and oculus, and the second circular, tapering, and with a domed brick vault. It is entered by a short segmental-arched brick passage leading to the first chamber, with a further short passage connecting with the second chamber. At the time of survey (April 1986) the ice house had been exposed to the west by the removal of the earth on that side. The ice house was built to supply Buntingsdale Hall and is especially notable because of its size.

Market Drayton
Pell Wall

NGR: SJ 680 331

HER No:

Type:

- 1 The hall was the centre of a 2,000 acre estate which had formal gardens designed by William Gilpin. The gardens have remained almost as they were in the 1820s when Pell Wall Hall was built. The gardens contain an underground ice house accessed by a small hatch. The dimensions of the building are 5.79m. long, 2.44m. deep and 4.27m. wide.
- 4 Web article by BBC Radio Shropshire. Visit by Mary McKenzie, Shropshire Archives, September 2010.

More**Linley Park**

NGR: SO 347 938

HER No: 1864

Type: A

- 1 The site is variously recorded as a Bronze Age burial mound, a medieval motte (fortified mound – an unlikely interpretation), and a post medieval ice house which has been partly removed for a summer house. It is believed by the bailiff to be an ice house. In 1856 it is described as a large barrow at Linley Hall scooped out to form an ice house. No record of contents.
- 2 Situated 275m. south-east of the Hall, the ice house stands near the lake, the source of ice. The domed structure, c.1853, is of brick and extends 1.8m. below ground. Now used as a changing room for bathers, the ice house has been given a 'temple' frontage after the removal of the west-facing passage. (1981/3.)

Moreton Corbet**Wain House Farm, Palms Hill**

NGR: SJ 529 269

HER No:

Type: B

- 2 The ice house is a semi-circular brick built structure covered in turf. It measures 4.25m. × 2.1m. and is situated in the garden to the east of Wain House.

Moreton Say**Shavington Park**

NGR: SJ 634 389

HER No:

Type:

- 2 The ice house is in a wooded mound to the north-west of the hall. There are no further details available.

Morville**Aldenharn Park**

NGR: SO 671 955

HER No:

Type:

- 1 House Coppice, 365m. north of the Hall, houses the ice house in the side of a steep bank. It is also adjacent to a lake. The entrance was covered over many years ago, but it is constructed of brick within sandstone bedrock. From the owner's memory it is about 6m. deep and once drained into a stream.

Much Wenlock**Brook House Farm**

NGR: SJ 622 000

HER No: 19800

Type:

- 1 The site contains a granary with a large semi-underground brick vaulted structure below. This was used at one time to store barrels of beer, for two family connected public houses, but might originally have been an ice house possibly supplying ice to the Priory. The building is attached to the bake house (HER 19799) by a brick lean-to addition, and is constructed from random coursed limestone rubble and brick. It has a high rubble plinth with brick on top. The large single-celled granary has external brick and concrete steps leading up to it, small fireplaces in each gable end and a concrete floor. The cellar below has a brick floor with drainage channels and a brick vaulted ceiling.
- 4 The site is no longer a working farm. The condition of the ice house is unknown, but the surrounding buildings appear intact. (Bob Jarrett 14.08.09)

Munslow**Millichope Park (Plate 3 on next page)**

NGR: SO 527 882

HER No: 7742 Millichope Park.

Type: C

- 1 Recorded only as an 18th century landscaped park.
- 2 Listed, but no details recorded for this source. (1981)
- 4 The ice house projects from the south side of a bank in close proximity to a lake. It is built of stone with brick vaulting with turf covering. A single chamber measures approximately 2m. sq × 1.5m. high. There is a small roof access hatch. The doorway faces south. (Bob Jarrett 22.02.09)



Plate 3 An Ice House Situated on a Large Country Estate at Millichope. (Photograph: Bob Jarrett)

Newport
Water Lane

NGR: SJ 744 193

HER No: 6103

Type:

- 1 A possible fish house was destroyed by the construction of the canal wharf in the early 19th century. Approximate site of building at the end of a short road on a map of 1681.

Oswestry
Sweeney Hall

NGR: SJ 292 267

HER No:

Type: E

- 2 The ice house is north of the hall in a wooded area, although no specific details are known of the structure. Noxious gases were released when it was opened. (1981)
- 3 A letter dated 1843 contains a reference to thatching an ice house at Sweeney (Hall?): SA 665/5295.

Petton
Petton Park

NGR: SJ 440 262

HER No: 19635

Type: A

- 1 A disused ice house lies approximately 60m. south-east of Petton Church. It is probably late-18th or early-19th century. A red brick structure is beneath an earth mound. A short segmental-arched tunnel leads to a partly infilled egg-shaped cavity. A well-preserved motte lies immediately to the north-west.
- 2 To the south of the Hall, and south of Petton Church, a wooded mound covers an ice house (1981).

Pitchford**Pitchford Hall**

NGR: SJ 524 043

HER No:

Type: D?

- 2 The ice house is situated in a wood by a fishpond and is semi-subterranean with a partially exposed brick roof 1m. high. The entrance is south-east facing. The chamber is 3m. × 3m. and 1.8m. deep. It is constructed of brick walls 0.6m. thick and the barrel vaulted roof has a thickness of 0.46m. The ice house is maintained to be of mid- to late-18th century date and served the Hall 455m. away (1980s).
- 4 Marked on OS 2nd Ed 1902.

Quatford**Dudmaston Hall**

NGR: SO 749 892

HER No:

Type:

- 2 The ice house, now demolished, was shown on old maps to have been sited south west of Seggy Pool in a mound to the north-east of the Hall.

Quatford**Quatford Castle**

NGR: SO 73 90

HER No:

Type:

- 2 Reference to an ice house 1986:
'When my brother rented a flat at Quatford Castle forty years ago, there was an interesting excavation in the rock approached by a sloping passage from the cellar...It is suggested that this was used as an ice house':
Beamon & Roaf, 388.

Ruyton-XI-Towns**Shelvock Farmhouse**

NGR: SJ 371 240

HER No: 19886

Type:

- 1 The site lies 25m. north-east of Shelvock Farmhouse and represents a mid- to late- 17th century gamehouse or ashhouse. Its construction is of squared and dressed sandstone blocks on a chamfered plinth with a polygonal slate roof with iron weathervane. It has a polygonal plan with a single storey with moulded eaves cornice. The entrance is on the south-west side through a plank door with pointed strap hinges and large stone lintel. It has a single tall window with a similar lintel to the north-east side, possibly formerly a doorway. There are blocked ventholes. The interior has a light spar across the diameter at wall-plate level possibly for hanging game on. The use of this small building is the subject of speculation.

Selattyn**Brogyntyn Park**

NGR: SJ 27492 30969

HER No:

Type:

- 4 Structure noted in Brogyntyn Park near Porkington Hall appears to be an ice house. The majority of the site has been dismantled leaving a large depression in the ground. (Inf. Ian Dormor, December 2009)

Shifnal**Burlington Farm**

NGR: SJ 774 111

HER No: 41239

Type:

- 1 A 19th century ice house is recorded in the 1982–1983 Farm Buildings Survey. The walls are of handmade brick with a corbelled roof built onto a bank. The ice house occupies an isolated position and faces east. The building is 2.5 yds. wide by 6 yds. long. The source suggests that there were two ice houses on this site. Although there is no certainty about function of these two structures, their position indicates that water might have been located near by. The diverted course of the stream, to be channelled into the wheel house, might have occurred in the covered area directly in front of the structures. Channels in the concrete floor indicate the water course, and the presence of water would have cooled the temperature around these possible ice houses.

Shrewsbury
Abbey Foregate

NGR: SJ 49 12?

HER No:

Type:

- 3 A piece or parcel of land situate in the Abbey Foregate called the Near Hollywell Field with the ice house and barn on the same, containing 4a 2r 32p more or less, in the occupation of said Mr Underhill. The ice house is let to Sir Charles Oakley, Bart. For a term of years which expire at Michaelmas 1803 at the yearly rent of £3. (Sale Particulars 1801; SA: 4835/15/a)
- 4 This site may be confused with one on Monkmoor Road. (Bob Jarrett)

Shrewsbury
Belvidere

NGR: SJ 51 12?

HER No:

Type:

- 3 Said to be recorded as 'Belvidere ice house' on a plan of the area (N.D). Not verified. (SA: 4756/1/18). No ice house marked on OS 1906.
- 4 The area known as Belvidere is situated on a bend in the river Severn, 1 km. to the east of Shrewsbury. Most of the area is today covered by residential housing. The ice house was not found on a site visit (Bob Jarrett 10.02.09).

Shrewsbury
Corporation Lane, Coton Hill Farm

NGR: SJ 491 138

HER No: 20130

Type: A

- 1 Ice house, probably 1800–37. Brick construction. Subterranean egg-shaped chamber with right-angled entrance passage rebated for doorways.
- 2 The ice house is situated 27.4m.-45m. (30–50yds.) from the main building. The cylindrical chamber is entered through a passage with a right angled turn. The chamber is 4.6m. from the domed roof to its bottom, which contains a drain hole. The structure is of brick laid in Flemish bond. It is currently (1980) used as an apple store as the walls carry shelving; however it is thought that the original purpose was for commercial ice storage. The source of the ice is not proven, the nearest pools being 3.2km. away. The River Severn, into which the ice house is drained, flows nearby, but there is some doubt as to whether this was used as the ice source.
- 4 The ice house is currently part of a Camping and Caravan Club site (Bob Jarrett 10.07.09).

Shrewsbury
Ickeslode, Dogpole

NGR: SJ 494 123?

HER No:

Type:

- 2 No details available. Possible spellings *Ikeslode*, *Irkslodge* – field names?

Shrewsbury
Monkmoor Road

NGR: SJ 50 13

HER No:

Type:

- 2 Formerly Holywell House. No details available.
- 4 Possibly confused with a site recorded as *Abbey Foregate* (see above).

Stockton
Apley Park

NGR: SO 709 984

HER No: 3835

Type:

- 1 On the hill behind the site of Apley Castle, now Home Farm, the brick paved remains of what seems to have been an early-17th century ice house were discovered. It was probably where the original house was erected.
- 2 In the text of *First Childhood* by Lord Berners, a reference is made to an ice house in the park. This may be the same site as ref 1. Gerald Tyrwhitt-Wilson, 14th Baron Berners, *First Childhood*, 1934, 14 (see Beamon & Roaf, 383, for longer account).

Telford**Ketley Bank, Mossey Green**

NGR: SJ 685 102

HER No:

Type: A

- 2 A structure was discovered during the planning for a new road. It consists of a chamber c.3.65m. in diameter which has a dome 1.6m. high built of sandstone. In the roof is a brick circle about 2.7m. in diameter with about 0.32m. of single walling exposed. A shaft 1.5m. deep tapering from 2.7m. diameter to 1.2m. diameter was discovered. It has a cast-iron perforated plate for drainage at the bottom. Four adits, each lined with sandstone blocks, extend to the north, south, east and west from the top of the shaft. All of these passages, which measure up to 9.1m. long, reach outward beyond the mound as an open ditch. Many features suggest an ice house (probably belonging originally to Ketley Bank Hall), but the four adits would defeat the object of an airtight chamber. However, it is possible that it might have been re-used for tar distillation experiments by Lord Dundonald, a one time owner of the hall. (Inf. from I. J. Brown.)

Telford**Apley Castle 1**

NGR: SJ 651 132

HER No: 20394/3835

Type

- 1 The site represents one of two icehouses at Apley Castle (see 20395). The first is situated south-west of Apley Home Farm, the probable site of Apley Castle and is possibly contemporary with the construction of the second castle building. Brick paved remains have been found. An assessment of Apley Castle estate, including contour survey was carried out in 1980.
- 2 The ice house is completely enclosed in a mound and is of brick blocking. Access is no longer possible as the entrance has been filled. A previous report (1949–50) gives the information that the structure was ‘brick paved’. The ice house has been used as a rubbish dump.

Telford**Apley Castle 2**

NGR: SJ 655 133

HER No: 20395

Type: A

- 1 The second ice house is situated adjacent to the walled garden of Apley Castle. The entrance lies immediately outside the southern end of the east wall of the earlier walled garden of Apley Castle. This has a decorative curving brick parapet over an entrance doorway leading to the passage into the main chamber of the ice house. The style of the brickwork suggests that this dates from after the mid-18th century. It could have been built at the same time as the dovecote to the north.
- 2 In 1987 the north-east facing ice house was cleared of the rubbish dumped there in the 1960s. Well preserved brickwork was found, with access to the chamber via a corridor 3.65m. long, 1.2m. wide, and 1.8m. high. On either side are long horizontal recesses 1.2m. from the ground. There is one door frame recess at the chamber end, but probably there was an outer door as well. At the outward end is a concave ramp rising to ground level, clearly to facilitate filling the ice house. An egg-shaped chamber, 3m. diameter and 6m. overall height is located under the north-east facing wall of a large melonry. The corridor leads into the upper third of it. There are two drain holes on opposite sides of the inner cavity. It has been suggested that the ice houses, undocumented, are associated with the second castle on the site, completed in 1620. This is highly unlikely. Later building phases included the most recent castle built in the late-18th century. Ice to fill the chambers would have been gathered from ponds in the grounds.

Tong**Tong Castle (Plate 4 on next page)**

NGR: SJ 791 069 (original site)

HER No: 4005

Type: A

- 1 The site at Tong originally contained a 12th century castle, which was later extensively landscaped by Capability Brown in the 18th century. This included the construction of a later ‘castle’ and an ice house c.1765. The 18th century castle was demolished in 1954, and the M54 motorway was constructed in 1983 when the ice house was rescued from demolition and rebuilt in Avoncroft Museum where it is currently on public display.
- 2 The domed main chamber and barrel-vaulted passage of the ice house are built of local brick. The ice house also contains a 6.4m. deep egg-shaped ice shaft. The rebuilding resulted in a great deal of light being shed on the construction of ice houses of this period.



Plate 4 An Ice House Moved from its Original Site at Tong to Avoncroft Museum. (Photograph: Bob Jarrett)

- 4 Tong Archaeological Group Report 1983.
Information from museum display boards (2009).
Ice house in good condition and on public view as a part of Avoncroft Museum.
(7.11.09 Bob Jarrett).

Welsh Frankton

New Marton

NGR: SJ 340 344

HER No:

Type:

- 2 A wooded mound incorporated in the landscaping encloses the ice house, which is east of the Hall.

West Felton

Paradise/Lower Lee

NGR: SJ 379 292

HER No: 42358

Type:

- 1 An ice house, converted to a potato store is recorded in the 1982–1983 Farm Buildings Survey. Sandstone

walls, brick lined and barrel vaulted, 3 yds. wide by 11.5 yds. Long, incorporating 2 barrel vaults and cross passage. Remnants of nesting boxes in storage.

West Felton

Tedsmore Hall

NGR: SJ 369 255

HER No: 19132

Type: A

- 1 Probably 18th or early-19th century. Roughly coursed limestone rubble to front; red brick to tunnel and chamber. Short tunnel entered by segmental-headed arch leads to egg-shaped cavity. The whole is covered by an earth mound.
- 2 To the north-east of the Hall in a wooded area is an ice house.

Weston under Redcastle

Hawkstone Park 1

NGR: SJ 580 296

HER No:

Type:

- 2 There are a number of follies in the park, one of which has a semi-circular opening at one end of a deep tunnel-shaped ravine cut in the red sandstone. This structure, possibly dated to 1780, is popularly called 'The Dungeon', but it was most likely used as an ice house. A railway line ran from it to the Hall.

Weston under Redcastle

Hawkstone Park 2

NGR: SJ 571 290

HER No: 19062

Type: A,F?

- 1 An ice house, now disused, probably late-18th century. It is carved out of the natural sandstone rock outcrop. A roughly square recess with round-headed inner arch leads to very short tunnel, at end of which is a circular egg-shaped cavity of uncertain depth.

Weston under Redcastle

The Citadel

NGR: SJ 571 284

HER No: 19061

Type:

- 1 The site represents: a garden building of post-medieval date, and an icehouse of post-medieval date. The ice house lies approximately 120m. south-east of The Citadel. The Ice house, now disused, is of early-19th century rubble stone and red brick construction. It has a round-headed arch with 20th century stable-type doors. A flight of steps, leads to short tunnel, at the end of which is an infilled cavity.

Whittington

Halston Hall

NGR: SJ 339 316

HER No: 19155

Type: A

- 1 An ice house is recorded approximately 90m. north-east of Halston Hall, Ellesmere Road (location unconfirmed). Probably late-18th century red brick graded slate roof, gabled to front and apsidal to the rear. Plank door to front with semi-circular relieving arch and ramped revetment walls to either side. The interior has a short tunnel, which leads to a large egg-shaped cavity of uncertain depth. The ice house dome is covered by an earth mound. A particularly well preserved example of its type.
- 2 The ice house is in a mound to the west of the hall. (1981)

Whitchurch

London Road

NGR: SJ 541 419

HER No: 19517c

Type: A,B

- 1 An ice house is situated approximately 15m. to south-west of The Tithe Barn on London Road. It is mid-18th century and is of red brick covered by an earth mound. It is circular plan with the entrance to north-west (approach tunnel now demolished). The interior has a domed roof with oculus. It is tapered to drain at base. This was formerly one of the outbuildings of The Old Rectory, Claypit Street. (See above.)

Whitchurch**Pan Castle, Snow House Field**

NGR: SJ 526 405

HER No:

Type:

- 2 A former snow house, a building in which snow was preserved in a manner similar to the storing of ice, may be commemorated in the name of 'Snow House Field'. No further information available (1980s).

Whitchurch**The Old Rectory, Claypit Street**

NGR: SJ 541 420

HER No: 19495

Type:

- 1 The site has been identified as a late-18th century game larder, now disused. It is situated approximately 3m. to the south-west of the Old Rectory (see also London Road below) being square in plan, with a timber frame on a brick base with a pyramidal slate roof. It has one storey, with deep eaves and square finial to the roof, probably the base of a former cupola with 4m. x 4m. bays and small-paned wooden windows. The south-east and south-west abut the garden walls. The interior not inspected, but a plaster ceiling was noted.

Willey**Willey Park**

NGR: SO 66 99

HER No:

Type:

- 2 There was an ice house on this site but it has long since disappeared. (1983)

Woodcote**Woodcote Hall**

NGR: SJ 76 15

HER No:

Type:

- 2 *Subterranea Britannica Bulletin*, No. 11, Jan. 1980, 10.

Worfield**Davenport House**

NGR: SO 752 959

HER No:

Type: A

- 2 An egg-shaped ice house was constructed by Henry Davenport between 1726 and 1727 in the north-facing bank, beneath a wooded mound by Hallon Mere. Entrance was through a long narrow passage which led to the 6.2m. deep cavity. Ice from the mere was stored here. The entrance to the ice house has since been blocked up.

Wroxeter**Eyton on Severn**

NGR: SJ 570 058

HER No: 18206

Type: F

- 1 Shown on OS map as a cave ice house, now disused. Probably 18th/19th century, excavated out of natural red sandstone. It has an L-shaped plan with two circular chambers linked by small rectangular chambers. There is a segmental arched entrance to the first segmental vaulted chamber, and a segmental arch to a small rectangular chamber with shelves carved out of the natural rock. There is a segmental arch from the small chamber to the inner deeper segmental vaulted circular chamber. This was probably the ice house for the large house at Eyton on Severn of which nothing now remains except a detached tower and a few walls.

JOHN PROBERT OF COPTHORNE: A GEORGIAN LAND AGENT

By R. J. SILVESTER

Abstract: John Probert's origins are obscure, with only society gossip providing any background before 1760. In that year he emerged in the historical record as a capable land surveyor. For the next decade he produced a steady stream of estate surveys, including some at a scale that could be accommodated only in large volumes, for landowners in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire and adjacent counties, his work being distinguished by his recommendations for improving the estate and increasing the returns on it. Already acting as land agent for John Mytton of Halston which allowed him the tenancy of Copthorne on the edge of Shrewsbury, he was engaged in 1770 as land agent to both Lord Powis and Lord Clive. Over the next forty years Probert became one of the major land agents in the central borderland. Supported by a group of assistants, clerks and surveyors he ran the several large estates efficiently and financially effectively, with a careful eye on agricultural improvement. He became, too, the confidant of the dowager Lady Powis, accompanied Lord Clive in his travels in western Europe and in his own interest ran a farming estate from Copthorne and prospered as one of the leading lead mining adventurers in Wales. In his later years, and perhaps largely because of his health, he frequented Aberystwyth, where he built a summer house, and rented the castle ruins, which he transformed into a public recreational area. In his seventies he still controlled the Powis and Mytton estates, but increasingly he left their day-to-day running to his assistants up to his death in 1818.

Ten years ago I published a paper on John Probert, who for nearly fifty years was the land agent to successive Earls of Powis for their vast estates in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire.¹ Since then further research has illuminated aspects of his career which were not explored particularly thoroughly in that earlier essay. Although this remarkable man spent much of his working life in Wales, he was consistently referred to as John Probert of Copthorne (or less commonly as of Shrewsbury), and it is evident that despite his Welsh links Copthorne remained his home and his main base until his death in March 1818 (Plate 1). It seems appropriate then to offer a further assessment in these *Transactions*.²

Sources

Any study of John Probert draws, of necessity, on the vast range of documents – account books, letters and draft correspondence, memoranda and the like – which is available in the two Powis Castle archives, the castle being the central collecting point for much of Probert's administration.³ This is not solely because he and his clerks and assistants retained the drafts of much outgoing correspondence, frequently heavily corrected. Bills from vendors and tradesmen, rare in the archives before 1770 when Probert became the land agent at Powis Castle, were carefully hoarded and even *aide-mémoires* were sometimes kept, as for example a simple checklist from 1772–3, the majority of its items crossed through.⁴ The castle archives became a repository for records which Probert had accumulated prior to 1770, most of them bearing little direct relevance to the Powis Estate. To take but one example, in 1764 he had surveyed the Vaynor Estate in the valley of the Severn south of Welshpool, then owned by Robert Moxon, some of whose lands were intermixed with those of the Earls of Powis.⁵ The final, bound, survey volume has remained with successive owners of Vaynor, but Probert's draft notes and observations are to be found in a series of notebooks in the Powis Castle Collection at the National Library of Wales. Probert evidently was

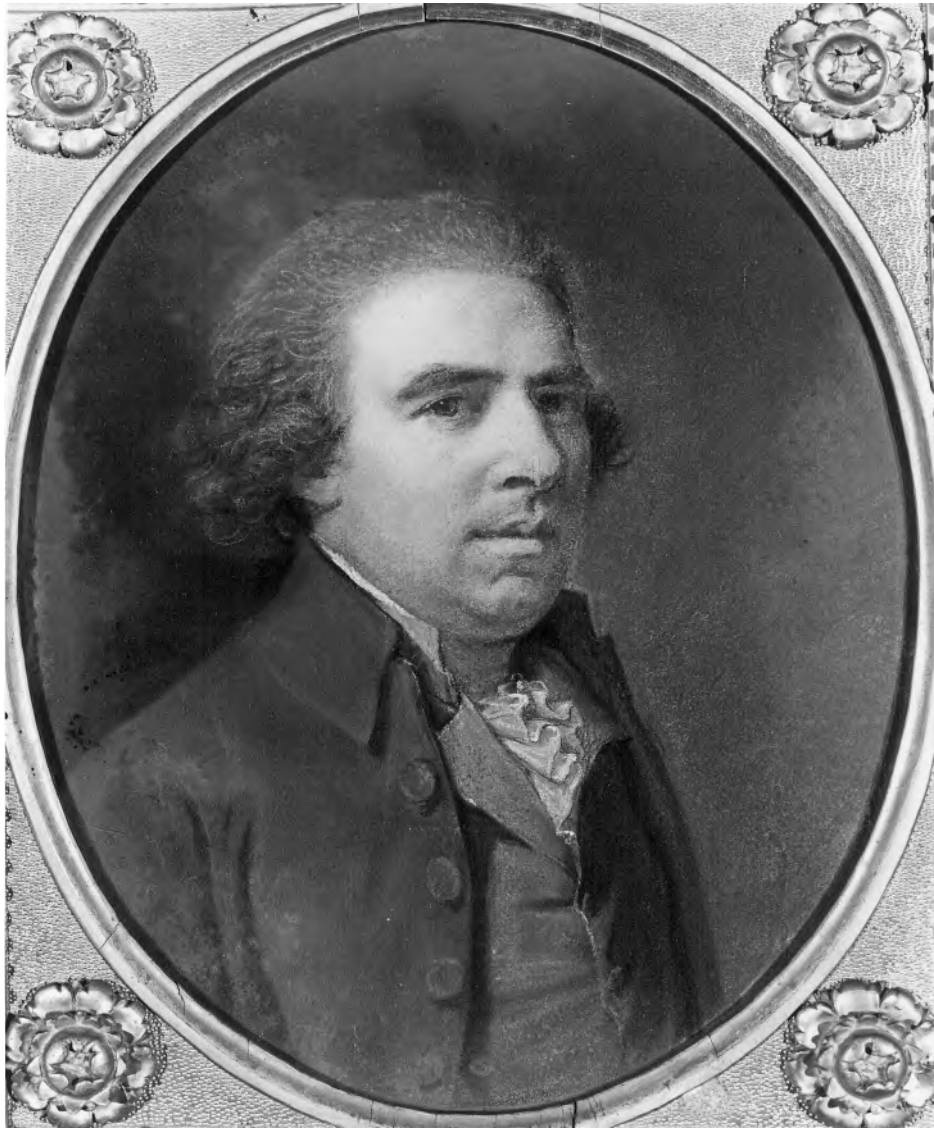


Plate 1 John Probert by Hugh Douglas Hamilton. Powis Castle, The Powis Collection (The National Trust). (Photographic Survey, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.)

loath to discard his working documents on the completion of a commission, although his draft maps are not always extant. Sometimes the reverse is true, for the draft of the Priory Estate (Cardigan) survey from 1768 resides in the National Library, but the final version has not been traced – perhaps it has not survived. It might, however, reside in the voluminous and as yet uncalendared Gogerddan archive in the same repository.⁶ As to why such documents were stored at Powis Castle rather than in Copthorne remains a mystery, but it may be that Probert's executors transferred material to Powis Castle after his death in 1818.

On the other hand, the archives are poor in papers containing personal detail and some other aspects of Probert's working life. There is little, for instance, on his family. His only daughter, Rebecca, became one of his chief assistants in his later years, but his wife remains elusive, referred to only in passing in correspondence. His relationship with other surveyors (see below) is frustratingly vague, and only rarely did he enter a wider arena that would have drawn attention to him in the writings of others. As a result of his dealings with landowners across mid-Wales and the border counties there are occasional references to him in other sets of papers, such as those for the Crosswood Estate in Cardiganshire, but, as with a passing reference in a letter penned by Noel Hill of Attingham, these generally reveal Probert in a professional capacity.⁷ Even the unwanted notoriety over the proposals by the Crown for its commons in Wales in 1778, which led to him being verbally abused by Edmund Burke in Parliament, was related to his work.⁸ Generally, very few outside references have come to light which depict the man himself.

Origins and Family

Probert's origins are unclear. Joseph Farington, a landscape artist who resided for most of his life in London, and whose diaries are an important source of gossip and information on late eighteenth-century life, claimed that Probert was a shoe cleaner in the household of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn at Wynnstay, near Wrexham, and later a stable assistant at Powis Castle.⁹ On the other hand, when the upper-class landowners of Anglesey in 1778 were petitioning against Crown intervention on the commons, they dismissed Probert as 'lately a joiner' and a 'footman to a counsellor at Lincoln's Inn', the latter probably a sarcastic plaudit.¹⁰ Conceivably he could have been all of these, yet perhaps even within his lifetime various myths had begun to circulate about his origins. Certainly for one who classed himself as a gentleman even before his employment by the Earl of Powis and who aspired to the rank of esquire, he might have preferred to obscure his humble origins. But Edward Johnes of Dolforwyn Hall near Newtown, writing to the radical thinker William Cobbett in 1809, remarked that Probert had risen 'to this present opulence and power from very low beginnings', while David Parkes, in an obituary, noted that 'he was his own tutor and the founder of his own fortune, having risen entirely by mental exertion. After emerging from servitude he commenced land surveyor...'.¹¹

His lowly origins can be accepted, but his family background, his place of birth and his early years remain unknown. But then this was typical of his life as a whole. Of John Probert the family man we know next to nothing. His wife is a shadowy figure. She was reportedly a Miss Prothero from Pembrokeshire, whose mother was from the Herbert family of Kerry, and she is said to have inherited a portion of an estate in Llanllugan (Montgomeryshire). On her death in the first week of October 1800 at the age of 69 – much the same age as Probert himself – she was buried at St Alkmund's Church in Shrewsbury, while Copthorne was in the parish of St Chad, and this perhaps suggests a family connection with St Alkmund's.¹² We know virtually nothing of her, apart from the contents of the occasional letter, such as the one which Probert wrote to her while he was in Paris in 1776. His only child, Rebecca, was born in 1764 and it was she who helped her father in his business, occasionally dealing with estate issues in his absence. When Probert travelled to Rome with Lord Clive in 1788, it was Rebecca who accompanied him rather than his wife. She outlived him by only eleven years, dying a spinster in 1829.

The Land Surveyor (1760–1770)

John Probert emerges from obscurity in 1760, at the age of about 28, as a competent land surveyor. Theoretically he could have acquired a basic knowledge of surveying by studying one of the several manuals then in existence. It seems more likely, however, that he acquired the skills by apprenticing himself to a practising surveyor. Who this might have been has never been established, and indeed he could have learnt the craft anywhere in southern Britain, although it seems more probable that it was somewhere in the border region. We can identify two surveyors who might have steered his training in the late 1750s. A surveyor of very similar name, John Roberts, was active in Flintshire between 1756 and 1759, with a brief sojourn in Anglesey. After 1760 Roberts is absent from the cartographic record, but he made a final appearance in 1763, when he was active in Shropshire, surveying the Oswestry and Whittington estates of Watkin Williams Wynn, the volume being bound in a similar fashion to those of Probert, almost certainly by Eddowes of Shrewsbury.¹³ Some traits featuring in Probert's style are mirrored in John Roberts's works: the rococo cartouches, the preference for pen and ink rather than colour, and the layout of the schedules, including occasional suggestions about improvements. Yet other aspects are very different, and the cartographic links are at best tenuous. A more likely teacher was William Pain, whose long career in map-making seems to have commenced in the 1750s.¹⁴ In 1772 he became a tenant of the Earl of Powis, leasing land near Powis Castle, and from the 1770s until as late as 1800 he was surveying in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire, in areas where Probert's own surveyors undertook much of the work (see below).¹⁵ There are close similarities between Pain's style and that of John Probert, and a personal link seems plausible, but this must await a detailed study of Pain's work, something yet to be attempted for this little-known surveyor.

Throughout the 1760s John Probert conducted land surveys primarily in the border region of the middle Severn. The list of surveys is a long one and is dominated by the detailed mapping of large estates across several counties, but for some estates the older tradition of producing only a written survey lingered on, and Probert was adept at compiling these too.¹⁶ For instance around 1767 he was commissioned by the Earl of Powis to survey and value his Montgomeryshire estates in Llanwddyn, Llyssin, Berriew and Manafon for £100 – the detailed written survey is extant, but, although there are hints that a mapped survey might initially have been contemplated, the absence of any such survey in the archives of the Powis Estate strongly implies that one was never completed.¹⁷

Probert's earliest commissions were geographically dispersed. He surveyed a tract of the Staffordshire moorlands near Cheadle for John Broughton Whitehall in 1760, but his principal efforts seem to have been around Clun Forest in south-west Shropshire, and he mapped John Walcot's large estate in Clun and Purslow, with Walcot

Hall in Lydbury North at its heart and produced also a description or particular of the lordship of Clun.¹⁸ The survey includes Probert's trademark observations on how the estate could be improved. Walcot had financial problems and another document reveals that the valuation was a prelude to settling his debts; Probert's thoroughness is demonstrated by a further particular which itemised every existing deed for the Walcot Estate – conveyances and leases – going back to 1636.¹⁹ One of Probert's strengths as a surveyor and valuer, his attention to detail, is displayed in his comments on the need for shelter for sheep on enclosed lands near Clun Forest.²⁰

Undoubtedly he exploited every opportunity to diversify. Having mapped and valued the Walcot estate in 1761, he then acted as the auctioneer at its sale in Clun, the sales brochure emphasising Probert's role, with the largest lettering reserved for his name. The estate was divided into lots and outline descriptions were printed, while Probert's own maps and schedules were available for consultation by prospective purchasers on the day of the sale.²¹ In the Powis Castle archive is Probert's own copy, annotated on at least two separate occasions. It includes notes as to why lands were grouped as they were, and in one case he remarks that 'the lessee drinks hard, takes no exercise and (as I take it) is now in a kind of lethargy'. That the annotated copy was retained at all again displays his reluctance to destroy any papers. Robert, Lord Clive, purchased the Walcot Estate in 1763, and Probert was then employed to assist in valuing (or probably re-valuing) the estate. It was then that he raised a whole series of issues, including whether Clun Forest was suitable to be enclosed. Interestingly, the valuations of the estate tenancies were generally higher than in the earlier valuation.²²

As word of his abilities spread, Probert extended his geographical range into Wales and Cheshire, as well as continuing in Shropshire for new patrons. His work in Cheshire was for the Broughton Delves family, presumably relatives of the John Broughton Whitehall for whom he had worked in 1760. Indeed, it now appears likely that he produced an estate atlas of Sir Brian Broughton Delves's holdings in Staffordshire in 1760, although this cannot now be traced, but the 1762 volume of the same landowner's Cheshire estate has recently been acquired by the Cheshire Record Office.²³ He also undertook his first work for the Clive Family, valuing the estate of Richard Clive at Styche in Shropshire,²⁴ and for one of the greatest of the border landowners, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, on rural estates in Montgomeryshire and southern Denbighshire. His first known association with Shrewsbury came in the same year, when he was employed by the Governors and Guardians to survey the small estate of the Foundling Hospital on the south bank of the Severn in Kingsland, later to become a workhouse and, in 1875, Shrewsbury School.²⁵ The building had been erected only two years earlier from plans drawn up by the Shrewsbury architect, Thomas Farnolls Pritchard, and it suggests that the governors wished to undertake modifications, perhaps to the layout of the grounds surrounding the hospital. Probert's plan is far from typical of what he was to produce at a later date. In colour, it depicted not only a relatively detailed plan of the building, but also a drawing of its front façade (Plate 2).²⁶

Much of his work in subsequent years fell in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire, and, while it was the big estates such as Wynnstay, Powis, Condover and John Mytton's Halston that commanded much of his time, he also completed one-off surveys such as that in 1764 of the Vaynor Park Estate at Berriew in the Severn valley above Welshpool.²⁷ The years 1765 and 1766 mark a hiatus in his surveying career; only one dated survey has been recognised for each of these years, implying that Probert was involved in other unidentified activities. In 1767 his productivity again surfaced, and in 1768 he extended his surveying practice into Cardiganshire, where, in conjunction with a local surveyor, he reported on some of the Earl of Lisburne's holdings in the vicinity of Trawscoed, south-east of Aberystwyth. In the same year John Pugh Pryse, owner of the large Gogerddan Estate in Cardiganshire, who normally employed only local surveyors, commissioned Probert to survey his Priory Estate which lay on the edge of the county town of Cardigan. There is currently no evidence to infer that there was a measured survey resulting in an estate map; rather it seems to have been the more traditional written survey, which incorporated what Probert specialised in, the valuation of land and the identification of where rent increases might be imposed. It is probably reasonable to assume that Probert had expertise not locally available. Certainly he was very much in tune with current thinking, advocating the enclosure of the common fields within the parish by converting them into ten-acre closes.²⁸ Other surveys followed in Shropshire, Radnorshire, Denbighshire and Monmouthshire, and finally, in March 1770, he valued the estates of Lady Jerningham within the Lordship of Corpham in Shropshire at £23,000. What is unusual here is that while there was no detailed mapping of the estate Probert produced a location map at one inch to the mile, showing the general position of these lands in the local context of Bishop's Castle, with Walcot Hall and Park, and Ludlow, with Oakly Park near Bromfield.

Other elements in Probert's surveying career emerge from an examination of the extant surveys. He appears to have been equally happy surveying and valuing woodland. For Walcot Park and its demesne he worked with William Corfield on an assessment of the timber in 1762 which included not only the number oak trees, but also the valuation of the bark and the timber. Later, reports on the timber became an integral element of his surveys. Fully aware of the long-term benefits of woodland, his report on the Usk and Trellech manors in Monmouthshire in 1769 noted that 'Maze Mawr is a large tract of poor ground, has all been plowed. It would turn to much better account if laid down and sown'd with Acorns, Ashen keys and Beech Mast to make a wood'.²⁹ Occasionally, too,

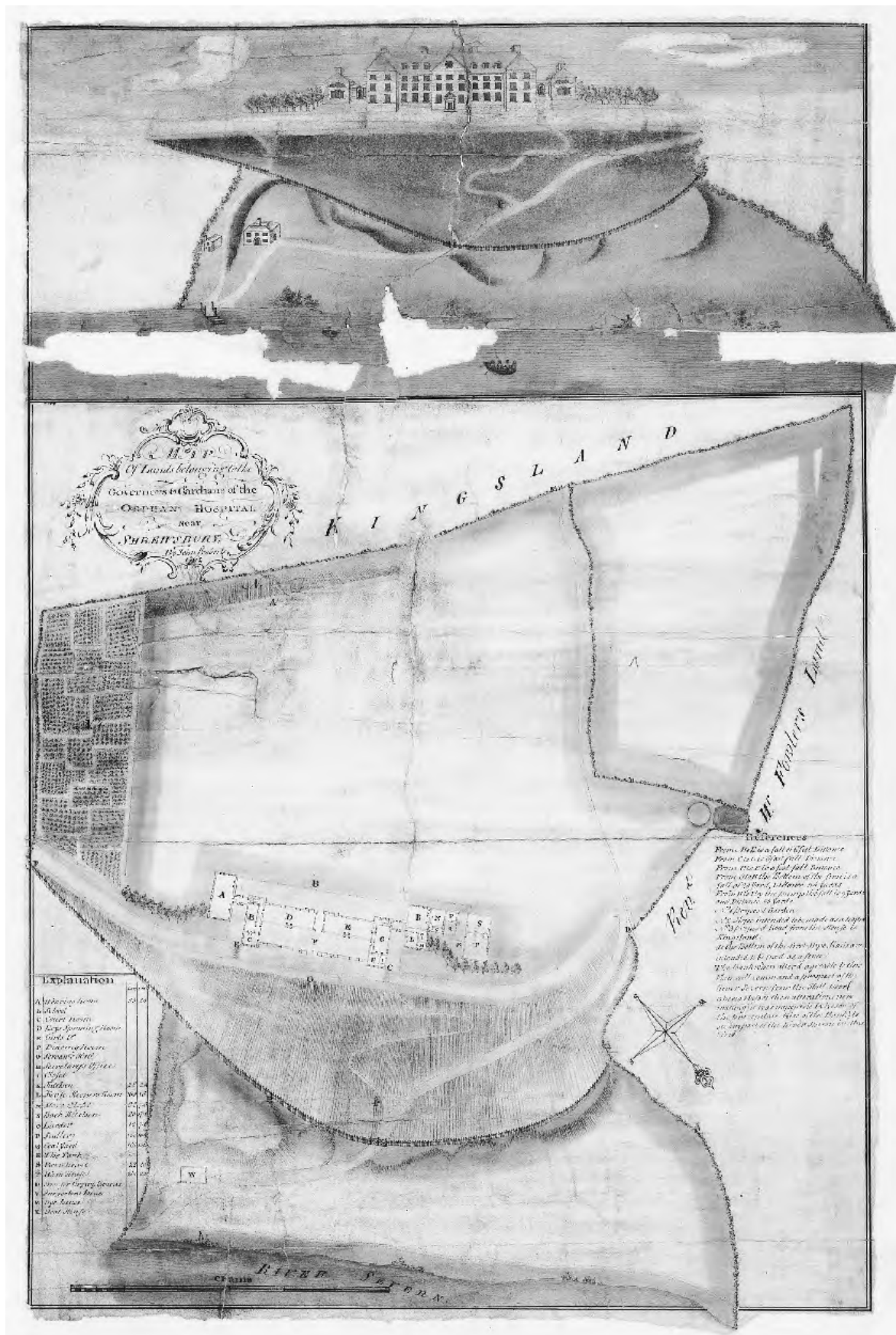


Plate 2 John Probert's plan of the Orphan Hospital in Shrewsbury in 1762. (It is deposited in the Foundling Hospital Collections at the London Metropolitan Archives, and is reproduced here by kind permission of Coram, a charity founded in 1739 by Royal Charter, providing better chances for children.)

Probert produced building plans; the Foundling Hospital in Shrewsbury has been noted above, and a plan of the hall and a prospect of the building in its landscape were prepared for Vaynor in 1764. These, however, were illustrative adjuncts to the main surveys.

A further dimension of Probert's work has been touched on above. His surveys went beyond the general land measuring and, on occasions, the valuing which were the standard for many of his contemporaries, for he assessed both the buildings and the land, recommending where improvements could be made.³⁰ The emphasis might subtly change from survey to survey – and generally it is within the atlases that we see the approach being adopted – but this practical embellishment was not usual in the surveying of the time. The survey became not simply a visual record of the estate, but also a medium for signalling its potential for change and improvement, and even more importantly, from the perspective of at least some of the landowners who employed his services, a mechanism for enhancing the financial return from that estate. The first such survey to be completed was probably that of Sir Brian Broughton Delves's estates in Staffordshire followed by the same landowner's Cheshire holdings, and Cyfeiliog, Vaynor and Conover. Typical is a statement on Morris Davis's holding on the Vaynor Estate which he recorded as 'a barren piece [of land] but could answer for rearing timber and therefore should be taken in hand and sown with acorns', and the report on a farm called Tyr Brwnt, 'which should not be let as a by take to any one but tenants of the Estate as the profits would be carried off the lands'. It was this inclusion of additional detail which led the commentator on the archive of maps belonging to Christ Church, Oxford, to single out Probert's last known atlas, of the college's lands in Shropshire and Staffordshire in 1769, for detailed assessment, classing it as unique in the college archives.³¹

By 1770 Probert had completed a minimum of forty surveying commissions in eleven years, some admittedly of no more than a single farm, but others massive estate land compilations in atlases. That of the Vaynor Estate in Berriew had 30 maps with the supporting schedules, the Conover Estate, significant enough in scale and execution to have been acquired by the Paul Mellon Collection at Yale University some years ago, has 47 maps, and that of Watkin Williams Wynn's Cyfeiliog estates in Montgomeryshire and Denbighshire 76 maps. Others maps have undoubtedly disappeared. Probert and his assistant, Nathaniel Lewis, verified copies of maps in 1767, the originals of which were held by John Ashby, the Shrewsbury solicitor who had received them from George Forrester of Willey. As to what these maps depicted, we have no idea, but it is reasonable to assume that they had been prepared by Probert, not least because nearly twenty years later he was attempting to get Lord Powis's London lawyer, Thomas Ryder, to extract 'mine and other surveys of Mr Ashby's several estates' from Lord Powis. Perhaps significantly, John Ashby was involved with the trustees of the Conover Estate in 1766/7, and we may speculate that Probert's association with Ashby must have been particularly beneficial to the surveyor.³²

Probert's surveying practice brought him into contact with a number of large and influential landowners, and there can be absolutely no doubt that he put these contacts to good use. From the Mytton family he acquired the lease on Copthorne, while his personal involvement in speculative mining ventures also certainly commenced as a result of working for Mytton and for the Earl of Powis, both of whom leased mines in mid-Wales. By 1770 Probert had worked for, or established connections with, several of the largest landowners in Cardiganshire – Pugh Pryse of Gogerddan, Wilmot Vaughan (the Earl of Lisburne) of Trawscoed and Thomas Johnes of Hafod – and these links were to prove valuable in developing his mining projects in the region.

Probert first worked for Viscount Lisburne at Trawscoed in 1768, when he assisted Lisburne's agent, Edward Hughes, in viewing and valuing several farms on the estate. In 1770, he started to survey the Crosswood demesne, but he produced only a plan of the house itself and a map of its immediate environs. The accompanying schedule revealed the value of the demesne to be let on Lady Day (25 March) 1771, providing a reasonable guide to the date of the survey which, unusually for Probert's maps, is missing from this one. That the remainder of the surrounding estate was measured by an obscure surveyor, Henry Mercier, otherwise known only for his limited work in Northamptonshire, suggests that he took over from Probert. Mercier's maps are competent and his style displays similarities to that of Probert, suggesting that the latter had a hand in appointing a new surveyor.³³

However, it was the Herbert family, who moved to Powis Castle only in 1771, and their relatives, the Clive family of Styche and Oakly, whose patronage was to be fundamental to Probert's career. The earliest work for the Earl of Powis seems to have been no earlier than 1767, when he completed the written survey and valuation of estates in Llanwddyn and other central Montgomeryshire parishes, although there are other, undated surveys of Powis's estates in Berriew on the Severn, the manor of Deuddwr near Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain, and Domgay near Four Crosses, between Welshpool and Oswestry, which might be earlier.³⁴ The Llanwddyn survey was referred to by Probert in a detailed memorandum, submitted to the Earl of Powis in 1770, on his work for the estate over the previous three years, prior to his appointment as the Powis land agent. It was in effect an invoice – Probert had been paid only £100, leaving a balance of £141, a considerable sum in the late eighteenth century, and it is difficult to envisage how he could have afforded to allow such costs to build up.³⁵ Apart from the Llanwddyn survey, which was charged at £100, he remarked on the reports and a survey of Esgair-y-Mwyn mine (in Cardiganshire), including an assessment of letting the mine to a lessee, the charge for which was £50, and there were trips to

Northamptonshire for viewing and valuing tithes, for surveying a couple of farms in Radnorshire, at the rate of 6*d.* per acre, for which he charged £10, and perhaps most significantly he listed his attendance on the Earl in London, Bath and at Oakly Park, 'amounting to a kind of agency for upwards of two years' for which he claimed £40.³⁶

Early associations with the Clive family are less easy to identify, but there is a draft text from 1769 of a valuation of an unnamed farm owned by William Powell in the parishes of Clun and Llanfair Waterdine, which was probably carried out for Clive, although there is no map and no indication that there was ever a full survey. Clive, however, had also purchased the manors of Usk and Trellech in Monmouthshire from Lord Windsor in 1768/9, and in 1769 Probert was commissioned to produce a written survey or particular of the manors, which was then checked by the land agent, Mr. Edwards. A Mr. Snell had produced a survey a short time earlier, but Probert was damning: 'I have had some parts of the estate surveyed by an accurate surveyor...plain proof that [Snell's] survey was of no value'.³⁷ He finished by noting that 'this is the most extraordinary estate I ever viewed. The two estates are at least 70 miles in circumference'. Later in 1771, and now employed as an agent by Clive, he returned to Monmouthshire to value the lordships.³⁸

By the late 1760s Probert was already fulfilling, in some respects, the role of land agent, and he was not averse to stating this in correspondence with the Earl. In April 1770 Clive and Lord Powis nominated Palmer, agent to the Duke of Bedford, and Probert to value their estates of Oakly Park, Heightley and Rockley, for which Palmer was later to be paid £1000 and Probert £500. It was in all probability Probert's final commission as an independent land surveyor.

The New Land Agent and Land Surveying

Probert's appointment as a land agent effectively marked the termination of his surveying career. This was explicitly accepted in his articles of agreement with Lord Clive, which rehearsed his experience in 'surveying, value setting, letting, buying and selling estates for several noblemen and gentlemen', and revealed that he was taking on the role of land agent for both the Earl of Powis and Lord Clive from May 1770.³⁹ The articles confirmed also that he was already acting in this capacity for John Mytton of Halston in Shropshire. His annual salary from Clive as agent for the Montgomeryshire and Shropshire estates was to be £100, together with an additional £50, which seems to have been a form of retainer,⁴⁰ and £25 for his 'riding charges'. He could not quit the post as long as he was able to do it, or without the agreement of Lord Clive, but after retirement he was to receive 'a due proportion', in other words a pension. In addition, he was to report occasionally on Clive's estates in Radnorshire and Monmouthshire. Any surveying and mapping was to be paid for separately, to whomever did the work, and here undoubtedly Probert was preparing the ground for the practices of later years. Probert must have agreed comparable terms with the Earl of Powis, but that agreement has not been traced. Already combining a surveying career with acting as agent to the Mytton family, Probert now took on two further estates, both of them extensive. Yet in the context of the time the 'part-time' approach to estate management was far from unusual. The later seventeenth century saw agents or stewards acting for themselves in business as well as running estates for the gentry, and in the eighteenth century there were plenty of parallels for such a spread of effort.

Probert did not give up valuing land entirely upon his appointment. In about 1771 he valued a portion of the Rockley estate, presumably as part of his earlier commission, and five years later he completed a particular and valuation of estates belonging to Messrs. Duck and Butler in Lower Down and Acton, an area of Lydbury North, which carried notes on the state of buildings and specific needs for repairs. Lord Clive, it appears, had designs on these Lydbury estates.⁴¹

Probert did, however, give up the physical task of surveying, delegating the ground work to others. As much as anyone, he would have appreciated how vital it was that landowners (and their agents) had access to accurate depictions of their estates, and how important too that there were experienced surveyors available locally to undertake surveys when they were needed. The solution, presaged in his agreement with Clive in the statement on the separate payment for surveys, appears to have been to maintain one or more surveyors at his home at Copthorne. In the decade during which he worked as a surveyor Probert rarely, if ever, acknowledged an associate or assistant; the reference, already noted above, to Nathaniel Lewis as his assistant in 1767 was unusual. But after 1770 a number of estate surveyors were linked directly in some way or other with Probert or with Copthorne. Henry Mercier might or might not have been amongst the first of these, but there were also Lewis, Thomas Slater, Robert Hale and, later, Thomas Kyfin, all operating in the period up to Probert's death in 1818. At a time when Copthorne was really no more than a single house, and not the suburb of Shrewsbury as we know it today, Robert Hale, Thomas Hale and Thomas Kyfin were all referred to as of Copthorne at some point in their careers, while Nathaniel Lewis and Thomas Slater worked together occasionally, although the latter is much more frequently associated with Charles Bage, a well-known architect and engineer based in Shrewsbury, whose earlier career, in the 1770s and 1780s, appears to have focussed on surveying.

The precise working relationship between Probert and these various surveyors cannot be established in any detail. Nathaniel Lewis was reputedly trained by Probert from around 1762/3, and was said still to be in Shrewsbury in 1794, although another record, from 1793, refers to his death and reveals that Probert's clerk had ready access to his papers, suggesting a close link.⁴² Thomas Slater was also reputedly trained by Probert at much the same as Lewis and was living in St Chad's parish in Shrewsbury in 1765 and in Dogpole in 1786.⁴³ Robert Hale, writing from Copthorne in 1779, complained to Hugh Jones, Probert's clerk, that 'we are entirely out of cash at Copthorne' and asked for 10 guineas, while an undated letter from Hale to Jones asked for £30 to cover bills in Shrewsbury and payments to his brother William, another surveyor. Later, in 1780, Robert Hale moved to Oswestry, but between 1781 and 1783 he was back at Copthorne, as was his brother (or son?) Thomas. In 1799, when he had moved, probably to London, Robert Hale was advanced money by the Powis Estate for a mortgage.⁴⁴ Thomas Kyffin the latest of the surveyors, worked from Copthorne in the years 1810 to 1816, as his then assistant, Charles Mickleburgh of Montgomery, testified. The inclusion of other documents relating to Kyffin in the Powis Castle archives into the early 1830s indicates that the strong connection was maintained, and by 1829 he had succeeded Probert as a trustee to the Lloyd Estate in Castle Caereinion.

It cannot be assumed that Probert established a local monopoly in estate surveying in the last decades of the eighteenth century, yet, with the exception of William Pain mentioned above, there were only a few other surveyors operating in this region of the Welsh borderlands during those years. Only Robert Hale and Kyffin and later Mickleburgh can specifically be linked to Copthorne, but the evident popularity of Shrewsbury as a place of residence for several other surveyors points to closer links between Probert and those whom he trained than are immediately obvious from the limited documentation. He supported surveyors, with Copthorne serving as a base for many years, using them no doubt on the Powis and Clive Estates as necessary, but also recommending them to other local landowners for work on commissions across the region. Defining the scale of what amounted to a surveying practice is virtually impossible. While Lewis, Hale and the others occasionally autographed their works, there are further groups of maps which are anonymous, to an extent that implies that surveyors were prohibited from identifying their products. That these works are very much in the style which Probert promoted, and which he encouraged amongst those whom he trained, strengthens the contention. Thus there is a fine volume of maps of the Powis Castle estates in the parishes of Montgomery, Chirbury, Forden, Churchstoke, Berriew and Llandyssil, produced in 1785. This was presumably officially commissioned by Probert, and it is inconceivable that he would not have used his Copthorne surveyors to do the work. But neither the survey nor the wall map that was presumably produced at the same time are signed. A later map volume, however, remarks on Robert Hale's great map and index of the Powis Estate around Welshpool of about 1780 and it is tempting to identify these as the anonymous maps in the Powis Castle collection.⁴⁵

Probert's reputation was high amongst the gentry and greater landowners of mid-Wales. In 1775, Lord Lisburne had written to Probert asking him to instruct Hughes, Lisburne's own agent, to employ Thomas Lewis to survey his Cardiganshire lands.⁴⁶ In Lisburne's view Lewis was the only person to employ and indeed he appears to have been the busiest of the surveyors working in Cardiganshire at that time. But Lisburne needed Probert to specify the surveying method to be used because of the considerable expenditure that he was likely to incur.⁴⁷ Five years later, when Lewis was at work at Trawscoed, Lisburne expected Probert to inspect Lewis's surveys to certify them as complete, while Lewis, in a 'letter' that was incorporated in one of the bound volumes of surveys, complained that he had to wait for months for Probert to journey to Cardiganshire to give his opinion on the survey.⁴⁸

There is one further matter relevant, if only theoretically, to Probert's surveying practice, his sole appearance on the national stage. He attracted attention and some temporary notoriety, incurring the wrath of the orator Edmund Burke, who sarcastically commented that 'at the name of John Probert of Copthorne, Cadair Idris shook to her centre'. In 1778 Probert was appointed by the Treasury Board at a salary of £300 per year 'to undertake the better surveying, superintending and managing [of] his Majesty's Manors, Mines, Farms Lands, Rights, Royalties and Estates within the Principality of Wales', and this brief was almost immediately extended to permit the enclosure of other commons and waste lands and the recovery of rent arrears. The story has already been fully chronicled by Peter Thomas, but there are some interesting side issues here. Thomas holds that the instigating agency of this programme was probably Lord Powis, and certainly this was the assertion of the contemporary commentator, Horace Walpole. Yet it seems improbable that even if he did have the ear of Lord North, the Prime Minister, the Earl concocted the whole scheme himself. Thomas points out that Lord Powis had much to gain in terms of enclosure from the Crown commons and also that the whole issue originated in concerns over the fraudulent exploitation of the Crown's metal ore deposits in north Wales. Probert, with his surveying and land agent background as well as his own interest in mining ventures, would have been considerably more *au fait* than his employer with the potential financial benefits to be gained from the implementation of such a scheme. Probably it was due to Probert's astuteness that the political possibilities of using Whitshed Keene were recognised. Keene was Lord Powis's tame MP for his pocket borough of Montgomery and married to Lord North's stepsister. It would be no great surprise to find that it was Probert who had hatched the whole idea.

Perhaps significantly, there is a draft memorandum from around 1777, seemingly from the hand of Probert, which implicitly criticises the Deputy Auditor for Wales, William Myddelton, who had control over the Crown Lands, laying out what the Crown officials should do.⁴⁹ In the event, the hostility of aristocratic landowners throughout much of north Wales, who saw this as a threat to their own lands, caused North's government to back down. We can but speculate on how much time Probert would have devoted to the Crown wastes himself had the scheme progressed. He was already the agent for three large estates, as well as having his own business interests, and it is probable that he would have delegated much of the work to his surveyors working from Copthorne. What is also intriguing, in the light of his meticulous record keeping, is that apart from the draft memorandum, there is apparently no documentation in the Powis Archives relating to the abortive appointment and its aftermath.

Probert the Land Agent

While John Probert might be described simply as a land agent, albeit to one of the biggest landowners in the border region, it was not only surveyors who came under his control. We may envisage him as the head of an eighteenth-century land agency. This is not quite as exceptional as it might appear. The well-known eighteenth-century agent Nathaniel Kent had colleagues working with him in southern England, and in the century which followed such agencies were quite common.⁵⁰ Probert, however, was ahead of his time in having a team of assistants and clerks working for him. Indeed it would have been impossible to administer these several estates effectively without such back-up. Hugh Jones, his clerk, had almost certainly been with Probert prior to his appointment as agent and I suspect, although I cannot prove, that many of the finely penned estate surveys from the 1760s were in his hand. In 1771, with Probert absent in London, it was Jones, based in Montgomery, probably at Lymore Hall, who kept him informed by letter of recent developments, sending him a number of estate surveys, and reporting that he was about to travel to Llangynog in western Montgomeryshire to 'settle the book of rents' and draw up lists of defaulters to pass on to the bailiffs.⁵¹ On Jones's death his place was taken by Robert Hughes, who was later rewarded with a bequest of £100 in Probert's will.⁵² There were other clerks who, although usually amanuenses, were also trusted with estate business. Other clerks also appear in the records, such as Edward Edye who subsequently was identified as an attorney-at-law in Montgomery.

From Probert's early years in control of the Powis Castle Estate Robert Wilding, possibly one of his relatives, appears in a capacity which could best be described as support staff. First mentioned in 1771, when he was 'transcribing books of agreement', he was employed as a clerk in 1777, but his responsibilities subsequently grew.⁵³ Wilding lived in a house called the Dairy on the Powis Castle estate in Welshpool, and during the last decade of Probert's life it was he who undertook much of the agent's work, and who, after Rebecca Probert, was the main beneficiary of Probert's will. On Wilding's death in 1824, his nephew Charles, who had already been working at Powis Castle for some years, took over much of the agent's work. Both deferred to Probert on issues of importance, and it is quite clear from the wide range of matters in which they were involved that they were Probert's men, and only on occasions were they answerable directly to successive Earls of Powis.

Less clear is Probert's relationship with John Ashby of Shrewsbury, who has been seen as the doyen of Shropshire estate managers up until his premature death in 1779 at the age of 57.⁵⁴ That Ashby worked for Lord Clive is well-attested, for in 1769 he became chief agent for some of Clive's recently purchased estates, and he clearly benefited in Shrewsbury from the patronage of both Clive and Powis. His involvement with Clive continued after Probert's appointment in 1770, but the relationship between the two men remains opaque. J. D. Nichol has argued that Probert was Ashby's assistant, at least in the management of Clive's estate, and that they appear to have worked jointly in promoting new agricultural techniques amongst Clive's tenants.⁵⁵ This could well be an accurate view of the professional standing of the two agents, reflected to some degree in the relative sparsity of estate papers for Clive's estates in the 1770s bearing Probert's imprint. But in view of the ideas on agricultural improvement which Probert was espousing in his earlier surveys it is also evident that he was the source of the changes on Clive's estates.

The agency had other commissions in addition to the Powis, Clive and Mytton Estates. Probert himself was a trustee of the Lloyd Estate in Trefnant and Caereinion (Montgomeryshire), a post which his daughter took over on his death, and he was also a trustee for some years of the estate of Nicholas Smythe Owen at Condober.⁵⁶ Robert Hughes, Probert's clerk, was appointed by Francis Lloyd of Domgay (near Four Crosses) in 1805 as agent and rent gatherer for his estates in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire; these included land in Ellesmere, Oswestry and Whitchurch, as well as in Malpas in Cheshire and Llandysilio in Montgomeryshire. It was Probert who provided surety.⁵⁷ There are indications also that in 1790 Probert might have been acting for Sir Richard Hill regarding encroachments in Moreton Wood, near Whitchurch. And there was a business relationship with John Lloyd Jones of Maesmawr, near Welshpool, which was never explained, but seems to indicate that by the early years of the

nineteenth century Jones was working with, or even for, Probert, and in 1813 Jones was one of the witnesses of Probert's will.⁵⁸

Running the Estates

Appointed by the Earl of Powis, Probert took up the challenge of running what was becoming one of the largest landed estates in the central Marches without any apparent difficulty, and his role almost certainly grew after the death of the first Earl in 1772. His son, George Herbert, the second Earl, was reputedly profligate, his prolonged stays in London requiring considerable finance. 'A mean, silly man, the bubble of his mistress (and of his steward consequently) who rarely comes [to Powis Castle] to sneak about for a day or two' wrote John Byng.⁵⁹ Probert's task was to create a surplus to fund the Earl of Powis's lifestyle. The income from the Powis Estates in 1780 was £15,851, the outgoings £4,507. Of the residue £3,600 was passed to the Earl's solicitors for his use. Probert's own salary as 'receiver and manager' of all the Earl's estates was £555, although this sum included the payments which Probert made to his clerks and assistants.⁶⁰

Probert's attention to detail was remarkable, his administrative paperwork meticulous. For instance, he maintained detailed accounts of the Powis family's travels, as in August 1773, when they journeyed from London to Ludlow and on those occasions he had sole responsibility for settling their bills.⁶¹ His accounts in 1780 include payments to people who helped to extinguish a fire at Welshpool, and the salary of a teacher of poor boys at Montgomery.⁶² Those for 1789/90 include not only the rents received from limekilns, but also the profits from selling poles, faggots and bark from Crowther's Coppice, near Welshpool, and Mathrafal Woods at Meifod, and the cost of carpenter's work at Llanfair market house.⁶³ In 1775 there is a list of the fish in the pools at Powis Castle and Lymore, including the variety – carp, perch, tench and pike – and their size, detailed to the point where we know that in Gwenn Morgan's pool there were 14 carp of ten inches and 12 of twelve inches.⁶⁴

His approach to the management of the estate in the first few years is instructive; at an early stage he brought administrative and financial order through a diverse set of strategies to a large estate which had not been well-managed by his predecessors, or so it appears. All elements of the estate came under his control. Initially, no doubt, he spent time assessing the estate and its numerous tenancies, but from December 1770 onwards there are records of him re-valuing and letting farmholdings.⁶⁵ He also sought to enlarge the estate by purchase, and consistently compiled abstracts of title to the larger land holdings which were acquired.

An estate in and around Welshpool belonging to the late Gilbert Jodrell, a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, came on the market after his death in 1772. A year later the trustees for the Earl of Powis, who was then on the Grand Tour, acquired Jodrell's estates, presumably by private treaty. All the properties were recorded in a particular, and the history of the land and its previous owners was set down in an abstract which provided all the necessary information on the background to the land acquisition.⁶⁶ Four years after his appointment a series of detailed surveys of different manors was initiated – Caereinion in 1774, Kerry, Cedewain and Halcetor in 1775, Tirymynech, Streetmarshall, Llanerchidol and Teirtref in 1780, Powis Castle around 1780 and Lymore in about 1785 – and there can be no doubt that Probert was establishing a detailed map record of the core holdings of the Powis Estate throughout Montgomeryshire and Shropshire.⁶⁷ These were not elegant volumes designed solely for the pleasure of the Earl of Powis, but, as the many annotations reveal, they were working documents for the estate.

The raw materials which the estate had to offer were also of considerable remunerative interest. In June 1770 Probert reported to the Earl that he reached an agreement with Thomas Ryder, the latter's London-based lawyer, on how to value all the small timber on his Lordship's estates, and that he had also set men to work exploiting a possible coal vein on Clee Hill in Shropshire. His remit extended to the limekilns around Llanymynech Hill, and in 1772 he gathered details about those which lay on the Powis Estate: the nature of the rock which was being exploited, the returns from the quarrying, the price of wagon loads of stone, the advantage of access to nearby turnpike roads, and a guide to how much one kiln cost to produce lime were all detailed in a memorandum by Probert, who cited his sources, listed the facts and raised issues which should be addressed in order to increase revenue.⁶⁸ His control of every detail is indicated by an undated set of plans of the proposed stables and dog kennels at Lymore Park, complete with descriptions and measurements which were sent to him while he was on one of his regular visits to see the Earl in London.⁶⁹

From his surveying days Probert was fully aware of the potential for agricultural improvement. His survey of the Crosswood estate for Viscount Lisburne had advocated turnips in rotation, liming and dunging, and he offered criticism of over-cropping and under-manuring; he would certainly have initiated similar practices on the Powis Castle estates.⁷⁰ That we find little reference to such practices is perhaps not surprising, for this was not the sort of effort that required documentation, but in an agreement with Henry Owen in 1787 to permit the ploughing up of ground called 'the Prisk' he defined precisely what should be used in successive years, including turnips properly manured with muck and lime in the second year, and barley with clover and grassed in the third year.⁷¹ The silver

cups given by the Earl in 1773 to his tenants in Chirbury and Montgomery for the best growth of turnips was surely Probert's idea.⁷² The Earl of Powis's 'compassion' for the poor also found expression through Probert. In 1776 there were recorded disbursements to the poor, for planting acorns in the park at Powis Castle.⁷³ And there is a draft, complete with corrections, of what today would be termed a press release: an undated note probably from the 1770s states that 'a Montgomery correspondent informs us that the Earl of Powis gave four hundred loaves, fifty strikes of potatoes etc. to the poor housekeepers of the neighbourhood of Powis Castle, an example of his lordship's economy and charity in this age of dissipation....'.⁷⁴ There can be no doubt as to the identity of the anonymous correspondent, nor of his assiduity in enhancing his master's beneficence.

There were major plans for Powis Castle and its surrounding park, reflecting the determination of the first Earl to move there from Oakly Park, although in the event it was his son who made the transfer in 1773. The Shrewsbury architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard was instructed to survey the castle, his earliest work in 1770, and later, in 1772, he delivered a set of sixteen plans and elevations to Probert for consideration by the first Earl.⁷⁵ Thereafter intermittent works included the conversion of part of the Long Gallery into a records repository, improvements to the castle, which included new windows and floors and stuccoed walls, the construction of a new brewhouse and other changes.⁷⁶ There were plans too for a redesign of the castle grounds. In 1771 a memorandum from the Earl of Powis, although certainly initiated by Probert, required the employment of William Emes, a 'layer out of lands and pleasure grounds' to plant parks and lawns around the castle, and a new kitchen garden and nurseries were envisaged. Possibly Emes was not immediately available, for Probert himself was to identify where at least some of these new gardens would be established. As late as 1778 a letter from Emes was still referring to the proposed kitchen garden.⁷⁷ Other changes included the closure of the public road through the park and its replacement by a new road running through closes on the demesne.⁷⁸

Less apparent, but probably equally important, is the guiding hand of Probert in the saga of Ludlow Castle. Thomas Farnolls Pritchard had been commissioned by the first Earl to prepare plans of the castle in 1765, and six years later the Earl applied to the Crown for a lease on the castle, seemingly with the intention of building a residence within its walls. The lease seems to have been granted just before his death, but the second Earl, still a minor, probably had little interest in a town house in Ludlow. Faced with holding the extensive ruins of a major Marches castle, the purpose of its acquisition now obsolete, the Powis Estate set out to look after the castle as best it could. Hughes has described how the Powis trustees undertook the upkeep and improvement of the castle, opening the site to the townspeople, laying out paths, and repairing gates and seats.⁷⁹ The impetus for all this probably came from Probert, and it is hardly a coincidence that what was done at Ludlow Castle from the 1770s was paralleled at Aberystwyth thirty years later, when Probert leased the castle ruins from Thomas Johnes.⁸⁰ Whether Probert calculated that with its pivotal role in border history, there was a political though non-financial value in maintaining Ludlow Castle is an intriguing question. In later years other outlying holdings of the Powis Estate received attention: for instance between 1785 and 1789 there were payments for enlarging and stocking Shrawardine Moss fish pool, and building a pleasure house and boathouse adjoining it.⁸¹

Probert's early years as agent were peripatetic, with Lord Powis spending much of his time in London. Probert spent ten weeks in the capital in 1771 when the Oakly Park estate was being purchased by Lord Clive from the Earl. When Probert finally succeeded in billing Lord Powis for two and a half years of accumulated expenses for trips to London the total reached £190.⁸² Later, in 1776, he travelled to Paris for two weeks, to deal with the affairs of Lady Barbara Herbert, the second Earl's mother. Previously he had been involved in a valuation of estates purchased by successive Dukes between 1685 and 1733, which were settled on her to provide an income, but in 1776 these were converted to an annual cash payment.⁸³ Probert seems to have spent a considerable amount of time trying to resolve the problems of the dowager Lady Powis, an inveterate gambler who spent her later years in the French capital. Some of the letters from her to Probert indicate that she viewed him as both an intermediary in her dealings with her son, the Earl, and also as her confidant, a conduit of information.⁸⁴ In 1782, for instance, she was seeking information from him about a split between her son and his wife, Harriet, and expressing concern that he might stay abroad permanently. In general Probert was on good terms with Lady Barbara, and her chatty letters remain in the Archive, as do what could best be described as gossip-filled letters in draft from Probert.⁸⁵

Probert's role in organising and running the estate became more routine as the years passed. In the 1780s he had probably organised its smooth running to his satisfaction. There were, of course, always issues to be settled. He was exchanging memoranda in 1796 about rights of common and their exploitation; he ran the manorial courts, and his expense accounts for 1784 include the ejection of a cottager; enclosure was an issue that involved him regularly as with Clun Forest in the last decade of the eighteenth century; and he held the town clerkship of Oswestry in 1801, a post in the gift of the Earl of Powis.⁸⁶ In the early years of the nineteenth century both correspondence and documents indicate that the Earl's Irish affairs, enclosures, some land purchases and occasional disputes with other land owners were the prime issues. There were also more minor matters to resolve. Richard Jones was appointed in 1805 to seize guns, bows, greyhounds and the like which were used to kill hares or conies, pheasants and partridges within the precincts of the manors of St John of Jerusalem (Llanwddyn) and

Caereinion. And at some unspecified date in the early nineteenth century the local bailiff at Montford, John Till, was directed 'to pay attention to all farm buildings, as well as gates and fences...and permit [no trees] to be fell[ed] without particular orders from Mr Probert.... [Till] was to be at Cophthorne every Sunday morning at eight o'clock to report any occurrences that may happen whether respecting game on the Estate and to receive any further orders..' With regard to the game, he was 'to get the names of all qualified persons, (but not to warn them) who shall be known to sport on the three last mentioned manors, and report it to Mr Probert...'.⁸⁷

The Earl of Powis also had holdings in other counties, and the emphasis on these in the later eighteenth century seems to have focused on their potential mineral wealth. The first Earl of Powis had, in 1757, leased from the Crown the Esgair-y-Mwyn mine (Cardiganshire), the scene, a few years previously, of a bitter dispute between Lewis Morris and local landowners.⁸⁸ Probert had been engaged in 1769 in preparing a survey of the mine workings there, and in 1771 he and his clerk, Hugh Jones, were instructed to report more generally on the condition of the mines in Cardiganshire.⁸⁹ The Earl had lands at Crickheath (Shropshire) and Llangynog (Montgomeryshire) with mines on them, and the lease of lead mining on Roundton Hill on the Shropshire /Montgomeryshire border was awarded in 1772, under very tightly controlled conditions.⁹⁰ There were even references in 1770 to mine workings in Caernarvonshire, where gold had either been found or was predicted.⁹¹

Probert's remit ran to being the political agent for Powis. There is, however, no evidence that he had any specific interest in politics, other than serving Lord Powis, Lord Clive and their candidates in parliamentary elections.

The Clive Estates

Probert's connection with the Clive family had begun in the early 1760s. He was employed in 1762 to survey and value Richard Clive's estate at Styche,⁹² and two years previously he had surveyed portions of John Walcot's estate which included Clun Forest and parts of Bishop's Castle, which were then acquired by Clive's son Robert (better known as Clive of India) in 1764. By the time Richard Clive died in 1771 Probert had become the land agent at Walcot.

Robert Clive conducted an aggressive policy of land acquisition in the 1760s, primarily in Shropshire. A memorandum produced by Ashby and Probert in 1775, the year after Clive's suicide, noted that 'the late Lord Clive to establish his family in Salop purchased large estates in that county and spent more than £20,000 in making a good house at Walcot and in enlarging the park there to 800 acres', and this policy was continued by his successor.⁹³ In 1771 Probert negotiated with the Duke of Beaufort's agent over the sale of Clive's Monmouthshire estates for £50,000, although Probert claimed in a letter that Clive wanted £60,000. Significantly these estates had been purchased from Lord Windsor only two or three years earlier and Probert's influence in selling off outlying landholdings, which were difficult to administer at such a distance, can probably be assumed.⁹⁴ Clive had other distant estates, such as Okehampton in Devon and Claremont, near Esher, in Surrey, the latter purchased from the Duchess of Newcastle as recently as 1769. Claremont was sold soon after for over £25,000, the proceeds funding the purchase of other lands in Shropshire, at Bishop's Castle, Lydbury, Little Brompton and the manor of Colbach.⁹⁵ Okehampton was exchanged with the Earl of Powis for the manor of Down and Acton, an estate near Walcot, continuing the rationalisation of Clive's landholdings.⁹⁶ He also acquired Lord Powis's estate at Oakly, near Ludlow, in 1771, purchased the Stonehouse estate in Stokesay and Onibury, and was negotiating to purchase a Mr Sayce's estate near Walcot in Lydbury. A particular of Mr Lloyd's estate in Lydbury North indicates that it was sold to Clive in October 1773. In 1777 the new Lord Clive agreed the purchase of the manor of Down and Acton in Lydbury North from Thomas Duck at a cost of £12,000, in the following year the purchase of Nicholas Charlton's estate in Bishop's Castle, and in 1779 Lord Craven's Shropshire estates in Melverley, Kinnerley and Ruyton.⁹⁷ In these acquisitions there is a sense that the Clive family were altogether more astute and tactical than the Earl of Powis in expanding their landholdings, and there can be little doubt that during the 1770s Probert as the land agent was actively promoting the growth of the Clive estate. Land acquisition in later years was scaled down, but never abandoned. Edward Clive, by now Earl of Powis, purchased the Earl of Oxford's estate of two farms and a sheepwalk in Clun Forest in 1807, and there are hints of other land deals in the area about this time. Probert agreed the purchase of the estate which bordered land of the Earl of Powis. Oxford wanted £7,000, although Probert had valued it at £500 less, but, pragmatically, as its purchase would resolve tenancy problems, Probert felt inclined to pay it. There is no indication that he felt it necessary to consult Clive on the matter.⁹⁸

Probert ran Clive's estate in the same way in which he organised the Powis Estate, with a close eye to the detail, and a tendency to archive every record, the significant difference being that the Clive family were more directly involved in the running of their estate. From the archives we learn that Richard Bowen was paid six guineas a year for quarrying slate on Clun Forest, the salary covering tool repairs, opening quarries and other allowances. In 1776

Probert wrote to Lord Clive about a temporary garden at Oakly Park, favouring a brick wall rather than a board fence, and suggesting its position.⁹⁹ Quite what one of Clive's tenants, John Bird of High Walton, had done in 1787 to incur Probert's displeasure is not known, but in a rebuke he indicated that Bird had taken upon himself 'the Office of Dictator to Lord Clive's tenants..', and he deputed his assistant, Mr Edye, to 'set [him] right as to prevent the other tenants from doing wrong...'.¹⁰⁰ And in 1800, at a time when grain prices were high, he drew up rules for the tenants of Clive's Montford Estate; his aim, he stated, was a 'continued regular supply of grain to the consumers at a fair market price during the present scarcity...'. There were printed pro-formas relating to the grain, and these were filled in by hand by Probert, reflecting requirements at a time when grain was expensive.¹⁰¹

As he was agent for two estates, Probert's parallel agencies for Powis and Clive followed broadly similar trajectories, although with different emphases. In the first twenty years the Powis Estate was efficiently organised to generate income, the Clive Estate was managed with a view to expansion. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, with both estates running reasonably smoothly, or so it appears, Probert, already well over sixty, appears less active, content to let each estate take its own course.

The Mytton Estate

The work for his third employer, the Mytton family, is the least well-documented of Probert's land agencies, even though it was the earliest, and consequently of longest duration. Acknowledging that Probert was fastidious in retaining administrative paperwork, it is likely that the Mytton Estate archive has been thinned out in the past. His first contact with the Myttons may have been in 1764, when he mapped their manor and parish of Habberley, and in the following year, Halston.¹⁰² At what date he became their agent is unclear, but by the time of his appointment as agent to Powis and Clive he was already in the employ of the Mytton family. Not surprisingly his work for Mytton was similar to that for his more famous employers, but with one difference. Probert's analysis of Mytton's Shrewsbury and Habberley estates in 1778 was typically acute, and also demonstrates that he continued to fulfil the role of land surveyor for Mytton, something which he deliberately eschewed in his contracts with Powis and Clive. Improvements were suggested, including the enclosure of part of the race course at Monkmeole, but before this was implemented he recommended the alteration of the course in order not to offend anyone. He also analysed Mytton's Mawddwy estate in Merionethshire, commenting on its economic significance in relation to its mines, coal, timber and copper, and its fishery, but he pointed out that the estate was too small to require a steward.¹⁰³

In general his work for the Myttons was as wide-ranging as for the larger estates under his management. The Craigwen lead mine in Merionethshire, north-west of Dinas Mawddwy, was worked by the Mytton family, and with his mining interests Probert must have encouraged its exploitation. It continued until 1794, and Walter Davies early in the nineteenth century thought that it had made quite a profit for the Myttons.¹⁰⁴ Probert drew up the conditions of sale of some of the late John Mytton's estates in 1784, and he had indeed personally benefited to the tune of £100, the largest individual bequest in Mytton's will drawn up in 1777, where he was termed Mytton's steward; he acted in 1793 as one of two trustees for Moses and Sarah Corbet, who benefited from the death of John Mytton, and two years later he was designated as a trustee of the Myttons, together with Thomas Mostyn Edwards of Cilcain Hall in Flintshire, and as late as 1816 during the minority of John Mytton he was appointed as receiver by the High Court of Chancery in the purchase of an estate at Berghill in Whittington.¹⁰⁵

The association with the Mytton family had another significant benefit: Copthorne House. It is evident that Probert had negotiated an advantageous arrangement when he moved into Copthorne, including a fixed rent for life. The Mytton estate in and around Shrewsbury was assessed in 1778, presumably by one of Probert's own surveyors, for the draft report survives in the Powis Castle Archives. Referring to this residence, the report, which must have been glossed by Probert himself, states that 'Copthorne House and farm at the decease of Mr Probert will admit a considerable advance in the rent, but no steward should on any account be permitted to live there hereafter, as the steward should always reside within the town of Shrewsbury'.¹⁰⁶ Copthorne during the 1760s lay on the outskirts of Shrewsbury and was little more than farmland. Copthorne Farm was untenanted in 1767, although valued at £60 per annum when Mytton's Monkmeole estate was being leased out to a wide range of tenants.¹⁰⁷ Probert leased the house and surrounding grounds soon afterwards. He moved into the existing farmhouse, but at some time before the turn of the century he built for himself an imposing three-storey brick house (which, now known as Mytton Villa, survives on the north side of Copthorne Road, close to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital).¹⁰⁸ Probert transformed Copthorne into a gentleman's residence. Around the house were extensive grounds which included houses for staff, a walled kitchen garden, a small park, a grotto, and an ornamental lake with rustic bridges, a cottage and a boat-house. There are records of a hothouse and of gardeners at work.¹⁰⁹ Part of the lake remains today, but much of the rest has disappeared. Copthorne also remained a working farm. On Probert's death in 1818 his stock – 11 cattle, 211 sheep, a threshing machine and the like – were sold off on the premises at Copthorne.

Probert aspired to the role of a gentleman in local society. His obvious pleasure in living at Copthorne until his death in 1818, and where his daughter, Rebecca, continued to live until her own death ten years later, is implicit in the fact that he was referred to consistently as John Probert of Copthorne. Powis Castle remained no more than a place of work, like Oakly and Halston, to which he would travel as required, but a considerable amount of Powis and Clive business was conducted from Copthorne. Yet the nature of his life at Copthorne must remain largely a mystery to us, and only occasional insights reveal the private man: in 1779 when he spent over £11 on books in an estate sale, including classics, but also copies of *The Tatler*, and the 'museum' which he created, the contents of which are ill-known, although some indications come from the sales catalogue which followed the death of Rebecca Probert.¹¹⁰ The Copthorne estate was sold off by the Mytton family as a freehold property three years later.¹¹¹

Mining Ventures and Farming

John Probert was a man involved in a surprisingly wide range of enterprises. Whilst acting as a land agent to the three families, he pursued his own interests which had certainly crystallised well before he signed his agreements with Powis and Clive. He purchased property, engaged in money lending and above all invested in the exploitation of the mineral reserves in the Welsh uplands.¹¹² His involvement in speculative mining ventures originated in the 1760s, and over the following forty years this developed into an income-generating activity, one that probably contributed significantly to his undoubted wealth. When, in August 1775, he visited the great copper mines at Parys Mountain on Anglesey, he committed to paper details of the site and the extraction processes, together with the quantities and value of the ore that was removed. There is no obvious reason why it was written, other than simply for personal interest.¹¹³ Whether the memorandum materialised as a direct result of the surveying and valuation work which he undertook for Powis and Mytton, both of whom had land with mining potential in Wales, cannot be determined. The Powis Archives contain large numbers of documents which relate to his mining ventures, and on occasions it can be difficult to distinguish those documents which record the Earl of Powis's own mining interests from Probert's personal enterprises.

The Cardiganshire uplands were the primary region for Probert's speculative mining investments, particularly in the vicinity of the River Ystwyth, and W. J. Lewis in his definitive work on the Welsh lead mining industry has called him 'one of the outstanding men in the industry in Cardiganshire during the last quarter of the [18th] century'.¹¹⁴ In 1768 he took on the lease of the mine on Maen Arthur farm in Llanfihangel y Creuddyn in conjunction with members of the local gentry, including the owner, Viscount Lisburne of Trawscoed, and Thomas Johnes of Hafod, and in 1787 he felt able to lease the same farm of 294 acres in association only with his site manager, John Lowe, for 21 years at £30 p.a. Next came the Fair Chance Mine, which was acquired on a 21-year lease in 1770, whereby, with John Vaughan and Edward Hughes of Aberlloolwyn (Cardiganshire), he leased the adjacent tenements of Nant-y-fynaches and Pen-y-wern-hir and the mines and minerals beneath them in the parish of Gwnnws for a yearly rent of £30, two hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, twelve chickens at Whitsuntide, two geese at Christmas and 30s. per ton for all lead and copper ore raised. Over the first three years it cost Probert £120 to exploit the Fair Chance Mine, a quarter of the total costs involved, and between 1777 and 1779 when it was opened up again, a further £163. That it was a good investment is implied by the fact that he bought out the interest of Wilmot Vaughan (now the Earl of Lisburne) in March 1784, and managed to raise considerable quantities of ore during dry periods. There were, however, considerable problems with the periodic flooding of the mine, and in 1791 it was closed.¹¹⁵

The Earl of Powis had leased another Cardiganshire mine, Esgair-y-Mwyn, from the Crown in 1756. Probert visited Esgair-y-Mwyn in 1769, making recommendations to the Earl for improving its exploitation. Eight years later the Earl sub-leased it to Thomas Johnes, the lease being drawn up by Probert, who then, on behalf of Johnes, committed a third share to John Lewis of Carmarthen and retained a third share for himself. In 1784 he and others took on the lease of the Logelace (Logaulas) mine, which was superseded by a further lease two years later. It appears that John Lawrence, the Shropshire mine master, was associated with this, and equipment from Shropshire found its way to Cardiganshire.¹¹⁶ By the 1780s, with the exception of Cwmystwyth mine, every Cardiganshire mine of importance south of the Rheidol was being worked by Probert.¹¹⁷ The Grogwinion Mine was leased in 1787, and over the next four years Probert put up two-fifths of the £338 which was spent on trying to make this productive, while in 1798 he took on the existing Frongoch mine on the Earl of Lisburne's land, and about three years later discovered the Llwynwnwch mine adjacent to Frongoch.¹¹⁸

Dissatisfied with the prices which he was receiving for his lead ore, Probert, in 1785, assessed the viability of constructing a smelting house at Aberystwyth, a coastal location which would facilitate the shipping of the metal, to process the lead from the Cardiganshire mines. Two years later the smeltery at Penyrancor was under construction and it was in operation by 1788. Turf (peat) was purchased at a cost of 5d. for a sack which contained

six bushels, 2d. of turf being used to smelt one ton of ore. Diversifying, he also built at least one limekiln there, which was functioning in 1790, and he leased a quay, all this under the banner of the Aberystwyth Anchor Company with Probert as the majority shareholder. There were, however, problems with the hard Cardiganshire lead ore, and softer ores were imported from Ireland; this together with the cost of fuel led to the closure of the smelting house in 1791.¹¹⁹

Cardiganshire, however, was not the only focus for Probert's mining ventures. There were proposals to work the mines at Cwmdu in Caernarvonshire in 1770, although these probably came to nothing.¹²⁰ The mine fields of west Shropshire to the south-west of Pontesbury also attracted him. John Lawrence, who established the White Grit Company at Shelve, tried to interest Probert in a partnership with his son in 1790, but a year later Probert entered into agreements to work the Pennerley Mine Works instead.¹²¹ In 1780 Probert had toyed with the idea of taking the lease on Clee Hill in southern Shropshire, where there were coal, stone and lime works, from Lord Craven, but whether this actually happened has not been established.¹²² And in 1788 his mine manager, John Lowe, moved briefly into western Montgomeryshire, opening up some trials at Bryntail, north-west of Llanidloes, although it seems unlikely that these works were successful.¹²³ There were other interests, too. A draft agreement for the exploitation of waste ground at Nant y Cawse in Oswestry was drawn up in 1772 between the Earl of Powis on the one hand and Robert Palmer and Henry Onions, who were termed coalmasters of Copthorne, on the other.¹²⁴

The same thoroughness in detail and efficiency which hallmarked his estate work for Powis and Clive is readily apparent in the administration of his mining operations. Probert indicated that he expected to hear weekly about progress from John Lowe at the Fair Chance mine, and letters to Lowe cover all aspects of the above- and below-ground operations, ranging from orders for significant additions to the mine infrastructure with the construction of a railway, reservoirs and troughs, to small, often peripheral requirements such as the storage of ferns and rushes before the advent of frost. Tighter control is attested also by the pre-printed forms listing the lead ores smelted and the costs and profits, which were filled in weekly for the Aberystwyth Anchor Company.¹²⁵

Probert's other major personal enterprise was farming. From his early years as a surveyor he realised that there was money to be made from farming, and he acquired a considerable amount of land. A farm at Llanwyddelan (Montgomeryshire) which he purchased from the Jodrell Estate in 1773 was put up for sale forty years later, but rather more land was leased. A codicil to John Mytton's will in 1783 lists tenanted landholdings and their rents in the vicinity of Shrewsbury. Grays Piece and barn, and part of Crowmeole Farm, were held by Probert himself for £13 and £40 respectively, having originally been leased as early as 1767. A later document of 1818 reveals that Probert had taken leases on further lands and that his assistant Robert Wilding and his son followed Probert in renting land from the Mytton Estate. In and around Montgomery various pieces of land and property were leased from the Earl of Powis, including Town Hill and the Castle Bank above the town, the Mill Pool, a flannel manufactory and Hendomen Common.¹²⁶

From the Montford Estate Probert leased Wilde's Farm, Forton, north-west of Shrewsbury, which included the Mop Pool Bytake in Shrawardine. These were the remnants of several divided farms and included 60 acres of Forton Heath. Probert's sound farming practices emerge from the rent assessment – although his rent of Lady Fen Meadow in Felton Butler was increased from £15 to £18 in line with most other rents in 1808, his rent for Wilde's Farm was not increased on the grounds that the improvements which he had made to the land at Mop Pool Bytake had 'been at [the] very great expense in draining, manuring and carrying soil to this land and has converted the chief part...from poor tillage to valuable pasture'.¹²⁷ This was a standard policy: Edward Cartwright's rent in Montford was not increased because he had expended some £200 on repairs and improvements at that time.

It was not only the mines in Cardiganshire which were leased. Having become the sole lessee of Nant-y-fynaches and Pen-y-wern-hir in 1785, he claimed to have spent £400 in improvements to the farms. A document of 1787 refers not only to the purchase of stock, but also to opening watercourses in order to float land.¹²⁸ Stock were moved around from area to area, and a letter of 1787 indicates that John Lowe had sent stock including cattle, wethers and two goats to Copthorne, presumably to stock the farm there.¹²⁹ In 1794 Probert's agent in Aberystwyth had bought oats and shipped them around the coast to Chester, presumably to be carried on to Shrewsbury, an indication that it was easier than transporting them across the Cambrian Mountains; some, however, had been left in the storehouse in Aberystwyth for the use of Probert's horses.¹³⁰ Sporadic correspondence reveals that Probert was kept fully informed about his farms. John Carter reported in 1795 that on one of the Cardiganshire farms the cattle had moved to the upland moors and the horses to the mountain; timber in Radnorshire had been felled and the bark harvested, and it was anticipated that there would be between ten and twenty tons when it was shaved and chopped; some of the rough trees might be sold on the spot if Probert agreed. There were plenty of boards and spars for the mines after disposing of a few trees.¹³¹

Probert was also involved from 1796 in financing the Montgomeryshire Canal which was constructed between 1794 and 1797, the principal shareholders in the canal being the Earl of Powis's family. It would not have escaped Probert's notice that the canal would greatly facilitate for agricultural purposes the movement of lime from the quarries around Llanymynech.¹³²

The Later Years

After 1800 Probert's direct handling of the estates began to decline. He had been seriously ill in 1799, and his wife had died in 1800. After 1806 his correspondence in the archives diminishes, and Robert Wilding evidently shouldered much more of the administrative burden – thus it was Wilding who accompanied Lord Clive to the Court of Common Pleas in that year. This was, however, a matter of scale rather than retirement, and Probert maintained overall control. A year later he determined the value of the Shadwell Hall estate in Clun and Mainstone to be worth £21,000 at the most, and that the annual profit was not likely to be more than £50; negotiations continued throughout 1807, but in the end the estate was purchased by Clive. Around 1810 Probert drafted a new valuation of the Walcot Estate.¹³³

Aberystwyth became increasingly important to Probert in his later life. At this time the town was developing into an elegant resort on Cardigan Bay, with picturesque scenery in the region around it.¹³⁴ It has already been remarked that he established a lead-smelting works there in the late 1780s, and it must have been as a result of this industrial connection that he was attracted to the town on the coast. His attachment manifests itself in several ways. A letter of 1789 to Thomas Ryder, Lord Powis's London attorney, extolled the benefits of sea bathing and indicated that Probert did not wish to leave Aberystwyth until he was obliged to do so, although clearly his age was beginning to tell on him, for he also noted that he could no longer ride there on horseback.¹³⁵ He built a summer house there in the following year and also rented Aberystwyth Castle from Thomas Johnes of Hafod at a cost of 19s. a year, building a wall around it.¹³⁶ Eight years after Probert's death Llewelyn Prichard wrote that there were pleasant walks around Aberystwyth Castle, and that 'the public are indebted for their occupation of this fanciful spot, decorated as it is, to the liberality, taste and spirit of the late Mr. Probert [*sic*] who...had the wilderness of the ruins converted to this delightful purpose, [and] having made walks in the most judicious places, it soon became a choice promenade of the fashionable who return to Aberystwyth during the summer season'. Prichard here was copying in large part what the Cardiganshire historian, Samuel Meyrick, had written some years earlier. A contemporary, Thomas Rees, was altogether less complimentary, claiming that Probert turned the castle into a 'whimsical building...highly offensive to the eye of taste'.¹³⁷

Probert did not entirely ignore his home town. Already in his late seventies, in 1809, he leased land at the Shrewsbury racecourse on Bicton Heath from the town corporation on the condition that he kept it fit for racing. Another part of the course was already owned by the Myttons.¹³⁸

Probert died on 8 March 1818 at the age of 86 and he was buried nine days later at St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury. At a time when less than 1s. 6d. was expended on the average burial there, his own cost 21s., which appears to contradict the requirement in his will that he should be buried in the churchyard 'with as little expense as decency will permit'.¹³⁹ The last word comes from the *Salopian Journal* in an anonymously penned obituary of 18 March:

'In his 87th year, the venerable John Probert, a man whose vigorous and comprehensive mind was ever actuated by a warm and generous heart; and who was governed, through a long and arduous life, by the most liberal views, and the most inviolable sense of honour; the distinguished talents and active zeal which he displayed in the promotion of the important interests confided to his care by the great families of Powis, Clive, Mytton etc for upwards of 50 years are best appreciated by the improvement on those immense properties and the regret of their exalted owners. The paternal and judicious attention of this faithful steward to the interests of the tenantry is about to be commemorated by a public expression of their gratitude, as honourable to their feelings as to his venerated character. His worth as a man and his value as a friend receive their only adequate panegyric in the sorrows of those who had the happiness and honour of his confidence, and in the regret of a numerous and highly respectable circle of friends in the counties of Montgomery and Salop'.¹⁴⁰

Obituaries by their nature rarely present a truly objective picture of the deceased, but it is tempting to suggest that reading between the lines we may detect a respected, but perhaps feared, man, who was fair to both his masters and his tenants.

John Probert: Character and Interests

Probert emerges as a man of many parts: surveyor, valuer, land agent, administrator, land owner, mine operator, collector. Yet little contemporary comment on Probert the man has come to light. A gossip letter on the state of local politics from Edward Johnes of Dolforwyn Hall, near Newtown, to the radical commentator, William Cobbett, noted archly that 'Probert was once Sergeant Trumpeter to the King and has always been his own

Trumpeter...As deviser and manager of the estates of the late Earl of Powis John has unlimited power over the burgesses of Montgomery who are almost to a man his tenants and dependents'. Yet in spite of Johnes's sometimes acidic comments about the Earl of Powis he had nothing derogatory to say about Probert, stated that the latter had risen to a position of 'opulence and power from very low beginnings' and qualified this by stating openly that he was commending Probert as 'a man of integrity'.¹⁴¹

Of that integrity there can be no doubt. He was evidently appreciated by those for whom he worked. In the will of John Mytton, drawn up in 1777, Probert, termed his steward, received £100. This was the largest bequest in the will, exceeding those to Mytton's cousin and nephews. Under the will of Robert Clive in 1796 Probert received an annual annuity of £50.¹⁴² The Earl of Powis was content to leave Probert to run his estates, hardly surprisingly in view of his reputation as a lover of the high life in London, whose prime interest must have been the provision of money to fund his lifestyle. More telling is Edward, Lord Clive's, memorandum in 1798, when he went abroad, for he left the 'conduct and management of all affairs regarding his dwelling houses, pleasure gardens and farms' to Probert 'my chief steward or agent and receiver of rents' and 'having an entire confidence in the said John Probert I do hereby declare that it is my particular request that the said John Probert...do from time to time make remittances...to my bankers'. Any improvements to his estates and collieries as recommended by Probert were also to be followed. The attorneys, who included the Earl of Powis as well as Probert, were to continue Clive's 'line of politicks'.¹⁴³

Probert was perceptive, and undoubtedly forward-thinking. That he was able throughout the 1760s to combine land valuations with his estate surveying at a time when large landowners were increasingly trying to optimise their incomes implies that he had identified and exploited a method for ensuring a steady flow of commissions. It was also a means of widening his range of expertise, and it seems probable, although we shall never know for certain, that he had planned the move into land agency when the opportunity arose, the stewardship for the Mytton family effectively preparing the ground. His perceptive mind emerges in a totally different context in his assessment in 1778 of the Myttons' Mawddwy Estate in southern Merioneth, where he examined not only the agricultural and industrial economics of the estate, but also commented on the uncommon transparency of the water in the streams and that 'it might not be amiss if some notice was taken of some of the natural beauties of this wild mountainside – cataracts, cascades, etc. winding horse paths'.¹⁴⁴ It was several years later that William Gilpin's ideas which developed the concept of the 'picturesque' were disseminated widely through publication,¹⁴⁵ but it appears that Probert already shared Gilpin's views.

John Probert the collector has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁴⁶ The sale of his antiquities collection, together with the household contents of Copthorne, upon the death of Rebecca Probert in 1827 reveals that her father had accumulated a large and diverse collection of objects. Archaeologically, the most interesting items in his collection were the prehistoric Rhyd-y-gorse bronze shield which Rebecca passed to Samuel Meyrick of Goodrich Court and which is now in the British Museum, and the Aston Farm Roman lead pig found in 'the bog mines in Minsterley' in 1767, which was once in the Birmingham Geological Museum but is now at Linley Hall near Lydham,¹⁴⁷ while nothing is known of the 'gold piece' found at St Harmons in Radnorshire. There were foreign coins from as far afield as Sweden and Russia, English coins going back to the reign of Elizabeth, and many Roman coins. Fragments of sculpture and sarcophagi, Etruscan and Roman pottery, geological specimens and fossils, and birds' eggs were all there. A tessellated pavement (presumably Roman) and four 'British celts' (Bronze Age axes?) were described in the catalogue in a little more detail. Probert was a typical gentleman collector, seemingly indiscriminate in what he acquired, and certainly there is nothing to suggest anything other than an antiquarian approach to the assembly of objects.¹⁴⁸

Was John Probert exceptional amongst land agents in the eighteenth century? Probably there was no such individual as a typical agent, for the role depended on a range of circumstances, amongst which the character and degree of involvement of his master would figure prominently.¹⁴⁹ In a period when most land agents emerged from the middle classes,¹⁵⁰ Probert's seemingly humble origin sets him slightly apart, but his move from surveying into land agency is readily paralleled elsewhere, as was his longevity in the post. His salary of £100 from Clive and presumably the same from Powis was reasonable by the standards of the time, but hardly exceptional. The standard tasks of keeping the accounts, overseeing tenancies, collecting rents, presiding over the manorial court, employing staff, maintaining the main residence and perhaps other subsidiary ones, overseeing the industrial works, supporting his lord's political aspirations, including acting as an election agent and, for Probert, ensuring continuity of administration for three successive earls, including functioning as a trustee, were all features common to more than one land agent.¹⁵¹ He was on good terms with many of the gentry – Vaughan of Trawsgoed, Johnes of Hafod – respected, but not, of course, their social equal.

That he was wealthy is obvious, and in this respect there were probably very few in his profession who could compare with him. The only direct evidence of his wealth is the unsubstantiated, and perhaps exaggerated, claim by Joseph Farington that Probert was worth £100,000, which in modern terms might be the equivalent of at least £5 million and probably rather more. But anything approaching this sum will have put him apart from his peers, for

whom the accumulation of a fortune of several thousand pounds might be reasonably typical.¹⁵² His will, however, offers no corroborative evidence, nor is there any guide when Rebecca, his main beneficiary, died nine years later. Some land agents of this time were clearly involved in other schemes and developed their own industrial concerns,¹⁵³ but again the extensive range of other interests – mining, processing, farming, collecting – points to unusual diversification. Some agents were powerful – this is not particularly transparent with Probert, and yet one is thrown back on Edward Johnes's comment that Probert was the one of the most powerful people in Montgomeryshire. This was an exaggeration, perhaps, and yet it was an indication of how he was perceived by others. Above all, John Probert comes across as assiduous, dedicated, efficient, well organised and energetic, a man generally respected by all.

Notes

- 1 R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, **89**, 2001, 163–78. This appeared in a volume that was devoted to the late medieval house of Tŷ-mawr in Castle Caereinion, near Welshpool, and the essay centred on Probert as the surveyor of the earliest estate map to depict the house. I was at that time, and still am, particularly interested in the estate maps which Probert produced in the ten years from 1760 when he was primarily a land surveyor, but these represent only one element in his list of achievements.
- 2 I am grateful to James Lawson for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper, and for his general guidance on various issues. Needless to say, where errors do occur they are the responsibility of the writer alone.
- 3 The Powis Castle archives have been divided up on county (and country) lines, and it is probably inevitable, given the vast size of the collection, that some Welsh material is to be found in the Shropshire archives, and some English material is in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. The fact that the Clive family inherited the Powis Castle estates seems to have led to much of the Clive material being amalgamated with the archives at Powis Castle, although there is some material in the British Library which was formerly in the East India Office records. A portion of the archive for the Mytton estates survives, and indicates that despite Probert's control the Mytton archives were maintained separately from those of Powis and Clive.
- 4 National Library of Wales (henceforward NLW): Powis 20158.
- 5 R. J. Silvester and J. Alfrey, 'Vaynor: a Landscape and its Buildings in the Severn Valley', in J. Finch and K. Giles (eds.), *Estate Landscapes: Design, Improvement and Power in the Post-Medieval Landscape*, 2007, 39–55.
- 6 NLW: Powis Castle 16705(MS). However, the absence of much material relating to the efforts of Probert's team of surveyors in the years after 1770 implies that at least some of the Copthorne archive has not survived.
- 7 B. Coulton, *A Shropshire Squire: Noel Hill, First Lord Berwick*, 1989, 39.
- 8 R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 168; P. D. G. Thomas, 'A Welsh Political Storm: the Treasury Warrant of 1778 Concerning Crown Lands in Wales', *Welsh Historical Review*, **18.3**, 1997, 430–49.
- 9 K. Garlick and A. MacIntyre, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, **II** (January 1795–August 1796), 1978, 650.
- 10 P. D. G. Thomas, 'A Welsh Political Storm', 436.
- 11 NLW: Glansevern/8780; Shropshire Archives (henceforward SA): 6001/3060, p. 40.
- 12 R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 166. I am grateful to James Lawson for sharing his research which led to the identification of Elizabeth Probert's burial place.
- 13 For instance in Flintshire dating from 1756: NLW: Bodrhyddan Map, Vol 1, and on Anglesey in the same year: NLW: Maps Volume 53.
- 14 S. Bendall, *The Dictionary of Land Surveyors and Local Map-Makers of Great Britain and Ireland 1530–1850*, **ii**, 1997, 392.
- 15 NLW: Powis Castle/13753.
- 16 A list, now out of date, is given in R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 177.
- 17 NLW: Powis Castle/17095; 20776, Volume M5.
- 18 SA: 552/8/1017, 552/8/1018, 552/8/101/1, 552/18/1/9.
- 19 SA: 552/18/1/10, 552/8/1012.
- 20 SA: 552/15/2180.
- 21 SA: 552/18/5/33.
- 22 The documentation for the Walcot Estate is extensive and requires considerably more work to bring it into order. In addition to the volume from 1761–4 on Walcot Hall and its demesne in SA (552/8/101/1) there is a survey in the East India Office department of the British Library (EUR D513). SA 552/8/101/2 appears to be a 20th-century manuscript copy of 552/8/101/1. The British Library valuation seems to be later than that in Shrewsbury, even though the calendar suggests that SA 552/8/101/1 was made in connection with Clive's purchase of the Walcot Estate in 1763.
- 23 Information from Mr J. Pepler, Cheshire Record Office, to whom the writer is grateful for information on the continuing search for Probert's Cheshire and Staffordshire surveys.
- 24 SA: 552/12/188.
- 25 B. Trinder, *Beyond the Bridges: the Suburbs of Shrewsbury 1760–1960*, 2006, 109, 111.
- 26 London Metropolitan Archives: A/FH/A/16/031/004/0015.
- 27 R. J. Silvester and J. Alfrey, 'Vaynor: a Landscape and its Buildings in the Severn Valley', in J. Finch and K. Giles (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 39–55.
- 28 NLW: Powis Castle/16708. This seems to be a working record, a draft of the background to the estate and its location, in the form of a preamble which was a standard feature of Probert's large estate surveys. There is no intrinsic evidence of a draft schedule or accompanying map. The final version submitted to Pugh Pryse probably lies in the largely uncatalogued Gogerddan archives in the National Library of Wales.

- 29 SA: 552/18/4/58/1/1, 552/8/58.
- 30 R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 173.
- 31 D. Fletcher, *The Emergence of Estate Maps: Christ Church, Oxford, 1600–1840*, 1995, 83.
- 32 Gloucestershire Archives: Sudeley Manuscripts/D2153/1/11; NLW: Powis Castle/2734; J. Lawson: pers. comm.
- 33 NLW: Crosswood I.1019, Crosswood Map, Volumes 3 and 4; S. Bendall, *The Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, 350.
- 34 The Berriew estate survey is NLW: Powis Castle/17095, Domgay is NLW: Powis Castle/19643. Both are written surveys, now without accompanying maps, but there is internal evidence that the Domgay survey might originally have had one. The Deuddwr Survey (NLW: Powis Castle 19690) is also a written statement, with annotations that suggest it was retained as a working record during later years.
- 35 NLW: Powis Castle/20776.
- 36 NLW: Powis Castle /1796.
- 37 This is presumably Robert Snell, known to have been active in Monmouthshire in 1756–60. See S. Bendall, *The Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, 478; SA: 552/8/58.
- 38 SA: 552/8/59.
- 39 SA: 15/2181.
- 40 This annuity of £50 continued to be paid after Robert Clive's death as the latter's will of 1796 makes clear (NLW: Powis Castle/16427).
- 41 SA: 552/8/1020, 552/8/1013/1–3. Shropshire Archives class them as part of the Walcot estate, and refer also to the alternative valuations by Butler and by Probert; Butler's valuation was £16,299 14s., while that by Probert was £12,946 5s. 5d.
- 42 S. Bendall, *The Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, 317; NLW: Powis Castle 2595.
- 43 S. Bendall, *The Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, 19.
- 44 NLW: Powis Castle/20966, 1723.
- 45 NLW: Powis Castle/M11; SA: Map 4303/2; Wall Map in Private Collection; NLW: Powis Castle/M9 and M10.
- 46 NLW: Powis 3036.
- 47 Lewis was being paid £176 for surveying 17,400 acres according to Lisburne, but by the time he had finished he had surveyed over 21,000 acres, and at the rate of 4d. an acre his bill was considerably higher.
- 48 NLW: Powis 3038; G. Morgan, *A Welsh House and its Family: the Vaughans of Trawsgoed*, 1997, 195.
- 49 M. Humphreys, *The Crisis of Community, Montgomeryshire 1680–1815*, 1996, 125; P. D. G. Thomas, 'A Welsh Political Storm'; R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 168; NLW: Harpton 1801; Treasury Papers 29/47, fo. 197, quoted in Thomas 'A Welsh Political Storm', 431; NLW: Powis Castle/3922.
- 50 For Nathaniel Kent, see P. Horn, 'An Eighteenth-Century Land Agent: the Career of Nathaniel Kent (1737–1810). For the nineteenth century see *Agricultural History Review*, **30.1**, 1982, 1–16; E. Richards, 'The Land Agent', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, **ii**, 1981, 439–55.
- 51 NLW: Powis Castle/22118.
- 52 National Archives: Prob 11/1607.
- 53 SA: 2313/133; NLW: Powis Castle/22118.
- 54 J. Nichol, 'Social and Political Stability in Eighteenth-Century Provincial Life: A Study of the Career of John Ashby (1722–1779) of Shrewsbury', *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LIX**, 54.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 58–9.
- 56 NLW: Powis Castle/2551 (1790); SA: Attingham Collection/112/5/16/1–5 (1805).
- 57 NLW: Powis Castle 13529.
- 58 NLW: Powis Castle/22175, 7568, 2798; National Archives: Prob 11/1607.
- 59 D. Adamson, *Rides around Britain: John Byng, Viscount Torrington*, 1996, 474.
- 60 NLW: Powis Castle/16695.
- 61 NLW: Powis Castle/20966.
- 62 NLW: Powis Castle 16698.
- 63 NLW: Powis Castle/2066.
- 64 NLW: Powis Castle/20139.
- 65 NLW: Powis Castle/13421.
- 66 NLW: Powis Castle/16846, 14085, 16423.
- 67 Microfilm copies of all the map volumes from these are held by the National Library of Wales.
- 68 NLW: Powis Castle 1440, 20160. Isaac Messeder's survey of Jodrell's estate, dating to 1759/1760 is in the Powis Castle Archives (microfilm copy as NLW: Powis Castle/M2).
- 69 NLW: Powis Castle 13862.
- 70 G. Morgan, *A Welsh House and its Family*, 194.
- 71 NLW: Powis Castle/12817.
- 72 NLW: Powis Castle/12304.
- 73 NLW: Powis Castle/20788.
- 74 NLW: Powis Castle/20966.
- 75 NLW: Powis Castle/20593; J. Ionides, *Thomas Farnolls Pritchard of Shrewsbury: Architect and 'Inventor of Cast Iron Bridges'*, 1999, 188.
- 76 NLW: Powis Castle/20593, 12390.
- 77 NLW: Powis Castle/16825, 9068.
- 78 NLW: Powis Castle/16825.
- 79 P. Hughes, 'Decline' in R. Shoesmith and A. Johnson (eds.), *Ludlow Castle: Its History and Buildings*, 2006, 91, 95.
- 80 R. J. Silvester, 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 166.
- 81 SA: 552/10/884.
- 82 NLW: Powis Castle/21353, 20714.

- 83 NLW: Powis Castle/1540, 16874.
- 84 Interestingly John Ashby seems to have had a not dissimilar relationship with Lady Clive, for which see J Nichol, 'Social and Political Stability', 61.
- 85 NLW: Powis Castle/2267, 2255.
- 86 NLW: Powis Castle/2637, 11714, 2641, 10155.
- 87 NLW: Powis Castle/22272/3; SA: 552/11/2947.
- 88 NLW: Powis Castle/1233; D. Bick and P. W. Davies, *Lewis Morris and the Cardiganshire Mines*, 1994, 4.
- 89 NLW: Powis Castle/3067, 3311.
- 90 NLW: Powis Castle/12792.
- 91 NLW: Powis Castle/3606.
- 92 SA: 552/12/188.
- 93 SA: 552/18/1/13.
- 94 NLW: Powis Castle/969, 1450, 972.
- 95 SA: 552/18/5/46.
- 96 SA: 552/18/5/45.
- 97 SA: 552/18/1/11, 552/8/1016/2, 552/17/71; NLW: Powis Castle/16469.
- 98 SA: 552/15/1876/12.
- 99 SA: 552/15/1735/2, 552/18/5/41.
- 100 SA: 552/15/1552.
- 101 NLW: Powis Castle/19682.
- 102 Staffordshire Record Office: D590/367; SA: 6007/66.
- 103 NLW: Powis Castle/16107. This was a working copy for Probert himself. Although written up neatly, it was not designed to be passed on to Mytton, and it must be assumed that the fair copy has been lost.
- 104 D. Bick, *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Parts 4 & 5 West Montgomeryshire, Aberdovey, Dinas Mawddwy and Llangynog*, 1990, 15.
- 105 NLW: Powis Castle/1504; SA: Halston 2313/138, 2313/141–2, 2313/66–67.
- 106 NLW: Powis Castle/16107.
- 107 SA: Mytton /2313/136–7.
- 108 P. Stamper, *A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Shropshire*, 1993, 329; B. Trinder, *Beyond the Bridges*, 132.
- 109 P. Stamper *Historic Parks and Gardens of Shropshire*, 1996, 85; NLW: Powis Castle/20238.
- 110 NLW: Powis Castle/21882; R. J. Silvester 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 169.
- 111 SA: 1069/1, 2.
- 112 A loan of £100 – part of a mortgage taken out by a tailor in Bishop's Castle – had not been repaid at the time of his death: SA: 5981/B/4/103/11.
- 113 NLW: Powis Castle/4131.
- 114 W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, 1967, 108.
- 115 NLW: Powis Castle/3603, 12794; D. Bick, *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Part 1 Cardiganshire – South of Devil's Bridge*, 1974, 34; W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, 108.
- 116 NLW: Powis Castle/1753; NLW: Crosswood II, 491; D. Bick, *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Part 1*, 22.
- 117 W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, 110.
- 118 NLW: Powis Castle/3603; W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, 13, 17; O. T. Jones, *Memoirs of the Geological Survey*, 1922, 105.
- 119 W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, 114; NLW: Powis Castle/4022; 4087.
- 120 NLW: Powis Castle/3606.
- 121 NLW: Powis Castle/3826, M. E. Criddle Collection, 5.
- 122 NLW: Powis Castle/21866.
- 123 D. Bick, *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Parts 4 & 5*, 35.
- 124 NLW: Powis Castle/1461.
- 125 NLW: Powis Castle/2989, 2991, 1610.
- 126 SA: Mytton/2313/136–138, 2313/18–19; NLW: Powis Castle/13181, which refers to leases for the Montgomery holdings in 1787.
- 127 SA: 552/8/5.
- 128 NLW: Powis Castle/3603, 16750.
- 129 NLW: Powis Castle/3639.
- 130 NLW: Powis Castle/1728.
- 131 NLW: Powis Castle/16750, 18971.
- 132 NLW: Powis Castle/2063–4; S. Hughes, *The Archaeology of the Montgomeryshire Canal*, 1981, 43.
- 133 SA: 552/15/931, 552/18/1/16.
- 134 J. Hassan, *The Seaside, Health and Environment in England and Wales since 1800*, 2003, 67.
- 135 NLW: Powis Castle/2470.
- 136 NLW: Powis Castle/3832, 4137, 3940.
- 137 S. Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Cardigan*, 1808, 414; T. J. L. Prichard, *The New Aberystwyth Guide*, 1824, 22; T. Rees, *A Topographical and Historical Description of Cardiganshire*, 1810, 445. I am indebted to Michael Freeman of the Ceredigion Museum for some of these references.
- 138 *VCH Salop*, II, 178.
- 139 National Archives: Prob. 11/1607.
- 140 An obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine* did no more than copy a few of the salient details from the *Salopian Journal*.
- 141 NLW: Glansevern/8780; M. Humphreys, *The Crisis of Community*, 1996, 200. Humphreys paints a less savoury picture of Probert, but this seems unjustified. The appearance of the letter in the Glansevern archives can be explained by the fact that the owner of Glansevern was A. C. Owen, nephew of Dr Johnes.

- 142 SA: Mytton/2313/138; NLW: Powis Castle/16427.
- 143 NLW: Powis Castle/9695.
- 144 NLW: Powis Castle/16107.
- 145 T. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, 1995, 148.
- 146 *VCH Salop*, I, 265; SA: L. Chitty Collection, 6004/764/1–10; R. J. Silvester 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 169.
- 147 James Lawson: pers. comm.
- 148 NLW: Powis Castle/12916; I. J. Brown, *West Shropshire Mining Fields*, 2001, 10; R. J. Silvester 'John Probert and the Map of Trefnant Township', 169. See also R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 2004, 8–10.
- 149 R. J. Colyer, 'The Land Agent in Nineteenth-Century Wales', *Welsh History Review*, **8.4**, 1977, 423.
- 150 G. E. Mingay, 'The Eighteenth-Century Land Steward', in E. L. Jones and G. E. Mingay (eds.), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution*, 1967, 7; J. Martin, 'Estate Stewards and their Work in Glamorgan, 1660–1760: a Regional Study of Estate Management', *Morgannwg*, **23**, 1979, 15; R. J. Colyer, 'The Land Agent in Nineteenth-Century Wales', 409.
- 151 E. Hughes, 'The Eighteenth-Century Estate Steward', in H. A. Cronne, T. W. Moody and D. B. Quinn (eds.), *Essays in British and Irish History*, 1949, 185–99.
- 152 G. E. Mingay, 'The Eighteenth-Century Land Steward', 12. It will never be possible to provide a precise value for Probert's fortune, even if, as seems unlikely, we could rely on the figure given in Farington's diary.
- 153 *Ibid.*, 4.

SHROPSHIRE IN THE FIRST CHOLERA EPIDEMIC

By LANCE SMITH

Abstract: This paper starts with a statement of the place of Shropshire in the cholera outbreak of 1831–2, emphasising the questions raised by previous research. It is stressed that the issue was seen as being more one of the poor law and management of the poor than one of advancing sanitary and medical knowledge. Then follows a review of precautions taken in various Shropshire towns, from Shrewsbury itself where the mayor's proposals were tainted by their association with the deputy recorder, and where they had to please a very sceptical and self-serving medical establishment, to Bridgnorth and Broseley where the history reveals many of the problems of an ill-thought out system. The history in several places is too slight for comment, but in Oswestry substantial measures are on record, suggesting that here at least broken pavings and offensive middens were significant. The paper ends with general observations and conclusions.

Introduction: The national context of the cholera

A new and deadly type of cholera entered Britain in 1831. The response throughout the country was to a very new situation created by a 'fearful curse' of almost unprecedented severity. There was as yet no Public Health Act in existence to direct authorities on how to deal with it, and newspaper evidence is not alone in showing that in Shropshire it was a matter of great public alarm.

The national history of the cholera epidemic has been told by Durey, who charts two great waves of this first infection in Britain; an early one mainly affecting Sunderland and the Scottish lowlands, and dying away in 1832;¹ and another wave affecting the whole of England and Wales mainly in the summer and autumn of 1832. Shropshire was affected in the latter wave. The only administrative means for dealing with this epidemic was the poor law, then still unreformed and parish-centred, and subject to the rulings of local magistrates. The experience of the cholera helped to convince people of the inadequacy of the unreformed poor law. There is a need for local studies of the effects of the cholera; not least in Shropshire which seems to have been relatively lightly affected. It remains to be seen how important the poor law was in dealing with this crisis.

The Government reaction has been described by Professor Brockington and sounds unduly casual. It was to set up the London Board of Health under Privy Council directions and to encourage the setting up of local boards of health throughout the country following local initiative in accordance with the poor law. Cholera scares, of which there were several in the nineteenth century, have been described nationally as an important reason for the gradual development of local government as the protector of public health. Brockington refers to the 'largely abortive effort to produce a public health machine' as a result of this early outbreak. He comments that local boards lacked legal powers to carry out the Central Board's wishes, but this problem may be largely an anachronism, as local parishes were still very autonomous, and any action was legal which the local magistrates permitted. Official lack of direction is suggested by the fact that the first 'Advisory' London Board of Health, based at the Royal College of Physicians, was dismissed for lack of relevant experience and a substitute 'Central' Board based at the Privy Council appointed in its place.² The government decreed that the London Board of Health was to oversee the local boards and disseminate advice. The Privy Council ordered that:

'In every town and village...there should be established a local board of health, to consist of the Chief and other Magistrates, the Clergymen of the parish, two or more Physicians or Medical Practitioners and three or

more of the principal inhabitants; and one of the Medical members should be appointed to correspond with the Board of Health in London.³

It was unclear what authority these local boards had. It was naturally assumed that, as in the poor law, parishes (or townships) were the responsible authorities. Studies of the local effects of the epidemic in Britain are not numerous, although they are more plentiful in Mainland Europe and the New World. Some isolated studies of the effects in particular places in Britain exist,⁴ including one for North-east Wales.⁵

‘Three or more of the principal inhabitants’ was generally understood to mean ‘twenty or so people’ who evidently enjoyed meetings. The Medical members were thus greatly outnumbered, although not if the ordinary members of a board later lost interest. If the Shropshire reaction is typical, the order met with resistance by important local persons. Also it required a response from every place, so if it had been literally carried out, it would have created a nightmare of unnecessary form-filling. There was strong medical resistance to setting up local boards of health.⁶

Shropshire was an inland provincial county, predominantly rural, and perhaps as little affected by the disease as any county in the kingdom. Just how untypical was the response there? Does it reveal local apathy and indifference? And does the Shropshire evidence bear out Brockington’s suspicion that the local boards lacked legal powers to carry out the Central Board’s wishes?

In Shropshire the response was certainly somewhat informal: only seven local boards of health created to deal with the cholera leaving regular archival trace out of a national total of about 820 such boards in England and Wales. In proportion to its population, Shropshire would be expected to have had about a dozen local boards. The *Shrewsbury Chronicle* reports of the cholera in Shropshire fade away in late 1832, partly because the cholera was genuinely disappearing, but partly also because they were eclipsed by discussions of the Reform Act.⁷

Quarantine, as for the plague, was initially a leading precaution, on the advice of the London Board and the British doctors sent out by the Privy Council to investigate precautions being taken in Russia. John Randall, who lived through the crisis in an infected part of Shropshire, comments on the futility of early quarantine measures.⁸

Other precautions may also have been futile:

‘Lord Hill [the Commander in chief of the army], in a circular memorandum from the Horse Guards, recommends that each soldier may be provided with two flannel belts, one of which is to be worn constantly around the loins during the existence of the present apprehension of cholera.’⁹

There was at first no knowledge of how this new disease was transmitted. Some believed it to be highly contagious, some not. If contagious, there was some evidence that contact with the corpses of victims was especially dangerous. Various patent remedies existed.¹⁰

Information about 1832 is so defective that for some studies of the cholera it has been necessary to supplement direct information with inferences derived from burial statistics, but as not all parish clergy were scrupulous about stating which deaths were caused by cholera this method is perhaps best avoided.

In February 1832 Royal Assent was given to the Cholera Act, emphasising that cholera measures were an extension of the poor law, and that penalties and costs under the act were to be credited or debited to the Poor Rate. As we see at Bridgnorth, there was ill feeling between local boards of health creating apparently frivolous expenditure and parish vestries, generally the responsible poor law authorities, paying.

The efforts of Dr. T. A. Latta of Leith (d. 1833) and his colleagues in May 1832 to create a treatment for cholera have been described by MacGillivray.¹¹ Latta, with encouragement from the Central Board of Health, publicised his treatment in a letter to *The Lancet*. It involved the infusion of the patient with large amounts of saline solution at a little above normal body temperature.¹²

After the 1832 crisis had passed, the urgency was over, and the first generation of local boards of health was allowed to lapse, many evidently ceasing to function at the end of 1832. Public Health was seen as very much a temporary urban problem, strongly linked to poor relief because the labouring classes were most involved.¹³ 1833 thus marked the end of response to the first in a series of terrible epidemics. (In 1848 the first Public Health Act was passed, and local government became better able to cope. Also important was the Sanitary Act of 1866, which introduced a new element of compulsion for Local Authorities to set up local boards of health. Local authority action became more effective from 1871, when the Local Government Board was established as a department of the Home Office. But these were developments for the future.¹⁴)

In Shropshire local boards were set up as a temporary measure in 1831–2. Contemporary statistics were available for the disease in some local towns (Table 1 on next page).

Perhaps a further column of ‘cases discharged cured’ could be added. This evidence suggests a death rate from cholera in the Midlands which was extremely variable but overall of about 30%. Accurate statistics are, however, quite impossible, as common cases of diarrhoea are not definitely excluded.¹⁶ It nonetheless suggests that it was

Table 1 Cholera in Places near Shropshire, late August 1832.¹⁵

Town:	Total cases	deaths	remaining
Birmingham	11	10	1
Bristol	787	309	174
Bromsgrove	13	3	5
Droitwich	90	15	55
Dudley	317	21	17
Gloucester	258	72	60
Liverpool	3828	1130	211
Manchester	389	212	77
Tewksbury	54	19	19
Tipton	623	181	63
Upton-upon-Severn	54	33	4
Wolverhampton	78	23	23
Worcester	148	37	24
TOTALS	6650	2065	733

dangerous to be in contact with the Severn, the Black Country or Liverpool. Even if all the 'remaining' cases died, it would still be a mortality of only 42%, far better than the dire Russian precedent. The prevalence of the cholera as an urban problem is evident.

It was fortunate for Shropshire that the incidence of the disease in the nearby and badly affected Black Country came quite late in the course of the epidemic. Wolverhampton was first affected as late as 8 August 1832, but it was severe there; the greater severity of the disease in its small suburb, Tipton, also first affected in August, is remarkable. The table is also probably very incomplete; in addition, for instance, Price counted 692 cholera deaths in Bilston, a suburb of Dudley, in just over a month in August-September 1832.¹⁷

In contrast, the very low figures for Birmingham (a town lacking cellar dwellings) are remarkable, and would repay further study. The perception in most of Shropshire was that the disease affected the ports; in the main part of the county it was expected first to affect places on the Severn, as they were most exposed to the river barge population, rather than places in contact with the Black Country. Some detached parts of the county were within the Black Country (Halesowen and Oldbury) and are likely to have been badly infected. It may also have been helpful to the main part of Shropshire that the worst exposure came late in the year when the weather was cooler, and the cholera less virulent.

Local Infections and Measures

1. Shrewsbury

In late 1831, long before there were any cases of the new disease in the county town, the mayor of Shrewsbury decided that there should be a local board of health. Shrewsbury at this time had a Borough Corporation and Street Commissioners (appointed under an Act of 1821); management of the poor was unified, nominally, under the Shrewsbury Poor United District, and no longer in the hands of the town parishes, though some parishes were effectively independent.¹⁸ At first the parishes do not appear to have been involved. The mayor must have first applied to the Central Board, as the setting up of a Shrewsbury Board of Health had been reported by 14 November.¹⁹ His approach to medical colleagues was very discouraging. Following several unsuccessful approaches to the medical and surgical officers of the Shrewsbury Infirmary, he called a meeting at the Town Hall on 29 November to discuss what should have been a quite uncontentious matter. He asked for alternative precautionary measures to be considered. Six days earlier, Dr. Du Gard²⁰ of the Infirmary had insisted on payment; a colleague, Dr. Johnson,²¹ took the opposite view that the cholera was a national emergency, and public spirit dictated that medical gentlemen should be prepared to offer their services for free. The issue seems to be whether their task went beyond statistical reporting. Poor law and charity apart, most normal medical attention would be paid for by normal fees from the patient or his relatives. In affluent parishes this might involve subsidy from the poor rate. Johnson also hinted that the 'faculty' might be helpful. At the mayor's meeting on the 29th Du Gard was present; that evening the mayor visited the Infirmary and announced the agreement of the magistrates to the formation of a board of health. That, evidently, made it official. The two doctors on the board were to be Dr. Du Gard and Dr. Darwin, the latter the senior doctor reporting to the Central Board of health.

On the previous day the 'faculty' had assembled at the Infirmary. Johnson had met Du Gard and outlined a system, which, he said, was used in forming a local board of health with county responsibilities in Worcester. This was to be the precedent for his proposed Shropshire county board.²² Their disagreement over payment came to a head. Possibly Johnson had a different idea of the amount of work involved; he is reported to have said 'I conceive very little of our time will be required at the board, and we can expect no remuneration...the members of the board of health will not be required to visit every case.' So he evidently considered the duties to be merely statistical, at least at county level.²³ It is unclear whether Johnson proposed that there should be a Shrewsbury local board in addition, but he probably did not; his Shropshire board was to double as a true local board.

A bigger disagreement arose at the mayor's meeting on the 29th when Dr. Du Gard observed that there was no necessity for a board of health to have a medical secretary, and Joseph Loxdale *senior*, the Deputy Recorder or Town Clerk, made his view known that he saw no need for there to be any medical members on the board at all. Loxdale, rather than the mayor, appears to have been the person who took the initiative.²⁴ This gave Dr. Johnson his cue to take offence, and the meeting descended into acrimony. The Deputy Recorder tried to rescue the proposal by suggesting a medical sub-board, but Johnson refused to take part. On the other hand Du Gard stated that he would agree to take part. The Shrewsbury local board of health was evidently set up on the mayor's plan. Following this, Johnson wrote to the Privy Council for copies of the same circulars which they had sent to Loxdale²⁵.

The offended Dr. Johnson and his colleague Dr. Webster²⁶ called a meeting of doctors and surgeons at the Infirmary a few days later, on 5 December, and adjourned it to Johnson's house in Belmont to discuss and set up a rival board for Shrewsbury, to be a 'county board of health'.²⁷ Johnson stressed that his motive was injured pride: 'In consequence of the attempt made by the Corporation to exclude medical gentlemen from the board...I am indignant at the usage the profession has received...I feel that we have been grossly insulted.' His colleague, Webster, hinting at corruption, went further, to say that it was a ruse to get fees into a certain person's pockets.²⁸ A 'hole and corner job' was as far as Johnson went in expressing his suspicions of corruption, apart from ridiculing the suggestion that the Deputy Recorder and his clerk should report on cases.²⁹ The root problem appears to have been personal hostility between Dr. Johnson and the Deputy Recorder.

It was probably not foreseen by the government setting up the Central Board in London to supervise local boards that a three-tier arrangement might emerge, with a 'general central medical board of health for the town of Shrewsbury and County of Salop' in the middle.

One Shropshire colleague, Mr. Edwards (a Coalbrookdale surgeon), himself first involved with the Dawley board on 24 August 1832, queried if the mayor's board of health was not already in existence. 'I have heard', he stated, 'that there is a board of health already established in the town.' This Dr. Johnson dismissed as 'an attempt', which had failed because it was so overloaded with parish officers.

A resolution of the medical meeting was that the new board should consist entirely of doctors and surgeons: Drs. Johnson, Webster, Evans, Wood, Lewis, Lloyd and Lawrence, and Messrs. Griffith, Clarke, Clement, Carline, Proud, Brooks, Cartwright, Watson, Tudor, Wilding, Mott, Gwyn, Edwards, Rowlands and Thursfield. Dr. Johnson's proposal was much more heavily weighted in favour of the medical profession than the mayor's (or deputy recorder's) proposal had been weighted against it. By another resolution, the corresponding local medical officers for each place were nominated. Twenty two centres in the county were thus identified for medical attention:³⁰ in addition to places actually obtaining local boards, Baschurch, Bishop's Castle, Church Stretton, Coalbrookdale, Conover, Ellesmere, Hodnet, Ironbridge, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Newport, Pontesbury, Shifnal, Wellington, Wem, Westbury, Whitchurch and Worthen, but not Cleobury Mortimer, Lilleshall or Shrewsbury, were included.

There is evidence of Thursfield as one of the three medical men at work in Broseley, Edwards as one of the four in Dawley, and Cartwright as one of the three at Oswestry, but of no other name. When cholera appeared in Shrewsbury in August, the mayor's board of health dealt with it. In April 1832 Dr. Darwin's daughter wrote to her brother:

'I suppose you get the Papers...the Cholera...is quite dying away in London now, but spreading over the Country fast. One case is said to have taken place in Whitchurch, so we shall have it directly in Shrewsbury, and Papa being the Head Doctor of the Board of Health is really awful.'³¹

On 15 August 1832 Darwin's other sister wrote to him:

'The Cholera has at last reached Shrewsbury but there have not been 20 cases yet & I hope it may soon die away...'³²

In the next week 36 cases were reported in Shrewsbury.³³ In about September 1832 Richard Evans, a crew member of a Shrewsbury vessel, was struck down with the disease at Broseley.³⁴ Also in September, Lord

Tankerville, with the race committee of the Corporation, opened a racecourse on his Whitehall estate to the east of the town,³⁵ despite an application by the Shrewsbury local board of health to the Privy Council to prohibit racing during the cholera epidemic. The application was not successful in obtaining a temporary prohibition.³⁶

Shortly after this, the disease died away in Shrewsbury. A meeting of the Shrewsbury local Board of Health on 12 November thanked everyone who had been helpful, including the Rev. W. J. James, the clergyman officiating at burials. The meeting also referred to 'District' boards of health, presumably serving the parishes of the town.³⁷

The Shrewsbury example seems to show the robustness of the orthodox pattern of local board. Dr. Johnson was clearly a very influential person, but he had difficulty in upsetting it and imposing a different type of board. Shrewsbury also demonstrates the unimportance of the town parishes as poor law authorities, as in this case the initiative came from the corporation. But information is very defective and the parishes may have played an unrecorded role.

2. *Bridgnorth*

In Bridgnorth there were two urban parishes within the territory of the Borough Corporation, High Town, otherwise called St. Leonard's, and Low Town, otherwise called St. Mary Magdalene's. For the purposes of poor relief these were distinct authorities, each possessing a workhouse; the measures taken were entirely those of the parishes, though recognising that they were in some way connected. The High Town authority was the dominant one, Low Town being something of a riverside suburb. The workhouse of the High Town was an old building close to the North Gate.³⁸ That of the Low Town was a house built in 1789 on the east side of the road called Bernard's Hill.³⁹ There was a local board of health in existence by the start of 1832, with responsibility for both parishes of the borough, though requiring its costs to be met by the parishes individually. The situation of Bridgnorth Low Town on the River Severn heightened the awareness of risk:

'The trade of this town may be said to arise principally from the navigation of the river, which affords every facility for the transit of goods, and has made this place a thriving inland port.'⁴⁰

The work of the local board of health in Bridgnorth appears to have consisted mainly of trying to establish a hospital and a burial ground. At first, long before any cholera cases occurred in Bridgnorth, it attempted to persuade the High Town vestry to convert their workhouse into a cholera hospital. The proposal was debated by the High Town vestry on 8 February, but many ratepayers were unconvinced of the necessity, and so it was defeated. The vestry minute complacently states:

'Resolved that the meeting would have great pleasure in complying with the request of the Board of Health to grant the use of the workhouse as a hospital for cholera patients but in consequence of the objection urged by a large number of parishioners they feel themselves obliged to negative the motion'⁴¹

As a consequence of this rebuff the board of health appears to have diverted its attention to the even more uncooperative vestry of the other parish, the Low Town. The board firstly applied to the Low Town vestry in July to obtain land for a cholera burial ground. The vestry in turn applied to the trustees of the Blue Coat School and almshouses in High Town apparently without success.⁴²

It is unclear why the approach to the Low Town vestry was secondary; perhaps it was considered that cholera was more likely to be a problem in the more congested High Town, although Low Town is more immediately on the river. In August 1832 the Low Town vestry responded to an order in Council prohibiting cholera burials in ordinary graveyards by resolving to look for a substitute ground in lieu of their parish churchyard. In the same month the board of health ordered the Low town vestry to make their poorhouse (Plate 1) available to be a cholera hospital, presumably for the use of the whole town, suggesting they take premises elsewhere for the accommodation of paupers.⁴³ The vestry agreed, subject to details of any supposed case being submitted to the London surgeons for verification, as there was scepticism about the reality of the threat. The poorhouse was evidently transformed into a hospital, as Wood's map of the town in 1835 marks different buildings on Bernard's Hill as the new poorhouse. The old poorhouse building on Bernard's Hill is unlabelled on the 1835 map, having, no doubt, become private property when, in 1833, it was no longer required as a hospital.⁴⁴ In late August the Low Town vestry decided that its own hospital and burying ground were to be independent.⁴⁵ At the same time the vestry decided not to make any payments to the Bridgnorth board of health but to set up an independent board of their own, with what success is unclear.

In August 1832 the secretary of the board of health applied to the High Town vestry to pay their expenses of £25. The High Town vestry resisted this proposal, as they appointed a committee of 13 persons to meet the board of health at a meeting on this subject to be held in the Town Hall.⁴⁶



Plate 1 Bridgnorth Cholera Hospital, (former Low Town Poorhouse, the Finest 1832 Isolation Hospital in Shropshire).

A proposed independent board of health of the Low Town was to be chaired by John Coley, a chemist and druggist, who might have been related to James and William Coley, local surgeons. It was to include 22 other persons. Several intended members do not appear to have been Low Town residents, but they must have been owners of property there. Its secretary was to be a lawyer, William Hardwick, and two other board members (George Davis and James Hall) were surgeons. One of the members was A. F. Sparkes, another lawyer, who would prove to be a troublesome secretary to the Bridgnorth Poor Law Union when appointed in 1836.⁴⁷ This proposed board appears not to have functioned.

Both High Town and Low Town poor law authorities appear to have been involved in precautionary measures with great reluctance and generally to have kept the board of health at arm's length.

3. Broseley

The history of the Broseley local board of health has been touched upon by Jones⁴⁸ after Randall's contemporary *History of Madeley*. The full minutes have been preserved and they illustrate the informality of its position.⁴⁹

There had been rumours, as early as late 1831, that the disease was present in the ports, placing Broseley, with its dependence on Severn trade, at severe risk. In response Broseley set up its local board of health on 28 November 1831. The parish was divided into three areas, each to be overseen by a medical practitioner and three inspectors. Nothing is recorded of the Shrewsbury initiative, although Thursfield, a local surgeon, was present at the Broseley meeting. The inaugural and many subsequent meetings resolved on a ventilation and whitewashing exercise. The status of the early board is unclear; in December 1831, under the chairmanship of John Pritchard, a local solicitor, it wrote to the Central Board to announce its existence. The local board collected £116 in 'subscriptions' from the major local property owners, and at the end of January 1832, probably feeling that the cholera scare had passed over without any cases in Broseley but without disappearing, paid the balance into a savings bank and allowed itself to become dormant.

There is reference to the Broseley board of health in February, so the board had presumably reconvened by that date.⁵⁰ Thomas Wilde was farmer of the poor from April 1832 for one year, and he was paid an additional sum for his trouble in managing cholera cases.⁵¹ What were two early cases of cholera were reported in July 1832, both, as expected, related to trade on the river Severn.⁵² The sinking of an infected barge was ordered. On 13 July the medical practitioner responsible for the most vulnerable district reported on several further cases, the fatal ones of Francis Oakes and his wife Ivie and two others less critically affected. The medical profession came in for some

suspicion because of its advocacy of very prompt burial of victims' corpses. At this stage the board must have felt its position to be unsatisfactory: it ordered a copy of the relevant Act of Parliament to be obtained. On 17 July contact from the Central Board of Health was reported, including a query as to who was to be on the local board. A new board was formed under the rector, the Rev. Dr. Townsend Forester, with 34 other members.

At another meeting on 23 July, lime was purchased for whitewashing all the houses in Jackfield, the riverside area of the parish, it being evident that the attacks of the disease were very much concentrated there. Cleansing and alterations were also to be carried out at Broseley Town Hall, several watercourses were to be covered, and no more dead dogs or cats were to be thrown into the Delph. Blankets and tubes carrying hot air into the hospital were methods mainly used to treat victims.

In August 1832 the board decided to take on additional powers and link themselves clearly to the poor rate.⁵³

The vestry of Broseley was unhappy with the burial of cholera victims in the local churchyards, and at their request the local board of health persuaded Davenport to provide a cholera burial ground adjacent to the Red Church without charge. Randall later described it:

'The Cholera Ground, as it is called, near the graveyard, which was consecrated by a separate visit of the bishop in 1832, lies open and exposed, not having even been railed in, or if railed in the fence is gone a long time since.'⁵⁴

Payment for fencing is recorded in June 1833. The board also successfully approached Foster, the Ironmaster, for a lease of Calcutts House, the 'big house' near the Severn, as a cholera hospital. On 5 September 1832 they agreed to appoint William Neeves and his wife to be attendants there, very like the master and matron of a poorhouse, and at their next meeting on 12 September they resolved to offer them a payment of one guinea per week. The builder, George Griffith, made a cholera cart which was kept at the poorhouse when it was not in use.⁵⁵

In October 1832 it appeared the crisis was over and two of the three medical men were discharged. The last recorded action of the Board of Health was the payment of £7 to John Geary on 12 January 1833⁵⁶. The board dissolved itself on 13 June 1833 stating that:

'the cholera having ceased in this parish and the purpose for which this board was established having been accomplished, we hereby declare that the board of health is from this time dissolved.'

Jones illustrates a burial in the cholera ground dated 1834, but with an upstanding headstone, contrary to Davenport's wishes. This shows that the burial ground remained in use.⁵⁷ In the case of Broseley the parish was important, but the confusion over two local boards of health is telling.

4. Dawley

Unlike Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Broseley, Dawley was not on the river Severn. It was a crowded parish of small mining communities,⁵⁸ industrially developed in the extreme south and west at Lightmoor and Horsehay under the aegis of the Coalbrookdale Company and in the extreme north by the Old Park Company. Paul Luter's evidence is that local people had many contacts with the Black Country, which must have heightened awareness of the disease, and there may have been some modernising influence from the Companies.

Even before the setting up of the Dawley board, a local surgeon, Matthew Webb, had been looking to the cholera to enhance his practice.⁵⁹ A local board of health was set up by Dawley vestry on 24 August 1832, and granted £50 by the vestry.⁶⁰ It was established with the Rev. John Wood (the incumbent) as chairman and the Rev. Thomas Humphreys (his curate) as secretary. There were 27 other members, including the ironmasters Abraham and Alfred Darby of Coalbrookdale and William Botfield of Old Park, although the latter was represented at meetings by a proxy, William Jones. Medical Practitioners on the board were Messrs. E. Edwards, J E Ward, Henry Greenhalgh and Hugh Rowlands. Personal rivalry with Edwards may explain why Webb was not included. Edwards was a surgeon employed by the Madeley vestry for its pauper patients.⁶¹ The board was evidently short-lived, as it was formed at a date when the epidemic was practically spent, but no specific record of its ceasing to exist is apparent. It was subsidiary to the parish, as it was 'expected to render an account to the parish officer'.⁶² It did not generate written minutes separate from the vestry. It probably ceased at the start of 1833, after which no meetings are recorded in the parish minutes. It appears, nonetheless, to have been a particularly active board, setting up a cholera hospital in redundant industrial buildings.⁶³

On 5 September the Dawley local board raised a sum of £50 for its treasurer to use, with instructions that anything left over was to be returned to the parish officers. It is not clear how many cases of cholera were to be managed in Dawley; a possible one was Richard Rhodes, who was granted 3s. 6d. a week on 7 December to

support his family while he was a patient in the workhouse infirmary.⁶⁴ On 12 December, by which time the crisis was practically over, the board (or the vestry) resolved to apply to Robert Slaney for half an acre of land to extend Dawley churchyard.⁶⁵

This appears to be a case in which the local poor law authority exactly met the Central Board's expectations.

5. Lilleshall

Not being on the River Severn, Lilleshall was probably not seen as being at great risk. The influence of the Sutherland Estate may have been a factor in creating more positive management here.

Blank tickets survive for a magistrate to order medical attendance on a poor person, headed 'Lilleshall Board of Health', but nothing further is known about this local board, and the tickets are not even securely dateable to 1832.⁶⁶

6. Ludlow

On 29 September 1832 the secretary to the Privy Council wrote to G. Harper of Ludlow thanking him for some cholera statistics and informing him that if there were any further cases of the disease he would be grateful to receive information. From this it appears that the local board of health was not yet established.⁶⁷

By contrast, when the secretary wrote to J. M. Berries of Bitterley near Ludlow on 29 December 1832 he implied that no more reports were needed and that the board of health was about to be disbanded.⁶⁸ It therefore appears that a board of health for Ludlow came into existence at some time perhaps in October 1832 but was disbanded by the end of the year.

7. Oswestry

Oswestry in 1831–2 was a single ancient parish, incorporated as a borough since the 13th century, with its present corporation established under an act of 1672, and Thomas Longueville Longueville (formerly T. L. Jones, an Oswestry solicitor) as Mayor.⁶⁹ Oswestry, like Shrewsbury, was a place where the parish-based poor law had been replaced by an 'incorporation', but unlike at Shrewsbury, the new arrangement was more successful, and the incorporation here was still active. Oswestry's workhouse was at Morda, but there is no evidence of its involvement. An Oswestry local board of health was established at the unusually early date of 21 November 1831. There appear to have been early apprehensions of grave risk here, associated with vagrants from Liverpool.

Oswestry town and parish was divided into three divisions by the local board, corresponding to the involvement of three surgeons. The public of Oswestry was very hostile to the work of the board, and its members 'met with many locked doors and surly observations.' Their main advice to householders was to whitewash.⁷⁰ Reports were received on 3 December.⁷¹ In the first, or most vulnerable, district it was decided that the houses were in a tolerably clean condition, apart from several nuisances to be remedied. The employment of a scavenger was recommended. The main concern of the local board of health centred on the problem of vagrants in lodging houses, but the problem they posed was not yet cholera:

'we are satisfied that infectious diseases have been introduced into the town by vagrants and that much danger is incurred by the filthy condition of the lodging houses themselves and the persons of those occasionally resident in them.'

The board also appointed a local surveyor, Richard Yates, as its secretary and ordered the repaving of some street drains. It was also ordered that a list of the 'poorest and most deserving persons' should be compiled and given to the churchwardens as a guide to the distribution of the flannel charity.

At a following meeting, on 17 December 1831,⁷² the secretaries of the three local committees were instructed to provide Yates with their lists of nuisances. A fund was created to cover the expense of whitewashing cottages whose owners could not do so, and the Beadle was to publicise the names of those who refused to co-operate.

By mid-July 1832 there was a loss of impetus and meetings were being attended only by the medical members of the board.⁷³ A pool in the town was ordered on the 14th to be cleansed. Ten days later, medical men in the nearby towns of Wrexham, Ruabon and Ellesmere were to be asked whether their towns were yet affected by the cholera;⁷⁴ this and the emphasis on vagrants shows that in Oswestry, the risk was perceived to arise from contact with Liverpool. From this it is also concluded that Oswestry was as yet unaffected by the cholera.

On 28 July Thomas Hughes was ordered to remove all offensive middens. It was apparently felt also that vagrants should be better controlled, and William Faulks's lodging house, to which many came, was ordered to be whitewashed by the churchwardens at public expense.

At a full Vestry meeting, also on 28 July, 1832, additional powers were conferred on the local board of health, in accordance with an order of the Privy Council. It was mainly resolved again that cottages were to be whitewashed.

At this time, the local board of health consisted of a chairman (the Rev. J Dunne, vicar and chief master of Oswestry School), three surgeons (Morris, Cartwright and Cockerill), two overseers, and five others.⁷⁵

A sum of £20 was deposited on 13 September 1832 with J. M. Hales, the dispenser of the Oswestry Dispensary, to pay for medicines for any bowel complaints experienced by the poor, because such complaints might be a precursor to cholera.⁷⁶

It is curious that in Oswestry so much attention was given to vagrants, and that there is no mention in the surviving minutes of any hospital or burying ground, unless, of course, the authorities were using their workhouse at Morda. The response of Oswestry shows how public opinion was beginning to become concerned about urban public health. Although cholera was their main anxiety, the parish authorities were concerned with the threat to the town, whatever its cause and nature.

Conclusions

Cholera was late in coming to the county, but the example of Shropshire leads to several general conclusions:

1. The reformed poor law unions, had they been in place by 1832, might have coped better than the old parish-based system, possessing the status of recent parliamentary creations and being more businesslike and active. If, on the other hand, they had been in place the local costs of the new system would have appeared higher, and the argument that the new poor law system brought benefits to the ratepayer would have been harder to make. The Shrewsbury example shows that an advantage which would have come with poor law reform would have been better financed unions to pay medical fees where patients were too impoverished to do so. The example of Oswestry seems to show that 'incorporations' under the Old Poor Law were simply ignored.

The main effect of the poor law came later, as the Secretary of the Poor Law Commission, Edwin Chadwick, used the experience of these years as a spring to set up inquiries which culminated in the Health of Towns Commission and the Public Health Act.

Far from suggesting that local authorities lacked powers, it appears that it was more the central board which found its authority unclear and in need of reinforcement.

2. The experience of Bridgnorth and Dawley suggests that vestries, the existing poor law authorities, outranked local boards of health and could treat their requirements as mere requests. Local boards of health in the county seem generally to have been a vestry initiative, but in Bridgnorth, where the board was a corporation initiative, the board and the two vestries of the town paying its expenses had a poor relationship. Not enough is known of the board of health in Shrewsbury to know what relations were built up between it and the town parishes.

There was some overlap of responsibilities between vestries providing emergency facilities such as burial grounds and local boards of health supposedly providing the same.

3. Although the lower Severn was badly affected, the disease was late in arriving in Shropshire, first reaching Broseley in April 1832. It was clearly a reasonable local perception that cholera was present in the ports of Britain, and three of the places acquiring a local board of health were towns on what was considered likely to be the main route for the cholera to affect the county, the River Severn. The barge population was mobile, so that a person might be infected in one place, and become a patient elsewhere. By August 1832 Gloucester, Tewksbury, Upton and Worcester were all infected places on the Severn. The example of Broseley shows that it was right to be suspicious of the barge population. In Oswestry, on the other hand, proximity to Liverpool was perceived to be the dangerous factor, infection being liable to be brought in by vagrants lodging in unclean premises.
4. Lord Hill, the Commander in Chief of the army, imagined that flannel around the loins of soldiers would protect them from cholera; this illustrates the lack of popular medical understanding of the disease; the unexplained efficacy of flannel has long been a popular belief. Similarly Oswestry had a flannel charity; but it is characteristic of primitive welfare that it should or could be reserved for the 'poorest and most deserving persons'.

The medical profession was in its infancy, but the example of Shrewsbury suggests a surprising lack of preparedness on the part of medical gentlemen to become involved. They felt that local boards of health should be set up on their terms, or not at all, regardless of parliamentary intentions. Suspicions of corruption in the town council might have been justified, but the alacrity of Dr. Johnson of the Shrewsbury Infirmary in

taking offence at the mayor's proposals was overdone. The treatment of the medical profession is also shown in the example of Broseley to have been very casual, doctors not being treated as having much relevant expertise.

5. The main tasks of a local board of health were to publish advice to the poor and to establish an isolation hospital and a burial ground. This shows that the task was conceived to be mainly the management of a crisis. The treatment of a patient in hospital seems to have been simply a matter of keeping him as warm as possible. Whether much was attempted of Dr. Latta's or other treatments is unclear, although it was doubtless usual for patients who could afford it. Even in Oswestry, where the risk appears to have been well studied, the effort was not particularly well focussed or specific.
6. A peculiarity of Shropshire in this outbreak of the disease is the comparative immunity the county appears to have enjoyed, compared in particular with the rather smaller and much worse affected Black Country on its borders. This perhaps justifies the authorities in not taking the disease very seriously. The extraordinary thing is that the local authorities of the Newport and Market Drayton areas appear to have shared in that indifference.

Shropshire might be unusual in the manner in which an alternative to Parliament's model for local boards of health was proposed. It will be recalled that the Shrewsbury doctors and surgeons also identified Baschurch, Church Stretton, Coalbrookdale, Condover, Ellesmere, Hodnet, Ironbridge, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Newport, Pontesbury, Shifnal, Wellington, Wem, Westbury, Whitchurch and Worthen as places which would benefit from having a local board, but possibly did not. Dr. Johnson's suggestion would have led to the creation of unnecessary work and been no better thought out than the 'official' pattern.

Notes

- 1 M. Durey, *The Return of the Plague*, 1979; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th edn., art. 'Cholera'. What Durey regards as a second epidemic reached Sunderland and Scotland in late 1831. There are two sorts of cholera, British and Asiatic. The more deadly Asiatic (*Spasmodic Indian or Epidemic*) Cholera was often a disease of very rapid progression, affecting and killing its victims in hours. It commonly thrived where there was human faecal contamination of drinking water. The ultimate source of all the early nineteenth century epidemics of this dreadful disease, *cholera morbus*, often referred to simply as 'cholera' with no adjective, was the Ganges Delta in India. It was very destructive of life on its advance across Russia, killing about two thirds of its victims. In Sunderland the first recorded case occurred on 27 Oct. 1831.
- 2 C. F. Brockington, *Public Health in the Nineteenth Century*, 1965; Royal Proclamation, 21 June 1831: *Op. Cit.*, 67. New London Board of Health: *Op. cit.* 79. The members of the initial board were considered to have insufficient relevant experience. The new Board also developed over time; at first it saw its task as mainly issuing circulars of advice, later it was more active in recruiting local boards.
- 3 *London Gazette*, 21 Oct. 1831, 2159.
- 4 E.g., M. Durey, *The First Spasmodic Cholera Epidemic in York 1832* [Borthwick Papers, 46], 1974.
- 5 A. Fletcher, 'Cholera in North-East Wales, *Trans. Denbighshire Historical Soc.*, 44, 1995, 25–44.
- 6 Brockington, *Op. Cit.*, 70 etc.
- 7 By Summer 1832 it was present throughout the British Isles. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th edn., art. 'Cholera'. (The Reform Act received the Royal Assent on 7 June 1832. The first 'reformed' election was not held until early 1833.)
- 8 The *London Gazette* and the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* set out precautions including the authoritative advice of the London Board of Health: Quarantine was to be observed; the word 'sick' displayed on the door of every case; a local board of health was to be set up; towns were to be divided into Sanitary Districts under separate committees; troops were to be ready to assist. The poor were warned about spirituous liquors and indulgence in irregular habits; the enemies of cholera were identified as temperance, cleanliness, ventilation and equanimity; and for cholera, as for any other fever, it was advised that lozenges containing chloride of lime should be sucked by attendants. *London Gazette*, 21 Oct. 1831, *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1831, *Salopian Journal*, 17 Sept. 1832, J. Randall, *History of Madeley*, 1880, 250f. The poor at most risk were readily accused of 'irregular habits', or intemperance, which would in some unstated way make them vulnerable. This resulted only in delay in recognising the true reasons for their vulnerability. Although the bacillus was not identified until the work of Koch at the end of the century, persons of common sense like Randall saw perfectly well what remedies were needed.
- 9 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 16 Dec. 1831.
- 10 Locally available remedies effective 'for the present period' are listed by the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* of 2 Mar. 1832: they were Tower's *Stomachic Essence* (the only remedy specifically stated to be effective against cholera); Butler's *Cardiac Tincture of Turkey Rhubarb*, a laxative; Dixon's *Antibilious Pills*; Gregory's *Stomachic Powder*; Butler's *Stomachic and Digestive*; Tower's *Chemical Solution of Camphor*; Henderson's *Stomachic Vegetable Elixir*; Butler's *Fluid Extract of Sarsaparilla*; Dalby's *Carminative*; Ching's *Worm Lozenges*; and Butler's *Improved Daffy's Elixir*.
- 11 N. MacGillivray, 'Dr. Latta of Leith: Pioneer in the Treatment of Cholera by Intravenous Saline Infusion', *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 36, 80–85.
- 12 The 'official' advice of the London Board of Health was to apply warmth to the body of the patient (*London Gazette*, 25 Oct. 1831, 2091); Anon. ('One of the [Birmingham] Resident Physicians'), *A Few Plain Remarks...* (2nd edn.), Nov. 1831, 16; National Archives, Kew: PC1/95, 5 June 1832: Letter from Privy Council to Dr. Latta. His was one of several available

- treatments, and to what extent it was taken up or effective is unclear, but after its publication the proportion of fatalities amongst cholera patients seems to have decreased.
- 13 The most important research was conducted by Edwin Chadwick on behalf of the Poor Law Commissioners, producing a celebrated report 'On the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population', 1842. It was important in setting up the first Public Health Act and getting medical officers of health appointed. Chadwick's efforts were also supported by the cross-party parliamentary Health of Towns Commission, set up in 1843.
 - 14 Sanitary Act 29 & 30 Vic. c. 90, 1866; In 1871 The Local Government Board took over all former General Board of Health functions: 34 & 35 Vic. c. 70. See also E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform*, 1938, 444–6.
 - 15 Extracted from national table in *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 24 Aug. 1832.
 - 16 A. Fletcher, *Op. Cit.*, 28.
 - 17 J. Price, *A Brief Narrative of...Cholera in Bilston*, 1840, 9ff. The severity of cholera here and in Rowley was notorious.
 - 18 L. Smith, *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **82**, 2007, 29.
 - 19 Brockington, *Op. Cit.*, 78.
 - 20 Dr. Du Gard, physician to the Shropshire Infirmary and honorary fellow of the Geological Society, d.1840. (*Proceedings of the Geological Society of London*, **3**, 1838–42, 523) A scandal about Du Gard charging the Hill family excessive fees in 1831 for a non-medical matter is mentioned in Charles Darwin's sister's letter (*Correspondence of Charles Darwin* [F. Burkhardt et al., eds.]; (online: *Darwin Correspondence*, letter 154)), E. C. Darwin to C. R. Darwin, 8 Jan. 1832.
 - 21 James Proud Johnson, M.D., 1784–1860, physician to the Salop Infirmary, 1814–1839. Dr. Johnson started his career looking after private mental patients at Hermitage House (Advertisement: *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 6 Nov. 1805); Quarter Sessions Orders 1758–1839 vol 3 p.189; Subsequent to the events of 1831, he became High Sheriff of Montgomeryshire and a magistrate for two counties: *Roll of Royal College of Physicians (London)*.
 - 22 This claim was fantasy. A Worcester local board of health was established in March 1832 with the Bishop of Worcester as Chairman: National Archives, Kew: PC1/94, Letter to C. Clifton, Lord Mayor of Worcester, 7 Mar. 1832.
 - 23 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 2 Dec. 1831.
 - 24 Just before 6 Dec. Loxdale contacted the London Board of Health for information: National Archives, Kew: PC1/93, Letter to Loxdale 6 Dec. 1831.
 - 25 National Archives, Kew: PC 1/94, Letter from Privy Council to Johnson, ?20 Dec. 1831.
 - 26 Possibly an elected Physician to the Shrewsbury Infirmary: SA MI5564: Letters to Ormsby Gore.
 - 27 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 9 Dec. 1831.
 - 28 *Loc. cit.*
 - 29 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 2 Dec. 1831.
 - 30 *Baschurch*: Mr. Croft; *Bishop's Castle*: Mr. Lloyd; *Bridgnorth*: Dr. Proud; *Broseley*: Mr. Thursfield; *Church Stretton*: Mr. Wilding; *Coalbrookdale*: Mr. Edwards; *Condover*: Mr. Millington; *Ellesmere*: Mr. Watson; *Hodnet*: Mr. Walmsley; *Ironbridge*: Mr. Roland; *Ludlow*: Mr. Baines; *Market Drayton*: Mr. Williams; *Much Wenlock*: Mr. Brookes; *Newport*: Mr. Higgins; *Oswestry*: Mr. Cartwright; *Pontesbury*: Mr. Skrymsner; *Shifnal*: Mr. Bennett; *Wellington*: Mr. Evett; *Wem*: Mr. Gwyn; *Westbury*: Mr. Tudor, R.N.; *Whitchurch*: Mr. Welch; *Worthen*: Mr. Hickman.
 - 31 *Correspondence of Charles Darwin* (F. Burkhardt et al., eds.); (online: *Darwin Correspondence*, letter 154), E. C. Darwin to C. R. Darwin, 26 Apr. 1832.
 - 32 *Ibid*, Letter 180, S. E. Darwin to C. R. Darwin, 15 Aug 1832.
 - 33 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 24 Aug. 1832.
 - 34 J. Randall, *Op. Cit.*, 251.
 - 35 H. Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury*, 1837, 198; *VCH Salop*, **II**, 179.
 - 36 Oswestry Town Council, OB/A101, 'Copies of Documents and Proceedings relative to the Town and Liberties of the Borough of Oswestry 1818–1838'. Folio 53r. suggests that it succeeded. The VCH, however, states that the application was unsuccessful: *VCH Salop*, **II**, 179. Racing in general did not cease: Advertisement for racing at Shrewsbury: *Salopian Journal*, 12 Sept. 1832.
 - 37 *Salopian Journal*, 14 Nov. 1832.
 - 38 L. Smith, *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **82**, 2007, 82.
 - 39 SA: P41/U/1/2 (transcript), Contract with William Amiss of Claverley, 1789.
 - 40 Pigot, *Directory of Shropshire*, 1835, 346.
 - 41 SA: Fiche P40/282, Vestry Minutes, 8 Feb. 1832.
 - 42 SA: Fiche P40/282, High Town Vestry Minutes, 26 July? 1832. The Blue Coat school was located in the west side of the North Gate, in High Town: Wood's Map of Bridgnorth, 1835.
 - 43 SA: Fiche P41/147, Vestry Minutes, 6 Aug. 1832.
 - 44 SA: BB/E/1/5/2/13/1, Wood's Map of Bridgnorth, 1835.
 - 45 SA: Fiche P41/147, Vestry Minutes, 22 Aug. 1832.
 - 46 SA: Fiche P40/282, Vestry Minutes, 6 Aug. 1832.
 - 47 Most board members' occupations and workplaces are indicated in Pigot's *Directory of Shropshire*, 1835.
 - 48 K. Jones, *Pitmen, Poachers and Preachers*, 2009, 27–29.
 - 49 Randall, *Op. Cit.*, 249–254; see also SA: 604/Box 19, Proceedings of Broseley Board of Health.
 - 50 J. Randall, *Broseley and its Surroundings*, 1879, 236.
 - 51 SA: Fiche P40/282.
 - 52 J. Randall, *History of Madeley*, 1880, 251.
 - 53 Order in Council, 19 July 1832.
 - 54 J. Randall, *Broseley and its Surroundings*, 1879, 213fn, 236f.
 - 55 J. Randall, *History of Madeley*, 1880, 254.
 - 56 SA: MI 686/7.
 - 57 Jones, *Op. Cit.*, fig. 2.13.
 - 58 *VCH Salop*, **XI**, 109.

- 59 National Archives, Kew: PC 1/93 17 Nov. 1831, Letter enclosing circular sent to Matthew Webb, surgeon, Wellington.
- 60 SA: P89/C/1/1, Dawley Vestry Minutes 1806–42, 24 Aug. 1832, 5 Sept. 1832.
- 61 National Library of Wales: MS 3148 p. 850.
- 62 SA: P89/C/1/1, Dawley Vestry Minutes 1806–42, 5 Sept. 1832.
- 63 Paul Luter: pers. comm.
- 64 SA: P89/C/1/1, Dawley Vestry Minutes 1806–42. A picture of the workhouse is published by Jones, *Op. Cit.*, 44 fig. 2.31.
- 65 SA: P89/C/1/1, Dawley Vestry Minutes 12 Dec. 1832.
- 66 SA: P161/W/7/1–2, Tickets.
- 67 National Archives, Kew: PC 1/96, Letter to Harper, 29 Sept. 1832.
- 68 *Loc. cit.*, Letter to Berries, 29 Dec. 1832.
- 69 W. Cathrall, *History of Oswestry*, 1855, 162–6.
- 70 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 2 Dec. 1831.
- 71 Oswestry Town Council, OB/A101, *Op. Cit.*, folio 48v.
- 72 Oswestry Town Council, *loc. cit.*, folio 49r (17 Dec. 1831).
- 73 Oswestry Town Council, *loc. cit.*, folio 50r (14 July 1832).
- 74 Oswestry Town Council, *loc. cit.*, folio 51r; 32 cases were reported in Denbigh from June/July in 1832, 12 in Henllan and 6 in Llanrhaeadr: Fletcher, *Op. Cit.*, 31–2. There were also cases in Flint, Holywell, probably St. Asaph, Halkyn and Northop, and possibly Rhuddlan, Hawarden and Wrexham: *loc. cit.*, 35–44.
- 75 The Rev. James Dunne, chairman; Thomas Morris, P. Cartwright and Roger Cockerill surgeons; Messrs. R. Jones, L. Lucas, F. Campbell, Thomas W. Jenkins, S. Dunne; also Henry Hughes and D. Jones, overseers of the poor.
- 76 SA: Fiche P214/552.

JOSEPH BOWLES, VICAR OF STANTON LACY 1847–1879

By DEREK WILLIAMS

Abstract: This is a study of the life, work and character of a Victorian country parson. It shows how, after graduating from Oxford University in 1836, Joseph Bowles seemed destined for a brilliant career in the Church. Within the next five years he had gained two doctorates and won the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough. In 1847, however, he became Vicar of Stanton Lacy and spent the rest of his life in that post. He reformed the pattern of worship in Stanton Lacy. Vivid stories were still being told in the village about him and his wife more than 100 years after his death. The paper also describes some of his controversial extraparochial activities whilst at Stanton Lacy, including his brief but stormy membership of the Ludlow Board of Guardians and his career as a Freemason. It concludes with some tentative explanations for his sometimes intemperate behaviour.

In 1847 the Vicar of Stanton Lacy in Shropshire exchanged posts with the Rector of Bladon with Woodstock in Oxfordshire. This paper describes some features of this exchange, and then explores the eventful life of Joseph Bowles before and after he became Vicar of Stanton Lacy.

Of the two parishes, Bladon with Woodstock, eight miles from Oxford, was the more glamorous but also the more demanding. Blenheim Palace was within its boundaries, and the Duke of Marlborough took a lively and critical interest in his Rector's activities. It also contained the bustling town of Woodstock, whose citizens had expectations of their Rector that were often at variance with those of the Duke. Few rectors were able to sustain for long equally good relations with both the Town Council and the Palace.

Life in Stanton Lacy, an agricultural parish about three miles from Ludlow, was more tranquil and uneventful. Its Vicar had no powerful patron leaning over his shoulder, and the Bishop was more than thirty miles away in Hereford. Nothing remarkable seemed to have happened in Stanton Lacy since a previous Vicar, Robert Foulkes, was hanged for murder in 1679.¹

The Exchange

In 1847 George William St. John had been Vicar of Stanton Lacy for 27 years. Aged 51 and unmarried, he appears to have been the model of unadventurous Anglican gentility. His father was a general, and his mother, Lady Arabella, was the daughter of the Earl of Craven, the patron of Stanton Lacy. He had been educated at Rugby School, Balliol College, Oxford, and Jesus College, Cambridge. His appointment to Stanton Lacy immediately followed his ordination in 1820, and during the whole of his time there he seems to have made no major changes to the fabric of the Church or the pattern of worship. Contemporary records suggest that the Churchwardens and congregation were content with this peaceful state of affairs.²

Joseph Bowles was 48 in 1847, and had been Rector of Bladon with Woodstock for seven years. He had been ordained deacon in 1836 and priest in 1837,³ and from 1837 to 1840 was Rector of Noke, in Oxfordshire, whose patron was the Duke of Marlborough. In 1841 the Duke chose Bowles to take over at Bladon. As Rector he succeeded William Mavor, who had been mocked by the townspeople of Woodstock as 'the tool of Blenheim': Mavor had spoken disparagingly about the high costs and low rewards of serving municipal Woodstock rather than ducal Bladon.⁴

Bowles adopted a different approach. He greatly increased the congregation at Woodstock, partly by taking an interest in the welfare of the local community. Perhaps inevitably, however, given the competing demands upon any Rector of Bladon with Woodstock, he found himself in sympathy and eventual alliance with a group of Woodstock radicals who were determined to challenge the political influence of the Duke of Marlborough. The Duke responded by taking a number of reprisals against Bowles: in 1844, for example, he was banned from using the Park at Blenheim.⁵ They began to quarrel over a range of educational and ecclesiastical matters, some of them quite trivial. Bowles complained that the Duke's Chaplain was interfering in parish visiting, and that the Duke was frustrating his plans to establish a National School and to improve church seating. The Duke complained to the Bishop that Bowles had spread malicious gossip about the contributions made by the ducal family to church collections.⁶ In 1847, relations had deteriorated so far that the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, was called upon to investigate Bowles's 'shameful and indecorous performance of divine service in Bladon Church'.⁷ (This might not have been as infamous as it sounds – it might simply have been a case of rushing through the service to get to Woodstock in time for the next one.) But it is clear that by 1847 relations between Bowles and the Duke were no longer those of patron and favoured protégé.

It is, therefore, possible that the exchange between Bowles and St. John was the result of an agreement between the patrons of the two churches, the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl of Craven. The Duke was able to dispose of someone whose interests and attitudes were no longer consonant with his own, and who was sowing unrest in the heart of the ducal estates. (If that was the motive for the exchange, the strategy seemed to work, at least at first. St. John appears to have persuaded the Bishop of Oxford that he should spend most of his time at Bladon. He held two services there each Sunday, whilst no one, or at best a curate, looked after Woodstock. Nonconformity flourished in the town and it was only after St. John died in 1876 that the Church in Woodstock began to recover.⁸)

It is less clear what the benefits of the exchange were to Stanton Lacy or to the Earl of Craven. The Earl might have wanted to arrange a more fashionable living for his grandson, and one nearer the family home in Wiltshire. He might also have been influenced by what seemed to be the royal connections and extraordinary academic achievements of Joseph Bowles since his graduation in 1836. These would have made him one of the most well connected clergymen and distinguished scholars in Shropshire – a prize catch for a remote village church.

Bowles's Early Life and Family

Joseph Bowles was the fourth son and youngest child of William Bowles, 'gentleman',⁹ of Faringdon, Berkshire. (There is a William Bowles listed as a shopkeeper in the Faringdon Trade Directory for 1790, but he does not appear in later editions.) William Bowles and Mary Belcher were married at Shrivenham, Berkshire, in 1776.¹⁰ They had six children. When Joseph was born in 1798 his sister Ann was already 17 and his brother William 14. Neither his father nor any of his brothers went to university.

We know nothing about Joseph's schooldays, but in the archives of Lambeth Palace Library there is a letter from him to the Bishop of London, written in 1824, when Bowles was 26. The letter was headed 'Faringdon School', and in it Bowles claimed that 'for the last nine years I have conducted a classical and mathematical school in this place...and have frequently sent young men to the Public Schools and Universities'.¹¹ He was, therefore, presenting himself to the Bishop as an experienced schoolteacher, and by implication one with considerable autonomy. He informed the Bishop that he owned an estate near Faringdon with 'an extensive mansion thereon', which he intended to use to establish a major new school: the purpose of his letter was to seek the Bishop's support for this venture and his willingness to become its patron. In essence, the young Bowles proposed to educate twenty boys, the sons of curates with stipends of less than £80 a year, and another twenty who were the sons of half pay officers. There would be no charge for their education apart from a nominal payment of £5 a quarter for each boy's board and lodging. To cover these costs Bowles intended to educate and prepare for the public schools and universities 30 sons of 'wealthy and loyal' parents at 100 guineas each *per annum*. Bowles gave the Bishop no information about his background or qualifications other than that already quoted, but he added that he came from an 'ancient and respectable family' and that he was related to William Lisle Bowles, the poet. We do not know how the Bishop responded to this request. It is unlikely that the venture flourished as, six years later, Bowles became a student at Oxford.

The William Lisle Bowles with whom Joseph claimed a family connection was a celebrated romantic poet and literary critic at the end of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth, centuries. *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, 1876, cites 'A Memoir of William Lisle Bowles' as one of several publications attributed to Joseph Bowles, which suggests that they might have met.¹² William was nearly 40 years older than Joseph. He was at Winchester, where he was captain of the school and won a scholarship to Trinity College, Oxford. At Trinity he won the Chancellor's Prize for Latin Verse.

Despite these differences in age and early education – none of the public schools so far approached recorded Joseph as a pupil – there are some possible links between the two men. William was a direct descendant of the Bowles family of Burcombe in Wiltshire: Joseph claimed the same ancestry. The east window of Stanton Lacy church has an armorial shield as its centrepiece, surrounded by Joseph's initials (Plate 1). The College of Arms confirms that these are the Arms of the Bowles of Burcombe, but adds that there is no evidence that Joseph had a right to them.¹³ (Interestingly, a family of Bowles in Bremhill, Wiltshire was using these arms in 1874:¹⁴ William Lisle Bowles had been Vicar of Bremhill for 40 years earlier in the century.) More plausible, but still circumstantial, support for the idea that the two men were acquainted comes from the fact that they both became chaplains to the Royal Family in 1838: William to the Prince Regent and Joseph to the Prince's brother the Duke of Sussex.

Degrees in Doubt

Joseph Bowles became a student at Oxford University in 1832, at the unusually late age of 33. He was at Magdalen Hall, (which became Hertford College in 1874) and gained his B.A. in 1836, with a second class in *Literae Humaniores* and a third class in Mathematics.¹⁵ In February 1839 he was awarded his M.A., which required no further study or residence.¹⁶ He played cricket twice for Oxford University against the M.C.C. – at Lords in 1834 and at Magdalen Ground, Oxford, in 1835.¹⁷ In essence, therefore, Bowles in his undergraduate years was an undistinguished scholar, but a moderately successful sportsman. He was more hearty than aesthete.

In the four years from his first clerical appointment, at Noke in 1837, to his first year at Bladon in 1841, the picture changes completely. There are no more sporting achievements on record, but an astonishingly rapid succession of honours and academic successes. In 1837 he gained the degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D.), and in



Plate 1 The East Window of Stanton Lacy Church.

1838 he was appointed Chaplain to Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, the sixth son and ninth child of George III: later he also became Chaplain to the Duke's wife, the Duchess of Inverness. In 1841, he became Doctor of Divinity (D.D.).

In later life Bowles made no secret of these apparent achievements. In correspondence he would add 'D.D., LL.D.' to his signature, and sometimes he also mentioned his past and present royal chaplaincies alongside his doctorates.

At first the reference books of the period recognised and listed these awards and honours. The *Clergy Lists* for 1846 and 1848 show Bowles to have the degree of Doctor of Civil Law (the Oxford University equivalent of LL.D.). Those for 1865 and 1876, however, make no mention of the D.C.L., but instead show Bowles with a D.D. and an LL.D.¹⁸ *Crockford* 1865 correctly identifies Bowles's college and personal details, and attributes to him the remarkable academic progress outlined above: third class B.A. in 1835, M.A. in 1836, LL.D. in 1837 and D.D. in 1841. *Crockford* 1868 and 1870 continue to show the LL.D. and the D.D., but these disappear from and after the 1872 edition.

No explanation for any of these various changes and retractions has been discovered, but that they occurred at all is significant, for it is now clear that none of these higher degrees was awarded by Oxford University. *Alumni Oxonienses* confirms this, as does correspondence with the Oxford University Archives.¹⁹ So from where did they come? In the 1851 census, Bowles appears as 'D.D. Oxon, Vicar of Stanton Lacy,'²⁰ but this is simply not true. Could they be Cambridge degrees? There is no Joseph Bowles in the relevant *Alumni Cantabrigienses* – and there is nothing in what we know of Bowles to connect him with Cambridge or, for that matter, with any academic institution other than Oxford.

Might they have been Lambeth degrees? These are degrees awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his discretion or on consideration of a petition from some prominent person or persons. This seemed a real possibility, given the connections between Bowles and the nobility and Royal Family when the degrees were being awarded. But Lambeth Palace Library has confirmed that no Lambeth degree was awarded to Joseph Bowles.²¹

Two other possibilities remain. One is that we have here an early case of doctoring one's C.V. The other is that Bowles obtained these degrees from somewhere as yet unconsidered. A powerful argument against the charge that Bowles invented the doctorates is that, if he did, it was in a remarkably blatant way. The rapidity of the successes listed in the 1865 *Crockfords* is barely credible. So perhaps we should continue to hope to find some Scottish or North American University at which Bowles obtained his doctorates. (Nothing is known of him at Trinity College, Dublin.) What does seem unlikely is that any sustained study went into their achievement, which would tend to rule out any doctorate from a major university.

There is also some uncertainty about the chaplaincies. Joseph Bowles does not appear in the registers of noblemen's chaplains held at the Lambeth Palace Library,²² which means that he was not a formally recognised chaplain to either the Duke of Sussex or the Duchess of Inverness. But members of the Royal Family could appoint any number of chaplains, who did not have to be registered, and Bowles might have been one of these. He did not, however, succeed in obtaining one of the most valuable perquisites of office available to royal chaplains. By virtue of their office they could apply to the Archbishop for permission to hold more than one benefice in plurality.²³ In 1840 Bowles sought dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold the living of Sandford in Oxfordshire alongside his new post as Rector of Bladon with Woodstock. Taking into account the financial circumstances of the two parishes, the distance between them and the (undisclosed) comments of the Bishop of Oxford, the application was refused.²⁴

At first sight, Bowles had little in common with the Duke of Sussex. The Duke was an uncle of Queen Victoria, (and in 1840 gave her in marriage to Prince Albert). He was an unusually liberal and learned member of the Royal Family, and he strongly supported various radical political causes. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1828 and its President in 1830. He was also known for his agnostic views: in his youth, he wrote 'I don't believe a word of it' alongside the Athanasian Creed in his Book of Common Prayer. He is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery because he had found distasteful the funeral arrangements for his brother William IV at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and also because his wife, the Duchess of Inverness, whom he had married outside the terms of the Royal Marriages Act, could not be buried at Windsor.²⁵

Why and how the Duke and Bowles came together is a mystery. Although Bowles was for a time associated with the radicals of Woodstock, he had no enthusiasm for social as opposed to political reform. During his years at Stanton Lacy, as we will see, he opposed the new poor law and argued fiercely against educational reforms.

If we are to believe that between 1837 and 1841 Bowles won ducal patronage, an appointment to royalty and two doctorates, we are left with two awkward questions. How could a third class honours man gain two doctorates in four years whilst busily building a career in the Church? And why was a man who opposed social and educational reform throughout his life chosen to guide the worship of an agnostic and liberal royal duke?

Transforming the Church at Stanton Lacy

Joseph Bowles's exile in Stanton Lacy began in the summer of 1847. He was dissatisfied with the state of the Church there for what might have been theological as well as architectural reasons.

Bowles was at Oxford during the heyday of the Oxford Movement, led by an influential group of clerical dons at Oxford University calling for fundamental reform in the Church of England. These Tractarians opposed the apparent decline of the Church into lazy liberalism, and its tacit acceptance of growing secular influence on social policies hitherto largely or wholly the responsibility of the Church. This was, for example, the period when predominantly lay national and local bodies were taking control of poor relief under the provisions of the 'new poor law'.

Did Bowles subscribe to any of these Tractarian beliefs? There is some evidence to suggest that he might. We will see later that he was an implacable, and in some ways a successful, opponent of the outdoor relief policies of the Ludlow Board of Guardians. Immediately after his arrival in Stanton Lacy, however, the clearest sign that Bowles might have had Tractarian sympathies came from his attitude to the roofed pews of the more prosperous members of the Church.

Tractarians objected to boxed or roofed pews because they were thought to bring secular notions of rank inside the church, and within weeks of his arrival Bowles set about removing them from Stanton Lacy. Many years later, in a letter to a friend, he recalled that 'when I became vicar...I found the church littered down with straw, covering the bare earth where the poor had seats. The vicar, Sir William Boughton, and some of the farmers had large high dormitories'.²⁶ Bowles immediately launched a major programme of renovation: at his first vestry meeting, in July 1847, it was unanimously resolved that 'the fittings up (*sic*) of the church are very much out of repair, and that the present arrangements of the pews, pulpit, reading desk and vestry are inconvenient and altogether inadequate to the proper accommodation of the parishioners'.²⁷ A London architect, Thomas Wyatt, was engaged to supervise the restoration of the Church (Plates 2 and 3).

By 1848 funds were being sought, not only for the general repair and refurbishment of the church, but also for a new vestry, the removal of the belfry stairs and the construction of a new belfry entrance. In 1851 the plans had grown to include major additional features such as new floors in the church and a system of central heating. The cost of all these changes was about £1,000.

The gazetteers and directories of the time were soon full of praise for the transformed church. In 1851, it was described as 'a fine old structure, some portions of which are unquestionably of great antiquity; it has recently been beautified...'.²⁸ Most of the credit for the changes went to the Vicar. The *Post Office Directory* for Shropshire (1856) described the interior of Stanton Lacy Church, 'which, at the commencement of Dr. Bowles's incumbency, was in a most dilapidated state, has, through his exertions, been thoroughly renovated. A richly carved reredos and pulpit of Caen stone have been fixed. The chancel is fitted up with carved stalls, and paved with encaustic tiles. The sittings throughout the church are open and mostly free. The whole of the woodwork is substantially executed in English oak, and the building warmed with hot air...There is a National School, chiefly supported by the Vicar'.²⁹



Plate 2 Stanton Lacy Church before Restoration (SA: 6001/3/372/2).



Plate 3 Stanton Lacy Church after Restoration. (Photograph: Richard Bifield)

Provincial Grand Master

Modernising St. Peter's Church at Stanton Lacy was clearly one of Bowles's principal interests in the first years after his arrival from Bladon, but it could hardly have consumed all the energies of a cleric accustomed to political manoeuvring on a wider stage and regular skirmishes with the Duke of Marlborough. One of the ways in which Bowles kept in touch with the world beyond the boundaries of Stanton Lacy was through his activities as a freemason.

Bowles became a freemason when he was elected to the Prince of Wales's Lodge in 1844, when he was at Bladon (Plate 4). This was a Masonic Lodge with unique royal connections. At the time of his accession to the throne in 1830, William IV was its Master and membership of the Lodge 'consisted entirely of those who had been honoured with appointments under its patron or men firmly attached to his Royal Highness's person and interests'.³⁰ The two previous masters of the Lodge had been George, Prince of Wales (1787–1820), and the Duke of York (1820–27). The Duke of Sussex, who was also Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England from 1813 until his death in 1843, succeeded King William as Master of the Lodge. It is probable that it was Bowles's connection with the Duke of Sussex that brought him into freemasonry, and that it was this royal connection which led to Bowles's rapid progress through the ranks of the order. Within a year of becoming a freemason he was a Grand Steward and a member of the Grand Lodge of England.³¹

Bowles's arrival in Shropshire led to further advancement within freemasonry. In 1848 the Earl of Zetland, who had succeeded the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master of England, appointed Bowles Grand Master of the Herefordshire Province. Shortly after this appointment, in October 1848, Bowles wrote to the Earl of Zetland acknowledging that he had been given the post 'to prove myself in some measure worthy of the distinction by endeavouring to revive Freemasonry in the County of Hereford'.³² Although he had only been in the office for a matter of weeks, Bowles went on to suggest that freemasonry in Herefordshire was a lost cause, and that it would have been better if he had been given the Shropshire Province instead of that of Hereford.

Bowles's argument was that there were only two Lodges in Herefordshire, in Ross and Hereford. Neither was particularly active. So far, he wrote, 'my efforts have proved abortive, neither do I see immediate prospects of

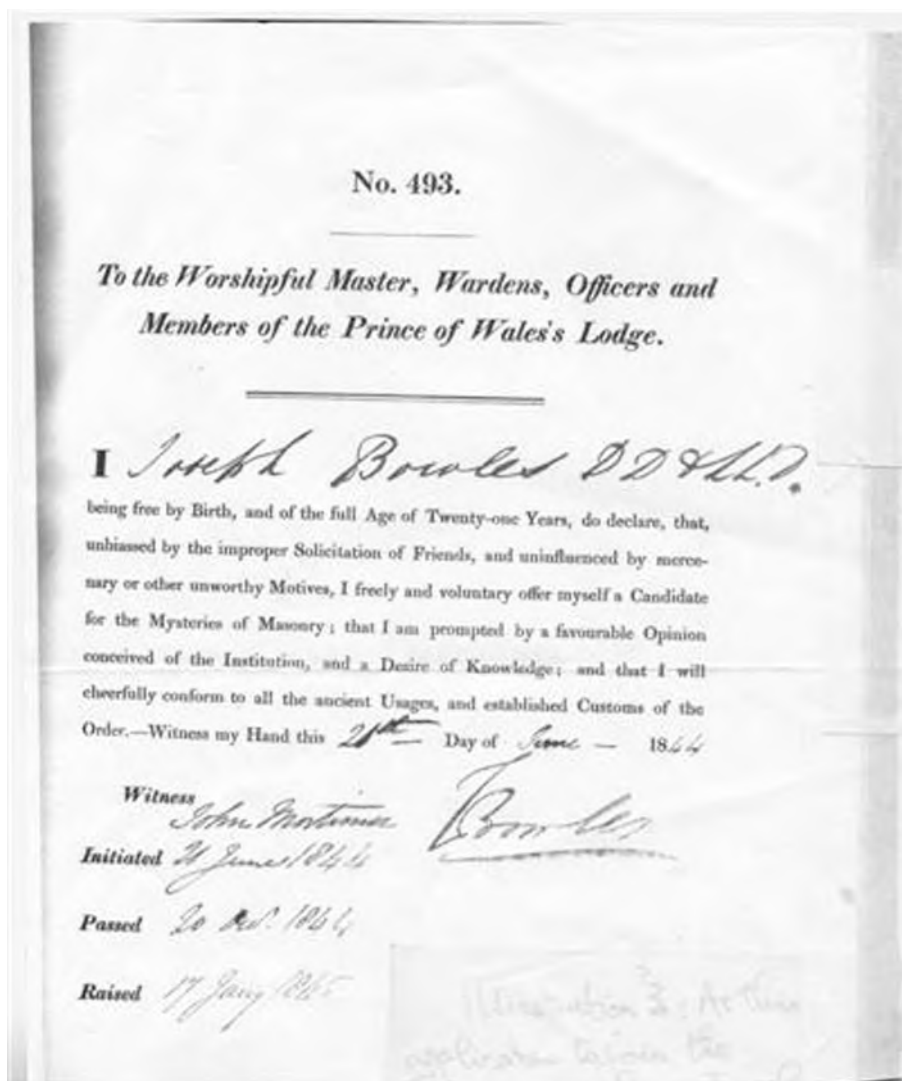


Plate 4 Bowles's Application to Join the Freemasons, with D.D. and LL.D. attached to his Name.

success'.³³ On the other hand, he continued, 'masonically there is cause for regret that I was not appointed for Shropshire in which County I have many influential friends...I am, with your Lordship's sanction, willing to hold the Office, pro tem, and resign it the moment either Sir Watkyn Williams Wynn or Sir Andrew Corbet or any other Gentleman has been definitely appointed'.³⁴

We have no record of what the Earl of Zetland thought of this idea, although he might have been disappointed by Bowles's prematurely gloomy view of the prospects for freemasonry in Hereford, and a little irritated that someone who had been a freemason for only four years should offer such guidance to the Grand Master. We do know that he did not accept Bowles's offer to take over Shropshire, and that Bowles was formally installed as Provincial Grand Master of the County of Hereford in September 1850, at a ceremony in the Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford. He does not seem to have been particularly active in this role. Only one new Lodge was consecrated during his period of office, at Eastnor on 20 September 1858. On the following day he installed Archdeacon Richard Freer of Hereford Cathedral as Deputy Provincial Grand Master. Freer died in 1863, and was replaced as Bowles's Masonic deputy by Chandos Hoskins. From the late 1860s onwards Bowles's health was failing, and he was rarely seen at Masonic functions.

Poor Law Guardian

A brief account of Bowles's career as a poor law Guardian, from 1852 to 1866, shows how aggressive and intemperate he could be, at least in the eyes of many of those with whom he worked, in the defence of what he believed to be the legitimate interests of his Church and his parish.

The 1832 Poor Law Amendment Act established Unions of parishes to administer poor relief in England and Wales. Broadly, relief of two kinds was offered: accommodation in the Union workhouse, and outdoor relief paid to sustain paupers in their own homes. A Board of Guardians answerable to the poor law authorities in London managed each Union. Stanton Lacy was one of 32 parishes in the Ludlow Union, and in September 1852 the ratepayers of Stanton Lacy elected Joseph Bowles to the Ludlow Board. It proved to be a bumpy ride for Bowles, as he fell out with many Guardians on a succession of issues. His views and actions offended some, and his ways of expressing those views offended others.

Bowles provoked the first dispute within weeks of joining the Board. He objected to the arrangement whereby William Russell, the Master of the Ludlow workhouse, also acted as Relieving Officer for the Ludlow out-relief district (one of several such districts in the Ludlow Union). Bowles argued, with some justification, that no one man should hold two such important posts simultaneously. At a Board meeting on 27 October 1852 he presented his case but lost the vote.³⁵ Two weeks later it emerged that Bowles had then written to the Poor Law Board (P.L.B.) to protest about this decision, but the P.L.B. had declined to criticise or overturn the action of the Ludlow Board. Some Guardians expressed surprise that Bowles had appealed to the P.L.B. over the heads of his Ludlow colleagues. Bowles declined to explain his action, beyond reiterating his objection to one man holding two such important offices, even though the P.L.B. and the Ludlow Guardians had agreed that both posts were well within Russell's compass.³⁶

Although the Ludlow workhouse was on the outskirts of Ludlow, it was within the boundaries of Stanton Lacy parish, and this led to a dispute in which Bowles again tested the patience of his colleagues. At a meeting in February 1853, from which Bowles was absent, the Board learned that he intended to charge a fee of £1 11s. 6d. (instead of the usual 3s.10d.) for burying any pauper, not a parishioner of Stanton Lacy, who died in the workhouse, 'to prevent his churchyard from becoming overcrowded'.³⁷ The other Guardians thought this excessive, and they deputed the Clerk to ask Bowles to think again. The dispute rumbled on for weeks. At first Bowles threatened to ban all paupers from being buried in his churchyard, and then suggested a fee of 10s. for each burial, and eventually, in March 1853, following what was described in the normally taciturn minute book as 'a very lengthy and animated discussion',³⁸ a fee of 6s. was agreed.

Bowles resigned from the Board of Guardians in 1866 in a storm of controversy, following a violent disagreement with the Chairman of the Board, Thomas Bridges. The background to, and details of, the affair have been described elsewhere,³⁹ but, in summary, what happened was that Bowles had been asked to chair a group of Guardians set up to investigate and report on the management of the Ludlow Union. Some parts of their report were critical of the Union, but they were recognised by most Guardians to be valid – notably that Ludlow was spending much more on outdoor relief than any other Union in Shropshire. Two features of the report and its presentation, however, offended the Chairman and a number of other Guardians. One was the intemperance of the language used to criticise existing practices: for example some aspects of the workhouse regime were described as 'disgraceful'. Worse, copies of the report had been sent to the Shrewsbury and Hereford newspapers, which published very similar accounts of the report and the reception which it received from the Guardians. Both accounts were sympathetic to Dr. Bowles and highly critical of Mr. Bridges, and it was widely believed that Bowles himself had written them. Eventually, after ferocious disagreements between the two men that nearly led to fighting in the boardroom, and which were reported in great detail by the newspapers, the report was adopted. The Chairman resigned, but he was re-elected at the next Board meeting. Bowles then wrote to the P.L.B. complaining of 'the great personal attack upon me by Mr. Bridges' and resigning from the Board.⁴⁰

Contemporary Impressions of Joseph Bowles

We know something about how Bowles was seen by his contemporaries and remembered by his parishioners. There is a letter in the *Hereford Journal* of 7 February 1849, from Charles Powell, a magistrate and landowner living at Sutton, near Ludlow, which directly addresses the question of Bowles's character. This letter follows a dispute between Bowles and Charles Bryce, a local physician, which ended up in the Hereford 'Small Debts Court'. The dispute was over the sale of a horse, or rather a 'swap' in which Dr. Bryce had exchanged his mare, and £5, for Bowles's horse.

Dr. Bowles's groom, who had conducted the initial negotiations with Dr. Bryce, had assured him that the horse was sound and that it had cost Dr. Bowles 50 guineas. Bryce went hunting with the horse once, when it seemed fit, but then found that it became lame when 'asked to walk' on any road. Bryce offered to return the horse for the mare and to give up the £5 because, he said, he had been unwise in not consulting a vet at the time of the transaction. Bowles repeatedly refused this offer, and eventually Bryce sold the horse for '£6 odd' and claimed – he said with great reluctance – £20 in damages from Bowles in the Small Debts Court.

Bowles pleaded that the horse had not been 'warranted' and he sent his groom to court to testify to that effect. But the judge found the groom's evidence unsatisfactory, and said that Bowles was bound by the actions of his servant if the latter had misrepresented the fitness of the horse. He awarded £20 to Dr. Bryce and also the costs of the legal action, amounting to about another £9.

In the following week the *Journal* published Mr. Powell's letter. It said that he had been present at the hearing and he wished the readers of the *Journal* to know that Dr. Bowles had not been directly involved in the negotiations, that he had not authorised his groom to warrant the horse and that Bowles was 'a gentleman of the highest honour and integrity...incapable of the conduct which the report of the case seems to attribute to him'.⁴¹

Perhaps Mr. Powell had missed the point. What the affair seems to show is not that Bowles intended to deceive Dr. Bryce, but that when the horse was found to be defective he was too stubborn, or arrogant, or disputatious, to take the easy and obvious step of unwinding the 'swap' – with or without Dr. Bryce's £5. (There is a sort of postscript to this affair. About 15 years later, when Bowles was a member of the Board of Guardians, he discovered that a cottage owned by Charles Powell in a hamlet near Stanton Lacy was in a dilapidated state. Bowles might have been tempted to save his friend, erstwhile supporter and neighbour embarrassment by turning a blind eye or quietly advising Powell to do something about it. Instead he formally reported the problem to the Board, and Mr Powell suffered the public ignominy of being urged to undertake the necessary repairs.⁴²)

Some men make such a mark on their surroundings that they are remembered for generations. This was the case with Bowles at Stanton Lacy. When Peter Klein was interviewing the villagers in the 1970s he gathered many recollections of Joseph Bowles which had been passed from one generation to the next. Most of these are about the Vicar's private and family life, and will be discussed later. But there is one anecdote which will be mentioned here because it confirms Bowles's rather carefree attitude towards those in authority over him. According to a Mrs. Smith of Onibury, Bowles 'brought a lot of panelling from abroad and fitted out the library' [in the vicarage at Stanton Lacy] 'in such a way that the doors were disguised. He then invited the Bishop to admire his handiwork, and left him on some pretext. The Bishop was trapped in the library for two hours before Bowles rescued him'.⁴³ The carving over the fireplace in the library consists of quotations from the Song of Solomon and was, apparently, made to Bowles's specification.⁴⁴ It might have occurred to the Bishop, during his detention in the library, that this was an unusual but revealing choice of motif for a Victorian Vicar.

Bowles went to some lengths to ensure that he and his family would not be forgotten in Stanton Lacy. He paid to replace much of the stained glass in the church. The east window, inserted in 1858, is in memory of his mother, with what is said to be the Bowles family coat of arms. The large west window (Figure 5) represents St. Peter and St. Paul. The face of St. Peter is a likeness of Bowles himself. On the right, as St. Paul, is a likeness of Bowles's friend Dr. William Clement, who was Liberal M.P. for Shrewsbury from 1865 to 1870.⁴⁵ This seems to have been a remarkably bold assertion of one's own importance and the rectitude of one's beliefs and values.

Emma Mary Bowles

Joseph Bowles married comparatively late in life, at Loughborough in 1844, when he was 46 and his bride, Emma Mary Walker, was 41. They had no children. Mrs. Bowles was therefore 44 when she came to Stanton Lacy in 1847. Like Joseph, she has her place in village folklore. In 1994 Peter Klein was told that Dr. Bowles 'was, not to put too fine a point on it, an extremely unpleasant man, and his wife had a most unhappy life. So she spent her time creating beauty, and her hobby was planting snowdrops...even a hundred years ago a wonderful sight'.⁴⁶ (The snowdrops of Stanton Lacy churchyard are still one of the springtime glories of South Shropshire). We have no way of knowing if there is any substance in such comments, but from other and less subjective sources we obtain a different picture of Emma Bowles. In 1850, the Vestry minutes record a note of thanks to Mrs. Bowles 'for her indefatigable exertions in improving and superintending the improvements in the Church in which she has displayed so much taste and which has given so much satisfaction to the parishioners'.⁴⁷

More significant is a letter written to Emma Bowles in 1857 by one of the most distinguished miniature portrait painters of the day, Sir William Charles Ross. He specialised in painting portraits of royalty and members of the aristocracy. Ross thanks Emma for 'your kind permission to place the Portrait in the Exhibition', reminds her of her visit to his studio and sends his best wishes to her father.⁴⁸ It seems possible that the portrait which she allowed to be exhibited was of herself. It might even be the 'Portrait of a Young Woman' by Ross, held in the National Portrait Gallery (Plate 6). Regardless of such speculations, the artist's letter casts an interesting light on the social standing of Emma Bowles.

Emma died in 1873, aged 70. Another village rumour is that Bowles then married again, and that his second wife 'whom he married elsewhere and brought back to the vicarage in a carriage, was seen to enter the house but was never seen to leave it'.⁴⁹ This is unlikely. Searches have revealed no evidence of a second marriage; Bowles was 75 when Emma died, in failing health, and he died six years later. Not only is the tale of a second marriage



Figure 5 The West Window.

intrinsically improbable, but also it casts doubt on the other rumours about the Vicar and his wife. Perhaps they tell us little more than that Bowles was unpopular in the village.

Although Emma and Joseph had no children, the 1851 census return shows George Scarzebrook, aged 23 and born in Woodstock, living in the vicarage as Bowles's 'adopted son' and 'gentleman'. From time to time we hear more of Mr. Scarzebrook (sometimes Scarsebrook), but never again as adopted son. In the same year he was given a vote of thanks by the Vestry Meeting at Stanton Lacy for his services as Honorary Secretary. He was later ordained, and from 1862 he was Minister of St. John's Church, Woolwich.⁵⁰ We know that he died before Bowles, because there is a bequest in Bowles's will of £50 'to Sarah Stevenson, sister of my late curate Revd. George Scarzebrook'.⁵¹ (There are no curates named for Stanton Lacy in any of the *Clergy Lists* for the period, although Bowles was represented at the court hearing in 1849 – see earlier – by the Revd. J. H. Mills, said to have been the curate at Stanton Lacy).

Last Will and Testament

From his will, it is clear that there were other young men known to Joseph Bowles, whose precise relationship with him is unclear. He left his house in Corwen, Merionethshire (now Denbighshire), to Sydney Clement of Shrewsbury, a medical student and the son of his friend William James Clement, the distinguished physician and M.P., who died in 1870 but lives on in the west window of Stanton Lacy Church.

More mysterious is his bequest of £500 – from an estate of less than £2000 – to Robert Highway 'now living with me, if he shall be living with me at my decease'. Highway would receive the whole amount when he became 25: until then the £500 would be invested in parliamentary stocks, and Highway would be given the interest.

There were a number of other bequests. The £50 to Sarah Stevenson has already been mentioned. Bowles also left £50 to the infant child of the late John Hotchkiss Wilding of Nash, near Presteigne, £100 to Richard Williams



Plate 6 'Portrait of a Young Lady' by Sir William Charles Ross, © National Portrait Gallery, London.

of Corve Street, Ludlow (the local executor of his will), and £10 to each domestic servant living with him at the time of his death.

To the Minister and churchwardens of Faringdon, Bowles left £100, to be invested in the parliamentary funds 'for the reparation and preservation of the tomb erected to the memory of my dear late mother Mary Bowles', with any residue from the income to be applied to the benefit of four aged widows in the parish. (In 2006 there were four Bowles tombs on the plan of the churchyard in Faringdon, but it was impossible to find any of them.)

There is no mention in the will of Bowles's father, nor of his five brothers and sisters and their children and grandchildren. Bowles stipulated that the rest of his estate should 'be divided equally between my two kinsmen

William Harbottle Peckwood and George Septimus Peckwood'. These might have been the sons of one of his sisters who had married someone named Peckwood. But the overall construction of the will suggests that, although he still remembered his mother fondly, he had lost touch with the other members of the family with whom he grew up in Faringdon.

Conclusions

Beatrice and Sidney Webb once wrote that the problem for those studying history in the 19th century was not the paucity, but the vastness, of the material available.⁵² But they were dealing with the broad sweep of social change; in this study of the life of one comparatively humble country parson we have felt the lack of information at every turn. We do not know where Bowles went to school, where his doctorates came from, or why he left Bladon. What we know about his private life is puzzling, inconclusive, subjective and contradictory. Any interpretation of his work and life must be correspondingly circumspect. Nevertheless we have learned enough about Bowles's behaviour in various situations to justify making some broad suggestions about what kind of man he was and why he acted in the way he did.

Bowles appears to have been an ardent defender of the traditional role of the Church in English life. During his career there were great changes in elementary education and in the care of the poor, the sick, and the elderly. Lay bodies emerged with responsibilities in fields where, when Bowles was ordained, the Church had had a dominant influence. Joseph Bowles lacked enthusiasm for these changes and the consequent diminution in the power of the Church. For most of his career he took a keen and laudable interest in the education of his parishioners, and, as we have seen, worked hard to establish a National School in Stanton Lacy – sometimes paying most of the costs himself. But these were schools largely controlled by the Church. Later, he was a fierce opponent of the schools run by locally elected boards set up by the 1870 Education Act to provide elementary education for all. 'Board Schools', he is said to have remarked on one occasion, 'are the work of the devil'.⁵³ We have also seen how, when he was on the Ludlow Board of Guardians, he antagonised the members and officers of the Board and did his best to frustrate its implementation of policies to care for the most disadvantaged people in the community.

The manner in which Bowles pursued the causes in which he believed is, perhaps, more revealing of his character than the causes themselves. In his dealings with the Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Zetland, the Ludlow Guardians and the Poor Law Board he showed a confidence in his own judgement which occasionally seemed reckless and sometimes bordered on arrogance. He expressed strong opinions on issues with which he had had little time to familiarise himself, for example the needs of freemasonry in Shropshire or the administration of the poor law in Ludlow. In both cases he offered trenchant views within weeks of being appointed to positions of influence, and with a splendid disregard for what might be the consequences to his career and reputation of offending those in high places. He might not have courted controversy, but when conflicts arose he did little to avoid them, and his uncompromising actions often made difficult situations worse. Perhaps the most complete example of this is the provocative way in which he dealt with the criticisms which he received from his colleagues on the Board of Guardians. He showed the same intemperance and stubbornness in dealing with purely personal affairs, as in the dispute with Dr. Bryce. Bowles was, in essence, something of a bully.

Behind this confident, often arrogant and aggressive façade there might have been another side to Bowles's character: one which might cause us to look again at his decision to allow his likeness to appear in the west window of Stanton Lacy Church, the affair of the imprisoned Bishop, and even the highly suspect doctorates. It is unlikely, but possible, that Bowles was a prankster, a hoaxer, who took private delight in presenting to the world images and achievements which were not what they seemed: images that he, and only he, for a time at least, knew to be false. For the doctorates, the only alternative explanation is that, for a fee, but little scholarly effort, they were obtained from some unknown source. It is, perhaps, kinder to Bowles's memory to believe that they might have been acquired for his private amusement, rather than simply to bolster his status and academic reputation. Whatever the truth, it might be that Bowles's move from Bladon to Stanton Lacy was the price which he had to pay to avoid public exposure when the deception was first discovered.

Readers of Trollope will not be surprised to find such complexity in the character of a Victorian Anglican clergyman. Some of Trollope's clerics, like Mr. Harding in *Barchester Towers*,⁵⁴ were modest, humble, gentle and caring in their relations with family, friends and parishioners. Bowles was not one of these: he had more in common with the shrewd and scheming Dr. Grantly in the same novel. Such hard qualities are often associated with those who have fought their way to the top in large, complex organisations like the Church. We have no way of knowing whether Bowles, at the end of his turbulent life, was in the end content to have remained for the last thirty two years of his life the vicar of a small village in Shropshire (Plate 7).



Plate 7 Bowles in Old Age.

Notes

- 1 P. Klein, *The Temptation and Downfall of the Vicar of Stanton Lacy*, 2005.
- 2 Herefordshire Record Office: HD5/29, Presentments, Bishop's Visitation to Stanton Lacy 1842.
- 3 *Crockfords Clerical Directory*, 1865.
- 4 *VCH Oxon.*, **XII**, 410.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 409.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 9 J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1715–1886*.
- 10 Berkshire Record Office: Marriage Index.
- 11 Lambeth Palace Library Archives: F. P. Howley, **8**, ff 94–95 Letter from Joseph Bowles.
- 12 Neither this nor any other publication attributed to Joseph Bowles has been found, despite enquiries at the British Library, the Bodleian, Lambeth Palace Library and elsewhere.
- 13 Letter, Windsor Herald of Arms to the author, 9 July 2010.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Letter, Oxford University Archives to the author, 5 Oct. 2006; *Crockford* 1874.
- 16 *Alumni Oxonienses, 1715–1886*.
- 17 Cricinfo England on Google: Bowles' batting average was 14.5, and he did not bowl.
- 18 *Clergy Lists*, 1846, 1848, 1865 and 1876.
- 19 Letter, Oxford University Archives to the author, 5 Oct. 2006.
- 20 1851 Census, f1982 129r.
- 21 Letter, Lambeth Palace Library to the author, 17 Jan. 2007.
- 22 Lambeth Palace Library: FV/XVIII (1809–20); FV/1/XIX (1821–30); FV/1/XX (1831–1859).
- 23 Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide, 8.
- 24 Lambeth Palace Library Archives: VB1 16/52, 1840 Joseph Bowles.
- 25 A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, 2003, 168; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 26 P. Klein, *A Guide to St Peter's Church, Stanton Lacy*, 1989, 12.
- 27 Shropshire Archives (SA): P265/1/1, Stanton Lacy Vestry Minute Books.
- 28 S. Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Shropshire*, 1851, 549.
- 29 *Post Office Directory*, 1856, 126.

- 30 Albert C. Mackey, *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences*, 1999.
- 31 Letter, E. Harford, Secretary of the Prince of Wales Lodge, to the author, July 2006.
- 32 A. D. Williams, *A History of Craft Freemasonry in Herefordshire 1727–2000*, 2001, 25.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 SA: PL9 2/1/7, 27 Oct. 1852.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 8 Dec. 1852.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 2 Feb. 1853.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 20 Mar. 1853.
- 39 D. Williams, 'The Ludlow Guardians 1836–1900', *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXVII**, 2002, 110–118.
- 40 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 4 May 1866.
- 41 *Hereford Journal*, 31 Jan. 1849.
- 42 SA: PL9/2/1/11, Guardians Minute Book, 19 Oct. 1865.
- 43 Communication from Peter Klein, October 2005.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 P. Klein, *Op. cit.*, 17.
- 46 Communication from Peter Klein.
- 47 SA: P265/C/1/1, 2 Mar. 1850.
- 48 Letter from Sir Charles Ross to Emma Bowles, 14 Apr. 1857. (Facsimile in Ludlow Historical Research Group archives.)
- 49 Communication from Peter Klein.
- 50 *Clergy List*, 1864.
- 51 SA: Last Will and Testament of Dr. Joseph Bowles, Will 1879/281.
- 52 B. and S. Webb, *English Poor Law History*, Part 2, **1**, 1929, viii.
- 53 The late Dr. David Lloyd, Ludlow's eminent historian, often quoted this remark, but despite extensive search he was unable to identify its source.
- 54 A. Trollope, *Barchester Towers*, 1857.

SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES REPORT FOR 2009

By MARY McKENZIE, County Archivist

2009 saw the first significant building work carried out at Shropshire Archives since the building had been opened as the Shropshire Records and Research Centre in 1995. The creation of Shropshire Council in April 2009 resulted in large transfers of archive material and increased business for our Records Management Service based at Shirehall.

2009 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and, amongst the many celebrations across Shropshire, the Friends of Shropshire Archives organised a day school on the Darwin family and Shropshire in February which was very well received.

We were also saddened by the news of the death of David Lloyd who had been Chairman of the Friends of Shropshire Archives and a great supporter of the service, as well as an incredibly active researcher and publisher of local history.

Remodelling of Shropshire Archives and service changes

Shropshire Archives reopened to the public in July 2009 following a 5 week closure for building work. The opening up of the reception area provided a much better welcome for customers, and it has generally been very well received. Updating the CCTV system, both inside and outside the building, upgraded our security, and the layout and furniture within the counter area were improved to help us work more efficiently. The layout and furniture of the reprographics area was also reviewed to provide better accommodation for staff and volunteers.

Changes to the service opening hours were also introduced with Shropshire Archives open from Wednesday to Saturday. This change was introduced to provide additional capacity to respond to customers contacting us remotely, especially online, which is becoming more and more significant.

Creation of Shropshire Council

The creation of Shropshire Council resulted in increased volumes of transfers of archives from the former borough and district councils. From September 2009 an Assistant Records Manager, Rachel Kneale, was employed to organise this work, as well as to sort and transfer records to the Records Management Service at Shirehall. Over 140 linear metres of records were transferred to Shropshire Archives during the year, and over 1,300 linear metres of records were taken in by the Records Management Service.

These transfers required additional space, as the Castle Gates site was completely full, so the records of pre-1974 Shropshire District Authorities were moved to an external storage facility, requiring one week's notice for production in the search room.

Shropshire Manorial Records Project

Work on the Shropshire Manorial Records project, funded by the National Archives, started during the year. The project identified Shropshire manorial records wherever they are held, either at Shropshire Archives, the National Archives, other archive services, or in private hands and added them to the online database hosted by the National

Archives website. With an estimated 700 manors in Shropshire this was a very significant undertaking, but once achieved made the records much more accessible.

Events, Friends and Volunteers

Over 170 volunteers worked with Shropshire Archives during 2009 contributing over 1,200 days' work in all areas of the service. The Friends also had a busy year and organised the Darwin event in Shrewsbury, described above, and a day school, jointly with the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society, at Acton Scott to celebrate the work of the Heritage project, as well as the annual programme of summer walks.

Accessions

Accessions received during 2009 have included:

Woodcote Chapelry register, 1838–1993 (7892)
 Burford St. Mary (third portion) parish records, 1980–1988 (7894)
 Ludlow parish records, 1992 (7895)
 Loppington parish records, 1934–2008 (7899)
 Veterinary account book of William Lock, 1827–1890 (7905)
 Hopesay parish records, 1807–1922 (7908)
 Loppington parish records, 1859–2008 (7911)
 Shropshire cricket league records, 1959–2007 (7931)
 Shrewsbury Unitarian Church records, 1998–2005 (7933)
 Shrewsbury Borough and Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council records, including building plans, 1838–2008 (7936, 7968, 8016, 8017)
 West Mercia Police Authority property deeds, 20th century (7939)
 Grafton County Primary School records, 1932–2006 (7950)
 North Shropshire District Council minutes and plans, 1990–2008 (7952, 7974)
 Much Wenlock Primary School records, 1863–1999 (7953)
 Ebnal and Oswestry Roman Catholic Churches, records, 1983–2009 (7954)
 Shrewsbury Theatre Guild, 1968–1988 (7958)
 Ifton Heath Primary School, St. Martins, Oswestry, 1885–2000 (7960)
 Wenlock Borough and Town Council records, 1834–1997 (7962, 8047, 8048)
 Meole Brace parish records, 1994–2007 (7967)
 Shropshire County Council records including estates (smallholdings), planning, 20th century (7970, 7971, 7972, 7973, 7975, 7976, 7977, 7978)
 South Shropshire District Council minute books and financial records, 1974–2008 (7980, 8014, 8015)
 Bridgnorth Rural District and District Council records, 1896–2009 (7982)
 Weston Rhyn Council of Social Service, records, 1923–46 (7984)
 Monkhopton Church of England School records, 1903–93 (7985)
 Shrewsbury Royal Charters, 1189–1974 (7986)
 Childs Ercall Church of England School records, 1845–2008 (7988)
 Stanton Long parish records, 1829–1999 (7990)
 Newport SNAP project photographic images, 19th -20th century (7993)
 Stoke on Tern Primary School records, 1877–2008 (8000)
 Ashford Carbonell Church of England School records, 1873–1987 (8001)
 Telford Methodist Circuit records, 1831–2007 (8006)
 Much Wenlock and Bourton parish records, 1841–2008 (8008)
 Clee Hill School log books, 1985–2008 (8011)
 Dovaston family papers, 1311, 1813–25 (8019)
 Broughton parish records, 1707–2008 (8024)
 Ludlow Free Church Federal Council and Richards Castle Primitive Methodist Church records, 1905–73 (8025)
 Shrewsbury Methodist Circuit records, 1864–2005 (8026)
 Bucknell, Chapel Lawn and Stowe parish records, 1807–2002 (8027)
 Shrewsbury Chronicle newspaper, records and photographs, 19th-21st century (8032)
 Fordhall Organic Farm, Market Drayton, records, 19th-20th century (8035)

Hope Bowdler parish records, 1813–1994 (8036)
Lanyon Bowdler solicitors, Ludlow, deeds, 19th-20th century, (8037)
Dawley parish records, 1974–2003 (8039)
Whitchurch Sir John Talbot School records, c 1789–2000 (8053)
Horsehay Company records, 20th century, (8057)
Little Ness parish records, 1884–2008 (8060)

SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES REPORT FOR 2010

By MARY McKENZIE, County Archivist

During 2010 Shropshire Archives saw developments in promoting access through additional venues, such as local history centres, and also with cataloguing projects. In addition, the service continued to receive significant quantities of records of former Shropshire Borough and District Councils following the creation of Shropshire Council. Storage capacity remained an issue for the service with records continuing to be held in an external storage facility, requiring one week's notice for production in the search room.

Local History Centres

Developing Local History Centres to provide local access to resources has been a key development of Shropshire Archives over a number of years. 2011 saw the opening of two further centres, in Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle, to join existing ones in Ludlow, Oswestry, Bridgnorth and Craven Arms. The local history centre in Church Stretton Library was launched in March, following the Heritage Lottery funded Rectory Wood Heritage Project. The Bishop's Castle Local History Centre, a partnership with Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre, was opened in September and was also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Further centres are planned for the new Wellington library, and for libraries in Whitchurch and Market Drayton.

Shropshire Manorial Records Project

Work on the Shropshire Manorial Records project, funded by the National Archives, was completed during the year. The project produced a summary catalogue of Shropshire Manorial Records in both public and private hands. Details of the catalogue can be found at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr/. For the first time researchers can find details of all the surviving Shropshire manorial records. This is a growing database which will be added to as additional records and corrections are discovered.

Cataloguing Project at Attingham Park

A three year project to catalogue the remaining Berwick family records held at Attingham Park started during the year. Funded by the National Trust, the project will work on over 500 boxes of archives that survive. They date mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries, and include large quantities of correspondence of the 8th Lord Berwick (1877–1947) and his wife, Edith Teresa (née Hulton), (1890–1972). National Trust volunteers are involved in the project, and as stories from the archive emerge, these will be publicised and used to enhance the interpretation of the house. Once the cataloguing work is complete, the archive will be added to the collection already held at Shropshire Archives (SA ref 112/).

Events, Friends and Volunteers

Over 170 volunteers worked with Shropshire Archives during 2010 contributing over 1,400 days' work in all areas of the service. The Friends also had a busy year and organised the Discover Shropshire Day in the Shirehall,

Shrewsbury and an innovative History and Music Day, and an evening concert, at Concord College Acton Burnell, as well as the annual programme of summer walks.

Accessions

Accessions received during 2010 have included:

Conover Deanery records, 1869–1972 (8068)
 Save the Children, Ludlow branch, minutes, 1966–2005 (8074)
 Shifnal parish and town council records, 1894–1955 (8076)
 Telford Methodist Circuit records, 1893–2004 (8080, 8168, 8185)
 Records of R. T. Lightwood, coal merchant, Newport, 1930–1985 (8082)
 Clungunford parish charities records, 1853–1987 (8088)
 Bayston Hill parish council records, 2003–2005 (8092, 8161)
 Shrewsbury Methodist Circuit records, 1854–1957 (8096)
 Grinshill parish council records, 1950–1985 (8102)
 Market Drayton and District Road Safety Group, records, 1961–2007 (8106)
 Burford St. Mary (third portion) parish records, 1837–2002 (8113)
 Merched y Wawr, Oswestry branch, records, 1974–2006 (8116)
 Shelton and Oxon parish records, 1982–2006 (8117)
 Welshampton parish council records, 1926–1978 (8122)
 Astley parish records, 1841–2009 (8127)
 Shropshire County Council, planning and licensing records, 20th century (8128, 8129, 8203)
 Rushbury parish records, 1698–1970 (8131)
 Royal British Legion, records of Shropshire branches, 1924–2004 (8141)
 Records from Shropshire Hospitals, Cross Houses, Lady Forester Hospital Much Wenlock and Broseley, 1927–1988 (8145)
 Burford (second portion) Whitton parish records, 1825–2010 (8147)
 Coreley parish records, 1839–2010 (8148, 8159)
 Hope Bagot parish records, 1813–2009 (8149, 8158)
 Bridgnorth District Council records, 1902–2001 (8150)
 North Shropshire District Council records, 20th century (8151, 8220)
 Shropshire Home Guard records, 1943–44 (8153)
 Berrington parish council records, 1935–2005 (8156)
 Meredith's general store, Clun, records, 1895–1973 (8157)
 South Shropshire Methodist Circuit records, 1893–2007 (8173, 8174, 8197, 8198, 8227, 8235)
 Aston Hall, Oswestry, records, 1860–1923 (8179)
 Shrewsbury, St. George's parish records, 1827–2010 (8180)
 Severne Family estate papers, 16th–19th century, (8186)
 Caynham parish records, 1837–2001 (8189)
 Oswestry Borough Council records, 1933–2007 (8193)
 Federation of Master Builders records, 1911–2004, (8194)
 Shropshire Voluntary Association for the Blind records, 1922–2010 (8210)
 South Shropshire District Council, planning applications and other records, 1927–1974 (8213)
 Records concerning Whitchurch Free School, 17th–18th centuries (8221)
 Shrewsbury Methodist Circuit Records, 1988–2010 (8223, 8225)
 Shrewsbury Choral Society Records, 1885–2006 (8226)
 Hadnall parish council records, 1894–1997 (8228)
 Shipton parish records, 1979–2003 (8238)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN SHROPSHIRE IN 2007

By CHARLOTTE BAXTER

A summary of work undertaken in 2007 in the County of Shropshire and the Unitary Authority of Telford and Wrekin that was subsequently reported to the Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council. Further information on all the related Monuments can be found on the Discovering Shropshire's History website (www.discovershropshire.com) and the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

The references in brackets prefixed 'PRN' are the Historic Environment Record numbers for individual sites and those prefixed 'ESA' are the Historic Environment Record numbers for individual events or activities such as archaeological excavations. I would like to thank the contributors who provided summaries for some of the reports included in this review.

Acton Burnell; SJ 536 021. In August a watching brief was undertaken at Concord College, Acton Burnell, during groundworks reaching a depth of 0.7m., for the erection of a student common room. The area was enclosed by the former 18th century historic walled garden within the Grade II registered landscaped park of Acton Burnell Hall (PRN 07646). Only a small assemblage of post-medieval pottery from one deposit was recovered and no significant archaeological features or deposits were found. The insertion of modern services and later gardening activity would have severely truncated archaeological features and deposits related to historic gardening activity. It is however possible that garden features survive around the garden boundary walls in areas unaffected by the present development.

(R. Cherrington, 2007: *Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire: an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Benchmark Archaeology, ESA 6140)

Acton Scott; SO 458 898. In 2007 the Acton Scott Heritage Project commissioned ArchaeoPhysica Ltd. to carry out a geophysical survey of the Roman Villa site (PRN 00168) at Acton Scott. Both magnetometry and electrical resistance surveys were undertaken and results indicate a complex settlement history. Possible features included a Roman villa with buildings surrounding a 40-metre square courtyard, a possible early Roman villa or outlying villa building, an aqueduct, two Iron Age defended settlements, and an undefended Iron Age/Romano-British settlement – possibly estate workers' houses. A Roman road leading to the villa, and several large pits of unknown use but possibly older than the villa, were also identified.

(J. Snyder, (ed.), 2008: *Acton Scott Heritage Project Newsletter*, ESA 6420)

Astley; SJ 515 173. In the autumn a metal detector survey was undertaken at Battlefield Farm in advance of the construction of a new access road. During the survey no finds were recovered which were associated with the 15th century battle (PRN 01615), suggesting that the battle is likely to have occurred further west.

(G. Signorelli, 2007: *Shrewsbury Battlefield Visitor Centre, Shrewsbury: Metal Detector Investigation Report*, ESA 6179)

Barrow; SJ 662 020. A desk-based assessment, walkover survey and field evaluation were undertaken in August at Morris Corfield & Co. Ltd., Benthall Lane, Broseley, in advance of the redevelopment at the site. The site was first developed in 1772, when John Thursfield established a pottery works known as Benthall Pottery (PRN 03982), later incorporating Haybrook Pottery (PRN 01821). Pottery continued to be produced at the site until 1982, initially in the form of cooking and tablewares, and by the 20th century drainage pipes and sanitary ware. Although little upstanding remains of the pottery works survive, the walkover survey identified building fabric from the

initial build in 1772, and surviving elements of 1930's redevelopment. The field evaluation, comprising the excavation of two trenches, encountered partly truncated but well preserved remains of kiln bases, including a mid-19th century beehive kiln, and a substantial kiln, altered to a downdraught kiln during the 20th century.

(Anon, 2007: *Desk-based Assessment and Field Evaluation at Morris Corfield & Co. Ltd., Benthall, Shropshire*, Mercian Heritage Series: Report PJ 182, ESA 6172)

Bitterley; SO 551 755. A desk-based assessment and walkover survey were undertaken in August along the proposed routes of the water pipeline at Stoke St. Milborough. The proposed route extended through a Grade II registered park at Henley Hall (PRN 10713) and a possible shrunken medieval village settlement at Snitton (PRN 21269). At Snitton there were traces of above ground earthworks, including ridge and furrow, former trackways and the remains of possible medieval house platforms. A number of parkland features were also identified (PRN 07733), including a large post medieval deer boundary and a tree-lined avenue. Features identified over the remainder of the study area comprised medieval or post-medieval cultivation, the site of a former limekiln and other earthworks of uncertain form and date.

(J. Halsted, 2007: *Stoke Saint Milborough, Shropshire: an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment 2007 (revised 2008)*, Birmingham Archaeology ESA 6269)

Bridgnorth; SO 719 931. In January an excavation was undertaken at the Old Mill Antiques Centre, Bridgnorth, following proposals to redevelop the site. A desk-based assessment and site visit carried out in 2006 (ESA 6183) previously identified a 'bylet' (PRN 20948) of the River Severn. The trench dug to a depth of 2.65m., revealed a brick and sandstone wall thought to be the remains of the eastern revetment wall of the bylet; the western extent of the channel could not be determined within the trench. A wide range of artefacts was recovered, including 17th century ceramics suggesting that the bylet was in use from at least this date.

(Anon, 2007: *Archaeological Evaluation of Old Mill Antiques Centre, Low Town Bridgnorth*, Ironbridge Archaeology, Report 202, ESA 6170)

Bridgnorth; SO 716 929. In June an archaeological evaluation was carried out at 4 & 5 West Castle Street, Bridgnorth, in advance of a residential development. The tops of two features were exposed at the bottom of the 2m. deep trench, including an undated curvilinear cut feature, infilled with a soil that suggests horticultural/garden activity and a large pit containing two sherds of Cistercian ware and later pottery, indicating the presence of later medieval/early post medieval activity in the area (PRN 05630 & 06031). To the west was a later 19th century stone lined pit cut by another pit. The uniformity of the fills in the later pits suggests deliberate backfilling, indicating a short life span. The results show an enormous amount of activity in the area dating from the 17th and later centuries which appears to have destroyed the earlier archaeology.

(N. Appleton-Fox, 2007: *4 & 5 West Castle Street, Bridgnorth: a Report on an Archaeological Evaluation*, Marches Archaeology Series, Report 440, ESA 6141)

Bridgnorth; SO 717 928. In June a watching brief was undertaken at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene (PRN 00389), Bridgnorth, during excavations for drainage works at the north east and south east corners of the church. It has been suggested that the hill upon which the church stands was the site of an Iron Age hillfort, though there is no evidence to support this. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (AD 896) also implies that there was a fortress here but its location remains uncertain. The position of the original 13th century church (PRN 05631), demolished in 1792, is believed to lie almost entirely on the western side of the existing church. During the watching brief the drainage trench cut through the end of a brick tomb, and further south an isolated block of solid, random sandstone rubble masonry in lime mortar. This did not appear to be a tomb and seemed too slight to be associated with the castle. It was concluded that it might have been a temporary structure relating to the construction of the church.

(M. Cook, 2007: *Watching Brief at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth, Shropshire*, ESA 6147)

Bridgnorth; SO 714 933. In August a desk-based assessment and site visit were undertaken at The Smithfield, Bridgnorth. Evidence of the medieval town defences (PRN 00374) survived in the southwest part of the study area, and close to Whitburn Street there was the potential for the survival of deposits and buildings relating to medieval and post-medieval backplots (PRN 05644 & 05645). Most of the application area lay outside the occupied area of the town before the 19th century, and consisted of land in horticultural and agricultural use. From the early 19th century there were a range of new land-uses within the area, including new housing, a livestock market (PRN 05622) and a ropewalk (PRN 06929), and by the late 20th century commercial buildings and workshops.

(H. Dalwood, 2007: *Desk-based Assessment of Sainsbury's Supermarket Site, The Smithfield, Bridgnorth*, Worcestershire Archaeology Services, Report 1555, ESA 6134)

Broseley; SJ 684 031. In October a desk-based assessment was carried out for land on the north and south sides of the River Severn at 'The Lloyds' (north side) and 'Lloyds Head' (south side). The study area once formed an important mining community and was heavily populated with industries dealing in iron, brick and tile making. Though one of the tile factories is still in operation at Jackfield, all of these earlier industries have ceased in this part of the Gorge. Sites of archaeological potential were identified and included the remains of former gardens, pathways and tramways, various buildings and wharf structures, and the disused line of the former Severn Valley Railway (PRN 06024).

(S. Watson & K. Hinton, 2007: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Lloyds Head and Lloyds Road, Telford*, Ironbridge Archaeology ESA 6303)

Dawley Hamlets; SJ 671 061. In September a watching brief was undertaken on land at Lightmoor, Telford, in tandem with a hedge and tree translocation programme. Previous archaeological work identified hedgerows and boundaries which may date to 1772. The watching brief produced a record of the hedgerows prior to their removal, but recorded no deposits or finds of archaeological significance. Although no physical evidence for the date of the hedgerows was identified, cartographic evidence established that one boundary, depicted on a map of 1772, may have been in existence for some time prior to this date. The line of a second boundary is not depicted and is therefore likely to be part of 18th century (or later) field enclosure.

(R. Cherrington, 2008: *Land at Lightmoor, Telford, Shropshire: an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Benchmark Archaeology, Report W2002/0256, ESA 6171)

Donington; SJ 826 052. A desk-based assessment was carried out from December 2006 to January 2007, in advance of a flood prevention scheme. The walkover survey identified no structures or features other than a mill leat (PRN 05375) and Hall Pool mill pond (PRN 05367). From the documentary research it was concluded that the site of the mill (PRN 05374) lay to the west of the study area and had gone out of use before the 19th century. The purely desk-based assessment of the much larger area east of the A41 by-pass simply demonstrated that there were a number of known sites of archaeological interest.

(M. Charles, 2007: *Land at Albrighton, Shropshire – An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 2007*, Birmingham Archaeology, Report PN1546, ESA 6127)

Ellesmere Rural; SJ 346 384. In May a watching brief was carried out during the groundworks for a new drain and septic tank in the cemetery of Dudleston Church (PRN 12211). During the excavation three partial skeletons and an assortment of disarticulated human bones were encountered. The best preserved skeleton (female) still had some brown hair. Overlying the chest area of the skeleton was a badly corroded metal plate, probably brass. A few pieces of wooden coffin lid(?), decorated with round brass studs, a coffin handle and a few nails were also found, likely to date from between the early 17th and late 19th centuries. The remains were reburied.

(D. Rouse, 2007: *Dudleston Church: an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Archaeological Investigations Ltd., ESA 6178)

Highley; SO 726 837. The Highley Initiative commissioned a community archaeology study continuing the investigation of an overgrown tree-lined mound which contained a row of demolished terrace cottages at New England near Highley. The work aimed to investigate a building to the east of what was initially believed to be the end cottage of the terrace previously investigated in 2006 (ESA 6354). The excavation confirmed the structure as a probable 19th century addition to the end cottage. This appears to have had a domestic function, perhaps originally as another cottage, but it seems to have ended its life as an annex to the adjacent cottage. The remains also included a well-preserved 19th century path-way, garden and a drain contemporaneous to the building. The evidence suggests a period of activity spanning most of the 19th century, and up to c.1917, when the cottages were abandoned, demolished and the remains left derelict.

(T. Hanna, 2008: *Archaeological Excavations 2007 at New England Cottages, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire: Interim Excavation Report*, Archaeological Research Service, ESA 6355)

Kinnerley; SJ 338 209. In September a watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a pipe trench through the churchyard, on the west side of St. Mary's Church (PRN 13018), Kinnerley. The Church comprises a medieval tower with Georgian nave and apsidal chancel. The watching brief identified the footings for the west wall of the medieval tower and the foundations for the buttresses at the northwest and southwest corners. Although the pipe trench extended for a total of 21m. across the churchyard, it appeared that in general it was of insufficient depth to disturb any *in-situ* burials. The only exception to this was along the side of the path where ground level had already been reduced and three possible *in-situ* burials were identified at relatively shallow depth, although the general area had evidently been disturbed to a greater depth than the base of the trench. Disarticulated bone,

building material and a sherd of 15th or 16th century 'Midlands Purple' ware were also identified in the trench deposits.

(N. W. Jones, 2007: *St. Mary's Church, Kinnerley, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, CPAT, Report 889, ESA 6135)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 268 212. Throughout 2007 a series of watching briefs were carried out in and around the area of the Hoffman kiln (PRN 04600), at Llanymynech. A pit dug in the top of the kiln exposed the layout of the stubby brick chimneys around the vents/coal charging holes in the kiln roof. Repairs to the badly spalled brickwork revealed that the kiln was double skinned, with separate spaces between the outer wall and the inner arched wall. Inside the kiln, the layer of dried manure accumulated during the kiln's use as a cattle shed was removed to expose a layer of burnt lime. The top of the charging ramp (PRN 08422), used to bring coal onto the top of the Hoffman kiln, was cleared, exposing parts of the old track bed, and a couple of *in-situ* sleepers (PRN 08410) were uncovered. Topsoil and debris were cleared from the retaining wall lying along the sides and at the northern end of the Hoffman kiln. During the removal of topsoil on the east side of the kiln two concrete turntable bases were exposed, the northern base still retaining its iron 'cartwheel' base-plate and fixing runner bearings.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6202)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 268 212. In September four trenches were excavated around the Hoffman kiln (PRN 04600), to investigate the associated yards and tramlines (PRN 08410) in advance of the installation of drains along both sides of the kiln. On the west side of the kiln, the former yard surface and track bed, complete with impressions left by tramlines and sleepers were uncovered. In addition a large pit indicated the position of a former timber turntable, with traces and impression marks of timber beams, along with two iron rods with nuts at each end. Excavations across the line of the former tramlines east of the kiln re-exposed the northern turntable base revealed earlier in the year [ESA 6202, *above*]. A former yard surface was exposed between the base and the kiln, with a hollow in the centre, possibly marking the former site of a turntable base. A trench located on the east side of the kiln opposite the first opening revealed another concrete turntable base; no ironwork was present. A trench located at the north end of the kiln, exposed a further turntable base with most of the cast iron cartwheel base plate surviving intact, together with three runner wheels and some of the sides of the turntable. Impressions of sleepers and tramlines also survived.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6235)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 268 212. An archaeological evaluation was carried out at the mid-19th century stable block (PRN 08423) at Llanymynech limeworks, prior to a new extension on the southern end of the building. A 1915 photograph showed that an open fronted extension formerly existed at the site, and was subsequently demolished. During excavations the end wall of the stable block was seen to rest on footings of limestone blocks. To the south were the brick and limestone footings of a parallel wall; the central part was removed by a later pit and an area of disturbed ground. A yard and floor surface of small limestone fragments butted against the east end and south face of these footings and set into this yard was a short length of limestone wall which, together with three other sections of wall, may have formed part of a square feature within the southeast corner of the former stable block extension. Beyond this was a yard surface of limestone chippings. No sign of a west wall for the original extension was found. A photographic record was made of the interior of the stable block.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6236)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 267 214. A photographic record and a rapid drawing survey were made of the standing remains of the late 19th century Tally Hut (PRN 08425) at the Llanymynech Limeworks, in advance of the stabilisation and partial reconstruction. The structure was in very poor condition, roofless and partially collapsed, and was in danger of immediate total collapse due to vegetation growth and being undercut by a stream. The Tally Hut is a plain unshaped two-celled red brick structure, 6.1m. by 3.7m. The north gable wall still stood to full height, and included a complete window opening that had a shallow segmental arch of unshaped bricks. The building had a central chimney stack (in fair condition) linked to the east wall with a dividing wall. To the west of the chimney was a (door) opening, linking the two cells. The external entrance was at the north end of the west wall. The structure would have incorporated a weighing machine to measure the stone brought down from the quarry.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6237)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 267 214. A watching brief was undertaken at the incline road bridge (PRN 08436) at the Llanymynech Limeworks during the diversion of a path. The remains of the former tramline track-bed of limestone fragments in grey silt were revealed with the removal of the topsoil. 2.5m. south of the bridge, a small rectangular brick structure of unknown function was set into the tramway. The structure was 2.4m. long by 1.8m. wide and was left *in situ*, sealed beneath the path.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6238)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 266 217. In January 2007 a drawn and photographic record was made of the English Winding Drum House (PRN 08417) at the Llanymynech Limeworks, in advance of the consolidation and restoration of the structure to allow a replica winding drum to be installed. Although the structure was heavily overgrown, the underlying fabric appeared reasonably sound. The upper courses of the structure did however need some rebuilding in order to accommodate the replica wheel.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6239)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 267 216. A watching brief was carried out during the removal of debris from the battery of 19th century draw kilns (PRN 19374) at the Llanymynech Limeworks. The brickwork at the top of the kiln chambers was repaired and grills placed over the openings at the top. No significant archaeological features were revealed during this work, though a number of tramlines and iron brake levers – presumably from the adjacent winding drum house – were recovered from the rubbish within the kiln.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Archaeological Investigations for the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project 2006–7*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 254, ESA 6240)

Ludlow; SO 508 745. In February a geophysical survey was carried out over large areas of Ludlow Castle (PRN 01176). The magnetic data failed to provide much information, being dominated by ferrous anomalies and areas of magnetic disturbance. However, resistance survey revealed several possible areas of structural remains. Some within the inner bailey could be related to known historic features, such as the pantry, and the chancel of the St. Mary Magdalene's Chapel (PRN 06168), whilst others, in the outer bailey, were harder to interpret. Whilst some are likely to relate to the main periods of occupation at the site (11th to 17th century), others may be the product of later post-medieval activities.

(G. Cruse, G. *et al.*, 2007: *Ludlow Castle, Shropshire: Geophysical Survey Report*, Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report 2007/08, ESA 6116)

Ludlow; SO 516 745. Between October and December, a field evaluation and watching brief were undertaken on the south-western corner of the Scheduled Ludlow Medieval Friary (PRN 01770). The evaluation uncovered a friary wall previously excavated and backfilled in 1864 before the development of a cattle market. Victorian bottle and ash dumps were also discovered in the southern extremity of the site.

(G. Arnold, 2007: *Augustinian Friary, Lower Galdeford, Ludlow: Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring*, Archenfield Archaeology, ESA 6177)

Moreton Corbet and Lee Brockhurst; SJ 574 227. A historic building recording survey was undertaken in April, in connection with planning proposals to convert buildings at the former Moreton Sawmill, near Shawbury. The listed 18th century sawmill forms the western part of the Moreton Mill complex (PRN 15659), originally an early-to mid-17th century iron-working forge, subsequently converted to a corn mill. By 1901 the sawmill was a busy timber yard, and comprised two wooden structures and a 23.2m. long single story building housing the wheel pit and waterwheel at its eastern end. The cast iron wheel, once housed in the corn mill until the 1950s, and now attached to the outside of the mill, is a rare technological survival.

(P. Frost, 2007: *Moreton Sawmill, near Shawbury, Shropshire: Historic Building Recording*, Castlering Archaeology, Report 259, ESA 6149)

Moreton Corbet and Lee Brockhurst; SJ 547 267. In April historic building recording was undertaken at North Shropshire Hunt Kennels, Lee Brockhurst, in connection with proposals to convert the buildings to residential use. The site has been part of the North Shropshire Hunt Kennels since the early 19th century, and was recorded as 'Dog Kennel Rough' and the 'Stackyard' in the late 1830s. The southern barns (PRN 21019 & 21020) built in the traditional architectural style of the 18th to 19th century represent the wings of a U-shaped building range noted on a plan of c.1836; the link barn having been removed shortly before 1971. A retained wall from the demolished link barn now acts as a dividing wall between the lower and upper yards. By the late 19th century, a two compartment

house (PRN 21021) was added as part of the upper yard and by 1901 a third barn (PRN 21022) was attached to the north side of the house. A fourth barn (PRN 21023) was built as an extension to a building first recorded in 1881 to the north. In the post war period, a large number of buildings became redundant, and subsequently fell into decay resulting in total loss.

(P. Frost, 2007: *North Shropshire Hunt Kennels, Lee Brockhurst: Level 2 Building Recording*, Castlering Archaeology, Report 258, ESA 6150)

Much Wenlock; SJ 622 006. In March a desk-based assessment and site visit were undertaken at the former grounds of The Lady Forester Hospital, now The Lady Forester Community Nursing Home, Farley Road, Much Wenlock, in advance of a potential residential development. Evidence suggests that there was a significant Roman settlement at Much Wenlock, with continuity into the Anglo-Saxon period with the establishment of the Wenlock Priory (PRN 00307). However it is unlikely that the development of the town spread as far as Farley Road until the post-medieval period, and the area remained in agricultural use throughout the medieval period, probably falling within Edge Field, one of four large open strip fields around the town. The open fields were enclosed by Enclosure Act in 1775, prior to which Farley Road originally connected to Sytche Lane (PRN 21044), by-passing Much Wenlock. In 1901, the meadow was redeveloped to form the landscaped grounds of The Lady Forester Cottage Hospital, completed in 1902, including ornamental planting, a track way, enclosures and a garden building of unknown function.

(Anon, 2007: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment: Farley Road, Much Wenlock*, RPS Planning Transport and Environment, ESA 6148)

Much Wenlock; SO 622 997. From July 2006 to January 2007 excavation and monitoring work was carried out on a parcel of land between High Street and St. Mary's Lane, Much Wenlock. The north-eastern part of the site appeared to have been a burgrave plot fronting onto the High Street (PRN 05008). The rest of the site was wasteland, covered in self-seeded scrub and small trees and possible grown-out hedges that may have represented former property boundaries. Within the High Street plot, pits and ditches containing pottery suggested that the area was occupied from the 12th to the 14th centuries. To the rear of the plots medieval back boundary ditches and a malt drying oven were uncovered. Pottery evidence suggested a period of abandonment in the later medieval period, possibly related to the Black Death. The foundations of a building were uncovered at the front of the plot, possibly occupied during the post-medieval period, and likely demolished before 1882. The Much Wenlock telephone exchange was located on the site and an associated service trench had truncated a pipe-makers' kiln, containing hundreds of clay pipe bowls marked John Roberts, known to be making pipes in Much Wenlock between the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

(D. Lewis, 2007: *High Street, Much Wenlock, Post-excavation Assessment and Up-dated Project Design*, Archenfield Archaeology, Report AA_86_4, ESA 6165)

Oswestry Rural; SJ 304 245. In May a watching brief was undertaken in connection with the restoration of a section of the Montgomery Canal (PRN 00927) at Redwith, Shropshire. Cropmark evidence suggests that the early medieval linear earthwork Wat's Dyke (PRN 01001) crossed the canal south of Gronwen Bridge and that the canal bank and tow path to the south of Croft's Mill Bridge possibly adopted the line of the dyke. However no evidence of the dyke was seen during the restoration work, though a stone revetment wall and deposits related to the construction of the canal bank and its clay lining were identified.

(R. Hankinson, 2007: *Land Montgomery Canal, Redwith, Shropshire – Archaeological Watching Brief*, CPAT, Report 883, ESA 6129)

Oswestry; SJ 303 289. A geophysical survey, evaluation and watching brief were carried out on a potential development site, east of Oswestry, as part of a proposal to create an Active Lifestyle Centre. The geophysical survey [ESA6132] identified six features, including a possible sub-surface spread/dump of material, a roughly circular feature, and several ephemeral linear and curvilinear features, possibly ditches. The evaluation [ESA6131], consisting of six trenches, with three located to investigate the geophysical anomalies, excavated a visible mound of heat-cracked stones forming a burnt mound (PRN 21414), several linear ditch cuts and a pond, which included nails, late 19th and early 20th century ceramics, glass vessels, several clay tobacco pipes, and a small pewter or possibly silver thimble. It appeared the pond was ultimately used as a dump for domestic refuse, seemingly into the 1920s. The watching brief [ESA6133] was carried out on the excavation of nine geotechnical test pits. One test pit revealed evidence for the back fill of the pond, and two other test pits, located to the north and south of the burnt mound, revealed the same heat-cracked stones representing the likely spread of ploughing in the field.

(C. E. Smith, 2007: *Active Lifestyle Centre, Oswestry: Geophysical Survey, Archaeological Evaluation and Archaeological Watching Brief*, Cambrian Archaeological Projects, Report 484, ESA 6131, 6132 & 6133)

Oswestry; SJ 300 308. In March a geophysical survey near Oldport Farm identified First World War trenches belonging to the Park Hall military training camp (PRN 21713). Other anomalies possibly associated with the entrance to, or surroundings of, Old Oswestry hillfort (PRN 00351) were also identified, but were not well defined. Several modern features, including the line of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct (PRN 21491) were also noted.

(Anon, 2007: *Geophysical Survey Report: Land at Oldport Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire*, Geophysical Surveys of Bradford Rep 07/12 ESA 6122)

Pontesbury; SJ 432 101. An watching brief was undertaken in July during repairs to a broken drainage pipe at Church Close, Cruckton. The site lay on the Scheduled Ancient Monument Cruckton Roman Villa (PRN 00112). The trench revealed no archaeological features and no stratigraphy as the bolder clay was so compacted. Three sherds of Romano-British Severn Valley ware pottery and seven pieces of medium sized unworked red sandstone were recovered from the backfill above the pipe, redeposited in 1949/early 1950s when the housing estate was laid out.

(P. Frost, 2007: *An Repairs to Service Pipes at Church Close, Cruckton, Shrewsbury*, Castlering Archaeology, Report 271, ESA 6144)

Pontesbury; SJ 431 102. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in August during the excavation of two 5m. long foundation trenches at No. 3, Church Close, Cruckton. The site lay on the Scheduled Ancient Monument Cruckton Roman Villa (PRN 00112). The construction of a manhole in the 1950s had disturbed ground deposits and no archaeological features were revealed. Two lumps of burnt clay and one unglazed possible tile fragment, likely to date to the Roman period, were recovered from the topsoil.

(P. Frost, 2007: *Archaeological Watching Brief undertaken during Below-ground Works*, Castlering Archaeology, Report, ESA 6145)

Prees; SJ 561 369. In January a desk-based assessment and site visit were carried out on land at Prees Heath Common, Whitchurch, in advance of proposals to restore heathland and grassland in the area. A potential medieval trackway, buildings recorded on historic maps and features relating to a First World War training camp (PRN 21590) were identified. These are however likely to have been destroyed by the construction of Tilstock Airfield (PRN 21549) during the Second World War and subsequent arable cultivation. The control tower (PRN 21550) of the airfield is still extant, and there is potential for the foundations of other airfield buildings and purposefully-buried aircraft parts in the vicinity.

(G. Stoten, 2007: *Land at Prees Heath Common, Whitchurch, Shropshire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, Cotswold Archaeology, Report 2284, ESA 6406)

Selattyn and Gobowen; SJ 295 310. In March a watching brief was carried out during the removal of seven stiles and the installation of kissing gates at Old Oswestry Hillfort (PRN 00351). Most of the archaeological deposits represented material that had eroded or slipped down from the ramparts. However, the gate at the inner end of the eastern entrance passage, and the gate about half way along the southern side of the passage, did appear to cut into *in-situ* rampart material, characterised by large cobbles and boulders contained in the soil matrix. No other significant archaeological features were observed.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2007: *A Watching Brief at Old Oswestry Hillfort, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 251, ESA 6136)

Shawbury; SJ 571 191. A Level 2 building survey was carried out on a group of five redundant farm buildings at Wytheford Hall Farm (PRN 40417; farmhouse PRN 12371). The buildings are curtilage listed, with the exception of the Grade II listed cow house (PRN 19868), 20m. to the north east of Wytheford Hall (PRN 12370). The farm buildings provide evidence of the evolution of farming in the region and of the application of model farm principles to the construction of farm buildings in the late 19th century. The farm also has historical associations with the Corbet and later the Charlton estates. It was recommended that further recording of all surviving fittings and fixtures should be undertaken.

(M. J. King, 2007: *Wytheford Hall Barns, near Shawbury in the County of Shropshire: Archaeological and Architectural Appraisal*, King Partnership, ESA 6195)

Shifnal; SJ 749 078. Between August 2006 and January 2007 a watching brief was undertaken on groundworks associated with a new residential development on land off Broadway, Shifnal, which revealed evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural activity. The northwest corner of the site revealed an accumulation of levelling and demolition deposits, below which lay a sandy subsoil containing an assemblage of 13th-14th century (possibly including some slightly earlier) ceramic material (PRN 05348). The ceramics were in good condition and

appeared relatively undisturbed, but there were no obvious concentrations, and no associated archaeological features. Topsoil stripping on the south side of the site uncovered a series of plough/cultivation scars indicative of lazy bed cultivation, together with medieval and post medieval pottery.

(P. Frost, 2007: *Land off Broadway, Shifnal, Shropshire*, Castlery Archaeology, Report 245, ESA 6117)

Shifnal; SJ 747 074. In May an evaluation, comprising four trenches, was carried out in advance of a proposed development on land at Church Street, Shifnal. Church Street formed an approach road to the church and manor. Although some development occurred on the northern side of the road, the land between the church and manor possibly lay open until the 18th century. With the exception of a single much abraded sherd of 14th century pottery, no evidence of activity prior to the 19th century was recorded. No evidence for the 'great fire of Shifnal' (1581) was found, suggesting that the area was cleared after the fire. Quarrying, high water levels, ongoing drainage and periodic flooding may also have removed earlier archaeological remains. The remains of the early 19th century church verger's house were encountered, and included earlier stonework, possibly from a late 17th century cottage it replaced.

(Anon, 2007: *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Church Street, Shifnal, Shropshire*, Mercian Archaeology, Report PJ 184, ESA 6123)

Shrewsbury; SJ 489 125. A desk-based assessment was carried out on an area of land within Shrewsbury town centre, bounded by Barker Street, St. Austin's Street, Claremont Bank, Hills Lane and Claremont Street. The study area formed the greater part of a district known as Romaldesham (PRN 08630). The area was occupied during the Saxon period, and in the Medieval and Tudor periods included a mixture of industrial and commercial activity, along with a number of high status hall houses. The status of the housing declined in the later post-medieval period and by the early 20th century was considered sub-standard, resulting in large scale clearance in the 1930s. Archaeological structures, features and deposits are likely to survive across the area and are likely to be well preserved and to lie close to the present ground surface.

(N. J. Baker, 2007: *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Land at Barker Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 253, ESA 6139)

Shrewsbury; SJ 488 126. An evaluation was carried out during the erection of a two-storey office extension following the demolition of a former school house building at Bridge Street, Shrewsbury. The school house building (PRN 10116) was relocated to St. Austin's Friars, Shrewsbury. On the St. Austin's Friars site the work revealed a sequence of medieval features and yards (PRN 21341), a late medieval sandstone wall (PRN 21340) and the remains of a post-medieval house, the White House (PRN 10492), demolished in 1978. On the Bridge Street site a number of medieval and post-medieval pits were revealed (PRN 21342 & 21343), one possibly associated with a tanning industry. The 13th century town wall (PRN 62563) was shown to have probably followed the line of the northern boundary of the site, where sandstone stonework is incorporated into the current buildings.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2007: *Archaeological Investigations at St. Austin's Friars and Bridge Street*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service, Report 252, ESA 6137 & 6138)

Shrewsbury & Pimhill; SJ 478 140. In August an excavation focused on the Berwick cropmark complex (PRN 00010) was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road. Eleven trenches were excavated to investigate the cropmark and the anomalies located by geophysical survey in 2006. Whilst most of the trenches were devoid of archaeological features, one did reveal an east-west orientated undated linear ditch, identified as a possible three-sided enclosure by geophysics. Two post-medieval ditches were also recorded, possibly relating to post-medieval field boundaries. The lack of archaeological features corresponding to geophysical anomalies may be partly explained by the highly variable natural geology across the site. The main cropmark complex appears to be concentrated to the north and confined to the higher ground.

(K. Krawiec, 2007: *Shrewsbury North West Relief Road: an Archaeological Evaluation 2007*, Birmingham University, Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) Report PN1683, ESA 6225)

The Gorge; SJ 681 052. Between August and December a watching brief was undertaken during reclamation work at Ibstock Brickworks, Lightmoor, in advance of the development of housing and a care home. Lightmoor Ironworks (PRN 07229) was established by the 1750s and was closely associated with the brickworks (PRN 03770), first noted in 1779. The remains of buildings associated with the last phase of brick making in the 1980s were recorded, along with purposely stacked un-mortared 'Mossite' stamped bricks forming kilns, some with associated flues. Further deposits of Mossite' Firebrick, rubble, brick, compact brick dust, coal ash, burnt shale and vitrified slags were also encountered. It was concluded the site was cleared of all earlier structures after 1945. The northeast side of the site was used for extensive tipping of industrial spoil from the Lightmoor Ironworks, from the

18th century at least, continuing into the modern period. Excavation here reached a depth of more than 5m. and consisted mainly of made-up ground comprising bricks, tile, black coal ash, clinker, clay, sand, and furnace slag. During the excavation a culverted watercourse, possibly dating to the 1840s, was uncovered together with four culverted watercourse inspection shafts. A further two inspection shafts considered to be formerly linked to the older 18th century Dawley Sough, a mines drainage tunnel, were also located.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Former Ibstock Brickworks, Lightmoor, Telford, Reclamation Work: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Castlering Archaeology, Report 299, ESA 6234)

The Gorge; SJ 675 039. In July a visual assessment and photographic survey were made of Lincoln Grange, Ironbridge, the site of the former Beeches Hospital, and originally the Madeley Union Workhouse (PRN 20763). The complex was designed as the first Pavilion Block Plan workhouse built 1871–5, constructed on an H-shaped plan. The central block contained a kitchen, dining hall, and chapel, with long, narrow, two storey accommodation blocks to the east and west connected by covered corridors. Workhouses were located to the southwest; a high quality residence for the Master and Matron was linked to the west of the Entrance Block; and a separate two-storey infirmary was set to the northeast, with an outbuilding to the east forming the isolation block. The buildings are more decorative than was typical for workhouses; the pinkish-brown brick are accented with decorative blue, yellow and red bricks, and the red tile roofs include pyramidal spires at the junction of roof ridges. The style of the buildings is a hybrid of Gothic and industrial.

(Anon, 2007: *Conservation Appraisal for The Beeches, Ironbridge*, Purcell Miller Tritton, Report MM/lkc/231233, ESA 6168)

The Gorge; SJ 675 039. In August a desk-based assessment and site visit were undertaken at Lincoln Grange, Ironbridge (PRN 20763). Industrial activity was present on site from the mid 19th century, with a shaft and brickworks adjacent to the site. Prior to that, the site appears to have been open pasture associated with Madeley Hill Farm. The former Beeches Hospital, designated as a Grade II listed building, was originally built as a workhouse in the 1870s. In the 1930s the workhouse was converted to use as a care facility, existing as a hospital, nursing home, and care centre. The site however changed little until the 1960s and 1970s when a number of alterations, extensions and improvements were made. The building, however, retained the vast majority of its exterior construction and interior details, and the plan also altered little. The now paved and landscaped areas within the old workhouse area may retain some below-ground archaeology relating to the workhouse history; the yard would have been used for various purposes ranging from breaking stone to washing laundry. It is also possible that remains of early landscaping exist to the north, as well as remains associated with the Woodlands brickworks and the disused shaft.

(Anon, 2007: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for The Beeches, Ironbridge*, Purcell Miller Tritton, Report HL/231233, ESA 6167)

Wem Urban; SJ 515 289. In March trial trenching was undertaken on land off Aston Street, Wem, in advance of proposed residential development. The line of Civil War defensive (PRN 01637) constructed in 1643 by the Parliamentarian forces was believed to pass through the area. Three trial trenches were excavated and revealed two parallel ditches orientated northwest-southeast, representing a considerable deviation from the expected alignment. It was suggested the ditches could be traces of a secondary defensive structure such as a bastion. The primary fills of both ditches were almost sterile and devoid of finds, consistent with rapid backfilling, possibly at the end of the Civil War. On top of the fill lay the remains of a charred wooden plank, suggested to be a footboard, or the remains of some timber defensive structure, though no other evidence was encountered. The board and ditch fill were both sealed by a fill containing sherds of late 17th/18th century pottery, consistent with a Civil War date. Evidence of later field boundaries, possibly reusing the defensive ditches as a field boundary, were also found.

(M. Charles, 2007: *Land off Aston Street, Wem, Shropshire: an Archaeological Evaluation 2007*, Birmingham Archaeology, Report 1578, ESA 6124)

Wroxeter and Uppington; SJ 561 083. In the spring, inspection of a bank on the eastern shoreline of the eastern channel of the River Severn at Wroxeter (PRN 00026) revealed a field drain of Roman date. Roman imbrex tiles were laid end-to-end in the gravel-filled bottom of the trench, located about 2m. below the present pasture field surface. Previously a quantity of Roman roof tile, including one intact imbrex roof tile, and a few pieces of pottery, bone and slag had been found on the river bed. The drain, which is gradually eroding out of the bank, appears to be the source of these tiles. Of note, Dr. A. W. J. Houghton previously reported encountering a field drain of modern (18th or 19th century?) date constructed of re-used Roman tiles in this area.

(N. J. Baker, 2007: *Roman Debris in the River Severn at Wroxeter*, ESA 6109)

Wroxeter and Uppington; SJ 565 080. In October a watching brief was undertaken to monitor the excavation of foundation trenches cut for a new dwelling at Wroxeter Roman Vineyard. Despite the close proximity to the site of the southern defences and the SAM designated area for Wroxeter Roman town (PRN 00026), no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the excavation of the foundation trenches, nor were any artefacts recovered from the topsoil.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2007: *Watching Brief at Wroxeter Roman Vineyard, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service Report, ESA 6155)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN SHROPSHIRE IN 2008

By CHARLOTTE BAXTER

This article summarises work undertaken in 2008 in the County of Shropshire and the Unitary Authority of Telford and Wrekin that was subsequently reported to the Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council. Further information on all the related Monuments can be found on the Discovering Shropshire's History website (www.discovershropshire.com) and the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

The references in brackets prefixed 'PRN' are the Historic Environment Record numbers for individual sites and those prefixed 'ESA' are the Historic Environment Record numbers for individual events or activities such as archaeological excavations. I would like to thank the contributors who provided summaries for some of the reports included in this review.

Acton Burnell; SJ 533 019. In October trial-trenching was undertaken at Concord College (PRN 13182), Acton Burnell, in advance of proposed alterations and extensions to the Kitchen/Dining Room at Concord College. The site lies within the medieval manorial centre of Acton Burnell. Much of the area had been systematically stripped of its former topsoil and subsoil deposits to the level of the present ground surface, as evidenced by soil-staining on the masonry building immediately to the east. No archaeological features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were identified and any possible archaeological deposits are likely to comprise the lowest levels of truncated features cut into the natural bedrock.

(R. Cherrington, 2008: *Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire: an Archaeological Evaluation*, Benchmark Archaeology Report. ESA 6255)

Acton Scott; SO 454 898. In April an earthwork survey was carried out on banks and ditches adjacent to Acton Scott Village Hall. The roughly parallel, widely spaced banks were disjointed and irregular in form, with the intervening ditches deep and boggy. Comparisons with James Sheriff's 1770s map shows the area once formed a 'corner' of the common, allowing cattle to be moved off the common and marshalled to an exit at the bottom of the slope. Cattle following this route over many years would have eroded sinuous 'hollow ways' separated by banks forming a wide tract of disturbed ground (PRN 21707). This would account for the irregular nature of the earthworks, although it remains a possibility that the area was in arable use before its use as a common, and that the resulting ridge and furrow was 'warped' by animal use. When the land became common is unknown, but it could typically have been after the Black Death when a lower population meant that less land was needed for arable use. At the end of the 18th century, the common land was enclosed.

(J. Snyder (ed.), 2008: *Acton Scott Heritage Project Newsletter*. ESA 6417)

Acton Scott; SJ 458 898. Between November 2007 and March 2008 a programme of shovel-pit testing was undertaken at Acton Scott Roman villa (PRN 00168) and cropmark enclosure site (PRN 04419). The Scheduled Roman villa site was discovered in 1817, with archaeological investigation in 1844 revealing a large stone built rectangular structure. In the 1980s the scheduled cropmark enclosure was recorded in the same area, possibly representing a farmstead of Iron Age or Roman date, later converted to the villa. Test pits across the area produced small quantities of fragmentary brick and pottery, some of Roman date. In the vicinity of the structures the test pits produced larger fragments of Roman roof tile, possible wall-flue tile, and hypocaust tile. A trial trench excavated across the southern arm of the enclosure identified a ditch over 4m. wide; the lower fills indicated gradual silting up, whilst the upper fill, represented by a dump of Roman building rubble, potentially marked the disuse and deliberate demolition of part of the villa. A trench across the rectangular structure found a sequence of pebble and

clay floors or surfaces, and a possible post-pad, all associated with a small quantity of Roman pottery. These features and deposits were covered with spreads of stone rubble, wall-flue tiles, and Roman ceramic and stone roof tiles.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2009: *An Archaeological Investigation of a Cropmark Enclosure and Roman Villa Site at Acton Scott, Shropshire*, SCAS report 260. ESA 6522 & ESA 6523)

Albrighton; SJ 8209 0416. A desk-based assessment and field visit were undertaken on land to the east of Shaw Lane, Albrighton, in connection with planning proposals to develop the site. Albrighton has Saxon origins, with the settlement continuing into the medieval period. However the focus for this was mainly to the west, so the majority of historic sites within or near the site related to post-medieval buildings. Two demolished windmills (PRN 05365 & 07315) were within the site boundary, and 19th and 20th century maps record few changes, with the site remaining in agricultural use throughout this period.

(J. Forbes Marsden, 2008: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment: Land East of Shaw Lane, Albrighton*, CgMs Archaeology Report 9785/01/01. ESA 6271)

Aston Eyre; SO 652 941. In February an architectural and archaeological analysis was undertaken at Aston Eyre Old Hall (PRN 00601), in connection with proposals to restore the buildings to residential use. Aston Eyre Hall is a well-preserved manorial dwelling with an associated moat (PRN 08133) and gatehouse (PRN 17165). The gatehouse and hall were probably begun in the mid-14th century by the de Charleton family after Alan de Charleton married the heiress of the Eyre family. However, when the Gatehouse and the Solar Block were virtually complete, work stopped – probably due to Alan's death in 1349 during the Black Death. Work recommenced in the mid-15th century under the Cresset family, more or less to the same design. In the post-medieval period the status of the site declined and the Gatehouse was extended as the main dwelling and farmhouse; the hall being relegated to agricultural use. In the 18th century, the Hall was re-roofed and new openings were created, but, however the basic masonry structure survived.

(R. K. Morriss, 2008: *Aston Eyre Hall, Aston Eyre, Shropshire: an Architectural and Archaeological Analysis*, Mercian Heritage Series 377. ESA 6268)

Barrow; SJ 662 020. In April site stripping and test pitting were undertaken at Benthall Pottery (PRN 03982) in connection with proposals to develop the site. The work uncovered the remains of an 18th century updraft kiln and a 19th century updraft kiln, along with evidence of their associated hovels. Both kilns were truncated by later developments. Pottery analysis illustrated the range of ceramics produced on site from the 18th century onwards, including slip-decorated and iron glazed red and buff wares from the early phases of manufacture on site. Although some 18th century walls were demolished during the clearance work, it was found that the development itself would not affect areas of high archaeological potential.

(P. Williams, 2008: *Archaeological Recording at Morris Corfield & Co. Ltd., Benthall, Shropshire*, Mercian Archaeology Report PJ 212. ESA 6254)

Baschurch; SJ 425 220. In August a desk-based assessment was carried out on land adjoining the Admiral Duncan Inn, Baschurch, in connection with a proposed development. The medieval centre of Baschurch previously centred on the Parish Church, shifted to the northeast in the early 13th century, resulting in a planned urban settlement established around the Newtown crossroads, north of the inn. Despite this, little evidence of medieval occupation has been found in the area during previous investigations and it is likely the development site has been heavily disturbed by post-medieval activity associated with the Admiral Duncan Inn (PRN 06223). The inn itself was a dwelling in 1794, and became a coaching inn sometime between 1805 and 1815. Cartographic evidence indicates the presence of outbuildings and enclosures immediately to the south and east, subsequently rebuilt and extended during the 19th century. Visible earthworks were of post-medieval date, and probably represented outbuildings and enclosures related to the inn, or possibly features associated with the near by Orthopaedic Hospital or the auxiliary military hospital (PRN 19537).

(S. Priestley, 2008: *Desk-based Assessment: Land adjoining the Admiral Duncan Inn, Baschurch, Shropshire*, Border Archaeology Report BA0818BDABS. ESA 6244)

Bayston Hill; SJ 493 083. Between April and June a desk-based assessment was carried out in connection with proposals for a new extension to Condover Quarry. A previous archaeological evaluation in 1996 [ESA 5027] covered c.40% of the new extension area. It was found that although prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval evidence was identified in the wider landscape, no archaeological features or sites were apparent within the study area; the only exception being possible medieval and post-medieval field boundaries (PRN 21247). Cartographic regression showed that there had been little change over the centuries, and aside from the addition of buildings at

the farms, alterations to field boundaries and the creation of the quarry, the surrounding landscape appeared almost unchanged since the mid-19th century.

(A. Richmond, 2008: *Condover Quarry Western Extension, Bayston Hill, Shropshire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, Phoenix Archaeology Report PC320a. ESA 6251)

Bayston Hill; SJ 500 093. In October an earthwork survey was carried out near Bayston Quarry prior to levelling and the construction of a new plant. An earthwork survey was undertaken along a 400m. stretch of known Roman road (PRN 00098). The road ran in a straight line northwest-southeast, following a slightly raised natural ridge on the upper section of the hillside. It then extended along a natural tongue of land, passing into a natural depression on the downhill slope. The use of the natural landscape is consistent with the technology employed by Roman surveyors following a course along subtle gradients, less prone to waterlogging.

(L. Hayes, *et al.*, 2008: *Bayston Hill Quarry, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Archaeological Earthwork Survey*, SLR report. ESA 6261)

Billingsley & Stottesdon; SO 706 839. An excavation was undertaken on the medieval and later iron working site at Ned's Garden complex (PRN 08244). Artefacts were recovered from trenches on either side of the Southall Bank Brook where excavation revealed deposits relating to a medieval bloomery, post-medieval cottages and 18th century industrial activity. A small but important group of 12th to 14th century pottery was identified, with later post-medieval pottery and building materials suggesting activity on site resumed from the 17th century.

(V. Bryant, 2008: *Report on the Pottery and Building Material from the Ned's Garden Complex, Stottesdon and Billingsley, Shropshire*, Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Report 1645. ESA 6256)

Bitterley; SO 543 769. The Horsehides Field Project was undertaken by the Bitterly Archaeology Team (BATs), an archaeology club set up for children of 9–11 years of age. They investigated a field known as Horsehides (PRN 21743). Linear features to the north of the field were identified as 'ridge-and-furrow' (PRN 08700), and south of these were a series of irregular mounds, some linear, some rectangular (PRN 21742). Two trenches put across these mounds revealed walls consistent with field or enclosure boundaries. An exploratory trench put across a central square-shaped 'anomaly' identified by geophysical survey revealed the possibly remains of a cobbled surface. Metal detecting found a large quantity of horseshoes and an ox shoe, musket and pistol balls, nails and a collection of agricultural paraphernalia. The earliest horseshoe dates to c.1250 with all subsequent centuries being represented by both riding and draught horses, with the majority related to draught horses from the 18th and 19th centuries.

(J. Buckard, 2008: *Middleton, Ludlow – Horsehides Field*. ESA 6430)

Bridgnorth; SO 716 930. In July and August an architectural and archaeological analysis was undertaken at the New Market Buildings in Bridgnorth (PRN 17292), built by a private company in the mid-19th century. They were built with the co-operation of the Corporation of Bridgnorth, who tried to force the traditional market traders off the High Street. Despite their being among the most significant buildings of their date in the county, and well-fitted to their intended task, the local traders simply refused to move. They won a landmark legal case and remained in the High Street; the New Market Buildings were thus unwanted and adapted for offices and storage. The buildings were constructed in hand-made red brick, with their principal external elevations faced in good quality polychromatic brickwork, mainly a 'base' of dark blue brick enriched with yellows (or 'whites') and reds. Copious use was also made of moulded brick or terracotta, most of it yellow, with elaborate entablature to all the main external elevations reflecting in a simpler form, the stylised and miniature versions of the machicolations of castle battlements used in Italian architecture, particularly in the 14th century. The New Market Buildings are a fairly rare survival of such bold mid-19th century enterprise, and the tower continues to be one of the distinguishing elements of Bridgnorth's skyline.

(R. K. Morriss, 2008: *New Market Buildings, Bridgnorth, Shropshire; an Architectural and Archaeological Analysis*, Mercian Heritage Series 416. ESA 6481)

Broseley, & The Gorge; SJ 685 032. In June archaeological recording was undertaken on the remains of a mill, located on the south bank of the River Severn close to Calcutts House. The area was once an important mining community and was heavily populated with industries dealing in iron, brick and tile making. A 1788 engraving of the south bank of the river by George Robertson ('An Ironwork for Casting Cannon') shows the Calcutts Ironworks (PRN 03818) and Calcutts House with a ruined mill on the river bank in front of it. The stone remains surviving on the south bank of the River Severn are likely to be the remains of this mill.

(A. Wallis, 2008: *Archaeological Recording at Lloyds Head Mill, Ironbridge*, Ironbridge Archaeology Series. ESA 6304)

Cheswardine; SJ 717 311. Between February 2007 and February 2008 an archaeological and architectural assessment was undertaken of The Round House, Chipnall. The building is a late example of a horse engine house; a feature generally located on farm yards, but to date never recorded in isolation as in this case. The building is more likely to have been constructed for industrial as opposed to agricultural use, with possible links to the brick works at Brickyard Covert in operation during the 19th century. Alternatively, it may have been constructed to raise clay for use on the Cheswardine Hall Estate. The building is constructed in Ruabon red bricks (also used for Cheswardine Hall Lodge built in 1900), suggesting that the building was probably constructed at the turn of the century, prior to 1929 when it first appeared on OS maps. The Round House is a unique structure, being a particularly late example, in an unusually isolated position in industrial use, and for its unusual use of building materials, since most examples were built in field or common bricks.

(P. Frost, 2008: *The Round House, Chipnall, Cheswardine, Shropshire: Historic Building Appraisal*, Castlering Archaeology Report 307. ESA 6292)

Clun; SO 297 809. In May a new interpretation panel was installed at Clun Castle (PRN 01198) and an archaeological watching brief was carried out to monitor the work. A single post hole for the panel was excavated by hand to a depth of 600mm., with a diameter of 200mm. The post was cut through a homogeneous soil of a dark reddish brown loam. No significant archaeological features were identified.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Clun Castle, Clun, Shropshire: Watching Brief*. SCCAS Report. ESA 6211)

Clunbury; SO 372 805. In September an archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken on a site at Clunbury to inform planning proposals for a sewage treatment works and pipeline in the village. Prehistoric flints have been found in the vicinity, mainly through fieldwalking in the first half of the 20th century. The Clun-Clee Ridgeway, thought to be a major Bronze Age trading route, also runs close to the southern edge of the parish. A village was recorded at Clunbury by 1066, with land affected by the pipeline to the immediate east of the village possibly forming part of the medieval settlement. It is postulated that the village had Anglo-Saxon fortifications, although no evidence for this has been reliably recorded. The fields to the northeast of the village are likely to have been orchards and meadows in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, with numerous trees still shown in Hall Orchard in the 1970s.

(R. May, 2008: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Clunbury Sewage Treatment Works, Shropshire*, ARCUS report 1232.1. ESA 6310)

Dawley Hamlets; SJ 669 082. In January an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with Phase 1B of the Lawley Village Sustainable Urban Development Scheme. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered. The absence of archaeological deposits associated with the medieval settlement of Lawley suggests that either they do not extend that far or they were not exposed by the development.

(J. Bennett, 2008: *Phase 1B, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Cotswold Archaeology Report 08015. ESA 6201)

Ellesmere Rural; SJ 388 345. In January and February an archaeological evaluation [ESA6181] was carried out on land adjacent to Ellesmere Business Park, where aerial photography revealed evidence of a double-ditched cropmark feature (PRN 04220), and geophysical survey [ESA6180] identified the presence of ditches and pits. Excavation of the cropmark feature revealed the remains of two ditches possibly forming part of a double ditched enclosure. Excavation of the sub-rectilinear or curvilinear geophysical features revealed a very large shallow ditch, and two ditches running parallel. These linear features may have functioned as settlement enclosures or as corrals for livestock, possibly of late prehistoric or possibly Romano-British date (PRN 20904). A single ovoid pit of unknown date or function was also found.

(K. T. Donaldson and D. J. Sabin, 2008: *Land Adjacent to Ellesmere Business Park, Shropshire: Magnetometer Survey*, Archaeological Survey Report Series 223. ESA 6180)

(J. Archer, 2008: *Archaeological Evaluation: Land Adjacent to Ellesmere Business Park, Oswestry Road, Ellesmere*, Border Archaeology Report BA085SCCEBP. ESA 6181)

Ellesmere Urban; SJ 398 345. In November a desk-based assessment was carried out on a site west of the Canal Wharf, Ellesmere. It was formerly occupied by the Dairy Crest Creamery, which ceased production in 1989, and remained derelict before being demolished in 2008. The site lies at the southern edge of the medieval town of Ellesmere and was probably in agricultural use throughout this period. The earliest recorded activity was the construction of the Ellesmere canal in the 1790s (PRN 05226). A timber yard was recorded at the site on the 1839 tithe map (PRN 21292), with a gas works further south (PRN 06556). Later maps show that the Bridgewater Iron

Foundry (PRN 06555) was built on the site in the 1870s and remained there until the end of the First World War when the Dairy was set up.

(C. Fenton-Thomas, 2008: *Site of the Former Creamery, Ellesmere: Report on an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, OSA Archaeology Report OSA08DT14. ESA 6275)

Ercall Magna; SJ 594 172. In July an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at High Ercall, to monitor ground works on a sewage scheme on land to the south of St. Michael's Church. Although the site lay adjacent to the boundary of the churchyard, with several sites of archaeological and historical interest in the immediate vicinity, no archaeological remains or artefacts were recorded.

(R. Barnett, 2008: *Land off Church Road, High Ercall, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, ARCUS report 1214.2 (1). ESA 6377)

Hodnet; SJ 591 286. In May a historic building appraisal was undertaken at Bank Farm (PRN 20991), Kenstone. The buildings include an L-shaped barn complex (PRN 20992), with an 1858 date stone, and a detached 20th century part stone, part steel, framed barn (PRN 20993), enclosing a former cobbled yard. The current L-shaped stone barn was built on the footprint of an earlier L-shaped building with a shorter eastern return, noted on maps pre-dating 1815. The L-shaped barn was constructed of irregular red sandstone blocks, with dressed sandstone quoins around the openings. The four centred arch openings found on the farmyard side (square headed openings to the rear) have been constructed in the late medieval style in keeping with the architecture of the Hawkstone Estate, with which the farm was associated until 1915. The sandstone barns were clearly meant to be seen and admired, with their robust construction, quality of materials and design highlighting their impressive status.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Bank Farm, Kenstone, Hodnet, Shropshire: Historic Building Appraisal*, Castlery Archaeology Report 294. ESA 6233)

Kynnersley; SJ 679 179. In July a geophysical survey was conducted in advance of a proposed mains renewal scheme at Wall Farm, Kynnersley, within the vicinity of the Scheduled Wall Camp, an Iron Age Hillfort (PRN 01108). Several probable soil-filled features were detected; some reflected parts of small palaeochannels whilst others were potential archaeological ditches and pits. One concentration of small intense anomalies possibly reflected the remains of a burnt mound (PRN 21378), although there was no evidence for a mound or an adjacent watercourse usually found associated with such features.

(D. Hale, 2008: *Wall Farm, Kynnersley, Shropshire: Geophysical Surveys*, Archaeological Services Durham University Report 1989. ESA 6280)

Lilleshall and Donnington; SJ 723 095. During May and June an archaeological evaluation was carried out at the Castle Farm Campus, University of Wolverhampton, Priorslee, in advance of a proposed development. A scheduled double ditched Iron Age enclosure (PRN 00281) was previously located within the eastern part of the site, but was destroyed by the construction of Priorslee Lake. Cropmarks visible on aerial photographs within the development site, interpreted as a possibly annex feature to the enclosure, were excavated. No features, deposits or finds were found, suggesting the cropmarks resulted from variations in natural geology.

(P. Mann, 2008: *Castle Farm Campus, Priorslee, Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation*, Birmingham Archaeology Report PN 1805. ESA 6246)

Llanymynech and Pant; SJ 267 215. In April a watching brief was undertaken at the Llanymynech Limeworks Countryside Heritage Site to monitor groundworks carried out as part of the interpretative work for the Shropshire County Council Countryside Service's Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project. These works included the installation of a number of sculptures at the Hoffman Kiln (PRN 04600), the Tally House (PRN 08424), the English Winding Drum House (PRN 08417), and by one of the quarry faces, as well as the exposure of a set of tramway rails and points at the base of one of the inclined planes (PRN 08407), and the excavation of foundations for a new viewing platform at a mid- to late-19th century draw kiln (PRN 19380).

(H. R. Hannaford and T. Hanna, 2008: *Archaeological Monitoring of Work at the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area, Shropshire*, SCCAS Report 265. ESA 6318)

Ludlow; SO 510 745. In August building recording of wall panelling and arcading at 7 Mill Street (PRN 11214), was carried out following draft proposals to convert the offices to domestic use. All the panelling had been reset, with some reduced in size and others extended with softwood. The earliest panelling was a single tier of linenfold in the north-western room, probably of early-16th century date, associated with a 19th century fireplace and cut to fit the space. The arcade frieze represented by the carved top rail in the entrance hall and upstairs was datable to a fairly long period from c.1590 to the end of the 17th century. The arched overmantel with the carved thistles in the

north-western room and the panelling carved with lozenges, Christ's head and the symbols of the passion in the north-eastern room were both early 17th century.

(S. Price and P. Williams, 2008: *Comments on Wall Panelling at 7 Mill Street, Ludlow, Shropshire*, Mercian Heritage Series. ESA 6398)

Ludlow; SO 512 751. In February an archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken at Station Drive, Ludlow, in connection with proposals to redevelop the site. The study area is currently occupied by a coal yard and a car and lorry park, but was formerly an area of railway sidings and yards of mid-19th century date, associated with the adjacent Ludlow Station (PRN 06119). The site lies immediately behind the former burgage plots (PRN 06185) of one of the town's medieval suburbs; however prior to the land being developed as railway siding, the study area was in agricultural usage.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Land at Station Drive, Ludlow, Shropshire*, SCAS Report 255. ESA 6173)

Madeley; SJ 695 043. In September trial trenching was carried out on land at Town Square, Madeley, Telford, in advance of residential and commercial development. There was evidence for extensive modern truncation of the proposed development area and no deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

(S. Baker, 2008: *An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire* NGR: 36958 30433, University of Leicester Archaeology Services Report 2008-148. ESA 6490)

Madeley; SJ 695 043. Between April and May a desk-based assessment was undertaken in relation to proposals to redevelop Madeley Town Square. The site includes a small portion of the Ironbridge World Heritage Site (WHS) and within the northern extent a section of the historic High Street comprising medieval burgage plots, extending perpendicular to the High Street (PRN 05194 & 05195). Much of this area is occupied by a Somerfield Supermarket and other shops forming the Madeley Centre, and thus extensive truncation and destruction of archaeological deposits is likely. The remaining area has little or no archaeological potential, with the 20th century factory and car park further reducing this potential.

(P. Chadwick and H. Heard, 2008: *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment: Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire*, CgMs Archaeology Report PC/HH/9753. ESA 6491)

Morville; SO 669 938. Between January and March a watching brief was undertaken at St. Gregory's Church (PRN 00604) for the provision of facilities in the church vestry below the church tower. The church originated in the 12th century, with additions and alterations in later centuries. The floor of the tower was removed and two trenches excavated, revealing fragments of disarticulated human bone and, at a deeper level, four further disarticulated skeleton remains, including crania, scapulae, vertebrae and phalanges. A 20th century brick soakaway, which assisted with drainage from the roof, was also found.

(G. Arnold, 2008: *St Gregory's Church, Morville, Shropshire: Archaeological Monitoring*, Archenfield Archaeology Report AA_109. ESA 6176)

Oswestry; SJ 299 286. Between December 2007 and January 2008, a desk-based assessment was carried out at Shrewsbury Road, Oswestry, in connection with proposals to redevelop the site. The route of the early medieval Wat's dyke (PRN 01001) formed the western boundary of the site, but had been effectively destroyed by development in the post-medieval period. Cartographic evidence showed that the development of the site did not occur until the mid-20th century; prior to this the area comprised two fields: Cae Bont (Bridge Field) and Cae Ysgubor (Barn Field). In the western part of the site, hardstanding and infrastructure have adversely affected the archaeological remains in this location. Earthworks were observed to the immediate west, but none lay within the assessment site.

(T. Charters, 2008: *Development at Shrewsbury Road, Oswestry: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, Giffords Report 14246-R01 Rev A. ESA 6245)

Pimhill, Shrewsbury; SJ 492 210. In January a photographic survey was carried out of the farm buildings at Lea Hall Farm (PRN 41091), in accordance with a condition set out as part of listed building consent for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for use in light industry.

(G. Dench, 2008: *Lea Hall Farm: Farm Buildings Photographic Survey*, ESA 6174)

Ruyton-XI-Towns; SJ 394 221. Between October 2007 and January 2008 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at St. John the Baptist (PRN 00860), the churchyard of which contains the Scheduled remains of Ruyton-XI-Towns Castle (PRN 01123). A church at Ruyton is first mentioned between 1129 and 1148 as a chapel

in the Parish of Baschurch, when it presumably served the castle. The early architecture of the church suggests a date of between 1120 and 1148. A timber castle is thought to have been built at the same time by John Le Strange. The existing castle may have been rebuilt in stone after 1302, when the Manor of Ruyton came into the ownership of Edmund, Earl of Arundel. In the post-medieval period a pair of cottages occupied the site until, in 1877, the land was sold to the church for an extension to the churchyard, and shortly afterwards a plan was made of visible structures. During the watching brief evidence of the pre-1880s sandstone wall that retained the east side of the churchyard was recorded near the Lych Gate. Excavations around the castle uncovered the foundations of walls extending at right angles from the castle keep on the west and north sides, forming part of a building adjoining the northwest corner as indicated on the 1878 plan. Further foundations on the south side also appear to be part of a feature recorded in 1878. On the southwest corner of the keep, the stonework remains of what appears to have been a stepped entrance to the existing level interior of the keep were uncovered. These were not recorded as part of the medieval castle in 1878 and are therefore more likely to date to the 19th century occupation of the site by the cottages.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Ruyton-XI-Towns Churchyard and Castle, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Castlery Archaeology Report 285. ESA 6182)

Sheinton; SJ 614 023. In July the Sheinton Heritage Group undertook a site visit to a weir marked on OS maps at the junction of the Sheinwood and Whitwell Brooks near Sheinwood Farm. The weir represented the site of a stone and timber watermill (PRN 20962), of late medieval or early post-medieval date. The weir was built of stone and incorporated substantial vertical and horizontal timbers. Stone walls lined both banks of the stream on either side of the weir, with further stone walls visible in the stream bed to the east. Two Harnage stone roof slates, a fragment of early post-medieval Midland Purple ware and a fragment of an 18th century slipware 'butter jar' were recovered from the stream bed below the weir. A bypass channel, runs east from above the mill site, and ends with a fine and largely intact stone-built overflow weir (PRN 20963). From here a leat, represented by a dry ditch, led north towards another mill site (PRN 15675).

(H. R. Hannaford, 2008: *Site of Watermill at Sheinwood Farm, Sheinton, Shropshire*. ESA 6215)

Sheinton; SJ 608 040. In November a watching brief was undertaken on the initial topsoil strip and preparatory groundworks for the installation of a temporary bridge across the Sheinton Brook, Sheinton. The works area was in a field that was known to contain earthwork remains of a post-medieval farmstead (PRN 20765), the tail-race from a former watermill (PRN 00318), and a ford (PRN 21338). The watching brief recorded the remains of a former trackway and a section across the upper fills of the former mill leat.

(H. R. Hannaford, 2009: *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Sheinton Bridge, Shropshire*. SCCAS Report 261. ESA 6277)

Shrewsbury; SJ 502 111. The Kingfisher No. 2 Bridge, a 19th century former Severn Valley railway bridge, currently carrying a footpath and cycle track across the Rea Brook (PRN 08153) and the Mill Race (PRN 62653), suffered a partial collapse in late January. Emergency works diverted the Rea Brook into the south end of the former mill race for a distance of 275 metres. The millstream was supposedly constructed by the monks of Shrewsbury Abbey in the early medieval period, though it has been suggested that the mills along its course were a legacy from the late Saxon settlement in the Abbey area, prior to its foundation. The cutting from the Rea Brook into the Mill Race ran close by a feature comprising a wall of 19th century red bricks, capped with concrete. This was possibly a former sluice, channelling water into the Mill Race from the Rea Brook, and corresponds to a channel shown on the 1902 OS 25" map.

(H. R. Hannaford and T. Hanna, 2008: *The Mill Race, Sutton, Shrewsbury: an Archaeological Watching Brief on Earthworks Associated with Repairs to the Kingfisher No. 2 Bridge (Rea Brook)*. SCCAS Report 256. ESA 6204)

Shrewsbury; SJ 482 098. In August a desk-based assessment was undertaken at a proposed development site for a Care Village, on land off Pulley Lane, Meole Brace. A Roman Road (PRN 00098) between the forts of Forden Gaer and Wroxeter, and 19th century or later structures evident on historic maps within the study area, represent the main archaeological potential on the site.

(K. Owen, 2008: *Care Village at Land off Pulley Lane, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Field Evaluation*. CAP Archaeology Report. ESA 6231)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 122. In September a watching brief and building recording exercise were undertaken during the refurbishment of the Grade II listed No. 26 Town Walls, Shrewsbury (PRN 10617), located along the alignment of the medieval town walls (PRN 62589). Monitoring of the removal of red quarry floor tiles in the kitchen

confirmed that it disturbed no archaeological deposits, revealing only 19th century or later deposits associated with the previous laying of the quarry tile floor. Refurbishments to insulate the floor and walls of the basement required a drawn record of all the elevations. The walls consisted of hand made bricks with a sandstone basal layer on seven of the elevations. The property was constructed before the 1830s period and was probably of c.1800 date. The house appeared to have once formed two properties, with the whole subsequently faced in brick to give the impression of a single phase of construction. The mix of sandstones and brickwork in the basement suggests that the sandstone fabric located within the house was a mix of medieval and later building stone derived from the late 18th century demolition of the nearby town wall.

(P. Frost, 2008: *No. 26 Town Walls, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief and Programme of Building Recording*. Castlery Archaeology Report 303. ESA 6250)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 125. In November a single trial trench was excavated to the rear of 8 Mardol, formerly the Elephant and Castle Public House (PRN 20148), in connection with a proposed residential development. The area was occupied by a 19th century stable block and outhouses contemporary with the public house, and a 1960s function room on the site of a demolished 19th century outbuilding. The site had potential to reveal evidence of occupation dating from the medieval period as the site lay within the historic core of Shrewsbury and on the site of burgage plots dating to at least the 12th century (PRN 62415). Following the demolition of the function room, excavation showed that medieval deposits had been obliterated on the east side by post-medieval and modern disturbance. Well preserved medieval deposits were however found on the west side of the trench, indicating a strong possibility that further medieval deposits lie in areas not heavily disturbed by 19th century and later building work. The medieval deposits suggested a lightly cultivated garden area, possibly part of the 13th century Cole Hall, or relating to burgage plots extending from Mardol. There were also indications of a possible medieval building in the area, with ceramic evidence indicating a 14th to 16th century date, though an earlier 13th century date could not be ruled out.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Land to the Rear of 8 Mardol (Rear of Former Elephant and Castle PH) Shrewsbury: Archaeological Evaluation*. Castlery Archaeology Report 305. ESA 6262)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 125. In May buildings recording was undertaken of The Stew, Frankwell, Shrewsbury (PRN 20695), providing proof of evidence in relation to proposing it for listing. The site of The Stew has a long history, probably dating back to the 14th century. By the mid-17th century the site was used as a fee farm in return for rent by the Scott family and in 1713 was sold to John Astley of Little Berwick, who settled it on his son, Thomas, and it seems likely that the present early-18th century three-storey fairly high-status house dates from this change of ownership. By the mid-19th century the property was occupied by maltsters and seed merchants and by the end of the century it was the site of Potters Brothers, makers and sellers of cart and wagon covers and ropes. A warehouse extension was built on the rear of the house, followed, in the first half of the 19th century, by a much more substantial extension with warehousing on three storeys. The original house has been altered, but its basic layout and main façades survive fundamentally intact. The later warehousing extensions have survived virtually intact externally, retaining most of their window and doorway openings as well as their distinctive 'taking-in' doors, hoists, and lucams. It was concluded that The Stew meets most of the relevant criteria for listing and is an important reminder of the river trade in Shrewsbury that was still an important part of its economic success in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

(Richard K. Morriss, 2008: *The Stew, Frankwell, Shrewsbury, Shropshire*. ESA 6421)

Shrewsbury; SJ 514 169. Between October and November an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the excavation of test pits during remedial works on the embankment of the Shrewsbury to Crewe railway at Battlefield, Shropshire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.

(S. Joyce, 2008: *Battlefield Embankment, Battlefield, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*. Cotswold Archaeology Report 08233. ESA 6270)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 127. Between March and April an archaeological desk-based assessment and site visit were undertaken at Mardol Quay in connection with proposals to create a Memorial Geo Garden. Although the site is within the area of the medieval Welsh, or St. George's, Bridge, demolished in 1795 (PRN 01471), subsequent development of the site suggests that there is only low archaeological potential. The site is predominantly land reclaimed from the river in the 18th century, after the demolition of the Old Welsh Bridge. No signs of any earlier structures are visible in the present river wall, though it is possible this reclamation sealed earlier deposits such as jetties, quays or earlier. The site was subsequently occupied by buildings during the 18th to early 20th century. Following their demolition, the site was landscaped after the widening of Smithfield Road. This would have caused

substantial damage to the underlying deposits, suggesting that any earlier deposits will only survive at some considerable depth.

(D. Mullin *et al.*, 2008: *Darwin Bicentennial Memorial Geo Garden, Mardol Quay, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Desktop Assessment*. Oxford Archaeology Report. ESA 6258)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 127. In July test pitting was undertaken at Mardol Quay Gardens in connection with proposals to change the site into a Memorial Geo Garden. Two test pits were excavated by hand; one uncovered a demolished brick structure close to the river, and the other, close to Smithfield Road, revealed a limestone cobbled surface overlaid by demolition debris, indicating the presence of buildings in the area.

(Oxford Archaeology, 2008: *Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Oxford Archaeology Report. ESA 6259)

Shrewsbury; SJ 490 127. In October an archaeological watching brief was carried out at Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, during the excavation of geotechnical test pits, in advance of proposed redevelopment for a public art project to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Charles Darwin. The watching brief revealed 19th century structures and deposits probably associated with the area's use as a quay.

(Oxford Archaeology, 2008: *Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Report*. Oxford Archaeology Report. ESA 6260)

Shrewsbury; SJ 489 125. Between June and July an evaluation was undertaken at land at Barker Street/Claremont Street, Shrewsbury. Four trenches were excavated and *in-situ* medieval deposits were encountered in two of the four excavated trenches. These comprised make-up layers in trenches 3 and 4; those in trench 3 being cut by a single pit of medieval date. Features and deposits of post-medieval date were identified in trenches 2 and 4. These comprised a surface and a structure relating to probable small scale industrial use and a rubbish pit. A modern cellar and other modern structural remains were also identified

(K. Saunders, 2008: *Land at Barker Street/Claremont Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Cotswold Archaeology Report 08140. ESA 6574)

Welshampton and Lyneal; SJ 432 350. In February a Level 2 building survey was undertaken at Oakleigh Farm, Welshampton (PRN 21349), to inform proposals for the conversion of the redundant farm buildings. Oakleigh Farm is situated at the western end of the ancient village of Welshampton. The farmhouse (PRN 21350) and barns (PRN 21351–21353) were constructed in the mid 19th century when considerable investment and improvements were being made in agriculture. The three farm buildings consist of two 2 storey parallel barns with a single storey link barn. The historic farm buildings reflect how model farm principles filtered down from the major estates to such modest farms as Oakleigh.

(M. J. King, 2008: *Oakleigh Farm Barns: Historical and Architectural Appraisal*. ESA 6199).

Wem Urban; SJ 516 289. Between August and September an excavation was undertaken on land off Aston Street, Wem. Two open area excavations took place in advance of a proposed residential development and aimed to investigate evidence of the Civil War defences (PRN 01637). The excavations confirmed the existence of a defensive ditch, and provided evidence of its profile, alignment and Civil War origin. The projected line of the defensive circuit, shown on historic maps since 1881, was probably originally based upon a description dating to the first half of the 18th century, and was only partly correct. The excavation provided evidence for a more complex Civil War defensive system that may have incorporated pre-existing field boundary ditches, which were later reinstated as a property boundary by re-cutting the silted up ditch.

(M. Charles and L. Jones, 2008: *Land off Aston Street, Wem, Shropshire: Archaeological Excavations 2007 & 2008*. BUFAU Report PN 1679. ESA 6214)

Westbury; SJ 340 096. In September an archaeological and architectural assessment was undertaken on three farm buildings at Vennington Farm, to accompany future applications in respect of development of the buildings for residential use. The farm buildings include a two storey barn and cart shed with loft above (PRN 21038); a range of single storey stabling with a two story barn adjoining the west end (PRN 21039); and a barn originally of timber framed construction (PRN 210400), associated with a mid- to late-18th century listed farmhouse, containing a 17th century core (PRN 15188). Cartographic evidence from the tithe and subsequent maps shows that the farm buildings have been present on the site for over 150 years, with the c.1841 tithe survey recording a 'House, outbuildings, yards, gardens and orchard owned by Craford Willam M.D. and let to William Jones'. The maps also show that the settlement at Vennington has changed little since the 1840s until very recently, with the oldest buildings having farming origins.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Vennington Farm, Vennington, Shropshire: Historic Buildings Appraisal*. Castlering Archaeology Report 302. ESA 6249)

Whitchurch Urban; SJ 541 416. In May a building assessment and photographic survey was undertaken on a structure to the rear of 35–37 High Street, Whitchurch (PRN 13881). The building is the surviving ground-floor portion of a bay of an early-19th century coach house or stable block, and is Grade II listed as part of Nos. 37 and 39 High Street. A second bay once extended east, the cobbled floor for which still remains, and this possibly extended further east again. The building itself is severely compromised by the loss of the eastern bay and the whole of the first floor, with the consequent decay of the remaining interior woodwork.

(N. J. Baker, 2008: *An Historic Building Assessment of a Structure at the Rear of 35–37 High Street, Whitchurch*. ESA 6217)

Whitchurch Urban; SJ 541 417. In January historic building recording was undertaken to accompany planning proposals for the development of the former Horse and Jockey Public House, Whitchurch. The 1761 Bridgewater estate map records a rectangular building on the site, corresponding to the middle section of the existing building. The building may have served as an ale-house which was extended south in the 1830s period. The building was subsequently extended north in the later 19th century, with the existing complex recorded on the 1881 town map. The historic interest of the Horse and Jockey and the development of this area of the town in the late medieval period have more value than the surviving building.

(P. Frost, 2008: *Former Horse & Jockey PH, Whitchurch, Shropshire: Historic Building Recording*. Castlering Archaeology Report 289. ESA 6290)

Worthen with Shelve; SO 354 964. In March a Level 1 field survey was carried out on land at the Big Wood and The Rock on the southern end of the Stiperstone Hills. The survey supplemented a survey carried out in 2003/4 [ESA 5405] covering areas previously excluded due to dense tree cover, since felled. A total of thirty-two new features, including boundary features and mining remains, were recorded.

(H. R. Hannaford and A. Wigley, 2008: *An Archaeological Survey at Big Wood and The Rock, The Stiperstones, Shropshire*. SCCAS Archaeology Report 258. ESA 6209)

Shifnal; SJ 752 071. In October a desk-based assessment was undertaken in connection with a proposed development on land adjacent to Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal. Although the medieval town is located north of the site, it is likely that early deposits near the site were entirely removed by 19th century activity. The area may have been within, or partly within, a deer park noted from the 13th to 16th centuries (PRN 7529 & 1824). Two ponds (PRN 05331 & 05333) noted along the northern fringes of the site may also have been of medieval origin, though their date and definite function is uncertain. The ponds had been backfilled in the recent past, although a remnant portion of the pond to the northwest was extant beyond the site boundary. Post-medieval ridge and furrow earthworks were evident just outside the site, with potential for subsurface remains of such earthworks within the site boundary, as well as other features associated with post-medieval agriculture such as ditches and relict field boundaries as noted on historic maps.

(Waterman CMP Ltd., 2008: *Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire: Archaeology and Cultural Assessment*. WCPM Archaeology Report H1649_01b. ESA 6243)

South Shropshire; SO 551 754. A desk-based assessment and walkover survey were undertaken between August 2007 and March 2008 along the proposed routes of the water pipeline at Stoke St. Milborough, between land west of Henley Hall, through the village of Snitton and to Prospect Place reservoir to the southeast. The proposed route extended through a Grade II registered park at Henley Hall (PRN 07733) and a possible shrunken medieval village settlement at Snitton (PRN 21269). At Snitton traces of above-ground earthworks, which included ridge and furrow, former trackways and the remains of possible medieval house platforms were identified. At Henley Hall a number of parkland features including a large post-medieval deer boundary ditch and a tree-lined avenue were identified, in addition to ridge-and-furrow and other earthworks of uncertain form or date. The archaeological features identified over the remainder of the study area comprised the remains of medieval or post medieval cultivation, and the site of a former limekiln.

(J. Halsted, 2007: *Stoke Saint Milborough, Shropshire: an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment 2007 (revised 2008)*. Birmingham Archaeology Report PN 1668. ESA 6269)

South Shropshire; SO 552 752. In September a Level 2 monument survey of upstanding features was undertaken along a proposed pipeline route at Stoke Saint Milborough. During the site visit a photographic record was made of the upstanding earthworks. The survey identified several areas of earthwork ridge-and-furrow of possible medieval

or early post-medieval date, close to Henley Hall, West Farm and Snitton Court. Earthworks relating to a shrunken medieval settlement at Snitton (PRN 21269), were also recorded. The proposed pipeline crosses the boundary of a post-medieval deer park at Henley Hall (PRN 07733), and this also survives as substantial earthworks.

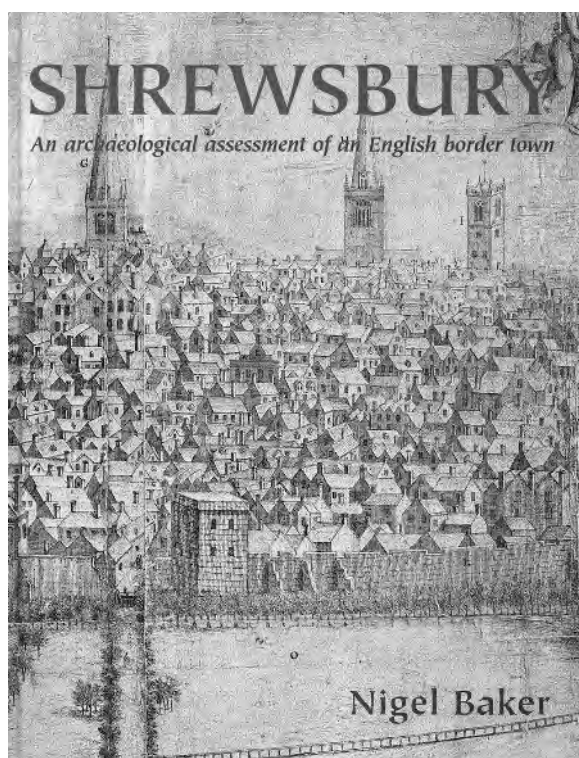
(T. Sparrow, 2008: *Level 2 Landscape Survey for a Proposed Pipeline Route, Stoke Saint Milborough, Shropshire*. ARCUS report 1226.2 (1). ESA 6252)

Shropshire. A rapid assessment survey was undertaken of 85 pre-targeted historic farmsteads in four selected areas of the Shropshire Hills region; the Rea Valley west, Clee-St. Margaret, Corve Dale and Rea Valley central. The assessment involved carrying out a visual inspection of the target sites from public rights of way and adjacent roads, in order to assess the present use of the farmstead, and the condition and scale of the pre-1940 historic buildings remaining at each site. Overall, it is clear from the evidence that the residential sites were in better condition than the 'working' buildings that were still in agricultural use. It is noticeable that the most dilapidated structures were probably some of the buildings at the highest altitude across the study area, with strong winds and driving rain commonplace. It was also apparent that the condition was not entirely dependent on the size of farmstead, with both large and small farmsteads falling down on maintenance.

(P. Williams, 2008: *Rapid Assessment of the Condition of Historic Farmsteads in the Shropshire Hills area*. Mercian Heritage Series. ESA 6210)

BOOK REVIEW

Nigel Baker. *Shrewsbury: An Archaeological Assessment of an English Border Town*, Oxbow Books in association with English Heritage, 2010. ISBN 978-1-84217-315-2. xv + 272 pp. £40.00.



This short review cannot do justice to Dr. Baker's magnificent account of the archaeological potential of Shrewsbury. It is the culmination of over a decade of work on the project for English Heritage and the product of a familiarity with the archaeology and history of the town stretching back to the late 1970s, when he investigated Rigg's hall on Castle Gates.

The book is excellently illustrated and draws on the extensive collections of topographical prints, watercolour drawings and oil paintings in Shropshire Archives and the Shrewsbury Museum, as well as historic photographs of demolitions in the town during the 19th and 20th centuries. The text is accompanied by exemplary maps, which are keyed to the Shrewsbury Urban Data Base contained on a CD Rom.

The book describes and documents the above and below ground archaeology as revealed by antiquarians in the past and by modern archaeology, drawing particularly on the reports generated by the PPG16 planning process. The author draws on the findings of the Shropshire dendro-chronology project, not only for buildings of the later medieval period, but also for the early modern period, and he reiterates the fact that the medieval burgage plot boundaries still very largely dictate street frontages. Behind the street facades, as was discovered by J. T. Smith, often lurk the unreconstructed remnants of medieval houses. Particularly remarkable are the results of the cellar

survey, which revealed the continuing existence of medieval and later undercrofts. The archaeology and topography are linked to the economic and social history of the town, and in this he has been advised by the detailed researches of Bill Champion, apparent in footnotes. Change within the historic town and original suburbs has been documented down to the present day.

If there is a criticism in this section, it is that Dr. Baker has underestimated street improvement in the later 18th century. The 1756 Improvement Act was a feeble thing and gave few powers to remedy the squalor of the streets. This was redressed in 1821, but it is notable that Belmont, a street which we associate with Georgian elegance, coexisted with the squalid St. Chad's almshouse until the mid 19th century. However, under the Acts for building the Shire and Guildhall, the County Gaol and new St. Chad's in the 1780s piecemeal powers were granted which led to considerable changes in High Street, Castle Gates and College Hill.

Error is almost non-existent, but the alleged architect of the 1785 Shire and Guildhall, Thomas Heycock, is new to me. It should be John Hiram Haycock, son of William Haycock, architect of the Lion Hotel and founder of the Haycock architectural dynasty. Mention is made of the growth of a consumer society in the 18th century and of a 'toyman'; readers should not be deceived, he was the purveyor of shoe buckles, fancy buttons and bijouterie ornamented with tortoiseshell and enamel, products of the Birmingham 'toy' trade.

On a more serious note Dr. Baker identifies the areas within the town and immediate suburbs where there is particular potential. It is remarkable that there has never been a total archaeological investigation of the surviving town walls and that the precincts of the Castle, which may conceal elements of the late Saxon town, lie uninvestigated. It is a matter of regret that BUFAU's excavation of the Owen Owen site off Pride Hill is substantially unpublished, and likely to remain so. It is, however, certain that within the bounds of the ancient town and suburbs virtually any development involving a building of any age or trenching in any street is likely to have archaeological potential. We owe a great debt to Nigel Baker in completing this study which a colleague has described as 'one of the best written and thoughtful archaeological histories of a British town ever'.

James Lawson

OBITUARIES

JOHN FREDERICK ARTHUR MASON, M.A., D.PHIL., F.S.A., F.R.HIST.S. (1920–2009)

Two of John Mason's leading passions in life were Oxford and Shropshire, and it therefore comes as a surprise to learn that he was not a native Salopian, but born in Wales—in Pembrokeshire, where his father was in service in Saundersfoot. What may certainly be described as John's most formative years, however, were spent in Shropshire, where his parents moved with their two sons when his father became Geoffrey Wolryche-Whitmore's butler at Dudmaston. John went to Bridgnorth Grammar School (B.G.S.), a late-medieval foundation which still retained a very few boarders in the 1930s and had recently become co-educational. Studying hard and playing a keen game of cricket (Cyril Washbrook, who had left the school to play for his native Lancashire, was an inspiration), he was very happy there, and in old age would contribute to a volume of essays on the school's history.¹ In 1937 he sat an Oxford entrance examination in Christ Church hall but—as a native of Wales (one can hardly say 'as a Welshman' of such an essentially English man)—it was naturally Jesus College (in the same examining group as Christ Church) which awarded him a scholarship. He went up in 1938, having at school been 'pipped' for a Careswell exhibition by a farmer's son.

War service, at first in the Manchester Regiment, interrupted his Oxford studies in 1940. From 1942 to 1945 he served in India with the Indian Army in a mechanical transport training centre at Kharian on the Grand Trunk Road near Lahore; he became the adjutant and then, as major, OC of a battalion there. (Late in life he wrote a history of the unit and deposited it with the India Office Library in the British Library.) He became fluent in Urdu—the 'camp language' that was something of a *lingua franca* throughout the Raj. Reminiscing, he would recall that as the only time in his life when he exercised direct power over men, and he would be moved by the recollection of an occasion when it was his duty to visit a soldier on the eve of his execution for murder to ask if there was anything he could do for him—knowing full well that the one thing desired was beyond his power to give. Nevertheless those years seem to have been as useful to John² as were four years in the Hampshire militia to Gibbon.

John returned to Oxford in 1946 and in 1948 took first-class honours in Modern History; he was justly proud of achieving the highest mark of any post-war undergraduate in the Stubbs's *Charters* paper, a subject on which he later lectured. He failed to get an All Souls fellowship but became a Research Lecturer/Research Student of Christ Church in 1950, completing his D.Phil. thesis³ in 1952. He was to remain at 'the House' for the rest of his working life, becoming an Official Student (the equivalent of Fellow in other colleges) in 1957 and an Emeritus Student on retirement in 1987.

Although he was not a gremial member of the House, John's passionate regard for Oxford came to centre on the college and its library. He saw the serving of college office as a serious obligation, gently but firmly deprecating donnish preferences for television or transatlantic celebrity to such duties. He himself was the House's Librarian for a quarter of a century (1962–87). It was an onerous responsibility, never more so than during the years when he had to care for the papers of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury: there were drafts based on the papers to be read⁴ and occasionally referred to the 5th Marquess.⁵ And when weighty issues—over the library's redecoration for example—came up he was skilful in defeating the opposition to his carefully considered plans by those on the governing body whom he considered his 'enemies'. How well the library and its treasures were cared for will long be remembered by those members of our Society who were taken round it by John during one of our more memorable summer excursions outside Shropshire; on the same occasion Iffley church was visited, and Christ Church's care for the churches in its patronage was amply demonstrated. As Curator of senior common room for a decade John maintained the House's hospitable traditions, conscious of the fact that he had inherited an office once filled by the Revd. C. L. Dodgson ('Lewis Carroll') and by Shropshire-born Osborne Gordon. He was privately

hospitable too: Oxford freshmen lists were regularly scrutinized for new undergraduates up from B.G.S., who, when found, were invited to sherry.

Besides filling college offices John was of course a 'first rate' college tutor from 1953,⁶ a conscientious supervisor of D.Phil. students, and a university lecturer. His undramatic lecturing style—at least as remembered by the present writer⁷—was thoughtful, reflective, and delightfully expressive of profound learning. His speech and writing needed close attention: understated but pointed asides, slipped in, were liable to catch one off balance. A characteristically teasing ambiguity, for example, concludes his *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* account of the 'mild and lovable' Hugh of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury: 'Welsh writers leave no doubt of his cruelty towards their people, but this was natural enough'.⁸ John's deep learning centred on institutions and places that he knew well, enabling him to enter imaginatively into the lives he wrote for the *Dictionary*, sometimes with revealing glimpses of self-identification with a subject—as perhaps with Osborne Gordon—or enlightening comments, as on Hamon le Strange (married to the widowed Queen Isabella of Jerusalem and Cyprus), who 'behaved in Outremer with the pragmatism necessary on the Welsh border' and for whom 'in comparison with the splendours of the palace at Beirut the castle at Knockin must have seemed unutterably provincial'.⁹

It has been said that John did not publish as much as might—perhaps in later times—have been expected of a scholar of his calibre. In fact, were a complete bibliography of his writings to be prepared, such a judgement might have to be qualified. He contributed to many collaborative works—e.g. the *Dictionary of National Biography* and its 2004 *Oxford* successor,¹⁰ the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, the *Victoria County History* (Oxfordshire and Shropshire), *The History of the University of Oxford*,¹¹ and David Loades's *Reader's Guide to British History* (2003)—and he published in the *English Historical Review*, the Royal Historical Society's *Transactions*, *Oxoniensia*; the Sussex Archaeological Society's *Collections*, the Institute of Historical Research's *Bulletin*, our own *Transactions*,¹² and *Notes & Queries*; and he co-edited an Oxfordshire Record Society volume.¹³ Besides that, he was general editor of the Oxfordshire Record Society for some years in the 1970s and 1980s and took justifiable pleasure in bringing forward pioneering volumes.¹⁴ John was elected F.S.A. in 1963 and was made a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Two substantial works of John's are *Christ Church and Reform 1850–1867* (with Dr. E. G. W. Bill; Clarendon Press, 1970) and 'Parliamentary Representation' in Volume III (1979) of the *Shropshire V.C.H.* The latter—the best thing of its kind in the *V.C.H.* as a whole—was a work of very substantial research over twenty or more years in archives, libraries, and many private country houses,¹⁵ and his transcripts of correspondence, poll books, etc., beautifully typed, remain in Shropshire Archives for the use of future scholars. The impressive *Christ Church and Reform* relates how power passed from the Canons of Christ Church to the Students of the college during the mid-19th century years of university reform. John was not normally in favour of change, even (perhaps especially) in our own day, but as a Student of the House he must have had some sympathy with changes which had a century-old patina—and perhaps something more—to recommend them.

His laborious life in Oxford notwithstanding, John's ties with Shropshire remained strong. He was for many years honorary archivist to Bridgnorth corporation, and in 1957 he produced a history of the borough (still the best one published) to celebrate the eighth centenary of its first Royal Charter. There were summer visits to his brother and his long-lived mother and to play cricket at Quatt, where the club (of which John was secretary for twenty years) had been founded by Geoffrey Wolryche-Whitmore in 1908. Other cheerfully shouldered responsibilities also brought him back to the county regularly—latterly thanks to Sally's driving. For many years he served on the county council's Records Committee and its offshoot the V.C.H. subcommittee, rarely missing a meeting. He was long a member of our Society's Council and latterly a Vice-President. And for over fifty years he was a governor of the well endowed Careswell Foundation which, from 1746 to 1900, enabled boys from Shropshire grammar schools to go up to Christ Church, and which still awards generous support to Shropshire boys and girls going into higher education.

In the last years before his retirement John worked with Jean Cook on a transcription and edition of *The Building Accounts of Christ Church Library 1716–1779*. In 1988 the book was presented to the Roxburghe Club (as its 251st volume) by Nowell Myres, who had been the House's librarian and was Bodley's Librarian 1948–65. For John this work was surely a labour of love—and not merely because it concerned the library which he had served for so many years or because it was supported by his friend Myres, whom he visited regularly in his last illness. As was remarked during his memorial service,¹⁶ John rejected cheap modern characterizations of libraries as information providers. Noting in 1977 that the University Grants Committee had proposed that, in order to avoid expensive extensions, libraries should destroy outdated, rarely used books and thus become 'self-renewing', John commented 'Self-renewal means, of course, impoverishment—a splendid variant of the new law that "Improvement means Deterioration"'. In this his deep, soundly conservative instincts were seen at their best: for him libraries were stores of hard-won learning and scholarship to be treasured for, and by, future generations.

John was a faithful member of the Church of England. He died peacefully on 31 October 2009 after a long illness, though alert to the last and, even when confined to home, generous in sharing his accumulated knowledge

and (thanks to Sally) extending hospitality to other scholars.¹⁷ He is survived by his wife Sally (*née* Hirst); by his daughter, Gillian, from his first wife Iris (*née* Bache), who died in 1989; and by three granddaughters, of whom he was very proud. His ashes are buried in his parents' grave in Quatt churchyard.

George Baugh

Notes

- 1 M. Jones (ed.), *Bridgnorth Grammar & Endowed Schools: Five Hundred Years of Change*, 2003.
- 2 *Christ Church* 2009, 109. Cf. generally *ibid.*, 104–11.
- 3 'Aspects of Subinfeudation on some Domesday Secular Fiefs', 2 vols.
- 4 See e.g. A. Roberts, *Salisbury, Victorian Titan*, 1999, xx.
- 5 On one occasion John reported Bobbety as objecting that he couldn't allow some statement—presumably about a peer contemporary with the 3rd Marquess—to be published from the papers because he regularly encountered his grandson in the Lords.
- 6 *Christ Church* 2009, 104, 154.
- 7 Who attended his lectures on the Crusades two years running in 1959–60. [The Editor of these *Transactions* attended John's lectures in 1964–5 and fully concurs with these observations.]
- 8 *O.D.N.B.* XXXVIII, 848.
- 9 *Ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 487.
- 10 Twenty articles in the 2004 *O.D.N.B.*: 6 on 18th- and 19th-century Christ Church men (including 4 deans), 2 on other Oxford men (including his tutor at Jesus—and lifelong friend—Sir Goronwy Edwards), and 12 on medieval men.
- 11 'Christ Church' in Vol. VII (Clarendon Press, 2000), 221–31.
- 12 Nine articles in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1990s: *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, LIV, 171–214; LV, 97–104, 112–18; LVI, 244–57; LVII, 37–46, 152–61; LXXIII, 52–61; LXXIV, 29–31.
- 13 With R. K. Pugh: *The Letter Books of Samuel Wilberforce 1843–68*, 1970.
- 14 E.g. P. Horn, *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire 1872–81*, 1974.
- 15 *VCH Salop*, III, 232 n. 4, is not an exhaustive list of the private archives to which he was given access.
- 16 In Christ Church Cathedral on 30 Jan. 2010. See *Christ Church* 2009, 108.
- 17 See e.g. C. Gamble, *John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads*, 2008, x.

MARY CORNELIA PAGET, NÉE HILL, M.A., F.R.HIST.S. (1912–2010)

Miss Mary Hill—always so known in her professional life, even after marriage to the widowed William Paget not long after she came to Shrewsbury—was Shropshire's first county archivist. In the 1890s Shrewsbury's magnificent archives had had been cleaned, sorted, labelled, and calendared by a volunteer committee,¹ and in the earlier 20th century some amateur work on the preservation, cataloguing, and publication of the county records had been undertaken.² Before the Second World War perhaps a dozen or more county councils had taken steps to provide professional care for official archives and deposited private papers,³ and Shropshire followed suit in the optimistic post-war years when the county council's policies were being formed and pushed through by forward looking councillors and officers.⁴ In 1945 the clerk of the council, G. C. Godber, called in his sister Joyce—herself about to become Bedfordshire's first professional county archivist⁵—to report on the county records, and as a result of her findings Mary C. Hill was appointed county archivist in 1946. The two women knew each other,⁶ and both were destined to combine the archive profession with historical research and writing.

Mary was born on 9 June 1912 in Charlton Kings, near Cheltenham. She was educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College 1923–31 and then at the Royal Holloway College, Egham (Surrey), in the University of London. After graduating she took a Diploma in Education at Oxford and began teaching at Adcote School, Baschurch, in 1936.⁷ She then gained a scholarship enabling her to study at the Institute of Historical Research in 1937–9, her resulting M.A. thesis on the medieval history of the King's Messengers being awarded a distinction by London University. She was elected a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and became assistant archivist in the Gloucestershire Record Office in 1939–43 and 1944–6, having in 1943–4 returned to her old school to teach for a year.

On taking up her Shropshire appointment in March 1946 Mary found the county records dirty and ill-housed with little room for searchers. Alone for a year or more, she undertook 'a phenomenal amount of work...under difficult conditions', travelling 'all over the county by train, bus, bicycle (she thought nothing of a 10-mile ride) and, if she was lucky, by car'. In due course, and with successive assistant archivists, she began to put things in order and to accept deposits of private records, for which until 1946 there had been no big local repository;⁸ by 1951 some very large family and estate records had been received.⁹ The Record Office's early years were heroic ones, the most urgent work inevitably centring on the acquisition and conservation of records. It was often (to use an archaeological term) 'rescue' work. When Miss Marion Hill came as assistant archivist in 1957 Mary acquired a

colleague¹⁰ who could drive a car to pick up records—offered sometimes at very short notice: some Church Stretton poor-law records,¹¹ for example, came to light as part of the old poor-law institution was being demolished in 1961, and a dash had to be made to save them.

During the 28 years when Mary Hill held office official archives and private deposits arrived in ever increasing quantities, and for the efficiency with which they were received or collected and cared for future generations will remain grateful. Inevitably, however, with a very small professional staff it was difficult for cataloguing work to keep pace with acquisition. The disparity meant that special measures—the labelling and numbering of boxes and bundles—were needed when the Record Office and its contents moved in 1967 from inconvenient offices and strong rooms in old Shirehall in the Square to the north wing of the new Shirehall at the top of Abbey Foregate. The numbers were retained after the move and helped to mitigate difficulties of referring to uncatalogued materials.

Mary had tried hard to influence the design of the Record Office's part of the new Shirehall, though unsuccessfully. The upper strong room was exposed to full sunlight from the south through large, continuous plate glass windows (covered by ineffectual linen blinds), and the lower strong room floor featured a storm-drain manhole cover which on one occasion was forced off. Mary's office and the search room came in due course to reflect a certain streak of eccentricity in her character. Her office's large south-facing windows served as greenhouse windows in summer, when rows of tall productive tomato plants would be raised on their deep sills; and there was watering and potting-on of plants to be done at lunch time, Mary invariably taking a desktop lunch, oatcakes a favourite fare.¹² A luxuriant avocado plant flourished near a north window in the search room, in which a potted coffee tree, grown from seed, eventually grew so large as to make access to two bays of shelved reference books something of a jungle experience; when Mary left Shrewsbury at the end of 1974 the tree was picked up by removal men to go with her furniture, and by then (as Mary triumphantly announced) it had produced enough beans to make, after roasting in a frying pan and grinding, a small cup of coffee.

The great strength of the Record Office during Mary's years was its staff. In particular Mary and her senior assistant, Marion Hill (Mrs. L. B. Halford from 1969), rarely failed to steer researchers towards those materials in the office which would be of greatest help, their detailed knowledge compensating the cataloguing lag.

Mary was a talented artist, producing sketches and watercolours of Shropshire and Iona (where she took an annual holiday), but it was her archive and historical work which impressed the public. Historical interests and ability are not a requisite of the archivist's profession, but some office lists suggest—by their detail¹³—Mary's keen interest in historical research and writing. In 1949 her edition of Dowdeswell manor court book, 1577–1673, was published,¹⁴ and in 1952 her useful *Guide* to the office and its collections appeared. Other literary work of those years included a book based on her thesis¹⁵ and articles in our Society's *Transactions* on 16th- and 17th-century maps of the Weald Moors, the county's iron and steel bridges, and borough markets.¹⁶ In retirement in 1984 she presented the Society with a whole volume on *The Demesne and the Waste: a Study of Medieval Inclosure on the Manor of High Ercall, 1086–1399*. This last was a notable achievement: a landscape study based mainly upon deeds, a source which, as she noted, 'survive in greater quantity than any other record'.¹⁷ There were few precedents for using deeds in that way¹⁸—combining their study with getting one's boots muddy in the best Hoskins manner. There were other publications, too, in Mary's Shropshire years—often marking particular occasions.¹⁹ Mary was a long-standing member of our Society's Council until she left Shropshire, and in 1984 she was elected a Vice-President, which she remained for the rest of her life.

At the end of 1974 Mary, with her stepdaughter (and college friend from Royal Holloway days), Joan Paget,²⁰ moved to Charlton Kings, where she had had a new house built on a corner of the family property, Glynrosa. There, in the long retirement that was to stretch before her, she indulged her passions for gardening (at Swan Hill, Shrewsbury, she had had no garden—the office providing a horticultural outlet) and historical research, field work, and writing. There too she took part in the work of the parish church, as she had at St. Chad's, Shrewsbury.

Soon after settling in at Crab End Mary began 'to be the driving force behind Charlton Kings Local History Society which was set up in 1978 and was one of the first in [Gloucestershire]'.²¹ She wrote, lectured, put on displays, and edited forty-seven issues of the society's *Bulletin*. She had an 'encyclopaedic knowledge' of the houses and families of Charlton Kings and was particularly interested in the architectural history of the old houses, which she 'took every opportunity to examine and photograph' during restorations. *A History of Charlton Kings*, edited by Mary, appeared in 1988, to be followed by a revised edition in the following year. In 2002, aged 90, she handed over the *Bulletin*'s editorship and was made the society's first Life President, but other books and documents written or transcribed by her continued to appear.

The Charlton Kings society did not exhaust her energies. From 1991 she produced a history of the Hill family from 1761 in ten substantial instalments, and she and Joan wrote a life of William Paget (1870–1968), which appeared in 2003; Mary had edited his recollections in 1985. In the midst of all this a second book on the King's Messengers appeared:ⁱ 'It's out at last!', she wrote on a Christmas card to a friend in 1994. Mary also found time for gardening, for looking after her domestic cats (successors to a similar tribe in Shrewsbury) and giving outdoor

relief to a population of garden cats, and for involvement in church life—parish church discussion and prayer groups met at Crab End.

Joan died in 2003. Mary's health held up for seven more years, but soon after her 97th birthday in 2009 she began to fail physically while remaining quite lucid. Increasingly weak and bedridden, for eight months she was lovingly cared for by her friends and neighbours Marion and Bryan Bee, who had promised that she would not have to leave home. Mary died peacefully there on 8 February 2010. Two nephews, sons of her brother, survive her.

On 19 March 2011 an Amelanchier tree was planted in the garden of Charlton Kings church hall in her memory and to commemorate her work.

George Baugh

Notes

- 1 *Calendar of the Muniments and Records of the Borough of Shrewsbury*, 1896, preface.
- 2 Including the appointment of an honorary archivist in 1935. For this paragraph see *VCH Salop*, **III**, especially pp. 222–3.
- 3 K. Neale (ed.), *An Essex Tribute: Essays presented to Frederick G. Emmison*, 1987, 11. By 1955 seventy per cent of English and Welsh county councils 'were actively involved with archive care'.
- 4 Notably Capt. Sir Offley Wakeman, G. C. Godber, and H. Martin Wilson.
- 5 Appointed temporary acting clerk of the records in 1942, she was made county archivist in 1946 (obituary at <http://www.sal.org.uk/obituaries>) and developed a service which owed much to the amateur work of the oceanographer Dr. G. H. Fowler (cf. C. R. J. Currie and C. P. Lewis (eds.), *English County Histories: A Guide*, 1994, 39; *Notes and Records of the Royal Soc. of London*, **XXXVIII** (2), 261–96).
- 6 Inf. from Mary. Joyce Godber taught history and German at Cheltenham Ladies' College c.1929–30 (*Jnl. of Soc. of Archivists*, **xxi** (2), 221)—in Mary's last couple of years at school; and they overlapped at the Institute of Historical Research in 1938–9 (see below).
- 7 Much of this paragraph, and some details given elsewhere, are from Alison Healey's obituary in *Salopian Recorder*, no. 67 (Summer 2010), 9.
- 8 Shrewsbury Borough Library had collected deeds and MSS., which were calendared by the Revd. W. G. D. Fletcher and the Revd. R. C. Purton, but before the war some large deposits (e.g. from Pitchford Hall) had gone to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- 9 *A Guide to the Shropshire Records*, 1952, 74 sqq.
- 10 Her successor: see *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXXXIII**, 119–20.
- 11 Deposit no. 1168.
12. A volunteer worker sorting through a box of deeds c.1972 was horrified when a large seal dropped to the floor and smashed. Close examination revealed the fragments of an old oatcake.
- 13 E.g. the list of the Pennington letters (Part II of the Eyton of Eyton upon the Weald Moors deposit and now Shropshire Archives 665/5934–6042) is a volume of virtual transcripts, annotated. Very little more work and an introduction would have made the letters publishable.
- 14 *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LXVII**, 119–216.
- 15 *The King's Messengers 1199–1377*, 1961.
- 16 *Trans. Shrops. Archaeol. Soc.*, **LIV**, 255–326; **LVI**, 104–24; **LVII**, 17–19.17.
- 17 *Ibid.*, **LXII**, 2.
- 18 Except B. K. Roberts, 'A Study of Medieval Colonization in the Forest of Arden, Warws.', *Agricultural History Review*, **XVI** (2) (1968), 101–13.
- 19 *The History of Shropshire's Many Shirehalls*, 1963, coinciding with the county council's approval of the construction of a new Shirehall; *New St. Chad's and its Architect* (c.1966), with P. F. Norton; *Abstract of the Quarter Sessions Rolls 1820–1830* (1974) marking the end of quarter sessions in 1971 and coinciding with her retirement.
- 20 Joan retired from teaching at Bridgnorth, having previously taught at Bishop's Castle.
- 21 These words are quoted from Jane Sale's obituary of Mary (on which much of this paragraph is based) in Charlton Kings Local Hist. Soc. *Bulletin*, no. 56 (2010), 4–5.
- 22 *The King's Messengers 1199–1377: A List of all Known Messengers, Mounted and Unmounted, who Served John, Henry III, and the First Three Edwards*, 1994.

EXCHANGE PERIODICALS

The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society exchanges publications with many other learned societies, and these publications are available for consultation in Shropshire Archives.

In the list below the titles of some journals are abbreviated, and some entries ignore changes of title over time. Reference to 'date' indicates that periodicals are still being received.

Publications marked * are to be found on open shelves in the reading room. All other publications are kept in the closed stacks and must be ordered at the desk.

- Anglesey Transactions* (1946–2003)
- Society of Antiquaries Journal* (1859–date, with a few gaps)
- Archaeologia Aeliana* (1857–date)
- Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1846–date, lacking some early issues and vols. 145 and 154) *
- Archaeologia Cantiana* (1883–date, lacking 1945, 1968, 1969)
- Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions* (1916–date, lacking vols. 54 and 67)
- Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions* (1880–date)
- Archaeological Journal* (1846–date, with considerable gaps)
- Caernarvonshire Transactions* (1941–date, lacking vols. 36, 46, 47, 52/3, 58, 59, and 69)
- Cambridge Antiquarian Society Proceedings* (1894–date, lacking vols. 40, 88)
- Carmarthenshire Transactions* (1913–1993, with many gaps)
- Chester Archaeological and Historical Society Journal* (1887–date, complete from vol. 33, except for vol. 50)
- Cumberland and Westmorland Transactions* (1883–date)
- Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal* (1879–date, lacking vols. 49, 57, 99, 100, 102)
- Durham and Northumberland Transactions* (1863–date, gap between 1912 and 1933)
- East Riding Transactions* (1893–1939, with a few gaps)
- Essex Transactions* (1898–date, very incomplete)
- Flintshire Historical Society Publications* (1952–date)
- Glasgow Archaeological Society Journal* (1891–1999, incomplete, but complete from 1969)
- Lancashire and Cheshire Transactions* (1879–date, with early gaps; complete from 1928)
- Leicestershire Transactions* (1866–date, early gaps; complete from c.1950)
- London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions* (1891–date, vols. for 1891 and 1910; complete from 1951)
- Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* (1974–1994)
- Merioneth Historical and Record Society Journal* (1949–1975, vols. for 1949, 1954–63, 1975)
- Montgomeryshire Collections* (1898–date, lacking vol. 29) *
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne Antiquaries' Proceedings* (1926–1956, with a few gaps)
- Northamptonshire Notes and Queries* (1892 and 1894)
- Northamptonshire Past and Present* (1948–1975, lacking 1950, 1963, 1973)
- North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies* (1961–1982)
- North Staffordshire Field Club Transactions* (1899–2002, lacking 1931/2, 1934/5, 1939/40, 1945/6, 1951/2, 1952/3. Club closed in 2002)
- Oxoniensia* (1950–date)
- Radnorshire Transactions* (1932–date, with several gaps)
- Railways and Canal Historical Society Journal* (1963–date)
- Royal Irish Academy Proceedings* (1891–date)
- Antiquaries of Ireland Journal* (1924–date)

- Antiquaries of Scotland Journal* (1875–date)
Somerset Transactions (1875–date, lacking 1948/9)
Surrey Collections (1864–date, lacking vols. 5 and 35)
Sussex Collections (1877–date, lacking vols. 34, 70, 74, 83, 84, 101, 102, 115)
Leeds Thorseby Society Miscellany (1891–date, with early gaps, and lacking nos. 104, 112, 129)
Ulster Journal of Archaeology (1958–date)
William Salt Archaeological Society [Staffordshire] (1880–date) *
Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine (1975–date)
Woolhope Club Transactions (1852–date) *
Worcestershire Transactions (1923–date)
Yorkshire Archaeological Journal (1895–date)

THE SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society was founded in 1877 (as the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society), and from that time it became, and has remained, the foremost continuous promoter of research into the archaeology and history of the county. The Society's regularly published *Transactions* have become the journal of record for the county's history and archaeology.

In its early years, and for long, the Society organized an annual excursion for its members. In recent times, however, that side of its activity has increased, and there is now a regular programme of summer excursions and a winter programme of lectures, for which speakers well qualified in their specialisms are engaged. Early in December there is also an annual social meeting, and from time to time day schools are organized – sometimes on topics such as industrial archaeology (so important in Shropshire) and sometimes on a subject of current interest such as that provided in 2009 by the Anglo-Saxon treasure found in Staffordshire.

In 1923 the Shropshire Parish Register Society (founded in 1897) amalgamated with the Archaeological Society, and the work of publishing the county's parish registers was continued. After a lapse that work has been resumed, and the most recent achievement has been the publication of the Bishop's Castle register. Work continues on other parishes, and the Society's as yet unpublished transcripts are available for use.

In addition to its *Transactions* and the parish-register programme, the Society has published occasional monographs and other works: notable in recent years have been the cartularies (registers of property deeds) of Haughmond Abbey (1985; jointly with the University of Wales Press) and Lilleshall Abbey (1997); Dr. Baker's *Shrewsbury Abbey: Studies in the Archaeology and History of an Urban Abbey* (2002); D. and R. Cromarty's *The Wealth of Shrewsbury* (1993; a detailed study of early 14th-century Shrewsbury people from taxation records— which survive so abundantly in the Shrewsbury borough archive and so rarely elsewhere); H. D. G. Foxall's *Shropshire Field-Names* (1980); and the historic county maps published by Robert Baugh in 1808 (1983) and by Christopher Greenwood in 1827 (2008). These maps, whose detail was unrivalled until the Ordnance Survey began work in Shropshire, give a vivid bird's-eye view of the county before the great changes of the Victorian period. Greenwood's map is available as paper sheets and on a CD. Further details of the Society's publications for sale (most of them at a 10 per cent discount to members) appear elsewhere in this volume.

In addition to the *Transactions* members receive a twice yearly *News Letter*, which keeps them in touch with all the Society's activities and work and with its programmes of excursions and lectures.

For further information about the Society, and how to join it, see:

www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk

RULES

1. The Society shall be called 'The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society (with which is incorporated The Shropshire Parish Register Society)'
2. The Society's objects shall be the advancement of the education of the public in archaeological and historical investigation in Shropshire and the preservation of the county's antiquities. In furtherance of those objects, but not otherwise, the Society shall have the power (i) to publish the results of historical research and archaeological excavation and editions of documentary material of local importance including parish registers, and (ii) to record archaeological discoveries.
3. Management of the Society shall be vested in the Council, which shall consist of the President, Vice-Presidents, Officers, and not more than twenty elected members. The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected at an annual general meeting; they shall be elected for five years and shall be eligible for re-election. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected at each annual general meeting; the other officers shall be elected by the Council and shall consist of a Membership Secretary, Editor, Editor of the *Newsletter*, Meetings and Field Meetings Secretary, Librarian, Publications Secretary, and any other officers deemed necessary by the Council. Officers shall act in an honorary capacity. Not more than twenty members of the Council shall be elected by the annual general meeting. Members of the retiring Council shall be eligible for re-election and their names may be proposed without previous notice; in the case of other candidates a proposal signed by four members of the Society must be sent to the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the annual general meeting. The Council may co-opt not more than five additional members for the year.
4. At Council meetings five members shall be a quorum.
5. The Council, through the Treasurer, shall present the audited accounts for the last complete year to the annual general meeting.
6. The Council shall determine what number of each publication shall be printed, including any complimentary offprints for contributors.
7. Candidates for membership of the Society may apply directly to the Membership Secretary who, on payment of the subscription, shall be empowered to accept membership on behalf of the Society.
8. Each member's subscription shall become due on election or on 1st January and be paid to the Membership Secretary, and shall be the annual sum of £14 for individual members, £15 for family and institutional members, and £18 for overseas members, or such sums as the Society shall from time to time decide. If a member's subscription shall be two years in arrears and then not paid after due reminder, that membership shall cease.
9. The Council shall have the power to elect honorary members of the Society.
10. Every member not in arrears of his or her annual subscription shall be entitled to one copy of the latest available *Transactions* to be published, and copies of other publications of the Society on such conditions as may be determined by the Council.
11. Applicants for membership under the age of 21 may apply for associate membership, for which the annual subscription shall be £1. Associate members shall enjoy all the rights of full members, except entitlement to free issues of the *Transactions* and occasional publications of the Society. Associate membership shall terminate at the end of the year in which the member becomes 21.
12. No alterations shall be made to the Society's rules except by the annual general meeting or by an extraordinary general meeting called for that purpose by the Council. Any proposed alteration must be submitted to the Secretary in time to enable the Secretary to give members at least twenty-one days notice of the extraordinary general meeting. No amendment shall be made to the rules which would cause the Society to cease to be a charity at law.
13. The Society may be dissolved by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of those present with voting rights at either an annual general meeting or an extraordinary general meeting called for that purpose, of which twenty-one day's prior notice had been given in writing. Such a resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by the Society after all debts and liabilities have been paid, the balance to be transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to those of the Society.