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No.31.

SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

Edited by Barrie Trinder for the Shrewsbury Museum,  
Castle Gates, Shrewsbury.

EXCAVATIONS AT ABDON DESERTED VILLAGE SA184

Preliminary Report, October, 1966.

Work at the deserted village of Abdon began in April and continued throughout the summer. Excavations were concentrated within the field known as "Childs Yard", which lies immediately to the south of St. Margaret's Church.

Documentary evidence indicates that Abdon was deserted during the 14th century and again in the 18th century. The long term aim of excavation here is to locate and limit the areas of occupation.

Stage 1. An area to the south of the church was first examined. A 40ft. x 4ft section running east-west across a suspected building to the edge of a deeply indented sunken way was first opened up. This revealed no substantial structures, but a pebble ledge 3ft. wide, forming the lip of the hollow road was uncovered, this probably represented a garden or enclosure boundary.

A magnometer survey, kindly undertaken by Mr.E.Jenks and Mr.T.Ewart, gave high magnetic readings near to the churchyard wall and in the hope of locating a hearth, a larger area was opened up.

A spread of rubble sandstone, together with recognizable stone walls were uncovered. Eventually an area 40ft. x 50ft. was cleared and the ground plan of a two-roomed building could clearly be seen on the ground. This lay adjacent to the churchyard wall, to the south of which was a considerable area of rubble. There were subsidiary structures running southwards from the main building, including the base of one substantial stone wall, 14ft. x 3 ft. and running parallel to this was evidence of a wattle fence. The rubble consisted mainly of worked sandstone from robbed walls and soft slate like sandstone which had formed the rubble core of the walls. The rubble area was twice as large as that of the building and suggests that there was at least one period of robbing.

There was a gap of about 6ins. between the walls and rubble, also some rubble lay on a thin matting of what appeared to be a previous turf level. This indicates that there was a period between the desertion of the building and when it deteriorated or was robbed.

To the extreme west of the site there was a destruction layer made up of burnt clay and charcoal, it was 10ft. x 12ft. and 2 to 3 inches deep, lying on the bedrock and piled up against the wattle fence. It contained a good deal of medieval pottery and iron work.

Excavation near to the churchyard bank revealed a shallow trench dug into the natural red clay. In the construction of this ditch the northern wall of the building had been removed and as it contained mortar and 19th century pottery it was thought to date from the rebuilding of the church in the early 19th century (Cranage, Churches of Shropshire, Part 2 p.61) This probably means that the present circular churchyard is a 19th century creation, and does not represent an earlier fortified site as was originally thought.

Stage 2. The rubble covering was removed thus isolating the walls of the building. These were mainly one layer of large stones resting on the bedrock or in some places natural clay. The walls were slightly curved. The building consisted of two sections, the smallest of which was the eastern one, 14ft. 4ins. x 13ft. 3ins (internal), this was probably a sleeping quarter or solar. The floor of this was made up of bedrock with some clay packing. A pit about 3ft. deep and 4ft. x 3ft. had been dug in the S.W. corner of this room; this was probably for storage. Outside the eastern and southern walls of this room a drainage trench 1ft. 6ins. wide and 1ft. deep had been dug into the natural bedrock.

The main section, 30ft. x 12ft (internal) was made up of two rooms, a) the eastern part which was associated with a hearth. This was an area of scorched bedrock 3ft. x 2ft. with charcoal and burnt clay, but there was no sign of a clay dome, as found at Bragginton (P.A.Barker, Medieval Archaeology, 1965). The southern wall was 4ft. wide which was much larger than any other wall in the building and contained evidence of timber slots. The northern wall had been completely robbed. There was

a doorway in the eastern wall joining the solar. The floor of this section was made up of trodden clay with some pottery and three different layers of occupation were clearly distinguishable. These were based on bedrock, which was probably the original floor level. b) The second section of this room was made up of rougher, closer knit walls, and contained the main entrance to the building, some 5ft wide. This area was probably an animal or storage quarter possibly added to the building at a later date. The floor was made up of heavy red clay into which a timber slot 9ft. x 1ft. 6ins. had been sunk. This would have contained a timber partition, dividing the hearth section from the animal end.

The exterior rubble was up to 3 ft. in depth, and alternating layers of rubble and soil indicated several periods of robbing. Immediately to the south of the building the bedrock showed signs of intense burning associated with layers of burnt clay and charcoal. As this burning stopped at the wall it was therefore contemporary with the building and may well represent the burning of outhouses during the last period of occupation of the site. Further work on this area is necessary.

A subsidiary room running off the solar but with no interior connection, lay to the south of the main building, it was 14ft. x 6ft. with the remains of one substantial wall and face stones of two other walls. It obviously represented a later addition to the main building.

Pottery. A large volume of medieval pottery was recovered from the site. Much of it lay on and stratified in the rubble outside the main building. Most of the sherds were 12th and 13th century cooking pot with almost 40 different varieties of cooking pot rims. Many of these had not previously been uncovered in Shropshire. Some complete rims and the base of a tripod pitcher have been reconstructed. A variety of jug handles were uncovered, many of which were similar to finds at Brockhurst and Hen Domen. Some, however, were new to the county and represented a type previously found at Weoley Abbey (Warwickshire). Green and orange glazed sherds, some with simple patterns, were found throughout the site.

Although the medieval pottery uncovered does not vary significantly from previous finds, the range of Shropshire medieval pottery has been greatly extended. It is also certain that a pottery kiln was operating near to Abdon as much of the coarse pottery was identical to local clay. Ironwork found included a large volume of nails and staples as well as domestic knife blades and horseshoes.

Conclusions. The main feature of the site was the stone base of a timber-framed building. It was a house of some substance with three interior rooms and a number of subsidiary structures attached to it. Its site next to the church suggests that it may have been a manor house. As the bulk of the pottery was 13th century it can be assumed that the area lying next to the church was deserted prior to 1350, and that there was no later reoccupation of the site. This coincides with documentary evidence which suggests an early 14th century desertion. Further investigation of the outhouses is necessary and next year it is hoped to examine some of the earthworks at the bottom of the field, firstly to prove desertion and to delimit the extent of the medieval settlement.

I should like to thank Mr. Price, the farmer, for his continued kindness, the members of the Shrewsbury Archaeological Research group, who have willingly turned out in all weathers, and everyone else who has helped to make this a very successful dig.

#### WEeping CROSS PREHISTORIC SITES.

Site A. Almost the entire area with the main Iron Age enclosure detailed in the last newsletter has now been excavated. The work has largely been carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and the direction of Mr. P. A. Barker, F.S.A. (last season) and Dr. R. Livens of the University College of Wales, Bangor, with the assistance of staff and prisoners from Drake Hall, Eccleshall (this season). Amongst the more important discoveries made this year were:

##### A. Iron Age.

i. A second entrance causeway at the North East corner of the main enclosure. This was most surprising in view of its position relative to the main entrance (only 28 yards away along the eastern leg). It was approached from the inside

via a narrow gap in the rampart which was timber revetted at this point. A massive timber slot had lain obliquely across the causeway which was only approximately 2ft. 6ins. wide. Fortunately, in leaving the causeway at this position the Iron Age enclosure builders preserved a short length of the original gully that must have run along the North leg of the enclosure ditch. (As noted in the past newsletter).

This, taken with the evidence listed in (ii) below suggests that the "homestead" was situated one side of a field system bounded by gulleys, and was later made defensible when the main enclosure was dug with at least one side aligned on the field boundary.

ii. An alignment on linear vee-shaped gulleys.

a. One led to near the NW corner of the main enclosure but did not cross the main ditch. It runs in a slight curve for approximately 35 yards before it terminates. However, a further leg continues along the same slight arc after over-lapping the first leg for 24 feet, thus forming a "gate" (very narrow). This second leg then makes directly for the charcoal filled pit (site C) noted last year, and was traced to within 10 yards of it. Along its length it contained another fill of burnt debris and a stone bead of uncertain date.

b. The second gully (mentioned in (i) above) runs eastward from the N.E. corner of the main enclosure and was traced for approximately 65 yards. So far the point at which it "broke out of" the main ditch is undiscovered and indeed it is uncertain that it was not continuous with a.

Luckily one of the trenches cut across this gully yielded a 2 ft. diameter pit containing a rim of Iron Age "A" sitular vessel. The pit was cut partly into the silt of the gully and clearly post dates it.

This gives the probable date of the phase I enclosure as Iron "A" and confirms the "A" dating given for the "wave rimmed" coarse ware gulleys from the primary silt at the entrance. It can be concluded that the linear gulleys were "open" with a slight bank to one side and probably marked field boundaries.

iii. The plan of another sub-circular building.

Approximately 24ft. in diameter and underlying House I. A complex arrangement of shallow gulleys and post holes within have been mapped and early conclusions indicate that the building may have served some purpose ancillary to domestic habitations. A find sherd of black cooking ware having a very elementary bead rim was taken from one gully (Iron Age).

iv. The Phase I gateposts of the main entrance.

These were removed and their pits backfilled with surface debris containing many pot boilers, pottery and charcoal. The pits are oval shaped and only 2ft. 5ins. - 2ft. 6ins. deep. The packing stones for these are by far the largest found on the site but are all fragments of much larger stones. If they are to be dated Iron Age "A" can they have been removed from the entrance portal of the Late Bronze Age cremation area (Site B)? The gateway is extremely strong, having an aperture only 5ft. 6in. wide. Between the gateposts (and to the inside) is a deep, flat-bottomed hole slightly tapering up to 1ft. 10ins. diameter at the top. It was clearly not a post-hole or a post pit (back filled) and may be the footing for a massive vertical wooden "bolt" to secure the gate shut.

v. An open sided structure underlying House I.

Confirmation of the plan of this strange building was provided but evidence of its being used in connection with domestic life is absent. There are gulleys approximately 45ft. apart joined mid-way by a continuous curved gully. This separates the structure into two halves, one being open on the N side and parallel with the main N ditch and the other bounded on its fourth side by a "back filled" gully having an entrance 10ft. wide.

B. Middle Bronze Age.

i. Five un-urned cremations under Barrow 2.

Three of these were clustered near to another area of burnt clay at the edge of the barrow circle (diameter 98ft.). The relationship of these to the urned cremation (enlarged food vessel) could not be established though it is hoped that an analysis of the calcined bone may explain this.

ii. Two boat-shaped features under Barrow No. 1

It is still uncertain whether these contained inhumations. Extremely meticulous trowelling failed to establish their identity and no silhouettes were discernable. The larger contains a post (mast?) at one end within the boat and also has a small shelf at this end. This almost clinches their relationship with the 'boat' shaped features found under the barrow on Site B.

Site C.

A fourth barrow bounded by a U-shaped gully, approximately 84ft. diameter, was regrettably dug by a mechanical digger (and the remains of the urn removed to a garden on Lyth Hill). One sherd was recovered together with a rough plan of a large area within the barrow. No sign of a mound was present but the features found could be associated with those determined by a proton magnetometer survey during the winter and are thus calculable.

The position of the sherd suggests that the urn was placed in a small oval shaped area bounded by a narrow gully 12ft. long by 4ft. 6ins. wide. A small "grave" was also sectioned revealing no finds. The ditch in this case was discontinuous having a narrow gap approximately 4 ft. wide to E.N.E.

W.E. Jenks.

#### Further excavations at Sutton Road, September, 1966.

Following the important prehistoric finds by Messrs. W.E.Jenks, P.A. Barker and R.Livens at Weeping Cross, a short excavation in search of sub-Roman and Medieval occupation was undertaken this summer near Sutton Chapel (SO 504105). Road widening revealed an extensive area of burning which was thought to have been part of a pottery kiln. Associated with this were a number of medieval cooking pot sherds. Documentary sources indicate that Sutton (South 'ton') is a deserted medieval settlement, and it is therefore, possible that excavation may prove continuity of occupation over a considerable period of time.

A section 'A' was first dug near to the area of burning (destroyed soon after discovery) in order to find further evidence of kilns or hearths. Further sections ('B' - 'E') were later opened up near to the chapel to demonstrate the presence of medieval timber buildings.

#### Results.

No features of any significance were uncovered. A shallow ditch about 2ft. deep was found in Section 'A'. This had post holes on both lips, but no associated pottery was found. In sections 'B', 'C', 'D' and 'E' no similar features were uncovered although a number of unstratified medieval sherds were found. Most of the pottery consisted of 13th century cooking pot sherds, green glazed with thumb-pressed bases, similar to that found at Hen Domen and Abdon.

#### Conclusions.

As the excavation was limited in scope and time, no firm conclusions can be drawn. The shallow trench may well be part of a much wider complex of prehistoric structures being investigated by Mr.W.E.Jenks. The failure to uncover medieval buildings near to the chapel certainly does not disprove their existence. A more profitable area of investigation would be to the west of the chapel where house platforms are clearly visible. This area is fortunately not in danger of immediate destruction.

Thanks are due to Messrs.R.F.Rowley and W.E.Jenks, to the girls of the Priory School and of Newport High School and to the boys of the Priory School.

#### Archaeological Excavations at Bromfield, Salop.

The archaeological importance of the Bromfield area has long been recognized. To the finds from early excavations of Bronze Age barrows have been added in the past decade a wealth of sites discovered from the air by Mr.W.A.Baker and Dr.J.K.St.Joseph. The fields in which arable farming has allowed ancient sites to reveal themselves as crop marks are mostly between the railway and the A.49, on the continuation of the gravel terrace on which the Race Course stands. Systematic excavation of these sites has hitherto been restricted to the ditch of a Roman marching camp, excavated by Dr.Graham Webster.

When the new quarry was opened in 1965 the Bromfield Sand and Gravel Company made arrangements with the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works to allow the excavation of archaeological features in advance of quarrying. In the latest strip to be bared of topsoil a number of dark patches were seen and brought to the attention of the University Resident Tutor. They mark the beginning of a Bronze Age cemetery of which some 30 cremation pits have already been excavated. In addition there are post-holes and drainage gullies indicative of prehistoric buildings.

Excavation is being directed on behalf of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works by Mr.S.C.Stanford, B.A., F.S.A., University of Birmingham Department of Extra-Mural Studies, (Ashfield Cottage, Luston, Leominster, Herefordshire, Tel: Yarpole 363). It is made possible by a grant from the Ministry and assistance from the Bromfield Sand and Gravel Company.

#### Sidbury: Deserted Village Site.

A survey of the deserted village site and moated farmstead at Sidbury (SO 686858) was carried out on October 5th by students of the Bordesley College of Education under the direction of R.T.Rowley. A clearly defined pattern

of sunken roads and possible house platforms was revealed.

#### The Lilleshall Company Sutton Wharf Tramway

Excavations for the Dawley Development Corporation industrial site at Halesfield (SO 712048) will involve the destruction of the earthworks of the 18th century tramway built by the Lilleshall Company to convey its products to the Severn at Sutton Wharf. This was one of the most substantially built of Shropshire tramways and considerable remains of embankments still survive, although the line was closed in 1813. The first stages of excavation on the site revealed the existence of the track bed, and on November 10th, by invitation of the Development Corporation, Mr. R.E. James and Mr. B.S. Trinder visited the site to make a photographic record of the remains. A track bed approximately 1ft. 8ins. wide was found, consisting chiefly of red sandstone blocks with occasional pieces of dense black slag-like material. There was a considerable sprinkling of small pieces of coal among the stones. Drainage ditches dug into the natural clay were revealed on either side of the track bed. To the south of the B 4380 the remains of a bridge which probably carried the tramway across the old line of the Mad Brook (diverted in the 19th century) were observed, but these could no longer be photographed.

Photographs of the track bed have been deposited in Shrewsbury Borough Museum. The earthworks have already been recorded by Mr. James and Mr. J.H. Denton.

Barrie Trinder.

#### Rock Collieries, Ketley.

During the past 18 months, the Shropshire Mining Club have been salvaging the remains of the equipment at the Rock Colliery, Ketley. The colliery was opened in 1882 and worked almost continuously until December 24th, 1964. Among the 110 items recovered were the centre post of a horse gin, a 1936 "Biskol" Coal Cutter, early flanged rails and points, two wooden and one cast iron hand winches, plans, old books, shot firers and deputies' tools. The larger items have been deposited at the Shrewsbury Museum, the smaller at the County Library Local History Collection at the Coalbrookdale Institute. The books and plans have gone to the County Archives. It is hoped that a history of the mine and a description of the salvage operations will appear in the Shropshire Magazine in the near future.

At the present time, the Club are completing surveys of the Llanymynach Gof and the celebrated Tar Tunnel at Coalport.

Ivor J. Brown.

#### Church History in East Shropshire.

Since September, 1965, a study group, under the auspices of the Shropshire Education Committee, has been meeting at Dawley and Oakengates to investigate the extremely complex history of the churches in the industrial belt of east Shropshire, stretching from Lilleshall southwards to Broseley. The 1851 ecclesiastical census has been closely studied and its findings recorded on maps. An exhaustive examination has been made of the records of the Madeley Wood (at other times Broseley or Dawley) Wesleyan circuit and some work done on the Ketley Bank and Shifnal circuit archives. A large amount of Primitive Methodist material has recently come to light together with important records of the Dawley Baptist Church. Work is also in progress on the revival of the Church of England in the area in the first half of the 19th century and on the shadowy history of the Methodist New Connexion. Meetings are held at Oakengates Library alternate Fridays at 7.45 p.m. New members will be welcome. Anyone with documents which might be useful to the class is invited to contact Barrie Trinder, 52 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

Mr. W.H. Williams of 21, Priestland Terrace, Furnace Lane, Trench, is compiling a survey of the brick and tile industries of east Shropshire. Over fifty sites have already been located. Mr. Williams will be glad to hear from anyone with information on the subject.

#### Roman Capital found near Wroxeter.

This column-capital, 2ft. 10ins. wide on its upper surface and 2ft. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, worked in local sandstone, was found, used as hard core, in a rough road

running east from the Roman town of Wiroconium. It appears to have been taken from the Roman town to the spot on which it came to light in the 16th or 17th Century. The distinctive feature of the capital is the series of vertical, stylised corn ears that appear on all sides between the acanthus leaves of the upper tier of leaves. So far, no parallel for this feature has been traced in publications on Roman-Corinthian Capitals. The corn ears would seem to be emblems of well-being and fertility and the fact that they are carved all round the capital suggests that the column that it crowned was a free-standing votive one. There is, however, in the upper surface of the capital, no dowel-hole for fixing a statue or sculpture group such as generally surmounted Roman votive columns. Capitals of votive columns are known in Roman Britain at Cirencester and Catterick.

Report by Professor Jocelyn Toynbee,  
University of Cambridge.

#### Recent publications.

The canals of the West Midlands. Charles Hadfield. David & Charles. 1966. 50s.

The mineral wealth of Coalbrookdale. Iver J. Brown. In Bulletin of the Peak Dist. Mines Historical Society, Vol. 2. pt. 5. May 1965, and Vol. 2. Pt. 6., December, 1965. These papers have been published separately but are now out of print.

Recent excavations at Charlotte Furnace, Norman Mutton. IN Bulletin of the History Metallurgy Group No. 7.

The use of Peat in Finery Forges. (Refers to Huxton Lodge). Norman Mutton. In Iron and Steel. Vol. 39. No. 10. September, 1966.

The Mottes in the Vale of Montgomery. (Refers to many Shropshire sites). D.J. Cathcart King and C.J. Spurgeon. IN Archaeologia Cambrensis. 1965.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions for future issues should be sent to the Editor, Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury. (Tel: 52310).

Information about finds and discoveries and enquiries about circulation of the Newsletter should go to the Shrewsbury Borough Museum.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

No.32. April 1967.

Published by the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Edited by Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury. (Tel. Shrewsbury 52310).

## The Future of the Newsletter.

The publication and distribution of the Newsletter, which have previously been the responsibility of Shrewsbury Borough Library, have been taken over by the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Readers will already have noticed the new format, and it is hoped that the size and scope of the Newsletter will be substantially increased in the near future.

The Newsletter will still be distributed free of charge to members of the Archaeological Society, but in future non-members who wish to receive it will be asked to contribute 5/- towards production costs and postage, which will cover issues until the end of 1968. Requests for the Newsletter, together with remittances, should be sent to the Editor, at 52, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

An Early Glass Manufactory at Ruyton-XI-Towns.

Bulldozing for a school playing field in Ruyton Park (SJ 396229) in January led to the discovery of glass wasters and parts of crucibles, which were taken to Shrewsbury Museum by Mr. J.M.Roe of Packwood Haugh.

The site is in one of the water meadows bordering the River Perry, and the field has either an old river course or a mill leete running through it. Bulldozing revealed some twelve inches of topsoil, going on to pure sand of unknown depth. Excavations by Mr. and Mrs. Roe, aided by boys from Shrewsbury Schools and others, produced numerous glass wasters and many sherds of glazed pottery. The wasters included bases of stems (probably drinking glasses) which have some affinity with those illustrated by Mr. Pape in his report of excavations on the glass furnace at Bishop's Wood, Staffs. (The Connoisseur. 1933.) Samples of the finds are being examined and analysed by Messrs. Pilkington. Apart from some slight disturbance in the sand, a circular patch at 4 ft. depth which contained charcoal, no signs of any structures were seen.

The Survey of the Lordship of Ryton, made for the Rt.Hon.Lord Craven late in the year 1771 (Shrewsbury Borough Library MSS 2481. Vol.3 p.14) shows the fields on this site (nos. 38 and 39) listed as Glasshouse Bank.

Between 1567 and 1575 French glassmakers were settling in the Sussex Weald and making glass using burnt bracken for their potash and the Weald timber for furnace firing. Shortage of timber forced them out of the Weald and they moved gradually northwards, till, by 1582, they were working in Bishop's Wood, in the Staffordshire parish of Eccleshall, but on the border of the Shropshire parish of Cheswardine.



The Cheswardine parish register shows a number of entries for glassmakers and their families between 1600 and 1613. The names in the register are Filmaye, Sqyer, (Sqyer: Squire), Conyer, De Hoe and Bigoe, names which in various forms occur in many of the places where the glassmakers settled.

In 1615 a patent was granted to Sir Robert Mansell, Treasurer of the Navy, which prohibited the use of timber as a fuel for making glass. The ban was followed by a migration of the glass workers to the Stourbridge district where there were ample supplies of coal and clay. It is likely therefore that the Ruyton glass manufactory was in operation sometime between the move away from the Weald, c 1582, and the prohibition of the use of timber in 1615.

Excavation on the playing field site has now ceased, but investigation of documentary sources is continuing, and various other sites in Ruyton Park are being examined.

Mr.R.E.James of Shrewsbury Museum kindly provided documentary evidence and historical background material for this summary.

#### Weeping Cross, Shrewsbury. (SJ 505108).

Excavation on the Ashley, Ashley and Newbrook development site has continued under the direction of Mr.W.E.Jenks. Work has been concentrated on the area next to Sutton Chapel, a medieval building. A series of sections has revealed medieval structures lying on the natural subsoil, associated with which has been a volume of medieval coarse and glazed wares, including the complete base of a large cooking pot. A ditch and other features, believed to be prehistoric, have been found in association with the medieval structures. Work on the site is continuing.

cf  
Hen Domen, Montgomery. (SO 214981)

Excavations in 1966 produced some more detail of the buildings on the inner slope of the rampart, and, for the first time, post-holes of the main palisade assignable to an early phase. Two sections were cut across the bailey ditch. In one of them three water-logged still beams with longitudinal grooves three inches wide, and with peg-holes approximately fifteen inches apart are almost certainly from a framed palisade with planks which were therefore fifteen inches wide and three inches thick. These timbers support the view that framing superseded post-hole construction in the latter phases. Other early structures in the bailey included a hearth and an oven, perhaps for bread, since there was no evidence of any industrial or other use, and a stake fence some forty feet long, with a pebble paved gateway. The primary silting of the outer ditch yielded, in addition to the preserved timbers, half a leather ankle boot, two great toe bones and a humerus, graphic reminders of the constant petty warfare which a castle such as this provoked.

F.A.Barker.

West Midlands Annual Archaeological News Sheet.

A limited number of copies of the current number of this publication (No.9, covering the year 1966) have been supplied gratis to the Shropshire Archaeological Society. In addition to the usual information of a general nature, the News Sheet contains summary reports of excavations in the West Midland counties, including the following Shropshire reports:- Bromfield and Weeping Cross (Bronze Age), Whitchurch and Wroxeter (Roman) and Abdon (deserted medieval village). Would anyone who would like a copy apply to 'r.A.T.Gaydon, 26, Hereford Road, Shrewsbury (tel.3160). Please enclose one shilling to cover postage if this form of delivery is required.

Charcoal Iron Furnaces and Forges.

Work on the South Shropshire charcoal iron industry up to c.1750 is being continued by members of the Historical Metallurgy Group, both in the field and on the documentary evidence. One project of particular interest is the investigation of pot sherds from the Apley Forges (Wren's Nest) in an attempt to substantiate the documentary evidence available for the use of Jesson and Wright's patented process for the manufacture of bar iron with coal fuel, 1773. There is such evidence available for the similar process of John and Charles Wood, 1763, and it is hoped to be able to show the detailed metallurgical differences between the two processes as a result of this present investigation. Samples of the pots are undergoing X-ray and other examination.

Norman Mutton.

Lilleshall Company Sutton Wharf Tramway.

Mr. J.H. Denton has pointed out that the date mentioned for the closure of this tramway in the last Newsletter (1813) is probably a little early, and has provided the following extracts from the minutes of the Shropshire Canal Company which illustrate the process of closure:

5. June 1812....are desirous of coming to an Agreement with Mr. Bishton (on behalf of himself and the Lilleshall Co.) in that matter and authorise Mr. Hy. Williams to offer him a sum for the above purpose ('for taking up and discontinuing the said railway') not exceeding £500, to be paid at the end of one year, after the said railway shall be taken up and discontinued.

18. April 1814. Williams authorised to agree with Lilleshall Co. on conveying "their coal, iron and other articles to the River Severn upon such terms as he shall judge expedient.."

28. April 1815. Agreement made with William Horton of Lilleshall Co. has been carried into effect. Pay Lilleshall Co. £500.

Through the kindness of Mr. J. Ball of the Lilleshall Company, some portions of the "dense, black, slag-like material mentioned in the last newsletter were analysed, and were found to contain Iron 50 o/o, Silica 30.20 o/o and Phosphorous 0.47 o/o. This reveals the substance to be "Flue Cinder" - in this particular case the lining of a puddling furnace, and this is especially interesting when it is remembered that it was in 1816, about two years after the tramway ceased operation, that Joseph Hall completely revolutionised the puddling process by utilising the slag, which then played a vital part in improving the wrought iron made. The process employed prior to this had not only resulted in an inferior product, but had also necessitated the frequent relining of the furnace. This produced vast quantities of slag for which few uses were known, but which was used to good effect as a hard core between the lines of plateway, giving a durable, though possibly over sharp grip for the horses. It is notable that the later lines of plateway - particularly those laid in the Blisits Hill area after 1832, were laid with bricks as infill, so that it can be assumed that by then Shropshire had followed Hall's example and utilised its superfluous puddling furnace slag to improve the quality of its wrought iron.

Dawley New Town Historical Survey.

Further investigations into tramways were made when a small party recently made a number of intersections along a possible line in the Newdale area between SJ 677096 and SJ 677092. Documentary evidence about this line is limited, and digging operations were equally inconclusive. Some evidence of core was found, but it was sufficiently dispersed to exclude any confirmation that the line was a tramway rather than a road. The nearby bridge over the stream at SJ 676095 is extremely puzzling. It has been carefully examined and everything suggests that it was built to carry a tramway rather than a road, for which it is too narrow and unnecessarily complex. But documentary research has failed to show any evidence of a tramway on this site, and has almost certainly precluded the possibility of a tramway here later than the early 1850's.

J.H.Denton.



The Recording Old Houses Group

This group, which is based on Shrewsbury, has now been in existence for two years. Its aim is to provide some form of permanent record of those smaller houses anywhere in Shropshire which are in danger of collapse, demolition or major alteration, such record normally taking the form of measured plans. Houses so far recorded in this way include Lower Newton Farm (near Stoney Stretton), Brookgate Farm (Pleaaley), Merivale (Shrewsbury), Sibberscott Manor, the Old Rectory and Olde Farm Cottages (Stapleton), Upton Cressett Hall, and Lower Farm Westley (near Minsterley). Some more summary recording has also been carried out in the Dawley area.

New members are urgently needed if the group is to cope in an effective way with old houses in danger throughout the county. No qualifications other than interest are expected, and instruction in domestic architecture is provided by the group's tutor, Mr. J.W. Tonkin. Meetings are held at approximately fortnightly intervals throughout the year. Most summer meetings are devoted to recording and the winter meetings to instruction and drawing up measured plans. Dates of meetings in the period April - July 1967 are set out below. Would anyone wish to join the group either contact Mr. A.T. Gaydon, 26 Perseford Road, Shrewsbury (tel. 3160), or simply turn up at one of the meetings.

Field Meetings, assembling at Car Park, St. Julian Friars, Shrewsbury, on Sunday June 11 at 11 a.m., Tuesday June 20 at 7.30 p.m. and Sunday July 2 at 11 a.m.

Offa Antiquarian Society.

Copper/Bronze Age Burial Mound, Yoggwennant, Denb.  
(SJ 189305)

Excavation continued in 1966 but no find was made. Little now remains to be done to complete the excavation of the mound. Previous report in Newsletter No.30.

W. Day.

Tar Tunnel, Coalport. (SJ 695026)

During 1965-66 the Shropshire Mining Club carried out a survey of the Tar Tunnel, Coalport. The tunnel was found to be in reasonable condition, and contemporary reports compared favourably with what was actually found. Tar still flows from the surrounding strata and tar-sumps have at some time been made at intervals at the tunnel side to collect it. These sumps contain up to two feet thickness of gluey, liquid tar. The tunnel is now accessible, with some difficulty, for 2240 ft., and appears to continue a further 725 ft. to the upper Blist's Hill shafts (red clay pit) - a total which is just less than 1,000 yards, as compared with Randall's "one mile".

At 1,483 ft. from the entrance there is a connecting tunnel, probably to the lower Blist's Hill pits (coal pits). The tunnel is not "brick lined throughout", but is so lined for much of the distance, and there is one short length, under the road at Coalport, with a double brick lining. A full report will be published in due course.

Ivor J. Brown.

Market Drayton Local History Research Group.

This group was started in October 1966 to give an introduction to the reading and handling of original materials, and to work on the aggregation of the parish registers of Drayton-in-Hales. The latter task has now been completed for the period 1558-1757, and opportunities have been given for research into tithe records, enclosures, surveys, terriers, court rolls and wills and inventories.

The most promising development of the group's work has been the study of the history of Hinstock from a number of surveys and terriers ranging over the period 1561-1840. Much interest has centred on field names and enclosures at various periods, - birches or briches, yelds or yelves, pikes or plecks, etc. - and there are clear possibilities in other names like Normanstones.

Research into the history of Market Drayton itself has yielded some interesting incidental results - names of (possibly) the first two schoolmasters, Randolph Lacke and John Keye, (1561 and 1571); instances of socage tenure recorded in the court roll of 1567; the possibility that Joseph Bourne, an octogenarian, and usher for over 50 years, was one of the two schoolmasters when Robert Clive was a pupil at the Grammar School (he was still at his post in 1733 and died in February 1738); five instances of plague deaths in 1650, fifteen of smallpox in 1681, four of smallpox and two of fever in 1699; and confirmation of the existence of a "paper mill" (probably the one at Peatswood) in the early 18th century. The parish register figures have yet to be analysed and no family reconstructions or literacy survey have yet been attempted.

N. Rowley.



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

### Excavations at Hen Domen, Montgomery.

A training excavation on this site will take place from Monday July 31st to Saturday August 12th, 1967. Anyone wanting to take part should contact Mr.P.A.Barker, 4, St. George's Square, Worcester.

### Excavations at Abdon.

Further excavation of this deserted medieval village will take place from September 3rd to September 10th, 1967. It is hoped that a camp will be organised and that travelling expenses can be refunded. A large number of talents can be employed, as it is hoped that a thorough survey of the area will be made. Anyone wishing to take part should contact R.T.Rowley, 33 Upper Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury. Beginners welcome.

### Industrial Archaeology Summer School.

Preston Montford Field Centre, Shrewsbury,  
August 12th - 19th, 1967.  
Details from Miss C. Holme, Department of Extra-  
Mural Studies, P.O.Box 363, The University,  
Birmingham, 15.

### Recent Development in Historical Demography.

Weekend course at Attingham Park, Shrewsbury.  
June 23rd to June 25th 1967.  
Lecturers include Peter Laslett, Dr.A.A.Wrigley.  
Details from the Warden, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury .

PUBLICATIONS.

The British Iron & Steel Industry, a Technical History, by W.K.V.Gale. David & Charles. 35s.

The Forges of Hampton Loade, by Norman Mutton. Shropshire Magazine. August 1966.

History of the Rock Fireclay Mine, Ketley, by Ivor J.Brown. Shropshire Magazine, October 1966.

Supplementary notes on the Mineral Wealth of Coalbrookdale. Bulletin F.D.M.H.S. Vol.3, Pt.2. December 1966.

A History of Limestone Mining in Shropshire, by Ivor J.Brown. Shropshire Mining Club. December 1966.

A History of the Madeley Wood Colliery, by Ivor J.Brown. Shropshire Magazine, February & March 1967.

Digging in Dawley? A guide for amateur industrial archaeologists. Obtainable free from the County Archivist, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, or from branches of the County Library.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

No. 34 - June, 1968.

Published by The Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Edited by Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52 Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury (Tel. Shrewsbury 52310).

## New Light on Thomas Farnolls Pritchard

In the past two years, a great deal of new information about Shrewsbury architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard (1723-1777) has come to light. The vital first step came when John Harris, Librarian of the R.I.B.A. discovered that a mid-eighteenth century architect's drawing book in the American Institute of Architects, Washington, could be attributed to Pritchard. This enabled a considerable number of houses in the Welsh Border area to be linked with his name, although much remains to be done before we know how much he did, and still more how much survives in each case. The most important surviving house so far identified is Hatton Grange, Shifnal. (Country Life, 29th February, 1968). Together with the drawing book, it provides the key to a 'Pritchard style', making it possible by analogy of architectural detail to draw up a list of possible Pritchard houses as an aid to further investigation of this interesting man.

In Shrewsbury itself several interesting cases have been spotted: The Lion Hotel, Wyle Cop; Monklands, Abbey Foregate; No. 6 Quarry Place; and Swan Hill Court House have all external detail which suggests Pritchard's hand. The last is outstanding, both in the quality and quantity of fine ornament in the

manner of Pritchard (inside as well as out), and also because the case is strengthened by its having been built c. 1760 as a town house by Lord Bath, who, as the drawing book shows, employed Pritchard elsewhere.

Around Shrewsbury other examples are beginning to show up; the Mansion House at Ford the most striking so far. Here the window on the E. front over the door duplicates that over the door of the Lion Hotel, and in the moulding of the corners both these windows are very close to others at Hatton Grange and Swan Hill Court House. It might be argued that this is the result of all being the work of the same stone mason. The same shape of design in the 1770 Corbet monument in Moreton Corbet Church, signed by Pritchard, and plainly designed by him in detail, in person (he started life as a mason and statuary) would seem to dispose of this possibility. And indeed the same distinctive moulding of window corners is clearly visible in engravings of the now demolished Broom Hall, built by Pritchard to serve as the Shrewsbury Infirmary after 1747.

All these, however, rest on an analogy of architectural detail, a perilous foundation which can only act as a guide to further investigation. Happily, more documentary evidence is also coming to light. The importance of the part he played in producing the prototype design for the first iron bridge over the Severn (1779, Ironbridge) is underlined by entries in the Coalbrookdale Company accounts, lately deposited in the S.R.O. by Lady Labouchere. The original estimate for the bridge (53,200:11s) appears as the work of Pritchard and Abraham Darby, and Pritchard received £150 for 'making drawings, surveying and other incidents'. He also produced a model- but this is unlikely to be the one now in the Science Museum at South Kensington, and probably no longer survives. There is also evidence of his making alterations at Ludford Park for Sir. Francis Charlton, and of his carrying out surveying work in connection with Ludlow Guildhall, in other S.R.O. collections.

Most striking is the documentary evidence in the Attingham Collection about his work at Tern Hall, Atcham, for Thomas Hill, M.P. (1692/3-1782), between the years 1759 and 1764. Hill may have encountered Pritchard through his position as Treasurer of the Infirmary; also through their mutual interest in St. Julian's Church. Pritchard was entrusted with the rebuilding (1748), and Hill lent the Church Wardens £300 to get the project started. The cost of rebuilding Tern Hall (it replaced a much smaller house built 1700) was just under £2,400. Pritchard received £70 for his services; additional payments to him in the region of £200 can be shown to be merely re-payment of sums he had expended in purchasing materials (stone, timber, slate, and a fine marble chimney for £32:9:00 all included) for the house. He was concerned with the house mainly between June, 1759 and September, 1760, by which time the main fabric was completed. When he re-appeared in summer 1764, it was only briefly, and the supervision of the finishing of the house was by this time in the hands of Richard White, a Shrewsbury builder, and Thomas Bell, Hill's agent in Shropshire.

The re-building of Tern was an ill fated project, which while it adds to the Pritchard oeuvre, can hardly be said to add to his reputation. In 1771 Noel Hill (to whom Tern was conveyed by his father, Thomas Hill, on his 1768 marriage) wrote to complain: 'The only Room Finished in the new Building at Tern was obliged to be pulled to pieces again owing to the Blunder of an Architect, who built the Windows so High from the Ground that no one sitting could look out of them...' Additional light is thrown on this matter by a letter written by Thomas Bell to his master in 1760: 'I presume if theres any Plans of the Buildings here they are in Mr. Prichards (sic) possession and as things are Wrong he'l not Care to produce them; but I remember the plan of the front of the House (Elevation as the Builders Call it) was left in London by Mistake after the Building was begun and prichard was obliged to Draw another which made his Curse and Swear a Great Deale...'

In defence of Pritchard it must be said that circumstances were difficult. The agent, Thomas Bell, was thoroughly hostile, and Thomas Hill (never in any case a man to enjoy spending money) lost all interest in the project after the death of his wife in early 1760, halfway through the first year of building. She was keenly interested in the new building, and was perhaps the initiator. Whatever the case, by summer 1760 Thomas Hill was writing to his agent 'You have asked me again and again what I would have done towards finishing the new building at Tern, and I have as constantly given you to Understand as little as possible...' Plainly, whatever went wrong cannot be laid solely at Pritchard's door, and Noel Hill's decision to carry out extensive alterations within a decade, and to engulf Tern Hall completely within his new mansion, Attingham, less than ten years after that, makes more sense against this troubled background.

Robin Chaplin

NOTE: I am indebted for help in assembling this material to Mrs. D. Cameron of the Shropshire Adult College, Miss M. Hill of the Salop Record Office, and Mr. Alec Gaydon, Editor, Shropshire V.C.H.

#### The Wombridge Canal Tunnel

Following the report in Newsletter No. 33, D. R. Adams of the Shropshire Mining Club proposed to carry out a survey of the remains of the tunnel, but on investigation found that even more of the tunnel had been opened up by the contractors, and that the entrance was all but blocked. Only a mere 20-30 ft. remained, the end being packed with loose bricks to support the road. Mr. Adams writes: "Over the road, the land slopes steeply away to a pool, with a long hollow and what looks like part of a brick culvert at the end of it. The existence of a tunnel on the top of a hill as this is seems nonsensical, but perhaps it was only covered over for the benefit of the owner of Priory Farm".

#### Weeping Cross, Shrewsbury. Site D (SJ 504105)

This site includes all features excavated in the field immediately north west of the junction of Sutton Road and the Shrewsbury By-pass. A preliminary report by Mr. R. Whitburn was published in Newsletter No. 31. The majority of the features are associated with the deserted medieval village of Sudetone. Excavations are still in progress and only a brief schedule of features can be given at present.

#### Post Medieval

An 18th century furnace or kiln. An apsidal arrangement of large bricks, associated with a great amount of imported creamy blue clay with fine pieces of coal in suspension and twelve distinct layers of ash and sand. This lay alongside the former Sutton Road just west of the cross-roads. SJ 504105.

A deeply rutted cobbled road with a kerbed pavement and storm water gully. The extremely hard packed surface showed evidence of burning along its route, and was traced for 30 yards. It ran under the former Sutton Road and curved south eastwards near the Shrewsbury By-pass. A map of 1801 shows the turn-pike road from Acton Burnell to Shrewsbury via Sutton Road, but this is thought to be an error since maps of 1752 and 1808 show it routed via Weeping Cross.

Medieval

1. A large 13th or 14th century baking oven, 16 ft. long (including the raking pit) and having side flues, lay roughly parallel with the cobbled road. It had been re-lined with creamy yellow clay shortly before it fell into disuse.
2. A gulley-bounded sub-rectilinear structure, with very large post holes set internally, dividing it into two parts and having an outer soakage pit. This may have been a timber fronted long-house with an internal width of 12 ft. 6 in. The major axis was parallel with and 75 ft. from the large baking oven, but only late medieval pottery was obtained from the gulley.
3. Seven further ovens, one of which was for corn drying, whilst another, relined twice, lay with the southern part of a twin bier, open fronted, gulley bounded shed, 30 ft. by 15 ft. The ovens were in random positions throughout the field and could range in date from the late 12th to the 17th century.
4. A palisade with main uprights spaced from 4 to 5 feet apart, and aligned north-south, ran along the eastern side of a re-cut prehistoric ditch. The significance of this is not yet clear, though it was observed that some posts were renewed, that both rectangular and circular posts were used, that some circular posts were dismantled, and that two rectangular posts were burnt.

5. There were numerous post holes and pits belonging to structures which could not be defined. There was a sunken floor of large stones in association with which were found large quantities of 13th and 14th century pottery, including one complete base.
6. A "Waterworks". A complicated plan showing a system of dams, gulleys and spillways for the control of spring water which ran along the route of the prehistoric ditch was revealed. The water was conducted away from a dam across the ditch along two gulleys towards the existing pond. The second gulley was cut deeper and wider, probably following a drought, which left the former gulley dry. Subsequently further loss of supply necessitated the construction of a further low dam of sandstone to maintain a reservoir cut into the silt of the prehistoric ditch. A medieval exploratory trench had been dug across the ditch below the first dam to establish the lower level to which the second gulley was cut.
7. A system of deep V and U shaped gulleys were found near to the existing farmhouse, which has been dated by Mr. A. Gaydon to the late 16th century. One is a substantial feature, 4 ft. 6 in. wide and 3 ft. deep, which in the section so far excavated, runs straight for 75 ft., turns at a right angle, continues for 30 ft. and then bends into its former alignment for at least another 50 ft. Orange-glazed 14th century sherds were in direct contact with the bottom. An earlier and smaller gulley contiguous with the first must have served a similar purpose. This was back-filled with rubble containing animal bone, refuse, and ornate 14th century pottery, near to the right angle bend. Thanks are due to boys from Kingsland Schools for their help with these features.

Romano-British (?)

An uneven cobbled floor laid in a bed of natural yellow sandy clay yielded a few sherds of Romano-British pottery. This was cut by the gulley no. 7 above, and a sunken area of 24 ft. by 16 ft. was exposed.

Neolithic (?)

A pre-historic ditch aligned roughly north-south from near to the edge of the Shrewsbury By-pass for 65 yards, then angling slightly eastwards for a further twenty yards was uncovered. It probably continues at least as far as the 16th century farmhouse 50 yards away.

Several sections were cut each presenting a different configuration. Generally the features can be described as follows :

- ( i ) Divided into various lengths by very narrow "causeways" which are well below ground level.
- ( ii ) Re-cut in prehistoric times to the bottom of the primary cut to form a continuous feature piercing the causeways.
- (iii) A bank on the western side collapsed into the re-cut ditch.
- (iv) A more recent, probably, medieval, period.

Finds included a very abraded rim sherd of coarse quartz gritted black ware. The rim has fingernail decoration impressed into the top edge. Associated with the pottery is a small object of fine, hard sandstone, having deep striations and faint scratch marks on one flat face. Both artifacts are thought to be of Neolithic date.

A number of simple stone artifacts, probably weapons, occurred at the bottom of the ditch lying on a flat floor which also yielded small traces of charcoal and tooth enamel.

Further excavation will be necessary before any explanation of this feature can be offered. An attempt to trace its continuation into neighbouring fields through aerial photographs of this year's crops (see below) was unsuccessful.

W.E. Jenks

An industrial site near Leintwardine (SO 418758)

Messrs. Michael Rix and Rex Wailes report the discovery of a triple series of kiln like buildings on the north side of the A 4113 road between Leintwardine and Fiddler's Elbow. The buildings are of stone construction and let into the side of a hill. There are three interconnected stone chambers and no flue in the roof. It is suggested that the site may be connected with the Knight family ironworks. The structure has been photographed.

**PRESTON MONTFORD COURSES****Course E**

M. Rix  
D. Pannett

**Industrial Archaeology**

**10th-17th August**

The course will be especially devoted to the study of the works of Thomas Telford as the father of Civil Engineering. The Holyhead Road, the Ellesmere Canal and his contribution to the evolution of the iron bridge design will receive particular attention. Instruction in surveying, measuring buildings and the use of documents will also be included.

SSA 27 220

Recent Aerial Photographs of sites at Weeping Cross, Shrewsbury

Since July, 1964 three missions have been completed with the following results :

( i) Mr. P.A. Barker, 1964

Two good colour transparencies; one of Site A (for which see Newsletter No. 29), and one of a square shaped enclosure in the field between Murrells Nurseries and the Shrewsbury-Hereford railway line, some 100 yards south of the Shrewsbury By-pass. This site (SJ 496104) will be referred to as site E.

PRN  
00015( ii) Mr. J. Pickering, 1965

Together with eight views of various features within a three mile radius of Weeping Cross, Mr. Pickering took two photographs of fields near to the traffic island (SJ 513104). These clearly indicate parts of three sides of a walled enclosure. Double walls, with the features approximately 30 ft. apart are visible on two opposite sides. The inner walls probably form a rectangle approximately 150 ft. by 250 ft. and inclose a series of dark crop marks. To the south west is a circular feature consisting of concentric rings between 50 ft. and 60 ft. in diameter. This site (SJ 513105) will be referred to as site F.

PRN  
30936

PRN04162

(iii) Mr. T. Ewart, 1967

Mr. Ewart took 36 photographs, mainly of Sharpstones Hill, including further details of site E. A number of minor features are visible, but by far the most important is a linear feature in the field containing the Mere Pool, and lying between sites A and F. This is not visible in the 1965 series. It will be referred to as site G.

General

All of the sites are in an area of which the future development is now being discussed. The Avon-Severn Valley Research Project Committee has details of sites E and F.

W.E. Jenks

Hen Domen, Montgomery

Excavations on the site of the timber castle at Hen Domen, Montgomery, will be continued from July 29th - August 10th, 1968, under the direction of Philip Barker, 4 St. George's Square, Worcester. (Tel. Worcester 26335).



### An Inscribed Stone from Wroxeter

In July, 1967, an inscribed stone was turned up by a tractor driver in field No. 394 on Shropshire O.S. XLII. 9 edn. 1927. It was part of a coarse sandstone slab that had been cut from a larger prepared piece, and displayed cross hatching on two of its edges as though for keying with cement into a wall or similar structure. The dimensions were: height 28 ins., width 19 ins., thickness 5 ins.

On the upper part was a Latin inscription that may be translated as:

"CUNORIX, THE HOUND KING, (i.e. great king)  
SON OF THE SON OF THE HOLLY"

The letters are stippled and not anywhere carved. They are unevenly spaced and shaped. Recent plough scoring has damaged part of the upper surface which bears the inscription.

Professor Kenneth Jackson, Head of the Department of Celtic Studies in the University of Edinburgh has kindly supplied the above translation after examination of photographs and squeezes, and on stylistic and linguistic grounds places the inscription "very roughly" about 475 AD. He further comments, "I don't see any reason to doubt that some Latin would still be spoken at a place like Wroxeter as late as this; after all, a number of people who were born about 400 AD. and learned to speak Latin as children would still be alive, there or nearby, then'.

This inscribed stone of the Romano-British periods adds one more to the number of such monuments scattered along the west coast of Britain from Cornwall to Cumberland and South Scotland, and which are most numerous perhaps in the Welsh area.

Cunorix must have been an Irishman who arrived perhaps with his band or part of his tribe, at Wroxeter via the Irish

Channel, Bristol Channel and River Severn. It is not beyond the bounds of probability that he and his followers settled at Viroconium, and were engaged by the shrinking number of citizens as mercenary soldiers to defend them. That he was popular and well regarded is attested by the fact that the memorial was engraved and set up over his burial place. The very crudity of the work and simplicity of the single sentence is more telling than the formal and elaborate memorials of an earlier age, and indeed for any one to receive the tribute of a funereal inscription at Viroconium towards the end of the fifth century places him very highly in public regard.

We have the Legionary tombstone of the early part of the second half of the first century as a terminus ante quem at Wroxeter, the magnificent inscription set up over the entrance at the east portico of the forum in Hadrianic times, and now a frail memorial which shows that the ancient language was not forgotten and that the Civitas was in being and still retained the semblance of respect and regard for law and custom as the period still referred to as the Dark Ages opened in Britain.

It is of great interest that this heavy stone was found well within the town ramparts and two reasons for this come to mind. One is that the very Roman custom of burial without the confines of town or city was no longer heeded or remembered. The second, that Conorix was so highly thought of that the rare honour of interment within the city wall was accorded to him.

A. W. J. Houghton, F.S.A.

### Coal Production in South Shropshire

Earlier this year it seemed certain that Highley Colliery, the last working coal mine in the Shropshire portion of the Forest of Wyre Coalfield will cease production in June, 1968, though a stay of closure has now been agreed by the National Coal Board. This coalfield has been worked only since the second half of the 18th century, mainly because of the depth and irregularity of the coal seams, lack of demand for the fuel, and the general inaccessibility of the area. Production appears to have started in the Billingsley area, just south of Bridgnorth and these mines, variously owned by the Severn Valley Colliery Company, the Billingsley Colliery Company and the Highley Mining Company, had reached over 500 feet deep at the time of their closure in 1921. Further south, the large Kinlet Colliery, opened in 1900, was much troubled by igneous intrusions, mainly dolerite, and closed in 1936.

The Highley Mining Company was formed in 1870, and began production in 1874 with shafts nearly 1,000 feet deep. In 1910 the Company took over the Garden Village developed for miners at the Billingsley Colliery and in 1917 carried through a mechanisation programme which included the introduction of two Hopkinson Chain Coal Cutters. In 1935 - 6 the Alveley shafts were sunk to reach the seams to the east of the Severn and since this time these have become the main production shafts. The mine has been in trouble for some years now mainly due to the difficulties in applying further mechanisation. The availability of only one workable seam (the Brooch), poor roof conditions, geological irregularities and lack of demand for the type of coal produced have further increased the problem.

Mines have been worked in other parts of the Forest including Shatterford (closed 1923), Harcourt (1923), Chorley Drift (1924), Chorley Woodside (1928) Chorley Wood (1933) and Winwoods (1927). Mines on and just over the county border have also proved quite profitable

and one, the privately owned Hunt House Colliery at Clows Top, is still in operation, employing about 30 men.

Very little recording has been done in this area, and even less published and with the use of modern agricultural machinery the sites of some of these mines have already been obliterated.

I. J. Brown

### Extract from letter from Mr. W. Howard Williams, 14th January, 1968

'I was interested in the reference to 'bakehouses' in relation to the Hinksay Row, because I have never yet heard anyone refer to a bakehouse. Attached to these old houses, especially in the Donnington Wood area, were quite large wash houses. In these the miner had his daily bath. The pig, reared at the bottom of the garden and killed on a bench in the back yard, would be hung in here after cleaning until the butcher came to dress it. And in this building was brewed the home-brewed ale - weekly or fortnightly, year in, year out. Because of this the building was almost always referred to as the brewhouse, or 'brew 'us' or even 'brewse'.

I have myself handled many tones of malt, until some 20 years ago. A regular order would be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pecks of malt and  $\frac{1}{2}$  -b. of hops. There were two kinds of White Malt - pale and high dried. The latter made a slightly bitter beer. Black or 'porter' malt was usually brought 1 lb. at a time, with 2 oz. hops (and some would use a bit of stick liquorice) for making stout or porter. A little brewing is still done at Donnington - I know an old miner who brews regularly. I also know a man in Lilleshall who brews beer about every two months.

Publications

The Miners' Revolution: The Coalbrookdale miners' fight for better conditions, by Ivor J. Brown. Shropshire Magazine, January & February, 1968.

The Coalbrookdale Coalfield, Catalogue of Mines and Mining Bibliography, by Ivor J. Brown. Shropshire County Library, 1968. Price 5/-. (Obtainable for any branch of the Library).

A History of Limestone Mining in Shropshire, by Ivor J. Brown, with additions by D. R. Adams. Shropshire Mining Club. December, 1967. Price 5/-. (Obtainable from D. R. Adams, "New Era", Princess Gardens, Newport, Shropshire).

Gazetteer of Streets, Roads and Place Names in Shropshire, by H. D. G. Foxall. Salop County Council. 2nd Ed. 1967. Price 15s. post free or 12s. if collected from Shirehall.

The Methodist New Connexion in Dawley and Madeley, by Barrie Trinder. Wesley Historical Society, West Midlands Branch, 1968. Price 2/6 (3/- post free). (Obtainable from Mr. D. Eades, 44 Springfield Road, Halesowen, Worcestershire).

The Economic History of the British Iron & Steel Industry, 1984-1879, by Alan Birch. Cass. 1967. (Includes much Shropshire material, some of it previously unpublished).

Griffiths' Guide to the Iron Trade of Great Britain, Ed. W. K. V. Gale. First published 1873, new Ed. 1967.

The Victoria History of Shropshire, Vol. 8, the Hundreds of Condover and Ford, will be published in the autumn. Price 9 guineas.

The next volume of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society will be published in August or September.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

No. 35 - December, 1968.

Published by The Shropshire Archaeological Society

Edited by Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52 Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury (Tel. Shrewsbury 52310)

## The Wooden Bridge at Cressage

The Act of Parliament "for building a Bridge over the River Severn, from or near Cressage in the County of Salop to the opposite shore; and for making proper roads or Avenues to and from the same" (39 Geo. III Cap. 28) received the royal assent on May 10th, 1799. A bridge was proposed to replace the ancient ferry because the latter was often obstructed by Floods, and was "not suited to the Accommodation of Passengers from either side". Trustees were appointed to build and maintain "a bridge of cast iron, stone, brick or timber". They were empowered to construct a road from the south end of the bridge to a junction with the road from Cound to Much Wenlock in the village of Cressage, and to maintain the existing road from the north end of the bridge through Eaton Constantine, Longwood, Rushton and Aston to the Burcot crossroads "near the nine mile stone on the Road leading from Shrewsbury to the Watling Street". Authority was given for the construction of a branch road from a point near to the north end of the bridge to the Lower Longwood colliery (SO 588065) on the road from Atcham to Buildwas. The trustees were granted the right to collect tolls, the rates of which were fixed

to range from two shillings for a coach with six horses to a penny for pedestrians. As was normal in bridge and turnpike acts, they were empowered to lease or farm the tolls if they should wish to do so.

The first meeting of the trustees was held at the house of Andrew Dodson in Cound Lane on June 12th, 1799, those present being Edward Tonkins, who took the chair, the Rev. John Wilde, Abraham Ward, Robert Nichols, Richard Davies, Thomas Smith, John Dodson, William Clayton, John Clarke, William Langley, Robert Hayward, John Tonkins and John Hoggins. A number of new subscribers were admitted including Thomas Telford, described as a gentleman, of Shrewsbury, and it was agreed to accept "the mode of building the Bridge recommended by Mr. Telford in a letter to Mr. Scott", the latter being the clerk to the trustees. The main contracts were let to John Lees for timber work, and to John Simpson for masonry, both to be supervised by Telford. Simpson had been associated with Telford during the construction of Buildwas bridge in 1795-1796. Most of the active trustees seem to have been local farmers or minor gentry, and such illustrious personages as Sir William Pulteney and Henry Cresset Pelham who were named in the Act as subscribers did not play an active part in the affairs of the trust.

At the first meeting of the trustees it was decided to buy 118 oak trees which were lying at Preen from Levi Davies, the cost of which worked out at £124 16s. 6d. The other major consignment of timber cost over £300. The road at the north end of the bridge received a foundation of about 1,500 tons of rock from Charlton Hill, and all of the roads built by the trust were surfaced with gravel. The foundation work for the roads, various excavations on the site of the bridge, and the construction of a towpath along the river adjacent to the bridge were carried out by a

contractor called Thomas Briscoe. A boat hired from a Mr. Langley was employed on the site for 44 weeks, but others supplied by the carpentry contractor, John Lees, were also used. By March 1801 the bridge was complete except for the surfacing of the roadway, and on April 2nd, Thomas Haines was appointed the first toll collector. The first tolls totalling £1 11s. 6d. were received for the week ending April 11th, 1801.

The bridge was constructed entirely of timber, with dressed stone abutments. There were five spans, supported on four wooden piers, built on piles sunk in the river bed. The toll house on the Cressage side of the bridge was of brick with over-hanging eaves. The upper storey was on a level with the road, and the door of the ground floor opened on to a garden which ran down to the river. The design of the bridge seems an exceptionally conservative one to have been produced by Thomas Telford in 1799. Only four years earlier he had designed the very advanced cast iron bridge at Buildwas four miles downstream from Cressage, his iron aqueduct at Longdon was already in use, and plans for the great Potcysyllte aqueduct were already well advanced. Cast iron was obviously considered as a possible material for the bridge, but was probably rejected on grounds of expense. The bridge cost less than £4,000, while the bill for Buildwas amounted to over £6,000. The latter was not a toll bridge, and it is doubtful whether the return which could reasonably have been expected from the tolls at Cressage would have justified the raising of the additional capital necessary to build an iron bridge. The dividend in the first eight years of operation did not exceed £1 12s. Od. per fifty guinea share, although by 1831 it had risen to £1 16s. Od.

Not all of the powers granted to the trustees under the act were taken up. The proposal to build a branch

road from the north end of the bridge to the Lower Longwood Colliery was dropped in April 1800 after the Committee had agreed with the trustees of the so-called Leighton Turnpike Road to repair the Leighton road from the eastern side of Longwood Brook to the finger post at the turning to the bridge, so long as the turnpike trustees took no tolls for carriages or horses passing along this stretch. No use was made of the powers to improve and maintain the road leading from the junction with the Leighton road to the Burcot cross roads. Presumably the tolls from traffic on this section would not have justified the expenses of collection. The only point at which tolls were ever taken was the toll house on the Cressage side of the bridge.

The trustees' early decision to be responsible themselves for the collection of tolls was soon reversed, for the first gate keeper gave up on July 6th, 1801, only three months after the opening of the bridge, and it was then decided to let the tolls by auction. For the next five decades the tolls seem to have been farmed out, and the surviving records reveal very little of the history of the bridge in this period. In March 1853 it was decided to appoint a person to collect the tolls on behalf of the proprietors for one year from the following Lady Day, and the tolls were never again farmed out.

Like turnpike gates, toll bridges could arouse resentment and even hostility among the people who lived nearby, and the trustees' minutes for the second half of the 19th century record a number of disputes with local inhabitants. In 1863 and 1864 demands were made that children from Cressage going to the day school at Eaton Constantine should be excused payment of tolls, but these were rejected. In August 1865 Robert Thomas of Eaton Constantine and the Rev. Henry Burton, vicar of Atcham, left their carriages and walked over

the bridge to evade toll, and the following March the secretary was instructed to demand from the vicar the sum due. In 1885 a request by the local police constable to pass over the bridge free of charge was dismissed. In 1901 a toll of 6d. which had been imposed on bicycles was reduced to 3d. after strong protests from the cycling unions.

Difficulties were experienced from time to time in finding suitable toll keepers. In 1893 the keeper was dismissed for his practice of harbouring large parcels of rabbits left with him by poachers, and in 1894 his successor lost his job because he was "not industrious" and because he and his wife were frequently away from the toll house at the same time. In 1895, for the third year running the annual meeting decided to replace the keeper, this time because he was allowing people through the gate at night without toll by leaving it unlocked.

During the 1880s and 1890s the condition of the bridge was rapidly deteriorating. In December 1888 the secretary went to inspect it and found two holes in the roadway. Traffic on the roads leading to the bridge had considerably increased with the opening of Cressage Station on the Severn Valley Railway in 1862 but much of this increase did not benefit the bridge trustees for they had no means of collecting tolls from those passing along the road from Cressage village to the station. In 1893 when this section needed repair assistance was sought from the Great Western Railway and the Salop County Council, and consideration was also given to the erection of a toll bar and cottage at the beginning of the road in Cressage.

Throughout the 19th century the active trustees were local men and the annual general meetings were normally held at Cressage, but in February 1902 the

meeting took place in London, all of the six trustees attending or represented being members of the Kynnersley family of Leighton Hall. At this meeting it was decided to sell the shares in the trust at par to the Severn Valley Coal Syndicate Limited, which had been formed to prospect for coal in the neighbourhood of the bridge. By the time of the next meeting held in July 1902 the composition of the trust had completely changed.

In October 1911 the trust met to discuss an offer by the Salop County Council to buy the bridge for £1,000, and a contract with the Council was finally approved in February 1912. Tolls were abolished and a new ferro-concrete bridge to replace the by-now rickety timber structure was opened in 1914.

Documents relating to the bridge are to be found in the Shropshire Record Office, Collection No. 570, and a good selection of photographs survives at the Shrewsbury Borough Library.

Barrie Trinder

The Destruction of Marton Motte, Chirbury  
(SJ 290026)

During the winter of 1967-68 the well-preserved motte alongside the Shrewsbury - Montgomery Road at Marton was levelled. With it went all traces of half of its rectangular bailey. The field in which it stood is now under corn and all that remains is that part of the bailey which lies beyond the hedge in the field to the South. This fragment consists of a right-angled bank, with external ditch, which curves back to the hedge on the east as a mere Scarp. This Scarp faces Marton Pool, which originally extended to the site and made a bank and ditch unnecessary on this front.

The Marton Motte and bailey was fortunately surveyed in 1963 and described and illustrated, together with eleven other mottes in the area, in an article in "Archaeologia Cambrensis", 1965, pp. 69-86. These twelve mottes, which form a remarkable group, seem to represent an attempt to resettle the area between Montgomery and Caus after the ravages indicated by the Domesday Survey. It is sad to note that only six of the twelve sites are now intact.

Jack Spurgeon

Bromfield: Roman Camp

At BROMFIELD (SO 483775) a short excavation before quarrying fixed the south-western side of the marching camp showing its dimensions to be 1060 feet by 845 feet (323 m. x 258 m.) an area of 20½ acres (8.32 hectares). (T.S.A.S. LVII (1964), 187, and J.R.S. XLVIII (1958), 95).

S. C. Stanford

### Hen Domen, Montgomery

The ninth season of the excavation of the motte and bailey castle at HEN DOMEN, MONTGOMERY (SO 214981) was confined to the earlier layers of the bailey rampart and the underlying subsoil. The tail of the rampart provided evidence of many complex structures, including what appeared to be the fine clay floor of a rectangular building at least 18 feet by 12 feet with central hearth. More palisade postholes were discovered, one of them packed with a Roman floor tile.

The western tail of the rampart sealed a thin buried soil under which lay a fine pebble floor or amorphous outline. Elsewhere the buried soil was of varying thickness, and careful measurement of this combined with traces in the subsoil of ploughing up and down the slope strongly suggest buried ridge and furrow of pre-Conquest date. This interpretation is supported by field work and the documentary evidence.

The most interesting find was an amulet carved from a Roman Sherd, sealed in the soil under the rampart.

P. A. Barker

### X Houses in Danger

Atcham Rural District Council, and presumably other local authorities in the county, are now engaged on the demolition of sub-standard houses whose owners are unable or unwilling to put them in an acceptable state of repair. The work is being done by demolition contractors, who operate in such a way that advance notice of impending demolitions can rarely be obtained.

While much of what will be destroyed would not have been worth preserving, it is vitally important that some record should be made, at any rate of the older houses involved, preferably in the form of measured plans.

Readers are asked to inform Mr. A. T. Gaydon, 26 Hereford Road, Shrewsbury (Editor of the Victoria History of Shropshire) of any such houses in their locality. Members of the Old Houses Recording Group are available to undertake recording.

### Saxon Finds in Shrewsbury

The construction of a new cellar on the site of 2A St. Alkmund's Place, Shrewsbury, during November 1968 revealed a 30 feet cross-section of the mediaeval and earlier levels of Shrewsbury down to natural gravel. Two pits, a ditch and a gully were revealed all cutting through two earlier occupation levels. One of the pits contained a nearly complete tripod pitcher of presumably 13th century date, and similar pottery was found in the ditch filling. The second pit contained at the bottom numerous pottery sherds which have been confirmed as of late Saxon date together with a circular gilt-bronze brooch now under treatment at the Institute of Archaeology. In view of the importance of the discovery of Saxon material in the town, this brief note on the site is made now and will be followed up by a more detailed description in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Geoffrey Toms



### The Bromsgrove Guild

As a result of a recent enquiry it has been possible to establish a number of interesting connections between this firm and the Coalbrookdale Company of Shropshire. The Bromsgrove Guild began as a partnership about 1870. It was a group of architectural metal workers and artists in glass, wood, stone, the precious metals and other media. Among their outstanding achievements were the provision of ornamental gates and rails on the sides of Buckingham Palace in 1905 and the central gates of the Palace in 1910-11, the bronze doors of Canada House, London, the Grace Gates at Kennington Oval Cricket Ground and the Liver Birds for the Royal Liver Building, Liverpool.

About 1909 Mr. George Ernest Cowper, pattern-maker and diestamper and his brother Tom left the Coalbrookdale Ironworks to work for the Bromsgrove Guild, and they may well have been associated with the erection of the central gates of Buckingham Palace, since the Coalbrookdale Company was, of course, well acquainted with work of this kind. George Ernest Cowper eventually became master of the foundry for the Guild and may have been responsible for the emigration of other workers from Coalbrookdale to Bromsgrove. In 1911, Tom Welk, who had been a draughtsman at the Coalbrookdale works and apparently an instructor at the Coalbrookdale School of Art, went to Bromsgrove, where it is understood that he became manager of the Guild. Soon after his arrival he was followed by about six other craftsmen from the Dale. The names of some of those who are known to have migrated are William Groom, Arthur Beardshaw, Tom Speake and a Mr. Beechin. Some were skilled moulders in both bronze and iron, and the others all had qualifications desired by the Guild.

Tom Welk returned to Coalbrookdale on his retirement, and a gravestone which he designed for one of his friends can still be seen.

T. C. Hancox

Coalbrookdale Archives  
Association

### A Cast Iron Cromwell

For about a year a number of historians have been contributing material to a project launched by the journal "Past and Present" to investigate the importance accorded to Oliver Cromwell by radicals in the nineteenth century. Work already done shows that Cromwell's name could be used to justify a variety of different causes, and that many of the arguments of nineteenth century radicals of all classes were conducted in the terms of the Civil War of the seventeenth century. An attempt is being made to find out about the debates in various parts of the country occasioned by the erection of statues of the Lord Protector. Of particular Shropshire interest is a figure of Cromwell in cast iron exhibited by the Coalbrookdale Company at the London International Exhibition of 1862, and mentioned in the Art Journal Catalogue of the Exhibition, pp.82-8. The figure was apparently very large - it was one of a number mentioned as "larger works shown now than in 1851". It was based on "the statue by Mr. Bell", and supported by river geni. If anyone has further information on the statue; whether pictures survive, what happened to it after the Exhibition, its present whereabouts, etc., please contact Barrie Trinder, 52 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

### Review

A new edition of Arthur Mee's "Shropshire" in the well-known King's England series has recently appeared. Its general format is a great improvement on the earlier editions and the illustrations are by that well known photographer A. F. Kersting. But the reproduction of the photographs is, in some cases, disappointing. Those of the Abbey Church and St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, facing p. 156, are far too dark. It is good to see photographs of such little known details as one of the ceilings of Plaish Hall or the monument in Conover Church to Roger Owen, not one of Roubiliac's masterpieces. But one still prefers the beautiful, if slightly hackneyed front view of Conover Hall to the side view given here, which gives little idea of the charm of one of Shropshire's most attractive interiors.

The present edition has two great drawbacks. First, we are told that the series is being "fully revised and edited" by Mr. E. T. Long, F.S.A. He is a well known and reliable antiquary, but he lives in Dorset, and the revision of this volume should certainly have been overlooked by someone who really knew Shropshire well. Had this been done, so many facts which were correct when the first edition appeared in 1939, but are not now, would not have crept into this 1968 edition. A quick glance through has produced the following errors, and a more detailed study would probably reveal others. In the last paragraph describing Acton Burnell, it is stated that some 500 yards of a Roman road remains towards Cardington. This road was macadamised about twenty years ago, leaving only a few yards of the original surface, which may be Roman or medieval. In the same paragraph reference is made to the gatehouse at Langley, "now part of a

farm, it has Elizabethan timbering and a battlemented wall". But this wall was unsafe and taken down some five years ago. Under Great Wollaston we are told that Old Parr's Cottage "still stands", although it was burnt down several years ago. Under Harley, we read that "there is a town of an ancient windmill", but this too was destroyed some years ago. Tong Castle is said to be "an imposing sight from the churchyard" although it was blown up as unsafe some fifteen years ago.

There are many items of local information that could have been included with great advantage, such as the fact that the design of the Newport monument in Wroxeter Church is practically duplicated in a signed monument by Grinling Gibbons in Westminster Abbey, or that the 1579 ruins at Moreton Corbet might well be by Robert Smythson, even though they are not mentioned in Mark Girouard's recent admirable biography of that architect. One looks in vain for any reference to Telford's cast iron aqueduct at Longdon-on-Tern. And much else.

The second drawback applies not only to the Shropshire volume, but to such other revised editions in this series as have already been seen. When these books were first published in the 1930s very few country houses were open to the public, and very little interest was taken in Georgian architecture. All that has now changed. Yet the series has not brought itself into line with these new conditions, which much depreciates their value. Under Atcham, only the barest mention is made of Attingham Park, open twice a week in summer. There is no account of the picture gallery (exciting for itself rather than for what it contains), nor of the Murat furniture and how it got there. Under Cleobury Mortimer, not even a mention of Mawley Hall, one of the most beautiful of the smaller 18th century houses

in England, and now also regularly open. Incidentally, the two bayed "cruck" house at Much Wenlock is described as unique which it most certainly is not.

As in the earlier editions, the biographical details are one of the best features of this book, e.g. Bishop Percy under Bridgnorth and Captain Webb under Dawley. But on the whole it is a disappointing book and it could so easily have been a very good one.

John Salmon

Wrekin College,  
Wellington.

#### Publications

In addition to new books reviewed in this issue, the following may be of interest to readers of the Newsletter:

The Victoria History of Shropshire, Vol. VIII, the Hundreds of Condover and Ford. O.U.P. 9 guineas. (This will be reviewed in a forthcoming volume of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.)

The Severn Valley Railway, by D. J. Smith. Town and Country Press Limited. 10/6d.

The Caughley Porcelain Works near Broseley, Salop, by A. W. J. Houghton. In "Industrial Archaeology", Vol. V, No. 2. May, 1968. pp. 184-192.

#### Borough of Much Wenlock

Edited by L. C. Lloyd, Shrewsbury.

Published by Much Wenlock Borough Council, 1968. 53 pp. 5/-

This well-produced little book is, sadly, the last published work of the late Mr. L. C. Lloyd. It is designed to commemorate the quincentenary of the granting of Much Wenlock's first borough charter in 1468 and contains six studies of various aspects of the borough's history between the 15th and the 18th centuries. Apart from Mr. Lloyd, the contributors are members of the extra-mural class which has been working on the Wenlock Borough records under his guidance for the past dozen years. The first essay (by Mr. Lloyd) discusses the contents of the 1468 charter and summarises the life of Sir John Wenlock, who seems to have been instrumental in obtaining it. Sir John's connexions with Wenlock were perhaps closer than is suggested. Title-deeds of a further part of his Wenlock estate (in the Middleton MSS., Nottingham Univ. Libr.) show that, in addition to the estate deriving from his maternal ancestors which Sir John recovered in 1448 (p.10), he inherited an equally large property in the town from his father. The latter, born John Botery, presumably took the name Wenlock when he left the town to enter the service of the Talbots of Blakemere in the time of Henry V.

Mr. W. F. Mumford follows with a study of the "first century" of the new borough, which includes a useful topographical survey of the town c. 1540. It is perhaps a little too sweeping to say (p.21) that the more ordinary houses existing at this date have "almost entirely disappeared". Apart from No. 5 Queen Street, a modest two-bay house noted on p. 22, some other houses of cruck construction are known to survive and no doubt more await discovery.

The 1468 charter conferred extensive judicial privileges on the new borough and three of the papers are based on the records of the two courts (the Borough Court and the Court of Quarter Sessions) thus created. Mr. Lloyd provides a careful account of the working of the borough court and by taking soundings in the voluminous evidence demonstrates convincingly the value of this hitherto neglected source of local history. The returns of recusants and dissenters reported to Wenlock Quarter Sessions by the petty constables in 1683 are discussed by Mr. Lloyd and Mrs. J. Stagles, but their figures need to be set against the rather fuller lists in the contemporary churchwardens' presentments among the Hereford Diocesan Records. Mr. J. H. Pavitt gives a panorama of the life of the labouring poor in the 18th century, based on registers of settlement examinations, and the book ends with an analysis by Mr. V. H. Deacon of the borough's finances in the 17th and 18th centuries. Compared with towns like Shrewsbury and Ludlow annual expenditure was very small and narrow in scope. Annual income was even smaller and by the later 18th century the bailiffs had to meet an annual deficit of some £30 from their own pockets. The structure of local politics would presumably explain why the system worked at all, but this is outside the scope of the essay.

Two small corrections of fact may be noted:

- (1) P.6. Harley was not a member of the Borough of Wenlock. This parish, however, contained a detached part of Much Wenlock Parish (c. 110 acres), in origin part of the medieval estates of Wenlock Priory.
- (2) P.15, lines 27-28. Mr. Mumford points out that '30 November' should read '15 March', which was not 'the day after the sealing of the charter'.

National Index of Parish Registers  
Vol. V, South Midlands and Welsh Border

Compiled by D. J. Steel and others.

Society of Genealogists, 1966. xxiv 300 pp.

£1 12s. 6d. cloth; £1 5s. Od. paperback

This is the first published volume of the projected 12-volume National Index, the scope of which is much wider than its title suggests, since it will be a guide to all sources of births, marriages and deaths before the beginning of civil registration in 1837. The first two volumes (of which volume I has now been published) are to contain general articles and the remainder will, like volume V, be regional guides.

The Shropshire section in volume V (pp. 143-183), following a standard pattern, opens with general notes covering inter alia the principal record repositories, the state and location of Bishop's Transcripts and Marriage Licences, and of Roman Catholic and Nonconformist registers. This section contains a regrettably large number of misprints, most of which can, however, be remedied by common sense. It should be noted that the information given on p. 144 about the records at Lichfield is now out of date and the enquiries should now be addressed to Lichfield City Library. A copy of the Shropshire part of Boyd's Marriage Index (p. 149) is now available at Shrewsbury Borough Library. Those wishing to consult the published transcript of Roman Catholic registers in Shropshire Parish Registers (p. 151) should be warned that the editor of this volume was highly selective in what he chose to print. The note on MS. collections of monumental inscriptions (p. 155) could be considerably expanded and a misprint on p. 156, line 3, obscures the fact that the correct dates for Eddowes's Journal are 1843-89.

The alphabetical gazetteer which follows sets out the covering dates of original registers, Bishop's Transcripts and register transcripts for all Anglican, Roman Catholic and Nonconformist churches in the county. This has been prepared with evident care and attention to detail and will supersede all previous means of reference.

A. T. Gaydon

Journal of West Midlands Regional Studies

Vol.1, No. 1, December 1967

This is the first number of what might be called the 'house magazine' of Wolverhampton College of Technology, the object of which is to publish the results of research by staff and students of various departments in the College on local history, industrial archaeology, geography and sociology. It contains papers on Horseley Fields Canal and Railway Junction, the Wolverhampton Town Commissioners (1777-1848), and a reappraisal of the achievements of the 17th century ironmaster 'Dud' Dudley. These papers are well-written, carefully documented and of interest outside their Black Country setting. An appendix summarises research in the field of regional studies on which members of the College are currently working. Future numbers are likely to be wider in scope, topically and geographically; this is one more periodical for Shropshire local historians to keep in mind.

A. T. Gaydon

Steam Engines in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield

Mr. Ivor Brown of 17 Middleton Avenue, Dinnington, Sheffield, S31 7QP, is currently investigating this subject, and would be glad to hear from anyone who has old photographs or drawings of engines used in the area. Of the hundreds of engines which have been employed less than a dozen have survived to the present day, and the future of many of these is questionable. The following are the engines known to survive:

Priorslee Furnaces, Lilleshall Co. Ltd.

Four sets:-

1. Beam engines (2). "David" and "Sampson". Built 1851 by Murdoch and Aitkin of Glasgow. Blowing engines for the blast furnaces. 12 rev. per minute. 40 in. cylinders, 8 ft. stroke. I.h.p.: 58.4 ("David") and 82.75 ("Sampson") at a test in October 1898. Last used 13th July 1952.
2. Steeple engines (2). Built about 1880 to supplement the air from the above vertical cylinders.
3. Vertical blowing engines (2). Built 1900 by the Lilleshall Company to the design of Edward P. Allis & Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.
4. Turbo-blowers (2). Built 1921 by Frazer and Chalmers of Erith, Kent.

Donnington Brickworks, Messrs. Blockleys

Single engine. Horizontal, Single cylinder engine, built late nineteenth century. This engine is believed formerly to have been used

in a paddle steamer, then in a laundry, before being rebuilt at the brickworks. Cylinder 1 ft. 8 in. diameter, 3 ft. stroke. Provided power for No. 2 plant. Ceased operation June 1967.

Milburgh Tileries, Messrs. Liptons

One set. Two horizontal single cylinder engines with 9 ft. diameter flywheel. One engine operated the tile-making plant, the other the winding drum for the clay pit. Both late 19th century. Cylinders 1 ft. 6 in. diameter, stroke about 4 ft. Ceased operation 1940.

Ivor J. Brown

Subscriptions, etc.

Subscribers to the Newsletter who are not members of the Archaeological Society are reminded that subscriptions for 1969 (Five shillings) should be sent to the Editor, Barrie Trinder, 52 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Members of the Archaeological Society are asked to note that receipts are not now normally issued for subscriptions paid by cheque, owing to the high cost of postage. Receipts will be issued if specifically requested.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

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Edited by Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52 Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury (Telephone Shrewsbury 52310)

## A Forgotten Industrial Valley

Until recently discussion of Shropshire's industrial development has tended to concentrate on areas where heavy industry has survived into the present day: which is to say around Wellington and Coalbrookdale. This is not surprising; historians as a species are every bit as good at remarking on the obvious as other people.

In the last ten years a great deal of evidence has come to light to show how misleading this emphasis can be. A glaring example is provided by the case of the Tern - Roden valley. Since early in the 19th century this has been (as it is today) a pleasant rural backwater. It is now clear that a hundred years earlier it was a major centre of iron manufacturing. Five large sites were located within the ten miles or so which separate Moreton Corbet from the confluence of Tern with Severn. Between them the five were manufacturing something like 800 or 900 tons of wrought iron a year in the late 17th and early 18th century period when, it seems, activity was at a peak. There are other sites in the upper reaches of the Tern and it would be very surprising

if more do not come to light. The aim of this note is to summarise information about these five sites, to stimulate further research into their history, and into others yet to be found.

Tern Forge: (SJ 552098)

PRN 01759

The forge was established on a 50 year lease in 1710, alongside an existing water corn mill which may almost certainly be identified with a mill operated on the tern by Lilleshall Abbey in the early 13th century, and perhaps with the Atcham Domesday Mill which could hardly have been on the turbulent Severn. By 1717 its output (Fuller Mss) was said to be 300 tons per annum and several years earlier Thomas Harvey listed its capital equipment as "a mill for rowling of Brass plates and Iron hoops, and slitting of bar Iron into rods for making of nails which cost us £1,500. Since we have erected a wire mill, a forge and a furnace for converting of Iron into Steel, and (work)shops for about 40 men". This, he claimed, made it "the first Joint Work of this kind in England, and for its goodness of Building, Europe Can't produce the like." The initial investment was about £4,000 and subsequent occupants more than doubled this; adding among other things a large forge hammer. The original partners in the lease were: "Jeffery Pinnel Merchant, James Peters Soapboyler, Samuel Cox Tobacconist, George Bridges Distiller and Caleb Lloyd Grocer, all of the City of Bristol: Thomas Harvey of Stowerbridge in the County of Worcester Ironmonger, Griffin Prankard of Somerton in the County of Somersett Gent and Peter Smythes of Stowerbridge ... Chirurgion." At least two of these were involved with Darby at Coalbrookdale, and it is evident that Tern was managed by his brother-in-law, Thomas Harvey, and that he had a close interest in it himself. The original plan seems to have been to manufacture at Tern the

charcoal smelted pig iron made at Coalbrookdale. This arrangement was destroyed by Darby's discovery of the coke smelting process in 1709 or soon afterwards, which produced iron suitable for casting but not manufacturing. The inclusion of brass work (in which Darby had been active at Bristol) is also interesting. In the 1720's Tern seems to have been sub-let to William Wood of Wolverhampton, and in the early 1730's to have passed to Joshua Gee, whose daughter Sarah had married Thomas Harvey's son Benjamin. He operated it until 1757, when failing to get an extension of the lease he evacuated it. The Hill family who had granted the 1710 lease then thankfully demolished it.

The labour force was c 80 or 90 strong, and the site, including at least one pool (Tern Mere), and a system of weirs, locks and wharfs which made it possible to get boats right up to the works (and of which traces remain on site) spread over about two miles of the Tern Valley, with the main site immediately east of Attingham Hall.

Upton Forge: (SJ 559113)

PRN 9613

The forge was certainly established by c 1675 (I am indebted to Mr. T. C. Hancox for this information and for other help about Upton) possibly on the site of an earlier water corn mill, and certainly in close association with Duncot Mill which controlled its water supply. By 1717 its output was said to be 200 tons per annum (Fuller Mss). In the 1730's and 1740's both the forge and Duncot Mill were operated by Joshua Gee of Tern, were leased to Francis Dorset (of Wytheford Forge, see below) in 1750 at which time the forge was repaired and extended. By the 1780's the forge and mill were being operated by one "John Wheeler of Upton Forge .... Ironmaster" whose partners were "George Hallen of Kidderminster, Gentleman,



William Hallen of Bridgnorth, Ironmaster, Samuel Hallen and John Hallen of Wednesbury, Ironmasters." The Hallens and Wheeler were also concerned in Moreton Corbet Forge (see below). At some date not precisely known but c.1800 it was leased by William Hazledine, and by tradition he forged the links for Telford's Menai Bridge here c.1820. Certainly by that date Hazledine had a paper mill at Upton, but this does not necessarily contradict the Menai tradition. As at Tern the works extended over about two miles of the valley, and here there were certainly two quite separate forge sites, as well as a complex system of leets and pools originating north of Duncot, in a weir across the Tern. The landlords were the Corbets of Sundorne.

Withington Forge: (SJ 594124)

SA 4116

The precise site has yet to be located, but cannot be far from the Lees Mill at the confluence of Tern and Roden with which it was associated. The documentary evidence is also as yet rather sparse. An indenture of April 1682 refers to "Richard Maule of Withington Forge, finerman." It does not seem to figure in the 1717 Fuller Mss list of ironworks. But there is listed "Winnington - 100 tons". Winnington does not look at all a likely place for a forge (two miles south-west Wollaston, SJ 329123). Is this a transcription error? Landlord as yet unknown.

Wytheford Forge: (SJ 569189)

SA 4115

Operating on a big scale by 1665 when rented out by the Charltons, the landlords in this case, at £130 per annum. By 1765 worth only £60 per annum and by 1792 said to be "much out of repair" and worth only £20 per annum. In the 1660's the lessee was John Browne, but from early to mid 18th century it seems

to have been operated by a succession of members of the Dorset (or Dorsett) family, who were also agents to the Charltons. An enterprising family, they were also active in coal and salt mines on the Charlton estate. The site shows evidence of at least one dam and pool and an extensive system of watercourses. The Fuller Mss gives the output as 140 tons per annum.

Moreton Corbet Forge: (SJ 574228) IRN 04421

This was a large site, but has a discontinuous history. It was probably going by June 1666 when the Parish Register records the burial of "Sampson Ford... a forge man." The Fuller Mss. gives it an output of 140 tons per annum, but by mid 18th century it was out of use. It was revived only in 1757, in which lease there is a reference to "the meadow ground called the forge pool, being formerly the pool belonging to Moreton Corbett forge ...". In 1757 it was leased by the Corbett's of Moreton Corbet to "John Wilkinson, of Wrexham, Ironmaster, and Edward Blakeway of Shrewsbury, Draper." Blakeway was, of course, Wilkinson's father-in-law, and his partner in other ventures. Wilkinson took the forge in November 1757, but moved his centre of operations to Willey soon after. In October 1759, the site was leased to a group including "Arthur Davies ... of Great Dawley, Gent., George Perry of Coalbrookdale, Gent., Isaac Colley of the Old Hall, Wellington, Gent., Richard Smith of Upton Under Haughmond, Gent., and Joseph Steedman of Moreton Forge, Gent." They covenanted to build by March 1761, on the site of the old forge, a "strong substantial forge", which evidently they did, since in March 1790 John Wheeler and William Hallen (both involved also at Upton Forge) were leasing it. Hallen had bought a share in it in March 1775, and Wheeler had followed suit in July 1782, buying out between them all the original partners of 1759, so that in March 1790 they were

able to sell the remainder of the lease to one Richard Watson. A final point of interest in relation to this site is the presence of the Hazledine family. In a lease of January 1759 John Hazledine the elder, of Moreton Corbet, Millwright, appears, as do his sons John and William. John the elder leased a half acre called "Forge Bank ... near to the place where Moreton Corbett Forge then formerly stood and lying betwixt the two water courses there," to the five partners of 1759 listed above. His younger son William at a later stage was to manage, and then lease the forge at Upton. This is a nice point with which to conclude, since it highlights once again the close and intricate texture of the family relationships which underlay and influenced the development of this Shropshire "mini-Ruhr", and which require further investigation.

Sources: Attingham Mss., Harward and Evers Mss., Charlton Mss. all in S.R.O. Corbet of Sundorne Deeds in Shrewsbury Borough Library. Mss notes on Salop history by (respectively) J. Blakeway and T. F. Dukes, now in the Bodleian Library.

ROBIN CHAPLIN

#### Roman Catholic Recusants in Shropshire

William Price, Assistant Editor, Shropshire V.C.H., is building up a list of printed and manuscript sources relating to Roman Catholics in Shropshire 1660 - 1800, and also a card index of all recorded Catholics in the county in this period. He would be grateful for any references to this subject which readers of the Newsletter might find, and is willing to make the lists and indices available to researchers. Mr. Price may be contacted at the V.C.H. office, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

#### The Church at Posenhall

SA 11477

The parish or extra-parochial district of Posenhall lies between Much Wenlock on the west, Benthall on the north, Broseley on the east, and Barrow on the south. The district consists almost entirely of farm land, is less than half a square mile in area, and contains only three or four dwellings. The hamlet of Posenhall (which consists of about half a dozen cottages), and Posenhall Farm, lie not in Posenhall but in Benthall parish. By Order in Council the vicar of Benthall is charged with the duties of incumbent of Posenhall, but Posenhall exists as a separate entity and is so shown on Ordnance maps. From this it has been assumed that a church once existed in Posenhall. Eyton (Vol. III, p. 287) refers to a tradition to this effect and mentions some confirmatory evidence from the archives of Wenlock Priory. Nevertheless there is no record of a church or an incumbent of Posenhall, and it seems likely that the church must have ceased to exist not long after the Conquest or earlier.

It is possible that Posenhall Farm and the hamlet of Posenhall were once part of Posenhall parish. According to Eyton they seem to have constituted a separate property up to the 16th century, but by 1844 they had become part of the Benthall estate, and it seems likely that they were transferred from Posenhall to Benthall parish when their ownership was acquired by the owners of Benthall.

A disused and overgrown lane runs east-west to the south of Posenhall Farm and hamlet. The lane now forms part of the boundary between Posenhall and Benthall parishes, but if Posenhall hamlet and Farm were part of Posenhall parish, the lane would be nearly in the centre of the parish. The hedge on the southern side bends southward to form an open space

along the side of the lane, which at some date was probably occupied by a small building. The alignment of the building must have been more or less east-west. A very old yew tree grows in the hedge at this point, a most unusual feature on agricultural land. It is suggested that this spot may well be the site of Posenhall church or chapel. (SJ 656013)

The nearest churches to this place are Barrow, which is almost certainly partly of Saxon construction, and Benthall, which contains a Saxon font. Possibly Posenhall contained a third Saxon place of worship. The author will be glad to help anyone interested in investigating this problem further.

SIR PAUL BENTHALL

A Cruck-built House at Prees

SA 12327

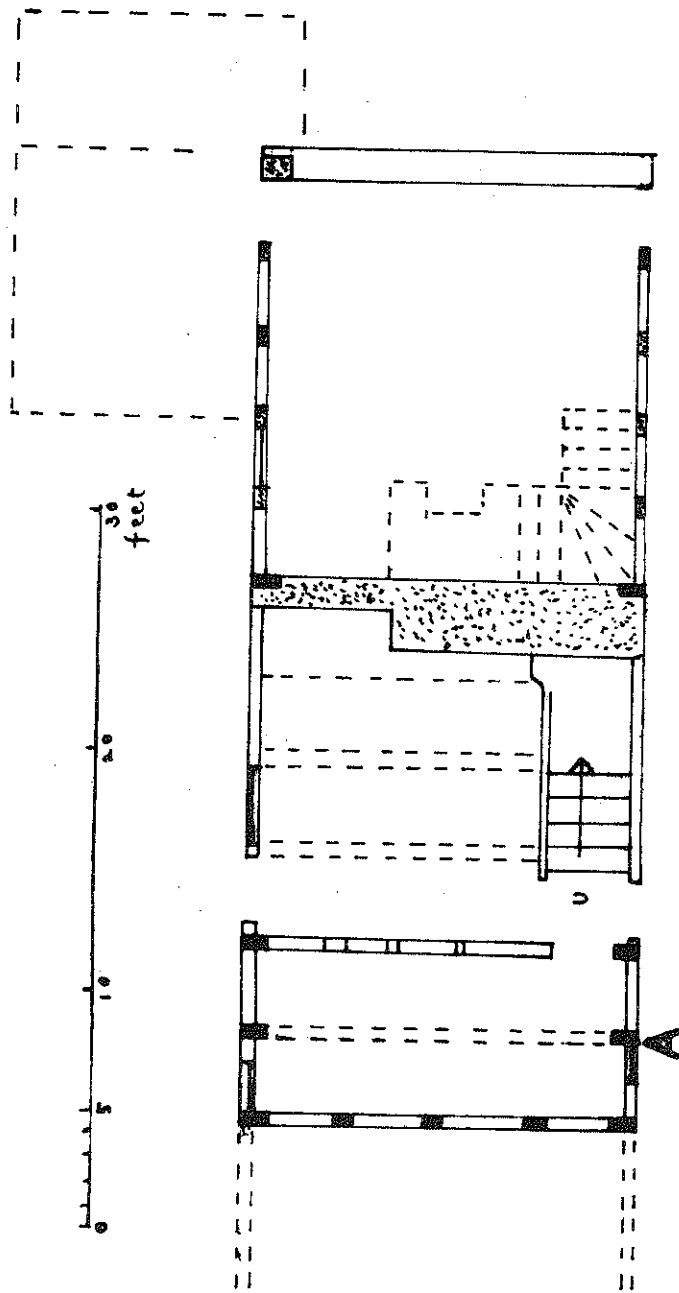
Cross End, Prees, stands just south-east of the parish church on the road to Market Drayton and Hodnet. It is an interesting building combining a number of features which one would often have to look at several houses to see.

The Sixteenth Century House

It was built as an open hall with three cruck-trusses probably in the first part of the sixteenth century. The cruck-trusses do not form two equal bays, but rather one and a half bays, and it seems that there has always been a chamber over the half-bay. The cross-passage was apparently under this, and windows occupy what are probably the original doorways. The present doorways on both sides are comparatively modern. The mortices and supports for the original floor-beam can still be seen, but the floor of the present chamber over the passage is about ten inches higher.

This type of plan is sometimes found in town houses, e.g. in Oxford and Coventry<sup>(1)</sup> and more locally at Weobley in Herefordshire.<sup>(2)</sup> It is interesting to find what appears to be virtually a town-house plan appearing in late-medieval Prees.

The gable crucks terminate just above the collar. This appears to be an original feature and no doubt they were constructed in this way for a thatched, hipped roof of the type which still remains on the house today. The roof timbers are smoke-blackened indicating an open hearth when the house was first built. The crucks are 21 feet high to the ridge and the roof is strengthened longitudinally by straight wind-braces. The original house has little decoration or embellishment, the roof purlins having simple four-inch wide chamfers with wedge stops.



CROSS END, PREES

6J558233

### The Seventeenth Century Additions

At about the turn of the sixteenth-seventeenth century a room and chamber over were added at the eastern end of the building. This box-frame addition has long-scratched carpenters' assembly marks. Presumably it was a parlour with chamber over. At this time the hip-roof at this end was modified to make a continuous ridge with the new addition. This parlour had a gable fireplace and stack against the earlier house and it seems probable that the fireplace against this in the hall was inserted at the same time. These additions and alterations are typical of the "great rebuilding" period of the late sixteenth century and the first forty years of the next.

At some time a floor was inserted in the hall to give a bedroom above, but from the comparative slightness of the timber used it was probably later in the seventeenth century. It was no doubt at the same time that a screen was inserted between the passage and hall and the doorway of this period, now blocked, is still in situ at its north end. Opposite this is another blocked doorway with a roughly-cut, elliptical head leading through to what seems to be a late seventeenth century, single-storey barn built on to the western end of the house. This has a lower roof-line than the original house and so the hipped roof at this end is unaltered.

Thus by about the end of the seventeenth century this was a house of more or less normal plan for the period with a parlour, hall/kitchen, service-room, all with chambers above. The direct access to a farm building beyond the service-room is less common and seems to show some influence from the long-house type of dwelling found to the west and south-west of this area.

The position of the original kitchen is not known. It may have been outside the house to the south of the passage or it may have been a lean-to occupying the position of the present barn at the west end of the house. Certainly some alteration appears to have gone on here when the barn was built for some of the studs have short, deep, carpenters' assembly marks which are usually late in date. If the kitchen was here the rough doorway, now blocked, may have been a feature of the original building.

#### Later Additions and Alterations

Later a small room was added at the north-east corner. It is of light timber-framed construction and appears to be of early eighteenth century date. Still later, still timber-framed but this time with brick infilling, a small room only about 12 feet by 5 feet was added to this on the east. It may have been a store-room of some sort.

Perhaps at the same time the eastern gable was rebuilt in brick. Only the north-east corner post survives of the timber-framing of the earlier wall and it can probably be assumed that it was removed because of some structural defect; it was hardly likely to be weathering at this end.

This house was probably the home of husbandmen or smallholders, people of no great wealth or pretensions but well-off enough to afford a comfortable house and to keep it up-to-date for over three centuries, for a range was inserted in the main fireplace sometime in the late nineteenth century.

I would like to express my thanks to Mr. A. T. Gaydon who introduced me to this house, to the extra-mural Old Buildings Research Group who did most of the measuring, and to Mr. H. L. Unwin, Prees.

1. W. A. Pantin, "Medieval English town-house plans" *Med. Arch.*, VI-VII (1962-3), pp. 202-240.
2. J. W. Tonkin, "Vernacular Buildings, 1968", *Trans. Woolhope Nat. Field Club*, XXXIX (1968) Not yet published.

J. W. TONKIN

#### The Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Most readers of the Newsletter will already have seen in the press the welcome announcement of the plans for the open air industrial museum in the Ironbridge Gorge. Proposals include the extension of museum facilities in Coalbrookdale, a main site at Blists Hill where large exhibits illustrating the industrial history of Shropshire will be installed, and a number of isolated restored industrial remains. A magnificent model of the Blists Hill site has been constructed which is on public view from time to time. Since the summer of 1968 a great deal has already been achieved by voluntary effort, including the excavation of a large part of the docks of the Coalport canal inclined plane, the demolition of one of the steam engines from the Snedshill brickworks, and the removal to safe keeping of many important industrial relics. This is a most exciting project which should make the southern part of Telford New Town one of Britain's leading tourist attractions within the next ten years. An appeal for funds for the museum has been launched, and the Hon. Curator, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Limited, Priorslee Hall, Oakengates, Telford, will be pleased to receive subscriptions or to hear of offers of voluntary labour, whether from individuals or from organised groups.

### Tractarians in Shropshire

Work has recently begun on a neglected field of Salopian church history - the effects of the 19th century Catholic revival in the Anglican Church in Shropshire. As yet study has been restricted to that part of Shropshire which was in Lichfield diocese. No serious research has been attempted in Shropshire in Hereford diocese, but a rapid survey of St. Asaph diocesan records at Aberystwyth has indicated little Anglo-Catholicism in the Oswestry area. (For details of the ecclesiastical geography of Shropshire, indicating the considerable diocesan boundary changes of 1893, 1905 and 1920, see V.C.H. Vol. II, which is the next volume to be published.)

Shropshire now has very few "advanced" Anglo-Catholic churches, but study of church directories, parish magazines, Church Union Gazettes, biographies, and local press, of the period 1860-1900, indicates that there were many Tractarians in North Shropshire at this time. Church furnishings often indicate also 19th century Tractarians in parishes now far from Catholic.

The propagation of Tractarianism was probably made possible by the leniency shown to Anglo-Catholics by John Allen, Archdeacon of Salop 1847-1886. (See R. M. Grier, John Allen (1889), and A. O. Allen, John Allen and his Friends (n.d.)). Allen was no Tractarian himself, but refused to prosecute such. The "Movement" spread by personal contacts. G. W. Pigott, Rector of Upton Magna, was perhaps the earliest Salopian Tractarian, although Leicester Darwall, Vicar of Criggion, just outside the county, wore a cope at a weekly Sung Eucharist from at least 1848. By 1869 there was a Shrewsbury branch of the English Church Union, founded in 1859 to defend and disseminate High Church principles in the Church of

England. Yearly festivals were held at St. Mary's, Shrewsbury - under its Tractarian Vicar, Thomas Bucknall Lloyd, 1854-1888 - and the church of All Saints, Castlefields, founded by T. M. B. Bulkeley-Owen in 1870, was from the beginning closely associated with the Movement, having the earliest surpliced choir in Shrewsbury, and possibly in Shropshire. For Bulkeley-Owen, see a biography by F. D. How (1914) which brings out very clearly Owen's work for railwaymen, both on a railway mission among builders of the Cambrian Railway and in Castlefields. Work is in progress on a history of All Saints to celebrate the centenary.

The most dramatic manifestation of Tractarianism in Shropshire was the Society of the Holy Ghost, an Anglican brotherhood, whose members took the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, at Stoke-on-Tern from 1869-1879. (We are indebted to the Rev. J. R. Williams, Rector of Puddlestone, Herefordshire, for introducing us to this Society - almost all authors in this field have placed the society at Stoke-on-Trent.) Under more single-minded leadership this might have developed into a Mirfield or Cowley Society, but adherence to set ideas was not a characteristic of the founder, the Rev. R. W. Corbet, fifth son of Reginald Corbet of Adderley Corbet (Rector of Stoke 1869-1901) dissolved the Brotherhood after an illness, when he had possibly already met the German lady from Oldenburg whom he married in 1884. For a decade Stoke Rectory attracted Anglican priests and laymen, who lived a common life centred around the Roman monastic hours - for the recitation of which they received a blessing from Pius IX - in an enclosure, with cloisters and refectory, traces of which survive. Father Corbet rebuilt the parish church, at his own expense, in 1874, and the "returned stalls", ecclesiological high altar, "High Mass sedilia", and plethora of prieux-Dieu and specimens

of religious art, all reflect very advanced High Church views. Augustus J. C. Hare was heavily sarcastic towards the Society, but Archdeacon Allen was favourably impressed, taking his literary friends to see the Monastery and admiring the library. General Gordon, not usually considered an Anglo-Catholic, appears to have made a retreat there before his last Sudanese expedition. By then perhaps Corbet had lost his enthusiasm for Tractarianism, and was tasting Evangelicalism in his search for truth which ended in mystical Theosophy tinged with Christian Socialism.

Many of the "Religious" remained only briefly at Stoke, for the founder's company could be very taxing in his "Dove-cot". Some members entered the Roman church, like Luke Rivington, first Prior of Stoke, who became a famous missionary in India. At least two members became Anglican missionaries, one in Canada, and the other in South Africa. One priest member became Rector of Upton Magna after the dissolution, and H. E. Hodson, uncle of a suffragan bishop of Shrewsbury, also remained in Anglican parochial work. One lay-brother, a local shepherd's son who played the fine three-manual organ placed in Stoke church by Corbet, was later ordained. Little evidence is available on the work of the brothers at Stoke. One certainly conducted a Parish Mission at Stapleton in 1874 (V.C.H. Salop, Vol. VIII, 168) and signed the register P. B. Simeon ex S. (ocietate) S. (ancti) S. (piritus). Priest brothers often took services and occasional offices at Stoke, and also at Adderley, where Athelstan Corbet, elder brother of the founder, was an advanced Tractarian incumbent 1863-1900.

The S.S.S. was important as a rural example of the results of the Oxford Movement, more often seen in urban "slum" parishes. Further research may also indicate the effects of the Stoke-on-Tern experiment

on the later missionary work of several important members.

We should be especially grateful to learn of the whereabouts of any 19th century parish magazines which may survive. A collection of these would add much interesting detail to the religious and social history of Shropshire.

WILLIAM PRICE,  
Assistant Editor,  
Shropshire V.C.H.

COLIN MILNER,  
Senior Education Officer,  
R.A.F., Tern Hill.

#### The Shropshire Iron Industry: Two new publications

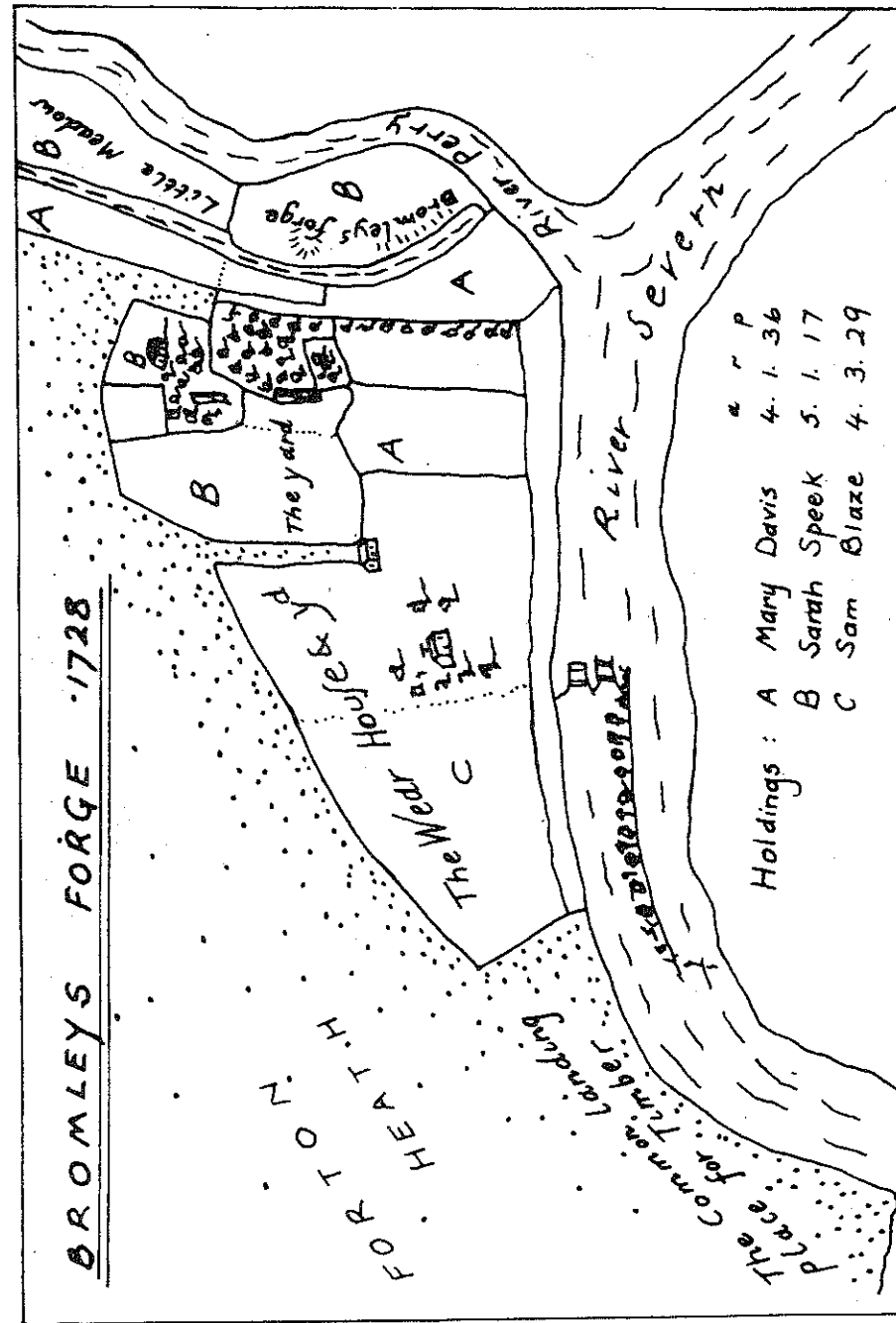
In "Iron and Steel", Vol. 42, No. 2 (April 1969) is an illustrated article by Norman Mutton on the construction of a tin works at Hampton Loade and its operation from 1822-26. It was built at a time when it had been thought that the Midlands tin industry was quiescent, but after only four years it was abandoned and the forge site was then used for the manufacture of charcoal iron. Mr. Mutton has also edited the diary of John U. Rastrick for the year 1820. This is published, with an introductory essay, as Special Publication No. 1 of the Journal of West Midland Regional Studies, by the Wolverhampton College of Technology. In 1820 Rastrick was managing partner of the Stourbridge Ironworks and the entries are mostly of only one or two lines each, but they indicate clearly the sort of activities upon which he was engaged, his social life, and also give odd glimpses of his family life. A shortened version of the introductory essay to this publication appears in the May issue of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers. The diary includes many references to Shropshire sites in which Rastrick's firm had interests.

A note on Bromley's Forge (SJ 439167)

It is well known that during the charcoal and water power phase of the iron industry in Shropshire, the tributary streams of the Severn were popular sites for furnaces and forges. It is therefore no surprise to find the name Bromley's Forge marked on the O.S. map at the point where the River Perry joins the Severn between near Montford Bridge and Mytton. The Powis estate papers preserved in the Salop County Record Office cover the parish of Montford and include a set of estate maps dated 1728 which show this corner of the parish to be mainly occupied by Forton Heath (400a) except a group of three smallholdings in the angle between the Severn and The Perry called "Bromley's Forge". A branch of The Perry, obviously a leet, is shown running through these to one small close actually called Bromley's Forge in which a pattern of hachures suggest some earthworks. (See opposite)

The heath was inclosed later in the eighteenth century adding more land to the smallholdings while some of the houses have been largely rebuilt. The old closes by the river show no signs of having been altered and there are even earthworks as shown on the map, although the leet no longer takes a flow of water. Moles throw up fragments of slag while the smallholders often speak of finding iron-rich stone around their fields. Clearly this site is one worthy of further investigation both through archives and excavation.

DAVID PANNETT





Excavations at Llanymynech (SJ 265 220)

A small excavation in conjunction with the Offa Antiquarian Society was begun in April with the purpose of seeking stratified dating evidence of Roman mining activity in the area of the Ogof where repeated discoveries of Roman coins and pottery, some in association with skeletons, have been made since the 18th century in the mining galleries leading off from the cave. The most recent discoveries have been those of a hoard of 33 denarii deposited in the latter half of the second century and found in 1964, and a disturbed burial in association with a Constantinian coin found by the Shropshire Mining Club in the "Burial Chamber".

Attention has been directed towards the mouth of the cave where an 8 feet long trench has been dug to a depth of 5 feet so far without meeting any stratified material: the whole of this level has been found to be heavily disturbed in recent years as modern objects such as the remains of a biro refill and electric light bulb have been found mixed with human and animal bones, Roman pottery, 18th century clay pipes and a silver penny of Edward III dated 1358-1360. A few sherds of Roman pottery have been found, mostly rims of second century date.

Two depressions outside the cave mouth clearly associated with mining activity have been sectioned and two above the cave in close proximity to the open shaft which leads to the "Shaft Chamber" and appear to be following the same seam of rock. No dating evidence except for two possible Romano-British potsherds has come from the filling of these features, and excavation has only served to prove that the two lower depressions were open pits refilled with "deads" after copper had been extracted, while the upper features are shown to be shafts.

The find spot of the 1964 coin hoard has been examined and recorded: the coins had been concealed in the upper part of a pile of "deads" stacked against the wall of the chamber at about 6 feet above original floor level. Since the second century the stack of deads had been virtually cemented together by the process of calcification. A short inspection of the "Mandible Chamber" revealed a few disturbed human bones and three small Romano-British potsherds of black burnished ware. Work is continuing.

(The word "dead" refers to local mining terminology for mined limestone discarded for insufficient metallurgical content.)

GEOFFREY TOMS

### Excavations at Viroconium

The work of the Roman Research Group in Shropshire during 1968 has been concentrated at the Finger Post Cottage site at the extreme east angle of the VIROCONIUM ramparts. The modern road to Ironbridge passes across the ancient defences at this point and the cottage garden abuts upon the present road at this point. (SJ 568083) The slang in which are the ruins of the cottage does in fact descend from the summit of the rampart and extends downwards in an easterly direction across the recut ditch and the small outermost ditch.

The upper layers are defaced by a large number of pits containing 19th and 20th century rubbish. Several of these pits were dug through successive Roman levels down to the natural sandy subsoil.

The trench cut last year, parallel to the present road, had revealed the recut great ditch butting up to a Roman road of first century construction. This trench was extended downwards and eastwards and the small outer ditch of the first period, found by Dr. G. Webster in his 1960 excavation a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to the east, was again located. At this point the Roman road was no longer seen. It had turned away to the north east and lies hidden beneath the modern road. It was also found that the small outer ditch, here about eight feet wide, and two and a half feet deep, had become silted up before being deliberately covered by a sandy layer containing pottery of the first part of the second century. This ditch can never have served an efficient defensive purpose and from an early period had been neglected. Beyond this ditch quantities of oyster shells were found. These were kindly identified by Mr. Norman Tebble of the British Museum (Natural History) as *Ostrea edulis*, the common or native oyster. Quantities of ox bones, some sawn as if butchered, were associated.

Further investigations were carried out at the westerly part of the road where it entered the town. Here it joined an extensive cobbled surface well set in clay and lying on dirty natural soil with here and there a thin turf line. This yard, if such it was, extended along the south grass verge of the present road leading to Wroxeter village, lay under the hedge bank and was found at a depth of from two to three feet in field No. 432. In this field at a distance of 90 feet from the hedge the foundations and remains of the construction trench of a wall was found. A total length of 38 feet of this wall was excavated. It had been set in an E-W orientation and during its destruction the cobbled surface which doubtless covered the construction trench had been destroyed also. Adjoining this wall a series of rooms were discovered all of which faced south. One was heated by a hypocaust the plain mosaic floor being supported on pillars of old red sandstone from the neighbourhood of Wenlock Edge. The mosaic had been smashed to fragments but it was possible to identify a scroll border pattern composed of tesserae of five colours. The large slabs which would have supported the mosaic were almost all gone a few fragments only remaining; these also were of old red sandstone. The remains of the furnace were found in the south wall of this room. The sides of the flue were built of red bonding tiles, the floors of a greyish sandstone but the voussoirs were missing. Dozens of large roof shingles, some with the nails still in the holes, choked the area beyond the furnace and were found in quantities all over the site. These shingles were, as generally occurs, lozenge shaped with borders about 18 inches long. Very few fragments of red roof imbrices were found.

Of interest were the numerous fragments of brilliantly coloured and decorated wall plaster and a few pieces showed that the original bright yellow

panels on one wall had been covered with mortar and an entirely new pattern superimposed.

It appeared that the hypocaust heated two rooms and five other smaller rooms were partially explored. A large piece of a Samian cup of Dr. 27 with cement adhering to it suggested that it had been used in a cement mix during the construction of the building. This, taken in conjunction with late first century pottery found in the construction trenches of two of the walls, suggests a late first century date for the erection of the building.

In the debris and rubble black burnished ware of the mid fourth century was found in some quantity so that the possibility cannot be disregarded that the structure was demolished in late Roman times.

A remarkably fine piece of tooled masonry appeared to have dropped near the north wall of one of the smaller rooms. This has been transported by officials of H.M. Ministry of Works to the site under their guardianship.

Due to the need to sow winter wheat in the field where this work took place it was necessary to backfill the excavation but it is hoped to resume that investigations when the crop is harvested.

A. W. J. HOUGHTON,  
F.S.A.

### Steam Engines in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield

The statement in Newsletter No. 35 that less than a dozen steam engines survive in the area is a little pessimistic and rather inaccurate. In addition to those named, there are two further engines in the vertical blowing engine house of the Lilleshall Company at Priors Lee. One of these is a barring engine and might therefore perhaps be considered as part of the blowing engines themselves, but the other is a single-cylinder engine with a huge flywheel suspended over the cylinder which, although partly supported by the enormous castings of the vertical blowing engines - an obvious design feature in the confined space of the engine house, was built to a separate order number and is quite properly to be considered as a separate engine. It is called on the plans the "tuyere engine" and was apparently built to operate a pump to circulate cooling water round the tuyeres of the blast furnaces.

Two more engines also survive nearby at the Lilleshall Company's former Snedshill Brickworks where they were used to drive the brickmaking machinery. Both are horizontal single-cylinder engines. One was built by Marshalls and the other by the Lilleshall Company themselves. So far no documents seem to have survived concerning them and their dates are unknown but at the time of writing they are being dismantled with a view to preservation at the Ironbridge Gorge Trust's Industrial Museum at Blists Hill.

Even these four additional engines do not complete the list. If Mr. Brown feels that the two Fraser & Chalmers turbo-blowers at Priors Lee qualify as steam engines, then we must surely include also not only the several fine steam turbines at Ironbridge "A" Power Station which have been operating since 1932, but in

addition the even greater turbines at the huge "B" station adjoining, which I understand are about to commence operation shortly.

J. HORSLEY DENTON

A bloom of Shropshire Wrought Iron

In March 1968, at a time of exceptionally low water, a bloom of wrought iron was found in the River Severn at Coalport near to the end of one of the diamond-shaped self-acting inclined railways which were used to transfer goods from the tub boats on the Shropshire Canal to the barges on the river. (SJ 698023) The iron had obviously fallen into the river instead of into the hold of the barge. The cross section of the bloom was 3 3/16 in. x 2 9/16 in. and it was approximately 2 ft. 6 in. long.

Through the agency of Mr. W. K. V. Gale the iron was analysed by the British Iron and Steel Research Association at Sheffield. The analysis is: Carbon 0.016, Sulphur 0.017, Manganese 0.01, Phosphorus 0.140 %. Mr. Gale comments: "These figures don't really tell us much except that the specimen is a good example of classical wrought iron. It would forge and weld well, and would stand up to hard work ... it is a typical local product". It is probable that the iron dates from before 1858 when the Shropshire Canal was closed north of the bottom of the Windmill Farm inclined plane. It is impossible to date it by analysis.

A portion of the bloom not required for analysis has been placed in the custody of the Shrewsbury Borough Museum.

BARRIE TRINDER

Notes on Finds in Shrewsbury

1. 2a St. Alkmund's Square (see also S.N.L. No. 35)

The opportunity arose in January to examine the contents of a \*fifth pit 5 feet in depth, on the site: no finds were made in the damp black sludgy infill except animal bones in an advanced state of disintegration, but overlying the pit was an almost complete black glazed 16th century tyg.

The Saxon pottery reported in the last issue is now recognised as undecorated Chester Ware of 10th century date. Chester Ware is dated by the hoard of 522 Saxon coins deposited in a jar c.975 A.D. and discovered in 1950 in that city; it has recently been found in early 10th century levels at Hereford, and is also known at Tamworth and in Derbyshire. It is thus clearly displaying a wide West Midlands distribution. A sherd of contemporary yellow-glazed Stamford Ware has also been found on the site.

\* The four features reported in the last issue are all now interpreted as pits.

2. Building demolition operations have been observed at the Grocott's site in High Street and the Gas Board site in Pride Hill. In each case deep cellars had cut right through the earlier town levels to the natural sand, and their walls being retained in position successfully masked what would have been key cross-sections, except for the very bottom of a pit on the Gas Board site which produced two green-glazed potsherds.

3. A considerable stretch of the 13th century town wall was exposed in building operations at Charles Clark's Garage Showrooms at Roushill. Although the

fabric is essentially c.1230 in date, there is much evidence of repair and reconstruction perhaps in the 15th century and at the time of the Civil War, and the wall had later served as the back wall to buildings in the 19th century. The sloping plinth revealed in P. A. Barker's excavation a few yards to the South (cf. *Mediaeval Archaeology* 1962-63) was found to continue on one level to the north. After about 30 feet the plinth ended and the course was continued as a stepped foundation of three courses, presumably marking a break in original building construction.

The writer is indebted to Mr. Roy Beard for drawing his attention to the site and for much helpful discussion.

GEOFFREY TOMS

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

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Edited by Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road,  
Shrewsbury.

## The early years of the Coalport Tar Tunnel

Future generations may well regard the Coalport Tar Tunnel as one of the wonders of industrial Shropshire. For a long time it was inaccessible, and many people who took a close interest in the industrial history of east Shropshire were unaware that it still existed. In recent years, thanks largely to the efforts of the Shropshire Mining Club, the tunnel has been "rediscovered". A party of Mining Club members led by Mr. Ivor Brown have surveyed the tunnel, and a summary of their findings was published in the News Letter. Mr. Brown has written a number of valuable articles on the tunnel which have appeared in the Shropshire Magazine and the Shropshire Star, and a short account was included in the tour notes provided for visitors to the Open Day at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum in September 1969. On this occasion a small part of the tunnel was opened to the public for the first time, and in the long term the Museum authorities are considering the opening up of sufficient of the tunnel to enable visitors to see its magnificently coloured calcite curtains and its remarkable straw stalactites.

The purpose of this article is to review the documentary evidence concerning the early history of the tunnel. Evidence which has recently come to light, both published and unpublished, makes it possible to establish a rather more exact chronology of the tunnel's early years than has so far appeared. No attempt is made to explain the geological features of the tunnel nor its later history, and readers who wish to know more about these aspects are referred to Mr. Brown's articles listed below.

Most current knowledge of the tunnel derives from the various writings of John Randall, the 19th century historian of Madeley. Like much of Randall's information about the late 18th century industrial scene, his account of the tunnel is taken in large measure from the valuable British Museum manuscript which incorporates a detailed survey of the parts of Shropshire in the diocese of Hereford made by Archdeacon Joseph Plymley in 1793. According to Randall and Plymley, the tunnel was driven in 1788 by William Reynolds, who hoped to bring out coal through it from pits at Blists Hill. After some progress had been made, a spring of natural tar was found, which was subsequently exploited for profit. Both Randall's and Plymley's accounts contain some minor errors. Plymley thought that the tunnel was driven by the Coalbrookdale Company, but although William Reynolds was a partner in the Company, the Tar Tunnel was an enterprise which he undertook on his own account. It is not mentioned in the complex collection of documents relating to the division of the Darby and Reynolds interests in the Coalbrookdale partnership in the 1790s. Plymley's account of the tunnel is included in his description of Broseley parish, and follows some remarks about the famous Burning Well at Broseley.

New evidence about the tunnel suggests that it was driven rather earlier than Randall supposed, in the

first half of 1787 or perhaps even slightly before. Charles Hadfield in his "Canals of the West Midlands" quotes Derby and Birmingham newspapers of June 1787 to show that a level had been driven from the Severn bank under the Hay to serve local collieries, partly as a drain and partly as a navigable canal. The Birmingham newspaper headed its account "Coalbrookdale Navigation". These accounts show that tar was struck after 300 yards and that by the time they were written a reservoir had already been built to hold the tar then gushing out at a rate of 70 to 80 gallons a day. This is the only firm evidence to suggest that the tunnel was originally planned as a canal, but it seems reasonably authoritative. William Reynolds was at the same time building canals at Wombridge and Ketley, both of which included tunnels, and there is evidence of navigable levels serving the coal faces at mines in Donnington Wood in this period. Furthermore, two pieces of evidence which in themselves would be of little value, can be taken to imply that the tunnel was intended to be a canal. Randall suggested that it was meant to link up with the lower level of the Shropshire Canal at Coalport. At its face value this suggestion is absurd, since the Shropshire Canal was not even authorised until 1788, and not completed until 1793, but if the tunnel was planned as a canal this may explain Randall's confusion. In "Manners and Customs of All Nations", published in 1827 and quoted in Mr. Brown's articles, the discovery of a tar spring during the construction of a canal in Shropshire in 1787 is mentioned. The site of the spring has not been located, but it may well have been that in the tar tunnel. A more detailed survey of the entrance to the tunnel may show whether it could possibly have been built as a canal.

The discovery of the tar spring in 1787 or slightly earlier is further confirmed by a letter dated 6th December 1787 from Samuel More, secretary of the Society of Arts, in which he tells Abraham Darby III



of the award of the Society's medal for the model of the Iron Bridge. He concludes "Tell William Reynolds I have made some trial of the native tar". He explained that his experiments showed that the properties of this tar were superior to those of tar made by burning coal.

Most accounts of the Tar Tunnel suggest that after some time the initial high rate of flow was reduced. The Plymley manuscript says that the stream of tar was "now diminished" in 1793. The Universal British Directory, published in 1797 but compiled some years earlier, records that the spring of tar yielded several hogsheads per day for a long time, but at the time of writing was almost exhausted. It is possible to date this information with some precision since the same report noted that "the navigable canal was nearly complete from Ketley" (to Coalport). The Shropshire Canal was opened in 1793, and it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that this report was written in 1792-93. The period of the tar spring's high rate of flow therefore seems to have lasted at the most for five or six years.

Randall thought that the flow of tar in the early years of the tunnel was about 1,000 gallons per week. Evidence from two eminent geologists who visited it in the 1790s confirms this figure. Robert Townson in 1799 recorded that "the so famous spring of mineral tar or pitch .... at this present time .... only yields about thirty gallons per week, formerly it yielded nearly a thousand gallons in one week; and at first, when the level or adit was driving, many barrels were collected in one day". Townson's account is exceptionally reliable, since most of his description of industrial Shropshire came directly from William Reynolds. Arthur Aikin, also writing in 1797, noted that the tunnel formerly produced three or four barrels of tar a day, but that the flow had been reduced to about half a barrel. If a

barrel contained 36 gallons, as was normal, a rate of four per day is equivalent to 1,008 gallons a week, which accords well with other estimates.

It should be noted that Aikin's description does indeed refer to the Coalport Tar Tunnel, although he says that the tar spring was "close to the inclined plane from the Ketley (instead of the Shropshire) Canal to the Severn". Randall's interpretation of this statement to mean that tar was discovered during the building of the Ketley Canal is misleading.

The most important new evidence about the tunnel comes from three eye witnesses who actually went inside it when it was operating. The first of these accounts, that of the geologist Charles Hatchett who came to Shropshire in 1796, was published in 1967. Hatchett describes the Tar Tunnel as being about 1,040 yards long. He went about 760 yards inside, and saw the tar or petroleum dripping into a small rill of water from the top of which it was collected. He recorded that a 36 gallon barrel of the petroleum or tar sold for five guineas. Part was rectified on the spot to make British Oil. Hatchett also noted that "this gallery communicated with a coal mine of considerable depth".

The second eye witness account was written by Charles Dibdin I, the dramatist and song writer, famous in Shropshire for his ballad about the huntsman Tom Moody. The account was undated, but it must have been written before Dibdin's death in 1814, although it was not published until 1823 when it appeared in a popular magazine called "The Nic-Nac or Oracle of Knowledge". The account is of considerable importance, for it is the only place where the apparatus for piping the tar and boiling it is described in any detail.

"There are .... in Shropshire .... many coal pits, one of which was discovered not long ago, to contain a stratum of a bituminous quality, and indeed is the very place where it is well known tar was extracted from coal. I went in company with a gentleman into the mouth of a bricked arch-way, which reached three hundred yards; and when we had got about thirty yards, we began to see the tar ooze from the crannies in the rock. It must be understood that from the top of the rock a pit had been sunk, which went to such an immense depth that it would have been very expensive, and indeed, almost impracticable, to work it. Finding, however, the coals of an admirable quality, it was thought worthwhile to form the arch-way above described at the foot of the mountain, and as near as possible to the Severn, that the coal might be drawn out in carriages, which mode of getting at them, instead of the usual way, it was thought would be so much more expeditious and convenient, as to make a saving, in a short time, equal to the expense of having formed the arch-way. In the prosecution of this scheme, the tar unexpectedly made its appearance, at first oozing as we had seen it, and afterwards pouring forth in a large body, which fairly flowed into the Severn. The discovery was made known, and the course of the tar as soon as possible diverted by means of iron pipes, which were, as far as my recollection guides me, nearly as large as those which convey the water from the New River in London. Large pits were immediately dug, and immense cauldrons sunk. In these the tar was boiled, and became pitch. When I saw the place there were three springs,

one of which emitted an astonishing quantity. The first was at that time nearly dried up, and this induced the workmen to believe that the whole would one day cease, which perhaps has been the case. The tar was about the consistency of treacle, and beautifully pellucid. I have no doubt but it is the dregs of this very tar which at the distance of seven miles they extract from the coal."

The final first hand account of the Tar Tunnel is included in a description of Coalbrookdale in 1801 by an anonymous author which survives in the Labouchere Collection. Like Hatchett's Journal, this is a document of considerable general importance and it is to be published in full shortly. The author describes the tunnel as "a long subterraneous passage from when great quantities of Coal is brought and within which is a spring of petroleum or fossil Tar; together with a Spring of brine the Tar formerly issued in great quantities, but is now much reduced". This account confirms that the tunnel was being used in 1801 for its original purpose of bringing out coal from pits in the Blists Hill area. The Shropshire Mining Club and other visitors to the tunnel have noted the presence of standard Madeley Wood Company pattern cast iron plate rails along which the coal trucks were doubtless conveyed.

The new evidence about the Tar Tunnel thus establishes that it was driven in the first half of 1787, or a month or so earlier, and that it may possibly have been planned as a canal. When the tar spring was first struck the flow averaged about 1,000 gallons a week, but by about 1793 this had considerably diminished. At the mouth of the tunnel there were extensive installations for the processing of the tar. By 1801 if not earlier, large quantities of coal were

being conveyed through the tunnel to the barges on the River Severn. Its history after 1801 is much more obscure, although Mr. Ivor Brown has quoted evidence in the articles mentioned below to show that the tar was still being exploited in the 1850s. How much longer it was collected, and how long the tunnel was used for the transport of the products of the Blists Hill mines are questions which still await conclusive answers.

Sources:

The best secondary accounts of the Tar Tunnel are the articles by Ivor Brown in Shropshire News Letter No. 32, Shropshire Magazine, May 1967, and Shropshire Star, 23 July 1969. John Randall published accounts of the tunnel in his "History of Madeley" (1880) pp. 94/320, in "The Severn Valley" (1882) p. 299, in "The Wilkinsons" (n.d.) pp.20-30, and in the Victoria History of Shropshire, vol. I, p. 475. Further information appears in his "Petroleum Wells in Shropshire" in the Transactions of the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club 1906, pp. 99-103. Plymley's account of the tunnel is in British Museum Add. MS. 21018, under the heading of Broseley. Charles Hadfield quotes evidence from the Derby Mercury, 21 June 1787, and Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 25 June 1787, in his "Canals of the West Midlands" (1966) pp. 152-153. Samuel More's letter is in the Labouchere Collection (S.R.O. 1987). Robert Townson's remarks are in a paper "A Sketch of the Mineralogy of Shropshire", published in "Tracts and Observations in Natural History and Physiology" (1799), which was kindly brought to my attention by Mr. J. Pagett. Arthur Aikin's account is in his "Journal of a Tour through North Wales and part of Shropshire" (1797) pp.193-194. Charles Hatchett's Diary was edited by Dr. Arthur Raistrick and published by Barton of Truro in 1967. Charles Dibdin's visit to the Tar Tunnel is

described in "The Nic-Nac or Oracle of Knowledge" of 29th March, 1823, a copy of which is to be found in the Coalbrookdale Collection (S.R.O.245/110). Mr. A. H. Simpson of Garmston, who deposited it in the record office, has kindly given permission for it to be published. "A Description of Coalbrookdale in 1801", edited by Barrie Trinder, will appear in the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society Vol.LVIII, part III, which will be published early in 1970.

BARRIE TRINDER

#### Lea Cross Roman Villa

Excavations on the villa site at Lea Cross west of Shrewsbury (SJ 418085) have been carried out during the summer of 1969 by a team under the direction of Mr. Geoffrey Toms. A full report will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

#### Roman Pottery at Upton Cressett

Mr. A. J. H. Gunstone of the Birmingham City Museum reports that Mr. D. Stoves of Monkhopton has taken to the museum fragments of Roman pottery found in a field between Monkhopton and Upton Cressett, north of the wood to the east of New House (SO 649926). The pottery shown at Birmingham Museum included two plain Samian fragments and one portion of a 37 bowl and the footring of a small buff ware vessel. The Samian was early second century in date.

Sharpstones Hill, Shrewsbury - Site "E" (SJ496104)

E.I.A. Enclosure

Type of Site

A pre- and post-Roman Iron Age enclosure bounded by substantial but completely erased earthworks (Bi-vallate).

Location

1½ miles south of Shrewsbury. Some 1,440 yards west of a similar site (Site "A") and at the northern end of a low spur of glacial deposit (gravel/clay/sand) commanding approximately 500 acres of generally gravel slopes banked up against a ridge of outcropping pre-Cambrian shale (Longmyndian).

Discovery

Aerial Photographs. Messrs. P. A. Barker (1964) and T. Ewart (1967). Verticals and obliques. Both of a barley crop.

History

Subsequent to the second aerial survey it became known that the site was part of 119 acres opted for development (Proposed Shrewsbury Golf Club). It was, therefore, desirable to expediently excavate in order to determine its relationship with Site "A" (if any) and obtain a dating bracket. This could be followed up by a more thorough examination when the golf links engineers had submitted their plans. In the event, and during the excavations listed below, a more suitable site was purchased by the Golf Club.

### Site Conditions

A large hollow on the western side, together with a smaller one facing east appear to be modern intrusions - probably gravel/sand quarrying to afford materials for the nearby railway embankment and early coalpits. The ground at the foot of the spur is inclined to flood during storms.

### Excavation

A.

A hand dug trench 27 ft. x 6 ft. 6 ins. (Trench A1) checked that the smaller hollow was a modern intrusion. Nearby, a mechanically cut trench 6 ft. 3 ins. x 3 ft. x 10 ft. deep (Trench A2) confirmed a water-logged sand sub-soil in this area. It was thus desirable to test the "Defences" in another area.

B.

A narrow exploratory trench across the ditches at the southern side - (Trench B), mechanically dug - with the following results:-

- (i) The inner ditch is 18 ft. 6 ins. wide (Below plough) x 17 ft. 8 ins. deep. The outer ditch is 15 ft. 3 ins. x 6 ft. 4 ins. deep. Overall depth of "Defences" - 26 yards.
- (ii) Steep-sided, flat-bottomed profiles compare with that of the "Boundary" ditch at Site "D" (see appendix).
- (iii) Rapid flowing spring water coursing along ditches made deep excavation extremely hazardous (the outer ditch quickly filled to two to three inches below plough).



C.

Adjacent to Trench C.

A 9 ft. x 18 ft. area opened over the inner ditch (Trench C) - was trowelled to a depth of 5 ft. below plough (Trench B serving as a drainage trench). This yielded -

- (i) A good quantity of stratified sherds of coarse pottery mainly 1st century and some early 2nd (see appendix). This has been examined by Messrs. Rahtz, Stanford, Toms and Dr. Webster.
- (ii) Before the end of the 1st century, the ditch ceased to function as a defensive feature. (Advanced silting and use as rubbish tip).
- (iii) The outer ditch was cut after the inner ditch had ceased as defensive feature.

D.

An irregular area of approximately 265 square yards (Area "A") was stripped of ploughsoil at the southern side of the entrance and an additional narrow trench cut mechanically (Trench D). These permitted the following conclusions:-

- (i) Despite its size the outer ditch was not defensive but served to conduct spring and storm water from the site. The ditch out-turn was continued into a smaller gully leading downhill towards the Moneybrook.
- (ii) The entrance aperture was 35 yards wide. This is thus unlikely to have been defensible.

An area roughly 27 yards x 15 yards was stripped (but only 20 x 15 yards trowelled) which produced the plan of a circular gulley-bounded house superseded by an overlying sub-rectangular structure (Area "B").

X Circular House I

- (i) Gulley - 36 feet internal diameter - shallow at each side of entrance, deepening towards the rear. Entrance - 13 feet wide - facing onto the enclosure entrance.
- E.
- (ii) The gulley was shown to conduct eaves drip into a further trough-shaped gulley leading towards the main ditch.
- (iii) Four posts set fairly symmetrically on a 14 ft. 6 ins. square were probably the main roof supports - two smaller posts were auxiliary to these. Only two small posts were located in the outer periphery - these were very shallow and could represent an outer ring of ploughed out eaves support posts. (However, a turf wall is a sounder probability.)
- (iv) The absence of a hearth may be explained by the fact that the floor level had been raised by dumping gravel on to the damp sandy-marl sub-soil. This would have subsequently been ploughed out. Although the complete floor area was not uncovered it is unlikely that a "Boiling Pit" existed.
- (v) Pottery from the gulley and Pits I and II ranges from V.C.P. to terra sigillata. A broken stone spindle whorl of very rude manufacture was found near the bottom of the

gully. Pit I was a soakaway pit - probably preceding Pit II.

### Rectangular House II

- (i) 48-50 feet long x 18 feet wide (measured to the inside edge of the gully). Entrance sited on the same position as House I.
- (ii) Two rectangular beam slots, one adjacent to the entrance, give a hint of a single slope roof though further excavation is necessary here.
- (iii) Wood Ash and burnt clay (in situ) lay in, and external to the W. gully (overlying House I gully). This may represent a local conflagration rather than ash tipping.
- (iv) Again - no hearth was found.
- (v) Pottery - only 7 small sherds of similar fabrics to those of House I - retrieved from the gully.

### APPENDIX

1. The excavation was carried out by members of the Pre-historic Research Group of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Prior to this, intensive digging on the nearby building development site (over 4½ seasons) revealed an almost continuous pattern of settlement since circa 2200 B.C. These earlier excavations were permitted and sponsored, largely, by the site developers, though Ministry of Public Building and Works grants were made to Messrs. P. A. Barker and R. Livens for their part of the examination of the Eastern enclosure (Site "A").

In addition to this almost completely excavated enclosure (containing a single, circular, gully bounded house) an extra-mural house of rectangular form (again gully bounded) yielding 1st Century pottery of similar forms to Site "E" was detected.

Subsequently, excavations lasting approximately twenty months detected and traced a contemporary linear ditch of unknown length, for 140 yards on a roughly straight course running up the hill on the N. slope. This feature has a flat bottom, steep sides and is 12-15 ft. wide with a revetted bank to the West. It appears to separate the two enclosures and was possibly a defensible boundary between them. At one point the ditch was backfilled with clean gravel, at an early stage, to afford a causeway for a road. Since this occurs in exact alignment with the known stages of the Wroxeter-Caersws Roman road west of Shrewsbury, it is probable that it continued this road on between the two enclosures.

## 2. Pottery.

Approximately 209 sherds, but including only 35 rims, provided the necessary links between the houses and the inner ditch together with relationships with Site "A" features. Analysis of fabrics gives approximately 195 vessels represented. The earlier wares are, exclusively, Pre-Roman coarse, plain, black cooking pots with everted or plain rims.

Early Roman wares are represented, generally, by plain red fine fabrics - the only form of decoration being horizontal linear grooving. Very small flakes of terra sigillate (two rims) occur in all layers. B.B. and "lattice" patterned Black wares mingle with common red wares in the later stages of ditch silt/backfill.

62 sherds, including 10 rims, were recovered from the house features.

*W. E. Jenks.*

Wroxeter: Ministry of Public Building and Works  
Excavation 1969

A month's excavation (from 26th July to 23rd August) was carried out on the site of the baths basilica and the area to the east between the basilica and the north-south insula boundary road in preparation for this part of the city to be opened to the public. The exploratory excavation on site 68 in 1967 and 1968 had shown that the latest levels were preserved even in the highest part of the field, and so that object of the 1969 excavation was to examine these latest layers over the whole area of the basilica.

As previous investigations had shown that the topsoil was considerably deeper over the lower slopes of the field, some of this over-burden was stripped mechanically from an area approximately 60 metres by 30 metres taking great care that no archaeological layers were reached or disturbed. The upper half of the field was stripped by hand because experience on site 68 had shown that the latest archaeological layers were a mere six inches below the surface. However, as the work proceeded westwards it became clear that there were some very unexpected changes in level, particularly between the interior and the exterior of the baths precinct, and some of the great depth of topsoil was removed mechanically. This unforeseen volume of overburden slowed down the work considerably, and it was not possible in the time available to join the extension of site 68 to the excavated area of the basilica proper. This has left some extremely interesting problems in the undug area between the two sites.

The first task in the basilica was to unravel the tangle of previous archaeological excavations, stretching back to Thomas Wright's in 1859, but including also the robber trenches (perhaps Roman in

date) of the main walls and colonnades, and then to isolate the areas of collapse which lay on the floors or their robbed foundations. Excavation in 1968 had shown that a large timber structure had been built into the mortar foundation of the basilica floor at its west end, but the 1969 excavation looked for evidence of even later timber structures built into the rubble strewn over these mortar bedding layers. The situation, predictably, proved to be very complex. Although it will not be possible to understand the sequence until the whole area is stripped, there is already clear evidence of timber buildings, with at least one massive square posthole and other lesser postholes and sockets built into and packed round with the collapsed roof and wall materials. Below these but above the herringbone-tiled floor of the basilica proper lie as many as seven pebble or mortar floors, as yet only glimpsed where they have been cut away in the past or are not covered with debris. One of these pebble floors, sectioned by Wright's or Fox's excavation of the north aisle, adjoins what appears to be a hearth. The pottery from this area is almost all from the second half of the fourth century, which suggests that the basilica had gone out of use by 350. The date of the subsequent series of timber buildings is at present unknown.

North of the basilica was the robber trench of a large drain which flanked an east-west street made of very fine gravel. This surface, which became very soft in wet weather, could not have borne wheeled traffic, and it is probable that it was for pedestrians only. A pair of shallow cart ruts along one side of the street merely emphasised its unsuitability for traffic, and could represent one journey by a single vehicle.

On the north side of this street was clear evidence of a timber building with sleeper beams and sandstone emplacements for a porch or perhaps a colonnade. It appears to have had a plank floor edging the street, rather in the fashion of a colonial verandah. Unfortunately, previous exploratory excavations had destroyed much of this building.

The extension of site 68 westwards showed a dramatic change between the area outside the baths precinct wall and that inside. The buildings excavated in 1968 on site 68 had been burnt down but this burning did not extend beyond the wall, which suggests strongly that the wall was still standing to an effective height at the time of the fire, some of the burnt buildings leaning-to against it. Within the precinct was a featureless area, perhaps of waste ground, which lay between the wall and a number of laid pebble surfaces containing stakeholes, pits and one large pebble-packed posthole of conventional type. Whether these surfaces are backyards or the floors of outbuildings remains to be determined. There were no hearths.

Against the northern stretch of the precinct wall was an area of sandstone rubble which might easily have been dismissed as random except that it had straight edges on two sides, and contained a sub-rectangular area of closer-packed stones, the upper surfaces of which had been worn smooth by their use as a floor. No postholes associated with this floor have yet been found.

Beyond the precinct wall and at a lower level a mass of stone rubble including two column bases lay on the east-west street, which had here changed its character entirely, being made of large pebbles, and clearly designed for heavy traffic. Somewhere between the two excavated areas, perhaps in line with

the eastern end of the basilica, lies the junction between these two streets, perhaps separated by bollards, three of which were found in exploratory trenches at the other end of the basilica in 1967.

The pottery from this outer area was much more mixed, including a good deal of residual material, probably from rubbish pits dug through the underlying layers. Many of the 150 or so coins were of the later third or fourth centuries, but since no sealed layers were disturbed this means little.

There were a number of jet pins and shale bracelets and some evidence of shale working on the site. The most interesting finds were three martio- or mattio- barbuli, or plumbata, lead-weighted javelin heads of 4th century or later date. Only three other examples have been published, and one of those is from Wroxeter (J. Corbet Anderson, 1867).

A magnetometer survey of the area immediately west of site 68 was contoured at the University of Birmingham's computer centre, and the first comparison of the survey with the results of excavation is very illuminating. An area south of site 68 was similarly surveyed in anticipation of future excavation there.

Soil analysis, particularly for phosphates, on the site of the buildings dug in 1967 and 68 on site 68 was inconclusive, but spot tests elsewhere, especially on cesspits and rubbish-pits in the legionary levels beneath the baths, were more promising.

A very large proportion of the excavated area was photographed vertically from a quadrapod which held a  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch twin-lens reflex camera approximately 4 metres above the ground, taking an area approximately 2 metres square with each exposure. In this way



critical areas and features can be viewed stereoscopically, and experiments are to be made with plotting the more elaborate features photogrammetrically. The mosaic of photographs, enlarged to the same scale as the field drawings, will be used to add detail to the ground survey.

It is clear that the area under excavation offers enormous possibilities for the understanding of the latest periods of the city's occupation, and the development of the earlier public buildings beneath.

Thanks are due to everyone, staff, volunteers and prisoners for their enthusiasm, good humour and hard work.

P. A. BARKER

#### The Offa's Dyke Association

The Offa's Dyke Association has been formed to bring together all persons and organisations interested in the Welsh border region to promote the conservation, improvement and better knowledge of the region along the path of the dyke. The Association has already been active in pressing for the better way-marking of the pathway along the dyke, which will greatly lessen the danger of damage to crops, etc., and in negotiating access to those sections where no public rights of way exist. Further details of the Association may be obtained from the Secretary, Frank Noble, March House, 6a Wylcwm Street, Knighton, Radnorshire.

Hen Domen - Montgomery SO 214981. Excavations 1969

A section cut through the bailey rampart in 1968 (see S.N.L. No. 35) had shown that the rampart embedded a small earlier bank along its front edge. The section had also revealed plough marks in the natural boulder clay beneath. Careful measurement of the depth of the buried soil showed that it varied in thickness and that the deepest soil lay along a line parallel to the ploughmarks, suggesting ridge and furrow buried under the rampart and therefore earlier than it. Slight traces of parallel ridges in the field to the north of the bailey supported this interpretation.

In 1969 it was decided to strip a sector of the rampart in order to examine these problems more extensively, at the same time making a detailed survey of the field to the north.

The Primary Defences

The early bank at first defied interpretation - it had a discontinuous turf-line on its surface, and had clearly been piled from west to east, along the line of the rampart, in overlapping lenses of soil and clay and was thicker and wider at its western end, on the site of the subsequent bailey towers. It was too slight and irregular to be part of an earlier castle and there were no internal structures associated with it. It appears, therefore, to be a stage in the construction of the defences, and its purpose seems to have been to level the sloping surface of the natural ridge to take the framework of the first palisade and fighting platform, which were perhaps prefabricated.

Post sockets on this primary bank and pads of boulder clay set into the turf behind the bank on 12 foot

square centres suggest that trusses of 12 foot span were set up at 12 foot intervals and the rampart material piled round them. There is ample evidence for the prefabrication of timber defences in Norman and later medieval times, and it would be sensible to prepare the timbers, as far as possible, in an area less exposed to attack than Montgomery in the 1070s. A curving line of stake holes, 20 feet back from the line of the palisade, probably represents a flimsy revetment of the back of the rampart.

### The Pre-Conquest Field System

The field to the north of the castle was surveyed by Mr. and Mrs. J. Sellers. 3,263 readings were taken on a 1 metre grid, and the resultant contours, drawn at 20 cm. intervals, demonstrate conclusively the presence of ridge and furrow averaging 4 metres in width.

An area of buried soil beneath the rampart was exposed and its surface trowelled very carefully. It was then surveyed and contours drawn at 5 cm. intervals. This survey again revealed ridge and furrow along the line of the ploughmarks seen in 1968. The varying thicknesses of the buried soil, seen in section, supported the other evidence for the existence of a field system involving ridging extending under the castle and therefore pre-dating it. Since there is every reason to believe that the castle was built shortly after the Norman Conquest, the field system is presumably pre-Conquest. It is hoped that pollen analysis of the buried soil will provide evidence of the crops which were being grown.

Domesday Book says that the Montgomery area had 52 hides, belonging to 22 vills, waste in the time of Edward the Confessor, and used by three Saxon thegns as a hunting ground.

There were two rather amorphous holes, cut into the buried soil beneath the rampart, which had become filled with clean rampart material presumably because they were open when the rampart was thrown up. It is suggested that these were holes where small bushes, perhaps hawthorn, had grown on the deserted fields and had been dug out to clear the ground before the castle was built.

The date of the origin of the ridge and furrow is unknown. The only finds in the buried soil were two sherds of Roman pottery, presumably from the fort at Forden Gaer.

#### The Pre-Field-System Building

The buried soil was stripped from about half the exposed area to reveal part of what appears to be a rectangular building 15 feet wide and more than 22 feet long. It is posthole built, the postholes being in pairs. It is not yet clear whether this indicates rebuilding on a slightly different alignment. A curving gully outside the uphill (?gable) end would have served to keep water away from the wall.

This building must have gone out of use, and had perhaps been forgotten, before the field system was developed. The two abraded Roman sherds in the buried soil above cannot be used to date it and there were no other finds associated with the postholes. At present, therefore, although a prehistoric date cannot be excluded, the building seems likely to be post-Roman but pre-field-system, and a date between the 5th and 7th or 8th centuries is tentatively suggested.

#### Finds

There were very few finds from the rampart material.

There was only one small chip of cooking pot from the approximately 150 tons of clay which were examined. This suggests that pottery imported from further east was used in very small quantities but that by and large the earliest castle phases were aceramic.

#### Acknowledgments

Thanks are again due to Mr. Wainwright, the owner of the site, for permission to continue with the excavation, and to all those who took part in whatever capacity, working long days in unprecedented heat.

P. A. BARKER

#### The Wrekin Television Mast

The Shropshire Archaeological Society has formally opposed the siting of a television mast within the Iron Age encampment on the Wrekin (Site One of the two proposed on the recently published plans). The erection of a mast here would destroy archaeological evidence of great importance, and the Society has recommended that Site Two, which is lower down the hill, well away from the hill fort, should be used instead.

Excavations at Abdon, Salop, 1969 (SP575864)

The site of a prominent platform was opened up some 450 feet to the south of and 30 feet below the medieval longhouse excavated in 1966. The aim of this small excavation was to help determine the extent of the deserted village and confirm documentary evidence suggesting that the lower part of the site was re-occupied in the 17th century.

The base of a dhu stone structure (5.75m x 9m) lying immediately below the turf level was uncovered and found to consist of three sections. A small northern room (2.25m x 4.6m interior measurements) was partially paved with sandstone slabs and contained a small square of packed dhu stone. A central cross passage with a clay floor (5.7m x 3.2m interior) had east and west entrances each with a broad stone step. The southern room (3m x 5.7m) was paved with dhu stone with a wide drain in the south west corner.

The abundance of 17th and 18th century slipware confirmed that Abdon had been re-occupied, but apart from a few sherds of medieval cooking pot there was no evidence of earlier occupation. The complete absence of any rubble and the clean, smooth nature of the structure suggested that it had been an open yard during the last phase of its life. The original building had probably been a cow shed or milking area.

Time did not permit further excavation of the site and the structure has been left intact for further excavation.

TREVOR ROWLEY

X The Old Coop (formerly "The String of Horses"), SA  
Frankwell, Shrewsbury

The report which follows is substantially the same as that published in the Shrewsbury Chronicle of 28th November 1969 and is reproduced here with the Editor's kind permission. It was originally prepared for the use of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, who opposed the building's demolition at a public enquiry last summer.

This building has been described as a "sham" by various interested parties; it is in fact no more a sham than, say, Ireland's Mansion, or any other timber-framed house which has been adapted to other purposes in more recent times. Apart from the insertion of partitions and fireplaces, the only significant alterations took place after a fire in 1912. These are restricted to the two eastern bays on the north face: the ground-floor room here has been gutted to make room for a large shop, and the framing on the north wall has been partially reconstructed. Even these changes are less serious than they might have been. Inside the shop it is likely that the original south wall, including a 16th-century fireplace and at least one doorway, survives beneath the board casing. On the north wall some original timbers were re-used and the reconstruction here closely follows the original pattern.

The date of the house

The existing date-plate, "J.W. 1576 ... 1912" was, of course, inserted after the reconstruction, but there is no reason to doubt that 1576 is correct. It is probable that "J.W." was John Worrall, who is known to have been a substantial inhabitant of Frankwell at this period, but the intractable problem of tracing ownership of Frankwell houses has not yet been solved.

Several original decorative features go to confirm the date. The use of cable-moulding and incised quatre-foils on closely-spaced studding is found in several Shrewsbury houses built between 1570 and 1601 (though the 1601 example was now been demolished to make room for a car park). The fine roll-moulding on the exposed fireplace in one of the cottages (in the room described as the "hall" on the ground plan) and the debased ogee-headed doors in the party wall between the two cottages are characteristic of the later 16th century. Other notable original features include mortices for brackets to support oriel windows at first-floor level on the east face, the unglazed attic window on the south gable, and a first-floor mullioned window in the two bays added about 1600 in the south-west angle of the original building.

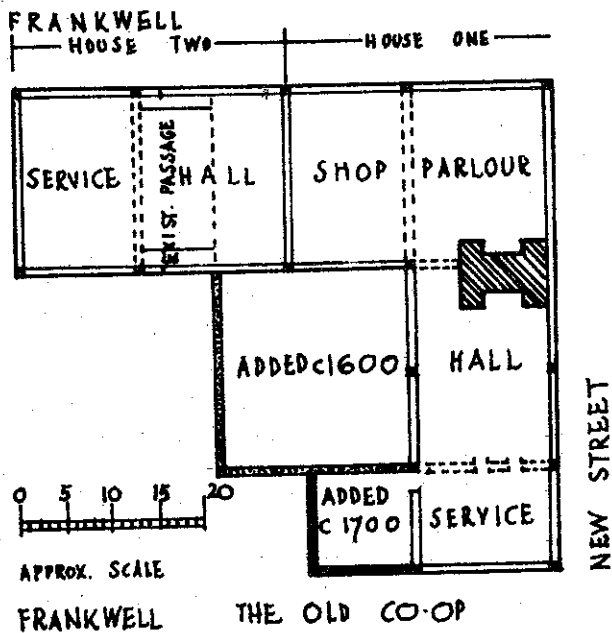
#### Its construction

The whole structure was always of two storeys with boarded attics, and all its timber trusses are substantially intact, even in the part converted into a shop. The exposed truss on the south gable is representative. There are two rows of "through" purlins with straight windbraces. There was originally no ridge purlin. All existing ceiling beams have wide chamfers and are neatly stopped at each end. In the cottages a good deal of the original wattle and daub wall-fill survives, despite attention from vandals in recent years.

#### Its plan

In the 16th century the Old Coop would have been regarded as facing north, towards the main street of Frankwell, and not towards New Street. It is therefore certain that, whatever was the original plan, the building would observe the tradition universal in Frankwell houses and elsewhere of





placing the main rooms parallel to the street, that is, on the northern range. The alterations of 1912 have to some extent obscured the original arrangements but enough remains to prove conclusively that the present building represents two houses built at the same time. Their conjectured layout is shown on the simplified ground plan.

The larger of these (House I on the plan) occupied the two eastern bays in the northern range and the three bays, now two cottages, to the south. It contains the only surviving original chimney stack set between what is now the shop and the more northerly of the two cottages, that is, between hall and parlour.

The smaller house (House II) was a two-bay building at the western end of the northern range. The two-bay plan was a very common house-type in 16th-century Shrewsbury and several other examples of it survive in Frankwell. In this case the eastern bay is 16 feet wide and the western 13 feet. This difference in size is significant; the larger bay must have been the "hall" since it would also have contained a narrow "screens passage" immediately to the east of the central truss. This passage no longer survives; it was replaced by a wider passage inserted in 1912, which now occupies about half of the "hall" bay. The house now has no original chimney stack. Probably there was once a stack on the south wall, but this wall has been removed. Such a ground-plan would closely resemble that of No. 27 Frankwell, another two-bay late 16th-century house, which is similarly derelict.

The evidence that there were once two houses

A drawing of the building, made in 1826 by Philip Browne (now in Shrewsbury Borough Library) shows a distinct change in roof-level in the middle of the

northern range. Browne carefully drew in the closely spaced studs, so it has been possible to check on the ground that the break in the roof-line occurs at the west end of the second bay from the east.

X

All these studs at first floor level on the north wall of House II have a numerical sequence of carpenters' marks: the surviving ones run from "XI" to "XXII" (11 to 22). A stud marked "X" (10) is now set at the east side of the wide passageway, but this stud was presumably moved from its correct position next to "XI" when the passageway was inserted. Studs "XI" to "XXII" occupy the western bay of House II; the sequence of ten missing studs ("I" to "X") would therefore have begun at the point of junction of the two houses.

A. T. GAYDON

## Two East Shropshire Paper Mills

The late Mr. L. C. Lloyd spent much time investigating paper making in Shropshire, and anyone interested in this aspect of industrial history will learn much from his articles in the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society for 1938 and 1950. From information then available, Mr. Lloyd established that the earliest known paper mill in Shropshire was that at Langley, Milson, which dated from about 1650. In recent years more evidence has been made available, and the present contributor has discovered two further mills, one of which may date from well before 1650.

The mills were at Ryton and Grindle, both in the parish of Ryton, near Shifnal. A deed of October 1654 indicated that Thomas Gray of Hatton Grange, Shifnal, sold to Robert Slaney of Shuffenhall a corn mill and a paper mill in the parish of Ryton called Ryton Mylnes, with water courses, etc. Such establishments were sometimes described as "two mills under one roof" and in this instance independent operation of the two mills by separate water wheels was possible because the site was at the confluence of the Cosford Brook and the River Worfe above the bridge at Ryton (SJ 759028). There was a sitting tenant at the mills, with a lease for "eight years to come", and a covenant in the deed protected his tenure. If this was a normal lease of twenty-one years duration, a date of 1641 could be assumed, making this paper mill the earliest yet discovered in Shropshire.

In May 1691 a lease was terminated between Robert Slaney, the elder, and Robert Clowes, gentleman, because of alterations in watercourses made by Slaney to improve the operation of his mills. The land hitherto held by Clowes was being constantly subjected to flooding. The deed provides the

following information: "a little above the place where formerly stood a corn mill and a paper mill, both under one roof and sometime since burnt downe, and demolished, and hath since lately erected and built a little above them .... a slitting mill .... and also a paper mill where the former stood". Deeds of 1714 and 1715 refer to "the lease of an iron work or slitting mill at Ryton, with a house or building heretofore a paper mill ...." No indication as to when the paper mill ceased to operate here has been found. There are suggestions that a new paper mill was later built a little further downstream on a site later occupied by a timber yard, but documentary proof has not been forthcoming.

There was a forge at Grindle during or before the Civil War, but it seems likely that it ceased operation after the death of the forgemaster, Gilbert Harrison, recorded in the parish register in 1668. A surviving deed shows that a family called Harding, yeomen, together with a man called Wheeler, took over a messuage and a piece of land in Grindle, but although both families were later connected with the paper and iron industries in Shropshire, there is no evidence that they set up a paper mill or forge at Grindle at the time. An entry in Plowden Slaney's Rent Book, headed Grindle, 25th March 1764, notes the lease by Slaney of a paper mill, pool, lands and premises, to John Hurd for 99 years at an annual rent of £9 10s. Od. A further lease shows that John Hurd had died by 1789. Local traditions maintain that the paper mill at Grindle stood in what is now the garden of No. 1 Grindle Forge (SJ 753034), and that it was burnt down.

The only mention of papermaking in the Ryton parish register is on 6th June 1773 when Francis Buckley of Kemberton, papermaker, was married. Later references to Buckley show that he was operating as a paper

maker at Brimstree Hill, which probably indicates the Grindle mill rather than the one at Ryton.

Sources: Deeds in the Dyas, Hatton and Slaney Collections at Shropshire Record Office, where the assistance of the Archivist and staff is gratefully acknowledged. Parish Registers. Interviews with local residents.

T. C. HANCQX

Turnpike Toll Houses

*See also file No. 1705  
14 Feb 1967.*

Mr. A. P. Wallace of the Shropshire Photographic Society has recently made a survey of the surviving turnpike toll houses in the County on behalf of Shrewsbury Borough Library and Museum. All of the sites of toll houses marked on Greenwood's Map of 1827 and on the Ordnance Survey one inch map of 1833 were checked, and the surviving toll houses photographed. There is some variation between the two maps and some known sites are not marked on either of them. Some surviving toll houses were, of course, not erected until after 1833. The following list includes only sites marked on one or both of the maps. It is hoped to publish a supplementary list of other sites in a future issue of the Newsletter, and Mr. R. E. James of Shrewsbury Museum would be glad to hear of any toll houses not listed here which should be included. Information about photographs showing demolished toll houses would also be welcome. The photographs of toll houses listed here may be inspected at Shrewsbury Borough Library.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Grid Reference</u>	
Alberbury	SO 365142	Photographed
Atcham	SJ 536088	Demolished
Basford	SO 395854	Demolished
Bayston Hill	SJ 487085	Demolished
Beambridge	SO 532883	Demolished
Berwick Wharf	SJ 542109	Demolished
Billingsley	SO 708850	Demolished
Billingsley	SO 708853	Demolished
Bishop's Castle	SO 330992	Demolished
Bishop's Castle	SO 320892	Demolished
Bishop's Castle	SO 320887	Photographed
Bishop's Castle	SO 325883	Demolished
Bletchley	SJ 625335	Demolished
Bratton	SJ 634142	Demolished
Broseley	SJ 683015	Photographed
Buildwas	SJ 640038	Photographed
Castle Pulverbatch	SJ 425026	Demolished
Chetwynd Aston	SJ 756173	Demolished
Clee Hill	SO 595748	Photographed
Cleobury North	SO 626875	Photographed
Clun	SO 305809	Photographed
Coalbrookdale	SJ 670049	Demolished
Copthorne	SJ 474125	Photographed
Coton Hill	SJ 493134	Demolished
Cressage	SJ 596048	Demolished
Crudgington	SJ 630182	Demolished
Cuckoo Oak	SJ 705048	Demolished
Darliston	SJ 579335	Photographed
Dean Park	SO 594692	Photographed
Ditherington	SJ 504143	Demolished
Donnington	SJ 577079	Demolished
Dothill Park	SJ 649133	Demolished
Edgebolton	SJ 575221	Demolished
Edstaston	SJ 523325	Demolished
Emstrey	SJ 319107	Demolished
Eyton	SO 375876	Photographed
Great Fernhill	SJ 308325	Demolished

<u>Location</u>	<u>Grid Reference</u>	
Harlescott	SJ 497165	Demolished
Harlescott	SJ 513158	Demolished
Harley	SJ 601010	Demolished
Hazler	SO 468933	Demolished
High Ercall	SJ 602176	Photographed
Holloway	SJ 556284	Demolished
Horderley	SO 410871	Demolished
Horton	SJ 485302	Demolished
Kemberton	SJ 724050	Demolished
Kenwick	SJ 425305	Demolished
Ketley Sands	SJ 663112	Demolished
King Street	SJ 517076	Demolished
Kinlet	SO 722821	Demolished
Knockin	SJ 327233	Photographed
Knowlegate	SO 600734	Photographed
Lawley Common	SJ 674082	Photographed
Leighton	SJ 608056	Photographed
Lightwood	SO 642909	Demolished
Lilleshall	SJ 732165	Demolished
Little Stretton	SO 445920	Demolished
Llandrinio	SJ 298172	Demolished
Long Lane	SO 420839	Demolished
Long Waste	SJ 613158	Photographed
Maesbury	SJ 312258	Photographed
Malehurst	SJ 386060	Photographed
Market Drayton	SJ 682345	Photographed
May Hill	SO 625717	Demolished
Meole Brace	SJ 491005	Demolished
Much Wenlock	SO 624994	Demolished
Much Wenlock	SJ 629998	Demolished
Muxton	SJ 718147	Demolished
Nethercott	SO 681787	Demolished
Newdale	SJ 672097	Demolished
Nobold	SJ 476101	Photographed
Northwood	SJ 465333	Photographed
Oakengates	SJ 720092	Demolished
Oldbury	SO 712919	Demolished
Oswestry	SJ 285299	Demolished
Oswestry	SJ 296301	Demolished



Posenhall	SJ 656916	Photographed
Prees	SJ 556322	Demolished
Prescott	SJ 426210	Demolished
Quatt	SO 757880	Demolished
Queens Head	SJ 340267	Demolished
Radbrook	SJ 469113	Photographed
Redhill	SJ 730108	Demolished
Rhoswiell	SJ 299363	Demolished
Roden	SJ 573165	Demolished
Rowton	SJ 364123	Demolished
St. Martin's	SJ 318363	Demolished
Sheinton	SJ 619037	Photographed
Shifnal	SJ 751072	Demolished
Sibdon Carwood	SO 425827	Demolished
Snead	SO 322920	Demolished
Stretton Westwood (2)	SO 595584	Demolished
Tenbury Wells	SO 596686	Photographed
Tern Hill	SJ 634323	Demolished
Upper Aston	SO 822937	Photographed
Walton	SJ 592183	Demolished
Weeping Cross	SJ 512015	Demolished
Wem	SJ 525292	Demolished
Wem	SJ 510283	Demolished
Westbury	SJ 355089	Photographed
Whixall	SJ 526341	Demolished
Willey Park Wood	SJ 674007	Photographed
Winsley Hall	SJ 352075	Demolished
Worfield	SO 766953	Demolished

## The Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Since the last report on the Museum's activities in S.N.L. No. 36 considerable progress has been made. Clearance projects have been completed at two important sites, and some valuable exhibits have been placed in store.

The site of the wharves at Coalport, upstream from Coalport Bridge, has been landscaped by the Forestry Department of the Telford Development Corporation. The dry bed of the Shropshire Canal, at this point has been restored, and its relationship with the River Severn can now easily be understood. Seven diamond-shaped self-acting railways formerly linked the canal and river. No remains of these were uncovered during the clearance operations apart from some stray pieces of plate rail, but the present levels are rather higher than when the port was operating, and any remains which do survive are safely sealed for the attention of future industrial archaeologists. A mooring ring and the stub base of a pillar crane were uncovered on the edge of the river. Clearance of further sections of the wharfage at Coalport may be possible in 1970, and the museum hopes shortly to provide some information services on the site for visitors.

The slope of the Coalport canal inclined plane has been cleared by members of the Territorial Army, and it is now possible, for the first time for many decades, to see from bottom to top of the plane, one of the most notable monuments of the industrial revolution in Shropshire. Restoration of the stonework of the incline docks has begun.

An interesting industrial railway locomotive has been acquired for the museum, which for the time being is standing at the entrance to the museum site at Blists

Hill. The locomotive is an outside cylinder, 0-6-0 saddle tank, built by Andrew Barclay Sons and Company Limited in 1896, the works number being 782. It formerly bore the name "Peter". The engine has 13 in. x 20 in. cylinders, and 3 ft. 2 in. wheels. It came to the Museum from Messrs. Comley, Lunt and Pitt of Shutt End, where it had been since 1954 or earlier. It had previously been used by the Highley Mining Company Limited at Kinlet Colliery, Shropshire. Mr. S. H. P. Higgins has kindly provided this information about the locomotive.

Three of the Lilleshall Company stationary steam engines mentioned in S.N.L. No. 36 have been taken over to the museum store at Blists Hill. The barring engine from the vertical blowing engine at the Priors Lee ironworks was recovered when the blowing engine was demolished in July 1969, and the two horizontal single cylinder engines from the Snedshill Brickworks have been dismantled by a museum working party. An early 19th century haystack boiler has been acquired from Messrs. Comley, Lunt and Pitt of Shutt End.

Large numbers of decorative tiles from Messrs. Maw and Company of Jackfield have been collected and sorted by a museum working party. The collection includes examples going back to the earliest years of the firm's operations in Shropshire.

The museum held its first Open Day on Sunday, 28th September, when over seven hundred visitors were taken on tours of sites of historical interest in the Ironbridge Gorge, where volunteer guides were available to explain the monuments and to answer questions. A second Open Day, at which the same sites will be visited, has provisionally been arranged for Sunday, 26th April, 1970. Full details will be announced in the local press.

The first museum staff were appointed from 1st November, 1969. Mr. Keith Dunham, formerly of the City of Nottingham Museum, has been appointed manager-keeper, with Mr. C. B. Waterson of Madeley as part-time assistant. The museum's future progress will still depend largely on voluntary efforts, and Mr. Dunham will be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to be involved with any of the museum projects. His address is Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Southside, Ironbridge, Telford.

Some industries in the vicinity of the Blists Hill  
Museum Site

These notes are mainly from the work of the late Mrs. A. Jackson who devoted a great deal of time to the study of the old industries of the Madeley area. She was a very diligent and careful research worker, and was the wife of a former secretary of the old Madeley Wood Company. The notes are of considerable importance at a time when the area around Blists Hill is being developed as an open air industrial museum, particularly since they draw on original source material which is no longer available to historians.

Washbrook Corn Mill SJ 699039. Date of origin unknown, but millers have included David Ellis, 1874, William Shaw, 1899, and Richard Shaw, the last miller who closed the mill in the early 1900s. The mill was sold by the Madeley Wood Company in 1926. It had a 40 ton overshot waterwheel which was broken up during the Second World War. The mill is situated on a lane once known as Barker Lane (pre-1861) possibly because the mill was of a type invented by a Dr. Barker before 1740.

Canalside Cement Mill SJ 700041. Built by the Madeley Wood Company in 1851 and sold to Thomas Hinsley in 1863 for £180. Passed to Benjamin Tranter between 1874 and 1879 and by 1899 Tranter was advertising "Roman Cement, best heavy Portland Cement, Plaster of Paris, etc." Closed about 1914 and taken over by Frank H. Jeffrey and used as a slaughterhouse.

Blists Hill Blast Furnaces SJ 695033. Three blast furnaces erected 1832, 1840 and 1844. Two steam blowing engine houses one built 1840-1 and the other circa 1873 when the Madeley Wood Company made a contract with J. C. Stevenson & Company for the erection of a blast engine at Blists Hill. Other buildings on the site included offices, stabling, and a bell house with bell turret and bell. In 1908 the furnaces were producing 4,000 tons of iron per annum each. The height of each was 50 feet, diameter at base 13 feet, and at hearth 5 feet. Shortly after this date two of the furnaces were blown out, and the third ceased operation after the miners' strike March 2nd - April 6th 1912.

Coalport Hemp Rope Factory SJ 69024. Founded about 1790 by William Reynolds. The father of Benjamin Edge was employed here from 1794, probably as manager. The factory was situated close to the Coalport China Works. The edge family bought the works in 1798 and shortly after 1814 took over the chain works of Gilbert Gilpin established in 1800 at the other end of Coalport. It was from the latter works that the Edges moved to Shifnal in 1873-4.

Gilpin's Chain Factory, Coalport SJ 695029.

Established 1800. Gilpin issued his own trade tokens for one shilling and one halfpenny. Around the rim are the words "Gilbert Gilpin, Dawley, Shropshire, pays the bearer one halfpenny". Gilpin lived at Dawley, but his works were at Coalport. The works were taken over by the Edges soon after 1814. They were situated at the bottom of Coalport hill on the left hand side when turning towards Coalport village. "Edges Rough", as the area was called, was bought by the Madeley Wood Company in 1898 for £250 (area 9 acres, 1 rood, 30 perches) and was sold in 1926 as lot 31, "Blists Hill Cinder Tip and Edges Rough and Coppice situated between the L.M.S. Railway and Canal, having access to the Coalport Road and extending to Coalport. Trees mainly Oak, Sycamore, Ash and Willow of about thirty years' growth, though some oaks are fully matured".

Edge's Foundry, Canalside, Madeley SJ 703047.

Founded about 1820, taken over by Waltons when Edges moved to Shifnal. Waltons made chains for mining and other purposes. Taken over by Mr. Muirhead in 1902, and closed shortly after 1908.

Waltons Smithy SJ 701045. Established by Richard Walton in 1773 at 54 High Street, Madeley. Followed by his son Richard and grandson William Taylor Walton. After the latter's death the blacksmith's shop was continued by William Abel, Frederick Dillow, then G. S. Boden who worked it until 1968. The Madeley Wood Company sold the property to Dillow in 1926.

Blists Hill Brick and Tile Works SJ 696035.

Established 1851. An extensive range of buildings with one 100 ft. stack and four smaller ones. The tall stack was felled on 3rd September, 1957. The Madeley Wood Company sold the brickworks to G. Legge and Son for £3,000 in 1916. Legges went bankrupt about 1934 following a lawsuit between themselves and the local council over the maintenance of the Wash Brook Culvert under Shawfield Colliery Mound which they owned. E. H. James bought and operated the works for a time, but left before 1951. Subsequent owners of the site were John Raleigh and J. T. Phillips and Sons.

Mines. The first shafts at Blists Hill SJ 695031 were sunk in 1799, and into one of them an entrance to the Tar Tunnel was made. This tunnel (entrance at SJ 695027) is first mentioned in 1787. The old shafts, sunk by Reynolds, were on the west side of the cinder tip. The "Newhill Pits" were also in this area, and may have been the same shafts. The land for Shawfield Colliery SJ 697935 was obtained from T. L. Beddoes in 1846 and this mine worked until 1915. A beam engine was installed, which was fully described in "The Engineer". The shafts were 564 feet deep.

The Hills Lane Colliery SJ 703044 was opened about 1805 and worked until 1910. The shafts were 678 feet deep.

Blists Hill Clay Mine at the canal side SJ 697936 worked almost continuously from the early 19th century to 1925, part was later re-opened and closed again in 1951. Some equipment remained in place until the late 1950s. The shafts were 396 feet deep. From this mine ran two long tunnels in the direction of the Lloyds. After the mine closed, clay for brick-making was obtained from a small quarry on the opposite bank of the canal.

### Administrative matters

Subscribers to the Newsletter who are not members of the Shropshire Archaeological Society are reminded that subscriptions for 1970 are due after the receipt of this issue, unless they have paid for two years in advance. The subscription is 5/- per year. Postal orders and cheques should be made payable to the Shropshire Archaeological Society and sent to Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury. (Please note change of address).

The Shropshire Archaeological Society will be bringing out two important publications early in 1970. The first will be the next volume of Transactions which includes a long study of the defences of Wroxeter by Arnold Baker, a study of politics in the borough of Wenlock between 1780 and 1832 by Jonathan Nichol, an account of the Forges at Hampton Loade and Eardington by Norman Mutton and a description of Coalbrookdale in 1801, edited by Barrie Trinder. The Society is also publishing No. 1 of a Supplementary Series, "The Medieval Pottery of Shropshire from the Conquest to 1400" by Philip Barker. Both publications will be issued free to members. Enquiries about membership should be addressed to Miss Marion Hill, County Record Office, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

The object of this Newsletter is to record what is currently happening in archaeological and local historical studies in the county, and items for publication are always welcome. With articles based on documentary research, some indication of the sources used should always be included, although precise references for each statement are, of course,



inappropriate in a publication of this kind. Grid references should be given wherever possible. Plans and drawings of a simple nature can easily be reproduced if executed in Indian ink on white or tracing paper. Articles or notes should be sent to the Editor, Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury.

# Shropshire News Letter

No. 38 - June 1970

Published by The Shropshire Archaeological Society

Edited by Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury. (Tel: Shrewsbury 52310)

## X Langley Gatehouse

SA 1060/SA 13376

The Gatehouse lies approximately 1¼ miles S.S.E. of Acton Burnell and is the only remaining part of Langley Hall.

### Brief History

The Manor of Langley was held by Mesne Tenure under the Burnells of Acton Burnell in the 13th Century, though its history goes back to Domesday when Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury was Overlord.

William Burnell, a member of the senior branch of the Burnell Family, held the manor in 1212 and it passed by marriage into the Lee Family in 1377. It appears to have been held by the Lees and their descendants until the 19th Century. The owner in 1868 was Sir Charles Frederick Smythe, who was descended from Edward Smythe whose wife was one of the daughters of Sir Richard Lee (d. 1660). This Sir Richard Lee was a staunch Royalist and was obliged to compound for his estates in the sum of £3,719 the third largest sum levied in Shropshire after the Civil War.

## X Langley Hall

Langley Hall was a large rambling structure, part stone, part timber framed surrounded by a moat. A long low range to the extreme right had a very tall Tudor chimney completely out of balance with the structure below. This range appears older than the main block which it adjoined, but could have been a later addition. The main block appears to have consisted of an Open Hall and a two storey cross wing to the right in half timber though the upper part of the cross wing may have been faced.

The slope and height of the roof of the main block suggests either cruck or base cruck construction or an aisled hall.

To this block was added a timber framed porch with diagonal strutting similar to that seen in the rear elevation of the Gatehouse.

A Sdar Wing adjoined the main block to the left. This was in stone and had an undercroft. This suggests that it could have been an earlier first floor hall with undercroft.

Probably the hall was given a new oriel window when the Porch was added. At the same time a curious half hexagon low turret tower was built into angle of the main block solar wing and contained a big hexagon window which presumably lit the dais end of the hall.

Therefore, the main block open Hall was Phase 2 (cf. Little Chesterford in Essex):

The Hall had become a farmhouse by 1717 and was still standing in 1868. It was probably demolished soon after this date when the present farmhouse was built.

### The Gatehouse

The earliest part of the Gatehouse is undoubtedly the magnificent double chamfered stone archway seen from the S.W. (front) elevation. This archway and the rough coursed stonework on either side of it together with the now vanished battlemented wall which formed a continuation to the N.W. appears to date from the mid-fifteenth century and may be contemporary with the first hall and undercroft of the Hall (above). To this date also may belong the chamber shown in the plan as "First Floor A - A1". This is a mezzanine chamber "sandwiched" between the Ground Floor and the First Floor (in plans B - B1) and seems to have lost its use and identity when the upper storey was added, if indeed it ever was a separate chamber. It contains one cusped brace which may help to date it, an inserted window, but no doorway as such, merely an opening in the wall, no access other than by a ladder. It would have been an ideal place for concealment perhaps in troubled times.

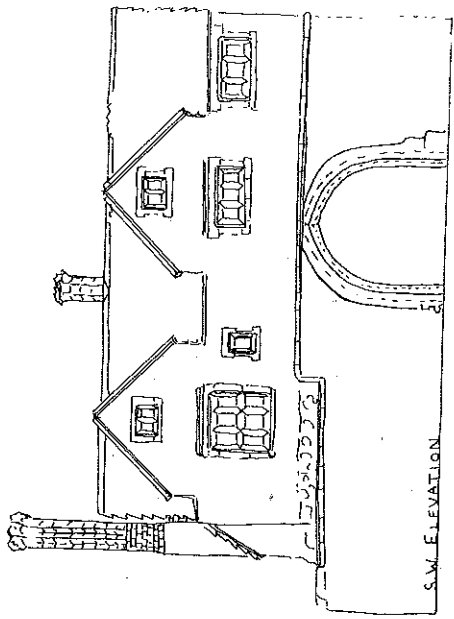
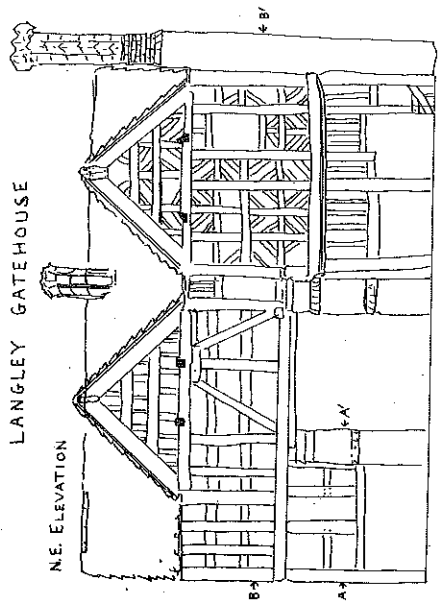
The first phase of building also probably included octagonal chimney to the N.W. of the archway with its stack on that side completing the extent of the block. The change of level in the string course suggests this and the height of the chimney would not be unusual.

### The S.W. (Front) Elevation

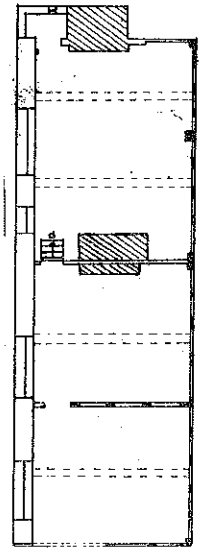
The main upper storey above the uneven string course which separates it from the earlier part beneath presents two gables, ashlar. These gables are not in line with the archway below. The N.W. gable presents the window of the Great Chamber. This has stone mullions and a transom and was glazed. It has 4" straight chamfers inside and out. The room contains two fireplaces. One is blocked and the other has a big flat stone lintel with stops. There is a Garderobe off, the tiny window of which appears in the N.W. (side) Gable.

LANGLEY GATEHOUSE

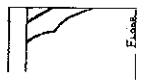
N.E. ELEVATION



S.W. ELEVATION



FIRST FLOOR (B-B)



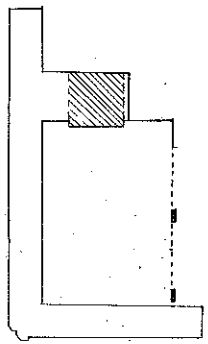
Flitch

CUSPED BRACE IN FIRST FLOOR A-A  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



CUSPED BRACE

FIRST FLOOR (A-A)



GROUND FLOOR

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

The S.E. (Front) Gable presents the window of the second chamber which has stone mullions, no transom, 4" straight chamfers and was glazed. This chamber also contains a fireplace with a big flat stone lintel and stops.

There is a further chamber to the S E of this, unheated. This chamber has the remains of a moulded plaster ceiling.

The front gables both have attic rooms with windows but the floors of these have gone.

All this upper storey work is later than the archway, probably 1620. It is unlikely to be post Civil War. Sir Humphrey Lee, who rebuilt the Chapel, was created a Baronet in 1620 so this work on the Gatehouse may coincide with his Baronetcy.

#### The N.E. Elevation (Rear)

This is the Inner face of the Gatehouse and presents the rear of the two front Gables. This time in half timbering with vertical struts to the N.E. Gable and much diagonal strutting to the N.W. The archway on this side is flat headed with a wooden lintel and crude supporting diagonal struts. There are two stone buttresses on either side of the archway.

There is one ground floor chamber to the N.W. of the archway containing a four centred arch fireplace and traces of a staircase to the upper floor.

There is one small ground floor chamber to the N.E. of the archway with a window, but is unheated and has no traces of access to the upper floor. The timber framing to the N.E. of the archway is original up to the level of the floor of the second floor (i.e. to the ceiling of the concealed chamber).

#### The Roof

The roof is stone slated, the slates are nicely graduated in size.

#### Chimneys

There is one outbuilt stone stack to the N.W. Gable with twin shafts of moulded bricks and star shaped caps. Also the one central hexagonal stone chimney which may be original (see above).

#### Cross-Wing

Old drawings show a timber fronted cross-wing to the S.E. with a large mullioned and transomed twelve light window similar in appearance to the porch on the hall. Both were probably early seventeenth century additions. No trace of the Cross-Wing remains. The Gatehouse is in a

ruinous condition and is in danger. It was recorded by members of the Shrewsbury Old Houses Research Group in August 1968.

X I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Faulkner of Langley Hall Farm for allowing access to the Gatehouse and to Mr. J. W. Tonkin, B.A., and Mr. Alec Gaydon, B.A., for invaluable help and advice. My thanks are due also to Miss E. Evans, Mrs. E. Beaton and Mr. Peter Throssel for help with the measuring and drawing.

M. MORAN

#### Notes on the Mines of the Madeley Court Co.

The area around Madeley Court was bought by James Foster on 25th March 1828, for its minerals, these being chiefly coal and ironstone but fireclay, brick-clay and sand were also available. Shortly after 1840 the minerals were being worked and transported via the adjoining canal to Wombridge. Following complaints to the canal company concerning the tariffs and the low power of the inclined-plane engines at Stirchley, Foster appears to have decided to transfer his furnaces to the Madeley site. The furnaces were transferred in 1843, continued in blast until 1902, and were dismantled in 1904.

The pits worked in pairs (except No. 1, the Water Pit and No. 4, a trial) and were numbered chronologically and consecutively from 1 to 17. The actual dates of sinking are not known except for No. 12 which was almost certainly sunk in 1872. Nos. 2 and 3, 7 and 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12 and 16 and 17 were the chief producers. The Penneystone ironstone workings at Nos. 2 and 3, 7 and 8 and 16 and 17 were abandoned in 1903 while all shafts Nos. 1 - 15 were officially abandoned for coal working in 1911, although many had ceased working long before this. Nos. 7 and 8 were the last shafts worked, and from these the shaft pillars supporting the furnaces were extracted between 1904 and 1910. The pumping shaft and Nos. 16 and 17 continued in use however, operated by the Madeley Wood Company until about 1914.

For some years there was a dispute between the Madeley Court and the Madeley Wood Companies regarding the responsibility for drainage. From 1893 the latter company contributed towards the former's drainage costs and from about 1910 took over the responsibility completely. In 1916 the

The mines of the Madeley Court were owned by the Foster family through out the period of their operation and were let out under the charter master system, general control being in the hands of an Agent and a Mines Manager. The Agents were, chronologically, G. Jones, Francis Pearce, his son Charles Worth Pearce and George Round. The Managers were John Smart, W. J. Clarke and William Snowden. George Round and C. W. Pearce also served some time as Manager before their promotion. During the latter years Levi Brown was Manager working without Charter Masters. In 1882 the Charter Masters were. Coal Pits: W. Hopley, R. and G. Guy, B. Buckley and L. Shepherd, Stone Pits: R. and P. Guy, W. Hopley and F. Guest.

### The Pits

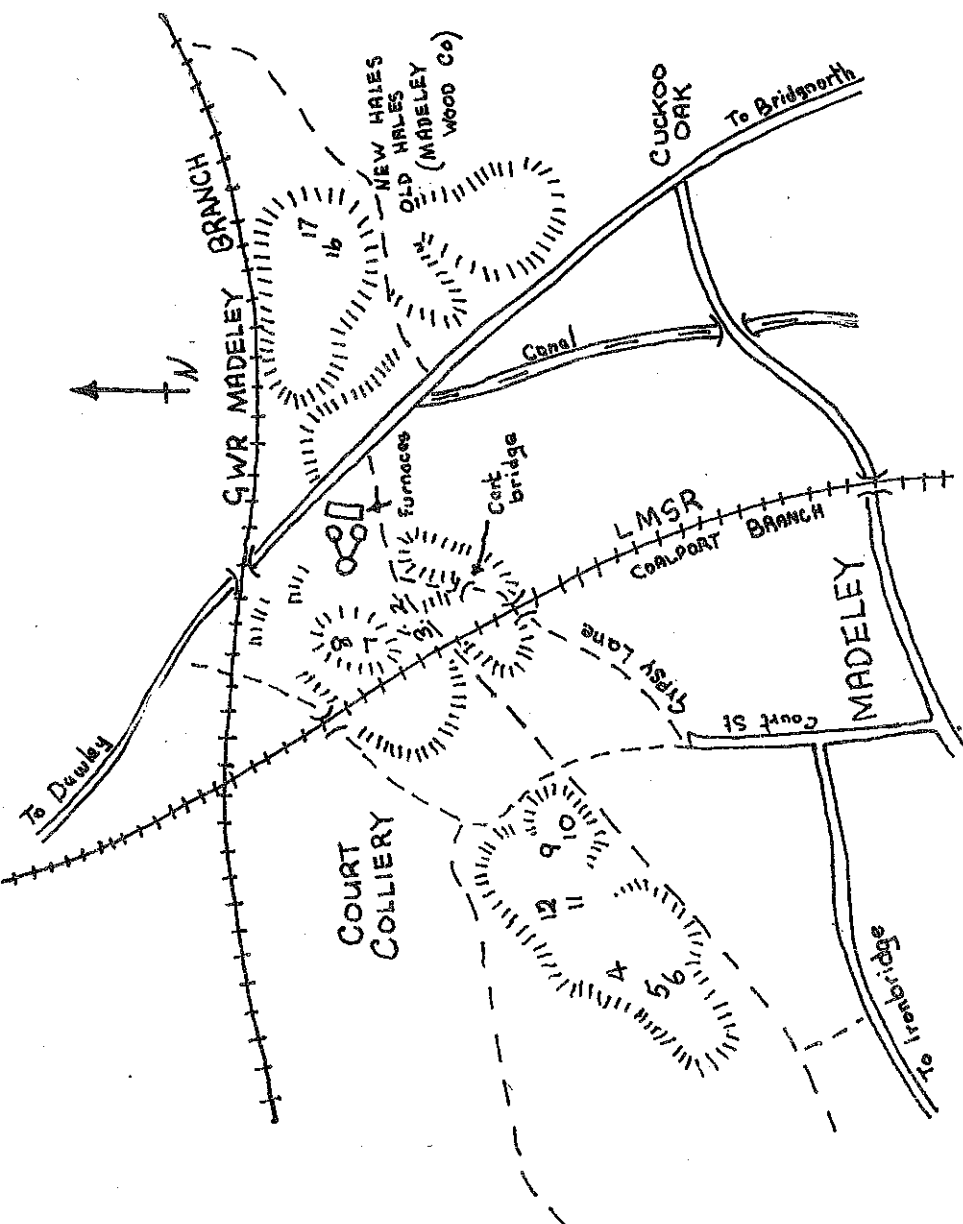
No 1 SJ 698005 Water Pit was used solely for raising water. In 1911 Ben Bennett, the pumper, fell down the shaft and was drowned, his body was then brought up by means of a hook. Pumping was continued by the Madeley Wood Co. to prevent the flooding of their neighbouring mines, until two Rees Roturbo pumps were installed at Halesfield shortly before the First World War.

Nos. 2 and 3 SJ 69820513 Platform Pits (also called Gypsy Lane Pits) produced ironstone and coal. The stone was taken from the pit over the bridge to the adjoining mound by horse and cart. It was then sorted by women pickers, loaded into iron boxes and then carried on the head by girls to be built into 'ranks'. Each rank was made up of wall of large stone about 3 ft. high which were filled with small stone. After the stone had weathered for several months, the girls would add another rank to the first. This would continue up to 4 ranks in height by which time the girls had to use planks of timber to reach the top. After weathering the stone was calcined near to the furnaces. Coal only was worked after the furnaces closed, by Levi Brown assisted by eighteen men underground, 5 on surface (1905). From 1903, when a candle ignited firedamp in an exploratory heading, the use of flame-safety lamp was enforced. There was an engine at this pit.

No. 4 SJ 69320480 was probably a trial pit

Nos. 5 and 6 SJ 69260472 Holmes and Dainties. Were explored during the Second World War by F. Bridges (son of the Kemberton Pit Manager) for a Mr. Raleigh using a fire bucket for ventilation and horse gin for winding. Tom and Ted Jones of Dawley actually made the descent and found the mine to be dry. The engine was to the south of the No. 6 pit.

Nos. 7 and 8 SJ 69800521 Furnace Pits worked by Bowen and Buckley. No 7 shaft 706 ft. deep x 8 ft., No. 8, 709 ft. x 8 ft., furnace ventilated. 16 men underground, 22 on surface working Clod Coal and Ironstone in





1905. The pillar beneath the furnaces was extracted from here in 1904-1910. There was also a steam engine at this mine.

Nos. 9 and 10 SJ 69550486 Hopleys, both 696 ft. x 8 ft., No. 10 was abandoned in 1894, No. 9 in 1903, the latter was then working, with No. 11, the Double Coal which had become 'unprofitable to work'. The final report on Nos. 9 and 10 dated July 1894 stated that "the coal was too thin to be worked profitably. The two foot coal was only 1 ft. 8 in. thick in shafts but increased to 2 ft. 6 in. towards the magazine. It was free from sulphur and made a good coking coal but a bad house coal. Difficulties had been experienced by the seam being crushed by sub-jacent working in the Clod Seam." The shaft section shows the following economic minerals to be available in this area:- Top Coal 4 ft. Fireclay 6 ft., Yard Coal 3 ft., Blue Flat Ironstone 4 ft., Flint Coal 3 ft., Penneystone Ironstone 7 ft., Stinking Coal 1 ft., Viger Coal 1 ft. 6 in., Two Foot Coal 2 ft., Best Coal 3 ft., Randle Coal 2 ft., Clod Coal 2 ft., Little Flint Coal 2 ft. 6 in. at depth of 702 ft. The steam engines for this and Guys (Nos. 11 and 12) were back to back, with vertical cylinders and two arms for starting and stopping.

Nos. 11 and 12 SJ 69500492, Guys, both 503 ft., No. 11 was 7½ dia. No. 12 8 ft. No. 12 was almost certainly sunk in 1872. No. 11 was abandoned in 1903 (see above). The engine was back to back with Hopleys (9 and 10).

Nos. 13, 14 and 15 not located but thought to be either non-producers or, perhaps outside the Court Field.

Nos. 16 and 17 SJ 70400528 Guests, were the Easternmost shafts. They were used for both coal and ironstone production. Both shafts were 8 ft. dia. and 867 ft. deep. As these shafts were very close to those of the Madeley Wood Co. it was necessary to come to an agreement regarding sharing the cost of de-watering. This agreement was made in 1893. About 1903 the Madeley Wood Co. took over these pits and continued using them for drainage purposes. The Penneystone seam was 5 ft. 8 in. with 1 ft. 6 in. Stinking Coal beneath. It was worked towards Cuckoo Oak, using longwall methods and ceased production in September 1902.

### Surface Equipment

The surface equipment for the colliery in 1882 consisted of one 'old water engine', seven winding engines (Nos. 1 - 7 but unfortunately the numbers do not tie in with the pit numbers), and one pumping engine. All were powered by steam. The old water engine was described as "high pressure, beam, supported on brick piers". No. 2 was a typical engine and was described as "a condensing beam engine, 26 in. cylinder working 5 ft. 6 in. stroke, with nozzle checker, hand gear and parallel

motion, 17½ in. air pumps and condensers with head and foot valves (in wrought iron cistern), 3½ in. boiler pumps including fly-wheel, shaft cranks and plummer blocks, spring beam, silling and holding down bolts, top packing and bottom floors. cistern and sills under engine."

Winding gear, 3 ft. 4 in. spur wheel, 9 in. barrel shaft, 13 ft. long, two plummer blocks, 6 ft. 9 in. crown wheel, two sets of drum rings and arms and sill plates.

Typical of the steam raising arrangements were that described for No. 1 and 3 winding engines as, "Boilers, cylindrical egg-ended 6 ft. x 26ft. 6 in. and 25 ft. and 8 ft. x 22 ft. 6 in. (five boilers in all). Mountings, three furnace grates, steam and feed pipes. Much of this equipment was sold for scrap in 1904 at the time the furnaces were being dismantled.

### General

The first reported accident was a double fatality in 1846, both men being killed in an explosion. Despite this and similar incidents candles were the only means of illumination until 1903. In 1864 the beam of one of the engines broke and fell down the shaft completely blocking it, fortunately the men were able to escape by the second shaft. Falls of roof were commonplace and in 1880 H. Owen, and 1883 R. Hussey were killed in such incidents. In 1882 J. Kirkham, a sinker, was crushed by the cage being lowered on to him. In 1888 a man was seriously injured while carrying the explosive powder, a boy threw a piece of lighted fuse at him causing the powder to ignite.

Smith describes the Madeley Court Ironstone as follows "Penneystone. Clay Ironstone, easily scratched by a steel point, but harder than the Donnington Penneystone, colour dark grey, fracture conchoidal, structure compact, some crystals of Iron Pyrites, 34.75% Iron."

Very little has as yet been published on the Madeley Court Works and much of this information has been obtained from the original records and plans by discussion with the older inhabitants of Madeley.

IVOR J. BROWN

Cornovian Farms: A survey of recent work on Iron Age/Romano-British Enclosures.

Excavations of many Iron Age sites in recent years have shown that their inhabitants perpetuated a form of 'A' (Little Woodbury) Culture, little modified in some aspects, over a long settled period until influenced by Roman techniques. The enclosed farmstead at Site A - Sharpstones Hill (S.N.L. No. 31) provided local evidence of this phenomenon, and now, with the discovery of several similar sites in the area, it may be possible to throw light on many problems which only recently seemed insuperable. It should be possible to make an assessment of the social and administrative controls over this form of rural economy. The exciting prospect of the identification and evaluation of peculiarly Cornovian traits now lies within the grasp of the excavator whose first task will be to confirm the contemporaneity of the sites, which at present is achieved by typological methods.

At least 11 enclosures (listed below) have been observed, 8 of them on a survey arranged in co-operation with the Shropshire Aero Club, Sleaf, on 31st July, 1969. All lie in close relationship North and West of Viroconium and all appear to be sited on commanding positions overlooking gravel slopes in river valleys. Each appears to exploit 500 to 600 acres (200 - 240 hectares) of good arable and/or stock raising land, with an estimated 400 - 500 acres of waste/woodland to complete the area within the possible site boundaries. The farmsteads are enclosed by single (Site A) or double (Site E - Lyth Hill) ditch/bank systems which are sub-square and were cut primarily as drainage features. Later, in some cases, they were modified to form defensive systems. This suggests that where drainage was unnecessary (e.g. on the sandier gravel regions south of the Sharpstones/Lyth Hill ridgeway) we must expect to find other types of settlement, particularly open villages, possibly in association with hill forts, and also hill forts with intramural villages. Open villages will be difficult to detect where lying on lighter soils subject to long agricultural use, and may have been erased completely. The Sharpstones/Lyth Hill group of settlements with their attendant hill forts of The Burges and Bomere Pool (?) certainly merit further study.

1. Site A. Sharpstones Hill. SJ 508105.  
Uni-vallate, sub-square, simple entrance assymmetrically along the E. leg, roughly 45 yds. square. Drainage towards the Mere Pools.
2. Site E. Sharpstones Hill. SJ 496104.  
Bi-vallate, square, inner ditch with simple entrance set mid-way along W. leg, outer ditch smaller and with out-turned entrance. Drainage towards the Moneybrook.

3. 200 yds. W. of Lythwood Hall, Bayston Hill. SJ 468085. <sup>? SA 92</sup>  
Bi-vallate, heart-shaped, simple entrance about mid-way along E. side. Roughly 65 yards square.
4. 600 yds. N. of Norton Farm, Condover. SJ 495076. <sup>SA 439</sup>  
Uni-vallate, sub-square with simple entrance into annexe (?) on N. side. Roughly 75 yds. square.
5. 600 yds. N.W. of Allfield, Condover. SJ 498073. <sup>SA 2205</sup>  
Rectangular enclosure (?) with square corners. This does not appear to be related typologically to the others and may represent a 'villa' site. Roughly 50 x 30 yds. Entrance (?) facing S.
6. 200 yds. S. of Condover Airfield, (N - S runway) SJ 508033.  
Bi-vallate (?) square, entrance probably on the S. side at edge of escarpment overlooking the Row Brook. Roughly 65 yds. square.
7. 1,000 yds. W. of Hunkington (Haughmond Hill) SJ 555135.  
Bi-vallate, heart-shaped (?) entrance on E. side towards a small tributary of the River Tern. Roughly 75 yds. square. Previously photographed by J. Pickering and others.
8. 500 yds. N.W. of Attingham Hall. SJ 547107.  
Uni-vallate (?) sub-square. Simple entrance on E. side towards River Tern. Roughly 70 yds. square.
9. 100 yds. N. of Longwood Farm. Longdon-upon-Tern. SJ 626164  
Bi-vallate, sub-square, simple entrance mid-way along W. side at the edge of an escarpment over-looking the River Tern. Approximately 60 yds. square overall. Outer ditch the smaller of the two. Kinnersley Walls hill fort 3 miles to E.
10. 100 yds. S. of Rodenhurst Hall, Rodington. SJ 589154.  
A complex of uni- and bi-vallate square and rectangular enclosures, some over-lapping and showing possible extensions. Entrances probably to the E. over-looking the River Roden. Roughly 60 - 70 yds. square, possibly associated with other non-linear earthworks in the same field.
11. 100 yds. E. of Cotwall, High Ercall. SJ 606175.  
Bi-vallate sub-square, simple entrance mid-way along S.E. side, roughly 40 yds. square with smaller outer ditch. At the edge of high ground over-looking the W. bank of the River Roden.

Other sites:-

Several other crop-marks which may be of archaeological importance

were observed, but in view of the necessity of photographing those listed above, only a few could be recorded. The most important were:-

- a) 200 yds. S.W. of Site E - Sharpstones Hill. SJ 492102.  
Concentric ditches, overall diameter approximately 65 ft. with associated linear gully. No entrance. Possibly a barrow.
- b) 300 yds. N.W. of Stapleton Church. SJ 469048.  
A circular barrow and several gulleys. A tumulus was razed in this area during the 19th century.
- c) Near Berwick Wharf. SJ 551112.  
Possibly another enclosure similar to the above.
- d) Near Robertsford Farm, Preston Boats. SJ 519117.  
Possibly another enclosure similar to b) above.

W. E. JENKS.  
J. DUFFY.

#### Viroconium. Finger Post Cottage. SJ 568083

Excavation has continued as weather has permitted across the Eastern ramparts in the garden of the now ruined Finger Post Cottage on the Ironbridge Road. The work is now nearing conclusion and the present position may be summarised as follows:-

There was, at this point, a road, 35 ft. wide, now covered by the road from Ironbridge, and diverging from the modern line at this point, aiming in the general direction of Wroxeter village. It was composed of two main layers with a spine of cobbles  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. x  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in size in the lower part. This was set in clay and was upon the natural clean sand. Under the first layer and lying on the natural sand was a portion of a lid in light grey ware dateable to Flavian times (Gillan 339). In this and the upper layer were hard fired sherds in grey ware of lobular pots (Gillan 101). These are found on military sites and here may be residual. In this upper layer was a trumpet brooch of a type that went out of fashion circa 110 A.D. On the road surface was found a small bronze dolphin of applique form.

The back end of the late 2nd century rampart overlaid about two thirds of the width of the road and was, where sectioned at its full width, though ploughed down, about 22 ft. wide. It was found to be, as else-

silt to the depth of rather more than 2 ft. in its bottom. This ditch was coming to a butt end against the road. In the forward slope of the rampart the robber trench of a wall was seen. No footways were left, and the trench was here 5 ft. 6 in. wide.

External to this first period (presumably late 2nd century) ditch was a hard clay and stone boundary and kerb about 2 ft. thick, beyond which was a second ditch 27 ft. wide and 17 ft. deep, including silt to a depth of over 3 ft. This silt contained quantities of animal bones, iron slag, a stamped amphora handle, part of a Wroxeter tankard, a buff coloured rim of a 2nd century bowl and a few scraps of residual plain Samian ware.

This ditch had been deliberately filled with stones, soil and clay in sub or post Roman times and at the same time this fill had overflowed into the first period and innermost ditch. Similarly a third and outer ditch about 17 ft. wide, flat-bottomed and 16 ft. deep was filled with building material from a demolished Roman building. In this debris good quality shaped stones were found, with a barous and worn bronze coin of TETRICUS II (AE double denarius. AD 270 - 273). Clearly this was not stone robbing but deliberate filling of a defensive ditch which was no longer required. As additional proof of this, a well set large pebble path about 15 ft. wide led to and from the levelled-off stone fill. Occupation debris lay upon it and a heap of soil and clay containing the head, neck and right femur of a young person aged about 22 years which showed what could have been a sword slash at the front (i.e. in the right groin). 4th century pottery was present, notably an example of a black burnished bowl (Gillan 228). This ditch was found also to come to a butt end against the early Roman road.

The fourth smaller outermost ditch has not been sectioned as yet on this particular line though it was found 25 ft. to the North. It too was filled in Roman times with clean sand and contained in its silt the rounded base of a 2nd century Samian vessel bearing the stamp of REBVRVS of Lexour (2nd century).

At this point there was faint evidence of the counterscarp of the largest ditch. This was evidently growing smaller due possibly to the narrowing of the ditches as they approached the road.

A. W. J. HOUGHTON.

X Excavation of the Roman Villa at Lea Cross, Pontesbury.(SJ 417085)

A Roman building in the vicinity of Lea Cross was discovered in November 1793 and recorded in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of that time. Unfortunately very little of the excavation then was properly recorded beyond the fact of "several rooms were opened". No plan was drawn but a fine mosaic of geometric pattern overlying a hypocaust was found and later drawn by Telford; this floor was later destroyed.

The site was re-discovered by Dr. A. W. J. Houghton in 1956 when trial excavation revealed floors and walls, some surviving a number of courses above ground level and covered by a hedge bank. Subsequent excavation for the Shropshire Archaeological Society in 1969 has concentrated on an area of 1,500 square feet, and has confirmed that there exists a substantial building of various phases between the 2nd and 4th century AD, dated by finds of pottery, with traces of outbuildings as well.

Work on the villa was re-started from August 1968. The site has been extensively robbed in the 18th century and there is much evidence for the removal of opus signinum and mosaic floors as well as wall structures; building material abounds on the site and includes hypocaust pilae and box-flue tiles, painted wall-plaster of various colours, and slate roofing tiles as well as tegulae and imbrex tiles. Pottery finds have been very meagre, as if the 18th century excavators had removed potsherds, but unstratified material covers a range from the 2nd to the 4th century, including Samian, Severn Valley ware and hammer-headed mortaria.

Work has concentrated on total stripping of the main structure and establishing its orientation. So far an area of 1,500 square feet has been uncovered and six rooms identified. The existing walls standing up to 3 feet high (the main area of Houghton's excavation) associated with thin yellow concrete floors are now seen as secondary additions to the original(?) masonry building one of whose main walls of dressed sandstone and solid pink mortar has been traced for 40 feet and is associated with opus signinum and concrete floors of far greater substance. Already at least three periods of construction are tentatively assumed and further excavation of the area will undoubtedly clarify problems of the plan, although it is doubtful how much stratified material remains for an accurate chronological assessment.

Trial trenches in the field adjacent to the villa where top soil has accumulated to a depth of 3 feet indicates outbuildings which may have been left undisturbed in the 18th century. Drainage operations 100 yards from the main site have also revealed potsherds.

GEOFFREY TOMS

Excavations and Courses: Summer 1970.

X Lea Cross Roman Villa. Excavations during 1970 will take place from 21st - 27th May and from 19th August - 1st September, and on certain weekends in May and June. For details apply to the Director, Geoffrey Toms, Shropshire Adult College, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury.

Hen Domen, Montgomery. This well known 11th century castle will again be excavated from 4th - 25th July, 1970. Details are available from Mr. P. A. Barker, 4 St. George's Square, Worcester. For an account of last year's excavations see S.N.L. No. 37.

Wroxeter. Excavation of a large area of late- and sub-Roman timber buildings lying over the baths basilica will continue between 8th August and 5th September, 1970. For details apply to Mr. P. A. Barker, 4 St. George's Square, Worcester. Detail of introductory and advanced courses in archaeological techniques, also to be held at Wroxeter during the summer, are available from the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham, 15.

Ironbridge Gorge Museum. Work on the uncovering of the Blists Hill Blast Furnaces and on other industrial sites in the vicinity will continue during the summer. For details contact Mr. K. Dunham, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Southside, Ironbridge, Telford. The museum frequently has emergency assignments, and Mr. Dunham would be glad to have names of people willing to help with the salvaging of equipment or with excavations at very short notice.

Canals and Waterways. Course at Preston Montford Field Centre, 29th August - 5th September: tutors, Michael Rix and J. Horsley Denton. For details apply to Department of Extra-Mural Studies, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham, 15.

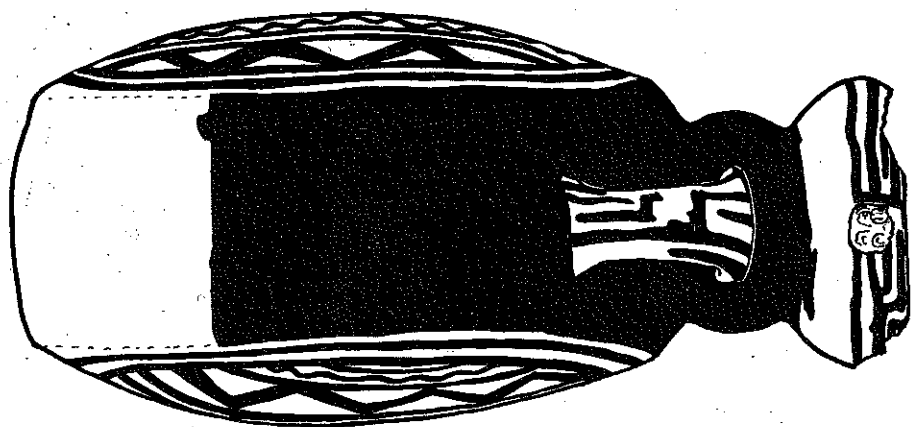
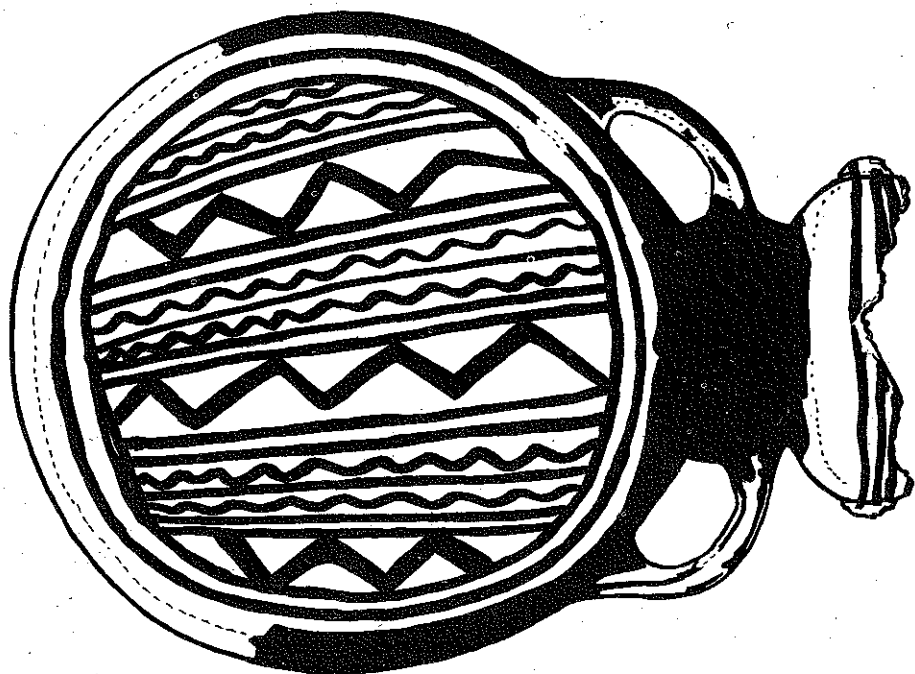
Archaeology and History in the Welsh Borderland. Course at Preston Montford, 22nd - 29th August. Tutor, Mr. D. Pannett. For details apply to Preston Montford Field Centre, Shrewsbury.

Industrial Archaeology in Shropshire. Course at Preston Montford Field Centre, 15th - 22nd August: tutor Robert Machin. Information from Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 20a Berkeley Square, Bristol, BS8 1HR.

Railway History of Wales and the Midlands. Course at Attingham Park 17th - 23rd July, tutors, J. H. Denton, P. A. Stevens, D. A. Halsall. Details from the Warden, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury.

The Mining Industry of South Shropshire. A whole day field trip on Sunday, 14th June, leader, Kenneth Lock, departing from Shrewsbury at





10 a.m. Details from Barrie Trinder, Adult Education Tutor, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury.

An exotic find from Church Stretton.

A remarkable find was made in 1964 when the garden of Highfields, Sandford Avenue, Church Stretton, was being dug. A complete pot was unearthed whose profile and decoration was completely unlike any known British specimen, and was thus submitted to the Department of Ethnology of the British Museum for identification.

The vessel is circular in profile, but rectangular in section with neck and flaring rim; a pair of attached loop handles join neck and shoulder, the total height being 12 inches. It is of a red brown ware covered with a cream slip over which runs a geometrical pattern in chocolate slip clearly based on textile fabric for its inspiration. There is no base to the original vessel, and the jar was obviously designed to be slung, possibly from a saddle, or from the waist as a pouch, and its likely use was as a water container.

The vessel indubitably comes from the Chancay district of Central Peru and was manufactured during the 13th or 14th century, being of the Cuismancu culture. The ceramics of this culture are typically egg-shaped or circular in form with textile patterns predominating. The main types are well illustrated on p. 110 in "Peru" by G. H. S. Bushnell in the Thames and Hudson "Ancient Peoples and Places" series. I acknowledge the assistance of the British Museum for this identification.

We may well ask how such a vessel in its entirety should be found in the heart of Shropshire. It seems that the house was previously owned by a Mr. Goss and on his death his wife disposed of his collection of antique objects with apparently little knowledge of their value. It may well be that the vessel was brought back from America by some early traveller and passed into Mr. Goss' hands, perhaps through purchase. It would be interesting to learn more about Mr. Goss' life in this respect and mean while we have a salutary warning to archaeologists who are tempted to identify and date sites by single objects!

The vessel was found by Victoria Wargent of Highfields, and I am grateful to Mrs. J. Miller for giving me details of this curious discovery and for providing the drawing.

GEOFFREY TOMS

Shropshire Archaeological Society Activities, 1970.

Friday, 5th June - Annual General Meeting at College Hill House.  
Speaker: Mr. J. Salmon.

Saturday, 18th July - A whole-day visit to Chirbury, Montgomery, and Hen Domen. We shall see churches at Chirbury and Montgomery, and Montgomery Castle, and visit the excavation at Hen Domen. Mr. J. D. K. Lloyd and Mr. J. B. Lawson will speak at Chirbury and Montgomery, and Mr. P. A. Barker will speak at Hen Domen. This excursion will be of especial interest following the publication of Mr. Baker's account of mediaeval pottery.

Saturday, 5th September - A whole-day visit to Maelor Saesneg, the detached portion of Flintshire. We hope to visit houses and churches around Overton, Hanmer and Redbrook. Our leader will be Mrs. Sunter Harrison of Wrexham who has made a detailed study of the history of the Maelor over many years. Further details available from the Hon. Excursions Secretary, William Price, V.C.H. Office, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

Corrigenda

Mr. F. A. Jeffrey of Shifnal points out that the Canalside Cement Mill at Madeley, mentioned in Mr. Ivor Brown's notes in S.N.L. No. 37 was never used as a slaughter-house by his ancestor, also Mr. F. A. Jeffrey. The latter's slaughterhouse was in Burnt Hall off Court Street, Madeley. Mr. R. E. James of Shrewsbury Museum wishes to emphasise that Gilpin's chain works also mentioned in S.N.L. No. 37 did not cease work in 1814, although by that time he had probably transferred his activities away from Coalport to the Dawley area.

The Shortwood Mine.

Shortwoods No. 9, the last little pit in Shropshire, ceased production of coal on 2nd February, 1970, and finally closed on 27th February, 1970. This mine, the last of a group in the Lawley Horsehay area, commenced production in 1953 and was owned by the Brandlee Colliery Co. (Messrs. Smallshaw and Tarr).

Parlour Coppice, Upton Cressett. (SO/649926)

Following the discovery of sherds of Samian Ware by Mr. David Stoves in this area (reported in Shropshire News Letter No. 37) a fuller investigation of the site was undertaken by Mr. W. E. Jenks and myself in December, 1969, after recent ploughing, with the kind permission of the owner, Mr. W. H. Pugh of Upton Park. Roman pottery, but no building material except one fragment of a tegula tile, was found in considerable quantity overlying the surface of the field to the North West of the coppice for an area at least 200 yards square in extent.

The site lies on a plateau of clay 700 feet above sea-level and slopes down in a South Easterly direction towards the Coppice. The majority of the sherds were found in 4 concentrated areas on this slope in association with darker soil to within 70 yards of the Coppice. Within a short time it was seen to be best to select only rims and bases for further examination, as literally bucket-loads of pottery could have been taken off the surface.

The pottery falls within a wide range of time and certainly includes material from the 2nd to 4th century. A further number of Samian sherds were identified, among them being Dragendorf forms 31, 33 and 37 (familiar 2nd century types) together with a rim of a Rhenish ware beaker. A rim of a red slip-coated "pipe-clay" hammer-headed mortarium could be attributed to the 4th century. The remaining sherds were almost entirely of pink, red or buff Severn Valley ware in which predominated claw-rimmed wide-mouthed storage-jars, bead-rim straight-sided bowls and foot-ring or butt bases of bowls and jars. Other distinctive features included grooved and flanged-rim bowls, bowls imitating Samian form 37 and handles probably from tankards. A very few sherds of reduced-grey or black-burnished fabric were found. There were also two pieces of vitreous slag.

The site is clearly an extensive farmstead settlement of the type being rapidly recognised now by aerial photography throughout the Avon-Severn valley areas. The concentrations of pottery probably represent successive hut sites, rather than a "village" type community. It is essential that further investigation of this site should be from the air when the relationship of the occupation to enclosures or field systems could be understood under favourable crop conditions over a number of seasons. Excavation at the moment would be unlikely to throw much important additional light on the site.

The site is in an area which has not up to now revealed Roman occupation, and this is undoubtedly due to a lack of fieldwork and aerial survey in the district rather than to sparseness of agricultural activity in the Roman period. Farmstead sites which are probably to be dated

to the Roman period have in recent years been recognised from the air at Bridgwalton and Cross Houses in the Mor Brook valley west of Bridgnorth (SO 687928 and 692922 respectively) about 3 miles east of the Upton Cressett site, and there is also evidence of similar enclosures south of Bridgnorth in the Severn Valley near Dudmaston Dr. J. K. St. Joseph has also recorded rectangular enclosures north of Bridgnorth at SO 727944 (Journal of Roman Studies, Vol LVIII 101).

It should be noted too that the Roman road from Greensforge to Craven Arms, described by Dr. A. W. J. Houghton in the Shropshire Archaeological Transactions Vol. LVI 238 passes within a mile to the north of the site on its alignment from Morville to Aston Eyre. Otherwise this is an area which would well repay further fieldwork and Mr. Stove is to be congratulated on this important discovery.

Evidence of earlier activity in this area is further given by a barbed and tanged arrowhead in the possession of Mr. Pugh and found on his land about three-quarters of a mile to the south west of the present site.

#### GEOFFREY TOMS.

##### Crucks at Ironbridge.

To find a Cruck, an essentially mediaeval feature in a town which did not exist until the late 18th century is unexpected. Yet during recent demolition work at No. 23 High Street, Ironbridge, a fine pair of Crucks was exposed. This is an interesting example of Crucks being re-used as a roof-truss at a late date.

As re-used, they rest on a tie beam the base of which is approximately 16 ft. from ground level, and have the appearance of Upper-Crucks. The apex is obscured above the collar beam. Almost certainly in their original state they constituted a full Cruck Truss. They have a 1 in Chamfer and the normal 20 ft. span is preserved.

At approximately 6 ft. 6 in. from ground level there is a 1 ft. beam (sawn) again probably re-used, supporting the remains of a staircase. Apparently the roof of No. 23 ran at right-angles to the properties on either side which follow the common practice in late town building of being set at right-angles to the street. Thus No. 23 would be set parallel to the street, perhaps governed by the desire or necessity to re-use the Crucks.

In April the above features could still be seen in the exposed lateral wall of Barclays Bank, No. 24 High Street, but they have now been bricked in.

M. MORAN.

# Shropshire News Letter

No. 39 - December 1970

ATTINGHAM HALL  
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Edited by Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury. (Tel: Shrewsbury  
52310)

## The Aqueduct: an east Shropshire industrial settlement

### Pt. 1. The area before the 19th century.

The settlement at the Aqueduct probably began in the late 18th century with the construction of the Shropshire Canal. This canal, authorised in 1788, ran from Donnington Wood to Southall Bank (SJ 695062) and from there one branch went to Coalbrookdale and another to what soon became known as Coalport. The aim of the promoters was for the canal to "open communication between . . . the river (Severn) and several valuable mines of coal, ironstone, lime and other extensive works and be of great public utility".

The western branch of the canal was "carried . . . across the great road leading from Bridgnorth to Watling Street" by the single arch stone aqueduct (SJ 694059) which gave its name to the settlement. The eastern branch of the canal passed "through a farm called the Windmill Farm belonging to Richard Dyott, Esq.." (SJ 699057) and descended by an inclined plane before passing under "the said great road leading from Bridgnorth to Watling Street on the north side of a certain turnpike called the Cuckoo Oak Turnpike" (Shropshire Canal Act).

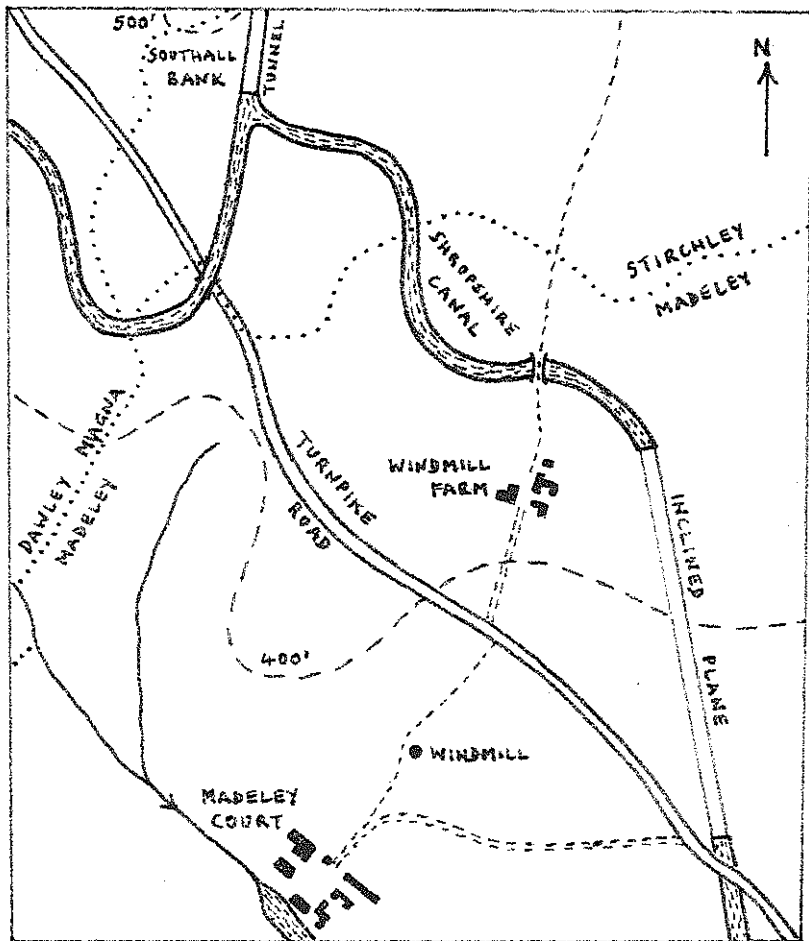
This turnpike road was one of those authorised by "an act for amending, widening and keeping in repair several roads leading from the Bucks Head at Watling Street to Beckbury and the New Inn, and from the Birches Brook to the Hand Post in the Parish of Kemberton" in 1764. Although "part of the high road leading from Wellington, Wem Ellesmere, Watling Street and several other towns and villages and

unto the several cities of Worcester. Gloucester. Bath and Bristol ... and ... unto Wolverhampton ... and Birmingham", like the other roads mentioned in the act was "in a ruinous condition", as is confirmed by a description of it in 1722 as a mere "lane leading from the Cuckoo Oake to Great Dawley" (Dyott Papers). It is interesting to note that two of the trustees named in the Act were Christopher Astley, the owner of Madeley Court, and John Smitheman, who owned a half share of the Manor of Madeley.

Thus, at the time of the building of the Shropshire Canal in 1788-1792, it appears unlikely that there were any buildings in the area other than that mentioned in the Act of 1788 (i.e. the Windmill Farm) and of course, Madeley Court (SJ 695051) and its outbuildings.

The Manor of Madeley originally belonged to the Priors of Wenlock, who held court and probably sometimes resided at the Court House. At the Dissolution the last prior, John Bailey, retired there on a pension until his death sometime between 1549 and 1552. The Manor, a large area on the north bank of the Severn with some additional land at Badger, was purchased from the Crown in 1544 for £946. 3. 8. by Robert Brooke of Claverley, a lawyer who in 1552 became Speaker of the House of Commons and Chief Justice in the Court of Common Pleas. In 1555 he was knighted for his services to the Crown. Sir Robert and his family came to live at the Court House, and probably it was his son and heir John Brooke who rebuilt the house, most of which dates from the early years of the reign of Elizabeth I. The porch and detached gatehouse are later, having apparently been added in Jacobean times. Like most of the country residences of Catholic families of the period, the house was "honeycombed with places for concealment and escape" (H. E. Forrest, *The Old Houses of Wenlock*).

Madeley Court remained in the possession of the Brooke family until the early 18th century when Comberford Brooke and trustees appointed by the will of Basil Brooke of 1697 sold the estate to Matthias Astley of Tamhorn, Staffs. for £5,400 in 1705. As Lord of the Manor, Comberford Brooke reserved the right "of digging for coal in any part of the said lands not lying within the distance of 500 yards on any side from the building of the said capital house" (i.e. Madeley Court). The Manor of Madeley and its valuable mineral rights passed from Comberford Brooke, first to his son Basil and then to his daughters Catherine and Rose, who married respectively John Unett Smitheman of Little Wenlock and John Giffard of Madeley. It was from these two families that Abraham Darby III purchased the bulk of the shares in



## MAP OF THE AREA AT THE END OF THE 18TH. CENTURY

SCALE : 6" TO ONE MILE.

--- : CONTOUR LINES. .... : PARISH BOUNDARIES.

COMPILED FROM INFORMATION IN THE SOURCES  
QUOTED AND FROM THE FOLLOWING MAPS :-  
BAUGH (1808), ESTATE MAPS (1827 & 1844),  
AND FIRST EDITION O.S. (1833).



the Manor between 1774 and 1778, a process of consolidation completed when Richard Reynolds bought Darby's and the remaining shares in 1780-81. The Manor remained in the Reynolds family until the late 19th century when it passed to the Balls (Cooper Papers).

Mattias Astley, the new owner in 1705, appears to have leased the Madeley Court Estate and one of the earliest tenants was the first Abraham Darby, who, according to Hannah Rose, died there in 1717. A title deed of 1730 describes the property as "all that capital messuage or manor house commonly called . . . Madeley Court and also those several pieces or parcels of arable meadow or pasture ground thereto belonging . . . (fields named) . . . and also that one windmill . . . and . . . water corn mill . . . and . . . all tithes". The windmill (SJ 697053) and watermill (SJ 695050) had been included in the sale of 1705. Although there is no specific mention of the Windmill Farm in this document, the will of Mattias Astley in 1722 included "all that part of his estate at Madeley that lay on the north side of the land that led to Dawley Magna from Cuckoo Oak . . . together with all edifices and buildings", a likely reference to what probably became known at a later date as the Windmill Farm (Dyott Papers).

The Madeley Court Estate remained in the possession of the Astley family throughout the 18th century until the last member of the family Mary, who had married Richard Dyott of Freeford, (Staffs.), died without issue in 1826 and the property was put up for sale by the trustees named in her will of 1822. A valuation of the estate gives the total acreage as over 546, which comprised Madeley Court and farm (occupied by R. Trigger), mills, malshouses and lands (occupied by W. Taylor) and the Windmill Farm (occupied by W. Anstice) with rents amounting to £810 p. a. The property was described as "a very complete and desirable estate, lying within a ring fence, near to excellent markets, coal and lime, and . . . free from all descriptions of tithes on payment of a modus of 8/- per annum"; and from the wording of the sale particulars, the trustees hoped that the prospects of exploiting the mineral deposits would attract a buyer (Dyott and Foster Papers).

The sale was held at the Jerningham Arms, Shifnal, on January 22nd and 23rd 1827, and the estate was purchased for £24,000 by James Foster, the Stourbridge ironmaster, who also had Shropshire interests at Eardington, Hampton Loade and Wombridge. By an agreement dated December 13th 1827 Foster paid a deposit of £1,200 and agreed to

pay the balance of £22.800 on the conveyance of the property to him on March 25th 1828. (Foster Papers)

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Part 2 of this account of the Aqueduct will appear in our next issue

SOURCES: -

Dyott Papers (Staffordshire Record Office, Debl). Documents relating to the Madeley Court Estate - espec. Title Deed of 1730; Abstract of Title. 1826 - 27; Valuation of Estate. 1826.

Foster Papers (Apley Estate Office, Bridgnorth). Volume "Madeley Court Miscellaneous Paper 1544-1837", espec. Sale Particular of Madeley Court Estate 1827; Agreement to sell to James Foster, 1827; Schedule of Title Deeds. 1837.

Copper Papers (Shropshire Record Office. 1681) Documents relating to the Manor of Madeley, espec. Abstract of the title of Joseph Reynolds to the Manor of Madeley, 1544-1828.

John Randall "The History of Madeley" (1880) and "The Old Court House, Madeley" (1883) provide useful information, particularly on the Brooke family.

N. J. Clarke.

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### Richard Gough's History of Myddle

Salop County Council Records Committee are sponsoring a reprint of Richard Gough's "History of Myddle", taken from the edition of 1875. Copies will be available from December 1st 1970 either from Mrs. A. Sparrow, Hon. Sec. The Gough Society "Westmore", Lower Road, Harmer Hill, Shrewsbury, or from Messrs. Adnitt and Naunton, The Square, Shrewsbury. Price the shilling.

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## Early railways in east Shropshire

The work of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum has recently brought to light two discoveries of some importance to the early history of railways in the east Shropshire coalfield.

It has been known for some years that plateways with L-section rails carrying smooth vehicles, as invented by the Sheffield coal-viewer John Curr, were introduced in Shropshire in the mid-1790s, and that they were the most widely used form of short distance industrial transport in the area in the 19th century. Archaeological evidence has shown that different iron and coal producing concerns used a variety of gauges and different types of track. Numerous plateway rails have been found in the district, but they have usually been in places where it was impossible to observe details of the original construction of the track. At Horsehay, for example, two sets of rails survived until recently, one roughly laid on a cinder base, the other embedded in concrete.

At the Ironbridge Gorge Museum's Blists Hill site formerly the work of the Madeley Wood Company, a section of plateway track has recently been discovered in its original condition, probably the only such section in the district. It consists of two lengths of 6ft. rails of 20 in. gauge. The rails are mounted in cast iron sleepers, fitted only at the joints, and beneath each rail is a longitudinal wooden sleeper, approx. 1½ in. thick. There appear also to be short timber piles supporting the shoes of the sleepers. Between the rails is the brick path, on which walked the horses pulling the waggons, which has been found on several other Shropshire sites.

There are gaps in the bricks above each of the sleepers which are filled with red clay. This section of track shows that plateways were, on some occasions at least, constructed with considerable skill and care. The use of the timber longitudinal sleeper is particularly interesting, suggesting some degree of continuity of principle between the first iron rails of 1767 which replaced the upper levels of two-level wooden rails, and the later plateways.

The many original contributions to the development of railways before 1800 made in east Shropshire are by now quite well known, but it has generally been assumed that there were no important changes of practice between the introduction of plateways in the 1790s and the opening of the standard gauge main line railways in the late 1840s.

This view must now to some extent be modified since among the items which have been brought to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum from construction sites in the Telford area are some T-section wrought iron edge rails of the type patented by John Birkenshaw of Bedlington, Northumberland, in 1820. The rails were accompanied by some cast iron sleepers which show the gauge of the line to have been 30in. All of the rails are broken off at one end, but the longest pieces measure over 10ft. and they were probably, like other Birkenshaw rails, rolled in 15 or 18ft. lengths. There are "fish-bellies" 3ft. long on the undersides as was normal with this type of rail. The top edges of the rails are 2in. wide. Particularly interesting are the cast iron sleepers found with the rails, which were of two types, one with a simple straight-through groove in the shoe to accommodate the rail at intermediate points along its length. The other had two stopped grooves to hold two lapping rails at the joints. In other parts of Britain it seems that Birkenshaw rails were mounted on stone blocks. The rails were found near Madeley Court and discussion of them at an evening class in industrial archaeology revealed the others of the same type had been uncovered in the Madeley Court works. This pattern of track was probably introduced therefore by James Foster when he took over the mines of the area in 1828, as described by Mr. Clarke elsewhere in this issue, and by Mr. Brown in S. N. L. No. 38.

Barrie Trinder,

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### Subscriptions &c.

Members of the Shropshire Archaeological Society who do not pay their subscriptions by Banker's Order are reminded that payments are due on January 1st 1971, and should be sent to the Hon. Membership secretary, Mrs. M. Halford, County Record Office, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Subscribers to the Newsletter who are not members of the Archaeological Society who have not yet paid for their 1971 issues should send five shillings to the Hon. Editor, Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury.

## Wroxeter (Viroconium Cornoviorum) (SJ 566 087)

Excavations, on the site of the Baths Basilica, 1970

The excavation of the latest levels on the site of the baths basilica and the areas to the north and east was continued for four weeks in the summer of 1970, bringing the excavated area, now stripped down to the first archaeological layer, to about 2000 square metres. It is becoming apparent that on complex sites of this kind any smaller area will lead to misinterpretation or the complete loss of the kind of evidence adduced below. The most significant fact which is emerging is the importance of the rubble spread from the destroyed stone building for the understanding of the latest phases. This rubble spread marks a break, not yet understood, in the development of this insula and the one to the north. It seals a number of pebble and mortar floors which lie above the basilica floor, but it has been cleared from some large areas whose buildings can thus be shown to be post-rubble in date. However, at least one of these buildings is classical in design, though built in timber framing and wattle and daub, so that a late Roman rather than a post-Roman date is implied. Close examination of the rubble spread shows where it has been worn by the passage of feet, or used as somewhat impromptu flooring, or where, conversely, it has been covered at an early stage with earth and perhaps grass, and thus been protected from wear.

The townscape of this part of the city in its last phase is now revealing itself. The insula was bounded on the east by a street of large pebbles. Between this and the parallel baths precinct wall lay the bow-sided wattle buildings of bi- or tri-partite form discovered in 1967/8. In their penultimate phase these buildings and their outhouses had been burnt down, but the burning did not extend beyond the precinct wall, which suggests that this was standing to an effective height at the time. The area, about 20 x 26 metres, bounded by the precinct walls and the eastern end of the basilica contains no random rubble spread. Within this area there is a patch of featureless ground close to a rectili near pebble surface lying diagonally to the precinct wall. A scatter of postholes and stake holes suggests that this pebble surface was within a building, though this cannot be proved. Nearby, a rectangular spread of sandstone rubble, 14 x 5 metres, has a tightly packed area of worn sandstone blocks at its centre. The whole seems to be the foundation for a timber-framed building leaning to against the northern precinct wall. An area of worn compacted rubble-spread immediately outside a break in the wall foundation implies that there

was an opening here when the wall was standing, giving access on to the abandoned street, which is covered with rubble, incoherently distributed, though worn in places.

The most remarkable and mysterious activity of this last occupation was the removal to a depth of about a metre of a large stretch of the cobbled street north of the former basilica, and its replacement by a bed of fine gravel, which weathers badly and is very soft in wet conditions. This impractical surface must have had some special purpose, which is at present unknown. It may have been covered, since it would hardly survive one winter's use, but there is no sign of the heavy roof supports which would be needed. Flanking this new street surface were the facades of at least two buildings, one of them a timber and wattle portico, symmetrical, and sunk a little into the ground to level the massive uprights of the framed structure; the other a clay foundation, square, with shallow post sockets. There is presumptive evidence that these buildings, the gravel street, and the last buildings within the precinct were contemporary, but there is nothing to show that the bow-side buildings outside the precinct on the east were of the same date - the history of that area could be quite separate.

Among the areas of rubble spread surviving over the site of the basilica one small square patch of very closely compacted material, perhaps a floor, overlies the line of the robbed north wall of the basilica, strengthening the impression that this great building had been demolished and its walls robbed before the abandonment of the city (if it ever was totally abandoned). The pottery and coin evidence, which has yet to be fully studied, suggests demolition of the basilica in the mid years of the 4th century. Discontinuous mortar and pebble floors lying over its herring-bone tiled floors, but sealed by the rubble spread, suggest a complex sequence of events before its final levelling.

\* \* \* \* \*

The evidence for the history of Viroconium in its late- and post-Roman periods is gradually accumulating. The recent discovery within the city defences of the tombstone of a late 5th century Irish chieftain, Cunorix; the recognition of a Francisca of Frankish throwing axe, of similar date, found in the baths area in the 19th century and now in Rowley's House Museum, and the recovery last year of three *martio-barbuli*, lead weighted legionary javelin heads of late fourth or

## Taylor and Co. Clay Tobacco Pipe Makers of Shrewsbury

This business was founded by William Taylor who was born in 1816 in Birmingham and who came to Shrewsbury with six molds to set up in Coleham in 1830 as Wm. Taylor and Co.. a name that the business maintained throughout its existence. In 1837 he married Ann Chidlow at St. Mary's church and during the course of the next twenty two years became the father of ten children, four of whom were to be actively engaged in the business.

The Shrewsbury directories for 1880 and 1882 list Taylor T. (Thomas born 1844) and Taylor W. (presumably William, born 1839) From 1888 onwards, daughters, Eliza, born 1850 and Ann, born 1859 were the chief makers, until the dissolution of the business in 1912. Ann being the chief modeller during this latter period.

The industry was based at 52 Longden Coleham, now Sankeys shop, but also listed on occasions at number 1, 18 and 19 Pipe Passage, later renamed Fairford Place. The kiln was situated at the top of Pipe Passage.

I have not as yet been able to trace any examples of the pipes produced but have a description from family sources.

The clay pipes were made by hand and not two part press moulded. The size varied but were chiefly churchwardens and straws. They were highly decorative with molded bowls in the Victorian manner: faces, acorns etc. Certainly during the latter period of manufacture the pipes were chiefly bought by public houses for free distribution although many were sold privately, as an advertisement in Kellys 1885 directory will attest.

"Established 1830  
Wm. Taylor & Co..  
Tobacco Pipe Works  
52 Longden Coleham

NB. Superior Modelling Clay Always in Stock  
Orders Punctually Attended To."

Each pipe was marked with the full or shortened name of the house in Indian ink and the mouthpiece dipped in molten sealing wax of a colour distinctive to that house, also some were bound with fine twine.



The pipes were moulded in the rear of the shop. carried in racks to the top of the passage and placed in the kiln. After firing. the rack of pipes was carried back to the shop where the pipes were dipped. stamped and finally polished by the children of the house.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries smoking habits were undergoing a change and the demand for clays was diminishing in favour of the briar. this. with the competition from the Broseley Works. caused the closing of the business in 1912 although a few pipes were made after this by Samuel Taylor. the grandson of William Taylor Snr. by his youngest son Andrew in association with his tobacconist's shop which superceded the clay pipe works at 52 Longden Coleham.

#### EVIDENCE FROM DIRECTORIES

(All addresses, 52 Longden Coleham, unless otherwise stated)

##### Kelly's Directory

Taylor Wm. & Co. 1856, 1863, 1870, 1885 1891, 1895, 1900, 1909

##### Pigots Directory

Taylor & Co. 1835 see English Clay Tobacco Pipes. A. Oswald.

##### Bagshaws Directory

Taylor Wm. & Co. 1851

##### Casseys Directory

Taylor Wm. 1871, 1875

##### Worrall's North Wales Directory

Taylor Wm. 1874

##### Shrewsbury Directory

Taylor T. 1, Pipe Passage 1880. 1882

Taylor W. 1880, 1882, 1910.

Taylor W. & Co 18 and 19 Pipe Passage 1890

Taylor Mrs A. & E. 1903

##### Wildings Directory

Taylor & Co. 18 and 19 Pipe Passage 1886

Taylor Mrs A. & E. 1888. 1896, 1899.

John E. Andrews

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## Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

The summer of 1970 has seen steady progress on a number of the Museum Trust's major projects. In June custody of the Coalbrookdale works museum was handed over to the Trust on the occasion of Princess Margaret's visit to the county. Preparation for the restoration of Rose Cottage (1642) the oldest surviving building in Coalbrookdale are well in hand. At the Coalport Harbour site some further clearance work has been carried out, and the full slope of the Hay canal inclined plane is now visible after clearance at its foot. On the Museum's major open air site at Blists Hill the restoration of the smaller of the blowing engine houses attached to the blast furnaces is now nearing completion, a new tiled roof is now in place. A charcoal-burning area and a drift mine on the Miners' Walk at Blists Hill are also near to completion. A working potter, Mr. Roy Evans, formerly of Edgmond is now operating on the Blists Hill site. Many of his products are on sale and he welcomes visitors at weekends. Work is at present in progress on the removal of tile presses, steam engines and other equipment from the Milburga Tileries, Jackfield, to the Blists Hill Site. This is the largest operation yet undertaken for the Museum by voluntary workers, and it is hoped to complete the project by the end of the year. Exhibits for the Museum continue to come in a steady stream from building sites throughout the Telford area. Outstanding among acquisitions for the indoor section of the Museum, this summer has been a coffee pot in Jackfield ware of the mid-18th century, presented by a resident of the district. The Museum's next Open Day will be on Sunday May 2nd 1971, when guides will again be available to explain to visitors all of the principal sites and exhibits. Full details will appear in the local press during April.

### **Courses at Attingham Park: Spring and Summer 1971.**

#### **The Iron Age in the Welsh Borderland**

February 12th - 14th. Directed by Stanley Stanford for the University of Birmingham Department of Extra-Mural Studies, to whom direct enquiries should be made. It is likely that early booking will be essential.

#### **The Old and New Poor Laws**

February 19th - 21st. A review of our current understanding of the way in which the poor in Great Britain were treated between 1760 and 1860.

which is likely to be of interest to anyone concerned with local history  
Speakers include Dr. J. J. Bagley. Dr. Norman McCord. Mrs. Dorothy  
Thompson, and Dr. Arthur Gooder.. Applications to The Warden.  
Shropshire Adult College, Attingham Park. Shrewsbury.

### **Industrial Housing**

April 23rd -25th. The annual Attingham industrial archaeology weekend  
for which early booking is normally essential. Examples of housing  
provided in the 18th and 19th centuries by industrialists for their workers  
from several parts of the country will be studied. Speakers will include  
Professor Maurice Beresford. Dr Jennifer Tann, Robin Chaplin and  
Barrie Trinder. Applications to the Warden.

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### **Stour and Smestow Archaeological Research Group**

For those who live in the south-eastern part of our county the  
activities of this group should be of particular interest. The group  
has been in existence for two years and is primarily concerned with  
field study and research in the general area around Stourbridge  
particularly where the adjacent counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire  
and Worcestershire meet. Already they have produced an important  
survey of Brierley Moat near Alveley.

They are now undertaking a major survey recording known field  
monuments and discovering previously unrecorded ones in an area  
bounded by Bridgnorth. the River Severn. Kidderminster, Stourbridge  
and Wolverhampton outskirts. Clearly in an area as large as this  
they would welcome any volunteers to join their research and survey  
team. and are particularly keen to recruit Shropshire field-workers.  
whether experienced or not. in the general Bridgnorth area.

The group are already to be congratulated on their active work so  
far and any further information can be received from their secretary:-

Mrs. M. G. Fenton,  
80 Heath Lane,  
Stourbridge,  
Worcs.

## Back Numbers

Since the beginning of 1967 the publication of the News Letter, which summarises current work in local history and archaeology in Shropshire has been taken over from the Shrewsbury Borough Library by the Shropshire Archaeological Society. The News Letter is distributed free of charge to Society members as one of the benefits of membership. The subscription for non-members is 5/- per annum. The News Letter is published twice a year in June and December. All matters connected with the News Letter are handled by the Editor, Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury, who can supply copies of the back numbers mentioned below. Enquiries about copies of issues before No. 32 should be addressed to the Shrewsbury Borough Library

No. 32

An Early Glass Manufactory at Ruyton-XI-Towns.  
The Lilleshall Company Sutton Wharf Tramway.

No. 34

New Light on Thomas Farnolls Pritchard,  
An inscribed stone from Wroxeter

No. 35

The Wooden Bridge at Cressage  
Steam Engines in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield

No. 36

A Forgotten Industrial Valley - ironworks along the Roden and Tern  
Tractarians in Shropshire.  
A Note on Bromley's Forge

No. 38

~~X~~ Langley Gatehouse.  
The Mines of the Madeley Court Company

All of the above are available from the Editor at 2/6 per copy. Each contains news items about work on such sites as Wroxeter, Hen Domen and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum as well as the major articles listed. Nos. 33 and 37 are out of print.

# Shropshire News Letter

No. 40 – June 1971

Published by the Shropshire Archaeological Society

Edited by Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury.  
(Tel: Shrewsbury 52310)

## William Farmer's emigration to Canada

Little seems to be known about the details connected with the emigration of English families to the New World in the early part of the 19th century and this makes the story of the journey of a Shropshire family to Canada and their early days there of considerable interest.

William Farmer a well-to-do member of the lesser gentry farmed at Sutton Maddock in Shropshire where his family had resided for many generations. In 1830 he married Eleanor Shelton Devey, the eldest child of Thomas Devey of Kingslow Hall in the adjoining parish of Worfield. She was his second wife (his first being Elizabeth Yates the daughter of Joseph Yates of Donnington) and by her he had several children. Thomas Devey was a man of substance, a lawyer with a practice in Bridgnorth and, as it turned out, the last of his family to live at Kingslow, their home for many generations. His partner in business was William Hardwick the Shropshire historian and it is through him that we know so much about the Devey family.

William Farmer seems to have been a man of considerable industry but conservative in outlook and the political changes taking in England in the 1830s greatly disturbed him. In the Parliamentary and Municipal Reform Acts and the abolition of the Corn Laws he saw danger signal to the strata of society to which he and his family belonged and he decided that the best course would be to emigrate to Canada and start a new life there; to this end he commenced his

preparations. His ultimate destination was a place on the Gatineau River near the rapids which later bore his name but why he chose this particular spot is not now clear. It was later to become the site of an electricity generating plant owned by the Gatineau Power Company and lies near the confluence of the Gatineau and Ottawa Rivers some miles from the Canadian Capital.

It is probable that the Farmers' decision to emigrate to Canada was not received with favour by certain members of the Devey family and in particular by Mrs Eleanor Devey the widowed mother of Mrs. Farmer. This seems to be indicated by the terms of Mrs. Devey's will, made some years after the Farmers' departure for the New World. Therein she tied up the Devey estates so that Mrs. Farmer could have only a life interest with remainder to the Farmer grandchildren. As it turned out Eleanor Shelton Farmer became the sole surviving heir of the Deveys of Kingslow and when she died in 1882 the estates were sold and Kingslow went to a Mr. Rock, who lived at nearby Sutton Hall, for £11,650. Two members of the Farmer family who came over to England to superintend the winding up of the Devey estate had originally fixed the reserve price of Kingslow at £13,000, but to their disappointment this figure was not realized and ultimately they had to accept the lower figure.

The Farmers claimed an ancient and genteel lineage being descended, according to family tradition, from the Farmours of Somerton in Oxfordshire. William Farmer the sixth of Brockton and Newhouse was born 4th February 1794 being baptised at Sutton Maddock the following day. He died at Brockton House, Ancaster, Ontario, Canada 7th March 1880 aged 86 years. By his two wives he was the father of twelve children, seven sons and five daughters, the youngest and last survivor dying in 1934, just 100 years after the family emigrated to Canada, aged 22 years. Seven of the children, five by the first wife and two by the second, were born in England, the rest at Farmer's Rapids on Gatineau River, near Hull, Quebec.

In preparation for his departure William Farmer commenced the task of disposing of his considerable estate in Shropshire and in March 1834 was ready to depart from the home where, for over 250 years generations of Farmers had lived and died. The plans being completed William Farmer with his wife and family left the home of his mother, Brockton Court, on 6th June 1834 on what was then the long and arduous journey to Eastern Canada. The large and roomy coach which he had hired to convey the family to their point of embarkation

was drawn by four fine grey horses and left at nine o'clock in the morning for Birkenhead, arriving there at sunset. For their journey across the Atlantic, William Farmer chartered the "Kingston" a sailing ship of some 430 tons commanded by Captain Willis, a Yorkshireman. It had nine square sails, a cabin on deck with sleeping berths, a sitting room and a dining room and was fitted up very comfortably.

In addition to his own family with general house servant, house maid and nurse, William Farmer engaged and brought with him a colony of ten families totaling forty five souls including various journeymen and craftsmen as well as a lawyer and a tutor for his children. The name of each man together with that of his wife and each member of his family is still in the records of the Farmer family. These people included lawyer, tutor, miller, wheelwright, groom, waiter, millwright, blacksmith, gardener, mason, general purpose man and sawyer.

William Farmer took with him a large selection of valuable livestock including the famous dark grey, mottled Clydesdale stallion called "Briton" 4 years old, the mother of this horse a grey Clydesdale mare bought in Scotland, an iron grey mare, two Durham bulls, two Hereford bulls, six cows (Durham, Hereford and Highland Scotch), two Southdown rams, fourteen Southdown ewes, one Leicester ram, thirteen Leicester ewes, one Berkshire boar, one Shropshire boar, nine sows, ten dogs (pointers, bull terriers and a fox terrier) and a number of game cocks and hens. He provided all the food and fresh water for his stock for the voyage. On stormy days the horses and cattle were suspended in strong canvas slings from the underside of the deck above them and not a single animal was lost during the long sea journey. The "Kingston" sailed from Liverpool in the early morning of 18th June 1834 and arrived at Quebec on Friday 8th August at sundown after an ocean voyage of 51 days. The "Montreal Gazette" of 26th August 1834 and the "Quebec Mercury" both commemorate this event.

Amongst the goods taken to Canada by the Farmer family were 42 cases all labelled and listed containing household goods and equipment and the family still retain the list of contents and the invoices for many of the things specially purchased for the occasion. Also included in the cargo were coils of rope, tools and implements, barrels, bags of barley, peas and wheat, several barrels of glass of all kinds for table use. There were five or six dozens of champagne

glasses, besides dozens of wine glasses of different styles and sizes, finger bowls and decanters. Barrels of china contained no less than six Coalport dinner services, two dozen meat dishes, vegetable dishes, gravy tureens, fruit and fancy dishes, six large beer pitchers, sugar bowls, cream pitchers and cups and saucers.

The contents of the large packing cases are interesting.

Case No. 1 contained curtains, a sideboard and celleret, two beds, bolsters, pillows, linen, a clock-case, blankets, waistcoats, clothes, tags and bed quilts. The clock-case was for an eight day clock that had been in the family for several generations and is still in their possession. The sideboard and celleret, bought by William Farmer and still in the family, were made by the order of the Earl of Bradford. In Case No 11 there was a bureau, looking glasses, old and new scraps, clothes, pictures and clock works. The bureau originally belonged to the Yates family of Higford and came into the possession of the Farmer family in 1827. They still own it. Case No. 12 contained "Mrs Farmer's bureau and clothing to be used by her on first landing in Canada".

On 9th August 1834 the day following the arrival of the "Kingston" at Quebec all the passengers, livestock and cargo were transferred to the large river ship "Canada" for conveyance up river to Sorel where they arrived at noon on Sunday 10th August and there William Farmer rented a house on the "Green" for himself and family whilst the other families were boarded out at various houses nearby. Until they arrived at their final destination Mr. Farmer bore all the expenses of the whole party which even by the standards of these days must have been considerable. The livestock were sent to the farm of one Alfred Nelsen at a place called Pettenduer near Sorel. During the party's stay at Sorel a serious fire destroyed a large part of the town including the house where the Farmer family were staying.

On 23rd November the whole party left Sorel and two days later arrived at "The Falls on the Gatineau River in the Township of Hull, Lower Canada, and about six miles from Bytown". In the night of 26th November 1834 the Ottawa and Gatineau Rivers were frozen over and remained so for the rest of the winter so that all river transport ceased. The property to be occupied by the Farmer family contained about 2,400 acres of wood and clearing with, it is recorded, "a house of extraordinary size, sufficiently large to hold all the people we brought out of England with us". This house was located directly opposite, and about 300 yards from, the first drop in the Falls.

It would appear that William Farmer chose the falls on the Gatineau River, afterwards known as "Farmer's Rapids", as his place of settlement following a visit from the agent of Mr. Tiberius Wright who owned much of the land in that area. Philliman the father of Tiberius Wright had come from New England on 7th March 1800 and settled on the north shore of the Ottawa River and founded the town of Hull thus beginning the exploitation of the timber-wealth of that district. During 1835 William Farmer erected a large sawmill, and during 1836 built a flour and grist mill nearby, engaging about 100 employees in addition to those who came out with him from England. During 1843 a dam on the river was built and a new house was completed and occupied on 24th January 1844, but the following spring floods on the river caused great damage to the dams. Soon the necessary repairs were effected and shanties started log cutting up the river during the Winter of 1844. In the year 1845 deals were sold for £7.10.0 (i.e. 30 dollars) per standard Halifax currency.

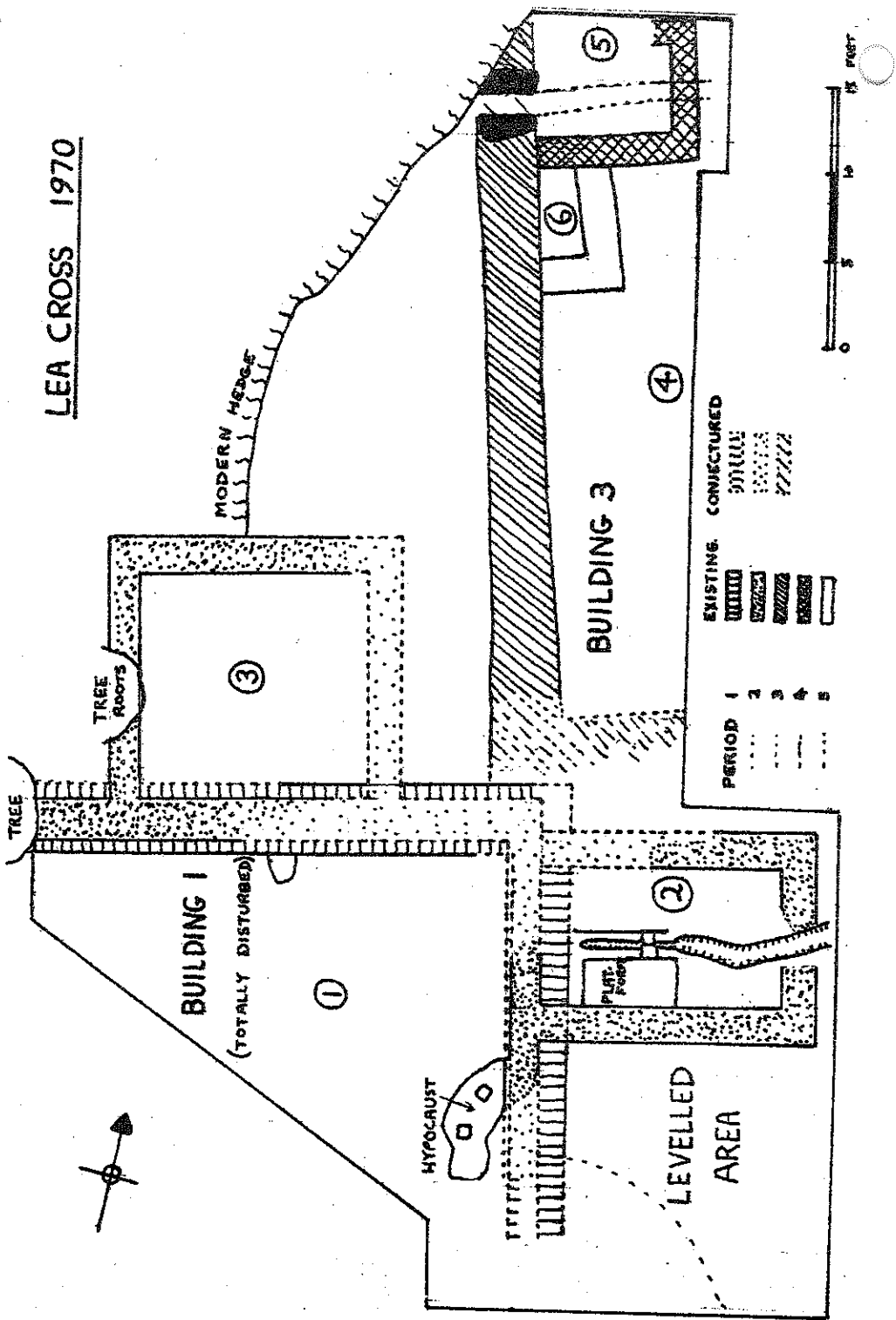
During the whole of his stay at Gatineau Falls William Farmer had a certain amount of trouble from his neighbours who were riparian owners along the banks of the river and who complained about him using the river for the transport of his logs. In 1846 he sold the whole of the property including mills, logs, dams, timber limits, etc., to Alonzo Wright but he only continued to work the property for a year or two. The Farmers moved first to Upper Canada and finally to Ancaster a village near Hamilton, Ontario, where the family made their roots and many of the descendants of this adventurous couple continue to reside there, occupying important positions in the community. William Farmer died 7th March 1880 and his wife Eleanor in 1882 and they are both buried in St. John's churchyard at Ancaster where they lie surrounded by many of their descendants.

N. W. Tildesley.

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#### Botanical techniques in archaeology

Mrs. W. Hutton, Longacre, Higford Lane, Beckbury, Shifnal, is willing to undertake investigation of botanical material from archaeological sites in Shropshire. She will be able to identify debris which can be floated out of soil and examined microscopically, but cannot, at present, work on pollen or charcoal. She would be glad to hear from anyone working on archaeological sites in Shropshire who would like help of this kind.



### Excavation at the Roman site of Lea Cross, Pontesbury (SJ 417085)

The second season of the new excavation at Lea Cross (first reported in Shropshire News Letter No. 38. page 14) was undertaken during 21st to 27th May and 19th August to 1st September, 1970, by kind permission of the land owner, Mr. H. P. Davies. Up to now the site has always been referred to as a "villa"; as a result of this season's work, it is more accurate to refer to "buildings" on this site. Area stripping was continued and altogether 2250 square feet have been uncovered.

Three distinct phases of occupation on the site were first recognized in 1969 and are now clearly seen as a later agricultural building superseding a possible bath-house with its own modifications. What seems most probable is that these buildings, set as they are in the unsatisfactory position of the flood plain of the Rea Brook, are but adjuncts to a substantial residential building higher up the hill towards the present Lea Hall, and that Lea Cross could well be a typical "Villa" site with outbuildings supporting a main residential block. It must be admitted, however, that the latter awaits discovery before this suggestion becomes tenable.

The relationship of the three phases will be evident from the plan of the site

**Phase 1. (Building 1.)** This was the most substantial building on the site but very heavily robbed and disturbed. The only surviving features were part of the north wall of a very solid masonry structure 4 feet thick of sandstone blocks mortared with a pink cement, and a small fragment of the base of a hypocaust which is itself an apparently secondary feature. Two sides of the building have been determined through traces of foundations giving measurements in excess of 36 by 30 feet. The excavated area of the interior contained masses of broken opus signinum floor with much broken tile and hypocaust pilae. (\*1) On the basis of this flimsy evidence two tentative suggestions are made - a) that this first building was a bath-house (which would account for the heavy walls and its situation in low-lying ground near the river) - b) that destruction of the floors may have been carried out in later Roman times to obtain tile. Fragments of a mosaic floor (presumably that drawn by Telford and published in Victoria County History of Shropshire Vol. 1.) were found in the ploughsoil, one fragment clearly being part of a guilloche pattern in red, black, blue and white tesserae.



**Phase 2.** The walls of the Phase 1 building had fallen into ruin and in some parts had been robbed down to ground level. Significantly the ground immediately to the east of this building had been levelled up by 2 feet, presumably to combat periodic flooding of the site, and this levelling contained considerable pottery, nails, and animal bones, typical refuse spread; over this a puddled clay floor had been laid. This pottery was predominantly later second century in type with a few sherds of Trajanic/Hadrianic type, Samian of Antonine and pre-Antonine forms, considerable Severn Valley ware, some black burnished ware, and occasional sherds of Nene Valley ware, which would be the latest identifiable varieties, perhaps of the early third century. Conclusions as to the dating of the site rely almost entirely on this stratified material, and it is suggested that Phase 1 was thus of the earlier part of the second century. (\*2)

These modifications consist of the patching of the north wall of the Phase 1 building and its rebuilding to narrower dimensions of a thickness of 3 feet, the attachment of rooms 2 and 3 to this structure, the west wall of the former being built on the foundations of the east wall of the first building. The white mortar for this new building had been mixed and spread north and east of Room 3. The walls of these two rooms were much less substantial, being only 2 feet or less in width and resting on shallow foundations.

The purpose of Room 3, internal dimensions 13 feet square, is otherwise unknown, but it contained a thick puddled clay floor overlying a thin mortar floor, itself overlying another clay floor beneath (\*3)

Room 2, 14 feet by 8 feet in size, contained the sandstone block foundation of a probable cistern or bath, which drained through the floor of the room probably by a pipe covered with tiles, extended by a V-shaped gully cut in the natural clay. There were also pits cut into the clay. The whole room was filled with masses of soot and burning mixed with sandstone blocks, the whole severely disturbed. A hammer-headed mortarium was found in this disturbance.

The building of Phase 2 must be seen as either a modification of the original bath? — house or turned to some industrial use in which a water-supply was necessary.

**Phase 3. (Building 3.)** A completely different form of building was constructed against the north wall the first two buildings. Pottery finds are very meagre in this area, but the comparative absence of 4th

century forms, and a stratified mortarium of interesting form transitional between the hooked and hammer-headed varieties, found in the build-up of the floor of this structure, suggests that this building was being used in the latter part of the 3rd century and perhaps not occupied far into the 4th century.

This building is a substantial barn: as yet the limits of no one side have been ascertained but it was at least 44 feet long and the interior has been excavated back for a distance of 9 feet from the main long wall. Hardly a single stone of the main wall above Roman ground level survives: the foundations are however well preserved and consist of unmortared sandstone blocks pitched at an angle supporting a wall up to 4 feet thick. This wall had clearly been cut through the mortar spread of Phase 2 convincingly securing the chronological relationship of the various structures. The south wall has been completely robbed but its only possible position lies alongside part of the north wall of the first building. (\*4)

The surface of the floor of the barn had been almost totally disturbed but it was clear that the basis of this floor was of closely packed sandstone rubble supporting flat sandstone blocks presumably set in clay. A saucer-shaped pit which may have acted as a hearth, of indeterminate date cut through the floor, showed the sequence of a) building debris, b) mortar spread of Phase 2, c) sandstone basis of floor of Phase 3, d) sandstone blocks.

Two secondary internal structures were present in the barn:-

#### Room 5

1) A flue (?) - channel made of reused tiles significantly from hypocaust pilae had been inserted in the main wall and a room or structure 7½ feet by 5 feet was added through which the channel passed (\*5). It is tempting to see this as a corn-dryer but with the total removal of all internal fittings the purpose of the room remains inconclusive.

#### Room 6

2) A recess or platform was built adjacent to this structure probably entered from outside the building. If the suggestion of a corn-dryer for the first structure is correct then this could be seen as a loading bay for corn.

Considerable amounts of wall plaster have been found of different textures and colours. The main colours are white, red, green, brown and yellow and occasional suggestions of superimposed designs are found. Small finds from this are virtually non-existent. However, a

## Why was Oakengates slated?

black glass counter of Roman type was found in an unstratified context. One should not be surprised at the comparative lack of pottery and absence of coins or similar material, if the buildings are correctly seen as away from the main residential area of the site. What is significant is that a complete economic change comes over the site within about 150 yards. From the sophistication of a well-constructed establishment with hypocausts and mosaic floors (there is extensive evidence over the site for the destruction of tessellated pavements as well as at least one figured mosaic) a major change is seen in the later construction of a utilitarian building for purely agricultural purposes. It is possible here that we can see a change of ownership or tenancy which might be reflected in the context of Wroxeter, where the wealthy decurions appear to have taken to the town during the fourth century; the south of England offers a different picture of the development of wealthy villa establishments around the towns in the fourth century in more secure surroundings.

### FOOTNOTES

- \*1) Where the underlying level could be examined (a difficult task as the water-table is high in this area today) a "floor" of levelled cobbles was periodically encountered.
- \*2) It should be noted that this area revealed the trenches of trial excavations of 1956/57 where 2nd century pottery was previously recorded (Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society Vol. LVI)
- \*3) To the north of this room a gully with attached pit (first recorded by Houghton) was revealed, but its purpose remains indeterminate especially in view of the extensive robbing of the east wall of this room and its adjacent area.
- \*4) It is assumed without direct evidence that by now the modified first building has fallen into complete decay. Certainly this is what the plan suggests.
- \*5) The walls of this structure are only 18 inches thick but are well constructed of ashlar sandstone blocks embedded in clay: they clearly did not support a structure of any height.

Geoffrey Toms

A five year interest in bricks and tiles and it was not until a dull wet morning last spring that I observed something that had previously remained unrevealed. Even in the four years since I read in a dissertation on bricks and tiles that between the years 1850 and 1914 slates had been in competition with tiles as a roofing medium, it had escaped my mind to notice, in a given area, how slated roofs compared with tiled ones.

Then came that dull, wet spring morning. I had just passed over Bel Vue Bridge on Stafford Road, and facing Oakengates, when I suddenly became aware that most of the roofs of Leonard Street and Slaney Street were slated. Along Stafford Road and New Street, the pattern seems to be repeated.

What I was looking at, I decided, called for a more detailed investigation, on a more suitable day. The street by street survey that I eventually made takes note only of building I know to have been erected before 1920. And for the purpose of this survey, a row of three houses is regarded as three separate buildings.

On Stafford Road, 20 houses and a former chapel (erected in 1862), are slated, whilst 18 are tiled. In Leonard Street there are 18 slated roofs and no old tiled ones. Slaney Street has only one tiled roof to 29 slated ones. A small factory, erected about 1867, is partly slated.

There are 16 slated roofs in New Street and Church Parade, and only 5 tiled ones. Nearby are the former C. of E. School and School house, erected in 1846, slated.

Two existing chapels, one built in the early 1840's and the other in 1868, together with a former chapel, converted in 1919 to offices are all slated. The former station at the top of Market Street, together with a couple of large warehouses, and the present station building off Lion Street are also slated.

In Lion Street there are three cottages, a shop, part of the Co-op range of buildings, the Caledonia Hotel (1849), a large warehouse and range of ancillary buildings which are all slated. Only the former Brown Lion Inn and house adjoining are tiled. Oxford Street has only one tiled building, whilst part of a large block of shops and offices 5 other premises are slated. Lastly, in Market Street, there are 28 slated buildings to 13 tiled ones. The oldest dated buildings in the town were built in 1846.

Since clay tiles were being made in huge quantities within eight or nine miles from the town, and transport was virtually door to door, it would be interesting to know why so many buildings in the town are slated, since slates would have to be transported upwards of a hundred miles

It could not be claimed that the town was wholly on one estate. The various buildings were erected at different times and by different builders. It would certainly be interesting to know if any other Shropshire towns fall into the same pattern. If they don't then perhaps someone could suggest why Oakengates was slated.

W. H. Williams

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### Industrial Archaeology for Children

The publishers A. and C. Black Ltd. have recently announced a new series of books on Industrial Archaeology designed for use in junior schools and with younger children in secondary schools. The first two volumes, both by Christine Vials, deal with "Cast Iron" and "Windmills and Watermills". The book on Cast Iron naturally contains numerous Shropshire references, and can be thoroughly recommended to local teachers. A section on how castings are made is particularly thorough, and there are many interesting photographs showing the uses of cast iron in architecture. "Windmills and Watermills" similarly contains some excellent material, but its treatment of watermills is regrettably thin. There is, for example, no indication of the way in which power from the waterwheel is conveyed to the mill stones. A clear diagram of the layout of a typical mill would have been most helpful to teachers. Although obviously designed for use in schools the books in this series will probably also find a ready market among parents of children with enquiring minds. Some quite senior industrial archaeologists will find a ready use for some of the material to be found in them.

## Caer Caradoc Suspected Hut Platform site

In 1969 a group of Archaeologists visiting Caer Caradoc noticed and discussed terracing on the south eastern slopes (or wilderness side) of the hill (ref: S.O. 481951). With the group was Mr. Desmond Bonney of the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments. Mr. Bonney has made a particular study of R.B. hut platform sites in Wessex and he was of the opinion that the site was a typical situation where hut platform sites could be expected to occur.

Later in 1969 a weekend survey was organised by Mr. G. Toms to examine the extent of the terracing. The weekend was directed by Mr. Bonney and the site duly recorded.

In June 1969 and in the autumn of 1970 the S. A. S. Prehistoric research group undertook to carry out trial trenching on two of the most prominent of the terraces to test the hut platform theory. The first feature to be examined was a terrace approximately 23 yards below and 45 yards north of the parish boundary stone. A trial trench 10ft. x 8ft. was cut to a depth of 3ft. along the slope of the hill. After removing the top and sub-soil, a layer of hard packed fine gravel was encountered which roughly followed the contour of the hill. No evidence of occupation was found.

The second terrace to be examined was approximately 17 yards below and 63 yards south of the parish boundary stone. A trial trench 24ft x 4ft. was cut to a depth of 4ft. down the slope of the hill. In the section of the trench the terrace could clearly be seen to be caused by soil build-up in a layer of clay, the soil laying in a wedge shape varying in thickness from over 2ft. at the outer edge to less than 1ft. at the inner edge. The clay layer being approximately 20 inches thick laying at an angle approximately the same as the general slope of the hill. Under the clay was a thin band of sandy grey material containing water and under this more clay again. No evidence of occupation was found.

The latter site was further examined by a Geologist, Mr. Andrew Jenkinson who was of the opinion that terraces could easily be due to natural causes.

### Conclusion

The two sites examined were amongst the most prominent of the terraces and as no evidence of occupation was found on either site, it is doubtful if hut platforms were built on this particular area of Caer Caradoc.

Geoffrey Toms

## A Shrewsbury Clay Pipe

Since the publication of Shropshire News Letter No. 39 last December, a cutty pipe manufactured by Eliza Taylor has been found during the restoration of The Bear Steps, which increases our knowledge of the Shrewsbury pipe makers.

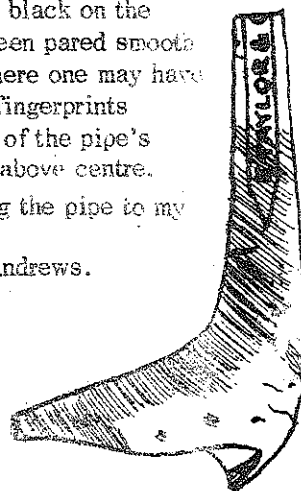
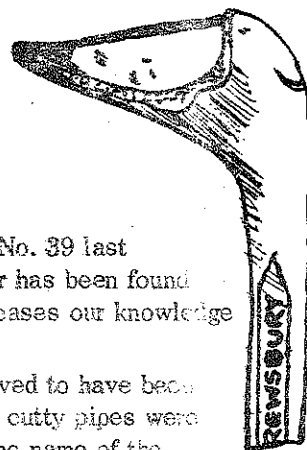
While the more decorative of the pipes are believed to have been hand moulded, this fragment proves that the smaller cutty pipes were press moulded, and what is more were marked with the name of the maker and town of manufacture.

This pipe, made somewhere between 1885 and 1912, is marked E. TAYLOR & (Co.) on the one side behind the bowl and on the opposite side (SH)REWSBURY. The fragment, burnt black on the upper side, from use, has a mould mark which has been pared smooth. The bowl has no heel but is cracked and chipped where one may have been, adjacent to which are portions of the makers fingerprints impressed in the once wet clay. The general finish of the pipe's surface is very smooth, and the hole being slightly above centre.

I am grateful to Mr. Malcolm Dutton for bringing the pipe to my attention

John E. Andrews.

Taylor Pipe found during  
restoration of Escarsteps  
December 1870



## Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

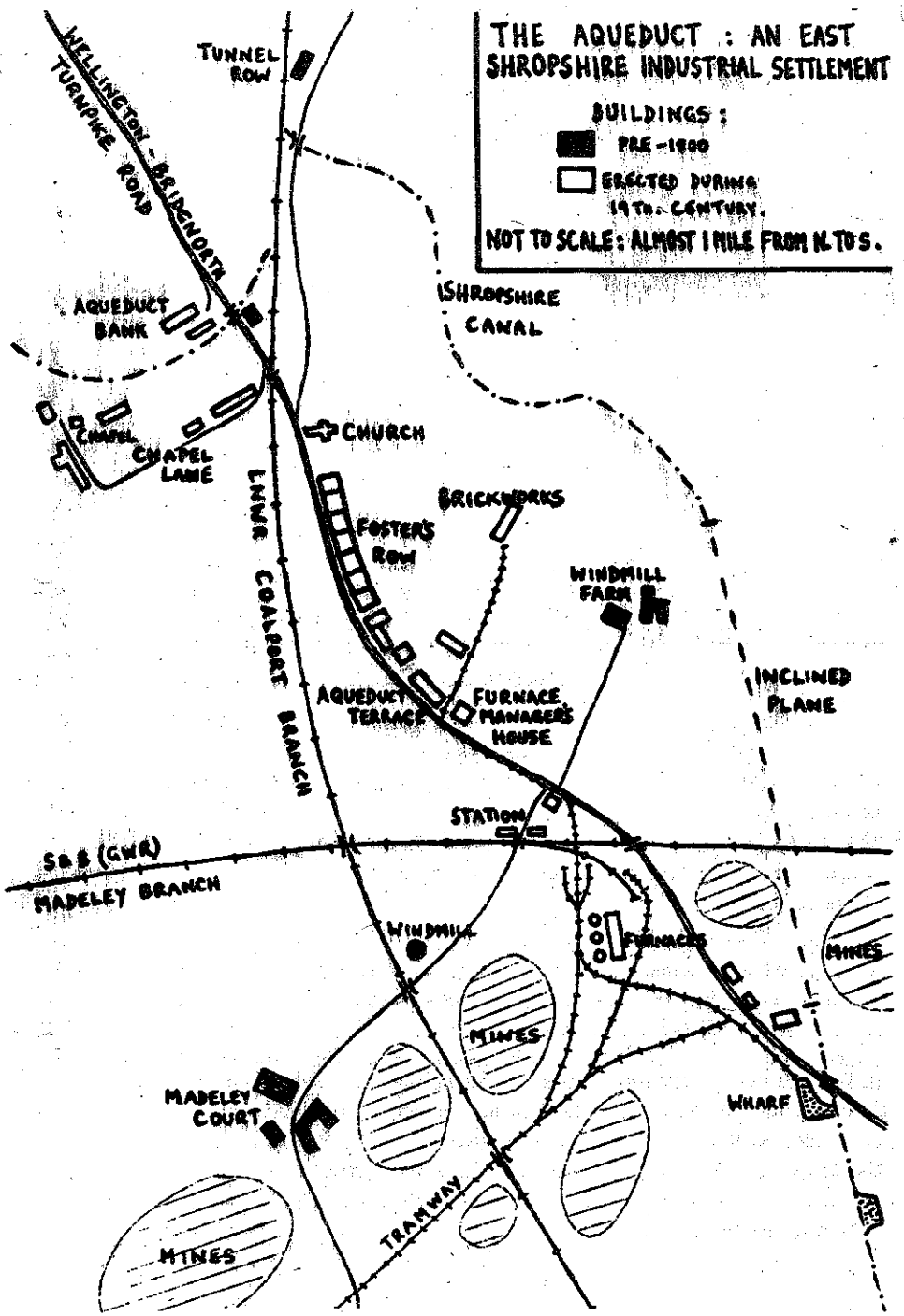
The museum is able to report considerable progress since the publication of the last edition of the Newsletter. The removal of all of the plant which has been purchased by the Museum from the Milburgh Tileries, Broseley, has now been completed by volunteer workers. It includes two steam engines with their boilers, a "bat-machine", a number of tile presses and a pit headgear. The equipment will be used to restore the brick and tile works at the Museum's Blists Hill site. A working plateway using track and vehicles from the Horsehay works has now been built at Blists Hill, and another, using Madeley Wood Company track will shortly be commenced. A rolling mill from an ironworks in Wednesbury has been re-erected, and the restoration of a horizontal steam engine to drive it is nearing completion. A number of far-reaching schemes will be carried out on the site during the summer of 1971. The Museum's Open Day on May 2nd was highly successful; over a thousand visitors went on tours of the principal sites and exhibits in the Ironbridge Gorge. Tickets for the next Open Day, on Sunday September 26th, will be available from the beginning of August. Full details will appear in the local press.

## A Correction

A report published in June 1970 News Letter (No. 38, page 17) of the discovery of a Peruvian flask at Highfields, Sandford Avenue, Church Stretton, and curiosity was raised concerning the presence of such a pot in this area. As a result of this report in the News Letter, Mrs. Goss herself has been able to give more information about its origin, and I am happy to correct a wrong impression of the circumstances of its loss.

Mrs. Goss herself brought over the object from the Peruvian Andes some years ago, when given it by her brother with whom she was staying there. It was quite wrong to suggest that she was unaware of the importance of her husband's antique collection, as she is of course very well informed on such matters. The Peruvian vessel was in fact inadvertently left behind at the house after her departure from there, being left on a high shelf in an outside greenhouse. By coincidence it was her brother who gave her the pot who recognised the drawing in the News Letter, and thus its correct story could be revealed. Apologies are certainly due to Mrs. Goss for suggesting an action quite out of her character.

Geoffrey Toms.



### The Aqueduct: An East Shropshire industrial settlement, Pt. II

In 1827 two important sales of property took place which had a significant bearing on the industrial development of the northern part of the parish of Madeley. The first, the sale of the Madeley Court Estate on 22nd and 23rd January has already been mentioned in Pt. I of this account (S. N. L. 39). The other was announced as follows: "For sale ... on 13th and 14th November ... all that capital brick building, with yards, air furnace, etc. connected with it, situate at the Aqueduct in the parish of Madeley ... and now in full work as a chain manufactory etc. under the direction of the executors of the late Gilbert Gilpin, Esq." (Eddowes Salopian Journal 7th Nov. 1827).

The area where Gilpin's chain works was situated (SJ 693059) was the first part of the Aqueduct to be developed. At the time of the construction of the Shropshire Canal in 1790-91 this land was apparently leased by a William Nicholls from Richard Dyott of Madeley Court. On the other side of the stone aqueduct over the turnpike road to Wellington, on land belonging to Isaac Hawkins Browne, a substantial stone cottage was built, probably for canal use. This building is marked in Baugh's map of c1808, is named Aqueduct House on the first edition O.S. map of 1833, was leased by William Botfield in 1839, acquired the name of stone Cottage, and was demolished about 1960.

Before setting up his chain works at the Aqueduct Gilbert Gilpin had travelled widely and gained much experience in the iron trade. Born near Wrexham in 1766, his first important job was that of John Wilkinson's chief clerk at Bersham Ironworks from 1786 to 1796. He was then with Boulton and Watt at the Soho Foundry for a short time before moving to south Wales where he was engaged in opening up a marble quarry and prospecting for lead ore near Neath. Returning to the Midlands in 1799 Gilpin entered the service of the Botfields and was engaged in "making great alterations to the forges to the South Wales plans" at Old Park Ironworks. (See article on Gilpin by W. H. Chaloner in National Library of Wales Journal, 1960) He remained with the Botfields for several years and, according to Randall, (appendix to "The Wilkinsons") eventually "left them in consequence of their objecting to his attention being divided between his duties to them and his chain-making". Gilpin's pioneering work in the substitution of iron chains for winding ropes in collieries and for

other industrial purposes, described in detail in "The Mechanic" 1805/07, and quoted by Randall in V. C. H. Shropshire Vol. I, gained recognition from the Society of Arts who presented him with a silver mounted purse containing 30 guineas and a silver medal. In 1814 a publication entitled "The Cambrian" announced that "Gilbert Gilpin, Coalport near Shifnal ... sells chains of the best Shropshire iron, which will raise upwards of a ton weight in general use at 5d per pound or 3 shillings per yard".

Letters from Gilpin to various people between 1816 and 1818 suggest that he was still at Coalport and Old Park, but a rather disgruntled one to William Wilkinson (jnr.) indicates that a break with the Botfields was imminent, (SRO 1781), and in 1819 he wrote a number of letters to South Wales ironmasters from "Aqueduct near Shifnal". So having established a chain works at the Aqueduct by 1819, Gilpin ran a business that was "profitable and extensive" (sale particulars 1827) until his death sometime before November 1827, and during these last years of his life he probably lived at Dawley

What happened to the chain works after 1827 is not known. By 1847 the site was owned by one Levi Shepherd (later described as a charter master) and occupied by a Charles Clayton, and was described as "a house, iron foundry, workshops, buildings, yard and garden" (Madeley Tith Map). According to directories, Charles Clayton, ironfounder, Madeley, had been there at least since 1835, and by 1849 was in addition a "Brass founder and manufacturer of rollers, hurdles, gates etc. He was still there at the time of the 1851 census, but by 1856 the property was owned by a Thomas Jones, and of the two large buildings on the site, one had been converted to "cottages, gardens, stables and outbuildings", being occupied by five families, and the other was described as "a soap manufactory", operated by four brothers named Ginner (SRO. Railway Deposited Plan No. 367). the subsequent industrial history of this site is not known. By the end of the 19th century both rows were in use as houses, later numbered 50-55, and 56, 57, 57a, and 58 Aqueduct Bank, They were demolished in 1965.

In Chapel Lane are four rows of houses (now nos. 59-65 and 69-73) which probably originally housed workers employed in the factories on Aqueduct Bank and the nearby Botany Bay Colliery and Dawley Castle furnaces of the Coalbrookdale Company. These rows date from 1840-41. An interesting addition to the hybrid end row, which is in the parish of Dawley, is a single storey barrack-type house, built sometime in the late 19th century. The Primitive

Methodist Chapel which gave the lane its name was built in 1850. It is not mentioned in the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census, but some thirty years later it had a weekly attendance of 60, six members, and 43 Sunday School Scholars. (Randall. History of Madeley). Closed in December 1917, its remains were recently demolished.

The other row of houses at the Aqueduct were built to house workers employed at Madeley Court Colliery and Ironworks (SJ 699052) James Foster had bought the Madeley Court estate in 1828 with the obvious intention of exploiting its mineral resources. Clearly this was to be an important link in the chain of a growing industrial empire: Foster already operated mines and furnaces in the Black Country, and furnaces at Wombridge and Calcutts, and forges at Eardington and Hampton Loade in Shropshire, and he was a partner in the large works of John Bradley and Co. at Stourbridge. After a delay possibly caused by a shortage of ready capital (he had to mortgage the Madeley Court Estate in 1837: Foster Papers, Apley Estate Office) Foster began mining operations at Madeley Court about 1840 and coal and ironstone were carried by tramway to a wharf on the Shropshire Canal at Tweedale, and by two boats to his Wombridge ironworks. The inadequate capacity of the engine on the Windmill Farm inclined plane made this a difficult journey, and together with the exhaustion of the mineral deposits at Wombridge, this led Foster to transfer his plant from Wombridge to Madeley Court, where he erected three furnaces. A plan of the Madeley Court Estate in 1844 (Staffs. R.O. D648) shows three furnaces pencilled in. A railway deposited plan of 1845 (SRO No. 325) shows two furnaces already built, and the records of the Hampton Loade Iron Co. indicate that pig iron from Madeley Court was used there for the first time in January 1846 (N. Mutton in T. S. A. S. Vol. LVIII. pt 3). All of this suggests that at least two of the Madeley Court Furnaces were blown in 1845, not in 1847 as Randall suggests in V. C. H. Vol. I. The third furnace had been built by 1846, but for much of the working life of the ironworks only two furnaces appear to have been in operation at any one time. In his "Guide to the Iron Trade of Great Britain" (1873) Samuel Griffiths states that **only two furnaces were then in blast, producing first class grey forge iron, and in the years prior to closure in 1902 only two furnaces were used.** Griffiths described the works thus " ... the property of Mr. William Orme Foster, M.P., of Stourton Castle (nephew and heir of James Foster who died in 1853); all the iron made here is sent by the proprietor to Stourbridge and Brockmoor

and manufactured at these famous works into 'S. C. Crown' Staffordshire bars; the plant here is modern and good, was erected with care, abreast with all modern improvements, regardless of expense, by the late Mr. J. Foster; the ironstone and coal here are first class".

As related by Mr. Ivor Brown in S. N. L. 38, there were seventeen pits at Madeley Court, the earliest of which dated from 1840; most of the pits ceased working when the furnaces were blown out, though the last two continued in use, operated by the Madely Wood Co. until about 1914. In addition to these pits there was also what is described in the Railway deposited plan of 1856 (SRO No. 367) as a "coalworks" which appears to have displaced an earlier brickworks in the same site (see map). It is not known exactly what this was, though it might have been a trial boring, or the working of coal seams near the surface exposed when clay for the brickworks was being dug:

Many ironworkers moved from Wombridge to the Madeley Court area, and to house them James Foster built six blocks of cottages, with four in each block, and added a seventh at a later date. These stand on the eastern side of the turnpike road from Wellington about 600 yards from the ironworks. These became known as Foster's Row, and were later numbered 22-49 Aqueduct Road. No. 22 was demolished a few years ago to make room for a car park at the adjacent Britannia Inn. Nearer to the Ironworks Foster built a house for his furnace manager, Thomas Penn; his surveyor of mines, George Jones, lived at Madeley Court itself, and his agent and general manager, Francis Pearce, son of that Thomas Pearce who was John Wilkinson's manager at New Hadley and James Foster's at Wombridge, appears to have lived at Park Cottage Madeley. Francis Pearce was succeeded as manager by his son, Charles Worth Pearce, who appears to have moved to Madeley Court sometime after 1895. According to Randall, James Foster intended to renovate Madeley Court itself, but with the industrial development of the estate, the house took on an even more neglected look: "the process of decay may be said to have set in with accelerated speed at the time the proprietors ceased to occupy the mansion, and to have more than doubled that speed when mining operations in the domain commenced (The Old Court House. Madeley).

Foster also built at the Aqueduct a Chapel of Ease for the use of "the inhabitants of the parish who on account of the great distance of their respective abodes from the parish church of Madeley are unable conveniently to attend divine service", and this building was licensed in December 1851. (SRO 2280). It could accommodate 150 people and

was enlarged in 1864 to hold 200. The Foster family owned the church until 1951 when the deeds were handed over to the vicar of Madeley on the occasion of its centenary.

The bricks used for all of these buildings and for the ironworks probably came from the small brickworks which Foster operated at the Aqueduct, which was probably working as early as 1844 when it was shown on the Madeley Court Estate survey, and by 1847 it was described as "brick kilns, brickworks, and clay pits" covering an area of over three acres. The brickworks was connected to the ironworks by a tramway which crossed and ran alongside the turnpike road for about 300 yards (Railway deposited plan No. 340, SRO) though this was presumably shortened or closed when the Madeley branch of the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railways was finally opened as part of the G. W. R. in June 1854. The tramway is certainly not shown on the deposited plan of the L. N. W. R. Coalport branch in 1856 (No. 367 SRO).

As was the case elsewhere in the Coalbrookdale coalfield, the chartermaster system operated in the mines of the Madeley Court Colliery. Between Foster's Row and the furnace manager's house, two other houses were built and occupied by the charter masters John and Joseph Bailey. Two other rows of houses, now nos. 2-6 and 7-13 Aqueduct Terrace, were built c. 1860 by the chartermasters Holmes and Dainty and the lane from the turnpike road to the brickworks and later coalworks became known as Dainty's Lane.

The last row of houses to be built, now nos. 15-20 Aqueduct Road and the adjoining Britannia Inn, which itself was rebuilt from the chartermaster John Bailey's house, dates from soon after 1860. The best workers' houses at the Aqueduct were those in Foster's Row; each house had a heated kitchen, 10 ft x 9 ft 6 in., in addition to a living room 12 ft 6 in x 12 ft., and two bedrooms, a cellar and a detached wash house and privy. Four houses shared a tap. Most of the other rows had pantries instead of kitchens, smaller second bedrooms and shared wash house and privies, the latter usually at the bottom of the garden, with communal taps serving greater numbers of houses.

A clear picture of the essentially industrial character of the Aqueduct is given in the 1851 census. The total population of the settlement, including the small portions within the parishes of Dawley and Stirchley, was 393, in 66 households. The working

population of 138 was employed as follows:-

Mining (coal and ironstone miners)	31
Ironworks (mostly furnace labourers)	51
Associated occupations (bricklayers, engineers, engine drivers, waggoners)	8
Canal (engine tender, driver)	10
Agricultural and general labourers	15
Other occupations, mostly trades, beer house keepers, butchers, cabinet maker, house servant, sign painter, soap maker etc)	23

While the majority of the workers living at the Aqueduct obviously worked at the Madeley Court Colliery and Ironworks, this was but a small proportion of the total labour force employed there. Bagshaw's Directory of 1851 gives the figure of "upwards of 500 hands, chiefly making pig iron", and while no accurate figure for a later date is available, the combined figures for the Madeley Court and Madeley Wood ironworks given in Post Office and other directories indicate a general decline of activity. The combined figure in 1856 was 1,400 but this had dwindled to about 800 in 1895. This decline led ultimately to the closure of the Madeley Court ironworks in 1902.

PRINCIPAL SOURCES are indicated in the text. Abbreviations used: SRO, Shropshire Records Office, SNL, Shropshire Newsletter, TSAS, Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, VCH, Victoria History of Shropshire

N. J. Clarke.

### Midland History

A new journal known as "Midland History" has recently been announced and it seems certain to be of interest to people concerned with local history in Shropshire. It aims to provide a forum and a focus for the growing amount of historical research concerned with one of England's most important regions, and promises a particularly thorough reviewing and bibliographical service. Further details may be found from "Midland History", Phillimore and Co. Ltd., Shopwyke Hall, Chichester, Sussex.

### Publications

The Stour and Smethstow Archaeological Research Group (see S.N.L. 39) have just published their first research paper on the Brierley Moat, Alveley (SO 798859). The site is well preserved and the group conclude that it was a medieval defended homestead. No documentary evidence about it is available. The report costs 10p and is available from Mrs. M. G. Fenton, 80 Heath Lane, Stourbridge, Worcs.

The Shropshire Mining Club announce the publication of their 8th report, a survey of the Llanymynech Ogof, Roman Copper Mine (SJ 266221) by D. R. Adams. This is probably the most detailed investigation of an existing Roman mineworking yet produced, and is the result of ten years' work. The report includes the results both of field work and of documentary research. It costs 75p and is available from D. R. Adams, New Era, Princess Gardens, Newport, Salop.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Southside, Ironbridge, Telford, offer the following publications for sale: "The Ironbridge Gorge", an introduction to the history of Coalbrookdale coalfield with detailed accounts of the various monuments open to visitors on the Museum's Open Days, (25p) "A Description of Coalbrookdale in 1801" edited by B. S. Trinder, a reprint with an attractive cover, of the article in the last edition of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society (20p) and "The Coalport Tar Tunnel" by I. J. Brown and B. S. Trinder, an account of the archaeology and history of one of Shropshire's most fascinating industrial monuments (to be published during May - price to be announced).



### Information Please

Mr. I. J. Brown, 19 Gregory Close, Harlaxton, Grantham, would be grateful for any information readers may have on the following:

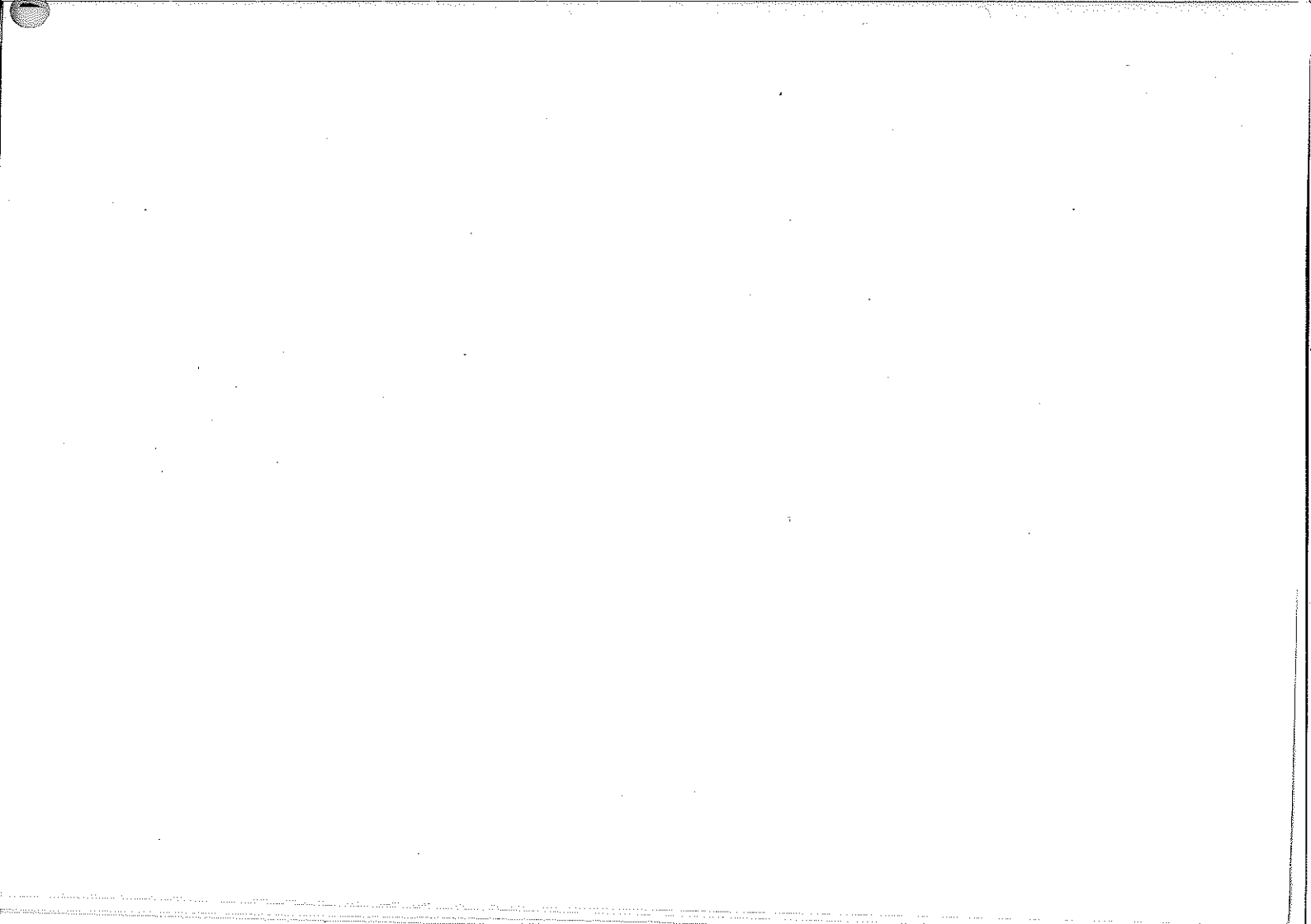
- X i) A lead smelt house at Madeley Wood, referred to in 1760 in a document in the Raine Collection, Shropshire Record Office.
- ii) An Iron mine at Rhysnant, Shropshire, called "Great Silurian", owned by E. Lloyd in 1865.
- iii) Grinshill Ironstone Mine. Plan, n.d., in Mining Record Office. Not to be confused with the copper workings.

# **Shropshire News Letter—**

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Edited by Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury. (Tel: Shrewsbury  
52310)



## New Light on the Ironbridge

There is no better known industrial archaeological monument than the Ironbridge, yet our knowledge of its building remains sadly deficient. The minutes of the proprietors (Shrewsbury Borough Library MS 3689) are even less informative and more confusing than most minute books, and the county newspapers for the period rarely mention the project. In recent years a number of account books belonging to the third Abraham Darby have been deposited in the Shropshire Record Office by Lady Labouchere. They reveal a considerable amount of new information about the bridge.

Several cash books recording Abraham Darby III's day by day expenditure were deposited in 1968 (S.R.O. 1987/19). The information they contain is for the most part conveniently tabulated in a ledger deposited in 1970 (S.R.O. 2448/1), in which four folios are devoted to a list of expenditure on the 'Cast Iron Bridge' between June 1777 and February 1781. The first conclusion to be drawn from the ledger is the confirmation that the realisation of the Ironbridge project was very much the personal achievement of Abraham Darby III. The accounts record all of the expenditure on the construction of the bridge, and they are included in a volume with Darby's income from various investments, his accounts for his farms, and even his most menial household expenses.

One entry which occurs both in the ledger and the cash book poses again the question of the extent to which the Shrewsbury architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard was involved in the design of the bridge. In September 1779 the proprietors paid £39.19.0d. to 'Samuel Pritchard for his late Bror. T. F. Pritchard's Bill'. The most authoritative account of the bridge so far published, that by R. Maguire and P. Matthews (Architectural Association Journal, vol. 74, no. 824, 1958) revealed the existence of a drawing (now in the Science Museum) made by Pritchard in October 1775 for a structure considerably more ambitious than that finally erected, with a span of 120 ft. and four ribs. An estimate for this bridge by Abraham Darby III and Pritchard put the likely cost at £3,200. Darby agreed to erect the bridge, but the minute authorising him to do so was rescinded in May 1776, and the proprietors subsequently advertised for persons 'willing to undertake to build a bridge of one arch . . . of stone, brick or timber'. Nevertheless in June 1776 a design by Pritchard for an iron bridge was again adopted, and contractors for the masonry work were sought through the newspapers. In October 1776 Abraham Darby III once more undertook to build the bridge, which at this stage apparently still resembled Pritchard's original design, since the span was to be 120 ft. No work was carried out during the winter of 1776-77, and in July 1777 Darby made a further agreement with the proprietors for the building of a bridge to yet another design, with a span of 90 ft. instead of 120 ft.

Even this was not the final design, for the bridge eventually built had a span of 100 ft. 6 in., but it probably bore a close resemblance to it, for Darby's agreement provided for subsequent alterations to be made in consultation with the proprietors.

T. F. Pritchard died in October 1777, and his part in the design of the bridge has always been a matter for speculation. The last meeting of proprietors which he attended was in October 1776, when a bridge of 120 ft. span was still intended. How much did he contribute to the design of the bridge which was actually built? He was named in the Act of Parliament authorising the bridge, as one of the trustees, and the proprietors' minutes give no indication of his withdrawal. Moreover the scanty information revealed by the minute book of what happened at meetings of trustees suggests that for the most part detailed technical discussions did not take place there. There seems no valid reason to suppose that Pritchard did not take an active part in the design of the bridge up to the time of his death, and it seems likely that this part was recognised in 1779 by the payment made to his brother.

The only narrative account of the erection of the Ironbridge which is near to being contemporary is the tantalisingly brief one in Richard Gough's *Britannia*, published in 1789, which records that 'the principal parts were erected in three months without any accident to the work or workmen or the least obstruction to the navigation of the river . . . a large scaffold being previously erected, each part of the rib was elevated to a proper height by strong ropes and chains, and then lowered till the ends met in the centre'. The account is supplemented by occasional news items in the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* during 1779, which show that the first main rib of the bridge was erected on July 1st and 2nd 1779, and that the bridge was already a great object of curiosity by September.

Abraham Darby III's ledger shows that Gough's account was substantially correct, and provides a more exact chronology of the whole process of construction. Work on the bridge began in November 1777, although the small sums expended in wages for the first three months suggest that not many men were then employed. Throughout most of 1778 work was being carried out on a considerable scale. Except for a slack period in August, over £20 a fortnight was spent on wages from mid April until December, indicating that between 20 and 30 men were being employed for most of the time, with perhaps twice that number for certain short periods. A payment for ale at the end of October perhaps indicates the completion of the abutments.

After a slack time in the early months of 1779 the wage bill again rose above £20 a fortnight in the early part of March, and between April and November did not fall below £28. The use of scaffolding and ropes is confirmed by purchases made by Abraham Darby, though it does not appear that chains were used, as Gough suggested. Ropes to the value

of £18.2.0d. were purchased in March 1779, and a further account for £46.19.7d. was settled after the bridge was finished. Several substantial loads of timber were delivered during 1779, the largest being for Dantzic timber worth £82.16.0d. from Harford Ring and Co., and for fir timber worth £55.14.6d. from William Goodwin. On April 26th 1779, John Wesley was preaching at Broseley and went to see 'the bridge that is shortly to be thrown over the Severn', noticing particularly its great weight: 'I doubt whether the Colossus at Rhodes weighed much more'. His remarks suggest that the principal parts may then have been laid out on the bank awaiting erection. In the fortnight ending April 10th work had been very intensive with £41 paid out in wages.

The ledger shows that a trow hired from Thomas Sutton was employed on the construction of the bridge during June, and the erection of the ribs in July and August is marked by large payments for wages - including one of £35.2.0d. for the fortnight ending July 3rd in which the first ribs were hauled into place. Probably a significant stage in the construction was reached on August 16th when £5.17.0d. was spent on ale, and the expenditure of nine guineas for the same purpose on October 23rd probably marks the completion of the main structure. The scaffolding was removed during November. By October 1779 the bridge proprietors had begun work on the road which was to link the northern end of the bridge with the Madeley Turnpike on Lincoln Hill (the present Church Hill, Ironbridge). Work on the bridge continued during 1780, but many fewer men were employed, the fortnightly wage exceeding £20 only on six occasions. The bridge was opened on New Year's day 1781, and the workmen completed their tasks during the fortnight ending on January 13th.

The building of the Ironbridge proved very expensive. The total costs of erection, quite apart from the costs of the materials of the bridge itself, of which the ledger reveals nothing, amounted to £2,737.4.4d., compared with a mere £550 allowed for the purpose in the original estimate of October 1775.

The ledger also shows something of the after effects of the building of the bridge. Two artists were commissioned by Abraham Darby to portray the new structure. In October 1780 he paid William Williams (painter of the two views of Coalbrookdale of 1777 now in Clive House Museum) ten Guineas for a view of the bridge, and in January 1781 Michael Angelo Rooker, scene painter at the Haymarket Theatre travelled from London to Coalbrookdale to make a drawing of the bridge, his fee and expenses amounting to £29. Engravings of his drawing by William Ellis were on sale the following May. The cash book shows that the mahogany model of the Ironbridge now in the Science Museum was not built to rehearse the order of erecting the parts, but was constructed in 1785 by Thomas Gregory, who had been responsible for the payment of wages to men working on the bridge during 1780. In 1787 Darby presented

the model to the Society of Arts who awarded him their gold medal in the following year.

The ledger and cash books of Abraham Darby III in no sense revolutionise our understanding of how the Ironbridge was built. They provide no information at all about the methods used to cast the ribs, or about the relationship of the project with the contemporary scheme for a bridge over the Severn at Preens Eddy two miles downstream. Yet they make valuable additions to our knowledge. They reveal beyond any doubt the importance of the role of the third Abraham Darby, they hint that T. F. Pritchard's contribution to the final design was a significant one, they confirm that Gough's account of how the bridge was built is substantially correct, and they provide a chronology of the various stages of erection.

*(I am most grateful to Lady Labouchere for bringing the ledger to my attention and for allowing me to quote from it.)*

Barrie Trinder.

## Fish Weirs of the River Severn

Anyone glancing at the OS 1 in. map of the Shrewsbury area cannot fail to notice several small islands dotted at intervals along the River Severn. The 2½ in. and 6 in. maps reveal several more and also hint at their function by marking associated "fish weirs" or "weir" names attached to adjacent farms or cottages. However, when one turns to literature, be it geographical, historical or archaeological, one can look in vain for further information on the 'why, how and when' of such features.

This paper therefore aims to set out a few observations so far gathered by the author in the hope that readers may be stimulated to discover more about a subject which touches upon the history of several parishes, as well as the history and behaviour of the river.

First of all it must be understood that the weirs in question were not solid barriers ponding back water as with the present Shrewsbury Weir. Instead they only acted as fish traps mainly consisting of a 'fence' of stakes supporting long wicker baskets. (1) Another device apparently consisted of a set of swinging gates which allowed upstream movement of salmon but prevented any escape downstream. (2)

Such structures did however hinder navigation and in 1575 (3) the Weir owners were ordered to remove such 'stakes, piles, hooks, engines, fences, fishgarthes, locks . . . ' which prevented a free passage of boats. The Orders list 28 Weirs between Alberbury and the county boundary above Bewdley. A study of the first edition of the OS Map (surveyed 1826-37) (4) shows that all twelve sites listed above Cressage Bridge

\*

are marked by split channels and islands while downstream few presumed weir sites show such structures. In addition the upstream section also contains four other sites: 'Cronchill Bylet' near Atcham mentioned in these orders, weirs at Shrewsbury (Coton Hill) (5) and Bromley's Forge known from other sources (6) and also another apparent site near Atcham Bridge.

It is this upstream group of sixteen weirs which will now be considered more closely. Their general characteristics seen today or appearing in old maps are as follows.

1. The river is divided into two channels around an island called a 'bylet' (extra islands occur in places).
2. One channel often the narrower is followed by the local parish or township boundary following the river; staking may partially block its upstream end.
3. One channel thus lying wholly within one parish, township or manor contains any known weir structures, towards its downstream end. (The foundations of the Roman bridge at Wroxeter (7) are in fact just where the weir frame would be expected).
4. There may be a special weir house or cottage or the site may be beside a village.

The physical characteristics of the river channel, in common with most other large rivers, (8) include a series of gravel bars spaced at regular intervals of a few hundred yards along the bed where the heavy bottom load has become concentrated. Thus the course of the river is divided into an alternating series of 'pools', where even at low flow, depths can exceed six feet, separated by steep shallow reaches termed 'riffles' by geographers, and no doubt something unprintable by Severn bargemen!

The regular spacing of riffles observed between Shrawardine and Shrewsbury suggests that only natural bars have been selected for weir sites and the staking has then led to the accumulation of even more gravel. Conversely, the bars lying immediately below the Montford and the Bromleys Forge - Mytton weirs appear to have been starved of their fair share of gravel.

Islands, however, do not appear to be natural features of this part of the Severn, as they only occur at weir sites. Clearly, they have either been built up around staking or have been created by the digging of a new channel across the floodplain. The general shape of surviving islands suggests the latter, and of course the Barge Gutter, bypassing the old Shrewsbury weir is an obvious example illustrating the role of such channels in maintaining navigation.

In a widened channel clogged with gravel the flow of water naturally tends to swing to one side as in a meander. Perhaps for this reason, the river appears to have maintained several such by-pass channels long



after weir stakings have decayed, as can be seen immediately upstream from Atcham Bridge. Meanwhile successive editions of Ordnance Survey maps show that other islands have been reduced or destroyed, as at Eyton, Eaton Constantine, and the mouth of the Tern, perhaps because the natural site has proved unstable. The Shrewsbury Barge Gutter lies plugged with fresh silt, while at Mytton the river pours over an exceptionally steep bar leaving a horseshoe-shaped by-pass loop forgotten in the willows. Were there more islands downstream from Cressage which have likewise disappeared?

So much for the 'Why?' and the 'How?'. What of the 'When?'. Clearly by 1575 some weir sites, complete with bylets had already gone out of use. Did the new orders lead to the final decay of many more? It is certainly curious that among the many complaints about the state of the Severn Navigation in the 18th century there are no references to obstructions caused by weirs. Nevertheless three weirs, Little Shrawardine, Montford and Fitz apparently remained in use right through the 19th century.

A medieval origin for the weirs and islands is suggested by the way in which parish boundaries follow the artificial by-pass channels. In the Domesday Book, Montford at least has a fishery! If the origins of the weirs lie in the ill-documented Middle Ages, there is an obvious need for some archeological enquiry.

Summary of known weir sites upstream from Cressage.

Parish and Place	1575 List	Grid Reference
Alberbury Hay Weir	1	SJ 3451 60
Alberbury Little Shrawardine	2	SJ 391 152
Montford Montford, Weir Farm	3	SJ 4221 45
Montford Bromley's Forge	-	SJ 4391 65
Fitz Mytton	4	SJ 441 166
Fitz Fitz Weir	5	SJ 4551 80
Shrewsbury Coton Hill (Barge Gutter)	-	SJ 4901 34
Shrewsbury Holywell	6	SJ 5041 34
Shrewsbury Pimley	7	SJ 5201 42
Upton Magna Preston	8	SJ 5201 17
Atcham Above bridge	-	SJ 5370 95
Atcham 'Cronkhill Bylet'	(-)	SJ 5400 84
Wroxeter (?) 'Tyerne's Mouth'	9	SJ 5520 90
Wroxeter Wroxeter	10	SJ 561 083
Cound Mouth of Cound Brook (?)	-	SJ 5660 62
Cound Eyton on Severn	11	SJ 5690 58
Eaton Constantine Eaton Weir	12	SJ 5920 51

## References

1. See displays in Gloucester City Museum.
2. Penny Cyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge. 1840
3. Orders made by the Commissioners of Sewers for the County of Salop. Mar. 27. 17 Eliz. (1575). T.S.A.S. 1st Ser. XI. pp. 425-26.
4. Ordnance Survey 2 in. : 1 mile, Field sheets. Photostats in Shrewsbury Borough Library.
5. R. E. James. 'The Old Bed of the River Severn at Shrewsbury'. T.S.A.S. vol. LIII (1950) pp. 242-250.
6. Estate Maps, 1728. Powis Collection. Shropshire Records Office. See also D. J. Pannett, 'A Note on Bromley's Forge', S.N.L. No. 36, 1969.
7. G. Webster and B. Stanley, 'Viroconium: a study of Problems', T.S.A.S. vol. LVII, p. 129.
8. G. H. Dury, The Face of the Earth, (1959), chapter eight., G. H. Dury, ed. Rivers and River Terraces, (1970), chapter nine.
9. O.S. Field Sheets: 6 in. editions of 1884 and 1903.

Preston Montford Field Studies Centre.

David Pannett.

## **Miscellaneous Finds at Cound Moor, Cound**

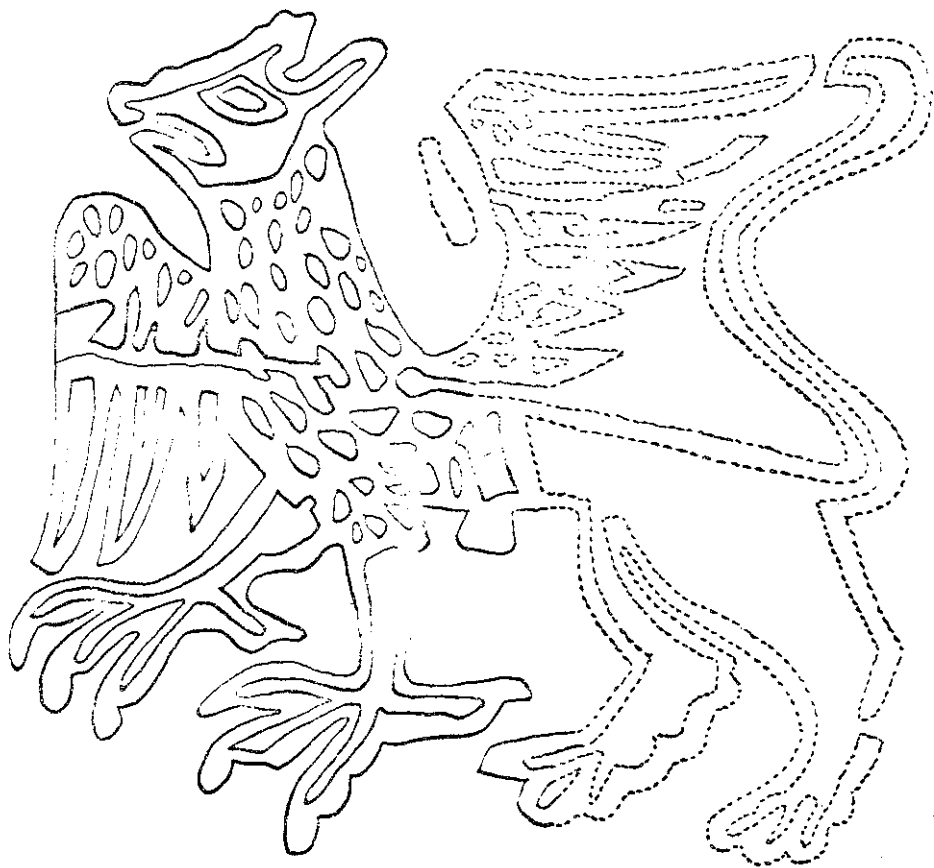
(Grid Ref: SJ 552033)

It is of course not unusual for finds of an archaeological nature to be found in gardening operations, and even isolated finds are worthy of record. In the case of the house, Brooklyn, at Cound Moor, occupied by Mr. J. J. Fleming, a variety of objects found in the last two years deserves particular mention.

Brooklyn is a small stone house, whose basic fabric is probably of 17th century date, situated in the small valley formed by the Coundmoor Brook immediately on its east bank. Discoveries from the garden adjacent to the house, from the field immediately above the house, and from the stream bed itself, have been made over the last few years. Much is 17th to 19th century material contemporary with the occupation of the house and is what one would expect from a settlement occupied over the last 300 years; thus sherds of Staffordshire slip-ware and part of an iron bowl of early Coalbrookdale type have been found. However, earlier objects have been found as well, and although there is no evidence at all of earlier occupation, they are listed here for their informative value and to encourage the observation of others on their own property.

1. Sestertius of DIVA FAUSTINA I, c. 141 AD. The reverse probably depicts AETERNITAS. cf *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 1099 ff.
2. Lead or pewter token of the Elizabethan period. Plain disc on one side with stamped simple geometric design on the other. About one inch in diameter

(These two objects were kindly identified by Mr. R. A. G. Carson, British Museum).



3. Green-glazed tile fragment as illustrated and restored. The figure is a gryphon, a monstrous four-footed creature, talons to fore and claws to rear feet, winged, with eagle head and lion's rear quarters.

This is a not unfamiliar Shropshire tile of the period 1350-1420. The closest parallel is in the church at Acton Burnell (1½ miles away) and a similar tile from Shrewsbury is in the Rowley House Museum. Others are known from St. Mary's Friary, Shrewsbury, Haughmond Abbey, Lichfield Cathedral and Valle Crucis Abbey, Denbighshire. In view of the replacement of tiles in the north transept of Acton Burnell church it is tempting to suggest that this fragment will have found its way from the church in its broken state during a period of restoration.

(I am grateful to Mrs. Ruth Taylor of Birmingham Museum for the identification and information).

4. Also worthy of comment is a lead die impression of a Coronation medal of George II, date 1728, enthroned king seated between Britannia (left) and bishop (right).

(This object was identified by Mr. A. Gunstone, also of Birmingham Museum).

Geoffrey Toms.

## Lyth Hill, Shrewsbury – Site "B"

(SJ 466084)

**TYPE OF SITE:** A Pre-Roman Iron Age enclosure bounded by substantial but completely erased earthworks (Bi-vallate).

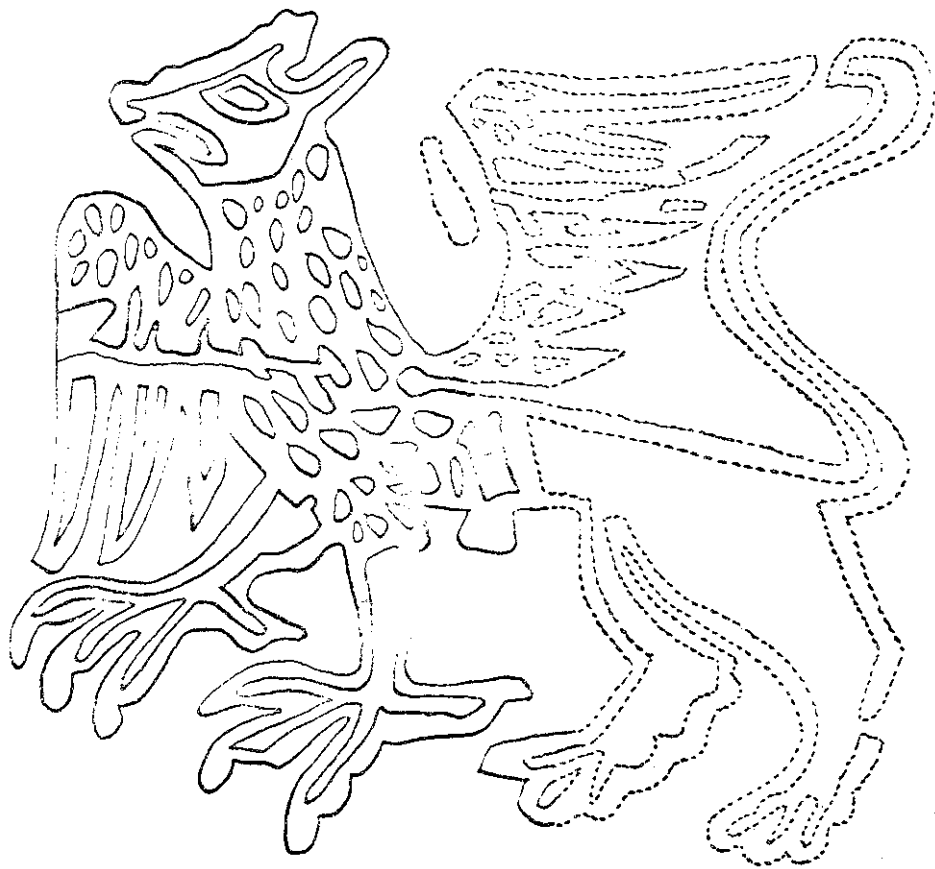
**LOCATION:** 3 miles S.S.W. of Shrewsbury, and 2 miles S.W. of a similar site (Sharpstones Hill - Site "E"). Although constructed on a prominent position, its siting is obviously non-strategic but shrewdly observes the need for good drainage and overall shelter from prevailing winds.

**DISCOVERY:** Excavation on this site completes the examination of the three enclosures discovered on aerial surveys and reported in S.N.L. No. 27 by Messrs. A. Baker and P. A. Barker (Oct. 1964) and in S.N.L. No. 38 (June 1970). Excavation reports are made in S.N.L. Nos. 29 and 31 (Sharpstones Hill Site "A") and in S.N.L. No. 37 (Sharpstones Hill Site "E").

**HISTORY:** Excavation of this site was favoured in the light of the following considerations:

1. Sestertius of DIVA FAUSTINA I, c. 141 AD. The reverse probably depicts AETERNITAS. cf *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 1099 ff.
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**HISTORY:** Excavation of this site was favoured in the light of the following considerations:

1. The recent acceleration of destructive deep ploughing in the area. In the event this was amply justified for it was revealed that the enclosure must have had a visible superstructure in the early Victorian period. Also some prehistoric features were completely erasable by lowering the plough setting by only 2 - 3 inches!
2. In view of the paucity of finds that can be expected from this type of site we required additional knowledge of contemporary features to obtain a satisfactory understanding of the neighbouring sites.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** The first edition O.S. map shows several 'coal pits' in the area. An area of large, ploughed out lumps of 'pit clay' and slack coal at the N. end of the promontory indicated the probable site of one of these.

Modern field drains controlled the water level in the ditch to approximately 2ft. 6ins. below the present ground level. This is the winter level but it is probable that in the early Iron Age the ditch would have been water-filled for most of the year. The problem of water supply would have been one of superabundance rather than scarcity!

**EXCAVATION:** An area of approx. 2600 sq. ft. within the enclosure was stripped (half by mechanical means, the remainder by members of the Prehistoric Research Group). Two further trenches were cut to explore the ditch near to the enclosure entrance.

A. Features: referring to the plan

Phase I.

A semi-circular structure (shown stippled) built directly opposite the enclosure entrance and facing it was set epicyclically against a round house (?), probably for the purpose of sharing its storm water gully.

Phase II.

The phase I structure was dismantled and an enlarged semi-circular structure (shown shaded) built facing the opposite direction, again epicyclically with the round house (?).

Phase II was of considerably longer duration than phase I.

Modern.

A rectangular sub-apsidal bed of 'pit clay' and associated gully (shown hatched). These features are almost certainly associated with another area of 'pit clay', roughly rectangular, where much slack coal was found in the plough-soil. The regularly spaced unmarked chain dotted features are field drains.

B. Finds: referring to the plan

'LW' - A clay loom weight (broken). This area of the "round house" was obviously the scene of some domestic process involving fire, the whole gully at this point appeared to have been used as a hearth.

'BE' - A Bronze eyelet. This lay in the topmost fill of the gully at a point where erosion of both phase II gulleys may indicate either a passage between the structures or from one to the other

'P' - Several fragments of pottery forming a rim sherd of a light-brown, buff-slipped plain dish of L.B.A./Iron Age 'A' form. Until this was found in the closing stages of the excavation it was thought that the culture represented was aceramic, apart, that is, from the general scatter of very coarse pottery which has characterised the three sites.

'S' - An iron object, possibly a fragment of a hollow, ribbed spear-head. The extremely bad state of corrosion renders identification difficult but there is some resemblance to an early lunate specimen from Hod Hill.

Both these objects are from an area of the phase II gully where secondary use of this feature was observed. Considerable contemporary rodent action within the gully had almost completely masked the true outline of it.

'Q' - A saddle quern. This, found within a post-hole near to the entrance had been re-used as a packing stone and may provide valuable dating evidence when the gateway is explored.

'F' - A composite flint tool in fine condition. Miss L. F. Chitty has kindly examined this and suggests the possibility of a Mesolithic date. Only one inch separated it from the last plough-score!

'PB' - 'Pot-boilers'. Although the plan shows only three positions for these they were, in character with the other sites, scattered generally, many hundreds being found in the ditch and gulleys. These were used on back-filling the excavation to mark those sections of the gulleys which had been emptied.

GENERAL: The site merits further examination in the very near future. The formidable task of producing the one ditch section in the face of severe flooding suggests a dig in the late summer. The complete plan of the 'round' house is another 'must' and this is probably in an area free of modern intrusions.

The success of this project was largely due to the kindness and cooperation of the owner, Mr. L. Davies and his staff, together with several members of the Prehistoric Research Group of whom Mr. D. Milsom and Mr. G. Hughes deserve special thanks.

FOOTNOTE:

An excellent aerial view of the excavations at a very similar site at Burradon, S. E. Northumberland, can be seen in Current Archaeology No. 15 (July 1969), page 118.

W. E. Jenks



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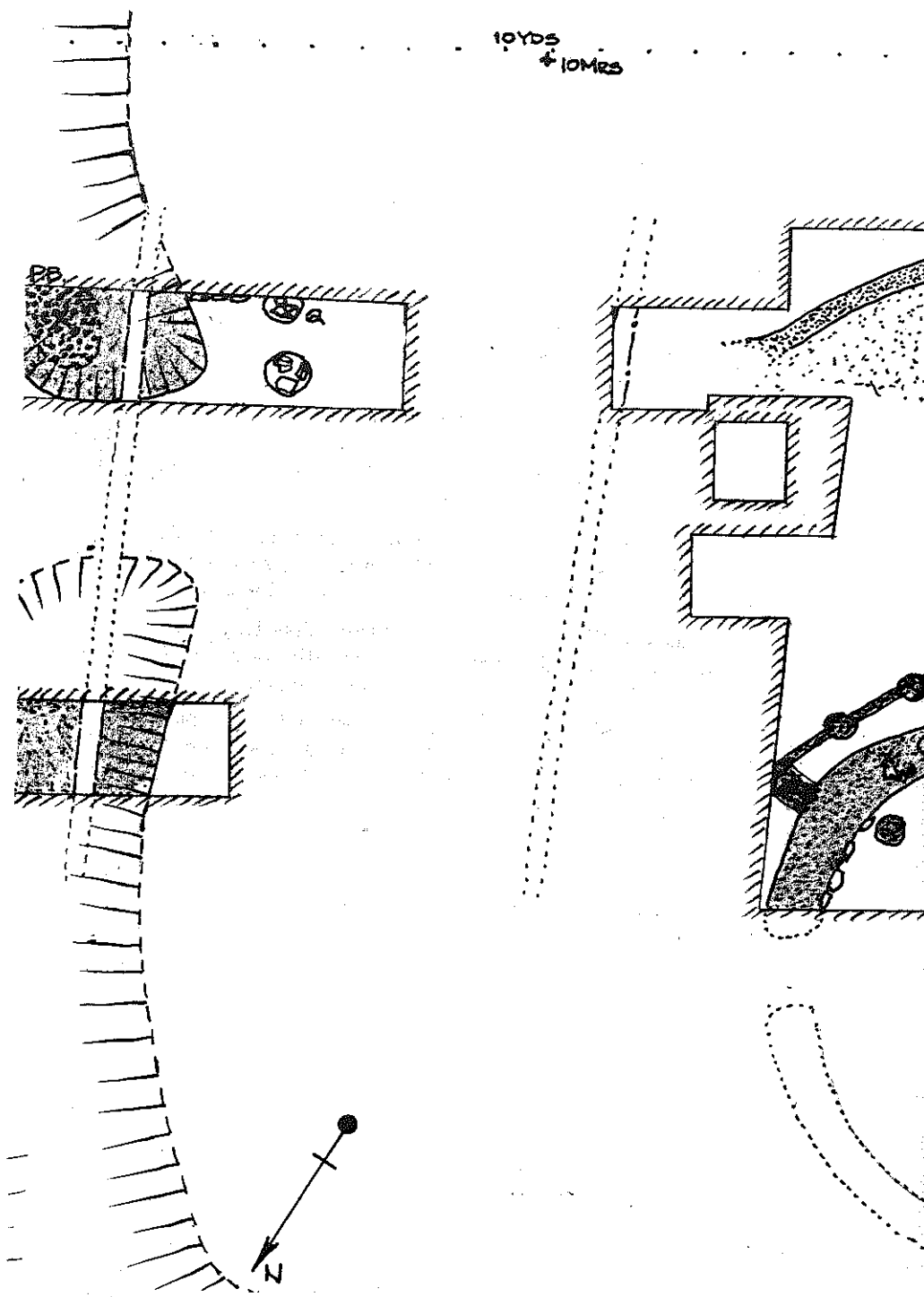
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10YDS  
+ 10MRS

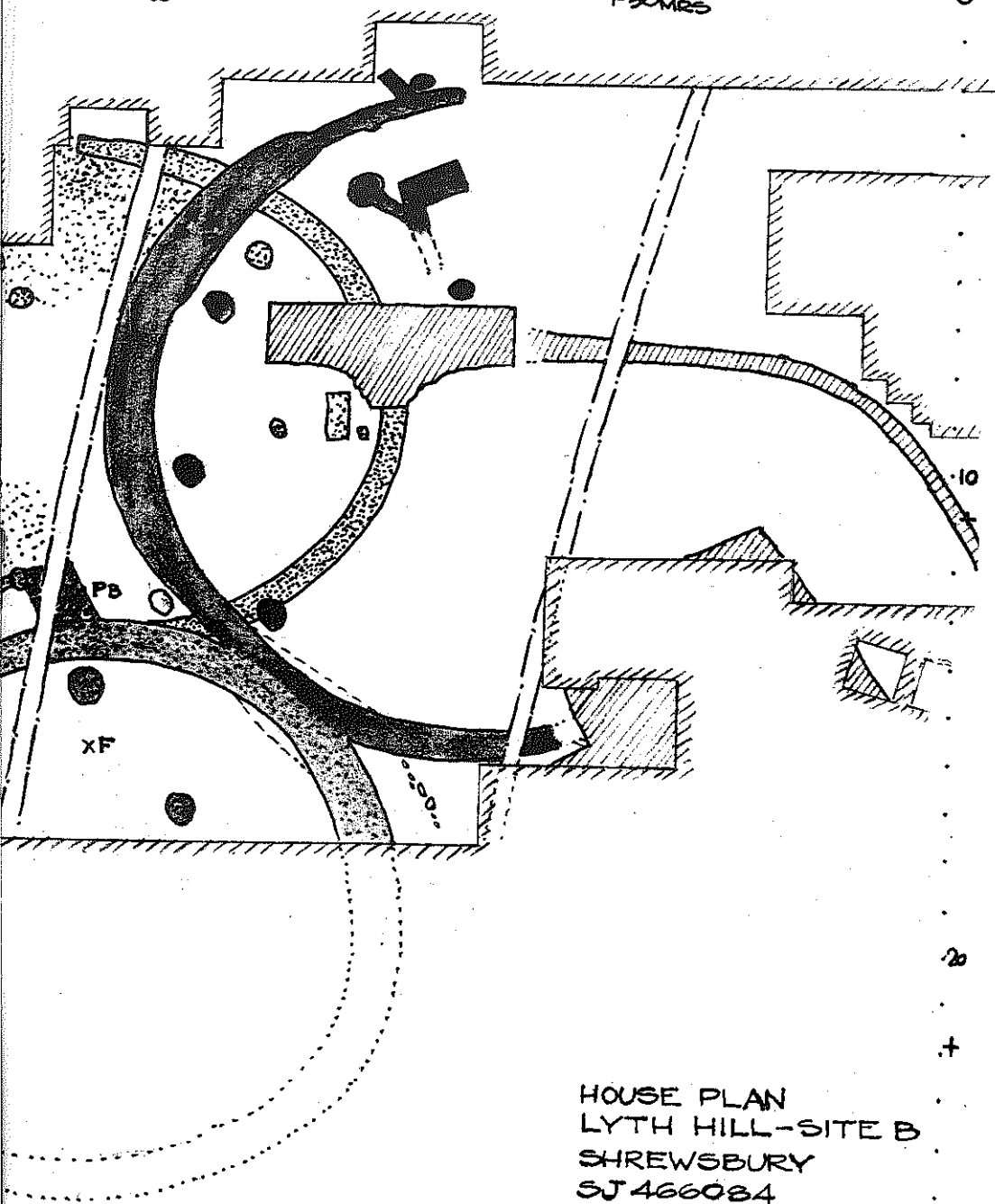


0YDS +20MRS

30YDS

+30MRS

48



HOUSE PLAN  
 LYTH HILL-SITE B  
 SHREWSBURY  
 SJ 466084  
 IRON AGE ENCLOSURE

## Malins Lee Chapel

(SJ 699088)

Excavation and observation on this site was carried out by Messrs. R. Cromarty, M. Pakes and J. A. Pagett with assistance from various other people between 21st February and 17th April, 1971, prior to its demolition by the Telford Development Corporation.

While producing no evidence of any previous structure on the site, the excavation showed that the building consisting of a Chancel and Nave which were perhaps not strictly contemporary. The building had been extensively repaired at a variety of dates. A piece of cooking pot of c. 1150 similar to Brockhurst Castle types of the 12th century was recovered from the foundations of the north wall of the Nave. No trace of any burials was discovered either within the Chapel or in the parts of the surrounding area which were explored.

Permission to excavate by the Telford Development Corporation and their assistance in clearing the building of undergrowth is gratefully acknowledged. It is understood that they hope to re-erect at least a portion of the building in the Town Park at some future date.

It is intended to publish a fuller account of this work in a future issue of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

J. A. Pagett.

SA 767

### Three dwellings in the Dark Lane Rows

X The Dark Lane Rows stood 1,100 ft. S.S.W. of Hollinswood Junction on the Shrewsbury - Birmingham railway line (SJ 703088), in the township of Malins Lee in the ancient parish of Dawley. They were destroyed in the early summer of 1971 in the first stage of the Telford Town Centre building programme. These rows, together with the housing a little to the west at Malins Lee Farm, the Lawn and the Lodge, made up one of the 'industrial villages' distinctive of the east Shropshire coalfield. These dwellings, the two farms, two or three shops, a blacksmith's forge, and the Primitive Methodist Chapel, were closely related to several collieries, the Dark Lane blast furnaces (later a foundry), at least two brickworks, and Malins Lee station. The rows were built about 1830, though the precise date of erection is not known, and were originally the property of the Botfield family of the Old Park Iron Company.

This note comments on the rows as they were in 1969-70, and details and measurements of three dwellings, one from each row. I am grateful to the people of Dark Lane for their friendly hospitality, and to

E. Hugh Nankivell for holding a tape measure on a snowy cold Christmas morning!

(A)

The most westerly row, called the Short or Top Row, lay west of the former canal and the Wellington - Coalport branch railway, and was aligned N.N.E. - S.S.W. It was a straight row, about 140 ft. long. There were 9 houses and 7 separate sets of outbuildings. The most southerly dwelling had additional front and back rooms, making six in all, which meant it was much the largest dwelling in the Rows. At the northern end of this Row the former shop and one time post office was distinguished by larger out-buildings and a taller first floor. No. 6 Malins Lee, described below, had not been thrown in with neighbouring houses, as was the case with some of the cottages. In 1969-70 six of the nine buildings were inhabited by nine adults and four children.

#### No. 6 Malins Lee:

Red brick. One up, one down. South East facing (terrace) row building. Back N.W. wall patched with sandstone. Chimney 5 bricks long and 4 bricks wide, shared with next house to north. Metal guttering, down spout N. & S. wall, window frames, and knocker over letter box. Timber porch over front door. A gate set in low brick wall enclosing a front garden 17 ft. x 6 ft. deep.

#### Downstairs Room

12 ft. x 7 ft. x 7 ft. 6 in. high. Front door 5 ft. 10 in. x 3 ft. 3 in. One S.E. window, 4 ft. 2 in. x 3 ft. Chimney in N. corner 6 ft. 6 in. x 7 ft., iron grate, 2 ovens, spit, hob. Floor - red square quarries. Door - W. corner, entry to cellar, boarded in.

#### Stairs

10 stairs up, 2 ft. wide and 10 in. high x 9 in. deep. Coal in space below stairs, boarded in and entered by doors. Stair head railed in, with cast iron window 2 ft. 4 in. x 10 in. on landing.

#### Bedroom

9 ft. 6 in. x 11 ft. 8 in. separated from stairs by timber partition. Plastered ceiling, sloping, 6 ft. 10 in. at lowest. One, S.E. window, 2 ft. 10 in. x 2 ft. 10 in. Door in, 5 ft. 1 in. x 2 ft. 1 in. (sic).

#### Downstairs

Back behind the room a passage 11 ft. 3 in. long, 9 ft. high and 4 ft. deep, with deep shelf W. end, window 16 in. x 16 in., small entry and door 6 ft. 4 in. x 2 ft. 10 in. to:

### Wash-House

Back door S, 5 ft. 6 in. x 2 ft. 5 in., a lean-to, 9 ft. long, added to original house. Chimney at N. end, shared with E. neighbour. Wash-tub, 2 ft. 8 in. x 2 ft. 8 in. No water.

### Back garden

31 ft. x 7 ft., 3 ft. 9 in. from back door, shared brick privy, tiled floor and roof, 7 ft. x 5 ft. x 6 ft. high and honeysuckle smothered.

### (B)

Moving east and over the disused railway line we come to Long, or Top Row, aligned north - south, with a slight curve to the east in sympathy with the bend in the railway line. The length, about 500 ft. with some 26 houses and 38 out-buildings. The row once extended south another 50 ft. - probably four more houses. No. 20 detailed below, had not been united with adjacent buildings. In 1969-70 32 adults and 9 children lived in 19 of the 26 houses.

### No. 20 Dark Lane

Red brick. Two up, two down, terraced (row) house. The houses in this row are arranged as a series of interlocking Ls, with the smaller rooms alternately at the front and rear. The houses face east. Chimney 3 bricks x 4 bricks, with TV aerial, shared with house to S. Asbestos or metal guttering. No downspouts.

### Lean-to

Brick, glass and asbestos over front door and downstairs window, 12 ft. 10 in. x 5 ft. 6 in. deep, with cold tap and sink on N. side. Low brick wall path, privet hedge, brick privy, timber roofed, sole use, at end of front garden. Garden 40 ft. x 20 ft. approx.

### Main downstairs room

12 ft. 3 in. x 12 ft. 10 in. Front door E., 6 ft. x 2 ft. 9 in. Side wall chimney projection 5 ft. 10 in. x 1 ft. 8 in. Modern fireplace.

Window, E., 2 ft. 10 in. x 2 ft. 6 in.

Floor: quarries, 7¼ in. x 7¼ in. Ceiling: 7 ft. 2 in. plastered.

### Downstairs room, right

N., 8 ft. 1 in. x 6 ft. 2½ in. One E. window, 1 ft. 10 in. x 1 ft. 2 in.

### Stairs

Railed, not boarded in from room. Rise from N.W. corner. 11 stairs, 2 ft. 1 in. x 9½ in. deep, x 8½ in. high. Space under: cupboard. Stairhead railed off.

### Bedroom

12 ft. 10 in. x 12 ft. 6 in. x 6 ft. 4 in. to ceiling. Cast iron box fireplace S. wall, 3 ft. x 1 ft. 2 in. Window, E, 2 ft. 6 in. x 2 ft. 6 in., 8 panes, 4 open.

### Small bedroom

Off N., at head of stairs, 7 ft. 1 in. x 6 ft. 2 in., one window, E., 2 ft. 5 in. x 1 ft. 2 in.; 4 panes, opens. Door off bedroom. No windows or doors, or garden on W, or railway side.

(C)

Thirdly at right angles to the previous Row, and making the lower arm of the letter L is the Bottom Row, on the north side of Dark Lane itself, and immediately east of the railway bridge at Malins Lee station. The alignment is E - W, with the west end bending north. It is about 390 ft. in length, with 19 houses and 44 outbuildings. The row originally extended west a further 120 ft. (see O.S. 6 in. map, 1881-82), but only the last two of these houses still stood in 1969-70, being Nos. 27-28. More than half the houses in this row had been 'enlarged' by opening adjacent houses into one another, and this was the case with No. 43, described, but the measurements of the original, un-united dwelling only are given. 17 adults occupied 9 of the 19 dwellings in 1969-70.

### Dark Lane - next to last dwelling

Red brick (bricks 9 in. x 2½ in.), red roof, tiled, 2 up, 2 down, terrace (row) house. As in B, the houses in this row are arranged in a series of interlocking Ls, in this case the small rooms are at the back of the house. Chimney, 4 x 3 x 27 brick lengths. Asbestos (?) guttering and one down-spout. Low brick wall around front garden, 70 ft. long (others in this row 75 ft. long) extending N. from front door, privy and wash house at N. end of garden. Front, N., door, 6 ft. 6 in. x 3 ft. 5 in.

### Main Room

13 ft. 6 in. x 13 ft. x 8 ft. high. N. window, 3 ft. 6 in. x 2 ft. 11 in. Fireplace projection, 6 ft. x 1 ft. 6 in., 2 ovens, hob and spit range. Door, E., 6 ft. 1 in. x 2 ft. 7 in. into:

### Downstairs room, back

4 ft. x 13 ft. 2 in., window S. on to road, 1 ft. 5½ in. x 1 ft. 7 in. (outside measurement 2 ft. 2 in. x 1 ft. 9 in.). At E. end slab 2 ft. x 4 ft., 1 ft. 11 in. off ground, with brick arch in centre.

### Stairs

Boarded in, at S. end of main room, rising from W., 12 stairs, 1 ft. high, straight into:

### Bedrooms

Same dimensions as rooms below. Plaster board ceilings, 6 ft. 2 in. high. Chimney projection reduced, open grate in large room. Window N., 3 ft. 10 in. x 3 ft., small room window, S., 1 ft. 5 in. x 1 ft. 5 in.

Christopher Nankivell.

### **Lead Smelting in the Severn Gorge**

The London Lead Company, Britain's largest lead mining and smelting concern in the 18th and 19th centuries, for a short period after 1731 operated a small smeltery at Benthall.

The project began as an offshoot from the Company's major operations in Bagillt, Flintshire, when, in 1728, its Chief Agent in North Wales, Thomas Barker of Gadlys, began mining trials on an extensive lease in the Shelve area, and on another site near Priestweston. (S.R.O. Lloyd Collection relating to Hogstow, 103/Box 36. London Lead Company Court Minute Book, Northern Institute of Mining Engineers, Neville Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne, (LLCMB) 17th June, 1729). In August 1729 he began work, in partnership with John and Robert Myddelton of Chirk Castle, on the much more important Llangynog mine in Montgomeryshire alongside the fabulously rich mine of the "Duke" of Powis. (National Library of Wales (NLW), Chirk Castle Mss. F12435, Davies W. *A General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of North Wales*. London, 1810. pp. 58-60.) With the poor road communications of the period, ore from these works could not be carried overland to Flintshire for smelting. Barker at first arranged for the Company's ore to be smelted in the "Duk

"Duke's" works at Pool Quay, near Welshpool. (NLW Chirk F6928).

By 1731, with mining prospects at Llangynog promising, and the smelting agreement with Powis being not entirely satisfactory, the Company decided to smelt its own ores. (LLCMB 18th May, 1731). Originally it was planned to establish a smelting partnership with Robert Myddelton, who suggested working in the Madeley area, where he may already have had a lead smeltery in operation for the family had been mining at Llangynog on its own account since at least 1718. (NLW Chirk F6936, F10028, F3178). He considered Powis's overland carting of ore to Pool Quay, and his up-river carriage of fuel from the Shropshire coalfield to the smeltery, more inconvenient and costly than carrying the ore to Madeley, particularly as the smelted lead would have to pass down the Severn on its way to Bristol, the only possible market. Consequently in August 1731, Thomas Barker investigated the Severn Gorge for a suitable works' site, rejected Madeley, and took a lease, in his own



name, of ground on the opposite bank of the river, in Benthall. Building began soon afterwards there on a smeltery, designed by Barker himself, containing two coal-fired reverberatory furnaces, or cupolas, a slag-hearth, and a smithy, which was in "smoke" by Christmas. (*ibid.* F6933, F6936.) By this date such coal-fired air furnaces for lead smelting were comparatively rare in Britain. The first one was built in Derbyshire, the most important mining area in the country, as late as 1734, though in the Severn Valley they were no innovation; the Pool Quay cupola, for instance, had been built in 1706. (A. Raistrick & B. Jennings. *A History of Lead Mining in the Pennines*. 1965. p. 124. NLW Chirk F11468.).

The actual site of the Benthall smeltery is unknown, but topographically there seem to be two possibilities in the parish:-

a) The less likely: beneath Benthall Edge, or Rock, (SJ 667033), giving a river frontage almost opposite Coalbrookdale. A late 18th century drawing by Thomas Rowlandson of the river at Coalbrookdale shows an industrial building of some kind there. (Reproduced in A. Raistrick. *Dynasty of Ironfounders*. London, 1953. opp. p. 96). The Parish Tithe Apportionment plan shows this site occupied in the 1830s by lime-kilns, which were often found in buildings originally designed for other industrial purposes. (SRO. Benthall Tithe Plan). G. Young's plan for improving the navigation of the Severn in 1768 shows a smelthouse on this site.

b) The more likely: which lies immediately to the east of the Ironbridge (SJ 672031), on the stream which runs into the river there (which is also the parish boundary). A works there might have had a river frontage, or it could have been part-way up Benthall Bank on the site later occupied by the Benthall Ironworks, and subsequently by a tile works. Significantly, in an agreement of 1739, the smeltery was described as, "At Broseley (Benthall)." Moreover its possession of a slag-hearth implies water power which was certainly available on this site. (LLCMB 11th Dec. 1739.) Interestingly a deed relating to the building immediately downstream from the Ironbridge, dated 26th March, 1765, refers to the premises as, "Formerly used as a smelting house and later converted and used as a malthouse." If this indeed refers to the London Lead Company's works then it means a riverside site. (Summary of deed in Shrewsbury Borough Library).

Even before the smeltery was completed Robert Myddelton asked to be released from the provisional partnership agreement, and thus the works came entirely under the control of the Company. (NLW Chirk F6936, F10804, E1095.) It seems that Myddelton's decision was largely prompted by the worsening mining prospects at Llangynog. (*ibid.* F6933.) In 1732 James Creed of London contracted to buy, at Bristol, all the Company's Benthall produced lead (LLCMB 18th July, 1732), but output remained small for ore supplies from Llangynog declined after 1733, and the Shropshire trials also proved disappointing. In 1733 Thomas Barker, again in his own name, leased coal and ironstone mines in the Manor of

Little Dawley from Lord Craven for 99 years, which may imply that the smeltery was supplied with coal from across the river. This seems to be confirmed by Barker also leasing a house, with a yard for stacking coal in it, (Mr. Stanley's Wharfage) in the angle between the Severn and the Dale Brook. (SRO 1681/1,5). Stanley's Wharfage may also point to the "Ironbridge" site for the smeltery, as it would have been easier to ship coal on the current, diagonally across the river, than to have taken it directly across to Benthall Rock.

In 1735 one of the Company's agents reported on Llangynog and the Shropshire trials, recommending that they should all be abandoned as soon as practicable. Accordingly Llangynog was given up between April and August 1736 and the Shropshire mines soon afterwards. (LLCMB 23rd July, 1735, 8th April, 1736. NLW Chirk F12435). This virtually meant the end of the Company's activities at Benthall, though the works were retained, possibly in the hope of smelting bought ore. Soon afterwards the furnace may have been dismantled, for in 1739 the Company,

"Agreed with Matthew Dove & Partners in the Bog Mine, Shropshire, to let them *the building* and slag hearth at Broseley (Benthall) at £15 p.a. for six years from Ladyday next, the Company assigning the Benefit of the Company's covenant for Indemnifying from any Damage by the Smoke, the said Matthew Dove & Partners to build a furnace, and at the end of the term the Company to have the liberty of taking the Furnace on a reasonable valuation . . . otherwise said Dove & Partners to pull it down and sell the material for their own use." (LLCMB 11th Dec. 1739).

In 1744 the Company received £60 from Dove, "For four years rent of Benthall workhouse," indicating that smelting went on into the 1740s, (*ibid.* 14th June, 1744) but in 1748 the Minute Book records,

"The Company having no further occasion for their workhouse at Benthall in Shropshire resolved that orders be sent to Mr. William Ferriday to surrender up the lease thereof to the landlord which he is hereby empowered to do." (*ibid.* 26th May, 1748).

It is interesting to note that William Ferriday of Wyer Hill, Buildwas, master collier, became Thomas Barker's partner in the Little Dawley coal mines in 1733, and ran them for him thereafter. Ferriday acting on behalf of the Company here may indicate another link between those coal works and the smeltery. (SRO 1681//2). In 1750 the Company finally wrote off a loss of £470.4.7 on the Benthall Smeltery. (LLCMB 15th Aug. 1750).

This was not quite the end of the story, for in 1759 a Mr. E. Davies of Shrewsbury wrote,

"I was apply'd to this morning to set or sell the smelting house that I am told belongs to Mr. Myddelton near Coalbrookdale . . . .

I remember to have heard that Mr. Robt. Mydn had such a building and that the furnace etc. was disposed of in the late Mr. Myddelton's time." (NLW Chirk E3178).

This could of course, refer to the Benthall site but it seems more likely to refer to an even earlier smeltery on the other side of the river, for a fragment of a letter to Robert Myddelton, dated 17th September, 1735 states that, "It was at first proposed (in the original agreement with the London Lead Company) to make use of your Smelting House to smelt the ore in," but when this plan wasn't adopted Myddelton sold his share of the Llangynog ore output to the Company at the mine. (supra p. 2, *ibid.* E6267). Thus this fragment could explain Myddelton's recommendation of a Madeley smelting site to Thomas Barker in 1731: What is more, in

1760 the Bog Mine partners proposed building a smeltery, or renting suitable property, in the Madeley Wood area, and a deed, dated 1756, refers to, "The waste land at Madeley Wood lying between the smelt-house and the garden of John Hughes, pipemaker," suggesting that there was already such a building in existence there. (SRO 851, Norris MS. Friends' House. Information supplied by Barrie Trinder and Ivor Brown.) Possibly then it was the Bog partnership which approached Davies in 1759 about the long-disused works, but if it was, what happened subsequently remains a mystery.

However lead smelting seems to have persisted in the area. About 1788, materials from a local lead works were used in the building of the Anchor Smeltery at Aberystwyth. (Lewis W. J. *Lead Mining in Wales*. Cardiff, 1967. pp. 114, 158.) and in the first decade of the 19th century there was a smelthouse and an adjacent group of cottages called Smelthouse Row on the estates of William Reynolds in Madeley Wood or Coalport (Staffordshire Record Office. D876/155).

Melton Mowbray.

J. N. Rhodes, M.A., Ph.D.

## Computer Stored Archaeological Data: County Gazetteer

The threats posed by motorway developments and the like to archaeological sites are by now fairly well known. An equal threat to archaeological studies comes from the loss of finds through the irresponsible use of metal detectors, spurious antique collection and the burgling of museums. Our duty to future researchers is to recover and measure accurately as many as possible of the finds or artefacts which come to light, many of which, of course, do not come from formally organised excavations. This

is a task to which experienced field workers no longer able to undertake digs can make a useful contribution.

This paper urges the preparation of comprehensive lists of both features and finds, especially for parishes threatened by new road works. Such lists should include the following information:

- i) Items already carded fully and known to C.B.A.
- ii) Items already measured but not fully carded.
- iii) Items known in archaeological circles but not measured.
- iv) Items not currently known.
- v) Items discovered in current excavations.

The main asset of such lists will be the provision of a bibliography for future research, and as an up to date schedule of sites requiring field work. Ideally we require correlation of archaeological evidence from all over Britain, a task requiring the use of computer techniques. A method of coding is being analysed by the University of Birmingham Computer Centre in conjunction with the Prehistoric Research Group of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Members of the research group collect and prepare data which is delivered to the computer centre. Weekly meetings are held at Shrewsbury Borough Library with occasional field trips during the summer and rescue excavations at weekends in the winter. Members of the Archaeological society and other readers are urged to bring any finds of which they may hear to the attention of the Prehistoric Research Group. A great deal of valuable evidence has already come to light, and it is vital that this work should progress as the threats of roadworks increase.

W. E. Jenks.

### Shropshire Archaeological Society: Membership

The membership secretary wishes to remind members who have not yet altered their Bankers' Orders to the new subscription rate (£2.10 p.a.) that they are steadily falling into arrears with their subscriptions, and should make the necessary alterations as soon as possible.

### Ironbridge Gorge Museum

There has been a great deal of museum activity in the Ironbridge area this summer, particularly on the open air site at Blists Hill. The outstanding additions to the exhibits at Blists Hill are the beam blowing engines 'Sampson' and 'David', built by Murdoch and Aitkin of Glasgow in 1851, which have been transported to the site from the Lilleshall Company's Priorslee ironworks. Technical details of the engines were

given in S.N.L. No.35. The engines are being erected near to the entrance to the museum, and will ultimately form the centrepiece of the concourse building. At the time of writing the cylinders are in place, but the beams have not yet been hoisted into position. The pools for the charcoal ironworking complex planned at Blists Hill are currently being excavated by a detachment of the Territorial Army. Work has also commenced on the making safe of the mid 18th century Madeley Wood or Bedlam blast furnaces. Once this is completed more scientific archaeological investigation of the site will be possible. At Coalbrookdale work proceeds on the restoration of the complex of timber framed buildings known as Rose Cottage.

The museum's first director was appointed in July. He is Mr. Neil Cossons, deputy director of the City of Liverpool Museums and co-author of "The Industrial Archaeology of the Bristol area" and of "The Industrial Archaeologists Guide". He will take up his appointment on October 1st.

Over a thousand visitors are expected for the museum's next open Day on Sunday, 26th September. It is probable that all tickets will have been sold by the time this Newsletter appears, but anyone wishing to go may make enquiries by telephoning Ironbridge 3522.

### The Aqueduct: An east Shropshire Industrial Settlement Corrigenda and Addenda. (See S.N.L. No. 40)

1. p. 18

Line 31 - 'brothers named Genner' (not Ginner).

2. p. 18. Last paragraph should read:

'In Chapel Lane are four rows of houses which probably originally housed workers employed in the factories on Aqueduct Bank and the nearby Botany Bay Colliery and Dawley Castle furnaces of the Coalbrookdale Company. Two of these rows (now numbered 59-65 and 69-73) date from 1840-41 . . . .'

3. p. 20

Line 30 should read:

' . . . Charles Worth Pearce, who appears to have moved into Madeley Court itself by 1895'. (See Kelly's Directory, 1895).

Other aspects of the settlement are covered in a paper which will be deposited in the Shropshire Record Office and the Shrewsbury Borough Library.

N, J. Clarke.

## The Coleham Engines

The two compound rotative beam pumping engines at the Borough of Shrewsbury's sewage pumping station in Longden Coleham were taken out of use about a year ago. They have not been demolished however, and since the beginning of August 1971 have been open for inspection by the public on Wednesday and Friday afternoons between 2.00 and 5.00 p.m. Applications for parties to visit the engines at other times should be made to the Borough Librarian, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury. The engines were built in 1907 by Renshaw of Stoke on Trent, and they are featured on a gramophone record in the 'Music of Machinery' series.

### University of Birmingham, Department of Extramural Studies Archaeology Course, Shrewsbury 1971-72

Members of the Shropshire Archaeological Society may be aware that the University attempted to run a "rescue" type of course this summer, tutored by Mr. Stewart, entitled "An Archaeological Survey of the Shrewsbury Area". This course has had to be cancelled, initially through lack of support, but now because of Mr. Stewart's departure from the county.

An alternative course has been arranged to commence on WEDNESDAY 13th OCTOBER, at College Hill House, 7.30 p.m., and will run for 20 weeks. Fee: £2.80 (O.A.Ps. and Full-time students £1.40).

The tutor will be Mr. A. Hannan, B.A. of the Department of Archaeology, University of Birmingham. The title of the course is at this stage undecided but it will especially deal with late Roman, early Christian and Medieval Archaeology of Britain.

The University would welcome support for this course from members of the Shropshire Archaeological Society. Anyone interested can obtain further details (when available) from the University's Resident Staff Tutor in Shropshire: Dr. P. Toghill, College Hill House, 13 College Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1LZ (Tel: Shrewsbury 55137 or Church Stretton 2713. Details will appear in the local press in early October.

## Another Underground Canal

Three underground canals in Shropshire are now quite well known. The plan of the Donnington Wood Colliery of 1788 shows that there were "navigable levels" in the local mines. The canal linking the upper and lower forges at Eardington near Bridgeorth has been described in several recent publications by Mr. Norman Mutton. The evidence that the famous Coalport Tar Tunnel was originally planned as a canal was discussed in S.N.L. No. 37. A chance discovery in a newspaper reveals that another underground canal was planned in Shropshire in the late 18th century.

The Shrewsbury Chronicle of July 18th, 1778, includes an advertisement seeking tenders for the construction of a new level in the manor of Snitton on Titterstone Clee, to be about a thousand yards long, beginning in the Dingle below the Angel Inn on the Turnpike Road (SO 572760), through Farthing Bank to the Gutter Work Colliery on the hill. The purpose of the level is "to drain the coal and ironstone works and get the mine there". Contracts may be either for a common level, or "for making a navigable cut of the dimensions of six and a half feet in height and four feet in breadth for conveying the mines (i.e. iron ore) to the mouth of the cut". The partners in the colliery were Mr. Pardoe of Nash Court, James Knight of Bringewood, Mr. Carter of Oakley Park and Mr. Probert of Cophorne, Shrewsbury.

Whether or not the navigable cut was built it is not possible to say, but the subject is clearly one which merits investigation both archaeological and in documentary sources.

B. S. T.

## The Priory of SS. Mary and Leonard, Wombridge

Everyone concerned with the history of the eastern part of the county will know and respect Rev. J. E. G. Cartledge's history of the Oakengates area, "The Vale and Gates of Usc-Con" published in the 1930s, and will welcome the publication of more of Mr. Cartledge's researches in a pamphlet entitled "The Priors of SS. Mary and Leonard, Wombridge". The author has discovered a considerable amount of information about the medieval priory, and the pamphlet includes lists of known priors and canons compiled from a variety of sources. Historians of later periods will find that there is much to interest them in the pamphlet, including a re-tracing of the course of the now almost vanished Springwell Brook, which ran through the centre of Oakengates, a description based partly on medieval sources and partly on the author's own observations. The pamphlet can be obtained from the author at Sunnyside House, Snow Hill, St. George's, Telford, Salop, price 25p. including postage.

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# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

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## NOTES ON PRESERVATION

### and the current threat to archaeological sites

Members will be aware from reports in the local press over the last few months of the Society's vigorous action in cooperation with other local and national bodies in ensuring the best practical means of protecting and preserving the Wrekin hill-fort and Rowley's Mansion in Shrewsbury. As in each case initial plans were altered or modified towards our own interests, it must be thought that such action is worth while and future efforts in the interests of preservation should now be much encouraged.

The Wrekin: The current plan for the siting of the BBC television mast and ancillary buildings is to locate them between the inner part of the hill-fort and the outer line of defences on the north-western side, where it is far less likely that structures would have existed. This is a great improvement on the scheme for siting the buildings in the heart of the hill-fort where the concentration of settlement must have been. Granted that the Wrekin now seems an inevitable site for the television aerial, the new scheme seems a reasonable compromise, especially as the Department of the Environment will arrange prior excavation of the threatened area. Even so, one would have hoped that the original site 2 of the BBC, north-east of Hell Gate right outside the hill-fort would have been chosen, and there is still the risk of damage to this outer gateway with its inturned entrance, when heavy machinery is moved in to the building site, despite the promises of embanking a road temporarily over the entrance to forestall damage.

X Rowley's Mansion, Shrewsbury: The Shrewsbury Borough Council reversed their decision not to purchase this very important 17th century brick house in the heart of the town at a meeting last month by 20 votes to 17. The Society in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Civic Society urged its purchase both on the grounds of the best form of preservation and the need to be able to expand the museum collection in the contiguous Rowley's House to this building as well. It was felt that in this way the town and the county would have available the space to house a rapidly expanding museum collection worthy of the important historical heritage of our county, and that this unique opportunity would not recur again. It was encouraging to note that some of the 17 objecting councillors voted against the proposal on the grounds that the Borough really needed a thoroughly new purpose-built museum, although no indication was given as to how likely this would be in the near future.

Motorway and Trunk Road Construction: The proposals for the construction of the M54 motorway or the widening of the A5 east of Telford in each case threaten known Roman or medieval sites on the

routes. The further proposals for the North Wales trunk road west of Telford are equally of great concern to archaeologists and historians. The Society has already made initial objections to features of both routes east of Telford where archaeological destruction will occur. The Society, however, also faces the reality that no major trunk road will be re-routed to avoid all archaeological sites, and a motorway committee is at present being formed to coordinate research and where necessary excavation under professional leadership to salvage information before sites on the finally-chosen route are destroyed for ever. It is hoped to give much fuller details of this great project in future numbers of the News Letter.

Threats of destruction or damage to archaeological sites in the county go on relentlessly and inevitably. After the construction of the North Sea gas pipeline, there is the prospect of the Milford Haven-Manchester Petroleum Products pipeline passing through the eastern part of the county. The redevelopment of Shrewsbury and our other medieval towns goes on apace with the attendant loss of medieval levels before prior examination, except in the current case of the Pride Hill site in Shrewsbury. There is now the prospect of road-widening in Market Drayton affecting part of the site of Tyrley Castle. Such wide-scale activity in the county is beyond the scope of a local society to cover on its own, and we must increasingly turn to the support of national institutions. In this respect the Society's meeting to inaugurate RESCUE in the county last October should have beneficial effects.

Geoffrey Toms

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## **Lilleshall Abbey**

(SJ 78142)

The laying of a sewage plant and outlet pipe in the field immediately to the west of the abbey church was observed during October 1971 by Mr. G. Toms on behalf of the Department of the Environment. The pipeline, laid in a trench 3 feet wide, passed obliquely across the field from the south-east to the north-west corner and revealed various walls and other structures. It was impossible in the space and time available to do more than record the presence of structures, and no plan could be made, but it is clear that in a field which is otherwise quite flat various conventual buildings to the abbey exist and probably the perimeter wall of the whole establishment is to be found there.

# EXCAVATIONS AT THE BREIDDIN HILL FORT, Monts.

(SJ 292144)

Rescue excavations in advance of quarrying at the Breiddin hill fort begun in the autumn of 1969 have been continued throughout the following two winters. The investigations, carried out by the Rescue Archaeology Group under the direction of Chris Musson, were completed in mid-February 1972; and the results are now being prepared for publication.

The main rampart cutting, begun as a 3 metre wide section in 1969 was eventually extended into an area excavation covering a 25 metre length of the innermost rampart and the occupation deposits behind it. There now appear to have been at least two main phases of construction in the 'Iron Age' rampart. The first consists of an earth and stone bank about 4 metres wide and originally a little over a metre high at the front; the rear is marked by a rough line of large boulders, the front by a concentration of larger stones which coincides with a double line of postholes, parallel to one another and less than one metre apart. The bank and the postholes certainly belong together, though it is possible that the bank itself has two phases, the second retained at the front by timbers set in a continuous palisade trench. The narrow spacing between the earlier double line of postholes recalls recently publicized Late Bronze Age defences on the Continent, but it would be unwise to treat such parallels too seriously at this stage, since good charcoal samples from both the postholes and the core of the bank will in due course give Carbon 14 datings. In the lee of the first rampart, a small rectangular area of cobbling probably represents a building about 2.5 metres by 3.0 metres.

A second rampart, certainly Iron Age in date and almost 6 metres wide, was built on the ruins of the earlier one, perhaps after a period of abandonment. The bank, largely constructed of loose scree, is faced at front and back in stone. Again, the buildings in the lee of the rampart appear to be rectangular and one may be associated with ironworking. The pottery is stamped-wares (Hawkes' Western 3rd B), and the ironwork includes involuted bow-brooches and a ring-headed linch-pin. At a late date in the Iron Age sequence a round-house about 6 metres in diameter was built above the remains of the earlier rectangular structure.

The site appears to have remained unoccupied throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., but fourth century pottery incorporated in a deliberate levelling of stone in the lee of the rampart re-affirms the re-occupation of the site at the end of the Roman period, noted by O'Neil in his excavations at the entrance 300 metres away in the 1930s. An unexpected feature, however, is the demonstration that the site was not only re-occupied but also re-fortified at this date. Large postholes cutting through the Iron Age deposits show that a four-posted tower 2.5 metres square, was later replaced by a larger six-posted structure linked

to a double line of postholes following the line of the earlier rampart. This appears to be the remains of a two-storied timber fighting platform, with watchtowers at intervals. A further stretch of rampart, 50 metres further north, produced much the same pattern, though the postholes in this case were less well defined.

Whatever the nature of this late fourth century re-defence, it does not represent the last phase of activity on the site. Behind the rampart, and partly cutting away some of the late Roman postholes, is an irregular trench or 'intrusion' which produced pottery similar to the 'VCP' (very coarse pottery) known from Iron Age levels on the site. The clear stratification of this pottery in a post-Roman context at the Breiddin may provide a valuable lead to the identification of native Dark Age wares in the area.

In the interior six timber built roundhouses, each about 6 metres in diameter have now been identified. These probably belong to the 1st century B.C. or first century A.D., but there are now at least ten four-posted rectangular buildings about 3 metres by 2 metres from earlier in the Iron Age. A number of large postholes and some ill-defined stone wall foundations probably belong with the late Roman re-occupation.

Finds have been relatively prolific, though much of the pottery is in a fragmentary condition. Late Neolithic pottery has been found both in the interior and beneath the rampart, and may be linked with two fragmentary polished stone axes to suggest a domestic occupation of the hilltop about 2000 B.C. A full scale late Bronze Age occupation now seems beyond dispute, since a socketted axe (complete with carbonized shaft), a Thornden-type socketted knife and a socketted bronze hammer have been added to the nail-headed pins found in 1969. There is also pottery showing Deverel-Rimbury characteristics. An extensive range of Iron Age pottery can now be analysed both typologically and petrologically, using the stratified deposits from the rampart excavation as a control. Iron Age bronzes include at least five items notionally identified as horse-harness one with curvilinear three-dimensional decoration on an iron core. The Roman pottery includes remains of more than 15 pots, of at least eight different types, all probably dateable to the late fourth century. There are no Roman coins.

Chris Musson.  
Rescue Archaeology Group.

## **The Shropshire Landscape**

Trevor Rowley's long-awaited book in the Making of the English Landscape series, entitled 'The Shropshire Landscape' was published in March. The book deals with a vast range of historical topics, and on many of them it offers new materials and new interpretations of major importance. For many people this book will be a first introduction to local history in Shropshire, and an excellent introduction it will be. A full review will appear in due course.

SA 608

**UPTON CRESSET :**  
**Hall, Gatehouse and Church**

X This most interesting complex of buildings stands in an isolated and beautiful site, some 2½ miles from Morville. The Hall was for some time uninhabited and suffered from the attention of vandals; valuable panelling and chimney pieces were stolen and mutilated. In 1970 The Hall and Gatehouse presented a distressing picture. The Church had not been used for some time, the Church yard was so overgrown that entry except in winter was a formidable task. In 1970 tenants for the property were found and early in 1971 repairs were started, a generous grant having been made by the Historic Buildings Council and further assistance was given by the County Council and the Rural District Council.

The complex consists of three main buildings, The Hall, The Gate House and The Church. There are, in addition, extensive farm buildings, including a large 18th century barn. The work of repair and reconstruction has been concerned with The Hall, The Gate House and Church.

The Hall is a timber-framed construction of three dates; in 1580 and subsequently it was given a brick facing. Its plan is a hall and cross wing. The hall is late 14th century, it has been truncated and a floor inserted, and the ground floor partitioned. The cross wing is of two builds both of the 15th Century. Some of the panelling and the plain plaster ceiling in the main bedroom can be dated to 1620. It has now received a complete overhaul, which included the rebuilding of the fine brick chimney stack of 1580, and a portion of the wall of the south elevation abutting the large Elizabethan bay window; the latter work was caused by the decay of the corner post of the first part of the cross wing. A clear demonstration of the folly of enclosing timber-framing within brick.

The south elevation had been much altered by the insertion in the 19th century of a variety of windows, in the main double-hung sash. All the windows on this elevation are now double-hung sash and the very poor quality front door replaced by something more appropriate. The appearance of this elevation is now consistent, though much later in style than the remainder. New windows have also been fitted on the south elevation. The west elevation remains basically as it was in 1580.

Internally, there have been little changes in the plan. The aisled hall has been restored to its original size by removing the inserted partitions. The removal of the later floor would have been most advantageous but this was not possible without seriously interfering with the requirements of the tenants. The ground floor has been renewed in old stone slabs, the modern fireplace replaced by something more appropriate and the destroyed panelling on the north wall replaced.

The two Elizabethan fireplaces have had the modern insertions removed and it has been possible, without great effort or expense, to bring them back to what must have been their original design. They are quite magnificent, the Kitchen having an opening of just over 10 feet wide.

In the main Bedroom vandals had caused much damage to the carved and panelled chimney piece. This has been carefully repaired and the missing portions renewed. This new work is not a copy of the old, what is new can be seen, but the overall effect is that of the original.

There have been few alterations to the house, the object being to maintain the plan and construction as closely as possible to the original.

The Gate House is in the main of one build; no documentary date is available and there is no date stone. It would be safe to assume that if not contemporary with, it cannot be much later than the encasing of the hall, and a date 1580-1600 would, therefore, seem reasonable.

It is, however, clear that the first floor was sub-divided into the two present rooms, though in view of the plaster work, which is in every way similar to that in Wilderhope and Morville, this could well have been a change of plan during construction.

The ground floor had been used for agricultural purposes for many years and the remainder of the building, though basically in fair condition, was dirty and uncared for. The leaded lights were in bad repair. There was one bad crack in the brickwork, but perhaps the most serious matter was one of the plaster ceilings, which was coming away from the joists. A grant from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings allowed this to receive first aid treatment, and it has now been tied back to the rafters and some of the damaged plaster work made good. After re-decoration its appearance is magnificent.

The roof, walls, timber work and floors have all been overhauled, the leaded light windows re-nerved and a minimum of re-pointing done.

It was interesting to see in what good condition the sand-lime Elizabethan mortar was after nearly 400 years. Very little re-pointing was necessary.

The Church of St. Michael has been declared redundant and is now in the care of the Redundant Churches Commission. It has been given a complete overhaul, including considerable work to the bellcote, which has been completely re-leaded, the bells removed and hung at a lower level, where they can now be seen. The fine Norman font, which had been taken elsewhere has been returned to its original home.

In the chapel there is considerable evidence of medieval wall painting and it is hoped that during the year that this will be dealt with by an expert in these matters.

The three very fine buildings at Upton Cressett are all now in a good state of repair. X

Roy Beard.

## A TUNNEL AT IRONBRIDGE

William Reynolds, the most able of the late 18th century Shropshire ironmasters, was responsible for the construction of a number of tunnels in the Coalbrookdale coalfield, including the well known Coalport Tar Tunnel. (See 'William Reynolds: A Man of Many Parts' by W. H. Williams Shropshire Magazine 1971.) At Ironbridge there is another tunnel which may well prove to be Reynolds's work.

This tunnel can still be entered and commences in a limestone face behind the Talbot Inn on the Wharfage (OS 66920364). The entrance is narrow and because of thick scrub is difficult to reach. It has a sandstone capstone with the date 1800 upon it. Once inside the dimensions are considerably larger, the original tunnel consisted of a completely oval-shaped brick lined arch about 8 ft. high and 5 ft. wide. The whole of the accessible length of tunnel is of this shape, and most of it is in excellent condition. There are, however, three falls of clay, one of which is wet and difficult to pass, and there is a short section about 150 ft. in cut in solid sandstone with ironstone 'cakes'. This is probably the Crawstone Measures, part of the basal beds of the Middle or Productive Coal Measures.

About 300 ft. in the tunnel is in excellent condition with sleeper and rail marks in the silt filling the bottom of the arch curve which has formed the base of the tramway. The whole is a typical example of a horse level as used in the better mines of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

When the writer first entered the tunnel about six years ago loose corrugated sheeting blocked the passage about 340 ft. in. This was removed and the exploration party came out in a sunken garage. The doors were fastened and locked, and the party passed beneath a car and through similar corrugated sheets on the other side of the garage, which were carefully replaced. Beyond the garage there was thick silt in the tunnel, and a fall of ground which blocked the way after less than 45 ft. The tunnel was found to follow approximately the 175 ft. contour from OS 66920364 to OS 67050358, having taken a southerly course almost parallel to the River Severn. At all points it seemed to be within 30 ft. of the surface, and had less than 15 ft. cover at the garage, the builders of which obviously broke into the tunnel inadvertently during its construction.

Local inquiry brought a number of explanations for the tunnel, of which the most likely seems the tradition that it was once part of a tramway from the Lincoln Hill limestone workings to the Madeley Wood or Bedlam blast furnaces, which passed through Ironbridge Square. There is much evidence to support this tradition including the following:

- i) The tunnel is unlikely to have been part of a mine, its direction parallel to the river, the fact that it is in strata below the coal and



ironstone seams, and that it is not shown on the Madeley Tithe Map of 1846 (which has otherwise all the known mine adits and shafts shown upon it) all support this.

ii) Richard Reynolds purchased the limestone workings in 1795 just five years before the datestone on the tunnel entrance. It is likely that fluxing stone for the Bedlam blast furnaces was supplied from Lincoln Hill, and after 1805 the workings were leased to a number of people, some of whom gave their address as the Lloyds. It is possible therefore that limestone for burning may have passed through the tunnel as well as fluxing stone for Bedlam. Why either the Wharfage or the Severn is not used is not clear, but the tunnel route would have a fairly easy gradient throughout, and would not be affected by flooding. (See William Reynolds Executors' Accounts, now in NCB Collection, Staffordshire Record Office, and I. J. Brown 'A History of Limestone Mining in Shropshire', Shropshire Mining Club, 1966).

iii) The accounts of William Reynolds's executors show for January 14, 1805 the entry 'Paid expence of securing the fence near the Ironbridge damaged by a tunnel made by the late W. Reynolds, £2.0.0., for nails 7d'. Could this be the Ironbridge end of the tunnel?

The writer would be pleased to hear from anyone with further thoughts or information on the tunnel. It is hoped that some means may be found to preserve it since it could offer an underground 'round trip' for tourists which the Coalport Tar Tunnel at present cannot.

I. J. Brown.

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## **The Benthall Lead Works - a further reference**

The lead smelter at Benthall in the Severn Gorge, and other lead works in the district were described in our last issue by Dr. John Rhodes. A further reference to the Benthall works occurs in the letter book of Richard Ford, managing partner of the Coalbrookdale ironworks, writing to his colleague Thomas Goldney in Bristol in December 1734. Ford asked Goldney to contact Thomas Stringer of Bristol, who was one of the partners with Jno. Middleton Esq., in the 'Smelting Lead Furnace' near Coalbrookdale, for payment for iron delivered in 1730. The agent in the lead works in 1730 was a man called Parry, but he had been replaced by one Whitlow by 1734.

B. S. T.

SA 10273

## THE ARCHITECT OF MILLINGTON'S HOSPITAL SHREWSBURY

The recent deposit of the records of the Trustees of the Millington's Charity at the Salop Record Office has made it possible to establish the architectural history of the hospital for the first time. The account which

follows is based on S.R.O. 2133/1199, 125, 126, except where otherwise stated. The hospital has been little altered since it was built in 1747-48, with the exception of the re-modelled central portico and octagonal cupola which were constructed in 1785-86. The architect, or rather architects of the hospital were Edward Massey, a Shrewsbury carpenter and Richard Scoltock, a Shrewsbury bricklayer. Their designs were approved in December 1746, but no contract was signed until July 1747. Massey, who describes himself as 'Architect and carpenter', says in an affidavit to the estimates that 'they have for several years last past been very much employed in drawing plans of Publick and other great Buildings and making calculations of the expences of the building thereof . . . and . . . can make very near estimates'. So far no other works by these two men are known. The cost of the hospital was probably in excess of £1,100, although the initial estimate was for £975.2.8d.

The final stage of the building took place in 1785-86 when William Haycock and his brother John Hiram Haycock contracted to build an octagon cupola in the centre of the building and to remodel the pediment with a portico 'in antis'. There was to be a bell in the cupola and a clock in the centre of the pediment. The plans were agreed in April 1785 and the contract signed in June 1785 for a sum of £179. An elevation of the hospital drawn by the Haycocks does not make it clear how much of the work shown was to be new.

William Haycock the father of the two men above was apprenticed to Edward Massey as a carpenter in November 1746, and was admitted a freeman of his trade guild in 1755. His sons were both apprenticed to him as carpenters: William in 1770-77 and John Hiram in 1774-81. (Details of the apprenticeships are in S. P. L. Deeds 13487, Minute Book of Guild of Carpenters & Bricklayers Company). J. B. Lawson

### Architectural History

Michael Rix draws attention to a number of items of Shropshire interest in Vol. 14 of 'Architectural History', published in 1971. An article by John Harris on C. R. Cockerell's 'Ichnographica Domestica' includes notes by Cockerell on Apley Park, Oakley Park and Willey Hall. A list of 'Architects sculptors, designers and craftsmen 1770-1970 whose work is to be seen in Chester Cathedral' by the Dean of Chester, includes references to John Carline II, the Shrewsbury architect and sculptor, Hollins Minton, the Broseley tile manufacturer, and John Nelson the Shrewsbury sculptor.

## **The Roman Road from Westbury to Forden Gaer**

by W. G. Putnam (Mont. Coll. vol. 61, pp. 89-95)

The author is concerned with tracing the course of the Roman Road from Viroconium to Pennal (Merionethshire), and in this article he deals with the section from Westbury to Forden Gaer. He discounts the traditional theory that the road ran along the ridgeway of the Long Mountain (as shown on O.S. maps), and sees a Roman route in the Rea and Camlad valleys, although he allows a slight possibility that an early military road of light construction ran along the Long Mountain ridge before the permanent road and fort system was established in the valleys.

There was possibly a short-lived fort at Westbury (SJ 357093), where the route from Viroconium divided, one road running north-west, on about the line of the B.4387, towards Llanymynech, and the other towards Forden. The route to Forden follows 'the remarkable series of hedge and lane alignments which run just north-west of Aston Rogers' from SJ 351083, passing close to the ring motte at Hawcocks, and then through Mondaytown. The road goes to the north of Aston Rogers and Aston Pigott, and passes close to the north-west of Brockton, and at the S-bend (SJ 312041) on the modern road the Roman and modern roads coincide. The modern road follows the line of the Roman road, with a slight change of alignment in the area of Marton Pool, through Marton village, and then the Roman road is slightly to the north of the modern road as far as Gunley Hall.

From here, through Rhed-y-Groes and Hem, it is not easy to trace the exact line of the road until it crosses the line of Offa's Dyke and approaches the river Camlad. The modern road swings away at SO 224997, while the Roman Road carries on straight to its bridge site and the fort at Forden Gaer.

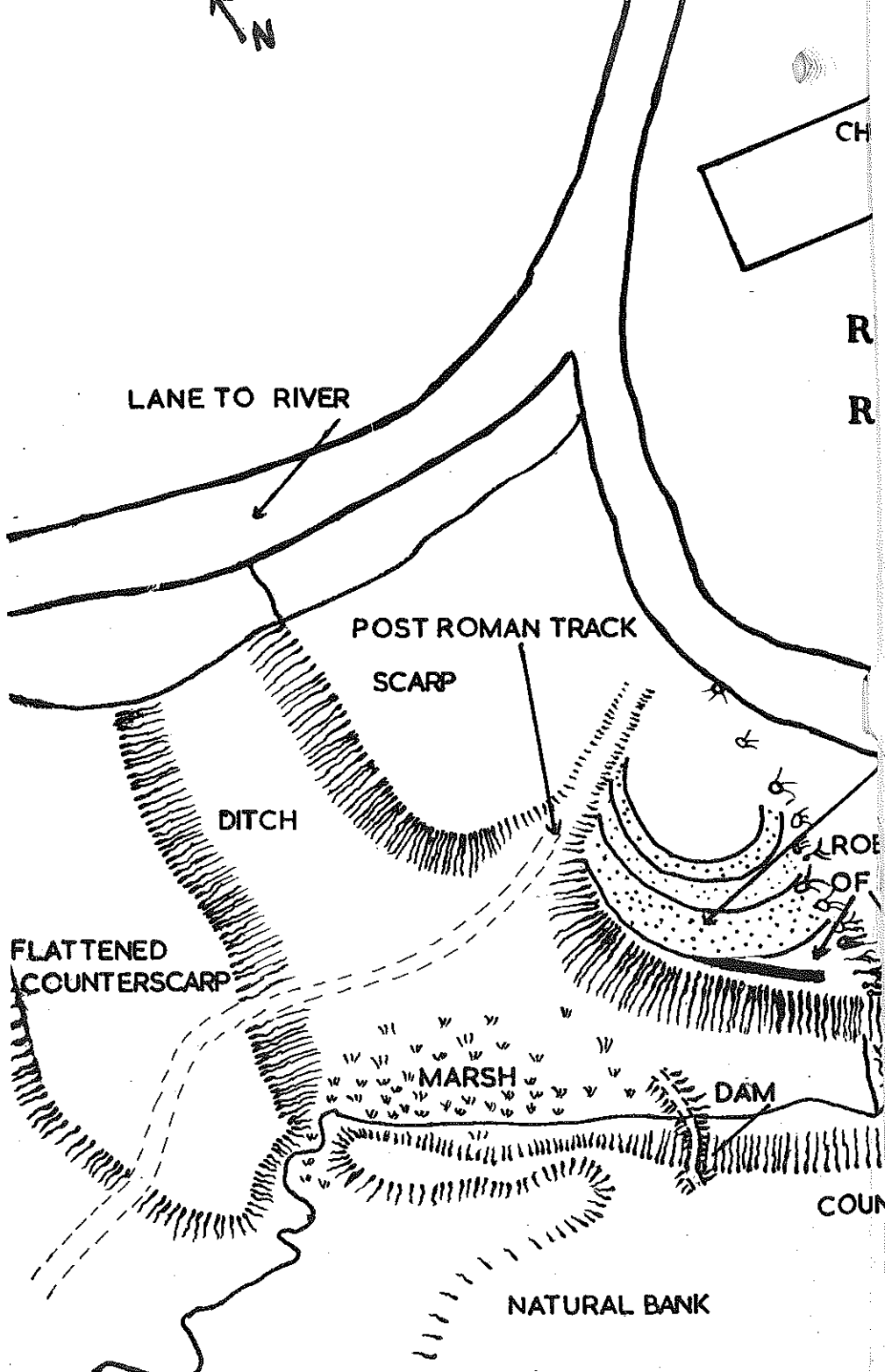
Mr. Putnam's account is illustrated with a clear map of the whole Westbury-Forden area, with six plans of the route, and with three illustrations, including a very useful aerial view of Westbury village.

D. T. W. P.

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## **The site museum at Wroxeter**

The closure by the Department of the Environment of the site museum at Wroxeter brought many protests from teachers and others concerned with archaeology in Shropshire. Readers of the Newsletter will be delighted to learn that work has already started on a new building to house the exhibits formerly displayed in the site museum, as well as other antiquities which may be revealed during future excavations. There will be a stand for selling literature about Wroxeter. The Department of the Environment expect the new museum to be finished during April.



LANE TO RIVER

POST ROMAN TRACK

SCARP

DITCH

FLATTENED  
COUNTERSCARP

MARSH

DAM

NATURAL BANK

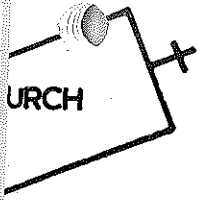
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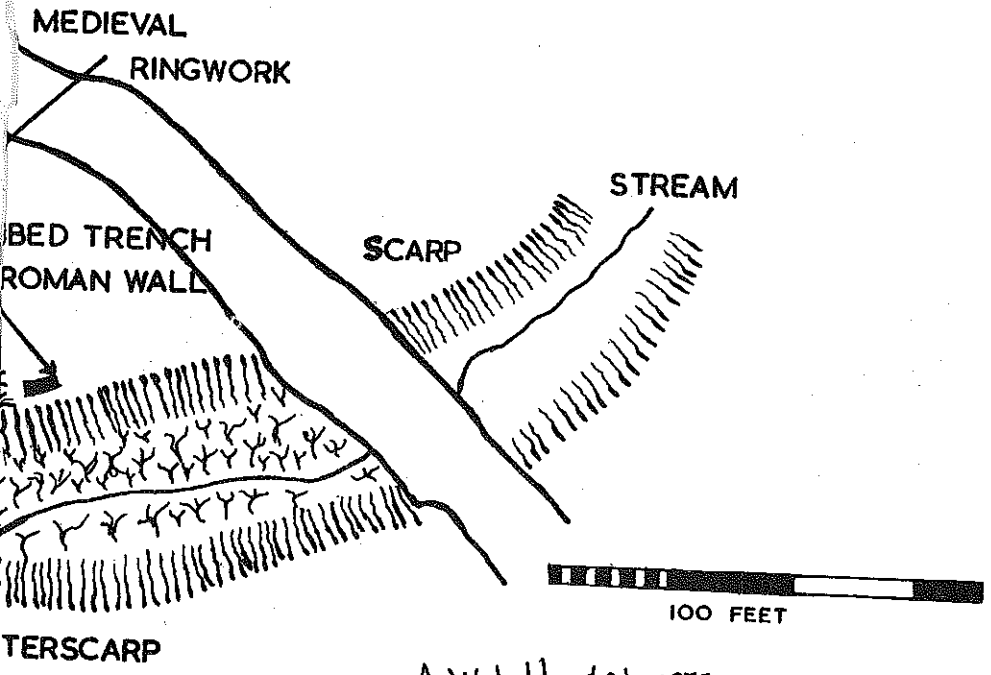
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# WROXETER.

## RETURN OF FOURTH CENTURY OMAN DITCH.



A.W.J.H. del. 1972.

## THE SHROPSHIRE ROMAN RESEARCH GROUP

In 1970 Gordon Hay carried out further aerial reconnaissance of the east and south east defence system of Viroconium. This section has in the past received little aerial study though G. Webster trenched the ramparts in the south of field 461 (O.S. 25 inch) in 1960 and Wright nearly a century earlier sectioned and stripped the same defences a few yards to the south

Two bastion platforms were revealed. One, just to the north of the modern Ironbridge road as it crosses the defences and another about 70 yards to the south. At the same time a street parallel to and just inside the ENE defences was seen for the first time. This was not surprising as it fitted into the known street grid. At the N end of this street a building complex was noted.

In field no 517 (O.S. 25 inch map) the SE return of the Roman 11th century ditch was clearly seen. The angle was about 90 degrees and the robbed trench of the Roman circumferential wall was clearly seen also. But a large circular ringwork occupied the area inside the return with a radius of about 100 feet. Although the pasture had not been disturbed within living memory the soil conditions were such that this and several other features were easily seen and photographed.

Three radial test trenches, 4 feet wide, were cut and extended well over the brink of the scarp. A dense rammed layer of buff coloured clay was found just below turf level and the indentations of a stony superstructure were noted. This clay platform overlaid the utterly destroyed and robbed construction trench of the third century Roman town wall but in only the W trench was this clay platform excavated. Where it overlaid the traces of the Roman wall it was about 18 inches thick but it grew progressively thicker towards the centre where natural subsoil was not reached at a depth of three feet. Some Roman residual pottery was found in the clay make up but pottery of the 12th to 13th century was also present.

Was this Wroxeter castle?

Near its return the wide Roman ditch was crossed by a decayed barrier, now marking the course of a little footpath. A small stream follows the course of the Roman ditch and has now worn down this barrier though in a few yards it easily passes through the man made counterscarp by a special channel. The present hypothesis is that in medieval times the barrier was constructed so as to provide a mill pond in the great ditch and that at the outlet through the counterscarp an undershot mill was set. A later road, now easily seen as a grass covered hollow way has clearly branched from the present road passing Wroxeter church and has worn and eroded the Roman scarp where it splays out and still provides access to the dam and site of the (possible) mill. Finally it crosses the counterscarp and meanders, as does the little stream, towards the river.

To the W of this later footpath the counterscarp is curiously flattened. Trial trenches revealed, just below the turf, remains of substantial Roman buildings.

A. W. J. Houghton.

## **EARLY ROAD SYSTEMS AT GREAT HANWOOD**

One of the results of a recent field survey along the probable route of the proposed A5 trunk road was the discovery from the air of a linear feature running directly under Lower Edgebold Farm (SJ 453103) and roughly parallel to the early road known as Thieves Lane. One section of the feature runs quite straight for over 800 metres, and when projected westwards, meets the well known alignment of the Roman Road at its junction with Thieves Lane west of Lower Edgebold (SJ 438105). When projected eastwards via the northern hedgerow of Old Meadow, it connects and aligns with the lane leading from Nobold to Day House (SJ 466102).

The title apportionment map of Meole Brace parish (1843) shows Thieves Lane re-joining this alignment east of Lower Edgebold at the north west corner of Old Meadow (SJ 459103). This suggests that Thieves Lane in this sector was planned to avoid the hamlet of Edgebold which had been settled along the Roman Road. The now-defunct lane leading direct from Lower Edgebold to Thieves Lane curves significantly westwards, perhaps indicating a phase in the post-Roman period when the main marketing centre lay to the west. All three roads were superseded by the existing link to Pontesbury when Shrewsbury was established.

Great Hanwood, at the new river crossing, became important at this stage. Following the route eastwards, about 90 metres were discerned south east of Nobold (SJ 478101) leading to a crossing of the Rea Brook at Washford, ('Washford' is the name of a site at Kenilworth, Warks., where a Roman road crosses a river). There it may be expected that further field work will show a multiple approach to the obstacle, since the adjacent field names are Stake Meadow and Bridge Leasow. In another nearby field, The Knowles, a footbridge exists today. These fields are now covered by the Moneybrook Estate, but an air photograph of 1946 (Air Ministry No. 5003, Flight 106G/UK/1698) shows a linear, side ditched feature running across them.

The next obstacle would be the Moneybrook itself and if the above alignment was maintained a further 500 metres the probable fording would have carried the road across at SJ 494100. From here the route is dubious but three further sections observed and photographed at Weeping Cross (SJ 512105 & 514105) and Chilton (SJ 522095) make it probable that at one stage the Roman surveyors engineered the route to follow

the ridge running almost parallel with the present A5 and just skirting the large bight of the Severn at SJ53083.

The whole area involved in these notes will probably be affected by the proposed trunk road and every effort should be made to ascertain the Roman and post-Roman lines of communication in the immediate future. Further information on work in the area may be obtained from the undersigned

J. Duffy

W. E. Jenks

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## **A ROMANO BRITISH SITE at Heath Road, Whitchurch**

SJ 552705

The building of a new dual carriageway road between Fleath Bridge, Whitchurch, and Prees Fleath has revealed — and destroyed — a hitherto unknown archaeological site. A small amount of excavation was carried out, and all archaeological features were recorded as the work went on by Mr. Andrew Rogerson of Bark Hill, Whitchurch, with the co-operation of the Salop County Council work force. The positions of many cobbled surfaces which probably represent vestigial traces of buildings have been plotted, and the large number of tegulae, or Roman roofing-tiles, suggests that there were formerly fairly substantial buildings on the site. A considerable quantity of iron slag has been found which shows that ironworking may have been carried out on the site. The settlement seems to date from the late 1st century until sometime in the 3rd; perhaps it was a civilian area associated with the nearby military fort at Whitchurch. This may well indicate that the area in Roman times was considerably more prosperous than has hitherto been supposed. Finds on the site have not been notable largely on account of the acidity of the soil. No coins were found, but there were some iron nails, some fragments of knives and part of a bronze brooch. There were large quantities of pottery, both imported and local, including an eating bowl and a cooking bowl, some glass, and the bottom part of a quern stone. A full report on the site will be published in due course.

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## **REVIEW :**

### **Excavation on the site of the baths basilica at Wroxeter**

by Philip Barker, M.A., F.S.A., University of Birmingham, 5 p.

This eight page illustrated booklet is a summary of the excavations carried out under Mr. Barker's direction in the vicinity of the baths at Wroxeter since 1966, during which over 1,500 sq. metres (about 15,000 sq. ft.) of the basilica have been stripped down to the uppermost archaeological levels together with about 60 metres of the street bounding it to the north. Regrettably large parts of the eastern end of this area have been destroyed by previous excavations, particularly those of the 19th century. The excavations have shown that this part of Wroxeter at least did not die a slow and lingering death, and that it was not overwhelmed by a horde of pillaging invaders, Saxon or otherwise. There is a complete lack of burning in the last period, and no evidence at all of hurried abandonment. Part of the cobbled street was laboriously replaced by sifted rubble on which was built what seems to have been large and perhaps imposing timber structures, which the author compares with those of colonial America. They seem to have all the hallmarks of Roman public works, but translated into timber. They may have been religious or public buildings or the private demense of a great man. The final phase of Wroxeter seems not to be frightened refugees quivering in the ruins of a once great city, but a deliberate dismantling and abandonment of these major buildings. This short interim report shows how much light can be shed on one of Shropshire's most important historical problems by the application of modern archaeological techniques. What has been achieved with limited resources in the past five years shows how much could be added to our historical knowledge by large scale area excavation at Wroxeter. The booklet will be on sale at the new museum at Wroxeter, mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, and it cannot be too highly recommended to everyone with an interest in Shropshire history and archaeology.

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### **An important medieval site in Shrewsbury**

Demolition prior to re-development on the site of Messrs. Boots store and the adjoining Pride Hill Chambers in Shrewsbury, has exposed for excavation a site of major archaeological importance. A portion of the town wall runs through the site, and there are substantial remains of a fortified tower. It is hoped that it may be possible to preserve some of the principal remains above ground, and excavation of the remainder of the site is proceeding with the aid of a grant from the Department of Environment. It is stressed that this site is particularly dangerous, and casual visitors venture on it at considerable peril to themselves.

## A NEW SOURCE ON EAST SHROPSHIRE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

The second volume of the Staffordshire Industrial Archaeology Society Journal published in 1971 includes an article 'Joseph Banks and West Midlands Industry, 1767' by S. R. Broadbridge, which contains information of major importance on the industrial history of the Coalbrookdale area. The article is basically a transcript with notes of a journal of a tour undertaken by Joseph Banks in the autumn of 1767-68. In later years Banks became president of the Royal Society and a scientist of great distinction.

Banks visited the Donnington Wood Canal on the 9th October 1767, the first day in which he ventured into Shropshire. He found that it was already in operation by that date, and implies that the Hugh's Bridge - Lilleshall branch was already built. Previously the completion date of the Donnington Wood - Pave Lane line of the canal had not been known precisely, and there has been no indication in any records of when the Hugh's Bridge - Lilleshall branch was built.

Banks paid a great deal of attention to the ironworks of the Coalbrookdale partners, noting that there were already three blast furnaces at Ketley by 1767, a fact not previously known, and that there were two steam pumping engines replenishing the pools which powered the Ketley furnaces, and two similar engines at Horsehay. Banks makes it clear that there was no forge either at Ketley or Horsehay at this time, but at the forge in Coalbrookdale he observed the Cranage brothers' puddling process in operation, noting that it was not as profitable as had been expected. He adds something to our knowledge of primitive railways in the area, confirming the exceptionally large size (by comparison with other lines in the district) of the Coalbrookdale Company's railway wagons, and showing beyond any doubt that two-level wooden rails were in use in the area before the introduction of iron rails.

One minor industrial enterprise which Banks noted which has so far escaped historians' attentions is the extraction of British oil from bitumen filled rock which was quarried from an outcrop, apparently alongside one of the Coalbrookdale Company's railways.

There are many visitors' descriptions of the Coalbrookdale area in the 18th century, among which this is one of the most informative.

B.S.T.

## PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS of outstanding national importance

The Council for British Archaeology has asked all constituent members, of whom our society is one, to recommend those field monuments in their area whose preservation is of paramount importance in the national interest as representing the finest examples of their type in the relevant area. The CBA will then go forward to present a highly selective national list to the Government, as being those monuments whose preservation should be maintained at all costs in the face of the rapid erosion and destruction of so many thousands of our national field monuments at present; this almost desperate step only too well illustrates the crisis which has now hit British archaeology. The list does not include buildings or structures of architectural merit, and does not necessarily pay reference to the list of scheduled Ancient Monuments under the general surveillance of the Department of Environment. The Society has therefore produced as requested, a list of the one or two outstanding field monuments of each type, and members may be interested in the final list. Many will no doubt wish to argue far and long over the merits of this or that monument included or not included in the list; the hardest task for the Society has been to know what to leave out rather than what to put in. The list may be a guide to members who would like to have a selective cover of the best archaeological sites in the county. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that inclusion on this list in no way invalidates the preservation of the hundreds of sites not included on the list, above all those which are scheduled Ancient Monuments.

### Archaeological field monuments in Shropshire recommended as of outstanding importance for future preservation

#### PREHISTORIC

1. Burial Mounds.
  - \*a. BROMFIELD. Area SO 4977. Partly surviving, partly ploughed-out, partly destroyed already by quarrying. Includes LBA urn-field excavated by S. C. Stanford.
  - \*b. ALL SPRETTON. Robin Hood's Butts. SO 431965. Partly on National Trust land on the Long Mynd on moorland.
2. Stone Circle.
  - \* CHIRBURY. Mitchell's Fold SO 305983. Surviving on rough pasture.
3. Sacred site, presumably Bronze Age.  
BERRINGTON, Cross Houses. SJ 545065; and northwards for half

a mile. Groups of round barrows, cursus monument (?) and enclosures, probably all contemporary. Completely ploughed out, but visible on aerial photographs by Arnold Baker, now in National Monuments Record Library. Sited on gravel down to permanent cultivation, with gravel extraction operations in the very close vicinity.

4. Hill-forts. (The most outstanding examples selected from 30 or so major sites in Shropshire).

- \*a. SELAFYNYN, Old Oswestry. SJ 295310. Permanent pasture.
- \*b. CHURCH STRETTON, Caer Caradoc, together with terraced trackway on eastern side, SO 177951. Permanent pasture.
- \*c. BASCHURCH, The Berth. (Suspected additional Dark Age modification). SJ 429236.
- \*d. CLEE ST. MARGARET, Nurdy Bank. SO 575817.

5. Farmstead (with probable Iron Age and Romano-British occupation).

GREAT HANWOOD, Edgbold. SJ 453100. Complex group of enclosures first recognised from the air in 1971, otherwise ploughed out, and site under cultivation. The outstanding group of enclosures of the 150 or so recently discovered from the air in the Severn Valley region of Shropshire

## ROMANO-BRITISH

6. Towns.

- \* WROXETER, Viroconium. Area SJ 5608, including the suburban development between the northern defences and the A5 road. Permanently cultivated, and with the northern part at present under threat in the event of widening the A5 here as part of the Telford-North Wales trunk road. The largest town in Roman Britain not built over subsequently. The excavated public baths are under the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. The defences are visible; the rest of the town is not visible but known from aerial photography or excavation.

7. Villas.

- \* HARLEY, Yarchester. SJ 605000. Partial excavation, since covered up has revealed intact mosaic floors. Terraces of other buildings or cultivation plots are clearly visible. Under permanent pasture.

8. Military Sites.

- \* NEEN SAVAGE, Wall Town. SO 692783. Well-preserved defences of the only visibly surviving military site in Shropshire. Cohort-

sized fort, with excavation evidence of 1st and 2nd century occupation. Under pasture usually.

9. Roads.

- a. WISTANSTOW, Marshbrook. SO 140895 for a distance extending in each direction. Finely terraced track leading to hill crest where it becomes a pronounced agger. Under permanent pasture.
- b. PONTESBURY, Cruckton. SJ 131105 and eastwards.

10. Other features.

- \*a. ACTON BURNELL and PITCHFORD, bridge abutments and causewayed road. SJ 525026. Roman and medieval. Under permanent undergrowth.
- b. WROXETER, Aqueduct. Area SJ 5708. Partly surviving as clay-lined ditch, partly already destroyed.

POST-ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL

11. Motte-and bailey castles.

- \*a. CHURCH PULVERBATCH, Castle Pulverbatch. SJ 422022. Under permanent pasture.
- \*b. WESTBURY, Cause Castle. SJ 337078

12. Ring-works.

- a. RUSHBURY. SO 514919. Under pasture.
- \*b. WESTBURY, Hawcocks Mount. SJ 349078. Preceding Cause Castle, in association with surviving ridge-and-furrow.

13. Deserted Medieval Villages. (Out of scores recognised in Shropshire two are selected as being of major importance).

- a. ABDON. SO 575865. Partly excavated by R. T. Rowley.
- b. HEATH. SO 566855

14. Linear Works

OFFA'S DYKE.

Outstanding stretches are at:

- \*a. SELATTYN. SJ 249340 and northwards and southwards.
- \*b. CHIRBURY. SO 235975 and southwards.
- \*c. CLUN. SO 256815 southwards to 266766.

POST-MEDIEVAL. 15. In terms of 'field' monuments the Coalport Incline (SJ 694026) is included, but it is more relevant to include this as part of the conservation scheme for the Ironbridge Gorge as a whole, which is beyond the terms of reference of this recommendation.

\* A monument already defined as a scheduled Ancient Monument by Department of Environment.

## **IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM**

Mr. Neil Cossons took up his appointment as Director of the Museum on October 1st, 1971

The winter has seen steady progress on a number of the Museum's major projects. By far the most important is the raising of a large proportion of the money needed for the restoration of the Iron Bridge. Work on the first stage of the restoration, principally the rebuilding of the north abutment, begins during April 1972. The work is being carried out by the Salop County Council Roads and Bridges Department. The Museum has been largely responsible, along with the County Council and the Department of the Environment for securing the necessary money. The toll house on the bridge will be operated by the Museum as an information centre throughout the summer.

Work has continued on the Bedlam blast furnaces. The first stage of restoration, the making safe of the remains, will be completed during the summer of 1972. At Coalbrookdale work still proceeds on the restoration of the group of timber framed buildings known as Rose Cottage, and in April work will begin on the terrace of eight workers' cottages called Carpenters' Row, which date from c. 1790. Four of the cottages will be restored to their original condition externally, and internally converted into accommodation for temporary members of the museum staff. The other four will ultimately be restored with period interiors. At the Blists Hill open air site there has been a good deal of clearance and landscaping work during the winter, and the Lilleshall beam engines, on which progress was reported in the last Newsletter, are now completely re-erected.

The Museum now publishes a quarterly information sheet called *IK*, and a number of new publications are planned for the second half of 1972.

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### **FUTURE EVENTS**

Summer excavations. Apart from the excavation programme being undertaken directly by Dr. Houghton and Mr. W. E. Jenks respectively, from whom information can be obtained directly, the following excavations will be taking place in the summer:

Wroxeter. The University of Birmingham, Dept of Extra-Mural Studies, will be continuing the annual summer schools on excavation technique based at Wroxeter under the direction of Dr. Graham Webster and Mr. Charles Daniels. Full details can be obtained from the University or

the Shropshire Adult College at Attingham Park. The two schools run from 22nd July to 5th August and 6th to 20th August.

Mr. Philip Barker will continue to excavate the Baths Basilica for the Department of the Environment from 5th August to 2nd September. Volunteers will be very welcome and further information can be obtained from Mr. Barker at 4 St. George's Square, Worcester.

The Society will be undertaking excavations under the directorship of Mr. Don Stewart and Mr. Geoffrey Toms over the period approximately 12th August to 10th September either at the Roman fort/signal station site at Red Hill, Oakengates or at Lea Cross, Pontesbury, continuing the present excavations there. Final details have yet to be arranged, and it is hoped that the site chosen this year will be Red Hill which is now under threat through the extension of the reservoir there. All who would be interested in taking part in either of these excavations are asked to contact Geoffrey Toms at Attingham Park, Shrewsbury now and further details will be sent when the final arrangements are made.

West Midlands News Sheet. Copies of this important publication (price 25p) which contains interim reports on all archaeological activity in the West Midlands area in 1971 can be obtained from Mrs. S. A. Foulkes, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, Birmingham.

Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society. The next volume is expected to be published and distributed to members by mid-summer.

#### Forthcoming events:

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 28th June.

Excursions will be held as follows:

Saturday, 13th May, led by Mrs. M. Moran.

Saturday, 15th July, led by Mr. G. Toms.

A date in September, led by Mr. W. Price.

Full details of these events will be forwarded to members.

The Shropshire Adult College is holding a Summer School from 7th to 13th August on "The Making of the Shropshire Landscape", which combines geological, geographical, archaeological, historical and architectural aspects of the county. It is particularly hoped that many Salopians will wish to join this course, and there will be a limited number of non-residential places available.

For full details apply to:

The Warden, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury.

## Remains of the Bishop's Castle Railway

The Onny Press who print this Newsletter occupy the former Horderley Station on the Bishop's Castle Railway. The proprietor, Mr. J. Bunting draws attention to two features of the site for which he would welcome explanations:

- i) A cast iron box section 13½ x 13½ in. apparently burned off just above ground level, and situated approximately 5 ft from the side of the line. Possibly a signal, but a very heavy construction for this purpose. Discovered when an old rockery was removed.
- ii) A stone-built chamber 7 ft diameter and 6 ft. deep, situated beneath the existing station bungalow bedroom, and without apparent access. It is quite dry, although below the surrounding water-table level. This was only discovered because a portion of the flooring had to be removed.

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## Local Correspondents

Local Correspondents It has been felt recently that more can be done to coordinate information on activities of archaeological and historic interest going on well beyond the centre of the county. It is hoped particularly to publish more items of relevant news throughout the county through the News Letter, and also to have more centralised information on building and development projects in the county which could threaten archaeological and historic interests. The Hon. Secretary would like to continue to be informed of activities in the Shrewsbury area, as before, by direct contact at Attingham Park (Upton Magna 255), but a number of local correspondents have agreed to coordinate information for their own local areas, and members are invited to contact them directly with any items of information that the Society ought to know. Those who have kindly undertaken to act in this capacity are:

Shifnal area. Mr. R. Cromarty, 3 Beech Drive, Shifnal.

Oswestry area. Mr. W. Day, 9 Green End, Oswestry.

Market Drayton area. Dr. J. Gask, Plas Gwinn, Shrewsbury Road, Market Drayton.

Telford area. Mr. J. Pagett, 48 Park Road, Donnington, Telford.

Church Stretton area. Mrs. J. M. Miller, Stonehouse, Picklescott, Church Stretton.

Ludlow area. Mr. J. Norton, The Museum, Ludlow.

Whitchurch area. Mr. A. Rogerson, Bark Hill, Whitchurch.



# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

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Edited by : Barry Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury

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## POTTERY MEADOW, Little Wenlock

Word was passed to me by Mr. H.H. Judd, of Shrewsbury, that on a site said to be known as Potters' Bank, at Coalmoor, Little Wenlock, open-cast coal mining was disclosing sherds of slipware. The name does not occur at the relevant place (though it does at Ketley) on the 6in. O.S. Map (SJ 664069). But documentation has been kindly provided by Miss M.C. Hill, from items deposited in C.R.O. The Little Wenlock Tithe Map of 1838 and tithe apportionment would identify the area as within field No. 357, then meadowland called Pottery Meadow, on the south of which is No. 381, then waste with a pit in it. A lease of 9th May 1767, which is abstracted in Lord Forester's collection on deposit includes "pot-houses and kilns for burning earthen ware and the Delphs for getting clay with the same used" at Colemere in the Parish of Little Wenlock, and with the right to sink for and get coals for burning bricks, tiles and earthen ware; and a later reference indicates that field 381 was known as Brick Kiln Yard. The lease was for a term of 21 years. The land was bought by the Foresters in 1825, but there is no mention of a pottery in the rentals, or in a survey of 1828, so it had evidently ceased before that time.

By now, most of the land referred to has been completely hollowed, and the pottery noticed was slithering down the northern side. Much of it was coarse ware, pieces of big black or brown glazed steins etc. But there was a definite scatter of slipware, some of the sherds being obviously wasters. These are of types which may be found in quantities around Benthall (and are apt to turn up at any post-medieval inhabited site in Shropshire). The most usual represent plates or dishes, (A) covered on the upper surface with a deep

brown slip, and this decorated with a trailed cream-coloured slip, and (B) the wasp-like type, on which a pale surface slip shines brightly yellow under the glaze, with thin lines of black slip, as often as not decoratively combed. In both places numerous variations occur, such as by intermingling of slips in several colours; one sherd from Little Wenlock has a moulded design, with the pattern picked out in different shaded slips.

Some basic types, especially (A), are doubtless common to all local potteries (e.g. near Cleehill), as described in 17th century Staffordshire by Plott. But in the present instance there may be an added reason for Little Wenlock and Benthall to be exactly duplicating some of each other's wares. The lease of 1767 mentioned above was from John Smitheman to Andrew Bradley. The latter is described as of Horsehay, iron master, but Bradley is a name well represented among the makers of "Broseley clays", and two Andrews of the known pipe-making family were bap. in the 17 C. Another Andrew, son of John Bradley of Benthall, was bap. at Broseley on 23 January 1729, and is not afterwards named in that Parish Register. Whether or not this gives a correct clue to individual identity, a family as well as craft relationship affecting these two pottery sites seems evident.

M. PEELE

### Local Correspondents

The address of Dr. J. Gask, local correspondent in the Market Drayton area was wrongly stated in the last Newsletter. His correct address is Newtown Leys, Market Drayton, Salop.

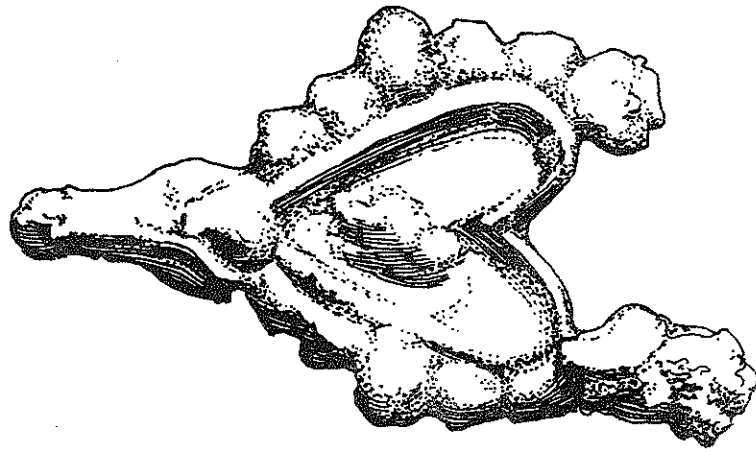
## Excavations on Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

It is a very rare occasion when building re-development takes place in Shrewsbury to find the medieval and earlier layers of the town left undisturbed by later buildings. It is even rarer to have the opportunity of a careful, unhurried examination of the town's archaeological evidence without the bulldozer or concrete mixer behind the excavator's shoulder. Such good fortune has arisen during 1972 with the demolition of the old Boots building on Pride Hill with its neighbouring house of Pride Hill Chambers to the north-east. The dismantling of the brick Pride Hill Chambers revealed the substantial stone walls of a 14th century stone house built against the 13th century town wall with a series of steps leading down beside the house to a sally port in the town wall. Mr. W.E. Jenks has been able to examine the town wall and related structures at a number of points on this site and has also been excavating the basement of this house with remarkable results. His own work will be the subject of a separate report, but this account deals with excavations which were conducted in September 1972 in the forecourt between the old Pride Hill Chambers (once the Beaconsfield Club) and the backs of the shops fronting Pride Hill. The work was carried out by the writer on behalf of the Department of the Environment after preliminary clearance of the site earlier in the year by Mr. Jenks and his team.

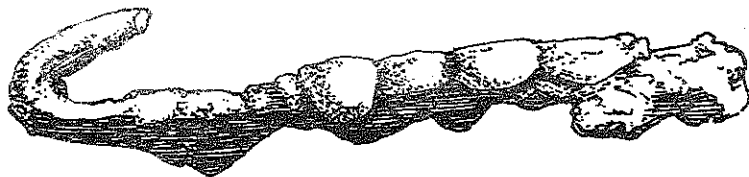
The area of the courtyard had never been built over since medieval times and once the later cobble stones were removed the earlier levels were found intact. It was presumed that since the construction of the stone house the area had always been open and would thus

contain evidence of occupation outside the house at any rate since 14th century times without the presence of any structures beyond those one would expect in a yard. In fact these surmises were confirmed and rubbish material deposited continuously up to the mid-19th century was found on the site. ??!

Altogether an area of 48 square metres (8 by 6 metres) was stripped and cleared. As expected, a very pronounced occupation level contemporary with the construction of the house in the 14th century was found covering most of the site, both sealing earlier levels and with later features either cut into it or resting on top. This particular occupation level was a rich mixture of clay and soil with a variety of stone chippings, daub and burning suggesting a builder's construction layer compressed into soil overlying the natural sand on which this part of Shrewsbury stands. A whole series of pits of different periods was found over the entire area; it is presumed that the majority of these were initially dug to extract sand and were then filled with the usual array of refuse, bones, pottery and building waste familiar on any medieval site. Altogether 16 pits were recognised and there was evidence to suggest that the whole site had been deliberately levelled off in the 18th century when the brick frontage to Pride Hill Chambers was constructed and the cobbling of the courtyard laid down. The contents of the pits threw interesting light on medieval building materials, much of which it is presumed came directly from the 14th century house at various stages of alterations. Particularly interesting were two quite distinct types of roofing, earthenware tiles with lugs and rectangular and polygonal limestone slabs with bored holes, which appear to post-date the earthenware tiles, but which would not be out of place in the 14th century themselves. Glazed and plain floor tiles were found in quantity, the former with a variety of designs



↑  
clear holes  
for sawing



Both engraved and painted. Of special interest were fragments of window-tracery of 14th century type, and an almost complete stoup with embossed shields on each side.

The most spectacular feature was an oven which had been constructed on top of a layer of sand above the 14th century level. This had already been revealed by Mr. Jenks and was further examined; it proved to be the typical bread or kitchen oven to be found in the yard of a building with its floor made of limestone roof tiles set compactly on end surrounded by a border of red sandstone which was almost pulverised by heat and a packing of sand around it. The oven was the usual circular form (1.70 metres in diameter) with a heavily burnt area representing the stoke-hole at its entrance. A very similar construction can still be seen in the inner bailey of Montgomery Castle. As re-used building material was used in its construction and 14th century pottery was found underneath, it is suggested that this structure is no earlier than the 15th century and may well be later still. The structure is being lifted and will be rebuilt in the Rowley House Museum. After the oven fell out of use a timber structure was built across the site, partly destroying the oven in the process.

Two coins were found in the 14th century occupation level and as these are the first two stratified coins ever found in the town their identification is of some interest. One is a Roman bronze coin of Valens (AD 364-375) and the other a long-cross silver penny of King Alexander III of Scotland, an issue of 1280-1286. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that not a shred of occupation material of Roman date was found on the site, nor has it been proved anywhere else in the town, and one must presume that the Roman coin was a lost souvenir of some medieval Salopian who had perhaps found it at Wroxeter.

1 oven  
3 1/2 metres  
size

elong!

A shallow pit of presumably 14th century date as well produced a small bronze buckle and an extraordinary bronze mount only 2.8 cm in length. This has been kindly illustrated by Mrs. Joan Miller and represents a sacred heart set between the stylised antlers of a hart's head (a most remarkable visual pun). This is presumably an object of religious significance and may well be connected with the sacred hart seen by St. Eustance at the time of his conversion, as the legend goes. ~~the garden step.~~

The most important find on the site, however, was that found beneath the 14th century level. This was a cess-pit of Anglo-Saxon date, 2.07 metres in diameter and 1.45 metres deep; the fill was a whole series of superimposed layers of alternating rubbish and sterile coverings of pebbles, gravel and sand. The whole pit was ringed around its immediate edge with 18 stake-holes 7 cm. in diameter and regularly 34 cms. apart. This must represent either a low fence or perhaps a framework on which a wooden cover was laid. The pit was conclusively dated to the 10th century by the neck and rim of a pot of Chester Ware lying on the bottom of the pit and 5 other sherds of Chester Ware with one green glazed sherd of Stamford Ware in the upper levels. Both these wares were found also at St. Alkmund's Place in 1968 in the other attested Anglo-Saxon site in the town and are fully reported in the Society's Transactions Vol. LIX. Vol.1 (forthcoming). The paucity of pottery in a pit full of other refuse, especially with a large number of animal bones, calls for comment and seems to confirm Mr. P.A. Barker's thesis that Shropshire was aceramic from the end of the 4th century up to the 12th century, and the only pottery in use was imported specially from elsewhere. Mr. Jenks will be reporting further Anglo-Saxon or Saxo-Norman pottery found residually in the basement of the 14th century stone house. It is gratifying to

record further evidence of Saxon Shrewsbury now at last appearing, but whether this particular pit is within the confines of the Saxon burgh remains at present a matter of hot debate. One must record that there was no trace of any Saxon defences in the form of rampart and/or ditch on the site, which is situated on the very edge of the northern scarp of the town. This negative evidence hints that one should look for the defences of the burgh closer to the line of the present street Pride Hill itself.

Approximately one half of the courtyard area was excavated, but it was felt unproductive to excavate the remainder where considerable disturbance of the earlier levels was experienced at the entrance to the house and the sally-port steps.

GEOFFREY TOMS.

### GEORGE STEUART—ARCHITECT

An article 'George Steuart, Architect, in the Isle of Man' by M.M. Rix and W.R. Serjeant, appeared in Vol. VI No. 79 of the 'Journal of the Manx Museum' as long ago as 1963, but it seems to have been little noticed in Shropshire, although it has important implications for students of architectural history in the County. George Steuart was the Architect of Attingham Park, All Saints Church, Wellington and St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, but very little is known of his life or his other work. The article shows that from 1793 until 1806 Steuart was active in the Isle of Man under the patronage of the fourth Duke of Atholl who was governor of the Island from the former year. Steuart's buildings included

the Red Pier at Douglas harbour, the court house at Ramsey and Castle Mona, Douglas. The article reveals that Steuart died in the Island on 20th December 1806 at the age of 76, correcting a widely held assumption that Steuart was born considerably later than 1730. He was buried at Kirk Braddan on the Isle of Man.

### Hen Domen, Montgomery 1972

It is now clear that the new area opened in 1970, the north-eastern sector of the bailey, had been underdug then and in 1971. This accounts for our previous inability to distinguish the buildings of the last period in this new area, though paradoxically, buildings of earlier phases had been discovered in the lee of the rampart.

Without here offering the evidence for the following conclusions (which will be published in full elsewhere) it seems probable that there were two Phase Z buildings in this new area. One was an extension of the pebble surface (discovered in 1961) which lay in front of the motte bridges. It appeared to be approached from the centre of the bailey by a rough flight of steps consisting of large pebbles and small boulders laid in concentric arcs. It is difficult at this point to decide if the pebble surface is internal or external, though the former seems more probable. There were no real indications of the nature of any superstructure, but the pebble surface was bounded for a short length of one side by a series of stakeholes.

East of this structure lay a rectangular area of small pebbles. This was shown almost certainly to be an internal floor by two slight but discernable lines of pebbles which divided the area into three, and therefore, probably marked the lines of partitions.

The nature of this evidence, and the method of construction, were paralleled in Phase Z of the earlier excavation.

Behind the rampart an entirely different method of construction, with large pebble-packed post-holes, parallels some of the buildings of Phase Y elsewhere and since these post-holes were the latest structural evidence at that point but appear to run under the late buildings described above, it is possible that some areas of the bailey were without buildings in the last phase but were simply grassed or covered with earth. It was this, coupled with the fact that there had apparently been a drift of small stones down the gentle slope from the higher part of the bailey, which caused the underdigging and resultant interpretive confusion of 1970-71.

The interim report in Medieval Archaeology, XV, 1971, 151, must now therefore be amended.

Damp marks in the western end of the excavation, together with the deep timber slots excavated in 1961-64, seem to adumbrate the existence of a very large, and probably two-storey, guardhouse or forebuilding standing at the foot of the earliest motte bridges. Excavation of this building must await the excavation of the later phases, but this clear hint coupled with the great depth of the postholes of period Y are beginning to suggest much more massive buildings than had previously been envisaged. The picture which is emerging is of a claustrophobically small area clear of buildings with palisades and internal buildings of considerable height towering over the occupants. This is difficult to imagine when one stands now in the bailey looking out over the Welsh hills through the trees which grow on the ramparts, but the evidence is

unavoidable.

Thanks are again due to all who took part; and particularly to Charles Hill and Robert Higham who assisted in the direction of what was perhaps the most difficult season's work yet at Hen Domen.

Philip Barker.

### M 54 Motorway Survey

Though the decision of the Minister on the final routing of the M54 Motorway is as yet undisclosed, a small group under Mr. R. Cromarty, assisted by Mr. J. Pagett has been engaged on a preliminary archaeological survey of the proposed southern pathway. The line being covered stretches from Telford to Essington in Staffordshire. The work done so far has consisted in field walking, some documentary research, but in the main of analysis of aerial photographs and the construction of distribution maps for the proposed line. Whether this line is that ultimately chosen or not, the information being thrown up is filling a gap on the archaeological map of Shropshire. The smallness of the group is limiting the amount of work that we can get through and new members would be welcome. Those interested should get in touch with :-

R. Cromarty, Esq.,  
3, Beech Drive,  
SHIFNAL.

Telephone No. Shifnal 8684

### The Severn Bridge to Viroconium & a Roman Glassworks

The exact site of the timber bridge crossing the Severn at Viroconium was determined with the help of aquadivers in 1964. The remaining truncated and morticed sandstone supports for timber uprights, each resting on a broad stone set in the river bed were then found and plotted. It seemed unlikely that a direct climb from the level 'vehicle park' opposite the bridge up three steep and sandy river terraces was possible, and a 2½ metre wide section up that course demonstrated that nothing except soil slip was there, but at the top of the section in field 509 (O.S. 25 in. map, 1927 ed.) the edge of a road, crumbled, but considerable, was found. Resistivity surveys indicated a curving course that would have joined the lower end of the present lane which goes from the church to the river. It is also evident that the left bank of the Severn curved well to the north in ancient times, and the squared stones that Morris found and removed from this point in 1927 were in fact the remains of a wharf and not a bridge as he supposed, and as the Department of the Environment still leads the visitor to believe.

Early in 1972 a section of 1½ metres wide was cut across the probable course of the road in field 509 close to the hedge of the smallholding shown on the six inch map (SJ 563087). The section was set here for the following reasons; i) that the cottage in the smallholding was always said locally to be built on 'a Roman road'; ii) an irregular hump could be seen to cross the field parallel to the river up to this point; iii) the edge of a road had been found by excavation in line with this hump.

The tithe map of 1842 showed that field 509 had been the site of cottages and farm buildings, but another map

30 years' later showed a blank pasture. The remains of these buildings were found beneath the top black soil, and intrusion into the upper levels of a road, roughly 10 - 12 metres wide had been destructive. Here pottery of the 14th century was found, together with residual Roman pottery, but, as is usual in the West Midlands, there was no Dark Age material. A pit 2½ metres across was filled with 18th and 19th century artefacts and cut through all the road levels into the ditch.

Fourteen layers of pitching were identified, separated by layers of mud of differing thickness. The two lowest levels were associated with shallow ditches roughly lined with grey clay. Silting rapidly occurred and on the north edge this was dug away and a soakaway, a little over a metre wide was inserted. As the road levels became worn and dirty they were not removed but fresh sand, pebble and clay mix was rammed down producing a tough surface. Along with the road levels the soakaway was built up but only on the north edge. To maintain it a revetting bank of stone and clay was built up externally. Finally, this great drain was found to consist of a stack of massive stones averaging half a metre by three quarters of a metre in size and extending to a total depth of 2.5 metres. It was divided by layers of stone and clay into three distinct levels, each associated with road reconstruction, the second layer being overrun by a road surface beneath which lay a corroded and ancient copy of an as of Claudius. The direction of the multiple rutting at once indicated the line of the road, the varying loads which it bore, and the differing quality of construction. The uppermost layers were of looser build and a ragged kerb of large water worn stones marked the southern boundary, though across the road modern intrusion had destroyed the verge. In the latest layers of all, medieval sherds were discovered along with material of Roman date.

An average width of 11 metres or more was noted though offsetting was usual to the north whereas on the opposite side the great drain set a regular boundary to all but the latest levels. The fact that the lowest level of the drain at this point contained cut sandstone blocks in direct association with Flavian pottery cross the way is of interest as showing that at this early period cut stone or off cuts were to be had, and that stone building must have been going on at Wroxeter at this time.

#### The Glassworks.

The ditch on the north or river side of the earliest levels was filled with clean silver sand for a length of nine metres. Moreover, an area of 72 square metres adjoining the second road level was covered with similar sand. This was laid on a stone surface and complete stripping was carried out to determine the limits of this deposit.

Open furnaces were superimposed on each other two or three times and these consisted of glassy slag, often with iron pany, lying on burnt clay or fragments of tile and brick. That there had been disturbance was shown by the scattered chunks of glass slag.

In this small area quantities of cullets, originating chiefly from Alexandria and Syria were collected, together with melted glass blobs, certain evidence of glass blowing, and glass 'string' from the finest to quite thick grades, had been set aside for the decoration of vessels. Three large post-holes, one cut into the edge of a road, were found together with over 100 nails, indicating the presence of some kind of shelter.

This condensed note gives some account of the largest glassworks so far found in the province. The wood used to produce the potash required for the 'melt'



was oak, and the animal food, lavishly consumed by the workers consisted of pig, sheep, ox, horse and the common fowl. Then, as to-day, cullets were used to produce a good 'melt'.

Associated pottery was abundant and indicated a period of activity from early Flavian times to Antonine times, after which work came to a halt. In parts, the furnances were deliberately sealed over with a creamy clay, and the whole of the small works was levelled off. There followed a lengthy period in which weeds grew freely and then, as the road levels were successively laid down pari passu the levelling continued. An attempt at a road ditch was cut on that side around the end of the third century.

The most interesting cullet was the shoulder of a common bluish green bottle on which had been engraved straight marks at nearly equidistant intervals. It could have been a tally or a rule, but Dr. D. Harden and his colleague know of no parallel in the Empire.

Notes.

1. A cullet is a piece of broken glass.
2. 'String' is straight rods of glass varying in thickness from a thread of cotton to an eighth of an inch or more.
3. We owe a great debt to Messrs Pilkington of St. Helens for their unstinted help, to Messrs Rolls Royce for help in metallurgical analysis, and to others whose contributions will be duly acknowledged when the full report is published.

A.W.J. Houghton.

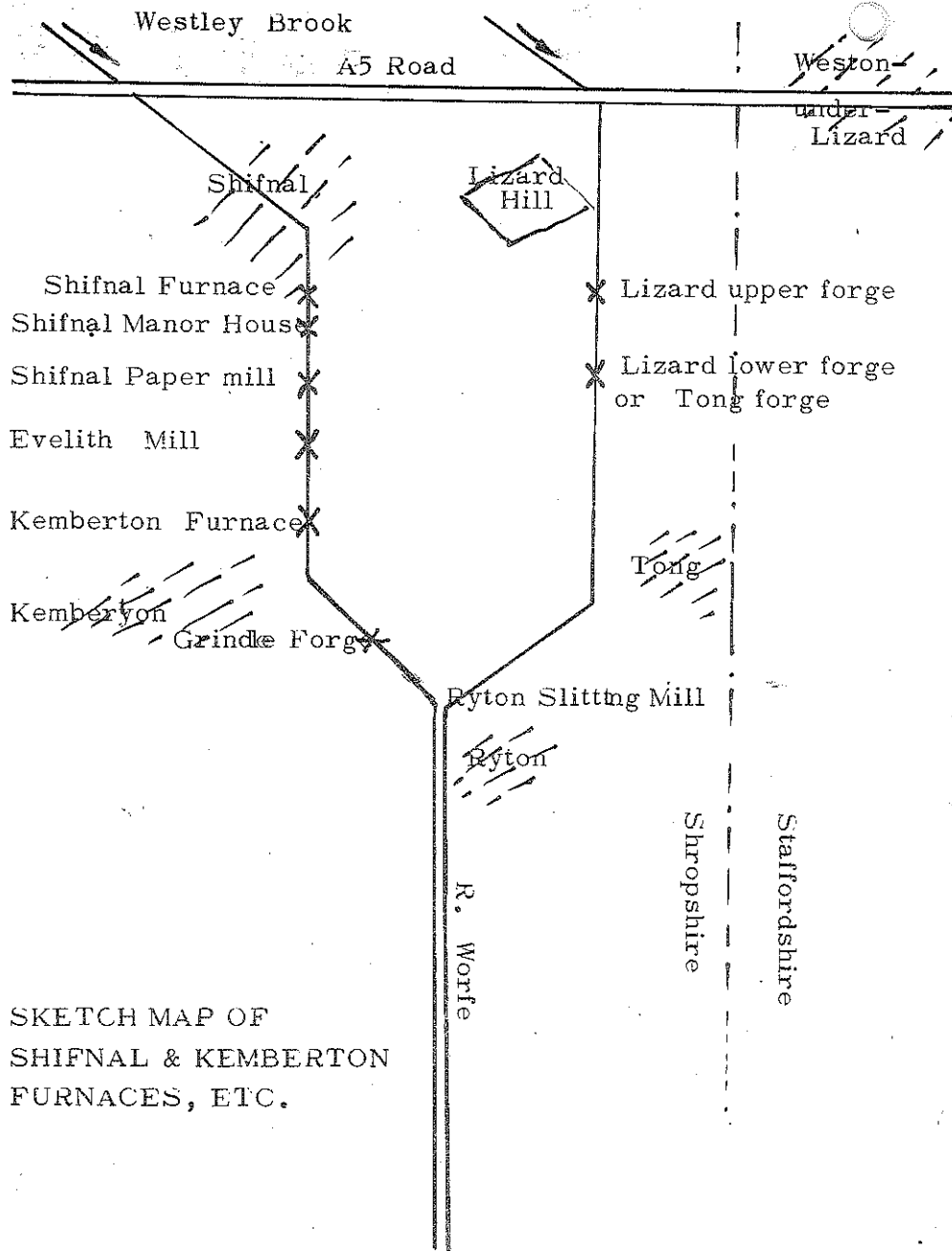
### Investigation of the Sites of Charcoal Blast Furnaces at Shifnal & Kemberton, 1972

The charcoal blast furnace at Shifnal is the earliest in the County of Shropshire dating from 1564, and the second oldest in the Midlands. Although its building is well documented, its history is sketchy and its site was unknown until investigation of a number of sites succeeded in the finding of evidence which points clearly to there having been a charcoal blast furnace in the valley of the Wesley Brook in Shifnal. As the Shifnal furnace was worked in conjunction with forges at the Lizard and as these forges were in use until the early nineteenth century their sites have been investigated also. In the early eighteenth century, probably earlier but this is not definitely established, the blast furnace at Kemberton was used in conjunction with the Lizard forges and with slitting mills and forges in the Parish of Ryton. All these sites are within a radius of some three miles of Shifnal and as there is no evidence that the site of Kemberton furnace has been studied recently the opportunity has been taken to investigate there. The need to find and report upon Shifnal furnace in particular was urgent in view of the proposals for the M.54 Motorway which will cut through Shifnal Parish and through a number of sites which, on general technical grounds, were possible sites for the hitherto unlocated Shifnal blast furnace.

Shifnal Furnace.

Location: Grid Ref. SJ 742067 (Manor Mill)

The site lies in the valley of the Westley or Wesley Brook, one of the headstreams of the River Worfe about one mile south of Shifnal village and something like 1,000 feet north of Shifnal Manor. It has for generations been the site of the manor mill and there is no



SKETCH MAP OF  
SHIFNAL & KEMBERTON  
FURNACES, ETC.

One Mile



N.M. 1972

place-name evidence linking it with the furnace, to my knowledge. (There is clear place name evidence for the sites of the forges, which are well known anyway, and for Kemberton furnace, and for the Grindle forge). The mill ceased to be used as a cornmill in this century and the buildings were demolished c 1960.

Investigation of the site shows large quantities of charcoal blast furnace debris, slag, partly-roasted carbonate ore, metallic iron and slag-encrusted lining, covering an area of some 30 yards by 50 yards and extending perhaps another 100 yards along the tail race of the old mill. A few pieces of modern hot-blast and cold-blast slags used for the metallurgy of the lane to the Manor are to be found on the site, but are clearly intrusive.

The water supply is from the partly-silted mill pool which covered more than three acres but which was fed merely by a spring arising about a mile away and not by the brook which runs beside the site. This seems to be the explanation for the known shortage of water in the sixteenth century, which is otherwise difficult to explain as the brook carries a very substantial flow. It is not obvious why this manner of supplying water was chosen in lieu of the more normal practice of damming the whole width of the valley, which is not above 100 yards wide at the mill site, and narrower immediately above it. Another singular feature is that the furnace is so close to the Manor House, even accepting that the Earls of Shrewsbury were rarely resident.

History; at this stage it seems sufficient to use Schubert's summary (History . . . p 387). 'A furnace was built . . . in 1564, with a forge at Lizard. The forge was still operated during the major part of the following century (sic), but the only evidence of the furnace

being continued is in a letter of 1604...'. So there is evidence of a life of at least 40 years for the furnace, and of some 250 years for the Lizard forges.

#### Kemberton Furnace :

Location: Grid Ref. SJ 744044 (Kemberton Mills or Kemberton Paper Mills).

On the Westley Brook, some two miles south of Shifnal furnace, and on the Kemberton side of the brook, the parish boundary between Shifnal and Kemberton running down the centre of the stream. Derelict paper mills used to the beginning of this century stand on the site, which is in a valley only about 50 yards wide. The water supply is from a mill pond of almost three acres formed by damming the whole width of the valley. There is a substantial quantity of charcoal slag and other debris under and in front of the papermill buildings and extending downstream along the tail race and in the brook. A small quantity of widely scattered cold-blast coke slag appears to have drifted on to the site from the roughly surfaced lane leading from Kemberton village. There is place-name evidence for the adjacent part of Shifnal parish and the site is clearly identifiable from 18/19 century maps.

History; Schubert at p.379 says simply 'Furnace mentioned in list of 1717; in 1728 it was in the possession of Edward Kendall'. Whilst these dates can be pushed both backward and forward for a few years there is no conclusive evidence, to my knowledge, for either a firm date for construction or for blowing out, although the paper mills on the site were in use not later than 1790. Much more research is needed here.

I am trying to compile a reasonably coherent account of the two phases, 1564-c1640 when a simple furnace/

forges relationship seems to have existed, and post c1640 when a much more complex relationship of furnace, forges and rolling and slitting mills can be discerned, with the forges at the Lizard being the link in each case. A sketch map, diagrammatic but essentially to scale is annexed.

Norman Mutton.

## IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM

The museum's major open air site at Blists Hill will be officially opened to the public on Saturday, March 31st 1973. Full details of opening times, entrance charges &c. will be announced in the local press. Members of the Friends of the Museum will be able to gain admission at any time during normal opening hours free of charge, and details of these and other benefits of membership may be obtained from the Membership Secretary, Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Southside, Ironbridge, Telford.

Numerous new exhibits have been installed at Blists Hill during the summer of 1972. A wrought iron tub boat, formerly part of the Lilleshall Company's fleet and until recently, a water tank on a farm near Newport, was restored and launched in August. The Telford tollhouse from the A5 at Shelton west of Shrewsbury, which was condemned on account of road improvements, was demolished and is now in course of re-erection at Blists Hill. The winding engine from the Milburgh Tileries, Jackfield, has been restored and installed in an appropriate engine house. The section of the Shropshire Canal which forms the boundary of the Blists Hill site has been cleared and now holds water. During clearance work a substantial length of plateway along-

side the canal was found.

Work has continued at the other museum sites. Clearance at the Bedlam or Madeley Wood furnaces has revealed that this is a far more interesting and important industrial monument than was originally supposed. The forehearth and tuyere arches have now been uncovered, and the upper part of the furnace made safe to enable further investigation to go ahead. Restoration of Rose Cottages, Coalbrookdale, continues and some re-arrangement of the Coalbrookdale works museum is proposed before the 1973 season. Restoration of the Ironbridge by the Salop County Council has been in progress during the summer of 1972 and the first stage successfully completed.

A Head of Interpretation and a Commercial Manager have been appointed to the Museum staff during the autumn, and a range of new publications will be ready for the opening of the Blists Hill site in March.

### **Trans. of the Shropshire Archaeological Society**

The next volume of the Transactions, part I of Vol. LIX, will be published shortly, and may have been distributed by the time this Newsletter appears. It will be sent only to paid up members of the Archaeological Society. Members who pay by Bankers Order are asked to ensure that their orders were altered when the subscription rate was raised to £2.10 some years ago. The contents of the volume are as follows :

A Stone Axe (Sh 49/c) from Weston Park, near Shifnal, by Lily F. Chitty.

A Street Section at Wroxeter in 1962, by

*Scene*

Graham Webster and Charles Daniels.

Aerial Reconnaissance over Viroconium and Military Sites in the Area in 1969, by Arnold Baker.

X 2A St. Alkmund's Place - a late Saxon and Medieval Site in Shrewsbury, by G.S.G. Toms.

Excavations at Woolstaston Motte and Bailey Castle, Shropshire, by R.T. Rowley.

The Provosts of Shrewsbury, 1200-1300, by Una Rees.

Early Baptists in Stoke-upon-Tern, by T.W. Hardy.

Social and Political Stability in 18th Century Provincial Life. A Study of the Career of John Ashby (1722-1779) of Shrewsbury, by J.D. Nichol.

Accidental Death and Suicide in Shropshire, 1780-1809, by P.E.H. Hair.

### **More Information about the Ironbridge**

Since the publication in the Newsletter No. 41 of an article assessing the importance to our understanding of the history of the Ironbridge of Abraham Darby III's personal account books, two further documentary references to the bridge have come to light.

The first concerns the decision to build the bridge in iron. One of a collection of Quaker letters from the

Maude family papers in Sunderland copied by Mr. Stuart Smith was written from Coalbrookdale on November 16 1776 by Rachel Thompson, who relates:

'The Bridge, that is to be made over the Severn at the bottom of the Dale is now fix'd upon to be an Iron one, wch. certainly when compleated will be one of the great curiosities yt this Nation or any other can boast of. I think there is two years allow'd for finishing it. I suppose it will all be cast in the Dale for Cousing Abrma. will have the whole direction'.

The letter obviously refers to the undertaking given to the bridge subscribers by Abraham Darby III in October 1776 that he would build a structure with a 120 ft. span.

The second reference poses more problems than it solves. It was noticed by Mr. James Lawson, Librarian of Shrewsbury Schools, while doing research on 18th century architects in Shropshire. In the accounts of Sir Edward Smythe of Acton Burnell (Shropshire Record Office 1514/2/820) there is an item dated May 5 1782 'To painting a model of the Iron Bridge. £2. 12. 0', paid to a firm of heraldic painters from Shrewsbury. This sum represents the work of two skilled men for about a fortnight, so the model must obviously have been a large one. Was it constructed in order to rehearse the erection of the parts of the bridge and subsequently sold to Sir Edward? And what happened to it afterwards? It was certainly not the mahogany model now in the Science Museum which was not made until 1785.

Neither of these references provides a definite solution to any of the problems concerning the build-

ing of the bridge, but, like pieces of a jigsaw which cannot immediately be placed, each may one day assume a new significance when more information is available.

B.T.

### Shropshire Mining Club Publications

The Shropshire Mining Club are urgently trying to raise money for the repair of their Headquarters, a 17th century one-up/one-down miner's cottage at Church Aston, and with this aim in view offer for sale an enlarged range of publications which can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer, Ivor Brown Esq., 5 Beech Drive, Shifnal, Salop. Full membership of the Club costs £2 p.a. and associate membership, of which the benefits are a monthly newsletter, the use of the Club library and equipment, and a discount on all publications, 50p. Details of membership can be obtained from the Hon. Sec., David Adams, New Era, Princess Gardens, Newport, Salop. The publications available are as follows :-

No. 8. A Survey of Llanymynech Ogof Roman Copper Mine. This is a full account of previous writings, explorations and discoveries within the Ogof, its geology and associated mining activities and a description and survey of the whole system. Size A4 79 pages, 5 plans, 2 illustrations 75p. (50p. to members) + 12p post.

No. 9. Mines and Caves in the area between Llanymynech and The Dee. A detailed survey of the existing mines, caves and topography of the area with comments on likely cave locations and details of the Ceriog Slate Mines. Size A4 28 pages, 8 plans. 50p. (35p to members) + 9p. post.

No. 10. A Collection of Plans & Sections of the Metalliferous Mines of S.W. Shropshire. Reproductions of 35 original mine plans and sections all reduced to a convenient size, indispensable for anyone interested in this area.

Size A4, 35 pages, 38 plans and index. £1 (85p. to members) + 10p. post.

### **Notes from the Secretary**

#### Forthcoming Excavation

Red Hill, Oakengates. 15th December 1972 to 12th January 1973.

The unique series of presumed Roman signal stations and related structures recognised by Mr. Arnold Baker from the air on the high ground immediately above Watling Street (the A5) at NGR: SJ/725111 will shortly be destroyed by reservoir building for Telford New Town. A major emergency excavation will be undertaken by Mr. David Brown on behalf of the Department of the Environment and all volunteer help (with payment at subsistence rates) will be gladly welcomed. Mr. Brown can be contacted at 48 St. Barnabays Road, Cambridge. It is expected that excavations will continue after the initial phase well into 1973.

#### Insurance Cover

The Society as a member body of the Council for British Archaeology has joined the comprehensive insurance scheme promoted by the CBA to cover all indemnity for field work carried out on behalf of the Society. This cover extends to all work carried out on archaeological excavations or survey work and to the recording of architectural structures. All

leaders of research groups in the field should remember that accidents or third party liabilities are always likely to occur and all members of a group should be properly insured.

It is always highly desirable that intent to excavate or conduct field work in the county should in any case be referred to the Council of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, and for purposes of insurance it is absolutely essential. If such formal reference is made, the Society will authorise such work as being carried out in its own name and will ensure that the relevant group is then insured under the Society's own scheme. Full details can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. N. Mutton, 12 Manor Road, Shifnal.

#### Publications of the Society.

A number of back numbers of the Newsletter and the Transactions of the Society are available for purchase. Earlier copies of the Transactions and other related publications may be obtained from Mrs. M. Moran, 10 Belle Vue Gardens, Shrewsbury, and back numbers of the Newsletter from Mr. Barrie Trinder, 20 Garmston Road, Shrewsbury.

#### Reprint

Members may like to know that "Shropshire - Its Early History and Antiquities" by John Corbet Anderson, first published in 1864, has been reprinted by E.J. Morten, Warburton Street, Didsbury, Manchester 20. Copies, price £6.00 may be obtained directly from the above Publisher or from any

local Bookseller.

Carnegie Trust Grants for Field Work  
in Archaeology.

The Council for British Archaeology has reminded the Society that Grants are available for projects designed to give amateurs experience in archaeological field work under skilled direction. These are provided by the "Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and a full schedule of conditions can be obtained from the Council for British Archaeology, 8 St. Andrew's Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4LB. Application forms can be obtained from the CBA and should be returned not later than Monday, 1st. January 1973.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

No. 44 — JUNE 1973

Published by

**The Shropshire Archaeological Society**

Edited by

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Telephone : Shrewsbury 52310



## THE FUTURE OF WROXETER

Members will have seen in the national press an item of news, which is one of the most significant events for many years in British archaeology. The nation, through the Department of the Environment, has purchased most of the area of the Roman town of Uriconium which lies within the town walls. It is normal practice for the Department of the Environment to take only visible sites into their guardianship, but a major and important precedent has been made in purchasing what is in effect an invisible site for reasons of preservation, and, in so doing, Britain has come into line with the policy of many other European countries.

The international importance of Wroxeter has been underlined by the excavations directed by Dr. Graham Webster and Mr. Philip Barker over recent years together with the full coverage by aerial photography undertaken by Mr. Arnold Baker. Wroxeter is now shown to be an especially complex and interesting site, with its origins in a series of military phases culminating in the establishment of the fortress of the Fourteenth Legion in the 1st century A.D. The subsequent development of Wroxeter as the canton-capital of the Cornovii from the 2nd to the 4th century AD is well known, and only London was an appreciably larger town in Roman times. Its great importance to the archaeologist is that this abandoned town has never been built over, and the potential of the site in increasing our knowledge of Roman towns through systematic and professional excavation is enormous. Recent work has shown extremely important evidence for continued occupation after the 4th century in sub-Roman or post-Roman phases. Germanic and Saxon occupation of the site is now only beginning to be understood, and the vitally important area of the comparatively early Saxon village in the south-west corner of the Roman town takes on new significance. Not least in importance is the early medieval development of this region too, and few sites in Britain contain effectively the undisturbed evidence for the development and decline of a Roman town.

The site, has therefore been purchased primarily for protection and preservation; it would be wrong to assume that wide areas will be immediately excavated,

especially when most archaeological resources must be turned to rescue work on threatened sites. But it could be hoped that in the not too distant future the area of the Forum, excavated by Donald Atkinson in the 1920s might be opened up again for public display. The more immediate purpose of bringing the site under state ownership is to control agricultural use of the area, particularly to avoid damage to buildings lying beneath the surface through deep ploughing. The future of Wroxeter should thus be seen more as gradual excavation by our own and future generations in a fully scientific way with attendant permanent conservation of sites as they are eventually exposed.

That part of the town which has not been purchased by the Department of the Environment is already in the hands of the National Trust. If we, as members of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, have a pride and concern for this magnificent site, then we also have a responsibility for its protection. Already in recent months serious despoilation of the site has been caused by "treasure hunters" using metal-detectors. There has been no more pernicious commercial venture against the interests of archaeology than the marketing of the metal-detector, or the promulgation of the "philosophy" by the manufacturers that archaeology is treasure-hunting. It is an absolutely essential factor of all archaeological work that excavations should be scientifically conducted, the results published, and the finds handed over to a museum for public access. The "treasure hunter", scouring a site for his own personal interest, and on occasions, commercial gain, signally fails to achieve any of these cardinal points.

Unfortunately, treasure-hunters have been at work at Wroxeter, especially as there is a good commercial market for Roman coins. The loss of such vital evidence from the site is very serious, and the only gain is the short-term one of the individual. The position of Wroxeter in this respect is quite clear, and in fact applies to all other sites in private and public ownership. Unauthorised entry on any part of the Roman town is an act of trespass, and the unauthorised

removal of any objects from the surface of the ground or through excavation, is an act of theft. So seriously are the activities of treasure-hunters taken that it is understood that the police are prepared to be fully co-operative in stopping these activities. In short, nobody is allowed to engage in archaeological activity of any kind on the site without the express permission of the owners, and to aid the owners in their responsibility in protecting and preserving the site, it is strongly urged that an immediate report is made to the police if any unofficial activity is seen to be going on in the area of the Roman town. Only in this way can we be assured that the site is fully protected and not commercially exploited.

Geoffrey Toms.

### Iron and Steelworks in Coalbrookdale in 1645

The earliest days of the "old furnace" at Coalbrookdale are clouded in mystery. Although the inscription on the hearth-beam suggests it was constructed in 1638, no documentary evidence of its existence has been discovered prior to the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. However the compounding papers of Sir Basil Brooke, lord of the manor of Madeley, which are deposited in the Public Record Office, shed a little light on the problem. An abstract of these papers has been available for many years in volume 3 of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding. It mentions coal, steel and limeworks in the manor of Madeley, of which Coalbrookdale formed a part, but implies that the original documents are few in number and lacking in detail. In fact the material relating to industrial activity at Madeley runs to over fifty folios. The bulk of this consists of evidence presented to the Committee of Compounding sitting at Goldsmith Hall in London by contenders for the lease of several very lucrative coalmines at Madeley Wood. These far outweighed (in value) the revenue from agricultural land and other industrial undertakings belonging to the manor,

but for reasons of administrative convenience the manor was leased a whole.

In 1648 Edward Cludd of Orleton, a distant relative of Sir Basil, had obtained a year's lease of the manor from the Salop Sequestrian Committee which had administered confiscated Royal estates. Having invested thousands of pounds to restore the mines to working order after a long period of misuse and neglect, Cludd asked for the renewal of his lease for seven years at an annual rent of £550. A counter-bid of £800 was made by a group of farmers and artisans from Madeley led by Henry Bowdler, but this was rejected by the Salop committee for a number of reasons:-

a) Although Cludd had invested large sums of his own money and had paid them a rent of £700 in the previous year, he had made little money from the sale of coal because the mines were still in the process of being drained and made safe with timber supports.

b) Cludd was backed by a group of wealthy Shropshire gentry whose combined income of £6000 pa was to act as surety; Bowdler and his partners could only offer a fraction of this sum.

c) Cludd had proved that he could manage a mineral estate and was prepared to invest his own capital, but Bowdler and his friends were "men of mean and lowly estates not able to stock or maintain such an estate" As a result it was feared that their sole concern might be to dig as much coal as they could in one year without repairing drainage machinery or installing proper roof-supports " and may then throw up the works to the great danger of the State and the prejudice of the country". In 1646 Bowdler had operated the coal and steel works for a time, but had allowed them to deteriorate because of his failure to invest capital.

d) In times past, Bowdler and all of his friends had been guilty of deceitful acts including the falsification of the rent-roll of the manor.

Bowdler replied to all this by claiming that the Salop committee had shown bias by not throwing the lease open to tender, but had simply made a private approach to Cludd. Moreover, Cludd and his backers were Royalists and tools of the Brooke family, whereas he and his partners had always been faithful to Parliament. Bowdler therefore petitioned the Committee of Compounding to

arbitrate between him and the Salop committee.

The bulk of the evidence presented by both sides appertains to the coalmines and to the respective characters of Cludd and Bowdler and their partners, but in the midst of this are a few documents which refer to the iron and steel works. The main witness was Thomas Glasbrook, clerk to the works, but he was supported by Richard Shenstall and Richard Mihill, hammermen, and by Captain Thomas Fox, who was apparently the agent of Richard Foley, the wealthy Stourbridge ironmaster. They stated that the works at Coalbrookdale belonged jointly to Sir Basil Brooke and Francis Flowden of Flowden, both of whom were Roman Catholics as well as being Royalists. On June 8th 1645 Captain Davies, who had just garrisoned Benthall House for Parliament, took Glasbrook prisoner and seized the keys to the works which he handed over to Henry Bowdler. At that time the steelmaking complex seems to have consisted of two furnaces, one of which is described as "old", a forge for the conversion of pig-iron into wrought-iron and a number of cottages. The stock-in-hand comprised the following items:-

9 tons of anvils, plates and other material of raw metal	£ 90
1½ tons of iron	27
1 ton 16 cwt of steel	66
Charcoal	200
	<u>£383</u>

In another place Glasbrook claims that the stock was worth £608, but does not explain the discrepancy between the two figures. There is, however, a reference to one of Bowdler's partners, John Pallett, taking 2200 lbs of raw iron as "bear" (?) to lay under a furnace.

During his occupation of the works (which may have been for as little as two weeks) Bowdler was alleged to have converted the raw-iron into wrought-iron and to have thus reduced the value of the stock of iron and charcoal by several hundred pounds. Bowdler replied that he had bought the raw-iron from Captain Davies and also some of the charcoal. He had also purchased timber to the value of £25 from the Salop committee which he

had converted into charcoal himself and sold to Richard Foley, who took over the works towards the end of 1645, aided by Glasbrook and Fox, and seems to have operated the Coalbrookdale complex for several years, possibly until Cludd took over in 1649. Although his ironworks were mainly situated in Staffordshire, Warwickshire and North Worcestershire, this was not Foley's first venture into the Shropshire iron-industry. In 1634 he was alleged to have had the lease of furnaces at Halesowen and at "Reking". The latter might refer to Coalbrookdale, as the other two charcoal blast-furnaces close to the Wrekin are quite out of the question: the Leighton partnership did not include Foley and Wombridge was not built until after the Civil Wars.

The following firm conclusion can be drawn from the evidence presented to the Committee of Compounding: there was a flourishing steelworks, a finery and chafery forge and two furnaces at Coalbrookdale in 1645. There is, however, some uncertainty whether Brooke and Flowden made their "raw-iron" on the site or purchased it elsewhere; the furnaces mentioned by Glasbrook may simply have been cementation furnaces used in manufacturing steel. Now it has long been known that Sir Basil Brooke introduced a new method for making steel into England in about 1620. H.R.Schubert believed that he established his works in the Forest of Dean area but only offered circumstantial evidence for the theory. Glasbrook's testimony suggests that the works were at Coalbrookdale, and there is other evidence that Brooke's metallurgical activities in Shropshire date from the early sixteen-twenties. Thus it is possible that Coalbrookdale has a claim to fame in the history of iron and steel which precedes the advent of Abraham Darby.

Malcolm Wanklyn.

Sources: Public Record Office, SP 23/105 fols.177-230, and SP 23/237 fols. 69-70 (the compounding papers of Sir Basil Brooks).

Public Record Office, SP 16/321 fols.41-70 (the prosecution of Richard Foley, 1634-35).

H.R.Schubert, The History of the British Iron and Steel Industry before 1760/ (1957)

Sir Basil Brooke and Bromley's Forge (SJ 439167)

In SNL 36, p.18 David Pannett reported on the site of Bromley's Forge at the confluence of the Severn and the Perry. This ironworks was erected by Sir Basil Brooke of Madeley by 1623 and probably before 1616. In 1623 Brooke was presented by the manor court of Forton, Fitz and Mytton for diverting the River Perry and building a dam on Forton Heath where he had lately erected certain "iron mylles", (SBL DEEDS 18523) on the ground of Sir Henry Wallop. Brooke owned no land in this area and it is therefore curious that nine years earlier, in 1616, he had been involved in a dispute over the cutting of cordwood at a coppice called the Birch Greaves near Boreatton, some miles to the north. It was then said that he had been cutting wood for at least seven years, (Ibid

8494). On the evidence it seems likely therefore that Brooke had an ironworks in this area at least as early

as 1610 which predates those in north-west Shropshire by a decade or more.

The exact nature of the processes which Brooke carried out on this site are not known as there are no further records of it in his tenure. However, the very remoteness of this site from other ironworks may provide some clue. By 1615 Brooke was already involved in the Forest of Dean works and experimenting with the production of steel, a material over which there was a considerable degree of secrecy. Such a site as Bromley's Forge would have provided him with a considerable degree of privacy and in view of Martin Wanklyn's discovery that the Coalbrookdale ironworks were producing steel at the time of the Civil War this theory has some attractions. It is certainly very strange that Brooke should have chosen a site so remote from his operations in the Forest of Dean and at a time when there is no evidence that he had any other Shropshire works or that there were any other ironworks in this particular area of the county.

J.B.Lawson.

ROMANO-BRITISH CREMATION BURIALS *ESA 886*  
at WHITCHURCH, SALOP. (SJ 545409)

Notice of housing development at Queensway, Sedgeford, Whitchurch, on a site previously occupied by prefabs and known to have produced 3 burial urns in 1946, prompted the writer to ask the North Shropshire R.D.C. for permission to excavate and examine the distribution and density of burials. Permission was granted and the N.S.R.D.C. agreed to hire a mechanical digger for two day's work. The excavation took place from the 19th to the 24th

excavation took place from the 19th to the 24th February 1973.

A restricted area of the site was available for excavation. Topsoil was mechanically stripped from an area .45. X c. 2m. Drains, electricity cables and water mains had disturbed a large proportion of this trench and only one burial was found. A second trench 6m X 5m. was also disturbed by services but produced 5 burial pits aligned in a rough row E-W. They seem to date from the late 1st to early 2nd century.

Burial-pit 1: Depth from ground surface 80cm. Cremated bone. 2 iron objects. Pieces of AE sheet decorated with roundels and with wood adhering. Part of AE ? handle. Probably part of a box.

Burial-pit 11. Depth from g.s. 85cm. Everted-rim jar, grey ware with central zone decorated with incised wedges. Small everted-rim jar, grey ware, heavily distorted. Refired? or a waster? Cremated bones in both urns. More than 100 iron tacks and nails, and much charcoal.

Burial-pit 101. Depth from g.s. 85cm. Cremated bones and 2 iron nails. Almost entirely removed by electricity cable.

Burial-pit 1V: Depth from g.s. 1.05m. Ring-necked flagon, off-white ware with blue/

grey interior. Found inverted with base smashed, containing sterile fill. Cremated bone. Speculum mirror with AE handle; As of Vespasian. Worn. More than 100 iron tacks and nails and charcoal.

Burial-pit V: Depth from g.s. 85cm. Small everted jar

incomplete. Found scattered throughout pit, very distorted and partly oxydised red. Cremated bones and charcoal, and more than 70 iron nails and tacks.

Burial-pit VI: Depth from g.s. 60cm. Ring-necked flagon, red ware, buff exterior. Neck missing above handle. Sterile fill. Cremated bones around urn and 1 iron nail.

(Natural is a light orange/yellow sand with fine gravel patches).

Besides the 20th century services, the site has suffered very

very little post-Roman disturbance. Only a small number

of medieval and post-medieval sherds were found, all in the topsoil. Without further excavation, it cannot be assumed that the burials form an isolated group, because of the possibility that services have removed others. However, there is no high density, nor would this be expected so far from Roman Whitchurch. Development is due to start this year (exact date as yet uncertain) and although further digging is not necessary, the

site will be watched while foundation and service trenches are dug.

Andrew Rogerson.

## Nos. 8 and 9 CHERRINGTON, SHROPSHIRE.

SA 1694.

X The building, at present two cottages, was originally a Cruck-built house of two Bays. The S. Bay is approximately 15'4" x 18' and the N. Bay is approximately 15' x 18'. There is no evidence of a through passage or "Screens Passage". The S. Bay (No 9) has always been a 2-Storey Bay, with service, storage or sleeping quarters below and storage or sleeping quarters above, but the N. Bay (No.8) was originally an Open Hall Bay, ie open from the floor to the ridge of the roof. This Bay now has an inserted floor which accounts for the restricted headroom at present. It is difficult to determine the position of the original entrance. For lack of other evidence it may be assumed to be the present entrance to the S. Bay (ie No 9).

The Crucks are plained curved ones, quite

large and substantial. They have no chamfering or moulding. The three pairs still remain in situ. Both end pairs have deteriorated to some extent and the S. end truss is bricked over externally. The N. truss is bricked over externally above the collar beam. The Central truss is a good example of the type typical of the West Midlands, ie it is open truss with no Tie-beam but an arched-braced Collar beam. It appears to be intact apart from the intrusion of an inserted door at 1st. Floor level (achieved

by cutting through the collar beam). This door would be put in at the same time when the floor

was inserted, probably in the 17th Century.

At present it is impossible to see the apex of the chimney from inside but if the rafters were stripped it might reveal evidence for the smoke-hole or louvre opening which conveys the smoke from the open hearth in the

It is not clear whether the framed walling is contemporary with the Crucks. The feet of the Crucks are properly pegged into the corner Wall Posts which suggests a contemporary date but the Wall plate is carried to the Crucks by crudely fashioned Cruck Spurs which appear to be of a later date. Each Bay seems to have had one pair of Windbraces on either side though these are partially obscured at the moment. Those which are visible are plain curved ones and spring from the back of the Crucks to the Purlins. The Purlins are trenched into the back of the Crucks which is normal practice in Cruck-built houses. The purlins are not scarfed but joined in rather a crude fashion, one length of timber simply resting on the other.

A few "rearing marks" are visible and also some carpenter's assembly marks. The windows appear to be modern apart from the one at the foot of the stairs. The stairs are modern but are probably in the position of the original access ladder to the upper chamber.

.....

In the lane known as "Cherrington Green" there are three surviving Cruck houses; nos. 8 & 9 (the property surveyed) and the small-holding opposite which appear to date from the early 15th Century and the house to the South of these known as "Long Acre" which appears to be of a much later date - the scantling of the Crucks is much thinner and straighter.

These three houses represent a surprisingly isolated little "pocket" of Crucks in the East of the County. No others are so far recorded in the area. All the

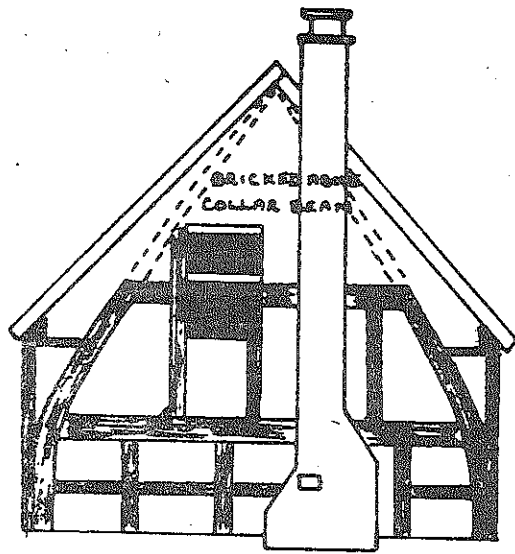
Shropshire Crucks found so far are in the South and West of the County. The position of the three Cruck houses in Cherrington is very interesting. Their close proximity to the moated site of the Manor, the meandering nature of the lane, the "lumps" and "bumps" in the fields on either side of the lane and the name itself of Cherrington "Green" are suggestive of the surviving features of the original village site.

It will be seen from the map (1) which is copied from a plan of the Shropshire Estates of the Marquis of Stafford and dated 1813 that the area of the "Green" was once built over to a larger extent. In the accompanying Survey (2) F27 is given as tenanted by Robert James, messuage, tenant AT WILL, 3 roods, 9 perches. More recent development has been away from the area of the "Green" and it is possible that these houses survive because they were the more substantial. Originally they would have been occupied by small tenant farmers of sub-yeoman status.

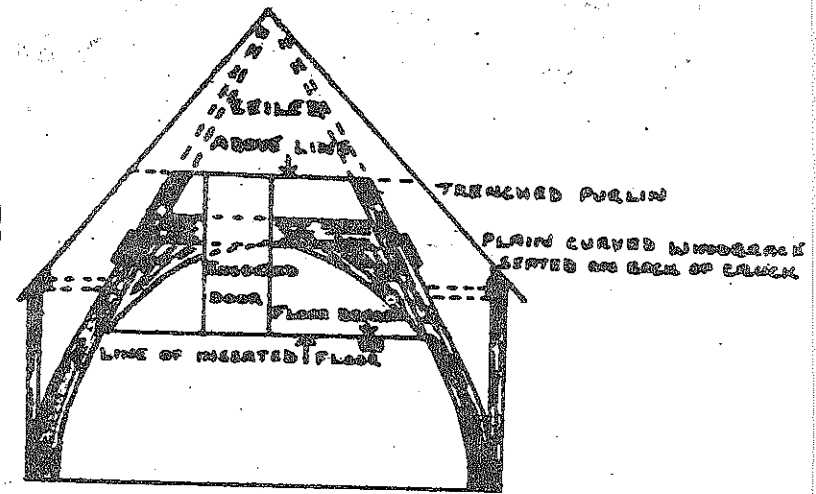
I am grateful to Mr. J. Barker of Tibberton for drawing my attention to these three houses and to Mr. J. Rochelle for allowing me to record Nos 8 & 9 before the property was sold.

1. SRO 972/Bdle 238
2. SRO 972/Box 41

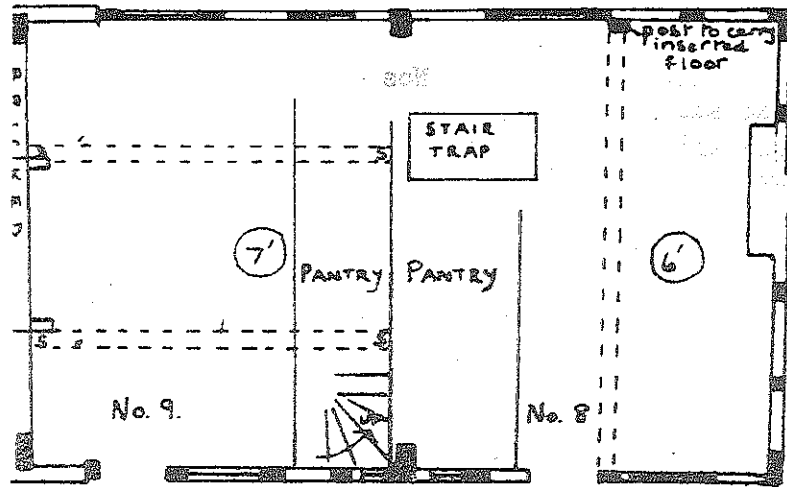
M. Moran.



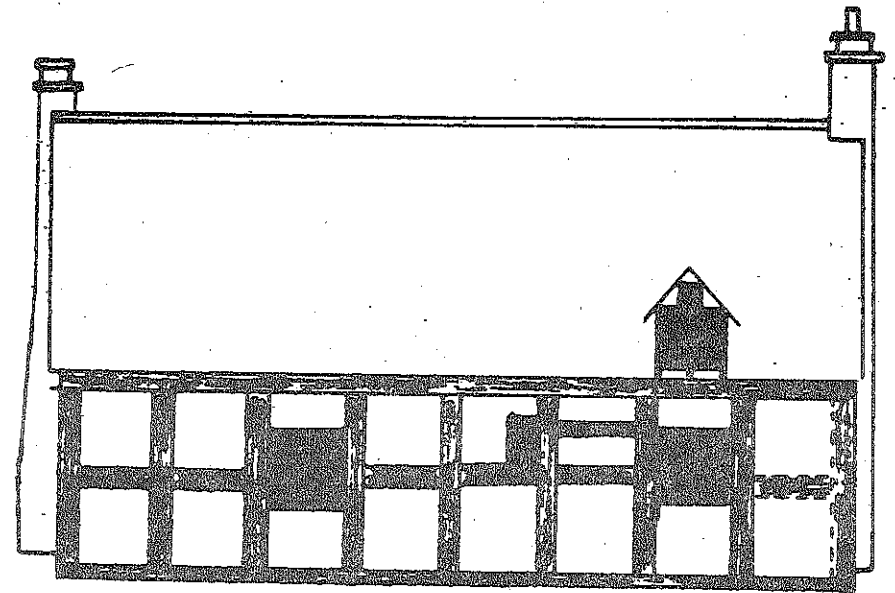
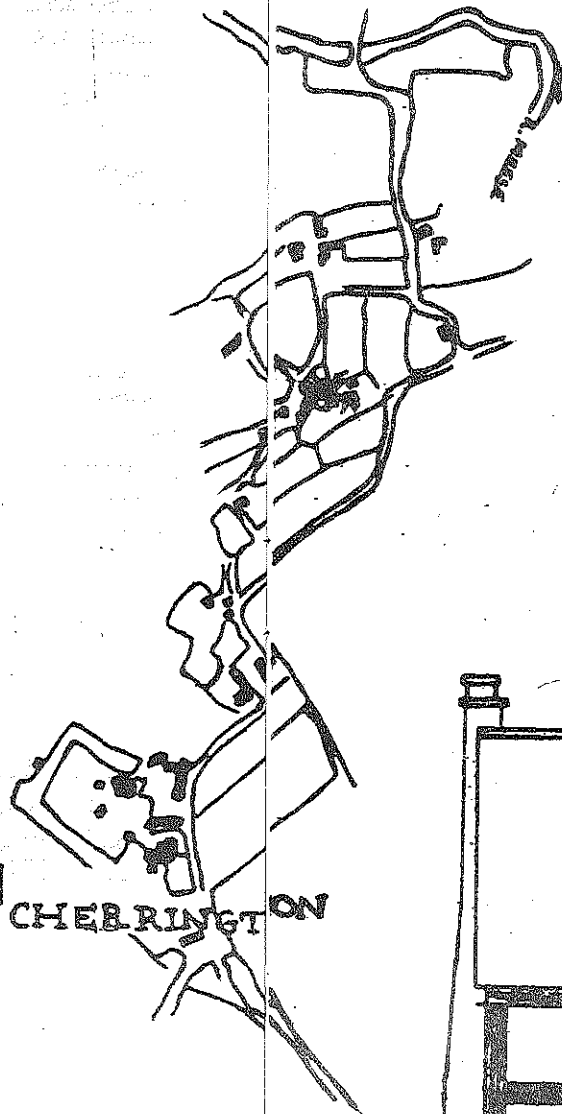
NORTH ELEVATION



CENTRAL TRUSS  
A - A



GROUND PLAN



WEST ELEVATION

## LUDLOW MUSEUM NEWS

The following list contains notes of items of archaeological interest brought in recently to Ludlow Museum.

### PREHISTORIC

650 flint artefacts from the Bishop's Castle District including remarkably fine leaf-shaped, petit tranchet and tanged and barbed arrowheads, scrapers, knives, etc. being the collection of the late Doctor D.C.Edwards. Presented by Mrs. Edwards.

SA 3355 }  
3357 }  
3358 } 50 flint artefacts from Morville Farm, some of these having been described as Mesolithic, presented by Messrs. P.&.M. Tarrant.

A tanged and barbed flint arrowhead and knife from Goat House, Presteigne. Donor: Mr. M. Price.

Spindle whorls from Bouldon, Kinlet, Brockton etc. from various donors.

SA 3177 Bronze spearhead of Late Bronze Age from the "Bloody Romans" Field, Bishop's Castle. Donor: Mrs. Edwards.

Medium chipped and polished stone axe with irregular side facets from New House Farm, Shipton, Group V1, the epidotised andesitic ash from Langdale, found by Mr. Williams.

Conical butted polished stone axe from Corfton. This is of the uralitised gabbro of Group 1 which is believed to emanate from a factory site near Penzance. Brought to Ludlow Museum by Mr. Frank Mitchell.

Conical butted triangular stone axe from Cardingmill Valley, Church Stretton; of a coarse igneous rock; found by Miss Edwards.

(These Neolithic axes have been examined by Miss L. F. Chitty and Professor F.W.Shotton and the Curator is very grateful for their kindness in the matter)

The Middle Bronze Age Pottery Urns from the Gravel Quarry at Bromfield. This site revealed over 100 cremation graves, and this together with the presence of the barrows on the Race Course shows that Bromfield was the most important burial area in the region and may have been a major centre serving people living on the hills around. This pottery forms the most important collection of its period (1500 B.C. - 700 B.C.) in the Welsh Marches and Wales. Some of the items are on display at Ludlow but most of the pottery is on temporary loan to Birmingham City Museum. The excavations were directed by Mr. S.C.Stanford and the pottery presented by the owner of the land, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Plymouth.

Other accessions include flint and other stone artefacts from this area from various donors.

### ROMAN

Samian ware and other pottery, glass; metal objects including horse pendant, brooches, rings, pins, shears, knives, keys, coins etc from excavations directed by Mr. S.C.Stanford in the Leintwardine area (details in Woolhope Club Transactions vol. XXXIX Pt.2.) The items were donated by the following landowners: Roman Rise Leintwardine - Mrs Noakes; Leintwardine (Site E. Bath House) - Messrs. C.A.Griffiths; Buckton - Mr. C.C.Harley; Chantreyland - Mr. C. Holmes; Jay Lane, Leintwardine - Mr. B. Phillpotts.



## MEDIEVAL

An iron arrowhead together with part of a 13th. Century Pitcher with slashed handle and sherds of other vessels of the same age, dug up in the garden of "The Spinney" Burford, Nr. Tenbury Wells, by Mr. P.J.Fvison.

49 armorial and other Tiles from the site of St. Peter's Chapel, Ludlow Castle. Exhibited by permission of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Powis.

A late 15th Century Pilgrim Badge to commemorate Henry VI (whose tomb at Windsor became for a brief period after 1485 as popular with pilgrims as Canterbury had ever been) Dug up in the garden of Linney House, Ludlow by Mr. Nicholas.

A 13th Century carved cross on stone, probably used to mark the grave of a monk, found at Clee View, Ludlow. Donor: Miss M. Russell.

Many sherds of medieval pottery not specially mentioned here have been added to the Ludlow collection by various finders, also coins and carved stonework.

## TUDOR AND STUART

Large stone block from recently restored building in King Street, Ludlow, now occupied by the Pearl Assurance Co. with the inscription "Thomas Hanks buylded this howse; Robert Wright being over-seer 1570" together with another stone block carved with coat-of-arms, the crest being that of the Sidney family and having initials H.S. Sir Henry Sidney (father of Sir Philip) was Lord President of the Council of the Marches 1559-1586.

Lock and iron hinge from Ludlow Castle, probably of late

Tudor or Stuart times. Displayed by permission of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Powis.

A large part of a finely decorated 17th Century slipware dish of the kind usually described as "Toft" ware found in the bank of Morville Brook Bridgnorth. Donors; Messrs. P.&M.Tarrant.

The silver seal of the Court of the Marches has been purchased. A grant from the Victoria and Albert Museum having been provided half the cost.

Other interesting accessions include coins and 17th. Century local tokens, pottery, metalwork. etc.

John Norton.

## IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM

The museum's major open air site at Blists Hill was officially opened to the public on Saturday March 31st 1973, and quickly began to attract large numbers of visitors. The first working steam engine on the site, the horizontal pit-winding engine removed from the Milburgh Tileries, Broseley, can now be seen in operation every day. The Telford toll-house which formerly stood on the Holyhead Road at Shelton west of Shrewsbury is now re-erected, and internal decoration is almost complete. A shop to house the printer's equipment shown in the Sunday Times Exhibition 'Scene on Sundays' is now in course of erection. An ice-breaker from Chester has now joined the wrought iron tub boat on the restored section of the Shropshire Canal. Considerable progress has also been made in recent months on many other exhibits at Blists Hill.

Elsewhere in the Ironbridge Gorge, there have also been many changes. The indoor museum at Coalbrookdale has been refurbished. A bookshop has been established by the Museum Trust in the former grocer's shop in the Square at Ironbridge, and is rapidly establishing a claim to be the best specialist bookshop for industrial history in the West Midlands. Work has begun on the second stage of the restoration of the Iron Bridge. A scheme has been drawn up for the restoration of Madeley Court for which most of the necessary money is now available.

Members and Friends of the Museum are able to gain free admission to all of the Museum sites at any time during normal opening hours. Details of membership can be obtained from the Membership Secretary, Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Southside, Ironbridge, Telford.

### More Light on George Steuart, the architect

#### a) Millichope Park.

SA11296

X Amongst the unnoticed works of Steuart is the pretty temple - a rotunda with Ionic columns - above the lake at Millichope Park dated 1770. This is amongst his earliest known architectural works and Blakeway (Sheriffs of Shropshire, 208) says that it was erected as a memorial to Leighton More (d.1744) one of the sons of Thomas More (d. 1767) whose sons all predeceased him. He solaced his grief for them "... by little memorials to their virtues scattered up and down the grounds...". With the exception of the temple these do not appear to have survived, although there is clear evidence of landscaping in the park.

#### b) The Shirehall 1783

X In June 1783 when Steuart was already at work at Attingham Park the Commissioners for the new Shirehall at Shrewsbury approached him to "...give his opinion of

the several conveniences and inconveniences of each." of the competitive designs they had received, which included plans by James Smith of Shifnal and other un-named architects as well as by Edward Haycock. This was tantamount to asking Steuart to compete himself and his response was to produce plans which, after modification, were accepted on 16th. September 1783 when he was ordered to produce working drawings. Smith for his part was to draw up bills of quantities and estimates. Steuart's triumph was short-lived, for his commission was revoked on 3rd. October when the Commissioners instructed John Hiram Haycock to go ahead with his plan. Steuart was thanked for his "... assistance, trouble and attention" and told it would be unnecessary for him to proceed with preparing drawings. As a small comfort he was subsequently offered the post of surveyor of Haycock's work at a fee of £60 with monthly attendance during the contract, a post which he appears to have declined. In 1785, Steuart, Smith and other un-named architects were awarded £80 for their services but Steuart's share is not known. Although the designs by Steuart do not survive there are, in the county archives, three separate elevations and plans by James Smith as well as those signed by Edward Haycock. The contract for the building was given to Haycock's brother, John Hiram, and was signed on 1st. January 1784. John Hiram has normally been given the credit for the design but in view of the surviving drawings he should probably give place to his brother or share the honours.

(The above is based on SRO 348/10; a fuller account of the Shirehall contract is intended elsewhere.

J.B.Lawson

## Census of Medieval Tiles in Great Britain

This survey is being sponsored by the Society of Antiquaries and the county representative is Mrs. J. Beard, 1, Leonard Street, Oakengates, Telford. The census involves measuring, sketching and tracing tiles in situ. This is obviously a large task, and Mrs. Beard would be glad of any help which can be offered. Anyone who would like to give assistance is asked to write to her at the above address.

James Smith of Coppice Green, Shifnal:  
architect and surveyor

Virtually nothing is known of Smith's work but at this stage a note seems worthwhile in the hope that others may be able to add further details. He was employed in the county service as surveyor under William Hayward on Tern Bridge in the late 1770's and probably in other similar works as well. (SRO County Treasurers a/c 1778-1788) He designed and executed the library at Hartlebury Castle, Worcs. for the Bishop of Worcester in 1781 where he employed stuccoist Joseph Bromfield. (Country Life 23rd. September 1971. At much the same time in 1782/3 he was engaged on preliminary surveys and valuations of properties to be purchased for the building of the new Shirehall at Shrewsbury and in 1783 submitted three alternative designs for this building. (SRO 348/10). He also made drawings for improvements at Pitchford Hall which are undated and were unexecuted. (NRA Pitchford Hall FL5).

It is probable that much of his time was spent as a surveyor and overseeing the works of others but the drawings and his work at Hartlebury indicate that he had some talent and it is to be hoped that more of his work will come to light.

J.B.Lawson.

### Thomas Telford and Robert Adam

It is well known that Telford had connections with the Adam Brothers in London after his arrival there from Scotland but equally that it was Sir William Chambers who gave him his principal employment. When Telford arrived in Shropshire it has been generally assumed that his advancement was entirely due to the influence of William

Pulteney, who as M.P. for Shrewsbury was a man of considerable importance, not to say wealth. It is therefore interesting that when he was appointed surveyor for the building of the new county gaol on 28th. July 1787 he produced a 'Character' from 'Mr. Robert Adam, Architect' which was duly filed by order of the Commioners, although it has not survived. The influence of Pulteney must clearly have been important as there were plenty of local men who might have been interest in the post. Telford was probably fortunate in that he had a few outside commitments at this point and was therefore in a position to give the time to the job which busier surveyors with a large practice could not. The salary of £60 a year was quite handsome and the conditions of employment proved no bar to his developing an active local practice, partly in the county service.

The fact that Sir William Chambers for whom Telford worked at Somerset House did not provide the reference suggests that the relationship between Telford and Adam was closer than has been accepted. (SRO 348/10)

J.B.Lawson.

### A factor in the Liquidation of the Snailbeach

#### Mining Company Limited?

Visitors to the Snailbeach area will be familiar with the tall chimney which rears out of Snailbeach Coppice. This is held to be the chimney belonging to

the Snailbeach Company's smelting works, erected east of the main workings at S.J.373 030. in 1863. Indeed the brick-lined flue may still be traced running from the remains of the five furnaces for some 150 yards in that direction until it finally disappears after

passing under the track of the Snailbeach and District Railway.

The smeltery was erected in 1863 after the closure of the company's Nags Head Colliery and Smelt House at the Green in Pontesbury in 1882 (1). This was possibly the result of a combination of the successful action brought in 1857 by the Rector of Pontesbury regarding the escape of lead fumes from the smelt house chimney at Pontesbury, (2), and the exhaustion of the coal seams there, for no possible benefit could be obtained from smelting adjacent to the colliery if the coal had been worked out. (3)

In any event the new smeltery commenced work in 1863, with the horizontal flue and tall chimney providing not only a good draught, but also fulfilling the twofold purpose of condensing the lead fumes and enabling the lead particles on the flue side to be recovered. During the 1880's when the lead market was depressed 'Flue Dust' was much in demand from Snailbeach and fetch only about £1. per ton less than 'Best Best' pig lead (4). However, the chimney itself seems to have caused trouble for the Company, and may eventually have been partially responsible for its voluntary liquidation in 1884. In 1876, although only 13 years old, the chimney began to crumble, its condition being described by the mine agent thus:-

'I would draw your attention to your chimney stack on the hill forming the vent of the smelting house flue which in my country would be termed 'groggy'... The original perpendicular of the ediface has become transformed into a segment of an arch...'

He continued, indicating the steps being taken to bind the chimney with iron hoops and concluded: -

.....I am not without hope that..... this somewhat remarkable specimen of Architectural Art may be preserved. (5)

However the repairs barely kept it intact for another ten years and, as had been feared, the cracks widened, and the chimney fell down during the night of July 18th/19th 1884. (6)

It is generally recognised that the great slump in the lead market which commenced in the mid 1870's was the major factor which forced the Snailbeach Mine Company limited into voluntary liquidation in 1884, and the efforts of the directors to remain in business by reducing the Royalty are reasonably well documented. It remains a matter of speculation, however whether the unfortunate collapse of the Chimney in July, which disrupted smelting for at least six months, may have been the last straw which persuaded the proprietors to vote for the voluntary liquidation of the company when they met at Oswestry on 28th. August of that year. (7) The vote was nevertheless taken, and the chimney subsequently re-erected by the new company which was formed to continue to work the mine. It remained in operation until 1895 when smelting ceased, (8) and, unlike its predecessor is still standing as a reminder of the activity which once dominated that part of Shropshire.

David Edge.

- References:-
1. S.R.O. 800/ Box 25 - Managers Report 5.6.1863
  2. Albutt.M & Brook F. 'The Snailbeach Mining Company 1767-1911' Memoirs of Northern Cavern and Mine Socy. 1969. p.71.
  3. S.R.O. 800/ Box 25 - Letter W.Eddy to J.Jones 17.5.1862
  4. Ibid Accounts 1880-1884
  5. Ibid Managers Report 5.2.1876
  6. Ibid Box 26. Letter to J.Job to E. Evans 19.7.1884

7. Mining Journal September 11th 1884
8. 'The Victoria County History of Shropshire. Vol. 8. p. 323.

## HINKSHAY ROWS

SA 12907

X A report on the houses at Hinkshay Rows, Dawley (SJ.696075) was published in Shropshire Newsletter No. 33 in 1967, not long before the houses were demolished. The object of this article is to examine the social structure of the village as revealed by the 1851 census and the tithe map for Dawley parish.

The settlement consisted of 80 houses, most of them in three rows; a 'Double Row' of 48 back-to-back houses, a 'Single Row' of 21 houses parallel to the former, and a 'New Row' at right angles to the other two, consisting of ten houses of a rather superior standard. The houses in Double Row appear to have been let with allotments, whereas very few of the occupants in Single Row, and none of those in New Row seem to have had gardens of any kind in the 1840's. The total population in 1851 was 428 of whom 242 were aged 20 or under.

It seems that there were quite distinct social differences between the occupants of the different rows. Of the 41 working heads of households in Double Row, 23 were labourers in the iron industry and only two were skilled workers in ironmaking. Of the 16 others, eight were in mining occupations. In Single Row however there were only eight labourers in the ironworks, and eleven skilled ironworkers. In New Row the contrast is even more marked, there being no labourers in these houses. Seven of the ten men had skilled jobs in ironmaking, and the remainder were tradesmen.

Six of the houses seem to have been occupied by two distinct families each, three in Double Row and three in Single Row. A further 19 of the 80 houses had lodgers, of whom eleven were related to the heads of the households in which they lived.

There seems to have been little acceptable work for women in this area, since none of the married women had any occupation other than housework, and of the 34 girls

between 12 and 18 in the village only six were at work. A high proportion of girls in this age group attended school; 14 being recorded as pupils or scholars, while 14 were simply 'at home'. Of the 36 boys in this age group only 4 still attended school, and 29 were at work. Although a higher proportion of the children from New Row attended school, there is little indication of any tendency for the families from Single and Double Rows to send their children to work earlier.

The majority of the population of Hinkshay Rows

were involved in the iron industry. 71 of the men at work were involved in ironworking, 11 in various types of mining, and 27 in other industries or trades. Of 30 undefined labourers, a large number were probably involved in the iron industry.

This article arises from work done during the adult class on 'The Social History of the Telford Area' held at Madeley Library during the 1972-73 Session. It is hoped in due course to publish material on other settlements in the East Shropshire

material on other settlements in the East Shropshire coalfield, and to draw on the 1841, 1861 and 1871 censuses as well as that of 1851.

Susan Roberts.

## Fish Weirs on the River Severn in Shropshire

This is a summary of sites recognised by ground evidence (weir channel, 'bylet' and barge gutter) or mentioned in records such as list made in 1575.

(TSAS. 1st ser. XI 425-6. Gatacre MSS) For an explanation of the origins of fish weirs see Shropshire

Newsletter No. 41, September 1971.

Each site listed in downstream order with grid reference, parish, township or other placename, side of river, present state of channels and historical references.

SJ 345160 ALBERBURY WITH CARDESTON, Hay Weir, south side with small bylet and gutter; weir 1575, disused 1754 (V.C.H. Salop VIII p 210) but still a fishery in the 19th century. (SCRO. Liddle & Heane MSS), 'Old Weir on O.S.6" 1881.

SJ 391152 ALBERBURY WITH CARDESTON, Little Shrewardine, south side with midstream bylet and wide gutter; weir 1575, recorded in deeds 16-17th cent. (V.E.H. Salop VIII p 210) and still on O.S. map c 1900; stumps of hedge and stone cill still in river.

(As its foundation Alberbury Priory was granted the fishing rights along this reach of the Severn, but there is no clear evidence of any weir other than the above two).

SJ. 422145 MONTFORD, Weir Farm, North side with bylet and gutter; fishery 1086, weir 1575, fence with two openings shown by estate map 1728 (S.C.R.O. Powis MSS) Watercolour 1897 (Shrewsbury Borough Library) and O.S. maps 1881 and 1902. Remains of timbers still visible at low water: in 1086 Montford only had half a fishery while the adjacent Ford had one; perhaps they shared this side.

SJ 439165 MONTFORD, Forton, Bromley's Forge, North side with bylet and gutter and also a further extension of gutter now silted up; weir fence with two openings shown by estate map 1728 (SCRO Powis MSS) stumps of timbers still on side of bylet.

SJ 441166 Fitz, Mytton, North side on steep bar with 'horseshoe' gutter around bylet now silted up; Weir 1575.

SJ 453162 Fitz, Mytton (problem site), North side on gravel bar with 'horseshoe gutter' now silted up; much longer gutter (500 yards) on Isle estate by-passing whole site, apparently out of use on eighteenth century estate maps. (S.C.R.O. Sandford MSS)

Field name = Great Potch Green on maps but locally called barge field.

SJ 454168 SHREWSBURY, St. CHAD, Rossall or Isle estate, South side with normal gutter now silted up, lying amongst medieval ridges; Weir fields on Isle estate but bylet not shown by 18th cent. estate maps. (S.C.R.O. Sandford MSS) Field name in Mytton = Boat lands (Tithe Map) Probably driven out of use by establishment of southside tow path.

SJ 455180 FITZ, North side with very long bylet and gutter (400 yards); weir 1575, weir hedge shown by O.S. 1900, no timbers surviving today.

SJ 490134 SHREWSBURY, ST MARY, Coton Hill, North side with well known 'barge gutter' around very large bylet, taking traffic until 19th century, but now silted at upper end. Common weir of town 1531, not mentioned 1575; petition to repair 1617-18 (James R.F. Old River bed at Shrewsbury (TSAS 53 1950 242-250)); Burghley map 1575 and St. Mary Tithe Map show small bylet in main river which has since destroyed although shoals remain.

SJ 504134 SHREWSBURY, HOLY CROSS AND ST. GILES, Holywell, South side with very large gutter and bylet; Weir 1575; is this fishery mentioned as property of Abbey in Chartulary ?

SJ 520142 UFFINGTON, Pinley. North side with gutter around bylet looking more like main river channel (?); Weir 1575. Site also associated with quays serving Uffington Forges.

SJ 527136 UFFINGTON. North side (?), site now only large gravel bar and ford 'Weir Field' names in Uffington. There would have been no clash with towpath at this point if weir belonged to Uffington.

SJ 521119 UPTON MAGNA, Preston Boats. North side with complex gutter and bylets; upper gutter around weir blocked by silt but lower one flowing; remains of stakes and cills of three openings survive. Fishery 1086, Weir 14th cent. 1575 and right through to O.S. 1900 until finally damaged in flood 1910; but still usable in 1920's. Photograph c 1890 illustrated in Waters (1947) Severn Stream and History reviewed in court action, 1830, 'Burton v Wilcox', (Shrewsbury Borough Library; Newspaper Cuttings Vol.3 p. 108) (This is best preserved and well document site;)

SJ 537095 ATCHAM, Chilton. South Side, on extensive gravel bar, with gutter and bylet; another old gutter (?) downstream, now blocked off with silt. No historical evidence for weir; Attingham estate maps place boundary through present gutter but include whole of the downstream feature which was open 1793 but closed by 1807 (S.C.R.O. Attingham MSS) (Site visible from A.5) Undocumented site which would have clashed with south side towpath.

SJ 540844 ATCHAM, Cronkhill. South side on gravel bar below sharp bend; gutter and bylet could have developed

naturally as 'point bar' and chute system. Could be the 'Crockhill bylet' mentioned in 1575 when it was ordered that the river be returned to its original course. On the other hand, could this refer to Chilton site?

SJ 552090 WROXETER (or BERRINGTON ?) Mouth of Tern North side (?) with remains of bylet; site between old mouth of Tern and Repton's Cut. Weir 1575, bylet gradually diminishing on O.S. field sheets and Tithe Maps.

SJ 561083 WROXETER. North side with well developed gutter taking main flow; Weir 1575; remains of Roman Bridge in weir channel; well established ford at lower end on line of Watling Street in use into 19th. cent.

SJ 569058 WROXETER, Eyton. North side (?) wider river channel around site of bylet shown to be getting smaller on successive nineteenth century O.S. maps; Weir 1575.

SJ 572051 COUND, Cound Lane (uncertain site). Bar and gutter following same pattern as Cronkhill's bylet known to have grown silt and vegetation cover in last forty years (ex. inf. local resident) and therefore not shown by any O.S. maps; adjacent holding could have been weir house, but no other evidence of weir.

SJ 580050 WROXETER, Eyton or Cressage. South side (?) with gutter silted up and bylet fused with floodplain; 'bylet' = field name on Wroxeter map; significant hedge line on O.S. 1881. Site probably driven out of use by clash with southside towpath.

SJ 592051 LEIGHTON, Eaton Constantine. North side with gutter now silted up; fishery 1086, weir 1575; gutter still open on O.S. 1881.

SJ 593043 CRESSAGE. South side (?) probable site near to village on gravel bar where gutter may have become buried under fresh silt banks on inside of bend; otherwise site similar to Count Lane and Crockhill; Fishery 1086, weir 1575. The towpath appears to have crossed to north side at Cressage Bridge.

SJ - - - 04- (?) LEIGHTON or SHEINTON. Site not yet identified. 'Weir with two mouths' owned by John Conye 1575. Probably south side if towpath followed north side.

SJ 642044 BUILDWAS, Buildwas Abbey. North side (?) with gutter and low bylet could be natural. Weir 1575, ordered to be modified, probably since the towpath was on the north side, and yet there appears to be little room for a gutter below steep hillside and on solid rock in river bed. Weir Will = field name at SJ.

SJ 646044 BUILDWAS, below bridge north side or middle (?) long gutter and bylet on south side recently silted up and filled up by power station yards, but other islands on north side; weir 1575, when five weirs below BUILDWAS bridge were to be widened, suggesting that boats had to pass through weirs where the gorge prevented cutting of gutters - see below. South side bylet only shown on Estate maps 18 (S.C.R.O.) and O.S. 1881.

SJ 662036 (?) BENTHALL. No recognisable site; Weir 1575.

SJ 668035 (?) BENTHALL 'Bowe'. No recognisable site; Weir 1575 owned by Richard Benthall.

SJ 678033 (?) BROSELEY, (or MADELEY) 'Robin' site probably on very large bar near later Bedlam Furnace and Robin Hood Inn; Weir 1575 owned by James Clifford.

SJ 685031 (?) BROSELEY (or MADELEY) 'Loyds' site probably on steep gravel bar near calcutts; Weir 1575 owned by James Clifford.

SJ 694024 (?) MADELEY, Hay Farm, Site not recognisable; considerable alterations were made to the river during

foundings of Coalport in 1790's; Weir 1575.

SJ 707017 SUTTON MADDOCK or BROSELEY, Sweeney Cliff Island in middle of river but no evidence of weir; island reduced by erosion following river authority bee cutting, and further destroyed by Telford sewage works.

SJ 711010 BROSELEY, Swinney, West side (?), bylet in midstream with parish boundary - (such boundaries usually follow gutter upstream of Cressage). Weir 1575.

SO 709980 STOCKTON, Apley Park, East side, with bylet becoming fused with west bank; Weir 1575.

SO 719929 BRIDGENORTH, West side with clear bylet and gutter. No other evidence.

SO (?) near Bridgnorth, 'Withakeswere' (Shrewsbury Abbey Chartulary)

SO 73-90- QUATFORD, East side (?) site not recognised; Weir 1575.

SO (?) QUAT MALVERN, Dudmaston, East side, (?) site not recognised; weir 1575; islands at SO 734885 likely to be on gravel at mouth of Mor Brook,

(as at Count Brook)

SO 744849 ALVELEY, Hay House, Bylet on O.S. field sheet and O.S. 1900 but not on O.S. 6" 1881; Field names Weir Leazow and a weir house but no bylet 1770 (S.C.R.O. Alveley Survey)

In addition, the following weirs between the county boundary and Bewdley were mentioned in the 1575 list.

SO 756804 UPPER ARLEY (Worcestershire). Eastside with bylet in middle of river; weir 1575, former



fishery mentioned by Randall (1882) The Severn Valley  
p. 404.

SO 765790 KIDDERMINSTER, FOREIGN, EYMER (Worcestershire).  
East side with bylet in middle of river.

SO 780763 (?) UPPER ARLEY or BENDLEY Bowles  
(Worcestershire)

D.J.Fannett

### THE WREKIN, WELLINGTON (SO 631083)

Excavations on the Wrekin in April and early May showed that the hill-fort was permanently occupied as a village in the centuries before the Roman conquest. The work was financed by the Department of the Environment in advance of the construction of the television transmitting station within the earthworks of the ancient camp. Test excavations showed that the actual building site - on the steep west slope between the defences of the inner and outer camps - is not of great archaeological interest. There was no evidence of prehistoric hut platforms and along most of this side the line of the rampart was marked simply by a ledge cut on the hill-side to provide a fighting platform.

Most of the excavations took place along the line of the intended approach track to the station from the present track along the ridge of the hill. Here were found the post-holes of timber buildings measuring about 10 feet square. The natural slope was about 1 in 6 and platforms had been cut into the hill-side to accommodate these huts which were only about 12 feet apart. The close arrangement and utilisation of this steep north-facing slope must indicate that space on the hill was at a premium and it may be assumed that, except for the western side, most of the rest of the camp was covered

X

with these little rectangular huts, some of them dwellings, others store-buildings. The population of the Wrekin before the Roman conquest may have numbered a thousand or more. Nor were these temporary visitors, for it has been possible to recognise at least three or four rebuilding phases in most of the post-holes, and comparison with similar evidence from Herefordshire hill-forts suggests that this indicates that the Outer Camp of the Wrekin was occupied for at least three or four hundred years. Only further excavation could show whether the occupation of this Outer Camp represents an extensive early occupation that was followed by a contraction to the Inner Camp, or marks an extension of the occupied area after some earlier occupation of the Inner Camp on the summit itself.

The discovery of carbonized grain shows that corn was important and should provide radio-carbon dates for the occupation of the outer camp on the Wrekin. Most of the final buildings were destroyed by fire, and by dating the associated carbonized grain it should be possible to see whether the destruction occurred about the time of the Roman Conquest or long before.

S.C.Stanford  
University of Birmingham

For the Shropshire Archaeological Society

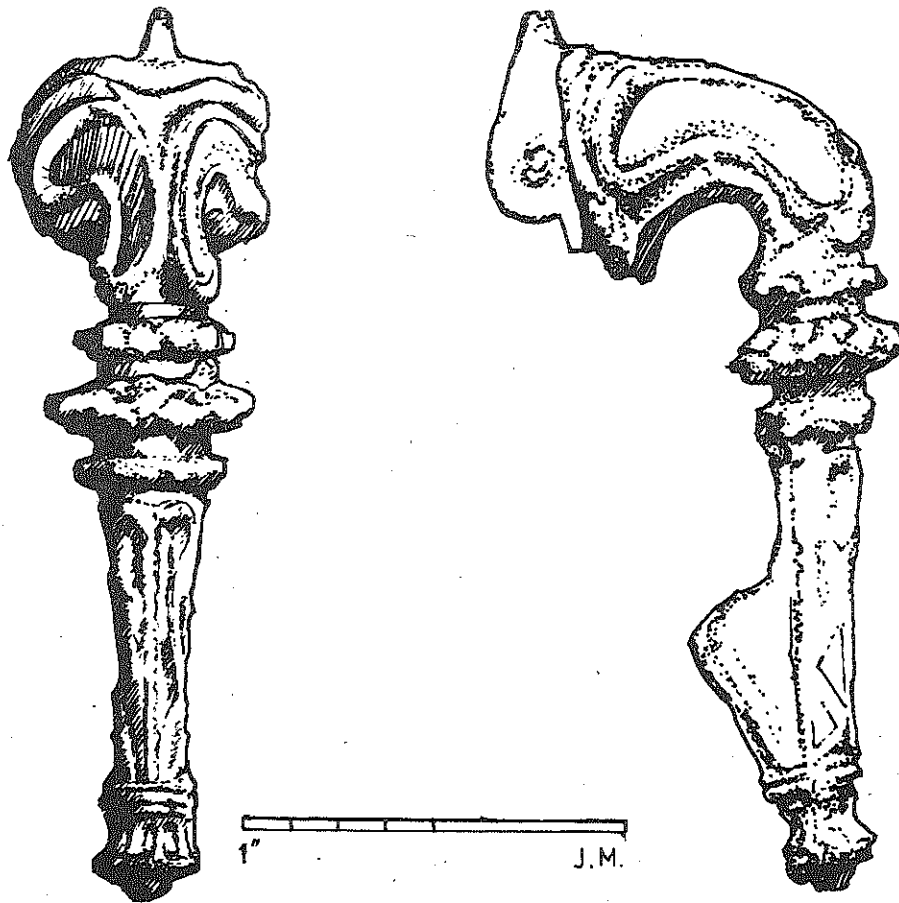
### ROMANO-BRITISH FIND at CHURCH STRETTON

Many children are fascinated by earthworks and other signs in their environment of the activities of earlier generations. Pupils at Church Stretton Modern School are encouraged to observe and report on these and to bring in for discussion and identification, any objects of interest that they may find during gardening, or ploughing, or on walks. This policy proved most successful when 1st. year

pupil, Philip Stracham, brought to school a bronze object found whilst gardening at his home near Watling Street.

The find spot was midway between Watling Street South and the A49 (SO 455947) and very close to the course of a stream, which now flows through pipes in a N.W. direction under Watling Street South and the A49. The object was recognised as a Roman Trumpet brooch and Mr. Donald Mackreth was kind enough to provide the following admirable description.

Joan Miller



Trumpet brooch with tinned or silvered finish. In the projecting plate behind the trumpet head is a hole still containing part of the rolled sheet bronze tube which once ran through the spring. The spring, pin and associated loop and collar are now missing.

At the base of the rear plate is a notch for the chord of the spring while the top projects above the head of the brooch to act as a stop to prevent the loop and collar from falling forward over the front of the brooch. On each side of the rear plate is a hollow body in the brooch filled with what appears to be burnt clay from the core used in manufacture.

Running round the back of the head is a moulding which breaks forward at the top. On either side of the head of the brooch is a ridged moulding which defines the upper surface. At the bottom of these side mouldings are others which suggest a bordering lobe. The centre of the bow has three cross-mouldings sharply separated one from another. The top and bottom ones have a row of bosses along them. The central one is damaged but has above and below a series of flutes which more or less match each other - the intention may originally have been to give the edge of the moulding a wavy appearance. The lower bow has a panel on either side defined towards the centre by a ridge; there is a medium hollow between the two ridges filled with rocker-arm ornament, while the outer edges of the panels have traces of what appears to have been a double ridge. Within each panel are two S-shaped mouldings which overlap to produce a lentoid shape at their junction. The foot-knob is complex: at the top is a double cross-moulding, the upper one being knurled, and at the bottom is another with a boss underneath. Between these mouldings is a concave surface decorated with a series of vertical flutes. The catch-plate is damaged yet bears at the back of the return a vertical ridge and on the return itself may be seen two horizontal incised lines with a flute between.

As is clear from the description, this is a highly ornamented brooch. It is one of a family of such brooches which belong to the Severn Valley and

only seldom occur outside that area. There are a number at Wroxeter and it is possible that it was made there. In general the family may be divided into two types: one decorated with relief ornament and another decorated with inlay. The character of the designs in each type is similar but the inlaid ones can be more complex. Close parallels for any brooch in the family hardly exist; in fact; it can be surmised that quite a lot of the decoration would have been added in the form of knurling, rocker-arm, punched dots, incised lines and general touching up of the rough casting. Those brooches belonging to the inlaid type would have been very susceptible to variation in design, even where there was an intention to copy.

The Trumpet brooch was much used in the second century but it is only comparatively recently that the first century origins of the type have become clear: a brooch from Baginton, Warks., was broken, then repaired and broken again before being thrown away about 75 A.D.. This brooch is a fully developed Trumpet with enamel decoration, hence it is certain that the prototypes were being developed years before.

For the present specimen, therefore, a date range of late first century into the second may be suggested. Closer dating is not possible owing to the virtual absence of dated examples.

Trans. Birmingham A.S., 83, 1966 & 1967, p.110, fig. 19.9.

D.F.Mackrath.

### Summer Schools and Training Excavations in Archaeology

The University of Birmingham Department of Extramural Studies has arranged the following courses for the summer of 1973:

Roman-British Archaeology: Excavation techniques at Wroxeter.

Course A. 28th July - 11th August directed by Mr. Charles Daniels, and Course B, 12th - 26th August directed by

Dr. Graham Webster. For further details contact the Department of Extramural Studies, P.O. Box 363, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT.

Hen Domen. Montgomery.

Work will continue on the timber buildings of the bailey of this 11th century castle from 30 June to 22 July. Volunteers will be paid subsistence, and training in a wide range of archaeological techniques will be given.

Rom

Wroxeter Roman City: Baths Basilica.

Excavation of this site will take place from 4 August to 1 September. Volunteers will be paid subsistence and training in field techniques of all kinds will be given.

For details of each of the above courses contact P.A. Barker, Esq., 4 St. George's Square, Worcester.

### A forthcoming lecture

Full details of the Archaeological Society's winter lecture programme are not at present available, but members may like details of one meeting planned for the early autumn. On Friday, September 28th. Dr. David Hey of the University of Leicester will lecture to the Society on 'Myddle: a Woodland Community, 1500-1701.' Dr. Hey is the author of a forthcoming book 'An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts', to be published by the Leicester University Press in the autumn. Myddle is the best documented of all English rural communities of the 16th and 17th centuries, thanks to Richard Gough's splendid history. Dr. Hey has been able to supplement Gough's work from a wide range of other records, creating what is perhaps the most detailed historical study ever made of a pre-industrial community. The lecture will be at 7-30pm at Bear Steps, Shrewsbury.

## Victoria County History

Volume II of the Victoria History of Shropshire, edited by A.T. Gaydon, will be published on July 13th., 1973. It is published for the Institute of Historical Research (University of London) by the Oxford University Press at £16-50.

Volume II is a general volume treating subjects that it has been thought best to deal with on a county-wide footing: ecclesiastical history, the history of the county's public schools and endowed grammar schools, sporting history and population statistics. The greater part of the volume is devoted to the individual histories of forty religious houses, written by Dr. Marjorie Chibnall, fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge. Sports described including fox-hunting, coursing, otter hunting, fishing, shooting, cricket, cock-fighting and athletics. The volume will be fully reviewed in a future issue of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

### Recent Publications

Prehistoric Man in Wales and the West. Essays in honour of Lily F. Chitty. Ed. Frances Lynch and Colin Burgess. Adams and Dart, 1972. £10-50.

The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire. By Barry Trinder. Phillimore. 1973 £4-50.

Thomas Telford (a pictorial biography) By Brian Bracegirdle and Patricia H. Miles. David and Charles. 1973. £3-50.

The Blists Hill Open Air Museum. Coalbrookdale: a walk through Coalbrookdale to explore its historic buildings and sites. The Iron Bridge. David and Sampson: a pair of blast furnace blowing engines. The Hay Inclined Plane. The Unnatural History of Blists Hill. Site guides produced by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. 10p each.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS LETTER

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## EXCAVATIONS IN SHREWSBURY

Further to the report on excavations at Pride Hill, reported in Shropshire News Letter, No. 43, news is to hand of two further excavations in the town in 1973.

1) Mr. W. E. Jenks has been continuing his work in the basement of Pride Hill Chambers, as described in Shropshire News Letter, No. 43, page 4, and has not only produced fundamentally important evidence of the sequence of the town defences, but has also found more medieval and Saxon-Norman pottery from this site than all previous discoveries in Shrewsbury put together. We await his report with great interest.

2) Mr. M. Pitman, of the Shrewsbury Borough Museum, has begun work on the Water Lane site, which includes part of the Dominican Friary, also a site of great importance in the town. It is hoped that a first report will be available shortly.

Mr. D. Stewart, formerly of the Borough Museum, observed two sites in 1971. He reports as follows:-

"Bear Steps. An unofficial report of the 'Norman Wall' was entirely erroneous. Investigation of the small portion of the remaining levels in Fish Street yielded two small sherds of stratified pottery of 14th century date. No earlier levels were present and it seems that the medieval building had removed these in the small portion that could be investigated, if they had ever existed. Strategy and topography demand that the Saxon and Norman burgh occupy the plateau above Fish Street. No Saxon pottery was evident at Mardol Head, and it seems that occupation was confined to the defensible area until a comparatively late date.

Mardol Head. This site gave a large haul of,

mostly unstratified, medieval pottery. It dates mainly from the 13th century onwards and includes some fine specimens of (incomplete) tripod pitchers, and one almost complete tyg of 16th century date. In quantity, the site more than doubled the amount of known medieval pottery from Shrewsbury (as at 1971). Publication will take time, but will have an importance as a record of known types in use locally. It was possible also to excavate with some precision some timber structures, probably industrial, and possibly connected with leather working. These were dated by sealed pottery, and are the earliest excavated timber structures so far from the town. Some parts of these structures were rescued. Other finds included much domestic rubbish (bones, etc.), parts of three shoes, and other leather. Interesting evidence was forthcoming that the small lake, known to have existed under the Old Shire Hall stretched as far as the Mardol Head."

Readers of the News Letter over the years will now be aware that ever since P. A. Barker's excavation of the Roushill site in 1959, archaeological observation and sometimes controlled excavation has taken place in the town. This has of necessity been carried out by small dedicated teams of amateurs and part-time workers. The material which has been found is of the highest significance in providing frequently the only evidence of the first thousand years of the life of the town, and what has been found and recorded, often under merely salvage conditions, is only a small proportion of what has been irretrievably lost through redevelopment schemes in the town, when a lack of available manpower has made recording impossible. Through no fault of the excavators and observers, the total archeological recording of Shrewsbury has become completely inadequate. All who have the slightest interest in the historical fate of our towns and cities should read "The Erosion of History - Archaeology and Planning in Towns", edited by C. M. Heighway, and published by the Council for British Archaeology. Here the situation of Shrewsbury

(and the other historic towns of Shropshire) is put in the context of the other 583 threatened historic towns of England, Wales and Scotland. As the report quotes "The town archives are not only in the Record Office, but also below the pavement and in the structure of the surviving historic buildings . . . . Change means, in this century, destruction more thorough than anything that has occurred before: it is mechanised and usually total. What is not recorded now cannot be retrieved later."

Recent work in Shrewsbury has illustrated dramatically the archaeological potential of the town. The situation has now reached a critical point. If this potential is to be fully realised, a full-time archaeologist working in the field and/or a Shrewsbury Excavation Committee to plan and co-ordinate archaeological work in the town, bringing together manpower, resources and finance is now essential. The Council of the Archaeological Society has been urging this point for many months now, and also with respect to the county as a whole. In this we have the support of the Department of the Environment and the Council for British Archaeology. Although nothing concrete has as yet been established, the signs are mildly favourable. But if these aims are not achieved, in the words of "The Erosion of History", ". . . . the end of the century (will) mark the elimination of a major source of evidence for the history of the British people."

At least something is being done in Shrewsbury. The CEA report goes on to record that of the other historic towns in Shropshire, some archaeological work at some time has been carried out in Ellesmere, Quatford and Whitchurch. Nothing has been or is being done in Newport, Wellington, Bishop's Castle, Bridgnorth, Church Stretton, Cleobury Mortimer, Clun, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Wem or Much Wenlock. A sobering thought indeed.

GEOFFREY TOMS



## Recent Archaeological Finds in Shropshire

Apart from scientifically controlled excavations and aerial reconnaissance, knowledge of the overall pattern of human settlement in all areas is extended by the reporting of chance finds and the deliberate searching of fields, particularly after recent ploughing. Aerial photography has shown in recent years that settlement sites of the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods were far more widespread than previously realised: although aerial photography has played a considerable part in the discovery of new sites, there are many areas where either flying is impracticable or the sub-soil is not suitable for producing crop-marks. In such cases, where sites have been previously totally destroyed by ploughing, searching the fields is the one method of rediscovery, where no documentary evidence exists to indicate the presence of an archaeological site. The activity of searching fields for surface finds, or observing non-archaeological excavations can be carried out by everyone of all ages and with no previous experience; the results can be rewarding, but it is essential that such activity should not be looked upon as mere "treasure-hunting", but that such finds should be reported, examined by the expert, and then placed in a museum for future inspection by the public. In this way new sites can be put on the map, and all can join in valuable and simple research. It must be emphasised that permission must always be sought from the land-owner or tenant farmer before undertaking such field-walking. Any finds, which are thus made and considered to be of importance, should then be shown either to myself or the local correspondent of the Society, whose names appear in the Shropshire News Letter, No. 42. I am grateful to be able to report on the following discoveries, which have been brought to

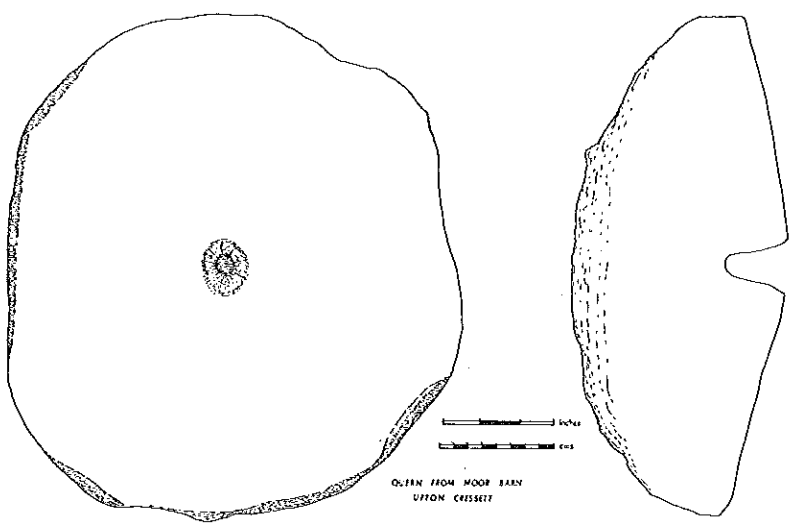
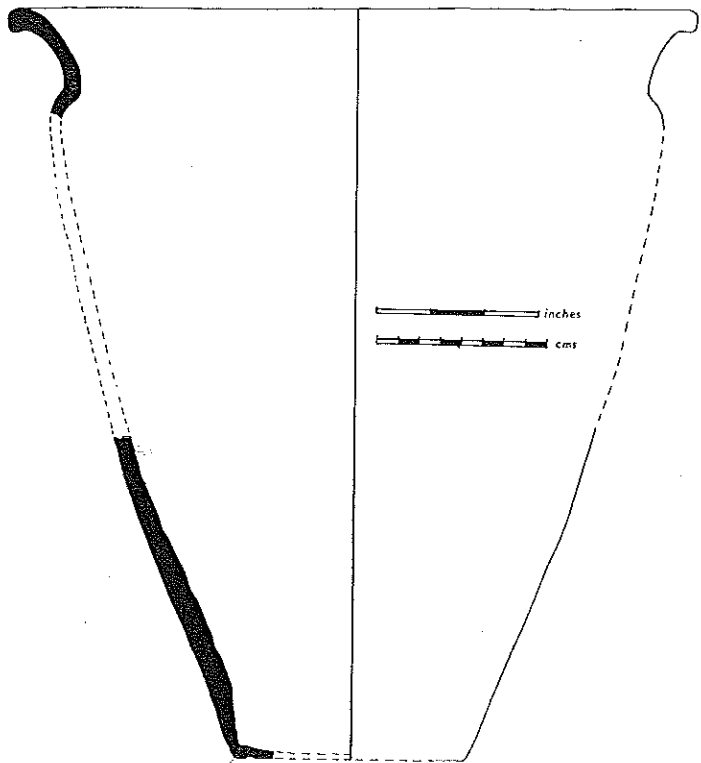
my notice and illustrate the valuable information which can be collated in this way.

#### BROMPTON (Grid Ref: SJ 555071)

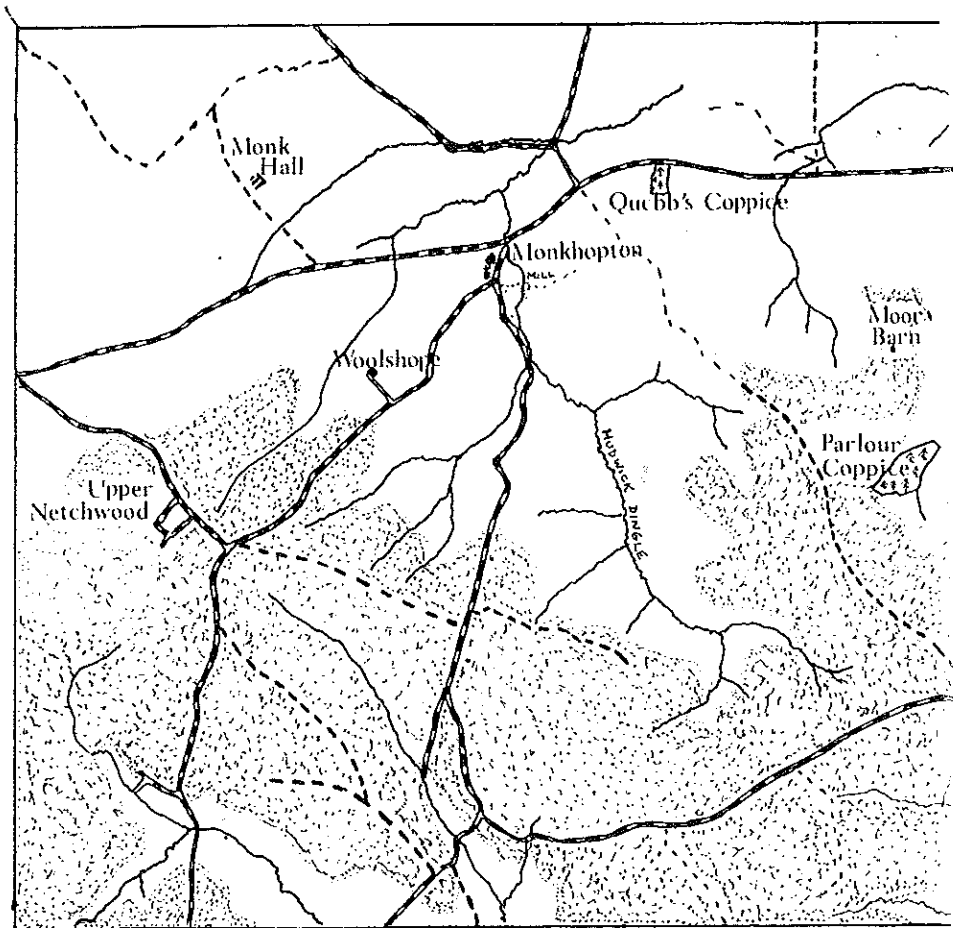
Mr. S. E. Yates, of Upper Brompton Farm, reported the discovery of Roman pottery in early 1972, when digging a drainage ditch across one of his fields. The ditch of about one metre in depth, and 200 metres in length, had sliced through a rubbish pit dug in the natural clay: no other finds were made along its length. Conditions for excavation were difficult due to the very waterlogged nature of the ground, but the pit appeared to be about a metre in depth and 50 cms. across. The fill was composed of ash and fragments of six pots, all of which could be dated to the 2nd century AD. The material, which is now deposited in the Borough Museum at Shrewsbury consists of

- 1 worn sherd of Samian ware bowl Form 37
  - 4 body sherds of a dark grey cooking pot
  - 2 body sherds of another dark grey cooking pot
  - 2 and 3 sherds respectively from Severn Valley Ware jars
- Many sherds making up approximately one half of a Severn Valley Ware storage jar, as illustrated.


The discovery of this pit is of interest in that it presumably marks the proximity of a farmstead site of Roman date just across the river from Wroxeter, in a region where seven other farmsteads have been identified from the air by Mr. Arnold Baker, within a mile radius of this site. This present site is within 300 metres of the Roman road from Wroxeter to the Church Stretton Gap.



QUERN FROM MOOR BARN  
UPON CRISSETT



SITES NEAR  
UPTON CRESSETT

 land over  
700 feet

⊙ barrow  
□ enclosure  
+ field



ure  
system



## WHITLEY CHAPEL FIELD (Grid Ref: SJ 457096)

The presumed site of a Roman villa, first recorded in the Shrewsbury Chronicle at the beginning of this century, would appear to have been confirmed beyond doubt by Mr. W. E. Jenks in 1971, as a result of surface finds made in the field. These consist of one piece of opus signinum, fragments of imbrex and tegula roof-tiles, and, most significantly, two complete hypocaust pila tiles. These are now deposited in the Rowley House Museum, Shrewsbury.

## EATON CONSTANTINE (Grid Ref: SJ 598052)

Mr. Arnold Baker has in recent years discovered from the air two Roman marching camps and a triple-ditched Roman fort in this general area. Field work by Mrs. J. Miller and Miss M. Beard immediately to the south of the defences of the fort produced from the surface of the field building tile, imbrex and tegula roof-tiles, and sherds of at least three Severn Valley Ware jars and the handle of a Severn Valley Ware flagon. Some 18th and 19th century pottery was also found. This pottery assemblage is interesting and surprising. One would expect the military sites to be of first century date and of timber construction. The pottery cannot be dated before the second century, and the likeliest conclusion is that here is a later unrecognised farmstead site on the earlier military sites; it is too much to surmise at this stage later military activity, although this is not unknown in the West Midlands, and notably at Wall Town, Cleobury Mortimer, in our county. The collection is in the Rowley House Museum, Shrewsbury.

## FIELD-WORK IN THE UPTON CRESSETT AREA

For the last four years Mr. David Stoves has made a number of important discoveries, both by himself and through encouraging schoolchildren to search fields. This is an area where aerial photography has had only limited results. The Shropshire News Letter, No. 38 described his important discovery of the Roman site at Parlcour Coppice (Grid Ref: SO 649926), since when there have been further finds from the field as follows:

- 1 hammer-head rim of mortarium
- 4 hooked-flange rims of mortaria
- 1 rim of black-burnished flanged bowl
- 1 rim of black-burnished bead-rim jar with lattice decoration
- a large number of sherds of Severn Valley Ware.

This pottery continues to confirm occupation falling between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD.

## UPPER NETCHWOOD FARM, MONKHOPTON (Grid Ref: SO 608921)

Kevin Fellows (aged 13) found a silver denarius lying on topsoil of a cottage garden in 1970. The coin has been identified by the British Museum as follows:

Issued by the moneyer Titus Carisius (circa 45 BC): obverse, bust of Victory; reverse, Victory in quadriga (four-horsed chariot). Reference to comparisons in Sydenham 985 and Grueber i 4070.

This is a remarkable find, as Republican denarii are invariably found in Roman military contexts. Upper Netchwood itself is clearly a diminished medieval hamlet, and considerable traces of ridge-

and-furrow in the fields surrounding the hamlet survive. There are also traces of an apparently larger ploughed-out rampart; could this be a Roman fort site? The position is ideal in that the whole site is a flat plateau just above 800 feet with all-round observation to the Clee Hills and Wenlock Edge. The only Roman fort in the area is Wall Town, 10 miles to the south-east; there are four hill-forts within 5 miles, The Ditches, Abdon Burf, Nordy Bank and Clee Burf. Of other Roman military sites Eaton Constantine is 10 miles to the north and the Craven Arms complex 12 miles to the West. One must not read too much into the discovery of a single coin, but the site is where one would expect a fort to be. The Roman road from Greensforge to Craven Arms passes within half a mile of the site to the north. Until confirming pottery is found on the site, the option must be kept open that the coin could be a collector's piece lost.

#### MOCR BARN, UPTON CRESSETT (Grid Ref: SO 647931)

The site is an isolated barn lying 1 mile north of the Roman site at Parlour Coppice. Some late medieval pottery, and also 18th century pottery including Staffordshire slip-ware has been found on the surface adjacent to the building. The most interesting find is the complete lower half of a rotary quern (illustrated): the stone is of conglomerate grit and pebble with the top well smoothed with use. The undersurface is quite irregular and broken. The central pivot hole does not in this case run through the stone but tapers to nearly a point, as if a round wedge of iron or wood had been used as a spindle round which the upper stone would rotate. It would be impossible to date this object.



## MONKHOPTON

The present village now consists only of church, manor farm, and a few houses, which lie outside the original nucleus of the medieval village. There are marked earthworks, suggesting house platforms on both sides of the village street north of the church, with ridge-and-furrow further west. It would seem that much of the centre of Monkhopton encapsulates a deserted medieval village, and Mr. Stoves has made two finds of medieval pottery in this area.

a) Grid Ref: SO 626935. Excavation for the erection of a new barn east of the village street revealed pottery, roof tiles and bones a foot below the surface of the field overlying a layer of small irregular stone slabs, two feet below the surface, and under these further pottery was found. About 100 sherds have been found, broadly confirming the stratification: much of the upper layer consists of hard-fired buff and white late medieval (14th and 15th centuries) pots and pitchers; some of the pitchers are glazed green and brown with rouletted and rilled decoration, with one deeply slashed handle. The lower level produced predominantly black and dark grey cooking pots: three main types of rim exist - incurved, infolded and clubbed - and these would all fit a 12th or 13th century date.

b) Home Farm Cottages. Grid Ref: SO 627934.

This collection was found by Master Timothy Simmonds while planting his garden. The site is adjacent to the Hudwick Dingle, a few yards south of the mill site at Monkhopton. About 40 sherds were found including 6 cooking

pot rims and a slashed handle of a green-glazed tripod pitcher. The assemblage is similar to the collection from site (a) and would seem to cover the period 12th to 14th century.

#### MORVILLE (Grid Ref: SO 669940)

Trevor Rowley has shown that the centre of Morville between the church and the Hall was deliberately deserted for landscaping reasons towards the end of the 16th century. The village "green" admirably preserves the original village street with its house platforms on either side. A drainage ditch cut fifty yards north of the church in November, 1972, produced 19 sherds of late medieval type including rouletted and grooved glazed pitcher fragments.

#### BRIDGWALTON (Grid Ref: SO 689927)

The whole Bridgwalton area deserves an intensive survey in the field: the site is a long well-drained plateau just below 300 feet standing above the Mor Brook to the south and the Tiddle Brook to the north. Bronze Age settlement is attested by a series of round barrows, some of which survive still, and some being recently discovered from the air by Arnold Baker. Worked flints including cores and small scrapers have been found by Mr. Stoves on two barrow sites (685926) and (687926). Iron Age and/or Romano-British enclosures have been discovered from the air by Arnold Baker at 687928 and 692922. The most prolific finds are from a mound (castle? round barrow? house platform?) east of Bridgwalton Farm: about 40 sherds have here been found, the majority of buff ware and of heavy and coarse manufacture compared with adjacent

sites. Among the sherds are 4 pitcher handles, a thumb-pressed pitcher base, and 7 cooking pot rims. The whole assemblage would not seem earlier than the 14th century.

The Morville-Cross Houses road may well be very early and on the line of a Bronze Age ridgeway track. Bridgwalton itself, which now consists of only two farms, whose two buildings are probably of the 17th century, and one other new house, would appear from its layout strongly suggestive of a larger hamlet or village of the early middle ages. (I should welcome any further information from correspondents on the history of this settlement).

Other finds in the region reported by Mr. David Stoves include

WOOLSHOPE FARM, MONKHOPTON  
(Grid Ref: SO 619929)

Flint core, flakes and scraper. Two sherds of medieval pottery, one cooking-pot rim.

WOOLSHOPE, MONKHOPTON (Grid Ref: SO 621928)

Flange of Roman Samian Ware, probably Form 36.

MONK HALL GRANGE, MONKHOPTON  
(Grid Ref: SO 613940)

One rim of light buff cooking pot with carinated neck and slightly everted rim - late medieval.

QUEBB'S COPPICE, MONKHOPTON  
(Grid Ref: SO 634940)

Two medieval cooking pot rims - one in hard black ware, the other in soft red ware.

MONKHOPTON (Grid Ref: SO 627934)

One flint straight-sided arrowhead (?), found by Master Geoffrey Taylor in the flood plain of the brook near the village.

GEOFFREY TOMS

## **A Bronze Rapier and Socketed Knife at Hordley**

During 1973 it was brought to my notice that two bronze weapons had been found during ploughing at Hordley. A fine rapier was discovered in a field belonging to Mr. Bernard Manford of Church Farm, and an equally fine socketed knife was brought to the surface during ploughing by Mr. George Jones of Grange Farm. Both weapons are in good condition and have been forwarded to Miss L. Chitty for more detailed investigation. A full report will appear in due course in the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

**WINIFRED B. BELL**

## A Miner's Cottage Restored at Church Aston

The Shropshire Mining Club's headquarters has recently been re-thatched. The building, a one-up, one-down cottage is in Wellington Road, Church Aston (SJ 739177) and is believed to be a 17th century limestone miner's cottage. It is certainly shown on William Hill's map of the area of 1681, which ties in well with an estimate made by the thatcher who found seven layers of thatch beneath the present one. Each layer was estimated to have protected the building for, on average, about 40 years. (1974, less 7 x 40 - 1694). The building has a flanged mining-type rail serving as a lintel.

The cottage was re-thatched by Mr. R. Jones of Onibury who spends the whole of his working life repairing the estimated 400 thatched cottages in Shropshire. This particular job, a small one, cost about £400, most of it being raised from grants and the sale of publications. The Mining Club is now raising funds to purchase additional mine and cave rescue equipment.

IVOR J. BROWN

## The Wellington Bell Foundry after 1682

It is more than sixty years since there was published in the Transactions the last instalment, the ninth, of "The Church Bells of Shropshire" by H. B. Walters. This monumental survey of bells throughout the county was concluded by a chronological account of the bells and their founders. The Wellington foundry, operated by the Clibury family from circa 1590 to 1682, was the only Shropshire foundry with a well authenticated and relatively continuous history of more than a few years. Yet there was a mystery about its operations after 1682.

The last Clibury bell-founder, Henry was working from circa 1673 but his last known bell is dated 1682, after which time the "last representative of the Wellington foundry was not a Clibury, but bore the initials I.B." No further clue to the identity of "I.B." was available to Walters, nor, it seems, to the recent historian of Wellington. The bells which seemed to be assignable to the unknown Wellington founder covered the period 1685 to 1700, "leaving a blank of three years after Henry Clibury's latest bell".

Some recent research, still incompleting, shows that it is possible to name the founder, to show that he was doing some bell work at Wellington from 1682 and that he was still at work in 1705. He was John Bradshaw, and the Shifnal Churchwarden's accounts are the source for the information.

In April, 1682/3 the Shifnal Churchwardens paid "John Bradshaw of Wellington for exchanging of the brasses ..." and paid John Felton "for taking up the 5 bells and laying in the new brasses ..." and sundry other work. In 1685 Bradshaw was paid 10/- for a bell, while in 1705 he was paid 28/- for casting another bell.

As the accounts beyond 1705 have not been studied it is possible that Bradshaw was working beyond that date.

Who was John Bradshaw? Tentatively I suggest that he was the John, son of John Bradshaw and Joyce who was baptised at Wellington on 11th February, 1648/9, and who appears at least eight times between 1678 and 1696 as father of children baptised there. I further suggest he was the John Bradshaw, described as a pewterer, who died in circa 1739 after having made over to his son William the entirety of his property while yet alive. He would by then have been of great age, approaching 90 years; but in 1682 he would have been in his early thirties, which seems a reasonable time for him to have taken over Clibury's foundry. I stress that this is only tentative, and without some detailed work in the Wellington parish registers is offered only as a suggestion. There is however no shadow of doubt about the names of the founder and the extended period of work of the Wellington bell foundry.

Sources: TSAS 4th series, vol. 1, part 1 (1911); Wellington Parish Register, Baptisms, vol. 1 (1955); wills at Lichfield; Shifnal Overseers Book in Stafford Record Office.

NORMAN MUTTON

## The TAR TUNNEL again

For many years people interested in the history of the Ironbridge Gorge have known that Erasmus Darwin (1731 - 1802) of Lichfield, the famous doctor and writer, visited the Tar Tunnel not long after it was dug, but the precise source of this information has been difficult to identify. Dr. Samuel Lilley, of Nottingham University, has now identified the reference, and it proves to add several important points to our knowledge of the tunnel.

Darwin mentions the tunnel several times in his poetic/scientific work "The Botanic Garden", which was published in 1791. Sometimes what he says clearly arises from personal observation, and sometimes it is based on information sent to him by his son, Robert Darwin of Shrewsbury, who was the father of the scientist Charles Darwin.

Erasmus Darwin shows that the spring of tar which made the tunnel famous was discovered in October, 1786, and that initially its output was even greater than most other accounts have suggested - between ten and fifteen 32-gallon barrels a day. He shows that the supply had considerably diminished at the time he wrote his book, by when only about seven barrels a fortnight were being extracted. He shows that the tunnel was being extended as fresh coal seams were being discovered in July, 1788. When talking about vision, he describes how when he was in the tunnel he could see the eyes of a horse pulling a cart when it was 100 yards away, long before any parts of its body were visible. This suggests that before plate rails were laid in the tunnel in 1796, ordinary carts were used to bring out the coal.

A remark elsewhere in the book shows that Darwin was accustomed to discuss geology with Abraham Darby III, the builder of the Iron Bridge. On one occasion Darby showed Darwin a specimen of iron ore in which there was a cavity which appeared to be filled with lead. This is an interesting confirmation of Darby's interest in scientific matters.

### IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST

The most important archaeological development at the Museum since the publication of the last Newsletter has been the excavation of the remains of the three blast furnaces at Blists Hill which was undertaken by the Conservation Corps in August and September, 1973. Substantial remains of the masonry bases of all three furnaces were uncovered. During the winter Museum craftsmen have been engaged in restoration of insecure brick and stonework, and further excavation will take place during the summer of 1974. Other new exhibits at the Blists Hill open air museum include a 19th century printing shop and a 19th century sawmill. Substantial progress has also been made with the restoration of the railway siding and the steel headgear from the Farm Pit, Dawley. The Museum sites all open to the public from 30th March, 1974, and will be open every day during the summer season from 10.00 a.m., until 6.00 p.m.

The Museum Trust has been presented by the British Tourist Authority with their "Come to Britain Trophy" awarded annually to the most significant tourist development of the year. It was presented to Lady Labouchere, President of the Museum Trust, on 18th March, 1974. This is an achievement of major importance, on which the Museum Trust and its staff deserve hearty congratulations.

### REDUNDANT CHURCHES

In our rapidly-changing society the problem of redundant churches affects architectural historians and archaeologists from their own stand-point. This is yet another problem in the whole context of conservation and rescue archaeology, which nationally has now become of overwhelmingly daunting proportions.

The system whereby the Council for British Archaeology Churches Committee invited various archaeologists to act as diocesan consultants has only recently been set up and is not yet functioning fully. Nevertheless, in the Lichfield Diocese (Staffordshire and North Shropshire) useful co-operation has been received especially from the chairman and secretary of the Diocesan Redundant Churches Uses Committee and a list of sixteen churches in the diocese recently made redundant or for which redundancy is under consideration, has been received. Mr. Jim Gould, of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, has reported on Shropshire churches within the diocese, and the following notes are based on his report.

It should be emphasised that the churches were each considered from an archaeological viewpoint only, conservation and architectural consideration being considered to be outside the scope of the report. A system, whereby archaeological considerations be taken into account when a grant of a faculty for church alteration is made, has not yet been worked out so that no estimate is yet possible of the work that the grant of such faculties will entail.

The churches made redundant or being considered for redundancy have been divided into three



categories. Should the churches be demolished or should alternative uses be found which involve interference with archaeological layers sealed by the church floors or in the neighbouring churchyard, then category A are those churches where excavation is considered to be essential, category B are those churches where excavation is deemed desirable and category C are those churches considered to be unlikely to be of any archaeological interest.

#### CATEGORY A

##### ST. ALKMUNDS and ST. JULIANS, SHREWSBURY

As at May, 1973 redundancy of both churches was under consideration, without any final decisions being made. In each case the building is entirely of the 18th century, except for the medieval west tower: the nave floor is two steps higher than the tower floor, and there is every hope that medieval and earlier layers sealed by the church floor are intact. St. Alkmunds has an extensive graveyard.

The churches are in the heart of medieval Shrewsbury and an area where there are strong indications of Anglo-Saxon settlement. The parish boundary of St. Alkmund is the most extensive of all the Shrewsbury parish boundaries, and suggests that this is the earliest parish from which the parishes of St. Julians and St. Chads (another pre-conquest site) were taken.

The archaeological potential of the site is enormous, especially in view of the apparent lack of interference with the floors of the churches. Excavation could hope to:-

- i) discover details of the earliest churches in Shrewsbury, which may well date to the immediate post-Roman period.

- ii) throw light on early Christianity in the Welsh Marches and on the relationship of Welsh Christianity to both Briton and Saxon.
- iii) give some indication of the relationship between the earliest settlements at Shrewsbury and the latest occupation of the Roman site at Wroxeter.

It must be stressed that at present one or both churches may avoid closure. However, in the event of, at worst, demolition, which one would hope would be unlikely through the pride that Shrewsbury people have in their visual architecture, or, at best, alternative use of the buildings, which might involve structural alterations, excavation of one of the most important archaeological sites in the country as a whole should take place. These comments are made now as a result of the long-learnt lesson that eternal archaeological vigilance is required in the face of potential destruction of vital evidence.

#### CATEGORY B

##### ST. GILES, SHREWSBURY

Redundancy under consideration as at May, 1973. The church is a large 12th century and later building, largely rebuilt in the 19th century, standing in a well-used graveyard, situated on the site of a medieval leper hospital.

If the church became redundant, excavation could hope to recover details of the leper hospital arrangements, and if the medieval graves could be located in the churchyard, examination of the burials might reveal much about medieval diseases and social conditions.

## ST. JOHNS, SUTTON, SHREWSBURY

As at May, 1973 a pastoral scheme to eliminate the parish from records and to dispose of the church was awaited.

The building is in ruins, and only the chancel stands, closed at the west end by a brick wall. Ivy covers the east end with its medieval lancet windows. At present the building is used as an outbuilding of the neighbouring Sutton House Farm. There is now grass where the nave stood. The church is surrounded by a housing estate where excavation by Messrs. Barker and Jenks, on the Weeping Cross site, found nearby evidence of prehistoric and later occupation. Sutton appears in Domesday Book, when it was held by Wenlock Abbey. The church is expected to have occupied a key site when it was first erected. Excavation of the chancel and nave may reveal details of pre-Conquest settlement.

## ST. MARTINS, PRESTON GUBBALS

As at May, 1973 a pastoral scheme involving redundancy had been submitted to the Church Commissioners.

The church is at present kept locked and warning notices of danger from falling masonry have been posted. The tower is in a dangerous state. The church, standing in a large graveyard, was largely restored in the 19th century, but there remains a priest's door, which seems Norman in date. The site would seem to have been used at least since Norman times. At Domesday the manor was held by St. Alkmunds, Shrewsbury, and there was then a thriving village. This is likely to be a pre-Conquest site.

## ST. PETERS, ADDERLEY

As at May, 1973 the Pastoral Committee were considering a scheme involving partial redundancy.

The visible structure belongs to the 17th century and later. It stands on rising ground but is strangely positioned with regard to the modern village: the settlement, but not the church, is recorded in Domesday. Provided the present church was built on the same site as the earlier medieval one, excavation should find pre-Conquest levels. As only partial redundancy is being considered, it is unlikely that excavation would be required, except in the event of danger of demolition.

## CATEGORY C

## ST. MICHAELS, SHREWSBURY

As at May, 1973 redundancy was under consideration by the Pastoral Committee for Salop.

The building is purely 19th century on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, and there is nothing to suggest that this was a medieval or earlier site.

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## "Rescue" A brief progress report - July 1973

A number of people have been very generous in supporting "Rescue" and this Report is really to express our thanks and to give you a brief report of what has been achieved.

The financial help we received has kept "Rescue" going and has enabled us to conduct a campaign for increased support for rescue archaeology from the public, the Government and Local Authorities.

The increase in Government aid to archaeology has been as follows:-

1971/72	-	£220,000
1972/73	-	£440,000

During the Summer of 1972, as a result of the "Rescue" campaign, an additional £125,000 was made available.

1973/74	-	probably not less than £800,000
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In addition to this growth, which has taken place entirely since "Rescue's" inauguration at the beginning of 1971, there have been considerable increases from other sources, notably the formation of Archaeological Trusts at York, Lincoln, Exeter and other cities. The City of London itself made a major increase for excavations last Summer. A number of individual firms have made funds available or have themselves conducted archaeological work on many of their developments.

The story by no means ends here because, following on our campaign last Summer, a complete reorganisation has taken place at the Department of the Environment which we hope will result in a completely new look at the problem of archaeology in this Country.

The setting up of a national Archaeological Service on a regional basis is under way and I append an extract from the "Times" dated Friday, 15th June, 1973 which reports on this.

Therefore, I feel that the support you have given us has achieved a very great deal and we are most grateful. However, we still have many tasks ahead and our priorities now are as follows:-

- 1) To see that the national Service is introduced and is effective.
- 2) To obtain greater training facilities for Field Archaeologists and Conservators, who will be required by the new Service.
- 3) To effect change in legislation which will enable proper archaeological Surveys to take place before developments commence.
- 4) To provide for proper conservation and recording of material which has been excavated. There is also a great need for proper publication of results.
- 5) To support local efforts for the setting up of Archaeological Units and, in particular, this Summer will see the publication of the City of London Survey dealing with the necessary steps to be taken in the City of London itself. A number of firms and individuals have already given valuable help with this project.
- 6) To continue to inform the public, with particular reference to those people, like Contractors and others, who are directly concerned.

I very much hope that you feel your help has been worth-while and that "Rescue" may look forward to your continued interest.

R. J. KILN  
CHAIRMAN - FINANCE COMMITTEE OF "RESCUE"

EXTRACT FROM THE "TIMES" DATED  
15TH JUNE, 1973

# Network of centres proposed to save archaeological sites

By David Hencke  
of 'The Times Higher Education Supplement'

Proposals for a national network of archaeology centres which would increase government spending on archaeology from £300,000 to £5m a year and create between 500 and 800 new posts in the profession are being considered by the Government.

The scheme would establish 15 regional centres in Britain, each with a staff of 50, who would organise rescue digs to save archaeological sites from destruction by new motorways and office development.

It has been put forward by senior staff at the Department of the Environment in discussions with the Council for British Archaeology, university archaeology departments, local authorities and museum staff.

Opportunities for archaeology graduates would be transformed. A big incentive would also be provided for expansion of university archaeology departments, at present under-financed.

A draft scheme has been circulated to archaeologists during regional meetings held by the department recently. The department has provisionally proposed 13 centres for England, one for Wales and one for Scotland. Later Wales and Scotland might each get

an additional centre.

Provisional areas for the 13 English centres are: Devon/Cornwall; Wessex (Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire); Kent; Greater London; South-east (Surrey and Sussex); Avon and Gloucestershire; Welsh Marches and Birmingham; Oxfordshire with Buckinghamshire and possibly Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire; Cambridgeshire and Essex; Norfolk and Suffolk; Midlands; Humberside, York and Lincolnshire; Northumbria, Durham and Cumbria and Lancashire.

The scheme is flexible enough for a further five centres to be considered in England if required.

The department would pay £250,000 towards the establishment of each centre and pay the director's salary of £10,000. Local authorities in the areas would be expected to pay the rest of the staff wages.

Reaction from universities has been mixed, as they fear they may lose their grants from the Department of the Environment to the new bodies. Most university archaeology departments rely on up to 50 per cent funding from outside endowments to do digs, which are essential to training practical archaeologists.

## Publications

Members may like to be reminded of publications of the Society available for purchase. The list is published in each issue of the Transactions of the Society, but the Council have felt it necessary to increase the price of certain publications forthwith, and notice is thus given before the next issue of the Transactions.

The following are available at no increase of cost:-

### "Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society"

Unbound.

First to Fourth Series ..... 37p per part  
 Vols. 46 - 55 ..... £1.00 per part  
 Volume 56 onwards ..... £1.50 per part

A number of early Transactions are available at 12½p per copy.

### "The Medieval Pottery of Shropshire from the Conquest to 1400"

by P. A. Barker, M.A., F.S.A., Unbound.  
 £1.50

### "Church Plate of the Archdeaconry of Salop"

edited by S. A. Jeavons ..... £1.00

The following are available at the new price:-

### Printed Parish Registers.

Small unbound copies ..... 50p per part  
 Medium-sized unbound copies .... £1.00 per part  
 Large unbound copies ..... £1.50 per part

Large bound copies ..... £3.00 per part

### "An Architectural Account of the Churches of Shropshire"

by D. H. S. Cranage

Parts 3 to 10a ..... £1.50 per part  
 Parts 10b and 10c (General Survey and Appendix) ..... 75p

### "Hearth Tax, 1672"

edited by Dr. Watkins Pitchford ..... £1.00 per copy

### "Shrewsbury Burgess Roll"

edited by H. E. Forrest ..... £1.00 per copy

Members are entitled to a 10% reduction on the above prices. Postage and carriage charges are extra.

All enquiries about publications should be addressed to the Hon. Publications Secretary, Mrs. M. Moran, 10 Belle Vue Gardens, Shrewsbury.

The Council for British Archaeology, to which our Society is affiliated, has a large number of publications available, as follows. All orders for these publications must be made direct to the CBA.

### List of Publications Available From The Council For British Archaeology\*

"A Survey and Policy of Field Research in the Archaeology of Great Britain, Part 1 (1948)".  
 Price 28p.

"The Council for British Archaeology: The First Decade", by W. F. Grimes. Reprinted from the "Archaeological News Letter", 8.5 (January, 1955).  
 Price 7p.

"Archaeological Bulletin for the British Isles" (title changed to "Archaeological Bibliography" in 1954).

1940 - 46 (1949) Price 20p  
1947 (1949) Price 20p  
1948 - 49 (1952) Price 20p

"Archaeological Bibliography for Great Britain and Ireland"

1950 - 51 (1954)	Price 20p	1967 (1969)	Price £1.00
1952 - 53 (1955)	Price 40p	1968 (1970)	Price £1.00
1954 (1956)	Price 40p	1969 (1971)	Price £1.50
1957 (1958)	Price 40p	1970 (1972)	Price £1.50
1961 (1964)	Price 70p	1971 (1973)	Price £1.50

"British Archaeological Abstracts": issued half-yearly. Annual subscription £5.00 for institutions, £2.50 for individuals. Back numbers available from Vol. 1 (1968) at same price.

"Archaeological Site Index to Radiocarbon Dates for Great Britain and Ireland", 1971, including supplement for 1972. Price 70p.

"Memorandum on the Ancient Monuments Acts", 2nd edition (1954). Price 2p.

"Current and Forthcoming Offprints on Archaeology in Great Britain and Ireland", Annual Subscription, 80p.

"Calendar of Excavations", issued monthly from March until September with January summary. Annual subscription: for European subscribers, 80p; for overseas subscribers, £2.20 airmail or £1.25 surface mail.

"Archaeology in Britain" (CBA Annual Reports). Price 20p (1971 - 72 out of print).

"CBA Research Report No. 7", 'Rural Settlement in Roman Britain', 2nd edition (1969). Price 80p.

"CBA Research Report No. 9", 'The Iron Age in the Irish Sea Province', (1972). Price £1.50.

"CBA Research Report No. 10", 'Current Research in Romano-British Coarse Pottery', (1973). Price £3.00 until the end of June, 1973; thereafter £4.00.

"The Erosion of History: Archaeology and Planning in Towns", (1972). Price £1.25.

"The Iron Age in Northern Britain", Edinburgh U.P. (1966). Price £1.50.

"Handbook of Scientific Aids and Evidence for Archaeologists", (1970). Price 35p.

"Field Survey in British Archaeology", (1972). Price £1.00.

"Public Inquiries: Presenting the Conservation Case", (1971). Price 20p.

"Responsibility and Safeguards in Archaeological Excavations", (1972). Price 15p.

"The Archaeology of Churches", (1973). Price 35p.

"Standard Record Cards" (8 in. x 5 in.) 40p per 100 plus postage.

"Industrial Record Cards" (8 in. x 5 in.) 40p per 100 plus postage.

\* All publications, with the exception of Standard and Industrial Record Cards, are sent postfree within the British Isles. Orders must be accompanied by a cheque or postal order for the correct amount, made payable to CBA.

Council for British Archaeology,  
8 St. Andrew's Place,  
Regents Park,  
LONDON,  
NW1 4LB

"The Victoria History of Shropshire", Vol. II  
(with Index to Volumes I and II). Edited by  
A. T. Gaydon. Published for the Institute of  
Historical Research (University of London) by  
the Oxford University Press. Price £16.50.

This is the third volume of the Victoria History of  
Shropshire to appear, Vol. I having been published in  
1908, and Vol. VIII in 1968. A full review of the  
present volume will appear in the next part of the  
Society's Transactions, and meanwhile we  
congratulate Mr. Gaydon in producing this very  
impressive publication.

Volume II is a general volume treating subjects  
that it has been thought best to deal with on a  
county-wide footing: ecclesiastical history, the  
history of the county's public schools and endowed  
grammar schools, sporting history and population  
statistics.

The greater part of the volume (pp. 18 - 140) is  
devoted to the individual histories of forty religious  
houses (thirteen monasteries, two houses of religious  
knights, seven friaries, a dozen hospitals and alms-  
houses, and six colleges of secular canons) and a  
religious guild (the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow). Most  
of the monasteries were small and poor, maintaining a  
precarious existence until the Dissolution in Henry  
VIII's time. Alberbury Priory did not manage to sur-  
vive so long: it was dissolved over a century before  
Henry VIII's general Dissolution, and its property was  
granted to Henry VI's new Oxford College, All Souls.  
Nevertheless, the abbeys of Buildwas, Haughmond,  
Lilleshall and Shrewsbury, and the priory of Wenlock

were important enough for their abbot or prior to be  
summoned to Parliament from time to time, and these  
houses have left behind them substantial remains - not  
only books from their libraries and records from their  
estate offices but also impressive buildings fully  
illustrated in this volume.

The two houses of religious knights (Templars at  
Lydney, near Leebotwood and Hospitallers at Halston,  
near Whittington) and the seven houses of friars have  
left few or no remains. The principal duty of the  
friars was to preach, and all but one of the Shropshire  
friaries were accordingly situated in the county's  
towns: at Shrewsbury (three), Ludlow (two), and  
Bridgnorth (one). After the Dissolution their  
buildings were used by the townspeople as stone  
quarries, and only at Shrewsbury are there any  
remains today - those of the Franciscan Friary  
(illustrated in this volume) on the banks of the Severn  
upstream of the English Bridge.

The histories of the Shropshire religious houses  
reveal the changing fashions in the religious life of the  
Middle Ages. Patronage was lavished on monks in the  
11th and 12th centuries, on the friars in the 13th  
century, and on the secular clergy in the 15th  
century. Most of the Shropshire monasteries were  
founded in the 12th century, all the important ones in  
the 75 years before the death of King Stephen (1154).  
The last Shropshire monastery was Alberbury Priory,  
founded about 1230. By then, however, the friars  
were arriving in England: a Dominican house was  
founded in Shrewsbury about 1231 and five more  
friaries (two Franciscan and three Austin) were  
founded in the county in the next 25 years. A  
century later, in 1350, the seventh and last Shropshire  
friary (a Carmelite house) was founded at Ludlow.  
The college of chantry priests built at Ludlow by the  
Palmers' Guild in 1393 and enlarged in the 1440s may  
be regarded as early evidence of the growing  
enthusiasm for patronage of the secular clergy -

called "secular" because they lived in the world (like parish priests or cathedral canons) and were not bound by a religious rule (like the various orders of friars) or secluded from the world (like the monks and "regular" canons inhabiting the monasteries). Other foundations of this kind were the collegiate churches at Battlefield (founded 1406 - 10), Tong (1410 - 11), and Newport (1442 - 8).

The dozen articles on Shropshire sports illuminate the social basis of sporting activity and revive the memory of such noteworthy sportsmen as John Mytton of Halston and John Purcell, the parson of Sidbury who was alleged to have shot 2,000 woodcock, apart from commoner game, in the last 40 years of his life (1778 - 1818). Fox-hunting, coursing, otter-hunting, fishing, shooting and cricket were the sports of the gentry in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the Dawley, Madeley, and Wellington area cock-fighting and bull-baiting were popular among the colliers, though in the 18th century the gentry too were great patrons of cock-fighting. Horse-racing was popular among all classes and there were many small meetings throughout the county in the later 18th century and the earlier 19th century - besides the important meetings at Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, and Oswestry. With the movement to outlaw the cruel sports favoured by the working classes came the growth of football and athletics as alternatives. Shrewsbury School did much to promote the spread of football in the county, and the annual athletics meeting at Much Wenlock was an important milestone in the modern revival of the Olympic Games. The facilities afforded by the Severn made rowing popular in the county, and Shropshire clubs have put up impressive performances at national races and regattas.

Among the fifteen public schools and endowed grammar schools whose histories are treated in this volume are Ludlow Grammar School and Oswestry School, whose origins lie in the Middle Ages.

Shrewsbury School, founded in 1552, became one of the leading schools of Elizabethan England. It declined in numbers and reputation in the 18th century but was restored to greatness in the early 19th century under the energetic rule of Samuel Butler - one of the great English headmasters until his appointment as Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry in 1836.

The table of population, which completes the volume, is based on the official censuses 1801 - 61. It gives statistics for each parish and for various other local government areas such as rural districts. There is an introduction to the table which provides much information about the history of the various subdivisions of the county - hundreds, rural districts, urban districts, and boroughs.

#### "The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire"

by Barrie Trinder. 467 pp. Illus.  
Phillimore. 1973. £4.50.

The history of the part of Shropshire around Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, now the new town of Telford, has long been recognised as one of the keys to an understanding of the Industrial Revolution. This was the leading iron-producing area in Great Britain in the 18th century, with more blast furnaces and more steam engines than in any other district of comparable size. It provided much of the capital equipment which made possible industrial developments elsewhere. It was the scene of many notable innovations, and was a district with which all the leading figures in the Industrial Revolution were familiar.

Barrie Trinder's study provides for the first time a full account of the social and economic history of the Shropshire coalfield between 1700 and 1851. New light is shed on many aspects of the development of the iron trade. There is a wide-ranging study of transport



systems, incorporating the results of new research, and an examination of the role of the steam engine. For the first time the origins of Williams Reynolds's "new town" of Coalport are detailed in print. The influence of the famous John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, and of the great Methodist revivals of the early 19th century is fully examined. The social history of the district is covered in chapters on working conditions, housing, recreation and popular discontent.

"The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire" is a study in local history, but its subject was an area of great national importance. It makes significant contributions to our knowledge of the economy, transport patterns, religious practices and social changes of 18th century England.

"Michael Faraday in Wales",

by Dafydd Tomos. 194 pp. Illus.  
Gwasg Gee. 1973. £2.75 hardback.

Michael Faraday visited Wales in 1819, 1822 and 1848. The 1819 visit, which contains an account of a visit to Shrewsbury, was a combined walk and coach tour from Blackrock near Chepstow to Amlwch, Anglesey. The Journal, now published for the first time, reveals a personality that may surprise those who have always regarded Faraday exclusively as a scientific genius. His reactions to natural beauty; his magnanimity; his acute observation - all contribute to a fuller understanding of him as well as shedding valuable light on contemporary life along the route he traversed.

The book is obtainable from D. J. Thomas,  
30 Lake Road East, Roath Park, Cardiff, CF2 5NN.

"The Shropshire Lead Mines"

by Fred Brook and Martin Allbutt. 94 pp.  
Illus. Moorland Publishing Company. 1973.  
80p (paperback), £1.80 (hardback).

This well produced book provides for the first time a concise and coherent account of the lead mines of the Stiperstones area. The geology of the area, the techniques employed by the miners and the commercial practices of the various companies are all fully explained. The greater part of the book is taken up with historical accounts of the various individual mines, ranging from those which were rich and successful, like Snailbeach and Tankerville, to some which failed utterly. The illustrations, maps and diagrams are all of a high quality, and there is a useful guide to sources. The authors made no claims for this work as a definitive monograph, and they admit that there is much work still to be done. They have provided a most enthralling introduction to the subject, which will aid future historians of the area, and delight everyone interested in Shropshire history.

"The Leviathan of Wealth"

by Eric Richards. 316 pp. Illus.  
Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1973. £5.25.

Early in the 19th century the ducal family of Sutherland was the richest noble house in Britain. "The Leviathan of Wealth" analyses some of the ways in which the enormous power which their fortune bestowed was exercised by members of the family and their agents. The Sutherlands were, of course, holders of vast tracts of land in Shropshire, but these are not discussed at great length in this book, which concentrates on the transport politics of the 1820s and 30s, and the contemporary Highland clearances. This is nevertheless a work of some importance for Shropshire historians since it effectively illuminates some of the principal pre-occupations of one of the

county's leading landed families, and adds much to our knowledge of that most intriguing of land agents, James Loch, who was as active in the affairs of the Sutherland estates in Shropshire as he was in the matters discussed in this book.

"A Regional History of the Railways of  
Great Britain, Vol. VII: The West Midlands"

by Rex Christiansen. 292 pp. Illus.  
David and Charles. 1973. £3.95.

This is a useful addition to the works of reference on Shropshire history, although the definition of the West Midlands in this series is somewhat eccentric, and not all of the railways in Shropshire are covered in this volume. While county boundaries, obviously enough, should not determine units of railway history, it does seem rather odd that the "West Midlands" should include Chinley and Buxton, but not Worcester and Hereford. The accounts of the Shrewsbury and Chester and Shrewsbury and Birmingham lines, the various lines across the north Shropshire plain, and the network which served the Coalbrookdale coalfield will be of interest to all historians of the county, although they are not without occasional minor blemishes. In the long term the detailed chronology at the end of the book is likely to prove invaluable to anyone working on the history of the 19th century in the area under review.

"Shropshire Mining Club Journal, 1972/73"

50 pp. Illus. 80p plus 10p postage.  
Obtainable from I. J. Brown, 5 Beech Drive,  
Shifnal.

As well as reports on the club's activities this issue contains articles on the salvaging of the Rock Fireclay Mine near Wellington, the Lawrence family of

mining entrepreneurs, the sale of the Pennerley and Tankerville Mines at Minsterley in 1892, the mining of slate in North Wales, the Moelferna slate mine, a short history of the Mining Club, and the Van mines.

## Summer Excavations in Shropshire 1974

### WROXETER

Course A 28th July - 24th August

Romano-British Archaeology Excavation Techniques

Director: Dr. Graham Webster

Deputy Directors: C. M. Daniels, D. Mackreth

Viroconium, the civitas capital of the Cornovii, was the fourth largest town in Roman Britain; its defences enclosed an area of over 180 acres. One of the most imposing building complexes still extant in the Province stands at its centre; of the buildings existing within this insula the Baths are the most extensive. The exposed remains are substantial and show evidence of many alterations which makes them ideal for demonstrating structural relationships. The remains of several first century timber legionary fortresses lie below the stone buildings. The result is a wide variety of military and civil structures and a very complex stratigraphy.

The work is at present centred on the Market Hall, a massive structure about 30 metres square, surrounded by corridors and colonnades, which stands in the south west corner of the complex. Although

reduced to ground level there are few signs of robbery or 19th century disturbance. No other example of a building of this kind is known in Britain. There is clear evidence of an earlier stone building and there are also fortress levels to be explored.

During the day (9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.) students will be instructed in the basic techniques of excavation and recording: the evening sessions (8 p.m. - 10 p.m.) will be devoted to lectures and practical work on pottery, coins, drawing, building techniques and aerial photography. Books will be available. Excursions at a small extra charge may be arranged.

Students may attend for two weeks or a month. The course is open to anyone over the age of 18 years and is designed to meet the needs of students with little or no experience of systematic excavation.

Accommodation will be at Shropshire Adult College, Attingham Park, Atcham, near Shrewsbury. Rooms will be shared but individual cubicles offer comfort and privacy.

Fees per fortnight

Tuition	£8.00 U.K.	£12.00 Foreign
Accommodation	£35.00	

For further details write to the Director of Extramural Studies, P.O. Box 363, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT.

## HEN DOMEN, MONTGOMERY

Work will continue on the timber buildings of the bailey of this 11th century castle and proceed to examination, begun in 1972, of the penultimate period. The excavation will take place from 29th June to 20th July inclusive. Volunteers will be paid subsistence; special skills will be welcome. Training in field techniques, recording, photography, surveying and other aspects of the excavation of timber structures will be given.

For further details write to P. A. Barker, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., 4 St. George's Square, Worcester, WR1 1HX.

## WROXETER ROMAN CITY - BATHS BASILICA

Excavation of the site of the Baths Basilica at Wroxeter will continue next year. Evidence is accumulating that after a period of decline the site of the Baths Basilica was entirely replanned with a complex of elaborate timber buildings. The excavation of the latest period of these buildings has now been completed and work will concentrate on the difficult task of uncovering the immediately preceding structures. Training in field techniques of all kinds will be given and those who wish to specialise will be encouraged to do so. Those with special skills will be especially welcome. Subsistence will be paid for volunteers attending for a fortnight or longer. The excavation will take place from 27th July to 31st August.

For further details write to P.A. Barker, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., 4 St. George's Square, Worcester, WR1 1HX.

## WROXETER ROMAN CITY - MARKET HALL

A small number of paid volunteers is required to work alongside Course A training excavation. Instruction in field techniques will be given. Subsistence will be paid to volunteers attending for a fortnight or longer. There is a camping site but volunteers must bring all their own equipment.

For further details write to Dr. Graham Webster, Department of Extramural Studies, The University of Birmingham, P.O. Box 363, B15 2TT.

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