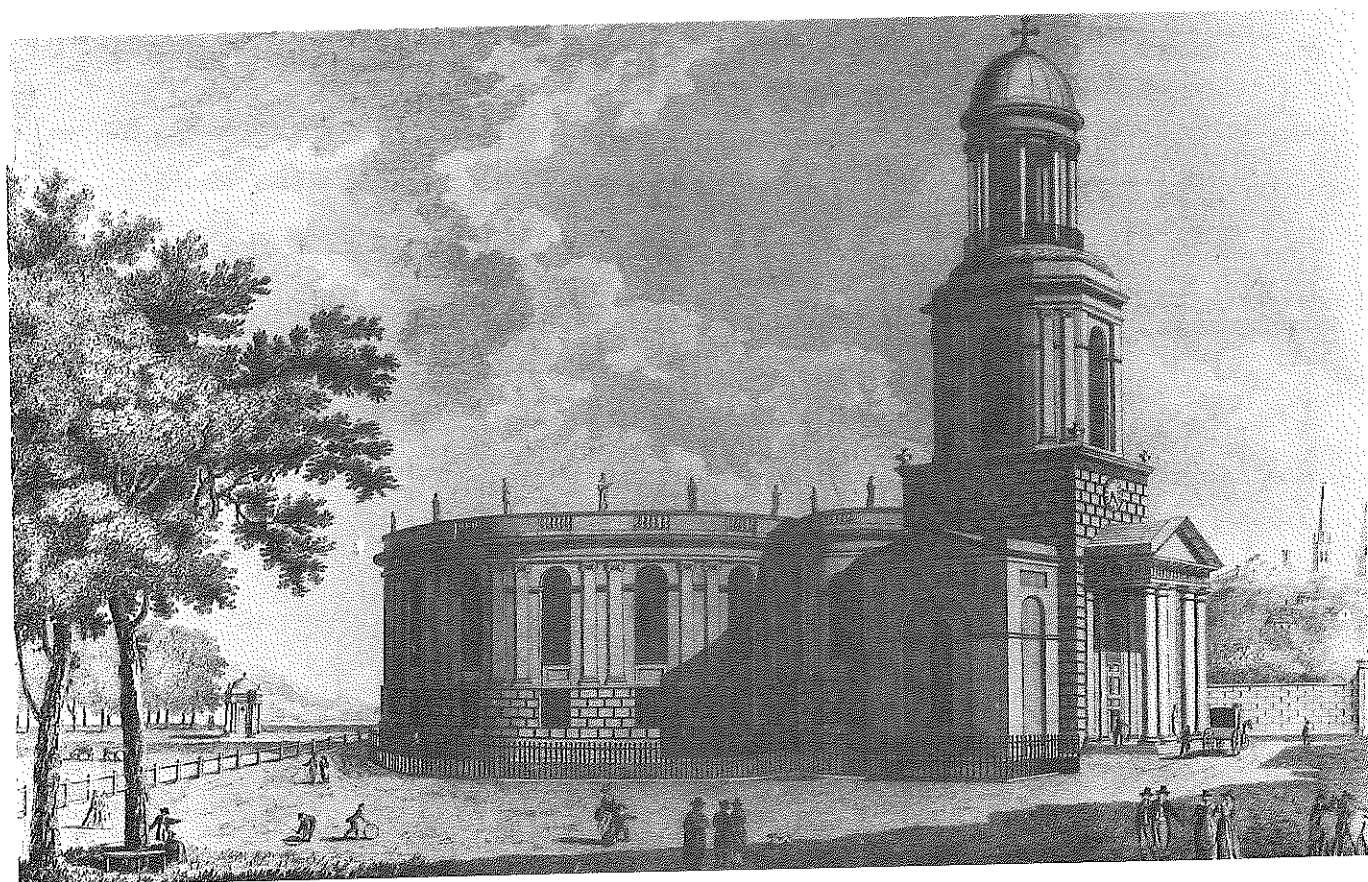


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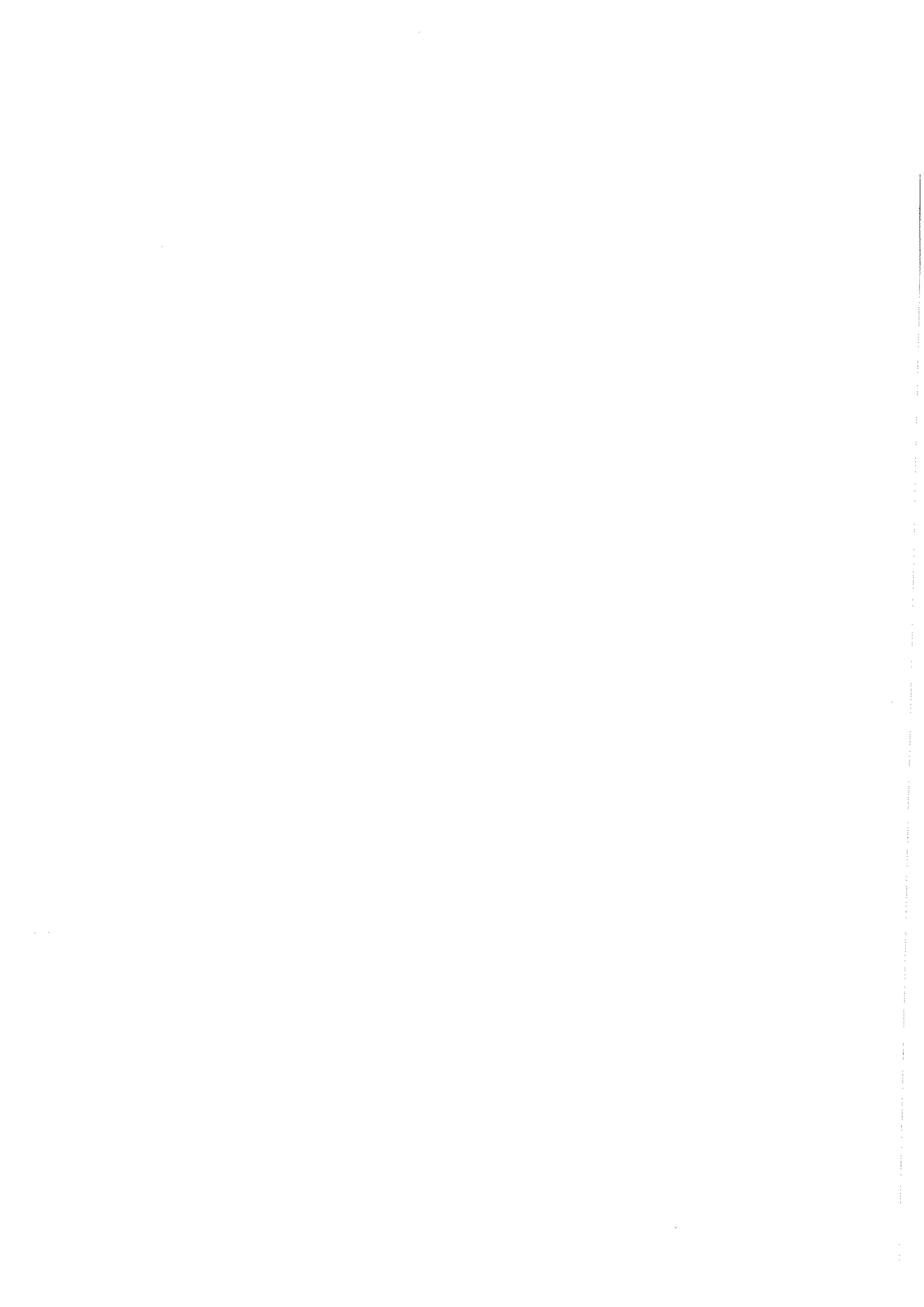
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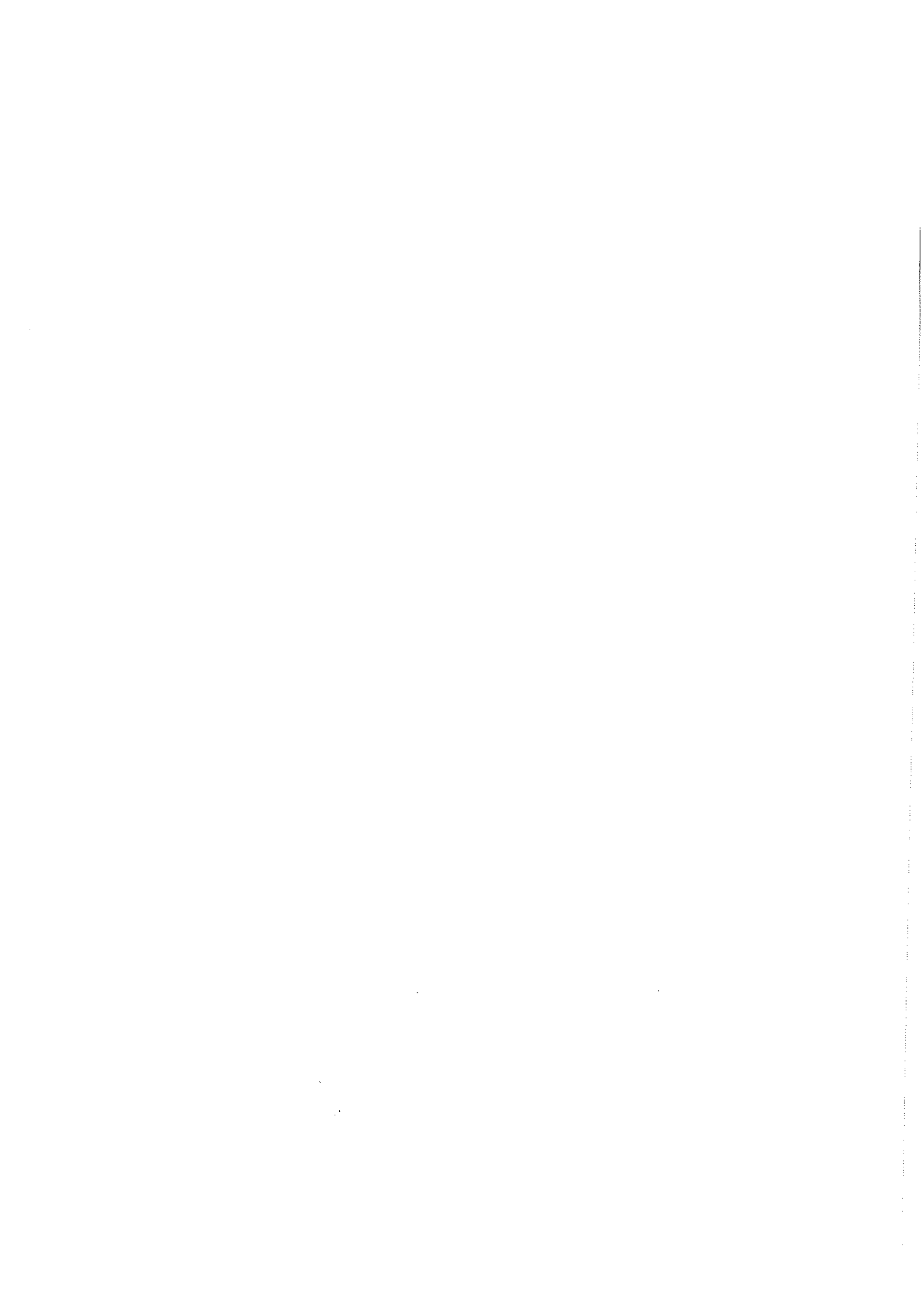
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D Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, **iii**, 1959, 489-90  
 PRO E302/1/5-6  
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 C D Gilbert, 'Clubmen in South West Shropshire 1644-45', *Trans Shrops Archaeol Soc*, **LXVIII**, 1993, 95

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## THREE BOG BODIES FROM WHIXALL MOSS, SHROPSHIRE

By R C TURNER and S PENNEY

### The Discoveries at Whixall Moss

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there were reports of the discovery of three bog bodies from Whixall Moss. This very extensive lowland raised mire straddles the modern boundary between Shropshire and Clwyd, with the part in Shropshire known as Whixall Moss, and that in Clwyd, Fenn's Moss (fig 1).

Three contemporary reports of the last discovery have been found. On 7 September 1889, the *Northwich and Winsford Chronicle* and the *Mid-Cheshire Advertiser* included the following report:

### A GRAVE IN WHIXALL MOSS MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR

Our reporter on Wednesday visited Whixall, where on the previous day two men, whilst engaged in cutting out a bed of moss, disintombed some human remains. The district known as Whixall Moss is an area of some five thousand acres of land and moss, mostly moss (or turf), in the cutting and sale of which some hundreds of people make a livelihood. In this respect it is a well-known tract of country, but what has made it more notorious, especially two years ago, is the well remembered fact that two tragedies were committed there, and still more recently it was to some extent devastated by a cyclone. It might, therefore, have been thought that the inhabitants had enough for the annals of their neighbours in respect of excitement and wonder. But this latest affair has aroused their feeling of dread and amazement afresh.

It is a mystery which no one seems able to solve, and various theories are exercising their minds. To note the facts before the theories, the statement of the men who discovered the remains must be first mentioned. They, namely, Henry Slack and Thomas Parsons, turfmen, give the information that they were engaged in cutting through a plot of turf on their occupation, and had got to a depth about four feet six inches when they found human bones. In its natural formation the turf lies in three layers, which are made very distinct by three colours. The top layer or 'lift' as the natives call it, is a brownish grey, the second is much darker (almost black), and the third perfectly black. It was between the second and the third layer where the remains were found. The body lay flat at full length with the face downwards. Some hair and small bits of flesh were still adhering to the skull and the ribs and legs were partly covered with flesh. It is supposed that these remains are those of a fully developed man, whose height was something like five feet eight inches. The bones were of a dark colour, and after some hours exposure to the air they turned almost black. The feet were not there and the cannon bone of the left leg was also missing. There was not the slightest trace of any clothing about the remains, and there is no doubt that the deceased went to his grave without a sheet or shroud. The skeleton was removed to the Waggoners Inn, a distance of over a mile from the grave. The police, including chiefly Superintendent Edwards and Sergeant Griffiths, with whom the discoverers promptly communicated, have been making investigations and taking information as far as they possibly can, and the district coroner, Major Warren, has the question to decide whether or not an inquest ought to be held. If he makes an effort to satisfy the curiosity of the inhabitants he will be attempting what now seems an impossibility. For everyone has a different question to put, and every question makes the mystery more difficult to solve. To one, almost the

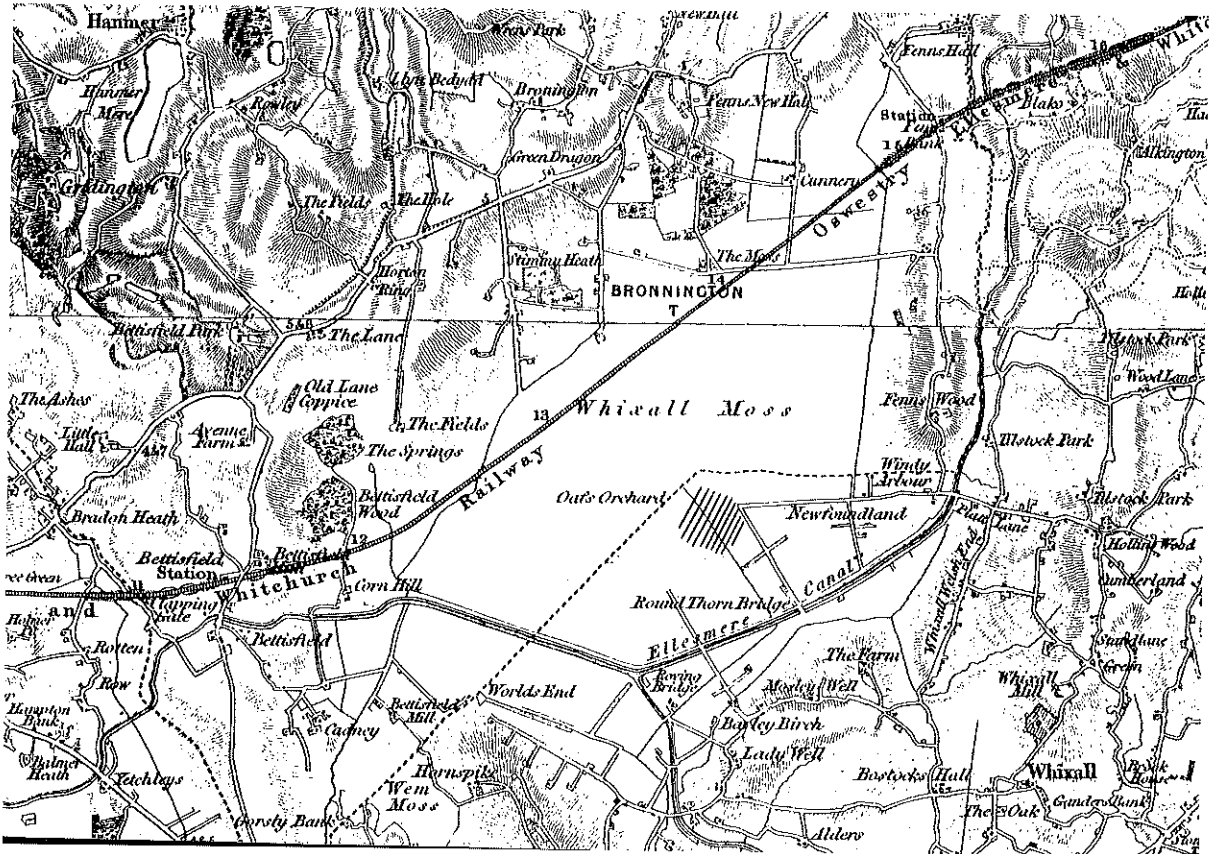


FIG 1 EXTRACT FROM OS FIRST EDITION 2 1/2 INCH SCALE MAP SUBJECT TO REVISION IN THE 1860S. CROSS-HATCHED AREA GIVES APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF 1889 BODY.

first query – Has there been a tragedy? – one of the answers offered by some of the inhabitants is that one might have been committed many years ago by gipsies who used to have short encampments and disputes with one another without holding any communication with the residents around them. It is also suggested that the deceased had by misadventure got into a hole, and since covered by moss which either rises or grows in course of time; but this theory is not satisfactory as regards the nudity of the deceased or the layers covering him, which did not appear to have undergone any change at any rate for a very great number of years. Moreover, the oldest of the inhabitants do not remember any disappearances that could not be accounted for. Two of them are octogenarians (one in his 85th year), and they are unable to throw any light on the mystery. One turfman did tell our reporter that his grandfather who lived near Whixall, remembered what he called a packman making almost daily calls, and suddenly disappearing. No one knew where he went, or how. If this is the skeleton of the packman where are his clothes or his wares? Some of the theories are obviously absurd. There is not one, indeed, which the police entertain, and they say they are quite unable to give any explanations. The occupier of a dwelling nearest the spot (a distance of about a quarter of a mile) says he cannot pretend to solve the mystery.

On the same day, the *Whitchurch Herald* also included a report of this find.

#### EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS

An extraordinary and shocking discovery was made by a man named Henry Slack on Whixall Moss on Monday night, whilst cutting turf, half a mile from the scene of the Whixall tragedy. When fully five feet from the surface he came across some bones, and then ceased operations. Information was given to the police, and Supt. Edwards and Sergt. Griffiths of Whitchurch went to Whixall on Tuesday afternoon. A thorough examination brought to light the most perfect skeleton of what is believed to be a man some six feet high. Slack had cut through the bones beneath the knee. Otherwise the skeleton is perfect. There was flesh on the breast, chest, abdomen, and thighs, but the skull was denuded of flesh. A thorough search was made, but with the exception of a thumb or toe-nail nothing was found to indicate if the body had been dressed or

placed there naked. The whole affair is shrouded in mystery. The bones and flesh were quite black, and the body undoubtedly has been in the place where it was found a considerable time. It is not known that the turf has ever been cut up at this part. The bones etc were put in a coffin and taken to the Waggoners Inn. Mr Warren, Coroner, of Market Drayton, was communicated with. The body is believed to be of a man between 40–50 years of age. When the discovery got known the place was visited by hundreds of people.

An old man, aged 84, living in the neighbourhood says that within his memory he has never heard of a man or woman being murdered on the moss.

On Thursday morning Supt. Edwards received a communication from the Coroner to the effect that he did not think it necessary to hold an inquest. The remains were interred the same day in Whixall churchyard.

Finally, on 11 September, a magazine describing unusual events entitled, *Bye-gones relating to Wales and the Border Counties* (vol 1, second series, 217) printed another version of these events.

#### THE DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS ON WHIXALL MOSS

The police have been busy making investigations respecting the recent discovery of a body on the Moss at Whixall. Some years ago gipsies used to encamp on the Moss. With regard to the remains, the feet have not been found. It is believed by some that they had been dismembered but the absence of one of the bones of the leg is also noted. Two octogenarians living in the locality say they never remember any mysterious disappearance. The body was found in a spot which is not known to have ever been touched by human hands. The natural formation of the beds of moss, which are at least 5,000 acres in extent, go to a depth of seven or eight feet, in layers shown by three distinct colours. How the body was placed below the second layer at a depth of about five feet in such an out-of-the-way spot is a puzzling question. There is hair on some portions of the head, while in places the skull is quite bare. A portion of the beard, a long one, also remains. When first got out of the peat the bones were white, and it is since the exposure to the atmosphere that they and the remaining portions of the flesh have turned black. Many parts of the moss are a dangerous bog. In hunting, if the fox crosses these portion, the hounds are called off. Some twenty-two years ago, so it is said, a lad was found in the peat and a stool discovered near him, which is now in the possession of a resident in Whitchurch. The lad may have sunk into the soft peat, but in this case the body lay at full length and, it is said, face downwards. How long the body has lain there is purely a matter of conjecture. Peaty substances are well known to have a peculiar preservative property, and blocks of oak hundreds of years old have been dug up at Whixall, which are as sound, and, indeed, far harder than ever. On Thursday morning Supt. Edwards received a communication from the Coroner to the effect that he did not think it necessary to hold an inquest. The remains were interred the same day in Whixall churchyard.

The basis of all three reports is similar but there are significant differences in detail and the range of information reported. The *Northwich Chronicle* gives most evidence for the stratigraphic position of the body. It is unlikely that the two turf cutters were working down from the naturally growing bog surface, as the cutting of peat for fuel had been carried out on the moss since at least the sixteenth century (Parry, 1976). However the *Bye-gones* report says the spot had never been touched by human hands.

The description of what was preserved of the body is more complete in the *Whitchurch Herald*, with the *Bye-gones* report adding that there were portions of a beard and that the feet and a bone of the lower leg was missing. It cannot be said if the man had worn shoes but the reports agree that otherwise the body appeared naked. Only the *Northwich Chronicle* describes the posture, being face down and lying at full length. Whilst the *Northwich Chronicle* speculated about the cause of death, the *Whitchurch Herald* was confident that it had been there for a considerable time. In *Bye-gones*, the preservative qualities of peat were recognised and explained.

Without a map showing which holdings the two turf cutters were working at that date, it is impossible to give an accurate location for this discovery. The only indication given is that it lay over a mile from the Waggoner's Inn, and about quarter of a mile from the nearest dwelling. This gives an approximate position centred around SJ 494363. This would be close to the end of the modern trackway leading into the moss from Moss Cottages, and a little to the east of Oaf's Orchard, an island of raised ground within the bog, where there is only a very thin cover of peat and a stand of birch trees (fig 1). All the reports refer to two other bog bodies having been found at Whixall Moss. Again, the *Northwich Chronicle* gives the most extensive report:

Two very interesting facts are recorded, and the police have had them verified by persons under whose notice they directly came. One of them Henry Simpson, says that about 20 or 22 years ago he and a man named Thomas Woodward, whilst engaged in cutting turf at a depth of two or three feet, and a distance of 200 yards from the newly discovered spot, found the remains of a young man, in a sitting position, over a three-legged

stool, and partly covered with a leather apron. No one could ever throw any light upon that discovery. Those remains were re-interred in Whitchurch churchyard. Some 12 or 14 years ago the remains of a woman were, according to the statement now made by George Heath, dug out of the turf at Whixall by him, and those remains were also removed to Whitchurch for re-interment. That was another mystery which no one could ever fathom.

In neither of those two cases was an inquest held, and the coroner may follow precedent and allow this discovery to pass without troubling a jury.

The *Whitchurch Herald* is briefer:

It is a singular coincidence that some twelve or fourteen years ago a man named George Heath found portions of a skeleton, identified as a woman, at a similar depth below the surface, and about 300 yards from the place where the other remains have just been excavated. It was not deemed necessary to hold an inquest in this case, and the bones were interred in Whitchurch Churchyard.

Supt. Edwards and Sergt. Griffiths in pursuing their investigations also ascertained from another turfman named Henry Simpson, that some 22 years ago he and a man named Thomas Woodward, whilst working on the moss, came across the remains of a youth in a sitting position embedded in a solid turf and lying near him a three-legged stool, on which he had apparently been sitting when engulfed in the bog. The stool remained in the possession of the Rev. J. Evans, Vicar of Whixall, until his death as a souvenir of an unsolved mystery. The moss in the neighbourhood of which the last skeleton was found is extremely treacherous and any stranger not knowing his way about might easily fall into one of the numerous holes which abound, and lose his life without anyone hereby made aware of it.

The mention in *Bye-gones* is given above.

The reports of the man found by Simpson and Woodward in *c.* 1867 are essentially the same except for some divergence in describing the posture and the clothing. The *Northwich Chronicle* describes the man as sitting over the stool, and partly covered by a leather apron. The *Whitchurch Herald* agrees the youth was in a sitting position but with the stool lying nearby, and *Bye-gones* describes the body laying full length and face downwards with the stool alongside. Little information is recorded about the woman found by Heath in *c.* 1875. Efforts to find contemporary descriptions of these two discoveries in local newspapers, parish registers and local and county histories have failed to provide any additional information.

All three bodies were subsequently re-interred. The find made in 1889 was buried in Whixall Churchyard and the other two at Whitchurch. This has been the fate of a number of other British bog bodies, for example, those from Grewelthorpe Moor, Grinton-in-Swaledale, Amcotts, Hope and Dolfawfair (Briggs and Turner, 1986). This means that no detailed examination of the human remains will now be possible, as the organic tissue preserved in the peat will have decayed in the mineral soils of the churchyard. The stool was retained by Rev. J. Evans, vicar of Whixall, and there remains a distant possibility that this may survive for re-examination and dating.

Nevertheless, the descriptions of these bodies are perhaps the most complete of those reported in nineteenth century newspapers. They can be compared with similar reports in local newspapers, which constitute the main evidence of the bodies found in Pilling Moss, Lancashire (Edwards, 1969) and Scaleby and Seascale Mosses, Cumbria (Turner, 1989 and 1990). Because they rely on eye-witness accounts, and in the case of the 1889 discovery, were made immediately following the discovery, it is possible to take the analysis of those discoveries further than in many other cases. However it must be remembered that eye-witness accounts can be contradictory and there are differences in detail in the three reports that survive.

For example, the following paragraph is appended to the report of the discovery of the looped palstave from the moss in 1927.

Mr Saywell (the finder of the palstave) saw the complete skeleton of a man found seven feet deep in the moss; his whiskers and nailed boots were still preserved; it was clear that he had sunk when the ground was swampy and the peat had subsequently grown solid over the body. . . . The skeleton of a woman had previously been found (Chitty, 1933, 77).

The former is most likely to equate to the find of 1889 and the latter of *c.* 1875. The appearance of the nailed boots seems to be an invention of nearly forty years of retelling this story.



### The Date of the Whixall Moss Bodies

Experience with the finds from Lindow Moss has shown that the dating of bog bodies is very problematic (see Turner, 1993, for a summary, and a discussion of the radiocarbon dates in Housley *et al*, 1995). In the case of Lindow Man, the two radiocarbon laboratories who dated the human remains directly, produced mutually exclusive dates with Oxford suggesting a date centred on the Roman conquest, and Harwell a date at the beginning of the fifth century AD. These two dates were significantly later than the date of the stratigraphic position of the body for which middle Iron Age radiocarbon dates were obtained, a date which can be confirmed by pollen analysis.

To some extent the situation has re-occurred with Lindow III, the second male body found in Lindow Moss in 1987. Here Oxford and Harwell's radiocarbon dates for the body coincide, and give a date in the middle of the Roman period. Again the stratigraphic position is significantly earlier and estimated to be the middle-late Iron Age (Housley *et al*, 1995; Branch and Scaife, 1995).

No datable artifacts were found in association with the Lindow bodies, to provide evidence independent of the radiocarbon method. Lindow Man's gut did contain a mixture of spelt and emmer wheat. Spelt began to displace emmer in the mid-late Iron Age in Britain, and had become the main species of wheat grown in the southern half of Britain at least, by Roman times (Hillman, 1986). So even where a lot of evidence is available the problem of dating a bog body is clear. The reaction between body tissues and a range of carbon-based acids found in peat bogs can present problems to the radiocarbon laboratories. Raised bogs are not like mineral soils and it is possible to imagine mechanisms whereby a solid object such as a body might move within, or be forced down into the peat stratigraphy so reconciling some of these different dates.

The only potential dating information available for the 1889 Whixall body is stratigraphic. Three broad layers were described in the bog, when it was in its 'natural formation'. The top layer was brownish grey, the second layer darker (almost black), and the third perfectly black. The *Northwich Chronicle* describes the body being 'between the second and third layer where the remains were found'. *Bye-gones* states that 'the body was placed below the second layer at a depth of about five feet'.

Whixall Moss has been the subject of pollen analysis on at least four occasions (Hardy, 1939; Turner, 1964; Slater, 1972; Twigger and Haslam, 1991). Hardy made a number of borings, one of which was close to the findspot of a middle Bronze Age palstave (Chitty, 1993). The approximate location of this findspot SJ 492361 is close to the estimated position of the 1889 body. The palstave was recovered embedded in a pine stump, which in 1927 was eight feet below the surface. Hardy's stratigraphy (1939, 77-8) can be equated to the three layers identified in the newspaper report. The first brownish-grey layer is equivalent to the fresh unhumified *Sphagnum* peat occurring to a depth of 55 cm, the second much darker layer must include the humified *Sphagnum* peat at 55-140 cm. The *Eriophorum* (bog cotton) and pine stump layer at 140-150 cm and perhaps the *Sphagnum* and *Phragmites* layers down to 190 cm. The third layer of black peat is formed by the sedge peats running from 190 cm-340 cm, with the lake muds at the bottom of the sequence. Twigger and Haslam (1991, 754) obtained mean radiocarbon dates of AD 200 and AD 20, which bracketed the junction between the first and second layers. Turner (1964), obtained a radiocarbon data of 2307±110 BP (Q-383) from a stump from Hardy's pine layer which is significantly later than the date of the middle Bronze Age palstave from the same layer. A second date of 3238 ± 115 BP (Q-467) came from highly humified *Sphagnum* peats, near the base of the second layer. The peat might have shrunk between 1889 and 1937, but the depth of five feet (150cm) below the second layer is in Hardy's diagram close to the junction between the second and third layers. This is below the position of the middle Bronze Age palstave and close to Turner's earliest radiocarbon date. The conclusion must be that the stratigraphic position of the 1889 body suggests an early-middle Bronze Age date. The *Northwich Chronicle* describes 'the layers covering him, which did not appear to have undergone any change at any rate for a very great number of years'. The implication is that the body may date from the period of its stratigraphic position, though the experience with the Lindow bodies might indicate he may have died several centuries later.

Dates for the other two bodies must be given with even more caution. The body found in c. 1867 was found at a depth of two or three feet so is potentially younger than the 1889 body. If the cutting was from the surface then the depth indicated may have been close to the junction of the first and second peat layers. No depth is given for the body of c. 1876.

### The Circumstances behind the Death of the Whixall Bog Bodies

Considerable controversy surrounds how bog bodies died and how they came to be buried within the bog. Theories range from those proposed by Glob and other continental authors (Glob, 1967; Munksgaard, 1984) that the vast majority of bog bodies are the victims of ritual sacrifice, to that proposed by Briggs (1995), that there is no conclusive evidence that any bog bodies died in that way.

None of the reports describe any ancient injuries or wounds on the Whixall bodies. There was only limited survival of tissue on the 1889 body so some of the injuries associated with some of the best known bog bodies, such as cutting of the throat, hanging and garotting may not have been obvious.

The *Northwich Chronicle* reported that various theories concerning the death of the 1889 body were put forward by those gathered at the scene. One theory proposed was accidental death, with the man becoming trapped within a hole or deep pool within the bog and being drowned. This was rejected as the body was found naked. Another idea rehearsed was that the body was a murder victim. No specific incident could be remembered by two octogenarians, though there was some speculation about disputing gypsies and a packman who had disappeared from the area, a couple of generations earlier. The *Whitchurch Herald* and *Bye-gones* both favoured accidental death, particularly when considering the body of c. 1867 found in an extremely treacherous area of the bog. The *Chronicle* concluded that, 'some of the theories were obviously absurd. There is not one, indeed, which the police entertain, and they say they are quite unable to give an explanation.' However thorough the descriptions of the discoveries of bog bodies have been in the past, there is often inconclusive evidence of the cause and circumstances of death. There was no suggestion that there was a ritual motive behind the death of the three Whixall bodies. This interpretation can only derive from considering the population of bog bodies as a whole, and by comparing these discoveries with other classes of finds from peat bogs. In seeking to support this interpretation it is also possible to draw upon the written classical sources, and the folktales and myths of the Celtic oral tradition.

### Comparisons with other British Bog Bodies

These reports of the finding of three bog bodies from Whixall Moss are an important addition to the growing list of the finds of all types of human remains from peat deposits in Britain (Briggs and Turner, 1986; Turner, 1995). There is now a total of over 106 such instances in England and Wales. These range in date from the Neolithic to the seventeenth century. Finds come from all types of peat deposit, from the inter-tidal zone to upland blanket bogs. The most interesting group, to which the Whixall bodies belong, are the twenty-seven which derive from the lowland raised mires of the northern half of England and extending into Wales (fig 2).

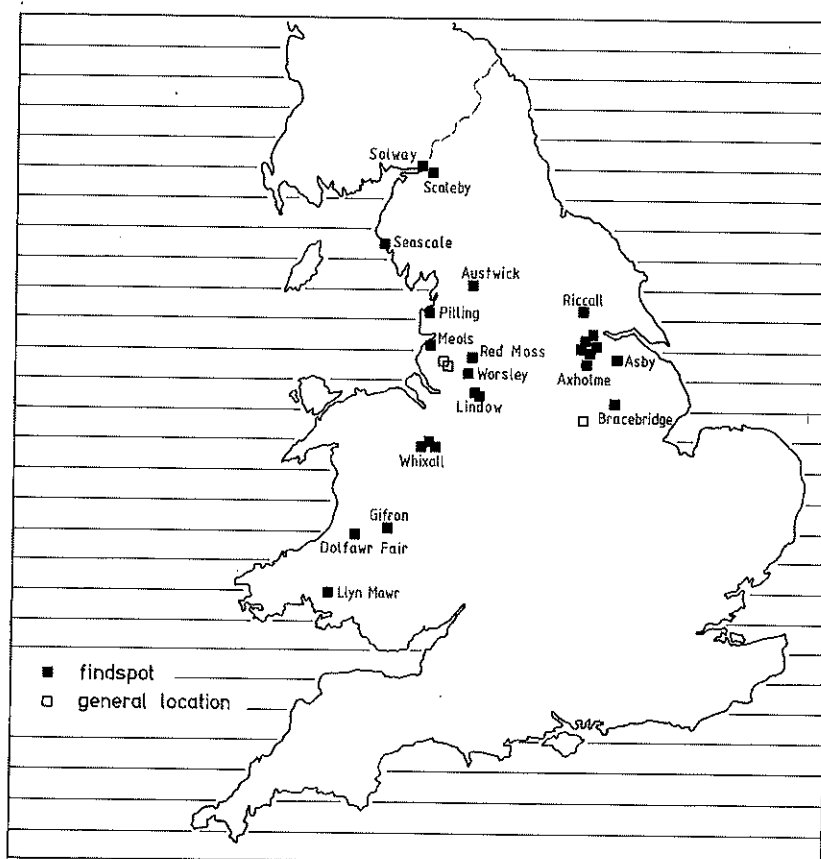


FIG 2 A DISTRIBUTION MAP OF BOG BODIES FOUND IN LOWLAND RAISED MIRES.

These discoveries are often the most spectacular, as a range of tissue and more rarely organic artifacts are preserved by the special qualities of the upper layers of these raised bogs. Whixall Moss has produced more bodies than are recorded for any other single mire – the finds made in Lindow Moss on four occasions are best explained as coming from two adult males. However, some early authors (eg De La Pryme, 1694; Leigh, 1700) imply that finds of this type were more widespread than the surviving records indicate.

The presence of two men and one woman reflects the wider population of bog bodies in England and Wales where twenty-seven men and thirteen women have been positively identified. The posture of the 1889 body, lying flat at full length with the face downwards is recorded for Lindow Man and the body from Hatfield Chase (De La Pryme, 1694). The *Bye-gones* descriptions of the c. 1867 body indicates a similar position, though the *Chronicle* reports a sitting position. Other postures have occurred, extended but face up and crouched for example. Clothing is very rarely recorded from bodies found in British lowland raised mires, though woollen clothing and skin and leather garments would be expected to survive in these circumstances. The leather 'apron' is therefore an important addition to this small group. The only comparison from England is from Scaleby Moss, Cumbria where the body was wrapped in a leather or deerskin cape (Turner, 1988). A similar cape was found wrapped around the Castleblakeney Man, from Gallagher, Ireland (Ó Floinn, 1995) and both woollen and leather capes have been found on the continent, for example, at Borre Fen, Denmark (Glob, 1967) and the middle Bronze Age body from Emmer-Erfschiedenvveen, Holland (van der Sanden, 1990) (fig 3).

The wooden object described as a 'three-legged stool' found with the c. 1867 body is without precedent. Sticks have been found alongside, over, beneath and even pinning down bodies. A simple peat spade was found near to Tollund Man (Glob, 1967), and tree-trunk wooden coffins have enclosed a number of bodies. Unless the



FIG 3 THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE BOG BODY FROM EMMER-ERFSCHIEDENVEEN, HOLLAND. NOTE THE LEATHER CAP, LEATHER CAPE, WOLLEN TUNIC, SHOE AND STICKS ALONGSIDE THE BODY (BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE DRENTS MUSEUM, ASSEN).

stool can be found, or a drawing or photograph located, it would only be speculation to propose what form or function this object took.

In terms of date, the 1889 Whixall body may be significantly earlier than the main group of well-preserved bog bodies from Britain, Ireland and continental Europe. Where an extensive range of tissue and other organic finds are preserved, radiocarbon dating has suggested a late prehistoric or Roman date for finds in Britain (Turner, 1995), Ireland (Brindley and Lanting, 1995), Holland (van der Sanden, 1995) and Denmark (Tauber, 1979). The reasons for the quality of preservation seem to depend on a high percentage of *Sphagnum* within the peat. A decay product of *Sphagnum*, called Sphagnan, acts as a natural tanning agent (Painter, 1991). *Sphagnum*-dominated peats are a feature of late prehistory onwards and form the upper layers all of true raised bogs. Hardy's analysis of the peat in Whixall Moss shows that *Sphagnum* is present as a significant constituent of the peat to the base of the second main layer from which the body was recovered (Hardy, 1939, 377). This may explain the partial preservation of the tissue. In England, the body from Scaleby Moss (Turner, 1989) was in a similar stratigraphic location and showed similar preservation. The only radiocarbon dated middle Bronze Age body where tissue and organic artefacts occur is from Emmer-Erfschiedeven, Holland (van der Sanden, 1990) (fig. 3). Other bog bodies with radiocarbon dates earlier than this period have only been recovered as skeletal remains. This includes the early Bronze Age group from Methwold, Norfolk (Healy and Housley, 1992) and a Neolithic find from Hartlepool (Tooley, 1978).

The dates for the other two Whixall bodies are not as easy to establish. The body of c. 1867 seems to be higher in the stratigraphy, and perhaps closer to the junction between the first and second layers dated to the first or second century AD. If so, then he would belong to the much larger group of bodies from that period.

The recovery of hoards of objects or single objects often of great value from peat bogs is another feature of late prehistory in northern Europe. Beginning in the late Bronze Age with such finds as the Caergwrle Bowl (Savory, 1980) and those from alongside the Flag Fen Alignment (Pryor, 1991) and ending with vast hoards from such sites as Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey (Fox, 1946) and Illerup, Denmark (Jensen, 1982). Cauldrons, tools and weaponry form the dominant features of these depositions which are easily assigned to a ritual origin. The bog bodies of this period may have been ritual offerings as well, for to some communities a person of status or prize prisoner may have been the most valuable thing they had to offer. Bodies and hoards of objects rarely occur in the same bog. The only finds from Whixall Moss are the middle Bronze Age palstave, apparently lost while in use, and an unprovenanced gold coin.

In conclusion, the three bodies from Whixall Moss must have been extraordinary discoveries which clearly caused enormous local interest. The evidence contained within the descriptions which survive is quite extensive, but in the end is both tantalising and frustrating. Nothing certain can be said about their age, cause of death or how they came to be deposited in the moss. Nevertheless, these finds reinforce the growing awareness that bog bodies are as much a feature of British prehistory as they are in the rest of northern Europe.

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# EXCAVATIONS ON WAT'S DYKE AT PENTRE WERN, SHROPSHIRE IN 1984/85

By JON CANE

## Summary

This paper describes the excavation and survey of a threatened stretch of this frontier earthwork. The results of the total excavation of a 30 metres long section are described. Constructional techniques, the sequence of decay, and the subsequent re-use of Wat's Dyke are discussed, with reference to both the excavated section of the Dyke and to the monument as a whole.

## Introduction

The system of linear earthworks which extends from Basingwerk Abbey, Clwyd in the north to Chepstow, Gwent in the south, of which Offa's and Wat's Dyke form the major part, has been the subject of intensive study since Fox's seminal work in the 1950s (Fox 1955). More than one hundred excavations of various sizes have been carried out on Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke and the other numerous, short dykes in the system (Hill 1977; 1981; 1986; 1988). The topography and construction of the dykes are becoming better understood, but it is an indication of the inherent difficulties of interpreting such structures that we still have only the vaguest ideas as to how, why, and when this huge construction was undertaken. The same problems beset the study of other frontier earthworks. Almost by definition human activity of a kind susceptible to detection by archaeological techniques would have been transitory on such sites, even during the main construction phases. From Offa's and Wat's Dyke artefacts are few and independent dating non-existent. It is, therefore, little wonder that the historical background to the monument has played such a central role in the formation of current ideas of date and function.

The construction of the system is assigned to the 8th century. Bishop Asser, writing over a century later, attributed it to Offa, who 'ordered the construction of a larger rampart the whole way from sea to sea between Britain and Mercia'. Wat's Dyke forms the northern section of this *c.* 220 kilometre long frontier. For part of its length it runs parallel to Offa's Dyke, some 6 kilometres to the west. The relationship between the earthworks is not clear. It has been suggested by Stanford (1980) that Wat's Dyke is an earlier construction than Offa's, on the basis of differing constructional techniques and because Wat's Dyke appears to be more overtly military in its positioning. This line of reasoning attributes the construction of Wat's Dyke to Athelbald (AD 716–57), defining the western limit of the initial English expansion into the Welsh Marches, and being replaced by Offa's Dyke which enclosed the areas of later westward expansion. The lack of independent dating of the dyke system, the number of constructional variants, and the absence of contemporary historical accounts, however, preclude definitive theories of date. In addition, Fox's survey, on which this interpretation is based, is being increasingly modified, notably by Hill (1975). The presence of Offa's Dyke north of Trueddyn now seems unlikely, and it is possible that Wat's Dyke north of the River Dee and Offa's Dyke south of Trueddyn are parts of the same earthwork.

The section known as Wat's Dyke probably runs from Basingwerk Abbey on the Dee estuary in the north, as

far as Maesbury on the River Morda in the south. Its route from the Irish Sea to the River Severn describes the divide between the Welsh uplands and the northern lowlands of the Welsh Marches. The line of the dyke follows the lowland edge of the western mountains and consists of a substantial ditch with its upcast bank to the east and its glacis facing west. This paper is primarily concerned with the most southerly extent of the earthwork which runs some 6 kilometres to the east of Offa's Dyke (fig 1). The southernmost point meets the River Morda, some 7 kilometres north of its confluence with the Vyrnwy. The Dyke then runs uphill, northwards to the hillfort of Old Oswestry, although its exact route is not clear, follows the west-facing ramparts of the hillfort and heads north again. This time its course disregards topographical features other than its immediate destination, the high ground at Glynmorals, above the confluence of the Rivers Ceiriog and Dee. In taking this route the Dyke crosses the valleys of the River Perry and the Morlas Brook. The line between Old Oswestry and the Dee is virtually straight, as if the planners had chosen the most important strategic and/or political landmarks and drawn a straight line between them, taking little account of localised advantages offered by the terrain.

#### Previous Excavations

Excavations have taken place in the immediate area previously. At two sites, 31a and 31b (SJ 300326), part of the ditch, under a hedge-line which follows the Dyke, was examined (fig 1). Excavation at site 31a located a ditch not more than 1.10 metres deep and sealed by *c.* 0.50 metres of topsoil. There was no opportunity to examine the rampart area. Site 31b, although more limited in area, revealed a ditch on a similar scale (D. Hill, pers. comm). A further excavation, Site 66, examined an area parallel to the road to Pentre Wern Farm, within the area examined in 1985. The results were interpreted as a ditch of similar size to those seen to the south, with a small clay upcast bank. Against this, on the eastern side, a deposit of stones was interpreted as a cobble road. None of these excavations recovered dateable finds from primary dyke contexts (Petch 1980).

#### The Excavations

The excavations reported here examined three areas of the earthwork known as Wat's Dyke, some 2 kilometres north of the hillfort of Old Oswestry. The project was undertaken between October 1984 and June 1985 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, in advance of the construction of the new Oswestry bypass. The threatened sections of the Dyke were on the low, gently sloping ground at Pentre Wern, south of Gobowen (SJ 302329). A 110 metres length of earthwork was threatened. The main carriageway of the bypass affected an 80 metres long section to the south of the road to Pentre Wern Farm, whilst the farm's new approach road threatened a further 30 metres to the north (fig 1). Both fields concerned were under pasture and the study areas were the subject of detailed contour surveys. The northern section, 30 metres of threatened earthwork, was fully excavated (WD113: P11) while the threatened area to the south was sampled with two trenches (WD114a/b). The main objectives of the project were as follows:

- 1) To analyse the constructional techniques of the Dyke in terms of form and function.
- 2) To attempt to establish a chronology for the primary earthwork and associated features.
- 3) To assess the environmental potential of the site.

To achieve these objectives it was necessary for as large an area of the Dyke as possible to be exposed and dismantled.

#### Site WD 113

##### *Introduction*

The excavation of WD113 began in November 1984. The turf and topsoil over the bank and ditch were very shallow and were removed by hand. The poor weather conditions generally enhanced definition on the difficult clay soils. However, January brought heavy snow and temperatures fell to more than 10 degrees below freezing. The site's proximity to high voltage power lines precluded the use of polyspans and, although covered, the site froze to a depth of *c.* 0.20 metres, making all work but heavy earth-moving impossible. The limited available

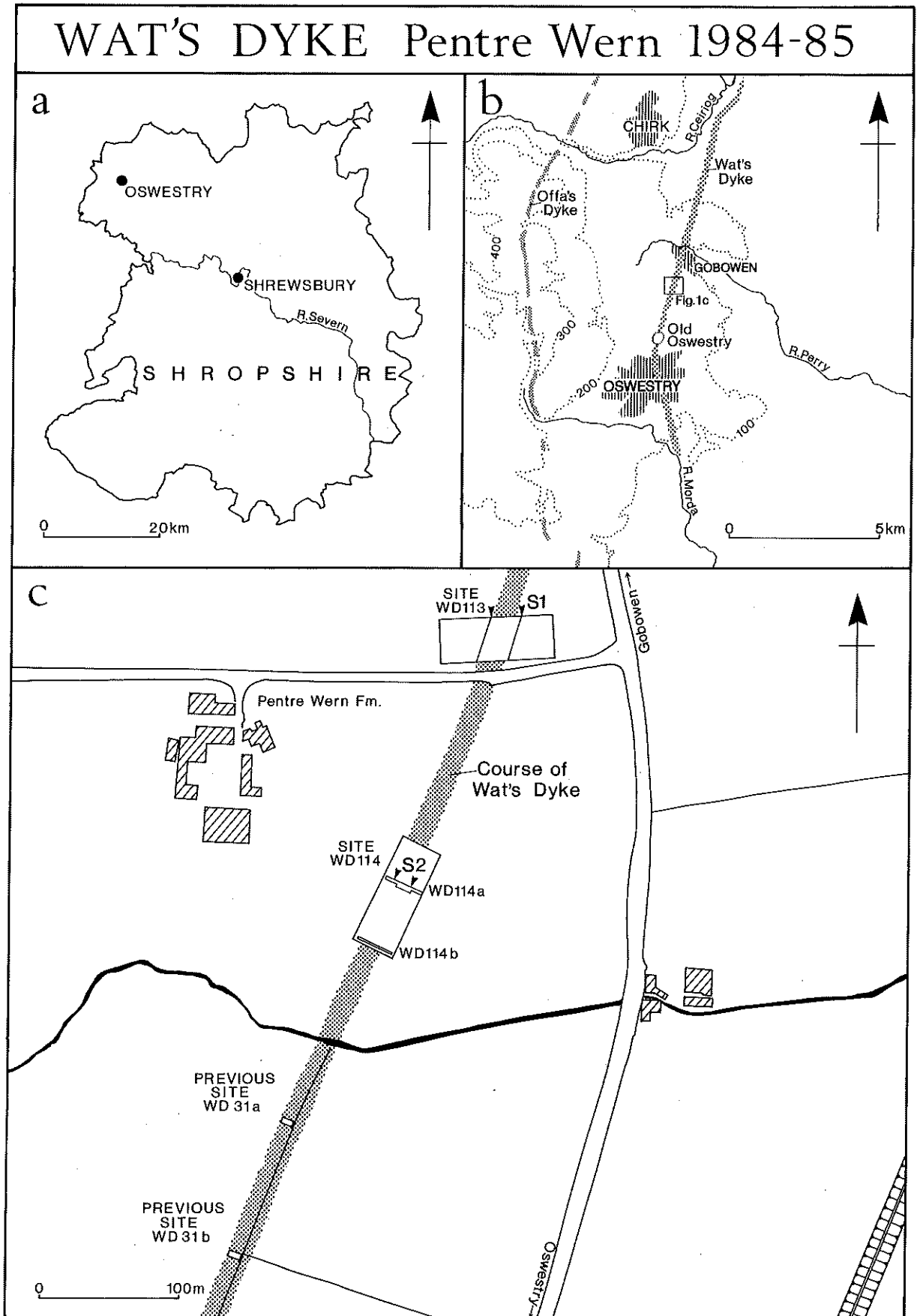


FIG 1 LOCATION MAPS, SHOWING COURSES OF OFFA'S DYKE AND WAT'S DYKE TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF OSWESTRY, AND LOCATION OF EXCAVATIONS.





PLATE 1 SITE WD 113. PHASE 2 DYKE FEATURES. (J. STERENBERG)

time for the project prompted a series of attempts to use industrial space-heaters to defrost small areas of the site. This was fairly successful in the short term but increasingly cold conditions led to freezing of both equipment and operators and the attempts were abandoned.

Work resumed in February 1985 and continued until the end of June with a reduced workforce. It was obvious by this time that work on the area to the south would be limited by the lack of time and resources, and so extensive use was made of a readily available earthmoving machine.

The standard BUFAU recording system was employed on site. Record cards are used to describe contexts in a continuous 4-digit sequence starting at 1000. Features are described on a separate record card in a continuous number sequence, with the prefix 'F', starting at F1. All defined contexts and features were thus recorded. Resources were not available to carry out extensive test sampling for environmental remains, and expert advice was relied on to identify and sample contexts with high potential.

The natural subsoil in the area consisted of stiff clay with irregular bands of compact gravel and occasional lenses of sand. This made the definition of feature edges extremely difficult when the features were backfilled with the same material. Differences were equally difficult to detect in section. It was therefore deemed essential to excavate features in plan over as large an area as possible, so that differences in texture could be tested.

#### The Sequence (Fig. 2)

**Phase 1** The earliest phase on the site consisted of three features, all of which predated the primary Dyke features. Gully F10 was a much-truncated, flat-bottomed feature running, as far as could be established, at about 20 degrees to the main axis of the Dyke. Its fill was homogeneous and free of finds and it remains possible that it was a natural feature. The majority of F10 had been destroyed by the Phase 2 ditch.

To the east, two roughly parallel linear features (F8 and F9) were sealed by the construction of the Phase 2 rampart. They averaged *c.* 0.20 metres in depth and were associated with the double iron-panned buried soil (1020) which extended in patches along the length of the site. These shallow features were only preserved by the dumping of the Phase 2 rampart. In the area to the east, they had probably been destroyed by subsequent ploughing.

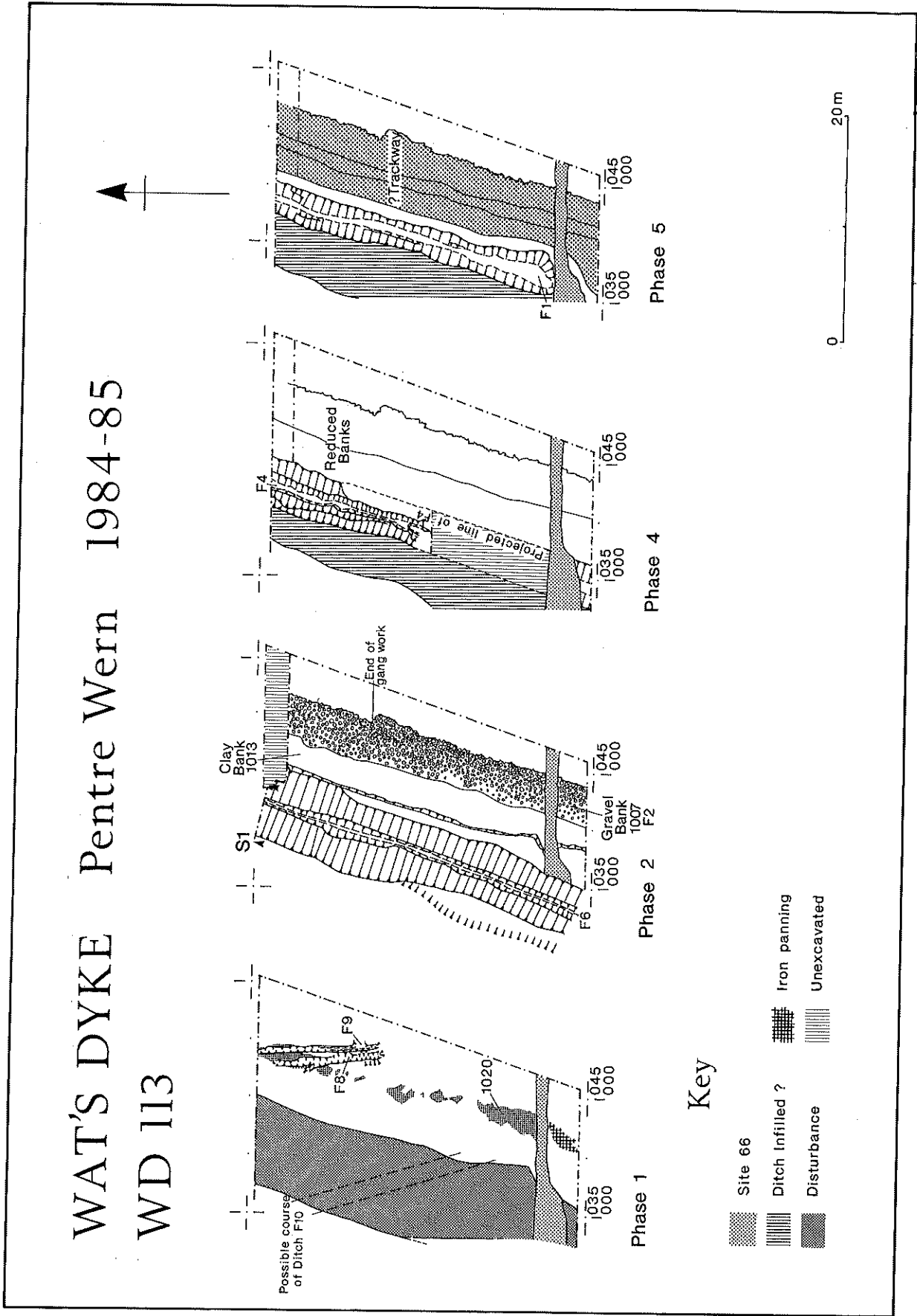


FIG 2 SITE WD 113. PHASE PLANS.

Phase 2 The primary Dyke features consisted of a rampart (F2) and a very large V-shaped ditch almost 8 metres wide and nearly 4 metres deep (fig 3). This ditch was totally excavated, mainly through the use of a Hymac excavator. The lowest silts were excavated mostly by hand, as was a 1 metre wide section against the southern baulk.

At the bottom was found a discontinuous ankle-breaker or cleaning slot. The definition of this part of the ditch was made fairly easy by the iron-pan crust which had accumulated on the sides of the ditch. The bottom of the ditch was at a consistent level and the sides fairly regular. The eastern glaciis was very easy to define, in marked contrast to the western side which was thus inadvertently over-dug in places, notably against the north-facing perimeter section. The material through which the ditch was dug was the same on either side, which suggests that the difference in definition was a result of human activity such as differential cleaning. It may also be that the western side was left rough and irregular, while the ditch glaciis on the rampart side was carefully cut to an angle of *c.* 45 degrees.

The up-cast from the ditch had been formed into a bank or rampart (F2) which survived to a height of 0.35 metres. This feature was of simple construction, with a clay core (1013) formed by the quarried clay sub-soil (fig 3). This material formed a low bank at the front of the rampart which originally may have been no more than 1 metre in height. The stony material from lower in the ditch had then been dumped on top, the larger stones rolling to the rear to form, whether by accident or design, a crude revetment. This material (1007), which formed the bulk of the bank, would probably have been too loose to stand on its own and may have been revetted with turf. However, no evidence of turf, or any other type of revetment, was observed. The iron pan of the buried soil was limited to the natural under the interface between the two types of rampart make-up, and under the stony material. This may mean that the turf had been removed only from the clay bank area, perhaps torevet the rampart. Alternatively, the turf may have been left intact but the iron pan, which was its only visible evidence, may have been created by the differences in drainage patterns through the different rampart materials. No evidence for timber or stone internal structure was recovered but a slight discontinuity in the stony material hinted at a junction or gang-joint between the work of two separate building teams, or some other hiatus. The fact that this feature was not reflected in the initial clay bank suggests that it may have been constructed in a separate operation.

The question of whether the bank and ditch were separated by a berm remains unanswered. Where the relevant area had not been destroyed by later features the definition was not good. However, the south-facing section suggested that no berm was used and that the clay bank extended up to the lip of the ditch.

Phase 3 The fill sequence of ditch F6 has been divided into sub-phases, 3a–3h (see fig 3 and Table 1). The earliest layers of silt of Phase 3a were sealed by a thick deposit of stones in a clayey gravel matrix in Phase 3b. A complex series of silts and waterlain sands then continued to develop in Phase 3c until sealed by more stony rampart material in Phase 3d. This was, in turn, sealed by silts in Phase 3e. The latest layer of stony material (Phase 3f) was sealed by two successive turf-lines of Phase 3g. A thick layer of ploughsoil finally completed the fill sequence in Phase 3h.

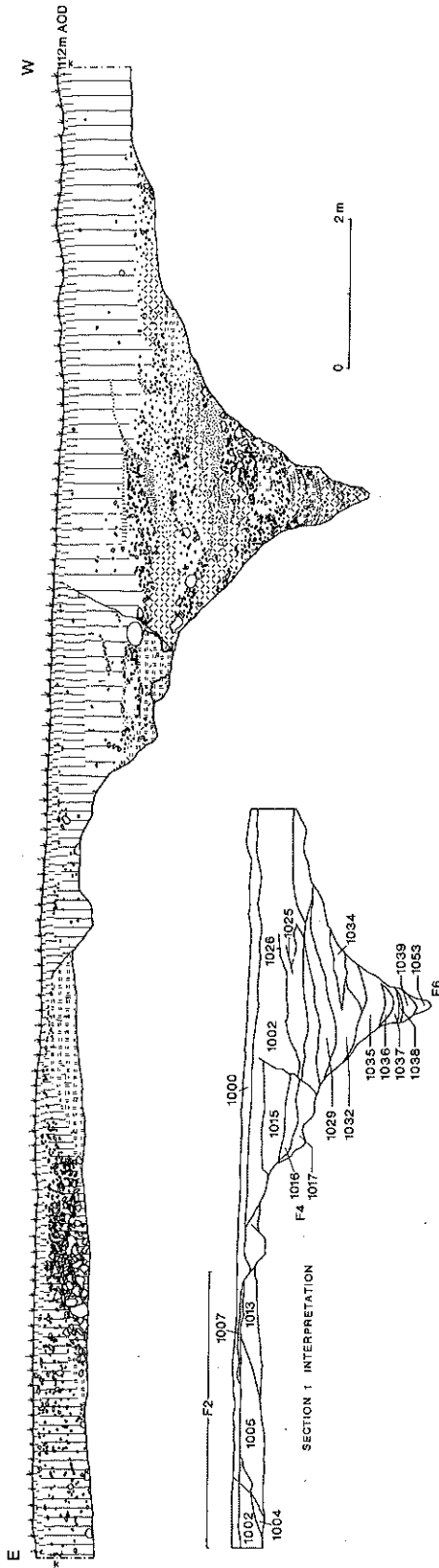
Phase 4 The resistance of the stone bank to the plough may have forced successive generations of farmers to adopt the line of the Dyke as a field boundary. As part of this use, the fills of the Phase 2 ditch were cut by a smaller ditch (F4), the eastern edge of which followed that of its predecessor (fig 2). This feature was *c.* 2.5 metres wide, *c.* 1 metre deep, and very difficult to define in plan and in section, the upper edges having been blurred by subsequent ploughing. The earliest silts in this feature were sealed by thick layers of clay soil which may have been mainly a result of ploughing. No separate upcast for this ditch survived. In size and shape, it was very similar to the ditches reported from the sites to the south (Sites 31a and 31b). The remains of the rampart may have been used during this phase not only as a field boundary but also as a trackway, the truncated stony material (1007) forming the hard-standing.

Phase 5 The plough soil (1001) which sealed the Phase 4 ditch was now cut by another, smaller ditch (F1). This was *c.* 1 metre deep and *c.* 2 metres wide and suggests continued use of the Dyke as a field boundary. The top of this ditch was not subject to the same plough damage as the earlier features and traces of upcast from this feature were noted on the west side. It seems likely that the area had been given over to pasture by this phase.

Phase 6 The backfilled Phase 5 ditch and the remains of the Phase 2 rampart were sealed by a thin layer of topsoil and turf.

WAT'S DYKE Pentre Wern 1984-85

Section 1 WD 113



Section 2 WD 114

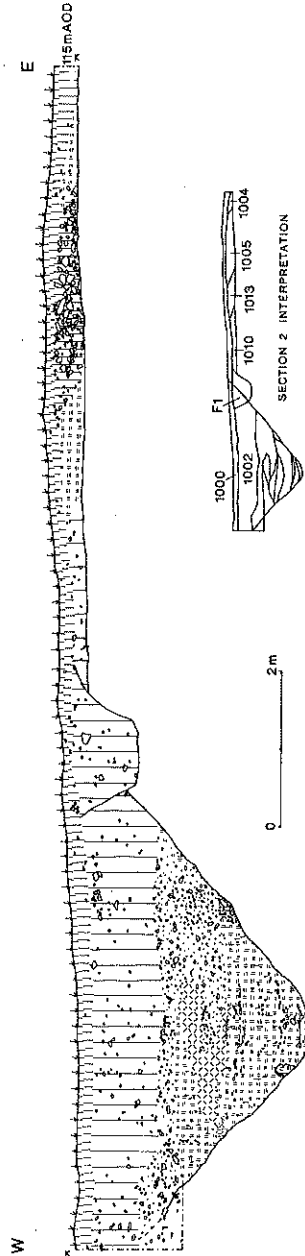


FIG 3 SITES WD 113 AND 114. SECTIONS.

## The Finds

No finds were recovered from pre-Dyke contexts, all of which were dug by hand. One badly corroded iron object, a possible projectile point, was found within the clay bank (1013). The final plough-derived layers of the Phase 4 ditch produced a very abraded sherd of medieval pottery, as well as a fine barbed-and-tanged arrowhead and several flint flakes. The fills of the final ditch contained pottery, brick and ironwork of 19th-century date.

It was unfortunate, if not unexpected, that no finds were recovered from primary Dyke features. In the absence of dating material, no independent statement of date for the earliest phases can, therefore, be made.

## Environmental Evidence

One of the objectives of the excavation was to recover evidence for the environmental conditions before and after the construction of the Dyke. The ditch was thought initially to be waterlogged and, in addition, there was the possibility of locating buried soils sealed by the rampart.

The rampart did indeed seal a buried soil, but the likelihood of differential survival makes conclusions difficult. The possibility was considered of applying pollen analysis to the buried soil and to the bank material, to determine the vegetation at the time of construction and to investigate the possible use of turf in the bank material. The probability of poor pollen preservation and differential destruction at the PH of around 5, however, meant that interpretation of any results obtained would have been difficult.

The sampling of the ditch presented similar problems. There was no evidence that this feature had been waterlogged at any time. There was some evidence to suggest that the ditch had channelled surface water and, perhaps, occasionally overflow from streams, but this would have rapidly drained away. No preserved organic material was recovered from the ditch fills.

In spite of the low potential, the buried soil and the ditch silts were bulk and core sampled.

## Interpretation

### *Phase 1*

An area of *c.* 180 square metres of pre-Dyke ground surface was exposed by the removal of the entire rampart along 30 metres of the Dyke at site WD 113. The buried surface was well defined beneath the stony material (1007) and here a double iron pan had developed in the buried soil. In the case of the clay bank (1013), the bank make-up material was so similar to the underlying material that the buried surface was difficult to define, and here no iron pan had developed. Whether this difference in the buried soil was due to different moisture conditions under the two materials, or to the removal of turf before the clay bank was constructed, was not determined. If the latter is the case, it may be that the turf stripped from this area was used to support the looser material dumped on top of the clay bank.

Only two features were firmly associated with this surface (F8 and F9). These shallow gullies are interpreted as the remains of cart tracks, possibly associated with the construction of the Dyke. They do not seem to indicate a formal routeway, and need be no more than the marks left by a single loaded cart on a wet day. The fact that they run roughly parallel to the shallow linear feature F10 hints at the possibility that they belong to a pre-Dyke landscape, but the status of F10 is uncertain.

### *Phase 2*

The total excavation of the available Dyke on WD 113 provided some evidence of the techniques employed in its construction. A marked discontinuity in the stony material (1005, 1017) which made up the bulk of the rampart was recorded. This may well represent the slightly off-line meeting of two work gangs. This discontinuity is not reflected in the clay bank (1013), implying that this may have been a preliminary marker bank, laid out using the relatively easily quarried clay which forms the top of the natural.

If a berm had been built into the system, but had been obscured by the collapse of the rampart front, one might expect that in the potential berm area, the natural would have been sealed by stony rampart material. In

fact, the natural was sealed by clay which was indistinguishable from the main bank material (1013). It seems, therefore, that no berm was left and this fact has important implications for the interpretation of the Dyke. Experimental work on the longevity of earthwork systems has suggested that the leaving of a berm, ideally with its turf intact, speeds the growth of vegetation on the glacia, and this helps to stabilise the rampart. However, the absence of a berm would make the ditch and bank a more formidable obstacle. Even with a sturdy revetment of the front of the rampart with turf, stone or timber the erosion of the ditch edge would undermine the revetment. In this case, there was not even any evidence of revetment. This, and the nature of the rampart material, must have meant that the rampart would not have remained stable for any length of time. The problem would not have been solved by regular maintenance in the form of ditch cleaning; in fact, this would have been more likely to have accelerated the rate of erosion.

The Dyke was built on an impressive scale, which is belied by its slight appearance before excavation. The whole system is *c.* 15 metres wide. The ditch averaged 4 metres deep and more than 5 metres wide. The size of the upcast bank created by the quarry ditch can only be estimated. Over the 30 metres of dyke excavated the ditch represents about 360 cubic metres of material. Using an in-bank swell factor of approximately 17% (Pryor 1986) this increases the projected volume of the bank to 420 cubic metres. Assuming a glacia slope of no more than 45 degrees, this means that it was probably about 3 metres high, creating a slope of *c.* 10 metres. The weight of spoil moved in just the excavated area was probably about 550 tonnes. This, incidentally, would make the total weight of earth moved over the system as a whole more than 4 million tonnes.

The ditch was dug fairly regularly and showed no evidence for the precise techniques used for excavation. The 'cleaning slot', which was not continuous, may not have been deliberate, but may have been created by the seasonal flow of water from diverted streams running downhill towards the ditch. The glacia slope and the depth would have made the ditch very difficult to dig on a broad front, as spoil would have had to have been carried up the side of the ditch. It seems likely, therefore, that gangs would have been allocated short stretches which were dug by working a smaller face, along the ditch.

### *Phase 3*

It was not possible to chart the post-constructional history of the Dyke system in more than a very general way. The fill sequence of the Phase 2 ditch is consistent with a long period of gradual disintegration of the rampart into the ditch. The layers of silt (1038, 1039, 1053) in the slot at the bottom of the ditch may represent only a few seasons of such erosion (fig 3). The stonier clay material (1037) which sealed them was probably derived from the gradual erosion of the rampart itself and of the less compact natural which forms the top edges of the ditch. The last episode of silting is indicated by layer 1036, which is sealed by a mass of very stony clay, interspersed with lenses of silt. This material (1035) probably represents the main period of rampart collapse, perhaps following the final disintegration of whatever revetment had existed. The end result may well have been the same whether this was the result of deliberate sleighting or of natural erosion, but the random nature of the sequence implies a natural and gradual collapse, the result of neglect rather than direct action. After the deposition of 1035, the rampart seems to have stabilised and a period of gradual erosion ensued. A complex series of silts and water-lain sands (1032, 1034) continued to develop until sealed by more stony rampart material (1029). By this time, it seems likely that the profile of the ditch and bank was fairly stable and this rampart material may have been pushed into the ditch as a result of ploughing. The final stabilisation of the system is indicated by possible turf-lines (1025, 1026). These were sealed by a thick layer of probably plough-derived clay (1003) similar to that which sealed the eastern tail of the rampart.

### *Phases 4, 5 and 6*

Intensive ploughing had reduced the bank and probably all but filled the ditch by the time a shallow drainage ditch (F4) was dug on the same alignment, probably in the medieval period. A single sherd of jug rim in an orange, sandy fabric suggests a *terminus post quem* of the 13th/14th century for this ditch. The remains of the bank were possibly being used as a trackway, as elsewhere in the Dyke system (D. Hill, *pers. comm.*). The stones of 1007 would have served as an effective farm track and they probably prevented effective ploughing anyway. This arrangement probably continued well into the post-medieval period. Ploughing seems to have ceased, in the immediate Dyke area at least, some time in the 19th century.

## Site WD 114

*Introduction*

This 80 metres stretch of Dyke was tested with two trial trenches, both running east-west across the Dyke (fig 1). Both were dug by machine. The recording system was the same as that employed on site WD 113 (see above).

*The Sequence*

The sequences in both trenches were almost identical to that recorded on Site WD 113. In scale and shape, the Phase 2 ditch and bank were remarkably consistent with those on WD 113 (fig 3). It was possible, however, to define two layers making up the clay bank (1013, 1060), otherwise the bank structure was very similar. The Phase 3 sub-sequence was less complex than that on WD 113. The smaller numbers of stones and the predominance of clayey fills suggest that the make-up of the bank may have reflected the generally less stony natural here, but the succession of silting and bank collapse episodes is very similar to that on WD 113.

The Phase 4 ditch seen on WD 113 was absent on WD 114. A small, later ditch (F1), probably to be equated with WD 113, Phase 5, was located in both trenches. No finds were recovered from any of the excavated contexts.

*Interpretation*

The problems of locating the primary ditch in small trenches was demonstrated in these excavations. Initially the possibility of a large, early ditch was dismissed after intensive section cleaning and recording. When the ditch on WD 113 was located, further more vigorous work with a machine also revealed a similar feature in WD 114a. The bank to the south of this point is much less well preserved, possibly as a result of a different ploughing regime. The slight irregularities in the topography of the Dyke were assumed to be the result of a later field boundary running at an angle to the west. However, in retrospect, this irregularity could have represented a change in the primary Dyke structure. Observation of the final destruction of this part of the Dyke by the road works, albeit in bad conditions, suggested, however, that this change was not a significant one.

*Conclusions*

Of the research objectives described at the beginning of this paper, only the first was achieved by the 1984/1985 excavations. A sequence for the construction and decay of the Dyke system in this area was recovered and is fairly well understood. However, no dating evidence was found in primary Dyke contexts and there were no opportunities to use independent dating methods. The environmental results were equally disappointing. This means that any analysis of function of the monument must be entirely based on form. The interpretation of earthworks on this basis alone is dangerous, and the temptation to build weighty hypotheses on slight foundations is great. However, as a basis for future discussion and research, a series of observations on this section of the Dyke can be highlighted.

Firstly, the structure of the Dyke itself must be considered. The most important conclusion drawn from the evidence is that, in its initial form at least, the earthwork was not planned to last. Its design, with no berm or internal rampart structure, would have made rapid erosion inevitable, even if continuous maintenance was possible, and there is no evidence that this took place.

Secondly, the attention paid to its regular planning suggests that it was constructed in one operation, rather than as a series of evolving, *ad hoc*, boundaries.

Thirdly, the general route of the Dyke is not suggestive of military planning. Use was made of distinctive landmarks which are more likely to have had territorial rather than tactical significance. Natural boundaries such as the River Morda, which can hardly have been naturally defensible, were used with no (known) additional defences. Generally, it seems that earthworks were only considered necessary where no convenient natural boundary line was available.

Fourthly, its size suggests that its construction demanded a significant level of labour and organisation.

There are two broad interpretations which might encompass some of the preceding points, assuming, in the

absence of any independent dating, that the generally accepted 8th-century construction date for the Dyke is correct.

The suggested territorial, as opposed to military, significance of the Dyke's course suggests that it was meant not as a physical barrier to be defended but as an expression of a territorial claim. Built only where convenient natural boundaries were not available, it may have been intended through its size to endure the effect of erosion and neglect. A more sophisticated design would not have been appropriate. Alternatively, the Dyke may have been an attempt to create a defensible barrier. Its size would have made it a formidable military obstacle for a time, but the need to maintain and effectively man the system would have required substantial numbers of people on a regular basis. The social obligation to contribute to military engineering projects such as fort and bridge building is known from the 8th and 9th centuries (Brooks 1971) and it is possible that this system would have been sufficient to maintain the Dyke. The continuous manning of such a frontier, at a time when reliance on the seasonably raised local fyrd was the norm, would have been a huge task.

This section of Dyke can perhaps, in the light of recent work, be considered separately from the other main sections of Dyke. If Hill's recent suggestions prove correct, then the stretch north of Trueddyn can be considered part of Offa's Dyke. This may lend weight to the idea of Wat's Dyke as an early boundary, a statement of territorial claim by the earliest Mercian settlers (Stanford 1980), based more on local landmarks than the needs of a national frontier. In the light of this, the territorial interpretation appears the most likely. The earthwork does not seem to be the result of purely military planning. The gaps left, especially at the southern end, make no strategic sense and would have made such a frontier untenable. Its size need not necessarily indicate a defensive purpose either; the Wansdyke is even larger and is equally unconvincing as a military construction, with its simple dump rampart, lack of a berm and any evidence of revetment or a patrol path (Green 1971). It is possible that Wat's Dyke represents a hurriedly constructed military frontier intended as a short term measure only. However, its reliance on the River Morda, when the construction of only another 6 kilometres would have reached the more formidable boundary of the River Vyrnwy, suggests that it was never meant as a serious defensive work. As a marker rather than a barrier, the system would have required no maintenance. Wat's Dyke probably lasted as a sizeable earthwork until long after the boundary it delineated had become redundant. It was only the ravages of intensive agriculture in the post-Medieval period which reduced it to the trace which remains today.

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Table 1 *WD 113 – Sequence Summary*

PHASE	BANK AREA	DITCH AREA	INTERPRETATION
Phase 6	1000	Turf + topsoil	Recent cultivation
	1001	Modern plough soil	
Phase 5		1006 Clay soil	Post-Medieval field ditch F1
		1009 Clay soil	
Phase 4		1015 Clay soil	Medieval field ditch F4
		1016 Gravel + stones	
		1017/18 Silty clay	
		1019 Clay	
Phase 3h	1004 Clay soil	1002/40 Clay soil	Ditch completely filled by ploughing
Phase 3g		1026 Turf line	Stabilisation of ditch fills
Phase 3f		1025 Turf line	Final slump of rampart material into ditch
		1027 Gravel + stones	
Phase 3e		1048/28 Silt + sand lenses	Continuing accumulation of silts
Phase 3d		1044/29 Sandy gravel + stones	Continuing collapse of rampart material
Phase 3c		1030	Increased silting caused by erosion of exposed and unstable rampart material
		1052/32 Silt + sand lenses	
		1047/34 Sand	
Phase 3b		1048/35 Clayey gravel + stones	
Phase 3a		1049/36 Silt + sand lenses	Initial collapse of rampart front into ditch
		1037 Silty clay + stones	
		1050/38 Silt + sand lenses	
		1039 Silt + sand lenses	
		1051/53 Silt	
Phase 2	1007	Dump of small stones	Excavation of ditch F6 and construction of dump rampart
	1005	Dum of large stones	
	1013	Clay bank	
Phase 1	F.8	Gulley	Pre-Dyke features cut into buried soil
	F.9	Gulley	
	F.10	Ditch?	
	1020	Buried soil	
		1055 Natural clay and gravel	

## THE ROYAL PERAMBULATION OF SHROPSHIRE, 1298

By DON C. SKEMER

The focus of this article is a previously unknown royal perambulation of Shropshire, for which documentation has recently been found in a roll preserved in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Libraries (John Hinsdale Scheide Collection, case 209, document 7111).<sup>1</sup> In addition to the perambulation of 6 February 1298, published for the first time in appendix 1, the Scheide roll includes on the dorse copies of three important documents in Anglo-Norman French relating to the English constitutional crisis of 1297.<sup>2</sup> This 108.9 x 17.7 cm parchment roll is complete in two membranes and was written on both sides by a local scribe around 1298 in an English documentary cursive script.<sup>3</sup> While shedding considerable light on the political issues that contributed to the baronial opposition led by Roger Bigot and Humphrey de Bohun, a careful reading of the Scheide roll underscores the importance of forest boundaries as a leading cause of clerical opposition to the crown during the constitutional crisis, particularly in Shropshire and the West Midlands.<sup>4</sup>

The Scheide roll almost certainly numbered among the muniments of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul in Shrewsbury, which was vitally interested in the results of the perambulation of Shropshire and had a practice of retaining local copies of important English statutes and other political documents. Evidence is found in the eleventh quire in the abbey's cartulary, which was completed in the early years of the fourteenth century, about twenty years after the main portion of the text; in this quire is a series of important charters from the period 1292–1303, including the 14 February 1301 Confirmation of the Charters granted by Edward I at Lincoln and the Great Charter of the Forest for Shropshire, granted the same day, which incorporates a perambulation conducted in 1300.<sup>5</sup> The scribe who copied the four crisis-related documents on the roll was probably a member of the lay clergy of Shrewsbury, employed by the abbey, or possibly one of the abbey's dozen or more monks, rather than a monastic estate official with some legal training. A comparison of handwriting shows that a different scribe was responsible for the two 1301 documents in the eleventh quire of the cartulary.<sup>6</sup>

The impetus for the flurry of copying around 1300 in both the roll and cartulary came from William de Mokeleeye, who guided the fortunes of Shrewsbury Abbey from 1291 to 1333. The abbot's wariness of the crown, as reflected in the practice of retaining copies of such documents, is not surprising in an area like Shropshire. At the time, the county boldly claimed special juridical exemptions based on local customs going back two centuries to the franchises of the earls of Shrewsbury.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the abbey was in an area then dominated politically by quasi-independent, sometimes rebellious Welsh marcher lords like Humphrey de Bohun, who in addition to his English titles was marcher lord of Brecon, though he appears to have held no lands near the Shrewsbury Abbey estates. People in the western counties could not but be influenced by the autonomy of the marcher lordships of Wales, though recognizing the boundaries that separated them.<sup>8</sup>

Within the recent memory of Abbot William de Mokeleeye and others in the Shrewsbury area were Edward I's Welsh wars of 1276–77 and 1282–83; the defeat and death of the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd at Orewin Bridge (1282), the trial of his brother Dafydd at a Parliament in Shrewsbury and nearby Acton Burnell, and the latter's subsequent execution (1283); and the king's unwelcome interference in a boundary dispute between Humphrey de Bohun and Gilbert, earl of Gloucester (1290–92). The marcher lords had to maintain an active interest in the politics of Westminster because their extensive landholdings, rivalled only by those of the greater abbeys in Wales and the West Midlands, were outside regular royal jurisdiction but could be easily challenged by Edward I from his many royal military strongholds in that area, including the royal castle in Shrewsbury.

Opposition to Edward I in 1297 can be said to have begun in the Welsh March with a baronial assembly in the forest of Wyre.<sup>9</sup>

Even if the abbey held no lands or received no charitable contributions from the earl of Hereford and other marcher lords, local concerns over the violation of rights and privileges no doubt exercised some influence on William de Mokeleye's attitude toward Edward I and the baronial cause. After all, the diocese of Hereford included most of Shropshire south of the River Severn, where the bulk of the abbey's extensive landholdings were located. While Shrewsbury Abbey was officially in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, then under Bishop Walter Langton, Edward I's treasurer and chief minister after 1295, the bishops of Hereford had been benefactors and protectors of Shrewsbury Abbey for two centuries. Richard Swinfield, bishop of Hereford, was (along with Robert Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury) one of a group of learned English prelates known as political opponents of Edward I during the 1297 crisis.<sup>10</sup>

William de Mokeleye himself must have shared with Archbishop Winchelsey's group a profound hostility toward Edward I's aggressive taxation of the English church and clergy through direct clerical subsidies, lay subsidies, and papal tenths. Year after year, the king summoned scores of bishops, priors, and abbots (including the abbot of Shrewsbury) to Parliament in order to extract financial support from them.<sup>11</sup> During the thirteenth century, the English Church appealed increasingly to the principles of Magna Carta for protection of its rights and liberties, and royal taxation of the church emerged as a leading issue in 1297, a year after Pope Boniface VIII's bull *Clericis laicos* prohibited secular taxation of the clergy. While Winchelsey struggled for the principle of voluntary grants and against lay imposition of taxes on the English church, there were other issues that could irritate the clergy. Once Magna Carta and the Forest Charter had been confirmed by Edward I, the old issue of royal forests and their contested boundaries came to assume a more pivotal role in the continuing crisis for the clergy as well as for the barons. The grievances of the English church perhaps shifted as well because Edward I had found ways to extract a portion of church taxes paid to the papacy.<sup>12</sup>

Shrewsbury Abbey retained both the 1298 and 1300 versions of the Shropshire perambulation.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the constitutional crisis, the abbey thus showed its primary interest in resolving questions of forest boundaries after a century-long standoff throughout England between royal officials and local landowners about the proper administration and geographical limits of royal forests, which as a legal institution date from after the Norman Conquest. Royal forests served as preserves for hunting deer, wild boar, and other game, but were also a significant source of income to the crown. The decentralized system of royal forest management and justice instituted to curb poaching and other infractions was unpopular with those who lived in and near royal forests, and became even more irksome as the forests came to be exploited increasingly in the thirteenth century through the conversion of woodland to arable land (that is, assarting or clearing woods and scrub); by wood and timber production, useful in the construction of towns, castles, and monastic buildings in a border region like Shropshire; and by grazing, hunting, and other uses. Landowners traditionally sought to increase their holdings of lands and exercise of rights. Pressure for land is seen in legal disputes over unenclosed common lands. The administration of royal forests, numbering more than seventy during the thirteenth century, thus became an issue of such political and constitutional significance that after 1217 the Forest Charter was invariably linked with Magna Carta.

Among the leading baronial grievances during the thirteenth century were arbitrary royal efforts to re-afforest (that is, claim as royal forests) lands that had been disafforested (shown to be outside the forest bounds) by official land surveys called perambulations (literally 'walking' surveys of forest boundaries), which relied on the information supplied by local juries to draw imaginary lines from point to point around large expanses of forest land. While the issues of military service and taxation were paramount in 1297, royal forests were never far away as an issue. Once the charters had been confirmed, Edward I's pattern of uncompromising legal administration and attempts to profit from offences against the forest law made new perambulations a political rallying point, especially with those people whose lands bordered on or within areas subject to forest law. Barons and prelates had a common interest in preserving liberties threatened by more than two decades of strict forest administration under Edward I.<sup>14</sup>

Few places offered more abundant opportunities than did Shropshire for royal authorities to fall foul of local landholders, as can be seen with the history of the Shrewsbury Abbey under the Norman and Angevin kings of England. Roger de Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury since 1074, is recorded in Domesday Book as William the Conqueror's tenant-in-chief for Shropshire and the town of Shrewsbury, where as the patron of its Benedictine monks he was building an abbey church of stone and granting it estates for its material support.<sup>15</sup> But when the earldom of Shrewsbury became extinct in 1102 after the defeat of Earl Robert de Bellême by King Henry I, its extensive lands and jurisdictions in England and Wales reverted to the crown, and the abbey came under the protection of the crown.<sup>16</sup> In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries more than half of Shropshire (especially lands south of Shrewsbury) was designated royal forest and administered under forest law.<sup>17</sup> In fact, a few years after assuming the throne Edward I was listed as lord of eight out of ten Shropshire hundreds surveyed in 1274–75, a

rather high proportion rivaled only by that of several northern counties and neighbouring Hereford, stronghold of Humphrey de Bohun.<sup>18</sup>

In the two centuries after the destruction of the earldom of Shrewsbury, the abbey was endowed with manors, hamlets, mills, churches, and other sources of income spread around Shropshire and in neighbouring counties, chiefly by charitable donations from the crown, local knights, officials, townsmen, and other benefactors. The manorial lands that accounted for most of the abbey's income were amassed by the mid-twelfth century. In the thirteenth century the abbey concentrated on consolidating its holdings and acquiring land in Shrewsbury and its environs by gift or exchange. Peremptory behaviour by local officials and the resulting grievances by landowners led to civil litigation in royal courts. As early as 1256, for example, the abbot of Shrewsbury successfully brought suit in the eyre of Shropshire after Henry III had granted away fifty acres of land in Ruckley held by the abbey from the crown.<sup>19</sup> The many cases of trespass generated by the forest assize of 1271 also help explain the need for new perambulations of Shropshire's forests under Edward I.<sup>20</sup> Conflicts with royal forest administrators were inevitable given the abbey's far-flung holdings and its increasing need over the previous two centuries to clear waste land in order to create new arable land for cultivation.<sup>21</sup>

Competition for land was most acute in the Shrewsbury area, where both the abbey and the crown had extensive holdings. The abbey held a series of estates (Emstrey, Betton Abbots, Brompton, and Boreton) located southeast of Shrewsbury in the hilly and agriculturally poor jurisdiction of Conover Hundred. In the thirteenth century these manors would have been legally subject to royal forest law since they officially lay in the vast jurisdiction of Long Forest, not far from its three non-contiguous but intact royal hayes (that is, fenced-in preserves or enclosed areas within the royal forest), which were prominently surveyed in the 1298 and 1300 perambulations: Lythewood (also rendered Lythewode or Lythwood), Hankhurst (also Haycrust, Hawkhurst, Hanekhurst, or Hakehurst), and Bismore (also Byschmor, Bishepmore, or Bushmoor). Shrewsbury Abbey's policy of actively enlarging its holdings during the thirteenth century must have made it particularly interested in Lythewood, the 800-acre royal haye just south of Shrewsbury, from which the abbey had long enjoyed the liberty of removing oak timber for construction.<sup>22</sup>

A series of perambulations was authorized in 1297, just weeks after Magna Carta and the Forest Charter were confirmed and reissued. Perambulations are known to have taken place in Hampshire, Somerset, and Gloucester, where the Forest of Dean was declared not to be royal forest. The forests of Shropshire, however, were thought not to have been perambulated until 6 June 1300 in compliance with Edward I's letter patent of 1 April 1300, even though Edward I had issued commissions on 26 November 1297 (after a similar 16 October commission had been vacated) to undertake perambulations of Shropshire, Hereford, and five other counties.<sup>23</sup> The Scheide roll, however, shows very clearly that a perambulation was carried out more than two years earlier on 6 February 1298 in compliance with the commissions of 1297 to justices Roger Sprengnose and Richard de Harley, both knights of Shropshire and landholders in the area of Long Forest, under the purview of royal commissioners Malcolm de Harley, escheator south of the Trent from 1290 to 1298, and John de Crokesley, also mentioned by the public records in connection with lands beyond the Trent.<sup>24</sup>

In other English forest surveys during the thirteenth century, local officials were ordered to 'make regard' in their assigned bailiwicks, using specific articles of inquest (that is, questions to be posed to local juries), prior to the arrival of the royal justices.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the perambulation of Shropshire seems to have been made up of a series of smaller surveys that had been conducted by seven local foresters in their assigned areas, perhaps with the assistance of three verderers named, in expectation of the commissioners' arrival. The 1298 perambulation, unlike the 1300 version, offers evidence of its own compilation, preserving in three cases the names of royal foresters who received sworn *veredicta* from juries in particular areas: Roger de Wellington for the haye of Wellington; Thomas de Bagesovere for the forest of Shirlet; and Roger filius Johannis and William de Rucheton for the haye of Morf.

While all references to jurors in the sub-sections of the 1298 perambulation seem to refer back to the nineteen names of jurors listed at the beginning (*juratos supradictos*), one wonders if the king's foresters might have convened smaller juries in different places in the interest of efficiency and to take advantage of the jurors' highly localized knowledge of boundaries. After all, twelve jurors were usually called for in a 'regard of the forest'. Then the final perambulation of Shropshire could have been compiled by the royal justices, presumably in Shrewsbury, from the returns recorded by the foresters' clerks on separate rotulets (*rotuli*) or sheets (*schedae*) for particular hayes and forests.<sup>26</sup> Compiled in this way, the final perambulation should then have been transmitted to the king for approval. Had Edward I approved of the perambulations presumably submitted in 1298, Chancery clerks would have put them into the proper diplomatic form to be issued, enrolled, and 'published' in the counties by official proclamation and the distribution of copies. However, this does not appear to have taken place.

The text of the 6 February 1298 perambulation is similar in content and wording to that of 6 June 1300, which was confirmed by Edward I on 14 February 1301. The principal differences are in the individuals

involved. While the 1300 survey involved six foresters (five of whom had also served in this capacity in 1298) and the same three verderers of the forests, Edward I appointed four new itinerant justices who appear to have been crown loyalists without Shropshire ties. No doubt, the new justices were selected in an attempt to guarantee a more satisfactory outcome for the crown. Three of the justices in 1300 were Roger Brabazon, who served as chief justice of King's Bench from 1295 to 1316; John Druel, sheriff of Northampton in 1297; and Henry de Guldeford (or Guildford), a royal official from Kent who had been appointed to perambulate several northern counties in 1298 and became a justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1305.<sup>27</sup> Though he had been a justice two years earlier, Roger Sprengnose was reduced to being a juror in 1300.

In addition to the replacement of the justices, new jurors were added. Of the twenty jurors listed in 1300, only eight had also served as jurors in 1298. Most of the jurors in both years were drawn from what from the fourteenth century could be described as the emerging gentry. Six of the jurors in 1298 were knights, so qualified by having at least £40 annual income and thus subject to royal summons to military service: Robert Corbet, William de Huford, William de Hodenet, Hugh Fitz-Aer, Radulph de Pichford, and Richard de Leighton. There were also local men recently in the king's service, such as Roger de Pwlesdon and John de Easthope, who had been tax assessors for Shropshire in 1297. Finally, the jurors included lesser landholders who were tenants of the greater landlords in the area: Richard Clerk, who held from Roger Sprengnose, lord of Longnor; Hugh de Longslow, who held under the Hugh Fitz-John; and Walter Sprengnose, lord of Bayston, who held from the bishop of Hereford. An understanding of tenurial relationships during the constitutional crisis of 1297 may help explain the common interests of local alliances in support of Roger Bigot and Humphrey de Bohun.<sup>28</sup>

Holding lands in and around the royal forests of Shropshire, the jurors had a personal interest in seeing Shropshire lands free from the jurisdiction of the king's forest officialdom. To Edward I's dismay, the perambulation of 1300 produced almost the same findings as that of 1298 in Shropshire and probably other counties as well. A collation of the two texts would suggest strongly that the perambulation of 1300 was copied in large measure from a locally retained archival copy of the 1298 returns, though there are enough differences to suggest both editorial revision as well as some additional surveying in 1300. It was almost inevitable that largely the same group of manors, villages, woods, and other lands that had been afforested since the accession of King Henry II in 1154 was declared disafforested in both the perambulations of 1298 and 1300.<sup>29</sup> In neither the perambulation of 1298 or 1300 were the jurors intimidated by the presence of the royal commissioners and other loyal servants of the crown, proving as reluctant as justices of local origin to cooperate.<sup>30</sup> The king was displeased by the jurors' flagrant disregard for royal instructions that they determine the boundaries (*bunde foreste*) as they existed in the time of Henry III, under whom the royal forests had been perambulated in 1235. The king could never accept the validity of the perambulations of 1300 and managed to have them annulled by the 29 December 1305 bull of Pope Clement V as extraordinary and improper concessions.

As a large landholder in the area, Shrewsbury Abbey was one of the principal beneficiaries of the perambulation, though it is only mentioned by name in 1298 and 1300 in connection with the 'boscus abbatis salopsberie de monte Gilberti [the Wrekin]'. Other religious houses with lands disafforested were the Benedictine abbey of Haughmond (founded 1100), the Cistercian abbey of Buildwas (1135), and the Augustinian priories of Wombridge (c. 1130–35) and of Lilleshall (before 1143). William de Mokeleye retained copies of both perambulations in order to document the abbey's rights and privileges. Even though Edward I had these surveys overturned, the haye of Lythewood was granted to Shrewsbury Abbey by Edward III in 1346 and remained in its possession almost without interruption until the Dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539/40.<sup>31</sup> So too, one must suppose, did the roll now at Princeton.

In terms of provenance, the roll would have been stored originally in a hamper or muniment chest in the treasury or possibly even the library of Shrewsbury Abbey's chapter house. The abbey and its property, presumably including its library and archives, passed in turn to the Langley (1546–1701), Baldwyn (1701–1726), and Powys (1726–1805) families of Shropshire, and was probably sold off not long after the Powys family died out.<sup>32</sup> The roll was owned by William Hamper (1776–1831), the Birmingham antiquarian and collector, from 1807 until his death, after which his books and manuscripts were auctioned off by Robert Harding Evans (1778–1857) on 21 July 1831.<sup>33</sup> The inscription 'Phillipps MS. 36299' on the roll indicates it was part of the great manuscript collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872), though it is unknown when he acquired it since the printed catalog of his collection did not list most of the individual documents. In this century Phillipps' grandson Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick (d. 1938) numbered the roll and perhaps twelve thousand documents and other items to facilitate their auction.<sup>34</sup> The roll seems to have been purchased by the London dealer Maggs Brothers in the 1920s or 1930s at a Sotheby's auction in London. The American collector John Hinsdale Scheide (1875–1942) of Titusville, Pennsylvania, purchased the roll from Maggs Brothers along with other English and French historical documents, several of which also bear Phillipps numbers.<sup>35</sup> The Scheide Collection was deposited at the Princeton University Library in 1938 by John Hinsdale Scheide and formally donated nine years later by his son William H. Scheide.

In publishing the 1298 perambulation for the first time, the transcription very closely follows the Princeton manuscript's spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and word division, all of which differ somewhat from the 1300 version. All abbreviations and contractions have been extended, with the exception of local place names for which there is no accepted modern equivalent. In such cases, following the English practice, a terminal apostrophe has been used to represent the suspension bar in the original, though it is likely that many of the ablative case endings thus avoided could be safely rendered by a final 'e' (for example, 'villa de Astone' rather than 'villa de Aston'), for the scribe on occasion used the two interchangeably (for example, 'Horestone' and 'Horeston', or 'Esthope' and 'Esthop'). In the interest of space, the many local place names have not been identified with modern equivalents because this was largely done for the cartulary copy of the perambulation of 1300 in both Una Rees's edition and in the translation by R W Eyton.<sup>36</sup>

## APPENDIX 1

## Perambulation of Shropshire, 6 February 1298

Perambulatio in foresta de Lythewode Hanekehrste et Byschmor in comitate Salopescire coram mancalmo de Harlegh' et Johanne de Crokeslegh'. ad visum dicte perambulacionis faciendum per dominum Regem assignatis. et Rogero Sprenthose et Ricardo de Harlegh'. in comitate predicto. per predictos mancalmum et Johannem electis. et eisdem assignatum. comitatis presentibus. Rogero filio Johannis. Philipo de Polileye. Petro manneysin. forestariis dicte foreste de feodo. Petro de Eyton'. Galefrido de Kynsedele. Elya de suttone. viridarii eiusdem foreste facta ibidem. sexto die februaris. Anno regni Regi Edwardi vicesimo sexto. per sacramentum Roberti Corbet. Willelmo de Huford'. Willelmi de Hodenet. Radulphi de Arraz. Henrici de motton'. Ricardi de Lehton'. Radulphi de Pichford' militem. Hugoni filio Aeris. Thome de Lee. Rogeri de Pyvesdon'. Reginaldi de Charles.<sup>1</sup> Johannis de Esthop'. Willielmi Rondulf. Hugoni de Wlonckeslowe. Ivonis de sulton'. Ricardi clerici de Longenolre. Walteri sprengrose. Johannis de Aldenham Ad hager. Willielmi Caynton'. Qui dicunt quod Bunde foreste de Lythewode incipiunt in alta via ad boscum Audulphi de Bracy<sup>2</sup> iuxta Poh Wenhale ascendendo per Welbaches evese per coopertum de Lythewode usque ad campum de magna Lythe per Welbaches Ewye usque Wernardesleye. Et sic ascendendo per hayam campi de magna Lythe usque ad viridem viam que ducit sub Eggefordsknolle. et ita per dictam viam usque hayam campi de Wesselegh'. et ita per dictam hayam usque ad hayam campi de parva Lythe. Et ita per campum de hayam usque ad sychetum qui descendit inter campum de parva Lythe et campum de Beystan. Et sic ascendendo per predictum sychetum usque ad Trencheam inter forestam de Lythewode et boscum de Beystan. Et directe per predictam Trencheam usque le Bracyeshok. Et sic inde descendendo usque ad metas inter Beystan et Polyleye. Et ita per predictas metas per quoddam vetus fossatum usque Beystaneshull'. Et de Beystaneshull' descendendo usque Bolemereslyche. Et ita ascendendo per quoddam vetus fossatum subtus Bolerugge. usque ad campum de Alvichemere Et ita per predictum campum usque le score super Bolerugge. Et ita de la score descendendo usque ad campum de sutton'. Et ita de campum de sutton' usque Wolmerysheystowe ascendendo. Et sic directe usque le horeston in Twychenylde Grene Et sic directe usque ad villam de Polyleye. ascendendo usque ad capud ville per quoddam sychetum usque ad quoddam vetus fossatum apud stockgyngesheued. Et ita ascendendo per mediam moram de polyleye usque ad le hokesheued. Et ita inde per le heuedweye usque lillayesweye. Et ita de lillayesweye usque Butte schoete iuxta Porrmones grene. Et ita ad corneram de hauleye. Et ita per quandam viam usque le mersyche iuxta audulnes schute. Et ita descendendo per predictum sychetum usque ad altam viam iuxta Pouhwenhale. Et manerium de stretton' cum pertinentiis in strettonedale quod Haweysia de la Pole<sup>3</sup> tenet ad terminum vite sue de dono domino Rege est in foresta.

Incipiunt Bunde de hanekhurst per predictos juratos facte. scilicet de Cherleysforde ascendendo per Eluynas syche usque le merbroke Et ita descendendo per le merbroke usque ripariam de Onye. et sic per Ripam de Onye usque le hauebrok descendendo. Et per le hauebrok ascendendo usque Cherleysford'.

Incipiunt Bunde de Byschemor per predictos juratos facte. scilicet ad le haueweyshelde descendendo per le vynawesbrok usque Bottestrete. Et sic per viam de Bottestrete ascendendo usque Bottelowe. Et ita predictam viam de Bottestrete usque le haldehale. Et sic de la haldehale per coopertum usque haselwalle. Et sic de haselwalle per coopertum usque Whyttyngeswalle. Et de Wyttyngeswalle ascendendo per coopertum usque le haueweyeshelle. Et ad dictas hayas de hanekhurst et Byssemor custodiendum. villa de muneton' pertinet cum pertinentiis.

Incipiunt Bunde haye de Welinton' per predictos juratos. et per Rogerum de Welinton' forestario de feodo in dicta haya ad Clerkenebrugge in Watelingstrete ascendendo per le stonibrock usque caput gardini Radulfi de

Clotlewe. Et ita a capite dicti gardini per predictum le stonibrock ascendendo usque le quicsonnt. Et sic de la quinsonnt ascendendo per quandam viam usque le merok usque le salin. exinde ascendendo usque ad fontem que dicitur sprungwalle in campis de huntidon'. Et ita per hayam dicti campi usque le mapelenehache. Et sic per predictam hayam usque le huntidoneshache. Et exinde ascendendo usque le stanydelf. Et ita descendendo usque huntidonestyle. Et ita descendendo usque ad quandum quercum qui stat in le moesymoz. Et ita inde ascendendo usque boynhaleshurne propinque ville de huntidone. Et ita per hayam usque boynhalispate. Et sic per quandam viam usque le horeston. Et ita per predictam viam usque le dede queneok. Et sic descendendo per predictam viam usque le Overe smethe. Et inde descendendo usque le Noethere smethe. Et sic descendendo usque le horestone in ardelestones grene. Et inde directe usque Wothynysforde ad corneram campi de ardelestone. Et sic per hayam dicti campi usque Rade Weyestyle. Et sic descendendo usque bayleysbroke. Et sic descendendo per bayleyesbroke usque Watelinggestrete. Et sic ascendendo per dictam viam usque le Wode Wardes schute. Et inde per predictam viam usque le Clerkenebrugge.

Incipiunt Bunde foreste de scyrllet per eosdem juratos presente Thome de Baggesovere forestarius de feodo in eadem foresta. videlicet a yapenetres merwey usque le Renenesock ascendendo et ita inde usque Bre Wallegene. Et ita inde descendendo usque Rommedenesyche. Et ita inde directe usque le mos Weye iuxta le coleherch. et sic ita ascendendo usque le fendesak et ad huc descendendo usque le derne Wytesfordes. et inde ascendendo usque le Netherecumbesheued. et sic ascendend per le middelcumbasgeued usque le Overecumbesheued. et sic descendendo usque le Coldewallehull' et sic inde descendendo per le lynde usque le mer helin. et inde descendendo usque du Beldandesleye. et sic inde ascendendo per queddum sichetum usque le stonesweyes Netherende. et sic directe usque le Brodeweyes netherende. et sic directe usque le hankymsacre et sic inde descendendo usque jonesacre. et sic per hayam campi de Aldenham usque Wodewallmedewe. et sic ascendendo per queddum sychetum usque le Pyrle. et sic inde ascendendo usque Wythardesok. et sic directe usque le puntfold. et sic descendendo usque le schepewey. et sic descendendo usque le halwerene. et sic ascendendo per hayam usque adameshale. et sic per assarta que Johannes de Aldenham arentata tenet de domino Rege usque ad corneram de mokeleyes rowe. et sic inde ascendendo usque le yapenacres merweye. Item dominus Rex habet idem quandam placeam bosci que vocatur Benetleyes Haye et est in eadem foresta.

Incipiunt Bunde foreste domini Regis de morf per juratos supradictos in prescencia Rogeri filii Johannis et Willelmi de Ruchton' forestariis eiusdem foreste. scilicet. ad Pendelstanes mulne ascendendo per sabrinam usque locum ubi Worgh descendit in sabrinam. et sic inde ascendendo per ripariam de Worgh usque Worghbrigge et sic inde ascendendo Myndeuffordesbrigge et ita ascendendo usque Chyrle per ripariam et sic ascendendo usque Chyrlefordesbrugge et sic ascendendo per altam viam usque villam de Hulton'. et sic per quandam viam usque Wabrokesheth. et sic ascendendo per le stonystrete usque Akewardes castel. et sic usque le Cheresock et sic inde directe inter dominicum domini Regis de Claverleye. et campos de Wythemere. Burshton'. Bebrugger et Gatacre usque coopertum de morf. et sic per hayam cooperti predicti usque le Blakewalle apud le Oldefelde. et inde usque schyrreneslydynete. et inde usque ad Cresweyslone. et sic per Cresweyslone usque hayam de brodenewelonde. et sic inde usque filiode. et sic inter hayam et la lyghte usque Tuggeput. et sic descendendo per sichetum usque ad stonybrugge de Wodeton'. et sic descendendo per sichetum usque Wynelesford'. et per altam viam usque moselydesete et sic inde usque haleweyeslydesete. et sic inde per quandam semitam que ducit usque quatforde usque le hethenedict. et sic per dictum fossatum usque gurgitem de quatford'. et sic ascendendo per sabrinam usque ad quaddam vetus fossatum quod est inter campum de Bruges et villam de quatford'. et sic per dictum vetus fossatum et altam viam usque domum leperosorum sancti jacobi de Bruges. et sic inde ascendendo usque ad quaddam vetus fossatum subtus de Gybet. et sic de dicto fossato directe usque ad Baconescroft. et sic descendendo usque Tyssyngscroft. et sic per altam viam ascendendo usque Pendelstanys mulne. Omnes autem foreste et haye supradicte una cum manerio de stretton'. et villa de muneton' cum pertinentiis sunt dominicum domini Regis et remaneret foreste.

Et dicunt quod terre et bosci qui afforestati sunt in predicto comitate una cum vastis et moris exceptis villis terris et boscis suprascriptos debent deafforestari secundum tenorem magne carte de foresta qui occupati sunt per antecessores domini Regis qui nunc est. et eorum ministerios post coronacionem domini Henrici Regis nostri patris. et sunt terre ille et bosci subscripti. videlicet. Capitale mesuagium de schyrrenehales cum toto bosco. medietas de parva hales. boscus de Wodecote. Abbacia de Lilleshull'. villa de Lilleshull'. mucleston'. donyton'. Grangia de Chershale. Grangia de Wildemor. et Grangia de Watelingestrette cum omnibus boscis suis et moris. villa de Longeford'. Brocton' et Chershale cum boscis et moris. villa de Eggemundone cum mori et brueris cum medietate novi burgi. magna Aston'. parva aston'. parva halis. Adoneye cum moris et brueris. boscus de oenlequeneacre cum campis et brueris adiacentibus villa de howele cum suis pertinentiis. Grangia de dodicote. Calvington' cum boscis et brueris et vastis. Caynton' cum bruariis et moris. villa de Tyberton' cum

bruariis et moris. Cherynton' cum bruariis vastis et moris. mestone cum medietate de magna Boewlewas ville de Huppton'. medietas ville de slepe ex parte usque Wyldemore cum moris. villa de Crugelton' cum moris. villa de Eyton' cum boscis moris et vastis. Kynardeseye. botereye cum moris. villa de Preston' et horton' cum boscis et moris. villa de hadleye cum boscis et moris. Prioratus de Wombrugge cum boscis et moris. villa de Leye Onbreye Watmundeshale. ketteleye. parva dalileye cum boscis et moris. villa de paneleye cum boscis et moris. Appeleye iuxta Welinton' cum boscis. quatuor burgagia in Welinton' ex parte boreali. Ardeston'. et magna dalileye cum boscis et planis. villa de scyrchelea et Onlemor cum boscis. villa de malmeleye cum boscis suis. villa de Poresleye et le Wodehous cum boscis suis. villa de Kyndeshale cum medietate de schuffenhale cum boscis. et medietate de brayton' ex parte occidentale. villa de Halghton'. villa de knalle. et villa de Wyke. Trillesardin et medietas de Hemme usque oulemor cum boscis suit. Boscus de Kembrithton'. tercia pars ville de sutton'. et medietas ville de Brocton' cum boscis suis. villa de madeleye. Caldebroc. parva Wenloc et Huntidon' cum boscis suis. parva Buldewas cum boscis suis. Bosci abbatis de Buldewas due partes ville de Leghton' ex parte orientale. Overe Garmeston' cum boscis suis et planis. boscus abbatis salopberie de monte Gilberti. boscus de opynton'. et medietas ville de Aston' cum boscis suis et vastis. villa de Clotleye. Abbacia de Hagwemon cum boscis et vastis suis. boscus comitis Arundelle<sup>4</sup> de hupton. boscus de rodene cum planis. boscus de Rodinton' cum vastis suis villa de Halghton' cum boscis suis et planis. villa de astleye cum boscis et planis suis. Boscus de Hadenhale. boscus ville de smethecote. medietas ville de munkes Adbrithon' cum boscis suis et planis. villa de Adbrithon' hesce cum boscis et planis suis. Harbascote cum boscis et planis suis. villa de Pymbeleye cum boscis suis. villa de Adbritholey cum boscis suis et planis. Grangia de sunderne. medietas ville de offyton'. medietas ville de dodynghope cum boscis et planis. boscus de Cyneton' cum planis. boscus de Corftone cum planis. boscus de duddelebury cum planis. villa de Astone cum boscis et planis pertinentiis. duo mesuagia. medietas ville de munselawe cum boscis et planis. Parva millinghope cum boscis et planis. millinghope superior et duo mesuagia in Hungerford' cum boscis et planis. medietas ville de schyptone cum boscis et planis. duo campi de Bradestan. Laverdene superior et inferior cum boscis et planis. medietas ville de Brocton' cum boscis et planis duo campi de Patynton' cum boscis et planis. duo mesuagia cum duobus campis et vastis in Boynton'. villa de Harleye cum boscis et planis. medietas ville de cristescheche cum boscis et planis. grangia de harnegge cum boscis et planis. villa de Kenleye et Bromcroft cum boscis et planis. villa de Leye et Blakeweye cum boscis et planis. villa de Longeleye. Rockleg' et hothales cum boscis et planis. villa de Luchecote et Longefeld' cum boscis et planis. villa de Esthope cum boscis et planis. villa de Pleshe et Brome cum boscis et planis. boscus de Wrocwardin. villa de Chatewalle cum boscis et planis. villa de fredesleye et Romeshurst cum boscis et planis. villa de Longenolre cum boscis et planis. villa de Lydleg' cumbeleg'. Bottefelde. Wylnerston'. Enchemers. Cardyton'. stonacton' cum boscis et planis. villa de Acton' Burnel cum boscis et planis. villa de parva proene cum boscis et planis. villa de Chyrcheproene cum boscis et planis. villa de Lotwyche cum boscis et planis. villa de Wyldredhope. villa de Overstaneweye et Netherstaneweye cum boscis et planis. villa de astewalle et Lake cum boscis et planis. villa de Russebury et Westewell' cum boscis et planis. villa de Cote cum boscis et planis. villa de Eton'. horton' et Tykelewardin cum boscis et planis. villa de Hope Bondelers. Chelmundewyke. et Ragedone cum boscis et planis. villa de Hatton' cum boscis et planis. villa de mydelhope cum boscis et planis. villa de Westhope cum boscis et planis. villa de Wolverton' cum boscis et planis. villa de Halchamston' cum boscis et planis. villa de Affecote cum boscis et planis. villa de Acton' scot. Heveleg' et Wyttyngeslowe cum boscis et planis. villa de Acton' scot. Heveleg' et Wyttyngeslowe cum boscis et planis. villa de streforde et le merchs cum boscis et planis. villa de Wystanestowe et feldhampton' cum boscis et planis. villa de Wolverston' Rotelynghope cum boscis et planis. Trota la Longenmunede exceptis dominicis de stretton'. villa de modelicote. stutte. Leye Hottewode. le cres. Walstanston'. smethecote. Pykelescote Wildredelegh'. Hehecote. Codardicote. et le schupene cum boscis et planis. villa de stepelton' et Neteleg' cum boscis et planis. medietas ville de Pulrebache et villa de Chyrche Pulrebache cum boscis et planis. medietas ville de Longedon' cum boscis et planis. villa de magna lythe. Wesseleg'. parva Lythe. Beystan. cum boscis et planis. tres partes ville de Polyleye cum moris et vastis. Boscus de moele Bracy. unum mesuagium in Welbache cum boscis et vastis. medietas ville de Pycheford' cum boscis et vastis. villa de Cantelope cum boscis et vastis. villa de Byrton'. eton' marscot. Bettane abbatis. Chylton'. Brampton'. Cronechull'. Burton' cum boscis et vastis. villa de Bedleswordin. Wyggewyke. et scheynton' cum omnibus boscis et vastis. Abbacia de Buldewas cum boscis planis et vastis. villa de Benethale posenhale Wyke. Adlescote. Barewe. Walton'. Atterleye. magna Wenlock et Bradelegh' cum omnibus boscis vastis et planis. manerium de Borewardeslegh' cum omnibus boscis vastis et planis. manerium de Wylleye cum boscis vastis et planis. ville de Lynleye et Canhgheleye cum boscis vastis et planis. manerium de Asleg' Abbatis cum boscis vastis et planis. manerium de tasseleg' cum boscis vastis et planis. villa de Aston' aer. Aldenham cum boscis vastis et planis. manerium de upton' cum boscis vastis et planis ville de medeweleye. cryddon'. chetyton'. eudon' savage. Walkeslowe cum boscis vastis et planis. Boscus de overton'. villa de fayntre. et medietas de Neenton'. cum boscis vastis et planis manerium de Oxebalde. myetldon'. deryton'. et Opton' cum boscis vastis et planis. ville de mainfeld' Lee. underdon'.



Walton' et Oldebure cum boscis vastis et planis. villa de Prestehope cum planis. Boscus comitis Arundell' iuxta schyrlet. Norton' iuxta Beystan. cum planis ville de Wytener. Gataker. Burghton' et Bebrugge cum boscis moris et vastis. villa de Gronyton' cum boscis vastis et planis. villa de doditon'. Wethale et Chatteford' cum boscis moris vastis et planis. villa de Holicote cum bosco.

### Appendix notes

- <sup>1</sup> Charnes in the perambulation of 1300. Both spellings were used during his life. Eyton, *Antiquities*, 8, 44–45.
- <sup>2</sup> A certain Adolph le Bracy was listed at Melebracy in the laysubsidy roll of 1297 with four oxen, two cows, and other property. Cromarty, *Wealth of Shrewsbury*, 88.
- <sup>3</sup> Hawise de la Pole (d.1310), daughter of John le Strange of Nesse and Cheswardine (fl. 1221–69) and widow of Griffin ap Gwenhunwin, prince of Powis. Eyton, 6, 61, 344, n 42.
- <sup>4</sup> The earl of Arundel was Richard Fitz-Alan (1267–1302), barony of Oswestry. See Eyton, 7, 260–62; I.J. Sanders, *English Baronies: A Study of Their Origin and Descent, 1087–1327*, 1963, 70–71.

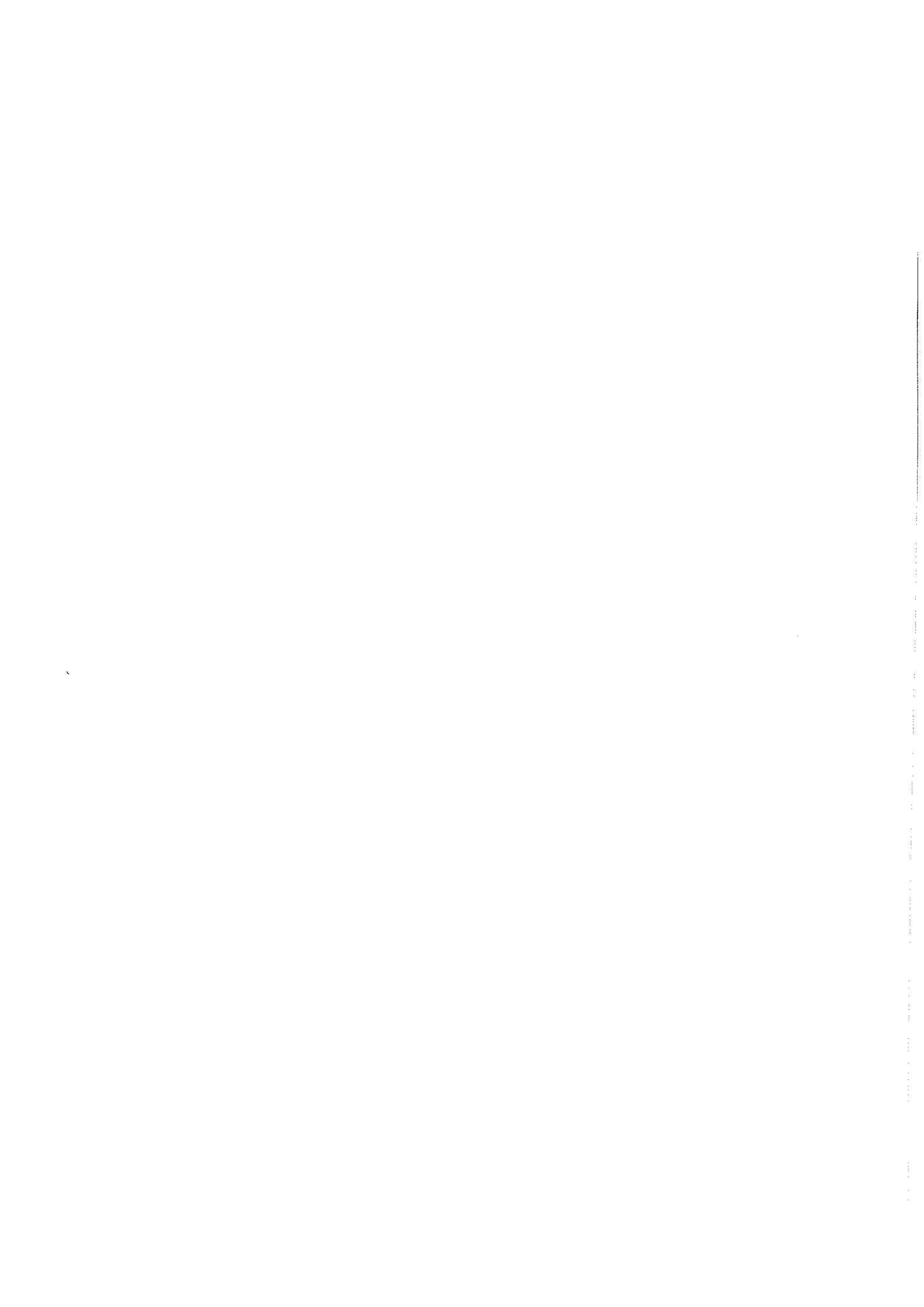
### Article notes

- <sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank the Princeton University Libraries for permission to use portions of his article, 'In Defense of Ancient Liberties: Shrewsbury Abbey and the English Constitutional Crisis of 1297', which appeared in the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 55, 2 (Winter 1994): 241–261; and also in William P. Stoneman, ed., *The Same Purposeful Instinct: Essays in Honor of William H. Scheide*, 1994, 89–109. For a discussion of statute rolls of monastic and commercial origins, see Don C. Skemer, 'From Archives to the Books Trade: Private Statute Rolls in England, 1285–1307', *Jnl of the Soc of Archivists* (Fall 1995)
- <sup>2</sup> Included are (1) the Confirmation of the Charters issued by Edward by Caernarvon, 10 October 1297, which was later confirmed and reissued by his father Edward I at Ghent, 5 November 1297, in *The Statutes of the Realm* (Record Commission, 1810–28), 1, 123–124; and in Prestwich, *Documents*, 158–160; (2) a letter patent of Edward of Caernarvon, 10 October 1297, conferring royal pardon on the earls Humphrey de Bohun and Roger Bigot and on their followers, which was confirmed and reissued by Edward I on 5 November 1297, in *Statutes of the Realm*, 1, 125; and in Prestwich, *Documents*, 155–156; (3) the undated general sentence of excommunication proclaimed in 1297 by Robert Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, against those who would violate Magna Carta and the Forest Charter, in *Statutes*, 1, 126; and in *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, AD 1294–1313*, transcribed and edited by Rose Graham, 1952, 1, 204–205. The three French documents have numerous though usually minor textual variations from the standard published versions of each, usually taking the form of differences in word order and orthography, as well as added or missing words and phrases. The variations result from a full complement of customary scribal errors
- <sup>3</sup> The script used in the Scheide roll is a distinctively English documentary cursive known as *anglicana* (characterized by forked ascenders, abbreviation bars, and the heavy look of particular letters), used in the late thirteenth century for both public and private administrative records. Though of a very modest quality appropriate to a country scribe, the roll's handwriting is clearly similar to examples in C Johnson and H Jenkinson, *English Court Hand A.D. 1006 to 1500 Illustrated chiefly from the Public records*, 1915, part 1, xviii–xlviii, 158–164, and part 2, plates xviii–xx(a); M B Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250–1500*, 1969, plate 4; and M P Brown, *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600*, 1990, 94–95
- <sup>4</sup> On political issues during the constitutional crisis, see Charles Bémont, ed., *Chartes des libertés anglaises (1100–1305) publiées avec une introduction et des notes*, Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire, 12, 1892, 96–108; William Stubbs, ed., *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History from the Earliest Times to the Reign of Edward I*, 9th ed., 1962, 482–494; Bertie Wilkinson, *The Constitutional History of England, 1216–1399, with Select Documents*, 1948: 1, *Politics and the Constitution, 1216–1307*, 197–232. On local bases of opposition, see Michael Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I*, 1972, 233–235; Prestwich, ed., *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297–98 in England*, Camden Fourth Series, 24, 1980, 15. Also based on local evidence is J H Denton, 'Worcester Text of the Remonstrances of 1297', *Speculum*, 53, 1978, 511–521
- <sup>5</sup> Una Rees, ed., *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey*, 1975, 1, vi, 245–252. Evidence is also provided by a British Library manuscript (Hargrave 313: 'Codex membranaceus in quatro grandiori, eleganter exaratus'), which includes a copy of the Red Book of the Exchequer and was tentatively attributed to the abbey by N R Ker on the basis of its contents. *A Catalogue of Manuscripts formerly in the Possession of Francis Hargrave . . . now Deposited in the British Museum*, 1818, 91–94; N R Ker, ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2d edition, 1964, 179. Hargrave 313 was probably brought to Shropshire either in 1277 or 1283 and was at Shrewsbury Abbey in the fourteenth century, when documents concerning that religious house were added. Hubert Hall, ed. *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, Rolls Series, 99, 1896, 1, 1–li; D C Cox, 'Peace-Keeping without Frankpledge: Shropshire's Claims in 1307', *Trans of the Shrops Archaeol Soc*, 60, 1975–76, 83. Several texts after 1300 relate to the land tenures and franchises of Shropshire around 1100, before the earldom escheated to the crown (fol. 48v: 'Hic annotantur tenentes terram de Rogerio Belysmo comite in Salopesia tunc de Rege Angliae; and fol 131v: 'Ces sont les franchises et les usages qe la communalite du comete de Salop' cleymet aver de droyt et de auncyne usage de tens dont nule memorie ne court') The latter is a text better known as *Calumpnia communitatis Salop'* (1307)
- <sup>6</sup> While a certain Master Gilbert was mentioned as the abbey's clerk around 1240 (Rees, *Cartulary*, 2, 346), there is no indication who might have served in this capacity at the time the Scheide roll was written. Most local documentation at this time was prepared by clerks who had taken low religious orders. According to R H Hilton, *A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century*, 1966, 65, 'Almost all the writing that was done on this parchment was done by members of the secular clergy, from the humble reeve's account to the elaborate folios of the bishop's register. Only the more elaborate literary productions were the work of monks in the scriptoria'. The training and record keeping of estate stewards and bailiffs from the reign of Edward I is described in Dorothea Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and Other Treatises on Estate Management and Accounting*, 1971, 62, 73–74. The documents of 1301 in the cartulary at The National Library of Wales are in a very clear Gothic bookhand quite unlike the hurried *anglicana* cursive of the Scheide roll.
- <sup>7</sup> This was most clearly stated in the *Calumpnia communitatis Salop'* (1307), which is found in Hargrave MS 313 and another contemporary source. For a discussion and edition of this text, see D C Cox, 'Peace-keeping without Frankpledge', 81–95.
- <sup>8</sup> On the multiplicity of laws, including reference to legal jurisdiction in the western borders, see R A Griffiths, 'The English Realm and Dominions and the King's Subjects in the Later Middle Ages', in J G Rowe, ed., *Aspects of Late Medieval Government and Society*, 1986, 33–54, and especially 33–35

- 9 Prestwich, *War Politics and Finance*, 234; Prestwich, *English Politics*, 39–41. For an overview of the Welsh marcher lordships and wars, see R R Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400*, 1978; J E Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I*, 1901; A C Reeves, *The Marcher Lords*, 1983 and Herbert and G E Jones, eds., *Edward I and Wales*, 1988
- 10 W Capes, 'See of Hereford', *A Dictionary of English Church History*, S L Ollard, G Crosse, and M F Bond, eds., 3rd edition revised, 274–278; Rees, *Cartulary*, 2, 301–321; W W Capes, ed., *Charters and Records of Hereford Cathedral*, Cantilupe Society, 1908, 119, 147, 149, 150, 152, 172; J H Denton, *Robert Winchelsey and the Crown, 1294–1313: A Study in the Defence of Ecclesiastical Liberty*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd series, 14, 1980, 39, 46, 50–54, 159, 261. Bishop Swinfield shared William de Mokeleye's interest in forest boundaries, which is suggested by the inclusion in the Hereford cartulary of the 24 February and 22 June 1300 perambulations of the boundaries of the forest of Haye (W W Capes, *Registrum Ricardi de Swinfield, episcopi Herefordensis, A. D. MCCLXXXIII–MCCCXVII*, Cantilupe Society, 1909)
- 11 H S Deighton, 'Clerical Taxation by Consent, 1279–1301', *Eng Hist Rev*, 68, 1953, 161–192; Denton, *Winchelsey*, 297–301. Along with two to three dozen other churchmen, the abbot of Shrewsbury was summoned to Parliaments held at Westminster or London on 1 August 1295, 8 March 1299, and 3 May 1299. Sir Francis Palgrave, ed., *The Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons. . .* 1831, I, 837–838. Shrewsbury Abbey was subject to sit in Parliament because it had become a tenant-in-chief, holding lands directly from the crown after the forfeiture of Earl Robert de Bellême
- 12 Denton, *Winchelsey*, 173–176; Prestwich, *English Politics*, 73–76
- 13 The perambulation of the royal forests in Shropshire, dated 6 February 1298, though the text is similar in wording and substance to the 6 June 1300 perambulation of Shropshire, which Edward I confirmed and issued on 13 February 1301, in Rees, *Cartulary*, 1, 245–251. 'The original perambulation of June 1300 is the PRO roll C47/12 but it is in a very bad condition. The letters patent which were sent out in February 1301 are enrolled on roll C 67/6A, and presumably the copy in the Cartulary was taken directly from these letters patent'. Though the 1298 perambulation was not recorded in the patent or close rolls, it might have been entered on special rolls of forest perambulations noted in the 'Tower records' by R Thomson, *An Historical Essay on the Magna Charta of King John*, 1829, 534.
- 14 G J Turner, ed., *Select Pleas of the Forest*, Selden Society, 13, 1901, ix–cxxxiv; C Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History*, Univ of Manchester Pubs, 91 1915, 2, 199–224; M L Bazeley, 'The Extent of the English Forest in the Thirteenth Century', in *Trans of the Royal Hist Soc*, 4th ser, 4 1921, 140–172; C R Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England*, 1979, 134–141; R Grant, *The Royal Forests of England*, 1991, 150–159. Bazeley (p 155) notes, 'In the forest, as elsewhere, Edward I made some attempt to recover lost ground. Eyre rolls became longer; fines for default increased in number; liberties were more jealously questioned.'
- 15 *Domesday Book*, ed. J Morris, 1986, 25: *Shropshire*, ed. F and C Thorn, section 3b:1–2, 4, 1:1–6, 37; 4, 3:14
- 16 G E Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage: or, a History of the House of Lords and all its Members from the Earliest Times*, ed. G H White, 1949, 11, 682–697; Rees, *Cartulary*, xii
- 17 T Rowley, *The Shropshire Landscape*, 1972, 98–99
- 18 H M Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls: An Outline of Local Government in Medieval England*, 1930; app 4, 260–285
- 19 A Harding, ed., *The Roll of the Shropshire Eyre of 1256*, Selden Society, 96, 1981, xxvii, 89–90. Similarly, three years later the prior of St. Milburg's Convent at Wenlock protested the 'regard and view' of foresters and verderers in Shropshire woods long exempt from royal jurisdiction. *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery)*, 1916, I, 86, no 244
- 20 Eyton, *Antiquities*, 6, 341–342
- 21 M C Hill, 'The Demesne and the Waste: A Study of Medieval Inclosure on the Manor of Ercell, 1086–1399', in *Trans of the Shrops Archaeol Soc*, 1979–1980: 62, 1–2. For a discussion of royal forests and assarting in the county, see Rowley, *Shropshire Landscape*, 95–106
- 22 For the history of the abbey and development of its estates, see William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum. . .*, new edition, 1821, 3, 513–529; Owen and Blakeway, 2, 1–142; T F Dukes, *Antiquities of Shropshire. . .*, 1844, 21–28 *VCH, Salop*, ii, 30–37, iv, 46–47; Rees, *Cartulary*, 1, x–xxii
- 23 Turner, *Select Pleas*, ciii; Bazeley, 'Extent of the English Forest', 155; Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies*, 2, 219–223; Rees, *Cartulary*, 2, 251; *Cal of Patent Rolls, Edward I, A.D. 1292–1301*, 1895, 312, 323, 506; *Cal of Close Rolls*, 4, 190–191
- 24 For biographical information on Roger de Sprengnose and Richard de Harley, see Eyton, *Antiquities*, 6, 56–62, 234–37; and for Malcolm de Harley and John de Crokesley, see *Cal of Patent Rolls, 1292–1301*, passim, and Edward Foss, *The Judges of England*, 1851, 3, 85
- 25 Hubert Hall, ed., *A Formula Book of English Official Historical Documents*, 1909, 2 (*Ministerial and Judicial Records*), 83, no 47. In a writ of inquisition from 1253, Henry III ordered the sheriff in each of 24 counties to convene the royal foresters 'ad regardum faciendum in eadem balliva tua, ante adventum capitalis iusticiarii foreste nostre in partes illas'
- 26 Exchequer-style rolls were made up of separate *rotuli* or 'rotulets', each of which had been compiled separately by a judge or other royal official and pertained to a particular balliwick or jurisdiction. Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 140–141; L C Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents*, 2d edition, 1966, 17–18; and *Introduction to the Study of the Pipe Rolls*, pubs of the Pipe Roll Soc, 3, 1884, 39, 42–44; D W Sutherland, *Quo Warranto Proceedings in the Reign of Edward I, 1278–1294*, 1963, 34, no 2. 26
- 27 Foss, *Judges*, 3, 241–42, 259; John Sainty, *The Judges of England, 1272–1990: A List of Judges of the Superior Courts*, Selden Society Supplem Ser, 10, 1993, 6, 60; *Cal of Patent Rolls, 1292–1301*, passim
- 28 Michael Prestwich has noted that researchers have emphasized political issues involving the entire kingdom during Edward I's constitutional crisis, in a absence of information about local grievances and opposition to the crown. Prestwich, ed., *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297–98 in England*, Camden 4th Ser, 24, 1980, 15; *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I*, 1972, 233–35
- 29 Rees, *Cartulary*, 2, 249: 'secundum tenorem magne carte de foresta qui occupati et afforestati sunt per antecessores domini Regis qui nunc est et eorum ministros post coronationem domini henrici regis filii Matille imperatricis'. Eyton, *Antiquities, VCH, Salop v*, 335–347; 1908, i, 484–491, iv, 42–48, viii, 29, 42. Compare the perambulations in Turner, *Selected Pleas*, 116–121
- 30 Richard de Harley and Robert Corbet, local knights involved in both perambulations, showed their independence in 1297 as tax collectors for the lay subsidy demanded by Edward I. According to D and R Cromarty, 'The first surviving local tax roll for Shrewsbury reveals reluctant tax officials facing reluctant taxpayers as they went from street to street assessing movable goods. . . The Shropshire collectors, Robert Corbet and Richard de Harley, after an initial payment of £393, despite being summoned to complete their account on several occasions, did not do so'. D and R Cromarty, eds., *The Wealth of Shrewsbury in the Early Fourteenth Century: Six Local Subsidy Rolls 1297 to 1322: Text and Commentary*, 1993, 2–3
- 31 Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies*, 226; *VCH, Salop*, 8, 29; Rees, *Cartulary*, 2, 435
- 32 Owen and Blakeway, *Shrewsbury*, 2, p 96. The roll has a cryptic Latin endorsement or inscription on its outer edge when fully rolled, which is in a handwriting quite different from that of the scribe responsible for text. Perhaps dating from the mid-fourteenth century, the inscription 'De quibus computat in semine xj pre.' may have pertained to some sort of agricultural rent paid in kind, specifically in seeds
- 33 The roll's earliest mark of ownership is the inscription 'Wm. Hamper, Birmingham, 1807' above the incipit of the Confirmation of the

Charters. Hamper was an antiquarian and fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, best known today for his book *The Life, Diary, and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale*, 1827, 2 vols. W P Courtney, 'William Hamper', *Dict of Nat Biog*, L Stephen and S Lee eds., 1890, 267–268; A N L Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840*, 1954, 3, 164

- 34 *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum in bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps, Bart. A.D. 1837* (n.p.: Impressus typis Medio-Montanis mense Mail, 1837–[1871]); A N L Munby, *The Formation* 4, 9, 14–15, 166; Rees, *Cartulary*, 1, viii–ix. Coincidentally, Phillipps also acquired the Shrewsbury Abbey cartulary (Phillipps MS 3516) around 1825 and Rev. Edward Williams's modern transcriptions of the same cartulary (Phillipps MS 11225) and possibly one of the documents on the Scheide roll (Phillipps MS 11232) in 1843. The cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey had been separated from its other possessions in the sixteenth century, though its provenance can also be traced. It was acquired from Stewart and Wheatley, probably the Piccadilly auctioneers William Stewart and Benjamin Wheatley, who were in partnership 1825–1826; in 1947 it was sold at Sotheby's in London to the National Library of Wales. The Williams transcriptions (including one described as 'Perambulatio Forestarum Salopiae 29.E.1') were in the 'Salop Collections' of the Lichfield antiquarian Rev. John Newling, which Phillipps acquired in 1843 at Sotheby's from the estate of William Noel-Hill, Third Baron Berwick of Attingham (1773–1842)
- 35 The roll is accompanied by a clipped description from an auction catalog, which appears to be from Sotheby's (London). Judging from the fairly late Phillipps manuscript number, it is likely that the roll was purchased at a Sotheby's auction in the 1920s or 1930s by Maggs Brothers, which used the roll's description from the printed auction catalog in compiling an undated typewritten 'Report of 228 Vellum Charters and Documents dating from c. 1154–1792'. (John Hinsdale Scheide Collection, box 249)
- 36 Byton, *Antiquities*, 6, 343–346



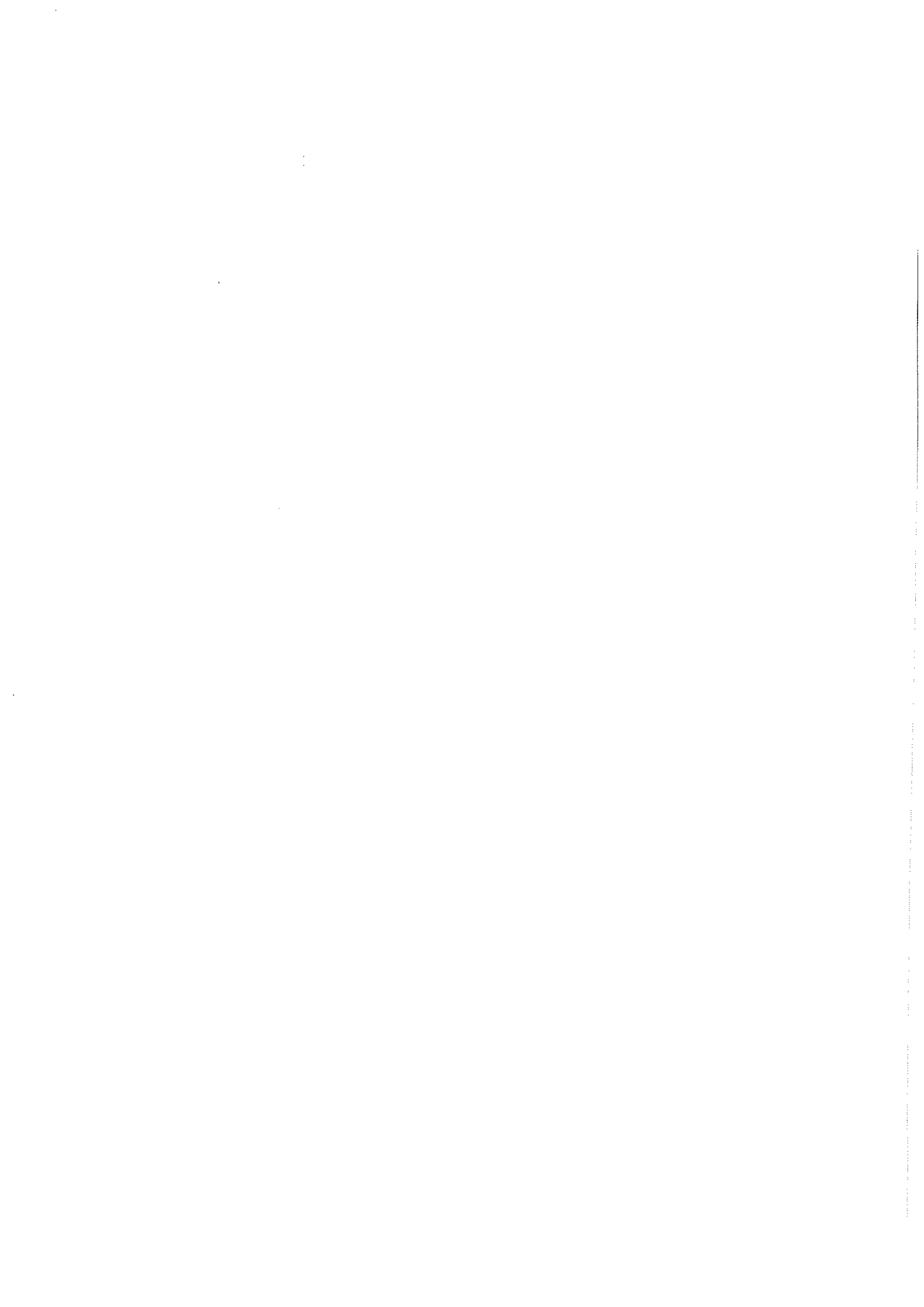
EXCAVATIONS AT BRIDGNORTH FRANCISCAN FRIARY, SHROPSHIRE IN 1989

By I.M. FERRIS

with contributions by

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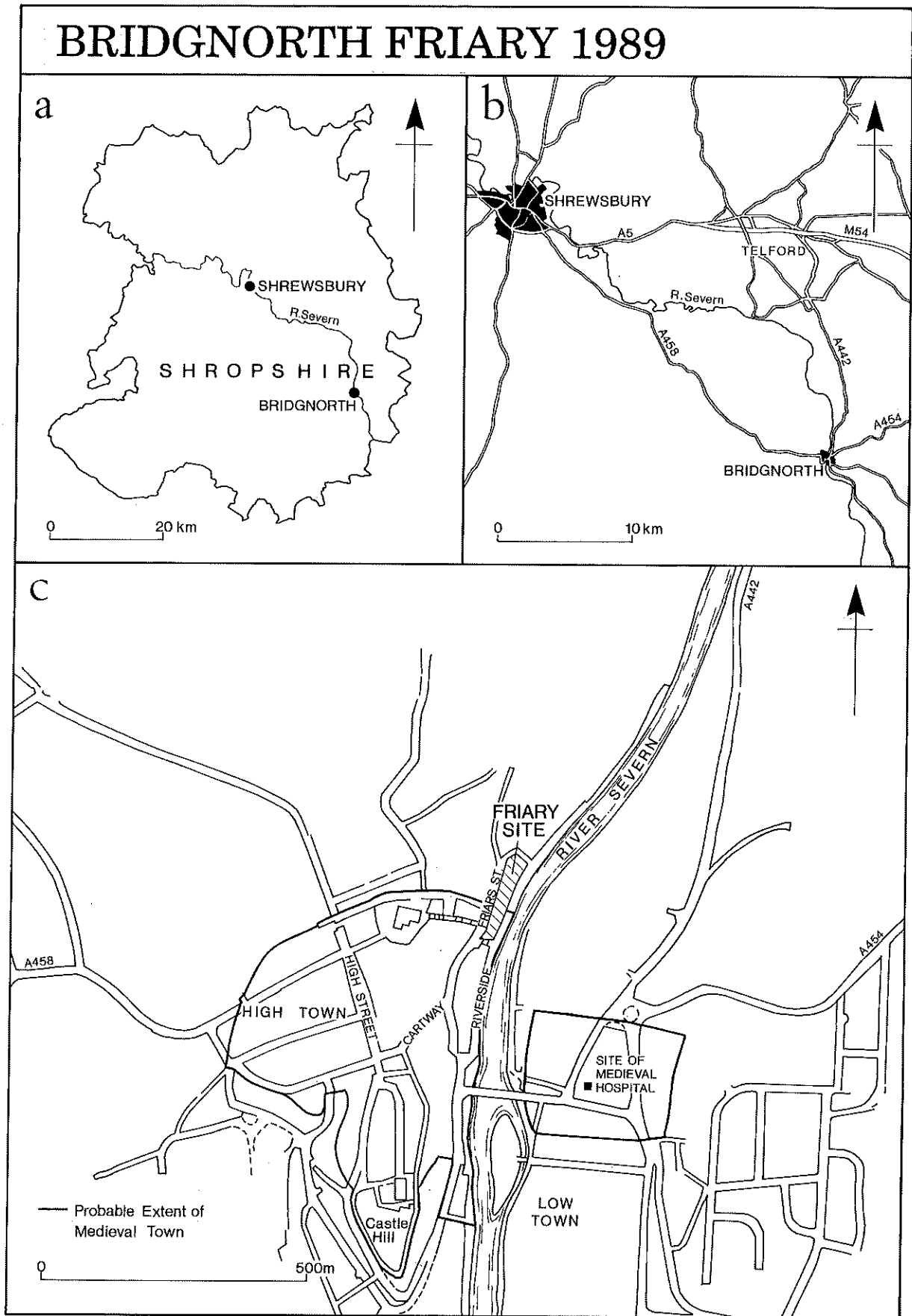


FIGURE 1 LOCATION PLANS (M BREEDON)



## SUMMARY

Excavations ahead of redevelopment on the site of the former Southwells Carpet Factory, Bridgnorth, uncovered remains of a number of medieval stone buildings belonging to the Franciscan friary that occupied this terraced, riverside location between the 13th century and its dissolution in 1538.

Identification of the functions of the excavated buildings, though tentative, suggests that they may represent the eastern end of the friary church and part of the dormitory range on the east side of the cloister, with a reredorter behind. An open, stepped passageway linked the riverside to an upper terrace.

At the dissolution, building materials deemed unfit for reuse were stripped from many of the friary buildings and dumped in the passageway. Excavation of this unique deposit recovered dozens of architectural fragments, thousands of decorated floor tile fragments, painted window glass and roof tiles.

## Introduction

Excavations at the site of the Franciscan friary at Bridgnorth, Shropshire (NGR SO 7187 9332) (fig 1) took place between April and July 1989, after the demolition of Southwells Carpet Factory and prior to a housing development. The excavation was carried out by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU).

It had long been known that the friary lay on the riverside but its precise layout was uncertain. The topography of the development area consisted of two terraces in the local red sandstone where a river-cliff steps down towards the River Severn. The upper terrace was occupied by a carpet factory some time before 1835, when it was first mapped; development on the lower terrace, with the extension of the carpet works here, did not occur until the 1860s. Stray medieval finds were encountered during many stages of the factory's expansion but it was only in the 1980s that an inspection of the factory cellars revealed portions of a sandstone wall, identified as belonging to part of a former post-medieval house, and possibly to one of the friary buildings, incorporated into a Victorian factory cellar wall.

Due to the intensive Victorian use of the site, expectations for the survival of archaeological deposits here were not high. Two initial trial trenches, however, located well-preserved medieval walling on the lower terrace and subsequent work was therefore concentrated on this area.

Excavation took place thanks to the generosity of the developer, Bovis Homes Limited, who not only allowed access to the site but largely funded the fieldwork.

As a result of the excavation some modifications were subsequently made to the development, to allow the partial presentation of the remains to the public. A watching and recording brief was maintained during the consolidation of the walling and the landscaping of the site in 1993; information obtained at this time has been integrated into the overall site archive and into the narrative of this report (though references to finds and layers from the watching brief are pre-fixed in the text by the letters WB).

## The Excavations (Figure 3; Plates 1 and 2)

After the initial trial trenching (for location of individual trenches see fig 3), excavation concentrated on an area on the lower terrace, c. 49m (north-south) by c. 14m (east-west) and taking in evaluation trenches 4, 5 and 11.

The brick and concrete factory floors in this area were removed by machine and any mixed, and obviously modern, levelling deposits were also removed at the same time. When the uppermost courses of sandstone walls belonging to pre-factory buildings were exposed, machining of deposits infilled inside those areas bounded by the walls continued until either significant archaeological deposits or the bedrock were encountered. In this manner the plan of a series of buildings rapidly emerged. The walling survived to two levels; to the north it was generally 1.5–2m lower than to the south, where the factory floors had been laid flush with the upper terrace, necessitating the retention of walls here to a greater height.

The results of the excavation will here be described and presented in three broad phases: pre-friary and pre-stone building; the friary; and post-dissolution activity. Each phase narrative will concentrate on the evidence from the area of excavation, supplemented, where applicable, by that from the evaluation trenches; the integrated discussion of key finds will draw upon the published specialist reports and on the specialists' archive data and notes. Then will follow the results of the post-excavation analyses of the finds from the site. Finally, an interpretation of the excavated remains will be offered and an attempt will be made to discuss their wider significance. The full site archive, that is site records and finds, is deposited in the Atcham Store of the Shropshire County Museum Service.

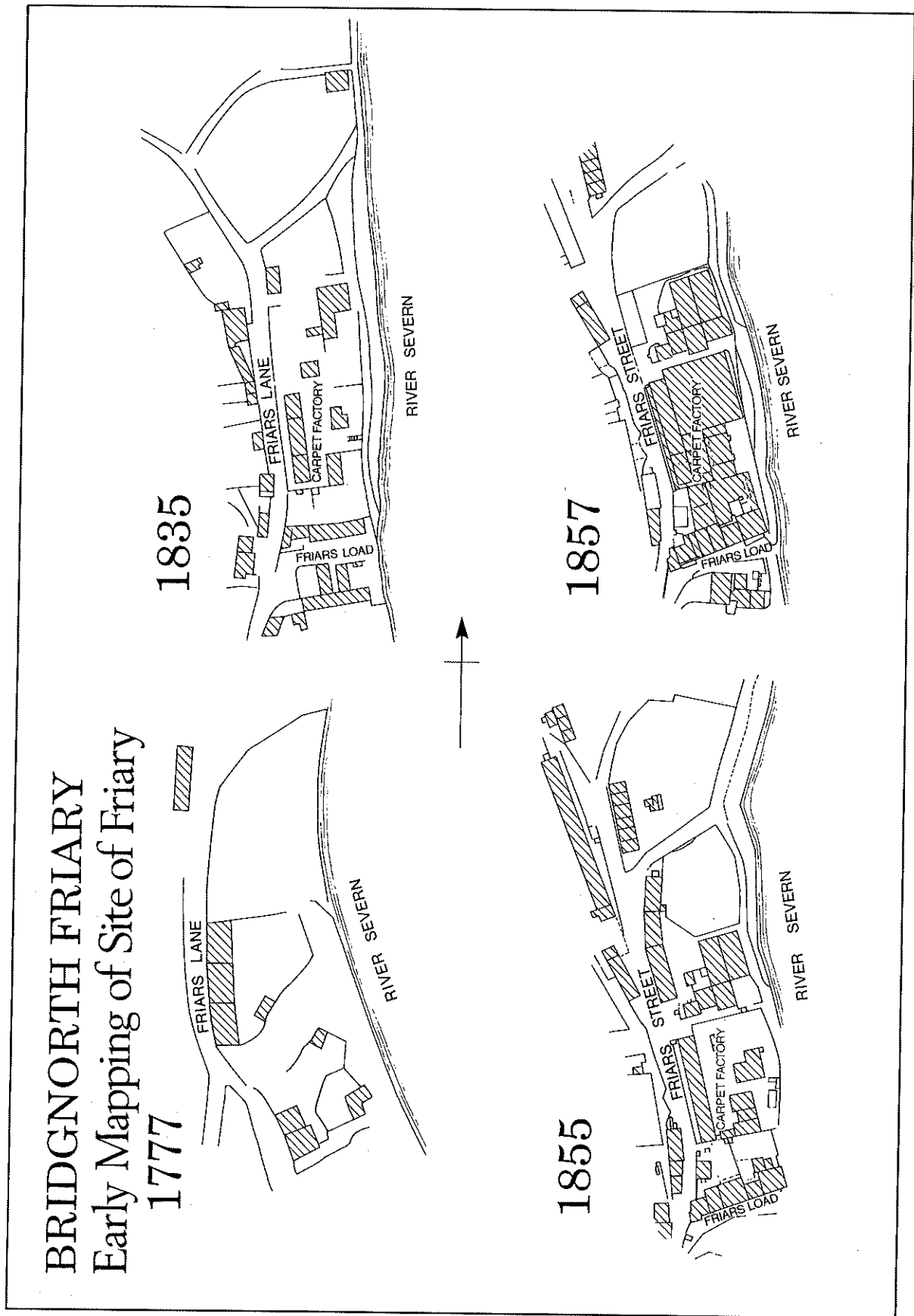


FIGURE 2 THE PRE-1860 MAP EVIDENCE FOR THE POST-MEDIEVAL USE OF THE FRIARY SITE (M BREEDON)

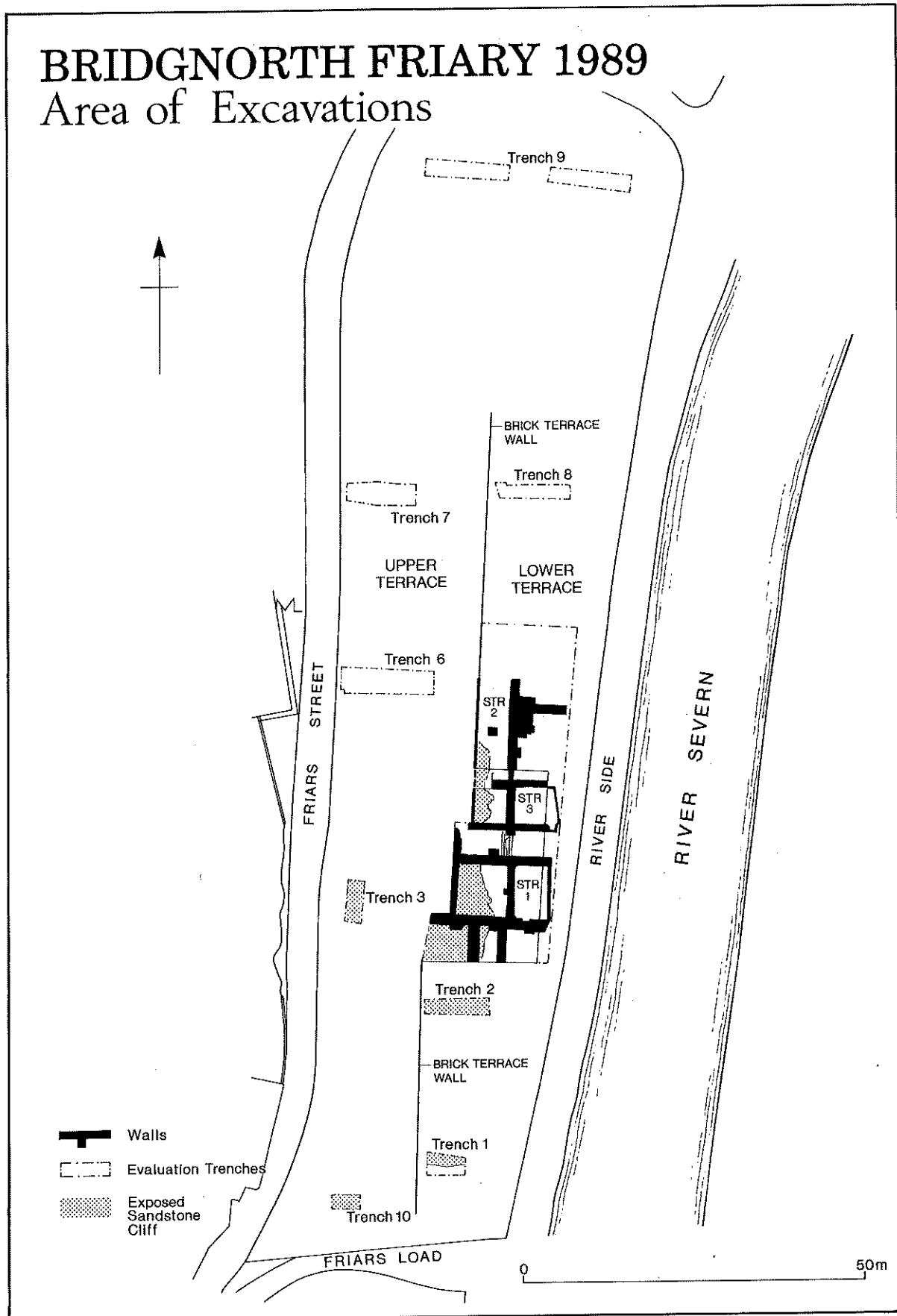


FIGURE 3 LAYOUT OF THE EXCAVATED AREAS (M BREBDON)



PLATE 1 GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXCAVATIONS FROM THE SOUTHEAST.  
(CLOUD NINE)

*Phase 1. Pre-stone building activity (Plate 3)*

The earliest features encountered were a number of slots, postholes and stakeholes, badly truncated and represented only by their bases, cut into the sandstone bedrock. No finds were recovered from the fills of any of these features, and in all cases they were in areas where no overlying stratigraphy survived. The presence in the pottery assemblage of a few sherds of early-13th-century pottery, including fragments of tripod pitchers and Developed Stamford Ware residual in contexts of Phase 2, suggests that there was some form of pre-stone building activity on the site, but the features located here cut into the bedrock were perhaps too ephemeral to represent that activity. The largest group of such features was found to the south of the excavation where there was a dense concentration of small stakeholes and slots (F69–F85). A linear trench (F45) and posthole (F44) were found to the north and an isolated posthole (F46) further north still. It seems most likely that these features relate to the erection of scaffolding for the construction of the stone buildings on the site, though they could represent the earliest, temporary timber structures on the site.



PLATE 2 GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXCAVATIONS FROM THE NORTH. (CLOUD NINE)

### *Phase 2. The friary. Stone buildings (Figure 4)*

The walls uncovered belonged to three main buildings (called here Structures 1–3) in the friary complex. Subsequent reuse of these structures will be considered below in the presentation of evidence relating to Phase 3.

The walls were all constructed of red sandstone, with a finer-grained green sandstone being used for architectural features such as windows, though a study of the excavated architectural fragments suggests that red sandstone was also used for fenestration. Where intended to be hidden from view, or to act as foundation coursing, the stone was cut in rough and irregular blocks and was generally unfaced and unfinished; the 'show' faces were of well-cut, squared blocks, finished and faced to a very high standard indeed. The use of the new, fresh stone is consistent throughout the complex, there being no evidence of reused stones in any of the medieval walls. The style of the build is likewise mostly consistent so as to suggest, along with other evidence, the broad contemporaneity of the three buildings.

#### *Structure 1*

In the south of the area excavated, and aligned east-west, was Structure 1, only the eastern part of which lay within the area of excavation, the eastern end wall of the building being presumably under the present riverside road, and the western part lying on the upper terrace and perhaps extending as far west as the present road. The excavated portion of the building was 10m wide and divided internally into two units; its walls rode over the sandstone river cliff which here bisects the site, the walls sitting directly on the surface of the bedrock itself (Plate 4). To the east of the cliff the foundations were considerably deeper and sat on made-up ground. The internal floor level must have been more or less flush with the level of the upper terrace but the floor did not survive at the eastern end (see fig 5 for a profile through the building).

Excavation of the western unit of the building, internally 7m square, involved the sampling of medieval

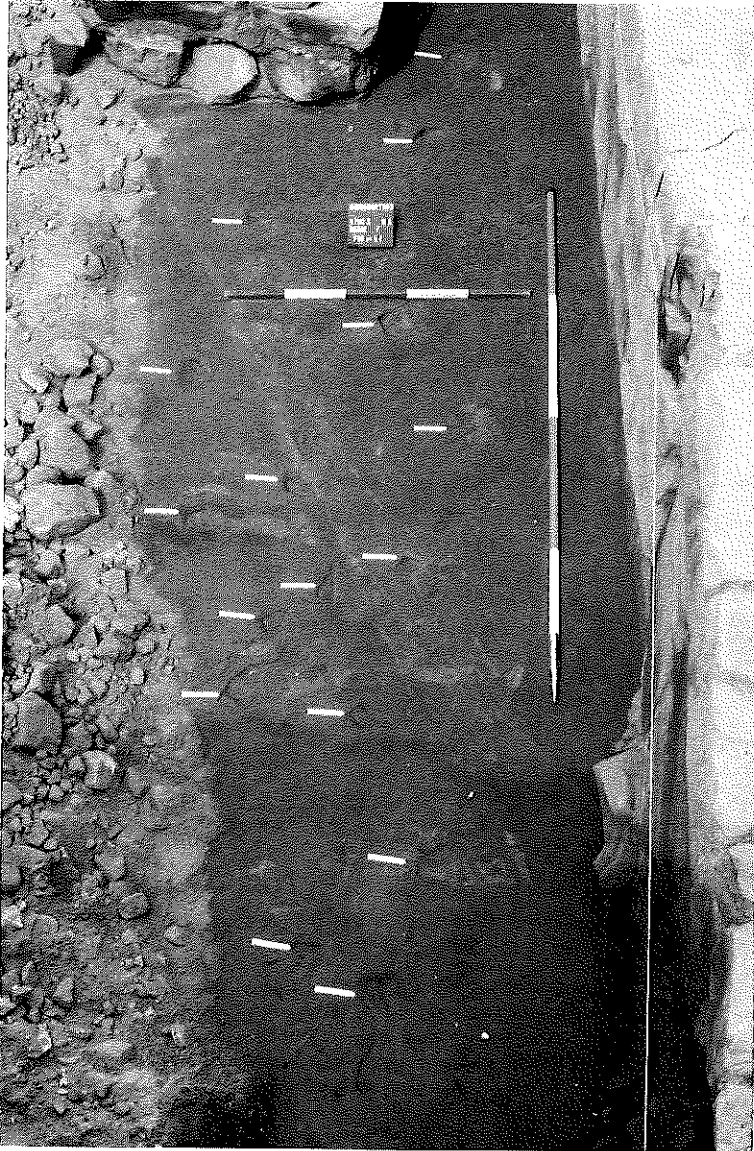


PLATE 3      SLOT AND STAKE HOLE  
BASES CUT INTO THE  
BEDROCK TO THE SOUTH  
OF STRUCTURE I. PHASE 1.  
(J STERENBERG)

foundation deposits, once post-medieval and Victorian infill (including stray human bones, doubtless derived from the disturbance of burials in the vicinity, amongst dumps of brick and ceramic sewer-pipe) had been removed by machine. The sandstone river cliff cut across the unit and the upper surface of the bedrock could be seen to have been exposed in the post-medieval period. An exploratory trench was dug by hand through the earthen infill deposits of loose, brown-orange sand with sandstone fragments (1104A) and a more compact, strong-brown silty sand with charcoal flecks and sandstone inclusions (1106) dumped up against, and to the east of, the cliff face, firstly to ascertain the depth of this infilling and to examine the foundations of the walls, and secondly to recover pottery for dating purposes. Due to logistical problems and safety considerations it was not possible to bottom the trench, though certain of the outlined aims were achieved. The trench showed that the wall foundation coursing east of the cliff went down at least 4m below the postulated floor level.

Pottery recovered from the sampled infills 1104A and 1106, was mixed, and included five obviously intrusive pieces of 14th/15th-century pottery, Cistercian Ware, 16th-century German stoneware and 17th-century sherds. The majority of the assemblage, however, comprised 13th/14th century pottery including buff ware sherds and 13th/14th-century cooking pot sherds.

Excavation within the eastern unit was more informative, as here some undisturbed stratigraphy was encountered. This 'sunken' room with its floor level well below the projected main floor level of the building was probably an undercroft of some kind. In the south-west corner of the undercroft part of a springer for vaulting survived *in situ* (F49) while scars marking the former positions of other springers could be seen in the

# BRIDGNORTH FRIARY 1989

## Phase 2 Structures

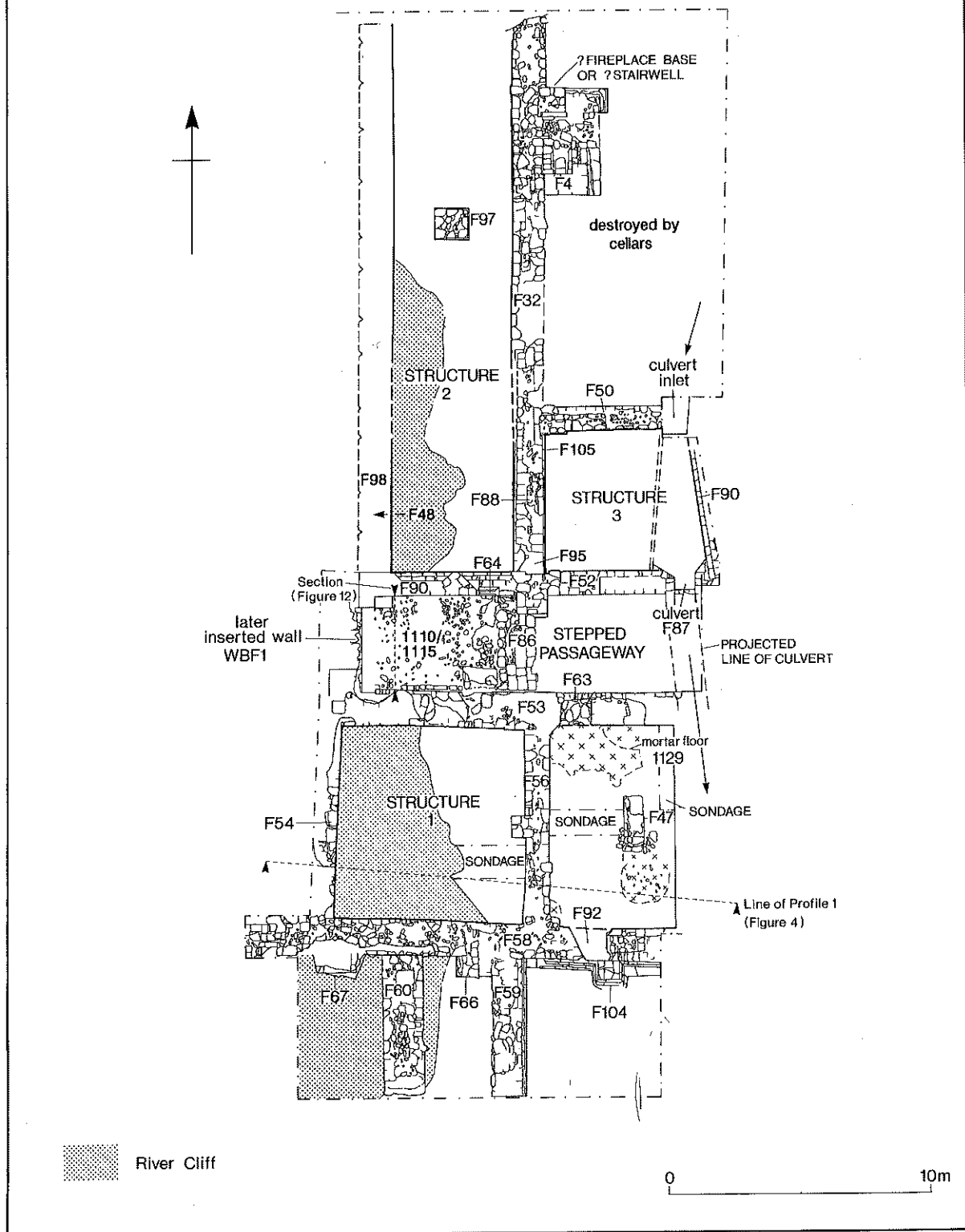


FIGURE 4 PLAN OF STRUCTURES IN PHASE 2 (M BREEDON)



PLATE 4 STRUCTURE 1. WALL (F54) FOUNDED ON SURFACE OF THE RIVER CLIFF, VIEWED FROM THE EAST. (J STERENBERG)

centre of the west wall (F56) and in the north-west corner (see Plate 5). The east wall did not lie within the area of excavation so that the dimensions of the room cannot be gauged. At a later date, probably during the post-medieval reuse of the buildings, a new east wall (F55) was inserted. Under the modern backfill (1107) were patchy remnants of a mortar screed (1129), into which were probably set floor tiles. The walls were plastered but this could be seen to be a post-medieval rendering.

Access into the undercroft was through a doorway (F63) in the northern wall (F53), which led out into an open stepped-passageway, with light coming from a window (F92), partially blocked and cut away by the later insertion of a fireplace, in the south wall (F58) (fig 3). There may possibly have been stairs connecting the two levels and, indeed, towards the centre of the room there was a rectangular sandstone pad (F47) set on rubble footings (1046) which may have acted as the base for a wooden staircase, though it may have alternatively been a pier base for supporting the vault. A sondage was dug through the centre of the room to record the stratigraphic sequence beneath the screed 1129. This revealed that below 1129 was a dumped and levelled deposit, up to 0.30m deep, of compact orange-red sand with inclusions of sandstone chunks and fragments (1130), overlying another mortar floor surface of compact dirty white mortar with flecks of charcoal (1126). This was cut by a small, shallow hollow containing a mixed black silt clay with charcoal and sandstone inclusions (1131). Floor surface 1126 overlay a dump of mixed orange-brown sand (1149), displaying many tip lines, mostly dipping down from the west, which was recorded to a depth of 2.10m but not bottomed.

Unfortunately very little pottery was recovered from the section through the deposits in the undercroft. Some 13th/14th-century sherds came from the makeup of mortar flooring 1129 and a single sherd of pottery in Fabric 2, unlikely to be later than the mid-14th century, came from deposit 1131.

Excavation outside Structure 1, to the south, concentrated on removing deposits dumped up against the exterior faces of the south wall of the building (fig 4) so that the stonework here could be recorded in detail. Indications from a study of the finds recovered are that the deposits removed (1111, 1113) represented medieval and post-medieval dumping and levelling with a disturbed interface between the two activities. Post-medieval material, of the 17th and 18th centuries, occurred only in deposit 1111. The remaining pottery was made up primarily of 13th/14th-century sherds, in particular the buff/white wares and sandy cooking pot Fabrics 5 and 10. There was one Cistercian ware cup sherd of late 15th/early-16th-century date. The assemblage from deposit



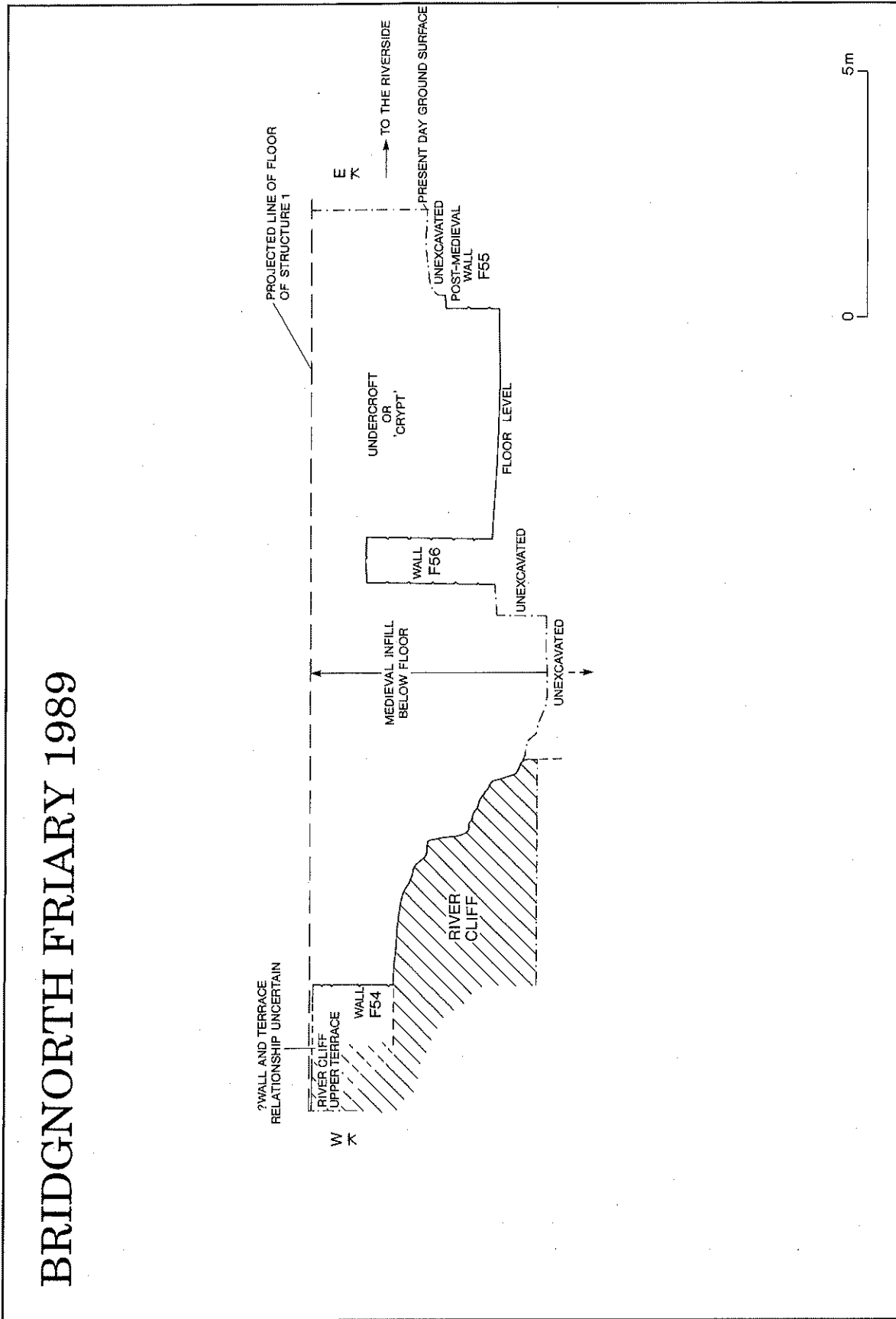


FIGURE 5 PROFILE THROUGH STRUCTURE 1, SHOWING ITS RELATION TO THE UPPER TERRACE AND THE PRESENT DAY GROUND SURFACE ON THE RIVERSIDE (M BREEDON)

1113, a dirty orange mixed sand with rubble, was similar in make up to that from 1111, although it contained no later medieval or post-medieval material. What was most interesting about 1111 and 1113 was that in overall site terms they contained the highest concentration of pottery which could be dated to the first half of the 13th century. Among the earliest material was a glazed base angle from a Developed Stamford Ware vessel, the rim from a Fabric 1 pitcher and four body sherds, possibly from a pitcher.

Deposits 1111 and 1113 were removed from against the south wall of Structure 1 and from against a north-south aligned, secondary wall (F59) bonded into the stonework of the south wall of Structure 1, down to their foundation levels. The east face of wall F59, the north face of the south wall of Structure 1 (F58) (fig 7), and the easternmost of three buttresses (F104) against F58, were particularly well-faced and finished with a stepped-and-chamfered course, in reality a drip-moulding, which would have been exposed to view (plate 6). On the other hand, the rear, or west, face of wall F59 was built of very rough, irregular and unfaced sandstone blocks and can never have been intended to be exposed. There was no evidence for the continuation of F58's stepped plinth beyond the line of F59, and it must be presumed to end behind this wall, at the point where F58 would step up over the sandstone river cliff. Some 3m to the west of wall F59, and butted up against wall F58, was another north-south aligned wall (F60), both faces of which were unfinished. The blocks employed in the building of this particular wall were massive and bedded in a heavy clay rather than mortar, a style of build not encountered elsewhere on the site. This wall sat directly on top of the sandstone bedrock which just to the east drops down again steeply towards the river in the form of a cliff. Deposits 1111 and 1113 were dumped up against this cliff face. It seems likely that both walls F59 and F60, or at least the western face of the former, were used as retaining walls for soil terraces stepping up the hillside on the south side of Structure 1. Both wall F59 and wall F60 were truncated to the south by the line of a major structural wall belonging to the carpet works. The two most western buttresses (F66 and F67) against the southern wall of Structure 1 were also rough and unfinished, unlike buttress F104 to the east, and must have been covered by soil, though their upper coursing would probably have been visible and of better quality stone. Buttress F66 had been partially cut away at foundation level, by the insertion of wall F59, its upper build at this time being presumably demolished.

### *The Stepped Passageway*

To the north of Structure 1 was a narrow, stepped passageway linking the upper terrace level to the waterfront (fig 8; plate 7). A set of three stone steps (F86) ran across the width of the 3.5–4m wide, slightly funnel-shaped, passage, most of the stones being still *in situ*. Flush with the uppermost and most westerly step was a patchy surface of flagging (1110) formed by thin slabs of sandstone and founded on a spread of small river pebbles set in mortar (1115) (fig 4). This latter surface, and the steps themselves, were, left unexcavated and *in situ*. Flush with the lowest, and most easterly, step was a patchy mortar skim floor (1138), overlying a levelled make-up deposit of mid-brown sandy clay with sandstone and mortar flecking (1139). The sides of a post-medieval disturbance in this area revealed that layer 1139 overlay a spread of sandstone slabs (1140) though whether this was an isolated deposit or was part of a more extensive floor surfacing cannot be said as logistical problems meant that excavation here had to cease at the upper surface of floor 1139.

### *Structure 2*

Fronting onto the passageway, and encroaching into the passage itself, was the gable-end of another building, Structure 2 (fig 8). In the gable-end were two windows (F64, F90) each with a green stone cill *in situ*. The jambs of the easternmost window survived to a height of 1.20m, the opening having been subsequently blocked. Though the northernmost end of the building had been largely destroyed by intrusions associated with the construction of the carpet works, the length of the building can be gauged as having been *c.* 25m, the width as 5 m wide on the lower terrace level. No internal floor surfaces survived, and in places the factory floor surface lay directly over the sandstone bedrock here. It seems likely that this was a two-storey structure with the upper storey being somewhat wider. Generally, with the exception of the gable-end wall (F52) and that portion of sandstone walling (F98) retained in the factory cellar wall and which can now be seen to be part of the west wall of Structure 2, the walls of this building did not survive to a great height in relation to the present day ground level, though this whole area could be seen to have been considerably raised by dumping since the medieval period. Towards the centre of the building was a sandstone pier (F97), 1.30m square, which perhaps acted as a basal support for vaulting, as this structure would appear to have had an undercrofted ground floor. Other piers may have existed and been stripped down to foundation level. As disturbance here was considerable no firm conclusions about this possibility can be drawn. An undercroft could have been used for storage and,

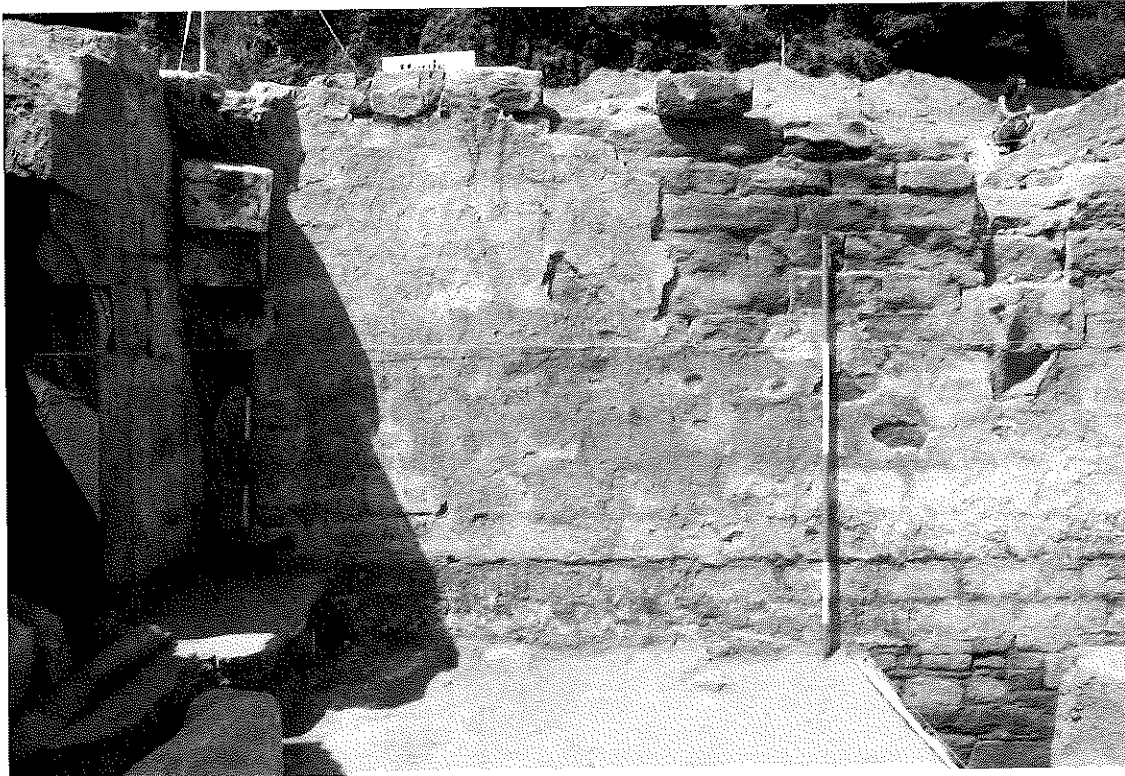


PLATE 5 DETAIL OF A VAULTING SPRINGER IN THE UNDERCROFT OR 'CRYPT' OF STRUCTURE 1. (J STERENBERG)

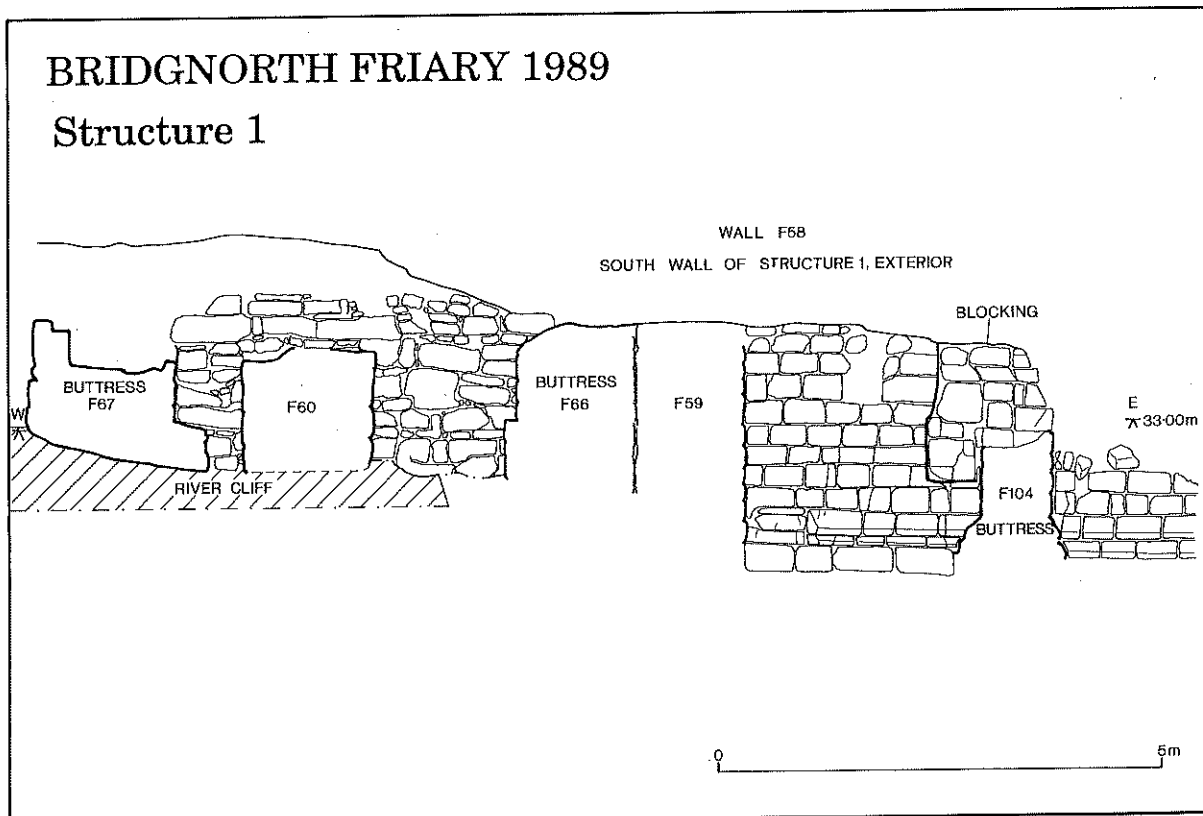


FIGURE 6 ELEVATION OF EXTERIOR FACE OF THE SOUTH WALL (F58) OF STRUCTURE 1 (M BREEDON)

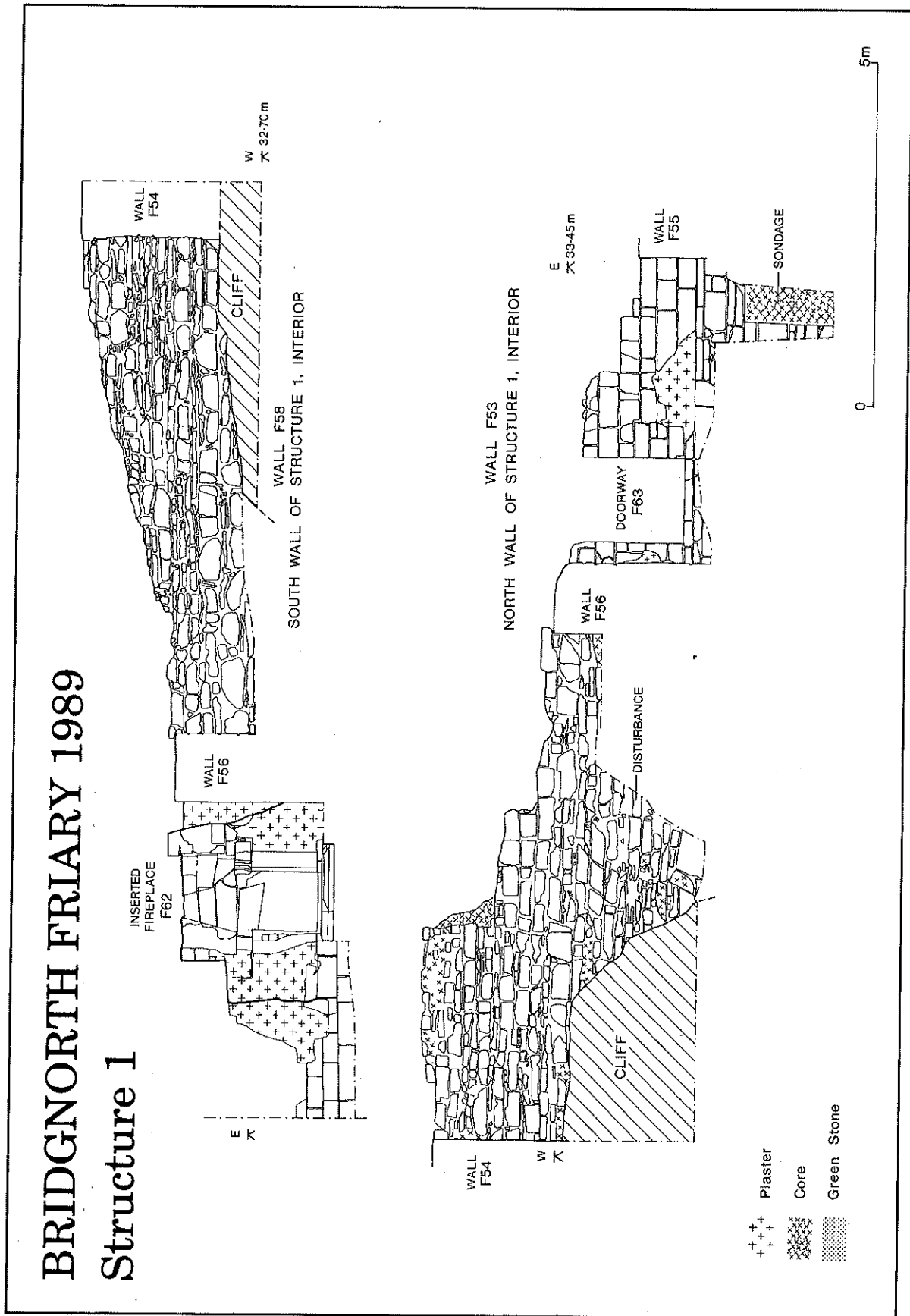


FIGURE 7 ELEVATIONS OF INTERIOR FACE OF SOUTH WALL (F58), AND INTERIOR FACE OF THE NORTH WALL (F53) OF STRUCTURE 1 (M BREEDON)



PLATE 6 STRUCTURE 1. BUTTRESS (F104) ON SOUTH SIDE OF BUILDING, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH. (J STERENBERG)

indeed, a now blocked doorway (F48) in the west wall could have led back to extra storage space, perhaps in the form of caves cut into the river cliff face behind what was later the factory cellar retaining wall.

Projecting eastwards from the east wall (F32) of the building, and abutting that wall, was a raised rectangular sandstone feature (F4) which may have been either the foundation of the base of a timber or stone staircase giving access to, and from, the upper storey or a chimney stack.

Excavation inside Structure 2 was limited to exposing and recording the walls of the building and in sampling the infill deposits of mixed sands (1062, 1063, 1065, 1066, 1118, 1119, 1123) which would have lain beneath the floor. Two trenches or sondages were dug, one during the evaluation and the other during the excavation proper, up against the face of the eastern wall (F32; also called F88 to the south where it forms the west wall of Structure 3) to record the sequence of deposits here. In each case it was found that the builders had utilised the natural sandstone cliff-face as the west edge of their 'construction trench' and had then infilled with spoil between the wall and the cliff. The dumped material was fairly clean and consistent and contained few finds, though a few sherds of pottery were recovered from layers 1062, 1063, 1118 and 1119. The upper surfaces of the dump were seen to be much disturbed by pre-factory pipe-laying, which would account for the presence of an intrusive Black Ware sherd in an otherwise medieval assemblage of 13th/14th-century pottery. At the southern end of the east wall of Structure 2 was a threshold and doorway (F95) giving access into another building, Structure 3.

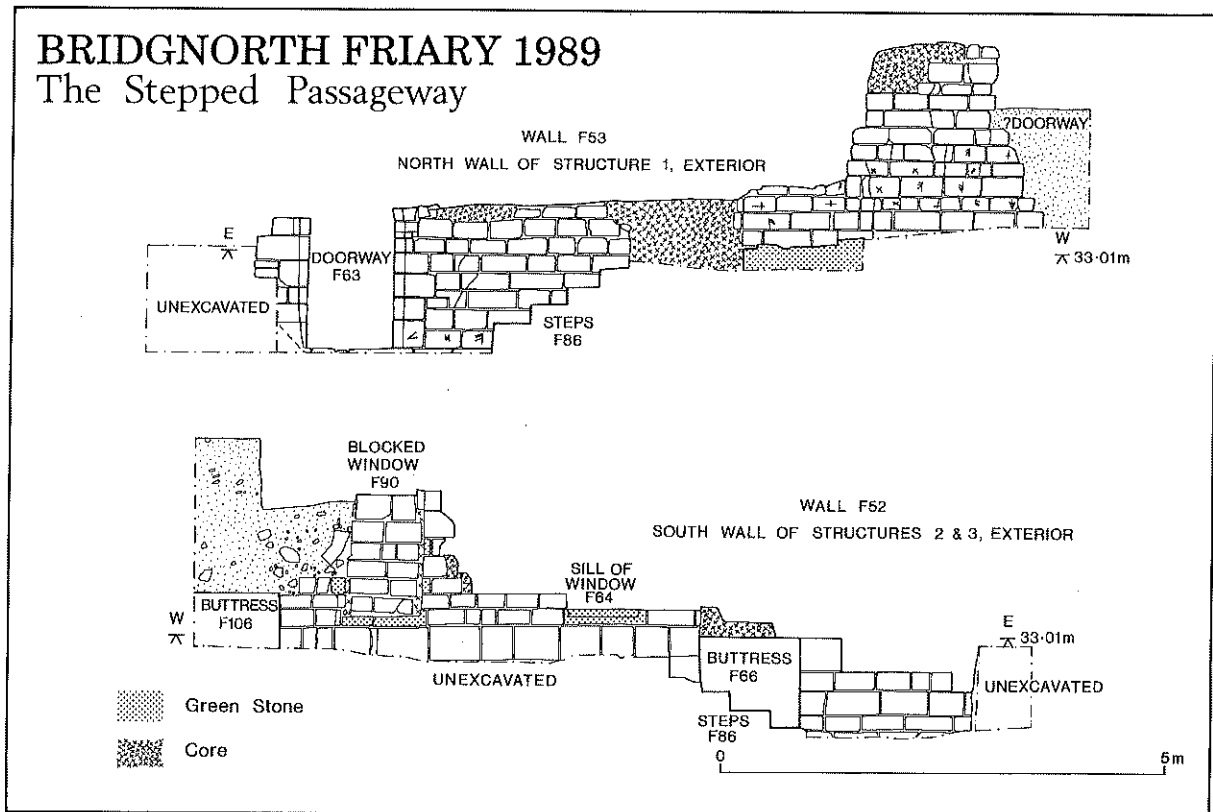


FIGURE 8 ELEVATIONS OF THE WALLS FORMING THE STEPPED PASSAGeway; THE EXTERIOR FACE OF THE NORTH WALL (F53) OF STRUCTURE 1 AND THE EXTERIOR FACE OF THE SOUTH WALL (F52) OF STRUCTURES 2 AND 3 (M BREEDON)

### Structure 3

The full dimensions of Structure 3 (figs 4 and 9) could not be recovered as its east wall lay outside the area of excavation, though it was at least 5m (north-south) by 6.50m (east-west). It was not possible to tell whether this had been a one or a two storey structure, or whether it had consisted of more than one room or unit at ground floor level. As has been noted, there was in the south-west corner of the structure, a doorway (F95) with a recessed niche constructed in such a position in the south wall as to allow for the opening and pinioning of the door on an iron hook that survived mortared into the stonework of the recess. Another doorway and threshold (F105) existed at the north end of wall F88 and this had been subsequently blocked. No medieval floor surfaces survived inside the room, though there was some evidence for the post-medieval reuse of the structure. The opportunity was taken to sample what were expected to be the medieval pre-floor infill deposits, as found elsewhere inside structures to the east of the river cliff. Initially these investigations indicated that there was a single, more-or-less uniform, deposit of infill (1104B), displaying tip-lines consisting of clayey sand with the occasional angular block of red sandstone, down to a depth of at least 2.5m. This infill, however, was shown by subsequent examination, particularly over the eastern part of the unit where a substantial drain had run beneath the floor level, to be a mixture of both medieval pre-floor infill, post-dissolution infilling of the substantial drain, and post-medieval levelling of the interior of the structure for reuse. The earliest pottery from a group which was collected as a single assemblage, but which can now be seen to represent material from a number of distinct phases of activity, was 13th/14th-century in date and fits in well with the material collected from undeniably medieval infill elsewhere on site.

The elaborate drainage arrangements associated with this structure are worth considering in detail. The north wall of Structure 3 oversailed a well-constructed and finished arch (F102) which would have acted as an inlet/outlet for water, beyond the wall to the north there doubtless being a leat or channel cut from the River Severn to bring water to the building (Figure 9). The inner face of the arch (the outer was not exposed), was constructed of well-cut stone with a chamfered innermost face. On the west side of the arch was a scar and rubble stub (F114), marking the former position of a wall probably forming the west side of a drain, the



PLATE 7 THE STEPPED PASSAGEWAY, VIEWED FROM THE EAST. (J STERENBERG)

southern end of this wall, running on a vaguely north-west to south-east alignment, also being marked by a truncated stub (F115). The wall forming the east side of the drain (F90) survived intact, though its upper coursing had been, in places, disturbed by later intrusions, and was constructed at an angle, as would have been its opposing wall, so as to create a funnel-shaped drain, well-suited to the rapid channelling of water. The drain, below floor level, may well have been positioned beneath chutes leading from latrines and/or basins so that waste could be fed directly into the drain and washed away. The drain fed, through an inlet with arched head, into a massive culvert (F87) (figs 4 and 9) which would have led, in turn, to an outlet point into the River Severn.

Excavation of the culvert, though its arched roof was still intact, was limited, due to health and safety constraints (fig 8; plates 8 and 9). The culvert was constructed of well-cut and faced sand stone blocks and was *c.* 2.50m in height (from the apex of the inner arch to the stone basal lining of the culvert). In the jambs by the entrance, towards the centre and down to the base, were cut narrow slots which must have provided the seating for a wooden grill or shutter for a sluice-gate which could have controlled the flow of water into the culvert. It seems likely that such an arrangement of sluice-gates operated at each part of the water system so that the flow could be controlled and managed, and certainly to allow repair or clearing to be carried out on any part of the system.

Environmental sampling of the basal deposits (1125, 1160) above the culvert floor was undertaken. Results from analysis of the samples were not encouraging and no plant or organic remains were recovered (J. Greig; report in archive).

As well as taking water and waste from the drain beneath Structure 3, this culvert doubtless also played some role in the general draining of the friary complex as a whole, especially those areas on the low-lying, and doubtless flood-prone, lower terrace.

No further stone structures belonging to the friary phase were recorded either in the main area of excavation or in evaluation trench 2, some 6m to the south of the open area excavation, but in Trench 8, some 9m to the north, some contemporary activity was encountered. Although heavily disturbed by the insertion of a number of enormous stone stanchion blocks belonging to the factory, and by pre-factory pipe-laying, much useful information about this period came from this trench (fig 10). A well-constructed, stone-lined and flagged drain (F20), though disturbed and partially truncated by the later intrusions, was traced for the whole length of the

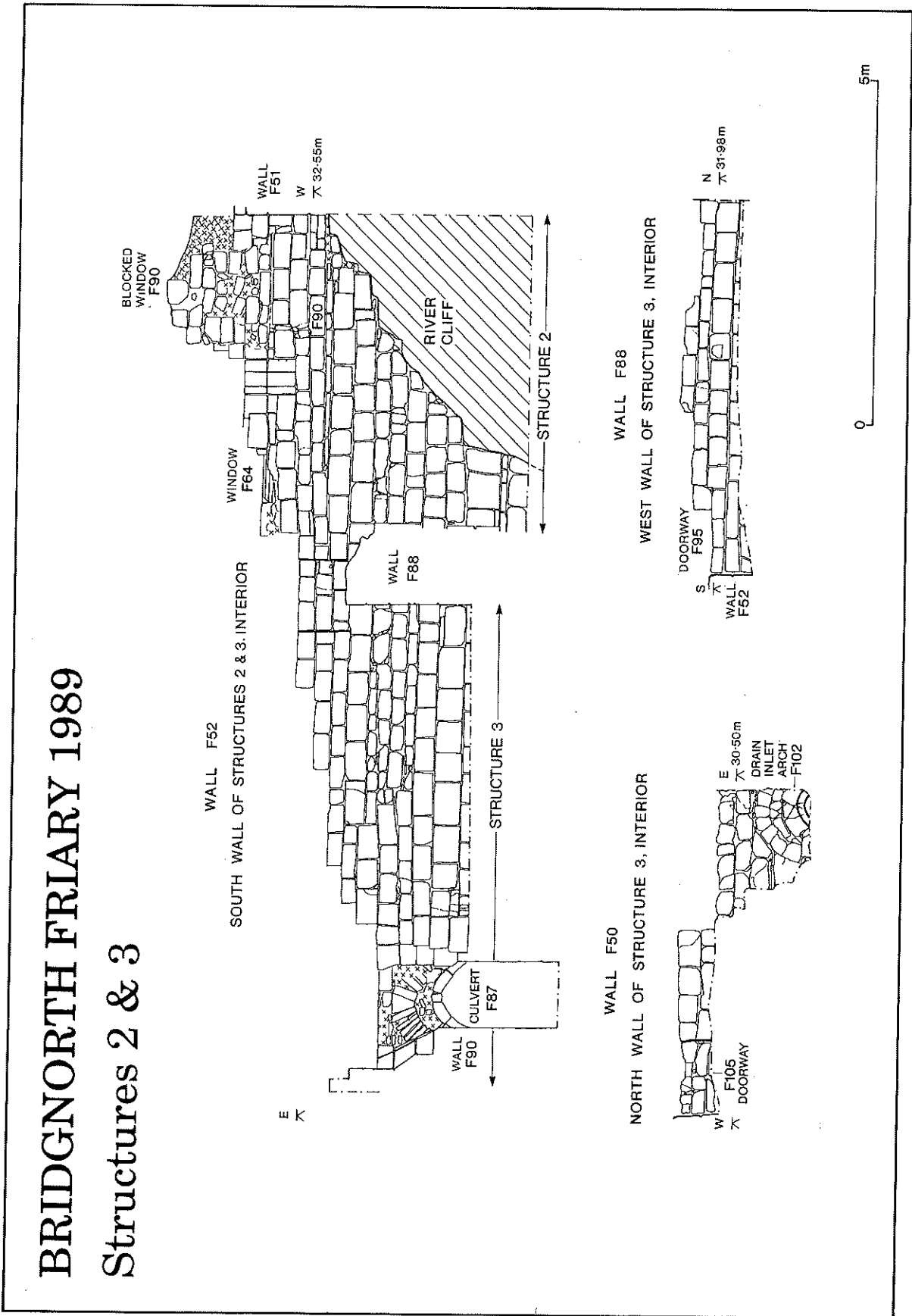


FIGURE 9 ELEVATIONS OF THE INTERIOR FACE OF THE SOUTH WALL (F52) OF STRUCTURES 2 AND 3, THE INTERIOR FACE OF THE NORTH WALL (F50) OF STRUCTURE 3, AND THE INTERIOR FACE OF THE WEST WALL (F88) OF STRUCTURE 3 (M BREEDON)



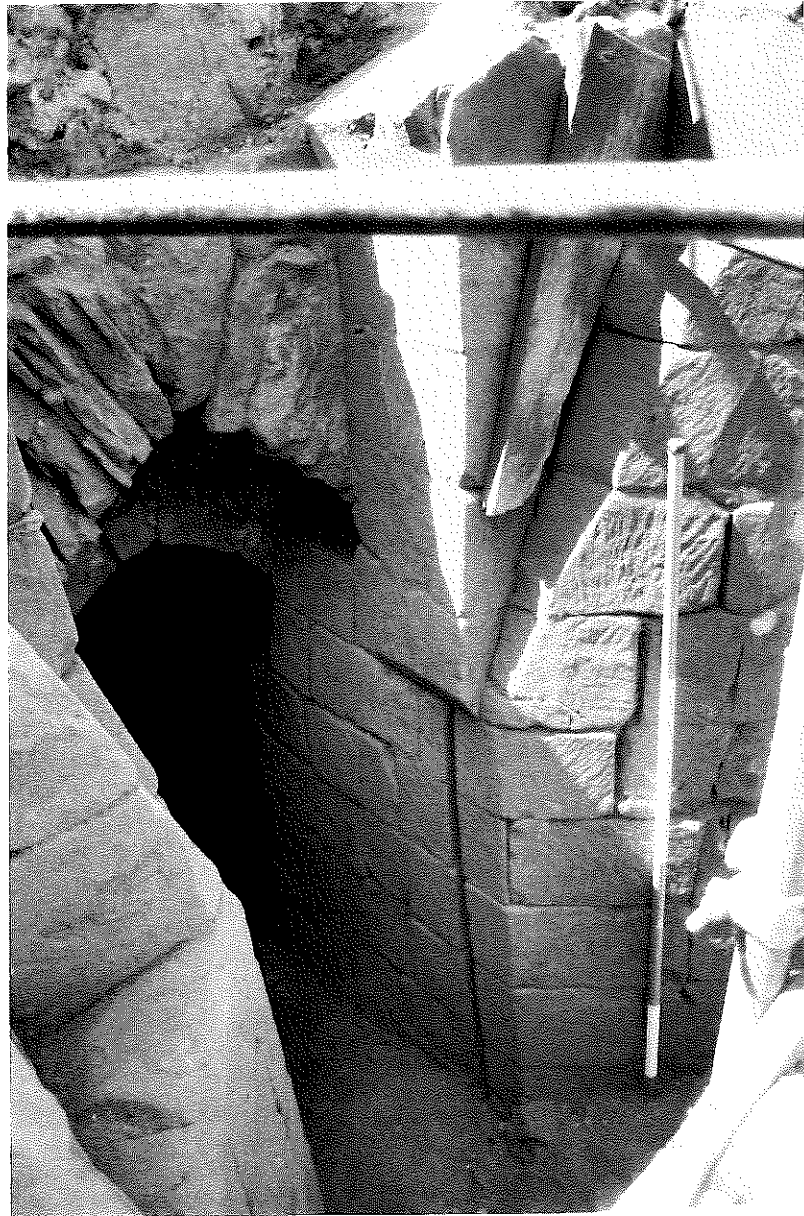


PLATE 8      STRUCTURE 3. THE  
 CULVERT (F87).  
 EXTERIOR VIEW. (J  
 STERENBERG)

trench, running in an east-west direction. An associated sandstone rubble surface (1022) was encountered and it seems likely that this was the surface of an external yard; one sherd of Cistercian ware pottery from the backfill (1053) of F20 was recovered, perhaps indicating that the feature had gone out of use during the 16th century.

Under 1022 was recorded a sequence of levelling deposits, which pottery suggests could possibly have started before construction of the stone building. A depth of 0.90m of spread orange-brown silty sand with red sandstone inclusions (1028) overlay a greenish, perhaps riverine, clay with charcoal inclusions (1054) at least 0.30m deep. Pottery of the 13th and 14th centuries was recovered from both layers. In evaluation trench 9, further north still and outside the northern boundary of the carpet factory, a similar levelling operation was noted, with a 0.40m thick dirty gravel deposit (1032) overlying a green silty clay (1033) which was only partially excavated but which augering suggested to be at least 0.50m thick. Again 13th- and 14th-century pottery was recovered from these deposits; in addition, from an upper horizon, but perhaps derived from disturbance of these lower layers, came a rim and rod handle from a large pitcher (fig. 13 No.1). Both the fabric and form have strong affinities with material from elsewhere in Shropshire, in particular Haughmond Abbey near Shrewsbury where similar pitchers were found associated with the construction of a new claustral range, dated architecturally to c. 1200 (Ratkai forthcoming).

Identification and interpretation of the structures excavated will be offered below (see p. 75).



PLATE 9 STRUCTURE 3. THE CULVERT (F87). INTERIOR VIEW (J STERENBERG)

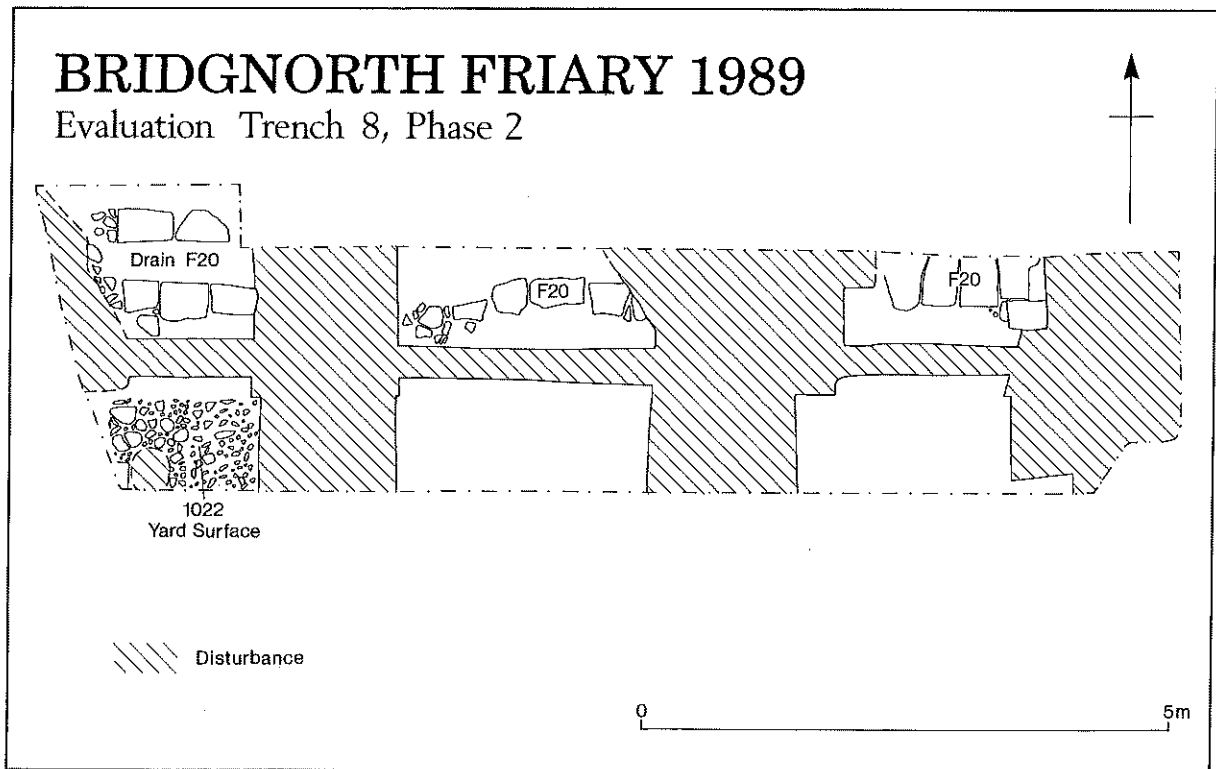


FIGURE 10 PLAN OF FEATURES OF PHASE 2 IN EVALUATION TRENCH 8 (M BREEDON)

*Phase 3. Post-dissolution activity (Figure 11)*

The post-dissolution activity took three forms; stripping and demolition of some friary buildings; the remodelling and reuse of some structures or parts of some structures; and the phased construction of the various carpet factories on the site.

The most dramatic evidence of the stripping and demolition of friary buildings, which doubtless started only a short time after the surrender of 1538, was found in the area of the stepped passageway which in Phase 2 had linked the waterfront to the upper terrace level. In Phase 3 this was deliberately closed-off by the dumping of spoil and demolition rubble (fig 12; plate 10) and by the insertion of a roughly faced stone rubble wall (WBF1) across the width of the passageway to the west of the area of excavation.

To the east of the steps, spoil (1105) was dumped to a level flush with the lip of the uppermost step, covering the lower ones, while, to the west, another dump of spoil was created to block off the passageway completely. This latter dump was, in places, up to 2.5m thick and consisted of a number of individual but interleaved dumps (1101–1103, 1108, 1115, 1117, 1120, 1136) containing dozens of architectural fragments, many of them derived from windows (that is tracery and mullions), seven ceramic roof tiles (listed in archive), stone roof tiles, thousands of fragments of glazed and decorated floor tiles, and quantities of both plain and painted window glass.

This dump is obviously a deposit of considerable significance and must mark the spoilheap of discarded building material derived from the immediately post-dissolution stripping of the friary church and from other structures. Unfortunately only part of this dump lay within the area allowed for excavation and some must still remain *in situ* further to the west.

The layers of the dump contained 97 pottery sherds. Of these, 10 sherds were late-medieval, ie 15th-century fabrics, and 37 sherds were from Cistercian Ware vessels, mainly cups, although two sherds may have come from jugs; there was also the upper half of a figurine salt (fig. 13 No.7). The only indication that it was this type of salt was the presence of two applied hands in white clay, holding the bowl of the salt. The presence of Cistercian Ware and of a German stoneware sherd with applied decoration (fig. 13 No.9), dated c. 1500–1550, provide a *terminus post quem* for the infilling of the passageway. However, dump layers 1101 and 1103 contained three 17th-century sherds, two glazed coarsewares and one of Blackware. This would suggest three possibilities: firstly, that the infilling took place in the 17th century rather than the 16th century; secondly, that these three sherds are intrusive; or thirdly, that both the Blackware and the iron glazed coarseware can be dated to earlier than the 17th century. Despite the recovery of a large Civil War assemblage, containing similar Blackware and Coarseware, from Dudley Castle, c. 15 miles east of Bridgnorth (pers. comm. S Ratkai), to date there have been no securely-dated 16th-century groups of such material from the west midlands.

The remainder of the pottery in the dump was residual, and was of the usual 13th/14th century type found on the rest of the site. Among this medieval assemblage was a rim of what may have been a cistern, with some glaze on the internal face (fig. 13 No.6).

Not all the friary buildings were demolished at the dissolution and considerable evidence for the reuse of parts of Structures 1–3 was recorded during excavation. Alterations at the east end of Structure 1 involved the insertion of a fireplace (F62, fig 11) into the south wall of the former undercroft, and the building of a new east wall (F55, fig 11), which suggests that the vaulting was now demolished. The doorway from the now-blocked passageway to the north was blocked and access was now through another door (F96) in the south-east corner of the room. The walls were probably now plastered. Given the nature of these alterations it seems likely that the former build above undercroft level had now been demolished.

In the gable-end of Structure 2, fronting onto the now-blocked passageway, the western (lowest?) window (F90) was retained, but later blocked, while that to the east (F64) was demolished to cill level and the wall coursing continued over the top of the cill. This suggests that Structure 2 was converted to a single-storey structure at this time and, indeed, an east-west cross wall (F50, fig 9) was built towards the south of the structure and the doorway at the north end of wall F50 retained in use. The south end of Structure 2 and Structure 3 together now probably formed a single building unit.

Inside Structure 2, and the newly-created room to the east, the internal levels were raised by dumping, but only after the stripping out of medieval floor levels and features. On top of the levelled dump in the new eastern room was laid a mortar floor (F116) into which was set a stone-built drain (F110); these were recorded in section only. Although much truncated by later intrusions and disturbances, a similar sequence was found in the interior of the former Structure 3. After the partial demolition and infilling of the massive medieval drain, soil was dumped (1144, 1145) and a rough floor surface, made up of squared chunks of red sandstone (1142) was laid. Set into the floor was a rough stone drain (F100, fig 11) running down the centre of the room.

Further alterations or additions to Structure 2 are more difficult to interpret. Two new units, or possibly

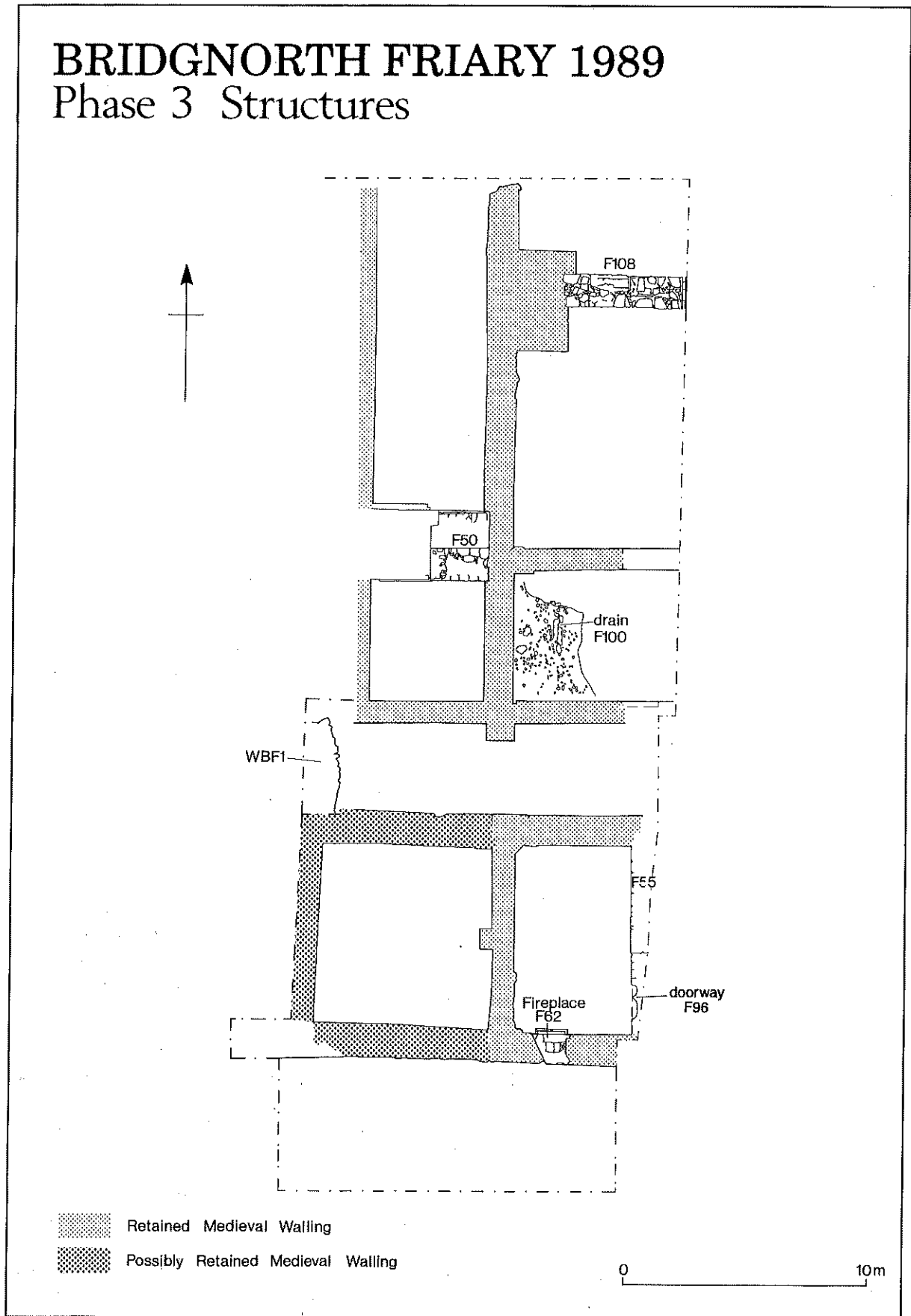


FIGURE 11 PLAN OF STRUCTURES IN PHASE 3 (M BREEDON)

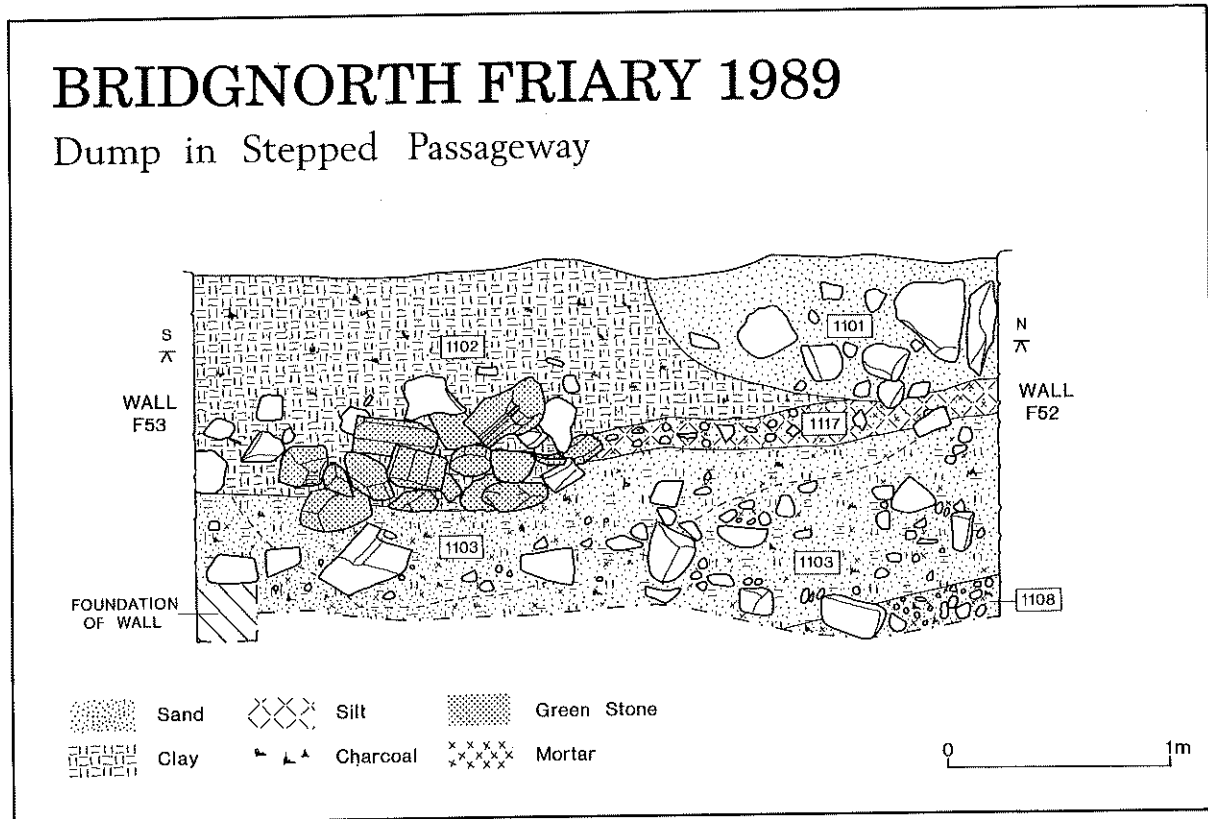


FIGURE 12 SECTION OF POST-DISSOLUTION DUMP BLOCKING THE STEPPED PASSAGeway (M BREEDON)

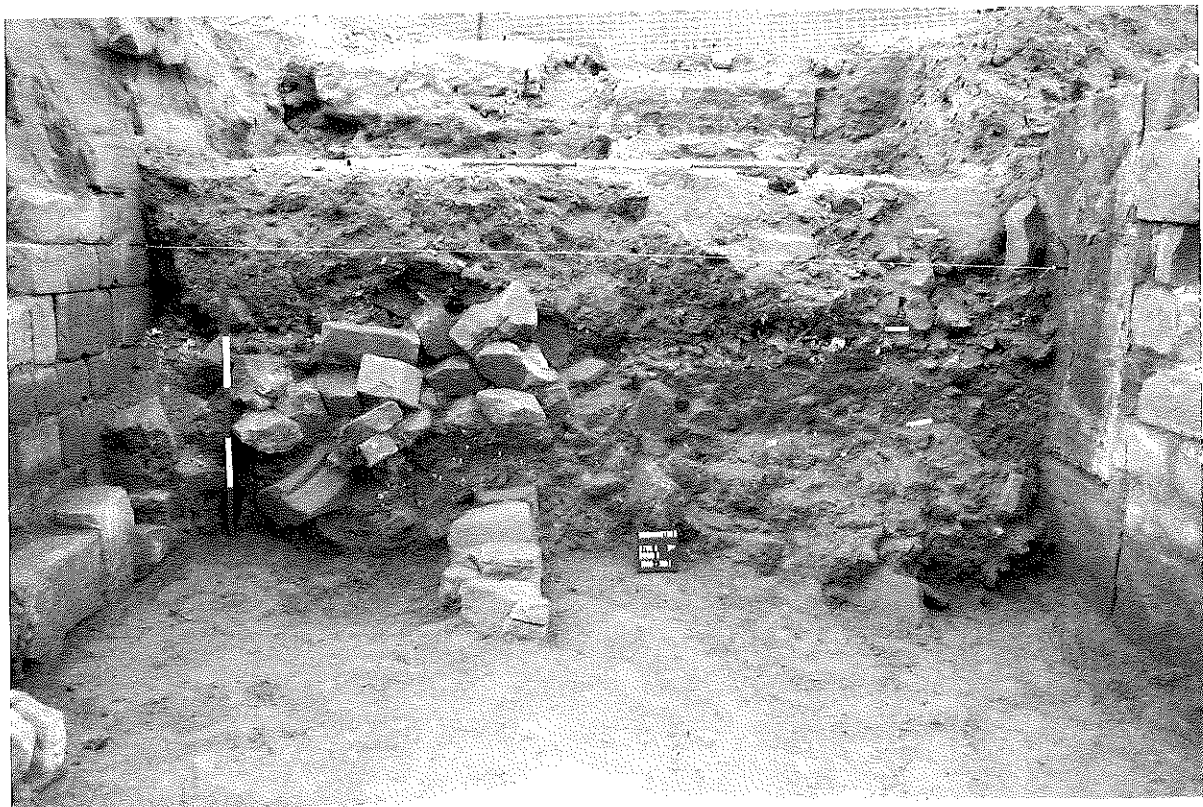


PLATE 10 THE POST-DISSOLUTION BLOCKING OF THE STEPPED PASSAGeway, VIEWED FROM THE EAST. (J STERENBERG)

cellars, were created by the building of two east-west aligned stone walls (F108, F112) constructed of rough blocks of red sandstone; one was butted up against the base of the former stairwell or stack base of Structure 2. Both wall F108 and F112 are pierced by a series of low-centred brick arches. The interiors of these cellars were emptied by machine to a depth of *c.* 1m below the present-day ground level but not further investigated.

In the evaluation trenches (fig 3), work in Trenches 1 and 10 indicated that a row of 18th/19th century houses had formerly existed on the north side of the stepped-passageway known as Friars Load, and that they had been deeply cellared, so that if any earlier structures had stood here they would either have been destroyed or severely truncated. All the trenches on the upper terrace level, that is Trenches 3, 6, 7 and 10 suggested, by the fact that the carpet factory floors either directly overlay the natural bedrock or an intermediate levelling spread of post-medieval mortar and demolition rubble, that most archaeological deposits and features that may once have been present here were removed or severely disturbed and truncated from the 19th century onwards; the disturbance of deposits is indeed hinted at by the discovery of a human skull redeposited in Trench 3. Observation of the stripping of concrete factory floors over a wide area between Trenches 6 and 7 revealed a similar thin sequence above bedrock, while to the north of Trench 7 rectangular areas of brickwork were exposed, to suggest here the presence of further cellars as seen in Trench 7 itself.

Presumably at the time of the extension of the Carpet Factory in the 1860s, the buildings occupying the lower terrace were demolished. It was, curiously, the approach adopted during this demolition that helped to preserve the structures so well in the area examined by excavation. The buildings were not reduced to foundation level but rather only partially demolished. In general those walls to the south were left standing to a greater height. The interiors of individual rooms were backfilled with spoil to the level of the factory floors and the ground level was then raised and levelled around these walls, before the laying of the factory floors themselves. One stretch of sandstone wall (F9), originally of the medieval period, was retained and built into one of the factory cellar walls. It would seem that in both the medieval and post-medieval periods the lower terrace area was prone to flooding which may account for the considerable amount of dumping and levelling-up recorded here before the building of the carpet factory.

## THE FINDS

### The Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery by S Ratkai

#### *Introduction*

There were 331 medieval sherds and 83 post-medieval sherds from the friary site. The medieval pottery was examined under x20 magnification, divided into fabrics and recorded by sherd number, sherd type, and form. The post-medieval pottery was examined macroscopically and divided into recognised types eg. Blackware, Feathered slip ware, Cream ware etc. Full fabric descriptions of the medieval pottery and general descriptions of the post-medieval fabrics can be found in archive.

The pottery fabrics can be assembled into five main groups, namely, sandy iron rich reduced cooking pot/jar fabrics, buff/white sandy wares, sandy iron rich oxidised wares, late medieval/post-medieval transitional wares and fabrics with a very fine sandy or paste-like clay matrix.

#### 1. *Iron rich, reduced sandy wares* (Fabrics, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 20)

These fabrics vary in degree of sandiness and grain size. The matrix contains predominantly quartz and ferruginous inclusions. Fabric 15 has some irregular calcareous inclusions. It is most probable that in the main these fabrics are derived from the local clays. The most common of these fabrics is Fabric 5; it is very sandy with abundant sub-angular quartz grains *c.* 0.25mm. There is a similarity between Fabric 5 and Haughmond Abbey, Fabric 9 (Ratkai forthcoming [a]). As Haughmond Fabric 9 is rather different from the other Abbey fabrics and less well represented, it is possible that the source may be in the Bridgnorth area.

There were very few complete or near-complete profiles. Fabric 15 was present only as body sherds. There were 22 rim sherds, divided into seven rim types. In the main these were either infolded rims or rounded, thickened everted rims with either some internal thickening or else with a grooved or dished inner face. These rim forms are all paralleled in Barker's survey of medieval pottery in Shropshire (Barker 1970). They seem to be associated

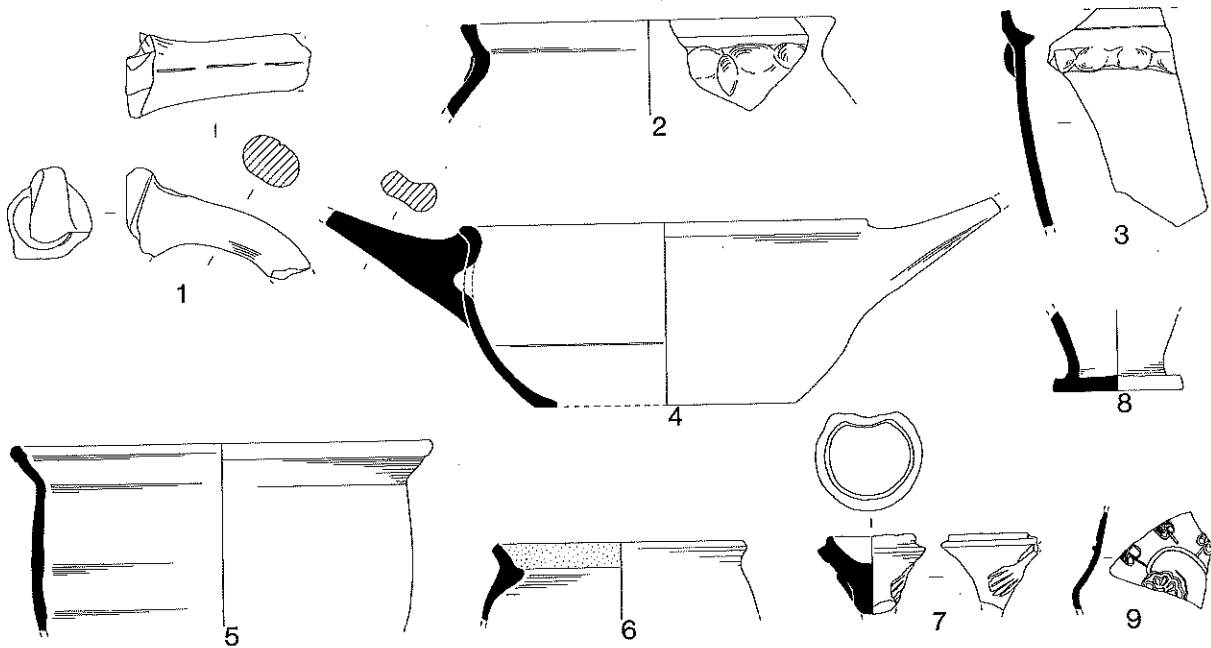


FIGURE 13 POTTERY: 1, FABRIC 1, TRIPOD PITCHER; 2-3, FABRIC 2, COOKING POT AND BOWL; 4, FABRIC 3, PIPKIN; 5, FABRIC 10, COOKING POT; 6, FABRIC 26, ?CISTERN; 7-8, FABRIC 13, FIGURINE SALT AND CUP; 9, FABRIC X02, DRINKING JUG (M BREEDON)

mainly with straight-sided cooking pots; one rim form, which was 'S'-shaped, appeared slightly different. Dating both the fabrics and rim forms is not easy, for there are insufficient sealed or well-stratified groups to trace the development of Shropshire cooking pots. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that the infolded rim was in use during the 12th and 13th centuries. The other rim types were probably in use during the 12th century certainly in use during the 13th century, and are likely to have continued in use during the 14th century.

Fabric 5 cooking pot bases usually reveal a marked ridge or lip at the base angle. This presumably shows that the base and body were manufactured separately and the base later luted onto the body.

The iron rich sandy reduced wares were used mainly for cooking pots/jars, but there is also a burnt pipkin handle in Fabric 5. There is one almost complete profile of a cooking pot in Fabric 10 (fig. 13 No. 5); this form and fabric are not dissimilar to examples from Dudley Castle.

Fabric 20, unlike the rest of the fabrics in the group is utilised for jugs and pitchers. There are the spout and rim from a bridge-spouted jug, with a white slip covering beneath the dark green glaze, suggesting strong affinities with Worcester Ware. However, it is by no means certain that all vessels in this tradition are made in one location (pers. comm. V Buteux) and they are here termed 'Worcester-type ware'. Other diagnostic sherds were two bases with deep thumbing and a thick rounded pitcher rim. Although the core and margins are always reduced, the external surfaces are sometimes oxidised.

## 2. Sandy Buff/White Wares (Fabrics 2, 3, 7, 12, 16, 17)

These fabrics are derived from the coal measure clays which run from North Warwickshire, where the Chilvers Coton industry was situated, (Mayes and Scott 1983) through South Staffordshire into Shropshire. In fact Bridgnorth itself, although situated on old red sandstone, is less than five miles both to the north and east of the Coal Measures. The different buff/white ware fabrics contain the same inclusions, quartz and ferruginous materials, although they vary in fineness, grain size and degree of sorting. Variation within this group may reflect different production centres or merely variable preparation of the clay at the same production centre.

The most common of these buff/white wares is Fabric 3. Together with cooking pot Fabric 5 (see above) it is the dominant fabric in the Bridgnorth assemblage. Fabric 3 is directly paralleled at Dudley Castle where it constitutes a major proportion of the fabrics identified in Building B in the Bailey (Ratkai 1985). This building was burnt down prior to the construction of the chapel, dated architecturally to *c.* 1350. As some time seems to have elapsed between the destruction of Building B and the construction of the Chapel, it would seem that Fabric 3 may have been in use during the 13th century. The same buff/white wares were also found on the Deansway site, Worcester (pers. inspection by the author), their use seeming to be associated with the 13th/14th century (pers. comm. V Buteux).

The buff/white wares are mainly made up of jugs with some bowls, very few cooking pots and a pipkin (fig 13 no 4). There were no complete or near-complete jug profiles but the standard rim form is the ledge rim. The glaze on Fabrics 3, 16 and 17 is usually tan to mid-green to olive with darker green speckles; unglazed surfaces characteristically have a rosy bloom, which may be caused by the medium by which the glaze was applied. A characteristic of the glaze is a pitted, orange peel texture. This too is found on examples from both Dudley Castle and the town of Dudley (Ratkai 1985, Ratkai 1991a). The jugs appear to have been highly decorated with incised horizontal and wavy lines, horizontal and wavy combing, rouletting, stabbing, applied strips both plain and thumbled or pinched. Further study on a larger group might possibly reveal whether some decorative patterns are associated with a particular fabric.

Fabric 2 had a much better glaze and was finer bodied, thin walled and whiter, the glaze being a rich copper green. There were only a few sherds in this fabric. Decoration was limited to incised horizontal lines and an applied, stabbed horizontal cordon, with an incised wavy line above. This was a unique design. There was also a bowl with a lid seating rim and an external applied thumbled strip (fig 13 no 3) and a cooking pot/jar or pipkin, also with an applied thumbled strip at the junction of the rim and shoulder. This vessel had traces of an external yellowish olive glaze (fig 13 no 2).

Fabric 12 had a marked pimply surface with a good mid-green glaze. One sherd was decorated with an oblique band of red slip. There were only a few sherds in this fabric and none of the others was decorated.

Fabric 7 was similar to the later buff wares found at Haughmond Abbey, and contained much less quartz and more orange ferruginous inclusions than the other buff wares. There was one jug with a simple curved everted rim. A body sherd, decorated with triangular rouletting may have come from the same jug. The glaze on both sherds was a deep yellow.

Two other forms were found in Fabric 3. A pipkin (fig 13 no 4) and three rims from a straight sided cooking pot with an angular rim everted from the neck.

### 3. *Sandy iron rich oxidised* (Fabrics 4, 9 and 25)

Fabric 4 has a fine sandy matrix and micaceous surfaces, and is usually found as jugs, commonly decorated with white slip. White slip decorated wares have a wide currency in the West Midlands, and seem to fall into two main groups; a fine micaceous fabric, as here, and a sandier coarser fabric. Fabric 4 is directly paralleled by Fabric 109 from Warwick (Ratkai 1991b) but is also found at Alcester (Ratkai forthcoming [c]). A similar fabric was identified by Sherlock in supposed waster dumps at Deritend, Birmingham (Sherlock 1957) but it is also similar to a white slip decorated fabric found at Montgomery Castle (pers. inspection by the author) and assumed to have originated in Herefordshire (pers. comm. J. Knight). The floruit for this type of pottery appears to be from the mid-13th to the early 14th century.

Fabrics 9 and 25 are medium-coarse sandy fabrics represented by only a few sherds. Fabric 25 is similar to Fabric 16 from Haughmond Abbey dated to the 13th century (?14th century). The two body sherds in Fabric 25 appear to be from jugs. Fabric 9 is found in a cooking pot/jar with a simple angular everted rim. There is also a stumpy thick rim, although it is not possible to say from what form this comes.

### 4. *Late Medieval/Post-Medieval Transitional* (Fabrics 8, 13, 18, 21, 22, 26)

These fabrics are typified by a better-prepared body with few inclusions; Fabric 8 is perhaps the earliest of this group and is paralleled both at Shrewsbury Abbey (pers. comm. V Buteux) and Haughmond Abbey (Fabric 2). Only a plain jug is present at Bridgnorth, together with a slashed rod handle with a tan glaze. Fabric 8 probably begins in the 14th century and continues in use throughout the 15th century.

Fabric 13 is Cistercian Ware. Most of the sherds from Bridgnorth Friary appear to be from cups, although two thicker-bodied sherds, with an external glaze only, may be from jugs. Only one cup was decorated with applied white clay pads. The material was too fragmentary to enable the identification of specific cup types, though there was one pedestal base (fig 13 no 8). This form has been found at Haughmond Abbey, Dudley Castle and Alcester but to the author's knowledge has not otherwise been found further east in Warwickshire; it is possible that this base may represent a regional tradition. There was also part of a figurine salt (fig 13 no 7), all that remains being the bowl, held by two hands, applied in white clay.

The remaining fabrics in this group are made up of only a few sherds. The forms are mainly jugs, although there is an unstratified bottle base in Fabric 26, and a rim, in the same fabric, from either a jar or cistern (fig 13 no 6). Fabrics 18 and 21 are found at Dudley Castle whereas Fabrics 22 and 26 resemble the late medieval Fabrics 21, 22 and 23 from Haughmond Abbey.

### 5. *Very fine sandy wares or paste-like matrix* (Fabrics 1, 19, 23)

Fabrics 1 and 19 both have an extremely fine sandy matrix, Fabric 1 containing orange ferruginous inclusions, whilst Fabric 19 does not. Fabric 1 appears to be the same as Fabric 14 from Haughmond Abbey, and was used



for tripod pitchers, from which there is a base and foot, and a rod handle and rim (fig 13 no 2). These vessels are not generally wheelthrown, but at least one sherd in this fabric appears to have been wheelthrown suggesting that the fabric may have been in use from the late-12th/early 13th century and continued into the 14th century.

Fabric 23 is represented by only one sherd. It is the base angle from a Developed Stamford ware vessel with a clear glaze with dark green copper speckles.

#### 6. *Imported Continental pottery* (Fabrics X01 and X02)

Continental imports are represented by only two sherds of German stoneware. One is decorated with applied decoration in the form of roses (fig 13 no 9) and dated to the first half of the 16th century (Gaimster 1987). Similarly decorated pieces have been found at Haughmond Abbey and Dudley Castle. The author has not seen any examples from Warwickshire. It is possible that these decorated types arrived in the western West Midlands via Chester, where there are other similar examples.

#### *Discussion*

The pottery from Bridgnorth is dominated by Fabrics 3 and 5, and there is no reason to believe that these fabrics were not both manufactured locally. Indeed, the fact that Fabric 3 is also found at Dudley town and Dudley Castle suggests that it may have been manufactured in the area to the east of Bridgnorth. The range of fabrics is not great and their presence at other sites within a 20-mile radius indicates a fairly insular pattern of contact. Those fabrics paralleled at Shrewsbury and Worcester presumably utilised the Severn for transport but they seem to constitute a minor portion of the assemblage. The land-based transport system which must have supplied the same pottery to Bridgnorth and Dudley seems to have been equally important. Medieval transport systems are imperfectly understood (Ratkai forthcoming [b]) and are in urgent need of more detailed study.

In general, the pottery from levelling and dumping deposits may suggest that the major building activity took place in the late-13th or early-14th century. The presence of a small amount of early-13th century pottery suggests there may have been earlier activity in the area, before the founding of the friary. However, if the friary began very shortly after the advent of the Franciscan order, it is possible that tripod pitchers and Developed Stamford Ware were still in use. The small amount of pottery from the site, in particular of the 15th century, indicates fairly consistent removal of rubbish from the site, presumably into the River Severn, below the friary. It is interesting to note the more or less equal ratio of jug sherds to cooking pot/jar sherds. This pattern is not usual on domestic settlement sites, where cooking pots/jars massively outnumber jugs, especially in the 12th to mid-14th century. However, a ratio similar to that found at Bridgnorth Friary, is found both at Shrewsbury Abbey (pers. comm. V Buteux) and at Haughmond Abbey (phases 2a, 2b, 2c/3a) (Ratkai forthcoming [a]). This may argue for the higher status of religious houses but more probably reflected different ceramic requirements from those of a normal domestic household. It has been suggested that simple communal eating arrangements may have obviated the need for vast numbers of cooking pots (pers. comm. V Buteux) or that metal cooking pots were more common in monastic houses.

The overall make-up of the Bridgnorth assemblage is of a fairly parochial nature, lying mainly within the Shropshire tradition, as first outlined by Barker (Barker 1970). The paucity of imported wares, which might be thought surprising given the riverside location of the friary, may simply reflect the function of those buildings examined during excavation.

#### *Catalogue of illustrated vessels (fig. 13)*

1. Fabric 1 (1043); rod handle and rim from a tripod pitcher, 12th–early 13th century
2. Fabric 2 (1120); cooking pot/jar with applied thumbled strip
3. Fabric 2 (1032); sloping-sided bowl with applied thumbled strip
4. Fabric 3 (1104); pipkin. The wall of the vessel has been pushed into the handle, leaving a deep, circular depression in the interior of the pipkin
5. Fabric 10 (1104); straight-sided cooking pot
6. Fabric 26 (1117); ?cistern; glaze on inner face of the rim
7. Fabric 13, Cistercian Ware (1117); bowl from a figurine salt, applied hands in white clay holding the bowl
8. Fabric 13, Cistercian Ware (1117); pedestal base from a cup
9. Fabric, X02 Cologne Stoneware (1101); body sherd from a drinking jug, decorated with applied rose and leaves

## THE MEDIEVAL FLOOR TILES by D Redhouse and I M Ferris

*Introduction*

A total of 2,654 whole and, most commonly, fragmentary medieval floor tiles (weighing 439.21kg) was recovered during the excavation. The majority of these (2,595 fragments; weight 432.763kg) came from the layers of the post-Dissolution dumps forming the blocking of the stepped passageway; in discussion here these will be dealt with as a single group though quantification of material from individual layers can be found in the archive. Unless otherwise stated below all tiles discussed will be from this group.

Here will be presented a summary only of the study of the assemblage, with basic information concerning fabric, forms and decoration, and an illustrated catalogue and discussion, with parallels where appropriate. Full quantification by layer, by fabric, by form etc. can be consulted in the archive. None of the small quantity of undecorated tiles has been considered worthy of publication.

*Discussion*

As the assemblage is dominated by one design it can be assumed that this unusual imbalance in such an assemblage reflects the stripping and dumping of a single area of flooring. This floor, of line-impressed tiles bearing a four-tile floral design, was in the Cheshire tradition (see Rutter 1990 fig. 161 for a map showing the links between Cheshire and Shropshire) and is widely paralleled, probably being of an early-14th-century date. Of the other designs present there is a roughly equal balance between line-impressed and two-colour tiles, though most of the latter type are represented by only one or two examples each. While some of these designs are also paralleled in Shropshire and Cheshire, others are linked to Worcester and Worcestershire sites and some have parallels in the Silver Street, Worcester waster dump. The Bridgnorth assemblage represents a dating spread of 13th/14th–15th century. While four distinct fabrics can be identified there is no overall regional fabric series to which these can be related, and, in any case, the nature of the Severn Valley clays may not allow for close identification of sources.

The assemblage is probably fairly typical of the lesser religious houses in that it does not display a great variety of types with few heraldic designs represented, and, though the presence of a small number of mosaic shapes points to some areas of intricate flooring, there is nevertheless a simplicity detectable in the dominant form and design of the pavement.

*Fabrics and Forms*

Four broad fabric types were defined by on-going macroscopic study throughout the cataloguing of the assemblage, the fabric definitions being produced by x20 magnification microscopic examination.

- Fabric 1 Pale orange coloured body. Sandy. Low density of partially-rounded, poorly-sorted inclusions, mostly quartz. Friable in relation to Fabrics 2 and 3. 22.7% of assemblage by weight.
- Fabric 2 Dark orange-brick red coloured body. Sandy. High density of partially-rounded, poorly-sorted inclusions, mostly quartz. Grog temper in some examples. Hard. 76.6% of assemblage by weight.
- Fabric 3 Dark brown coloured body. Fine sandy. Some fine quartz inclusions. Hard. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Fabric 4 Orange coloured body. Sandy. Very coarse, and porous. Brittle. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.

The forms consisted of standard floor tiles and a number of mosaic shapes and were as follows:

- Form A Square. 115 x 115mm. Average thickness 21mm. Glazed. In Fabrics 1, 2 and 3. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form B Square. 130 x 130mm. Average thickness 20mm. Glazed and unglazed. In Fabrics 1, 2 and 3. 44% of assemblage by weight.
- Form C Square. As B but diagonally divided. Glazed and unglazed. In Fabrics 1, 2 and 3. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form D Rectangle. 125 x 55mm. Average thickness 23mm. Glazed. In Fabric 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.

- Form E Oval-ended mosaic pieces including semi-circular tile. Thicknesses vary between 25mm–36mm. In Fabrics 1 and 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form F Miscellaneous unidentifiable. Glazed and unglazed. 49% of assemblage. Such a large percentage reflects the fragmentary nature of much of the tile in the dumped deposits.
- Form G Isoceles trapezium. Glazed. In Fabric 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form H Square. 95 x 95mm. Average thickness 31mm. Glazed and unglazed. In Fabrics 1 and 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form J Square. 65 x 65mm. Average thickness 20mm. Glazed. In Fabric 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.
- Form K Y-shaped mosaic. Thickness 19mm. Glazed. In Fabric 2. Less than 1% of assemblage by weight.

*Catalogue of Decorated Types (fig 14)*

1. Line-impressed. Part of four-tile set. Floral design: two cinquefoils and buds with stems and quatrefoil. Various glazes; in green, brown, brown-green, yellow, black etc. This design occurs on 99% of the tiles from the total assemblage, and on the majority of the decorated tiles, and is found on tiles of Fabrics 1, 2 and 3 and Form B. At least two different stamps represented, neither matched at Haughmond Abbey or Shrewsbury (pers. comm. Sara Lunt). Parallels can be found elsewhere in Shropshire, where it would appear to be a common design; at Lilleshall Abbey (Eames 1980, Design no 209), Shrewsbury Abbey, Water Lane and Draper's Hall, Shrewsbury (James 1985, nos 117, 118), and Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a], no 7). Probably of Cheshire School. Dated by Eames to the 15th century but this date subsequently has been deemed too late, with the early-14th century being more likely (pers comm Sara Lunt).
2. Line-impressed. Griffon facing left. Various glazes; in green, yellow and black. Twelve examples recorded, in Fabrics 2 and 3 and Form A. Widely paralleled; at Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a], no 1), Buildwas Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [b] no 21), Rowleys House, Drapers Hall, St. Austins Friary and Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury (James 1985, no 124), Cound Moor and Acton Burnell in Shropshire (see James), Strata Florida and Strata Marcella, Norton Priory, Cheshire (James 1985), Lichfield, Valle Crucis and Wenlock Priory (Eames 1980, Design no 158), and Dudley Priory (Locock 1990). Cheshire School. Dated by Eames to 14th or 15th century, and by James to 1350–1420.
3. Line-impressed. Mosaic border tile. Floral motifs on trailing tendril. Brown glaze. Single example represented in Fabric 2, Form G. Paralleled at the Franciscan Friary, Chester (Bennett 1921, fig facing p 17, no 12).
4. Line-impressed. Y-shaped mosaic tile. Stamped design with floral motif within double circle (repeated three times) and single, unenclosed small floral motif. Fabric 2, Form K. Stamps paralleled at; Wenlock Priory (Eames 1980 Design no. 84, Cat. no 2839), the Dominican Friary, Chester (Rutter 1990, No 46/20–49/21 and no 49/21–46/20) and at Basingwerk Abbey, Clwyd, Llanfaes Friary, Anglesey and Swords, Co. Dublin (see Rutter 1990, 238–239). Eames dates the type to the early 14th century.
5. Line-impressed. Mosaic tile. Simple floral stamps with ?tendril. Green glaze. One example in Fabric 2, Form E.
6. Line-impressed. Tile in ?nine-tile set with, on overall design, petals at centre of circle. Brown glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form A.
7. Line-impressed. Large, central floral design enclosed within double circle. Yellow and green glaze. Three examples recorded in Fabric 2, Form B.
8. Line-impressed. Portion of floral motif; full design uncertain but probably central quatrefoil with trefoils in corners. The tile is most noteworthy in that the design is overdrawn with elements of the same motifs. Brown glaze. Single example in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Design is probably equivalent to Eames (1980) Design no 195, a parallel from Lilleshall Abbey and dated to the 15th century.
9. and 10. Line-impressed. Mosaic pieces. Designs very worn and complete design uncertain; possibly a Celtic cross with other circular elements forming part of wider mosaic design. Green glaze. Two examples in Fabric 2, Form E, but thickness of tiles differ, one being 25mm, the other 33mm.
11. Line-impressed. Portion of floral design, represented by petals only. Single example in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Similar to Eames Design no 2826 from Chertsey Abbey and dated to 15th century.
12. Relief Design. Border tile divided into two rows lengthwise, the upper register bearing a flower motif, and the lower a motif featuring ?wings. Variegated yellow and green glaze. Two examples recorded in Fabric 2, Form D. Paralleled at Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 9), Lilleshall Abbey (Eames 1980 Design no 271) and elsewhere in Shropshire (James 1985, no 119),

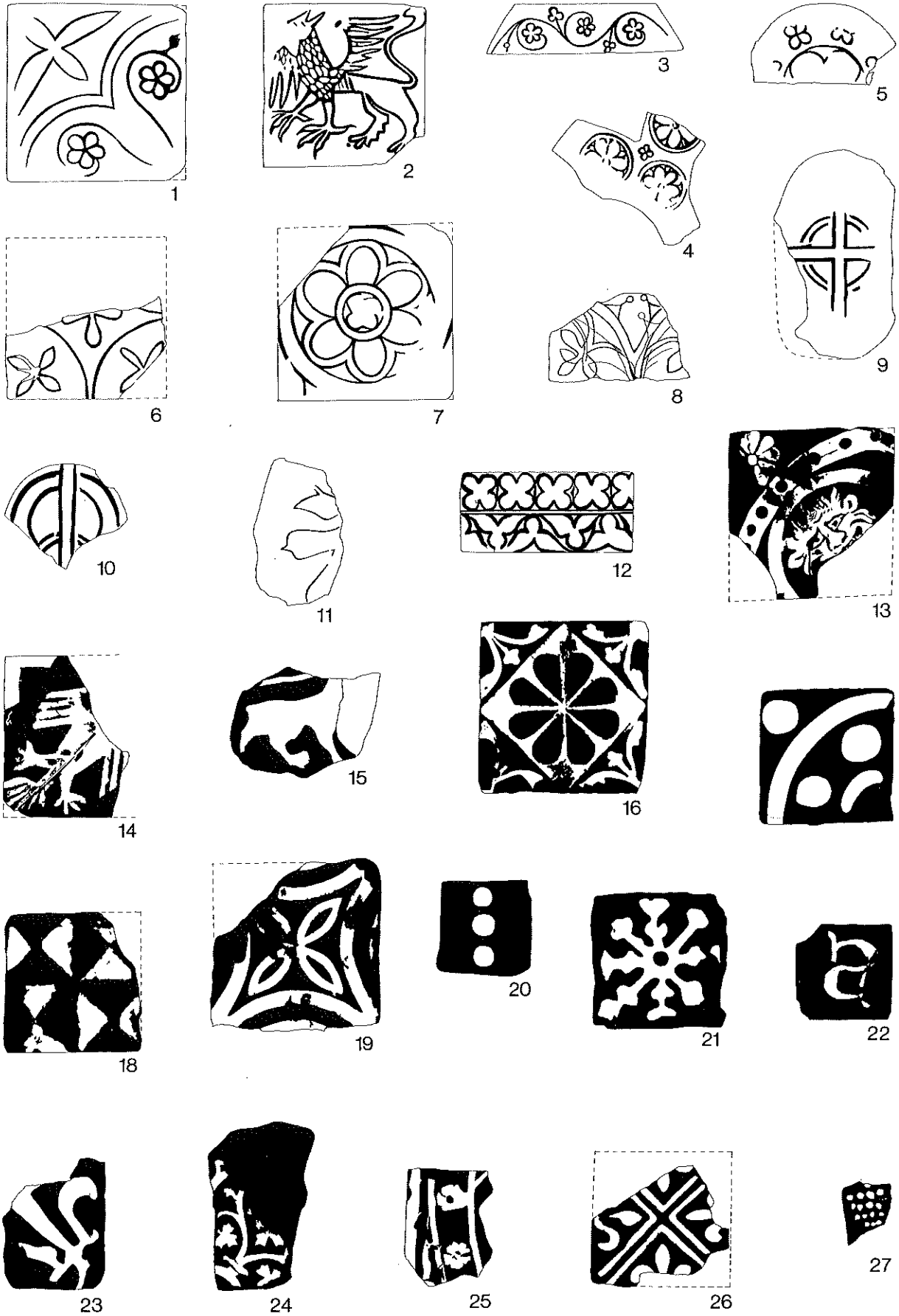


FIGURE 14 DECORATED FLOOR TILES (M BREEDON)

- and is similar to examples in the waster dump at Silver Street, Worcester (pers. comm. Hilary White).
13. Two-colour. Part of four-tile set. Grotesque head. Yellow and brown glaze. Three examples recorded, in Fabric 2, Form A. Paralleled at Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 95) and at various sites in Chester (Rutter 1990, no 30/237).
  14. Two-colour. Spread eagle. Yellow and black glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form A. Paralleled at Benedictine Nunnery, Chester (Rutter 1990, no 89/249).
  15. Two-colour. Deer. Yellow and brown glaze. Single example recorded, in Fabric 2, Form uncertain.
  16. Two-colour. Central floral design enclosed by diamond with fleurs de lys in each corner. Brown and yellow glaze. Single example recorded, in Fabric 2, Form A. Paralleled at Worcester Cathedral (Keen 1978, fig 6 no 16), in the waster dump at Silver Street, Worcester and at a number of sites in Worcestershire (pers. comm. Hilary White).
  17. Two-colour. ?Part of four-tile set. Arc, forming circle on full set, enclosing dots of colour, with dot in corner of tile. Yellow and black glaze. Single example recorded, in Fabric 2, Form H. Paralleled at Leominster Priory (pers. comm. Hilary White), Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] No. 86) and at Stokesay Castle (pers. comm. Sara Lunt). At Haughmond the tile dates to the early 13th century. Similar to Eames Design No. 2108 from London.
  18. Two-colour. Very badly worn. Geometric ?cross. Yellow glaze? Two examples recorded in Fabric 2, Form H. Paralleled at Buildwas Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [b] no 124).
  19. Two-colour. Floral motif in looped border. Yellow glaze? Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form B. Paralleled at Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 78), Worcester Cathedral (Keen 1978, fig 7 no 29), in the waster dump at Silver Street, Worcester and at various sites in Worcestershire (pers. comm. Hilary White).
  20. Two-colour. Border tile with central three-dot design. Yellow on brown glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form J.
  21. Two-colour. Eight point radiate ?snowflake design. Yellow and brown glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form H. Paralleled at Worcester Cathedral (Keen 1978, Fig 9 no 44) and Leominster Priory (pers. comm. Hilary White). Similar to Eames Design no 2479 from Croxden Abbey, Staffordshire. Place of manufacture is possibly Chilvers Coton in the 13th/14th century.
  22. Two-colour. Border tile with reversed-S design. Yellow on brown glaze, in Fabric 2, Form J. Such tiles are common, being associated with graves, but exact parallels are not recorded though similar examples come from Buildwas Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [b] no 50), Worcester Cathedral and the waster dump at Silver Street, Worcester (pers. comm. Hilary White).
  23. Two-colour (counter relief). Fleur de lys. Yellow on green glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Similar tiles are known from Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 23), Buildwas Abbey (James 1985, no 52), and Leominster Priory (pers. comm. Hilary White). Similar to Eames Design no 2243, unprovenanced but probably of the 14th century.
  24. Two-colour (counter relief). Portion of floral design. Part of 16-tile set. Glaze largely worn away. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Parallels from Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 84), the waster dump at Silver Street, Worcester and at other sites in Worcestershire (pers. comm. Hilary White), and in Chester (Rutter 1990, no 93/211). See n 25.
  25. Two-colour. Portion of floral design. Yellow on green glaze. Single example in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Paralleled at Haughmond Abbey by part of a 16-tile set (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 127), and also found in Chester in same design as no 24 above.
  26. Two-colour (counter relief). Criss-cross design with floral motifs. Yellow on brown-green glaze. Single example recorded in Fabric 2, Form H. Paralleled at Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] no 76) and Leominster Priory (pers. comm. Hilary White). Similar to Eames Design no 2209 from Croxden Abbey, Staffordshire and London. Dated to the 14th century.
  27. Two-colour. Fragment only of design showing irregular dots, representing ?grapes. Yellow glaze. Single example in Fabric 2, Form uncertain. Grapes are known on tiles from Haughmond Abbey (Lunt forthcoming [a] nos 115, 116) but correlation is here very tentative.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Sara Lunt and Hilary White for information on parallels from their own particular areas of interest.

## STONE ROOF TILES by I M Ferris

Five complete or near-complete stone roof tiles, and numerous fragments of such tiles, were recovered from the post-Dissolution dump. The majority of these, including the complete examples, were of Harnage Slate, with a few pieces of fine grained local red sandstone tile also present. The latter could have also been used for floor surfacing.

The Harnage Slate tiles were of a standard size; 340mm–380mm long, 230mm wide and 20mm thick, either squared or rounded at one end where pierced by a peg-hole, and squared at the other.

Harnage Slate was quarried locally in Shropshire near Cound, and was used widely in the county from the later medieval period up to the mid-17th century (Lawson 1985).

## MEDIEVAL WINDOW GLASS by L Bevan

*Introduction*

A total of 744 pieces of window glass was recovered, the majority of which came from layer 1103, one of a series of deposits comprising a post-Dissolution dump. Architectural fragments and thousands of fragments of plain and decorated floor tiles were also recovered from this rubbish dump which must have resulted from the stripping of the Friary buildings. A number of the pieces of window glass, 24 in total, were recovered from a watching brief where stratigraphic contexts were less certain (given code WB in catalogue).

Although many of the pieces have survived in excellent condition, with grozed edges intact, cataloguing and the seeking of parallels were limited by the small individual size and poor condition of the bulk of the assemblage. Many fragments were encrusted with a hard deposit which precluded identification of colour and/or design. The thickness of the glass varied between 1–3mm, with only one or two examples being 4–5mm thick (these are noted in the catalogue).

Fragments were categorised primarily according to colour. Only decorated fragments and complete panels, or panels with slight damage which did not preclude accurate measurement, were individually entered in the archive catalogue. Other sherds were divided into border fragments, with one or more definable edges, grozed or ungrozed, further sub-divided into straight or curved according to the shape of the grozed edge, and miscellaneous fragments with no original edges intact. These uncatalogued fragments are quantified in the archive.

The decorated glass deserves presentation in some detail both because of a dearth of comparative local and regional material and because of the paucity of such material from Franciscan Friary sites in particular, and from the sites of houses of the other Mendicant orders in general. Previously, significant groups have been published only from Sidney Sussex College, on the site of the Cambridge friary, and from the Franciscan nunnery at Denny Abbey (Newton 1980). Again, the significance of the Bridgnorth glass is increased by its coming almost exclusively from a single deposit, by the context of that deposit, and by its presence in the overall assemblage from the deposit.

The assemblage is divisible into two broad groups; blue glass, dating to the 13th/14th century, and light green glass, of the 14th century. The contrast between these groups, highlighted by very different styles of decoration and application, shows that two very distinct glazing schemes are represented by the assemblage. Not enough glass survives, however, to either reconstruct the overall glazing scheme or to make any valid conclusions about the art historical context of the material.

*Catalogue*

The archive catalogue comprises a full listing and description of the 200 decorated and complete or near-complete pieces of glass, and a quantification of the other 544 fragments. The present report will draw upon that catalogue to present a summary of the glass assemblage, supplemented by illustration of the majority of decorated pieces and complete plain panels.

*Light Green Glass* (Archive catalogue numbers 1:1–1:118; 1; 1:WB1–WB10. Figs 15 and 16)

Light green glass comprised the majority of the assemblage with 110 painted examples, 18 complete or near-complete panels, 112 border panels with straight edges, 7 border panels with curved edges, and 364 miscellaneous fragments being represented.

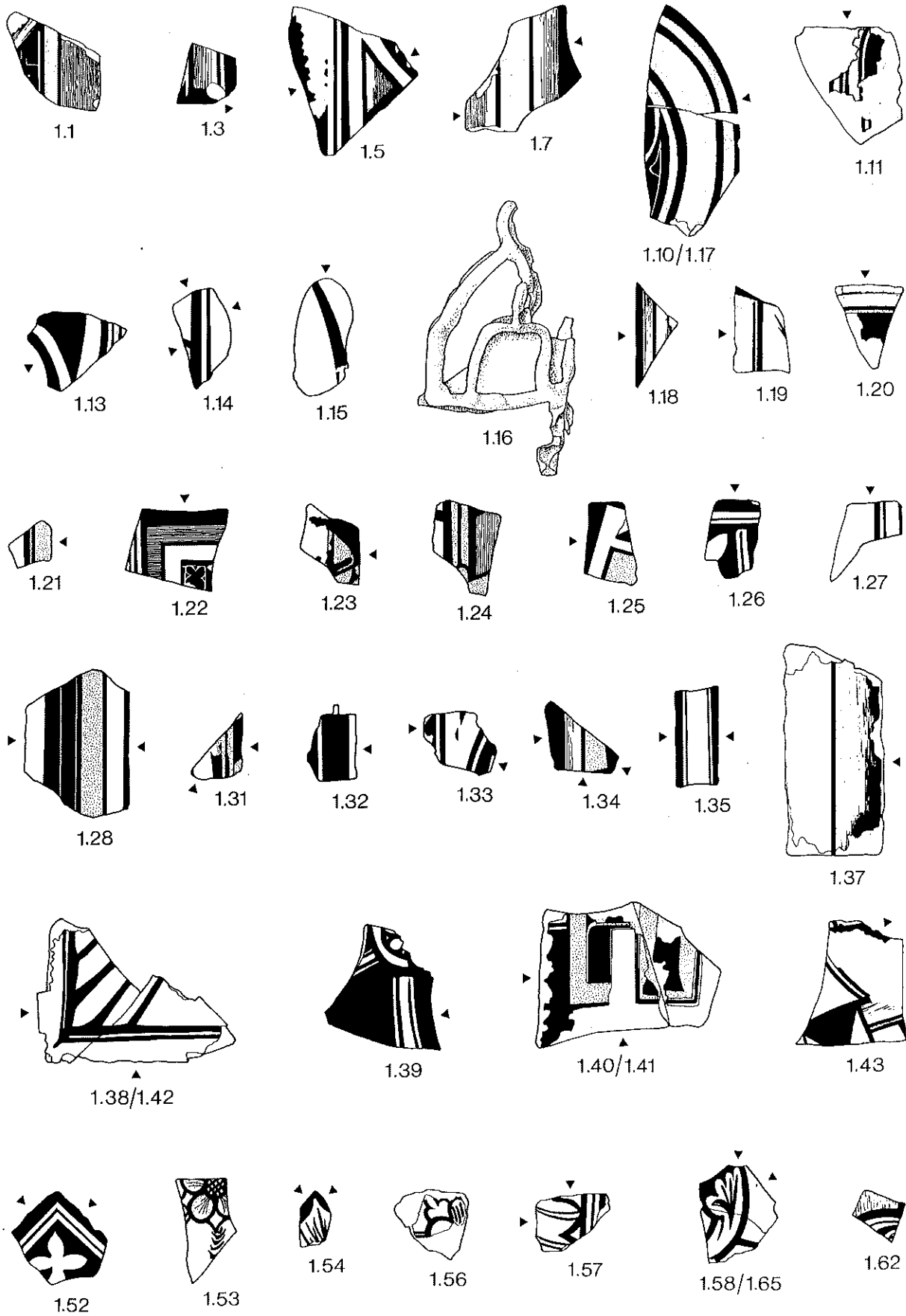


FIGURE 15 WINDOW GLASS; LIGHT GREEN (N DODDS)

Decoration is executed in dark red and occasionally yellow paint, the latter being particularly used on border pieces. Whether the yellow colour is, in fact, paint or whether it is rather 'yellow stain', that is a fired covering of silver compound applied in solution, cannot be said without further analysis. In many cases (1:76–1:86) the surface of the glass has been covered by a ground of transparent deep red paint, over which decoration in a lighter red colour has been applied; in cases where the paint is still intact the colour of the glass itself is only revealed in section.

No reconstruction can be made of the overall decorative scheme due to the generally fragmentary nature of the assemblage. Linear and geometric designs are well-represented, usually on border or corner pieces (1:1–1:50; 1:WB4–6, 1:WB9), sometimes in design schemes incorporating bands of stippled infill or bands formed by the framing of unpainted surfaces. Sometimes, other elements appear with such designs, notably a small quatrefoil motif (1:22), typical of 14th-century decorative schemes (Kerr 1990, fig 103; 901.6, p 414) and more elaborate decorative panels, using a variety of floriform and foliate motifs, are also present (1:52–1:73). These include a yellow rose motif delineated in dark red paint (1:53) and probably of 14th-century date (Newton 1980, fig 17.5); oak leaves (1:61, 1:64, 1:66); and a foliate-form crocket (1:68) executed in dark red and yellow paint and again with 14th-century parallels (Kerr 1990, fig 101:899.7). Other popular 14th-century motifs include an obvious 'wing' from an angel, demon or bird (1:WB3 Fig. 16) and a crown border piece (1:WB1–WB2) which has close parallels at Denny Abbey (Newton 1980, fig 21:2, 2, 206).

The most interesting single piece is a border fragment painted on both sides (1:51 figure 17), something that raises the question of whether it has been reused, which would seem improbable, or whether it is a practice piece. One side is painted with recurring quatrefoil motifs enclosed in squares executed in dark red paint, a piece with 14th-century parallels (Kerr 1990, fig 101:899.10) and the other is painted with a fish, delineated in dark red paint. Unfortunately the surface of the glass on which the fish appears is unstable and flaking so that the identification of any further related elements of the design is uncertain.

The painting styles are workmanlike and generally unexceptional though 1:51, 1:53 and 1:61 would appear to be the product of a more-skilled artist.

*Other Colours* (Archive catalogue numbers 2:1–2:49, 2:WB1–2, 3:1–3:4, 4:1–4:6, 5:1, 6:1–6:5, 7:1–7.5. fig 17). Other colours of glass present are: mid-green (4:1–4:6), dark green (5:1), yellow-green (6:1–6:5), blue (2:1–2:49), brown (7:1–7:5) and red (3:1–3:4). The blue glass represents the largest of these groups, comprising

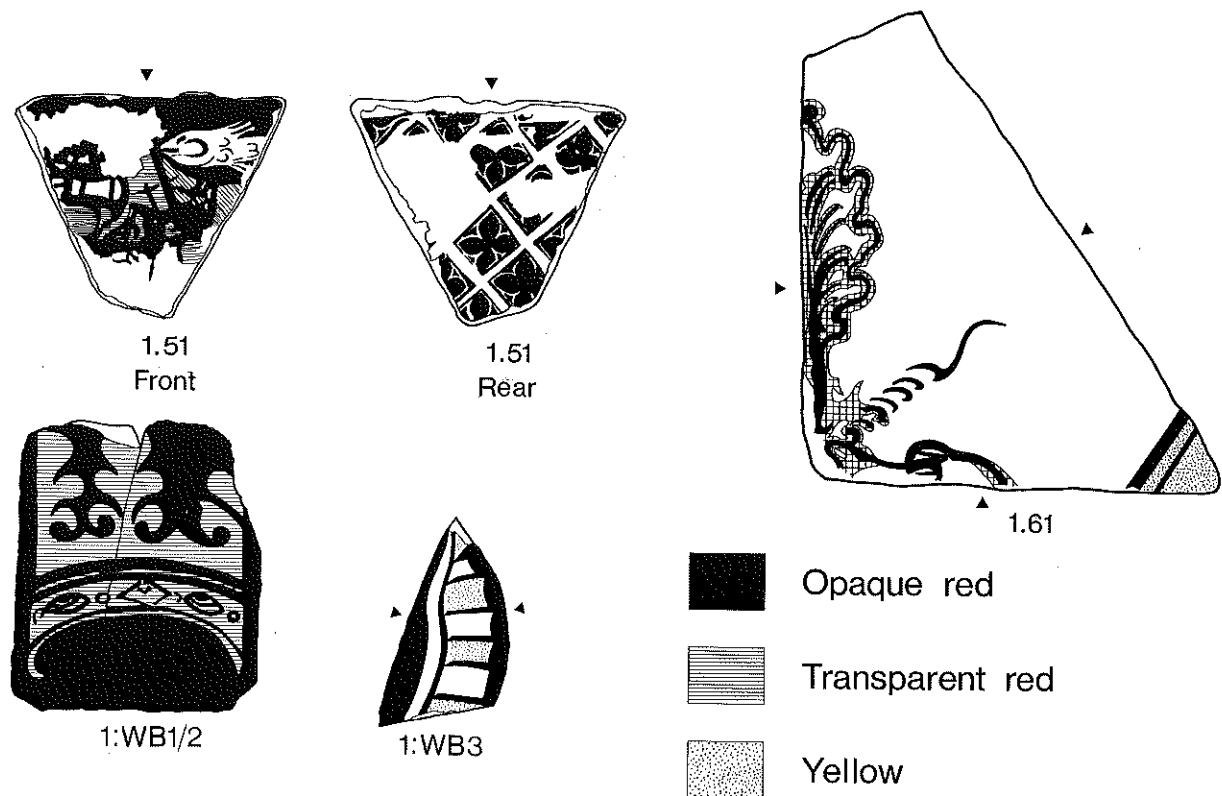


FIGURE 16 WINDOW GLASS; LIGHT GREEN (N DODDS)



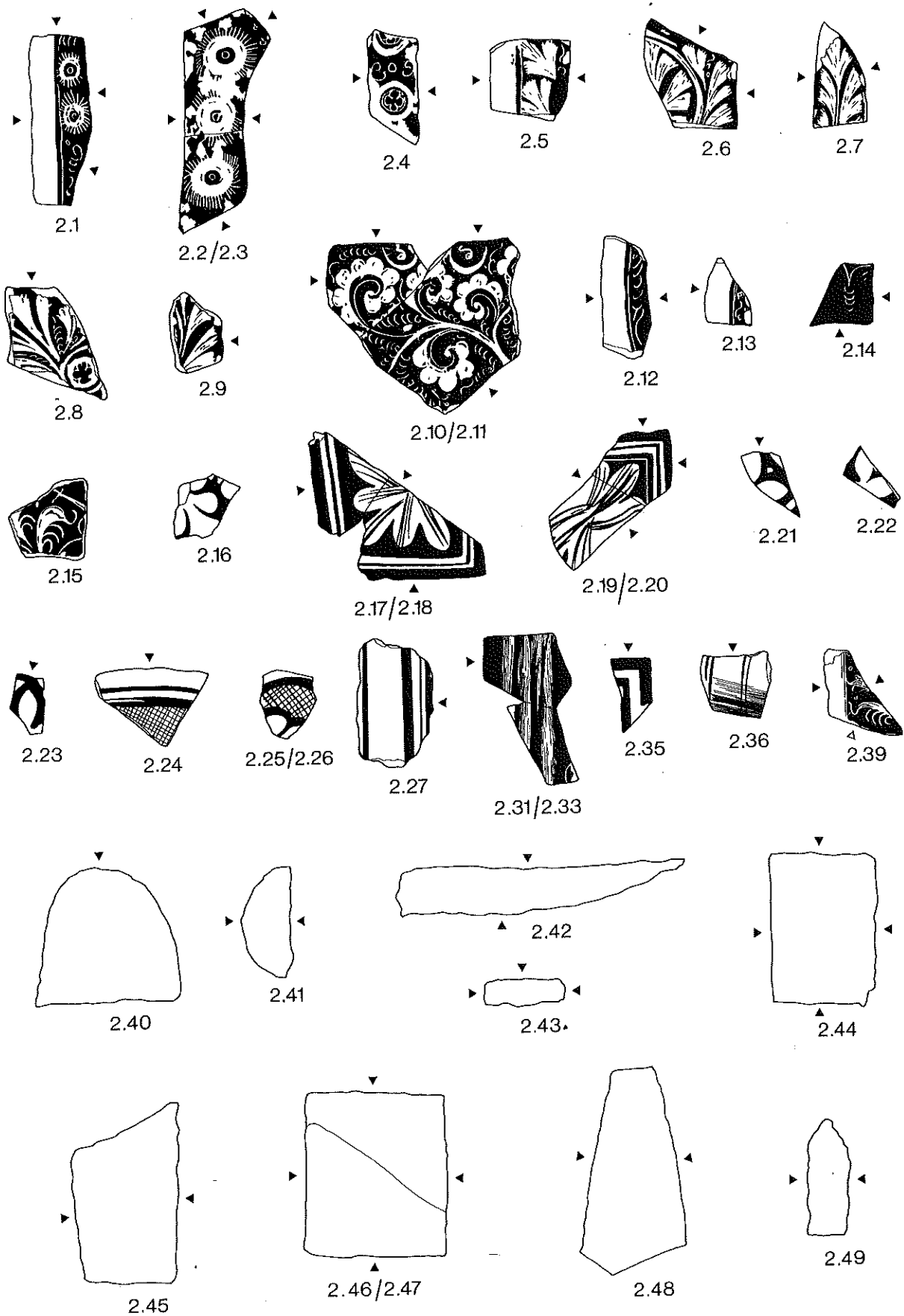


FIGURE 17 WINDOW GLASS; BLUE (N DODDS)

40 decorated pieces, 11 complete or near-complete plain panels, and 50 fragments. The method of decoration varies between the application of a light red paint, sometimes with fine brush strokes, and a sgraffito-style technique where large zones are painted over in red and designs scratched out to reveal the blue glass beneath. While foliate designs again predominate, and quatrefoil motifs are present (on, for example, 2:4, 2:8 and 2:WB1), the most unusual design, created by sgraffito, is a peacock's tail 'eye' found on two examples (2:1 and 2:2/2:3). The style and application of decoration, and its apparent fineness, would suggest an altogether different location for this glass from the light green glass with its generally more pedestrian style of painting. Two of the pieces (2.24 and 2.25/2.26) display 13th-century geometric grisaille designs, and the rest of the blue glass may be of a 13th/14th-century date.

Decorated pieces also occur in small quantities in mid-green, dark green, yellow-green and brown but with the exception of the mid-green fragment 4:1 with its single fleur-de-lys motif and 4:3 with its very stylized foliate motifs, both in dark red paint, none of these merits detailed discussion. In red glass only undecorated panels are present.

## ARCHITECTURAL STONWORK by David Kendrick

One hundred and fifty-seven architectural stonework fragments were excavated from the dump in the stepped passageway where they had been deposited (fig 12; plates 10 and 11), together with plain and painted window glass and numerous tile fragments, as a blocking deposit some time after the friary's dissolution in August 1538 and during its subsequent demolition. It will be seen, therefore, that none of the fragments was found *in situ* or in direct relationship with the structures from which they were derived.

All architectural fragments are of the local red sandstone or of an imported green sandstone. All the stones had received between one and three coats of limewash which in some cases had survived its four and a half centuries of burial in a remarkable state of preservation and cleanliness. This raises the question of why it was necessary to import green sandstone, only then to paint it in an identical manner to the red, though it must be remembered that the three coats of limewash may only have been applied in the later stages of the friary's active life. Its original external appearance may have been unpainted with perhaps the major windows, especially the east, architraved in contrasting green sandstone, with lesser or claustral windows in red sandstone. The overall appearance of the church would then have followed the usual Franciscan design of a quite sumptuous east window with plainer fenestration to other walls (cf the multiple lancet east window of the choir in the Greyfriars' Church at Chichester).

All the fragments are contemporary in their deposition; the only diagnostic fragments, from window tracery, probably date from between the late 13th century and the early 14th century. The fragments recovered possibly came from the east window and other windows in the church, from windows of a building in the claustral range, and from a possible bell tower.

## Catalogue

### Introduction

Of the 157 fragments, 62 were unidentifiable due to their small dimensions, damage and/or a lack of any diagnostic worked features. A further 16 fragments, though again not fully identifiable, seemed to resemble the components of internal features such as a screen, sedilia, arcading or stalls. Descriptions of these 78 fragments can be found in the archive synopsis. The remaining 79 fragments were assigned to nine form categories and are discussed below, with the fragments retaining their original archive code numbers (from ST001 onward). Full descriptions of each stone can be found in the archive.

1. *Y-Shaped Tracery* (plate 11A)  
[T 002-014, 017, 018, 021, 026-028, 036-039, 068, 069, 085, 108, 139 and WB001-002]  
Thirty full or partial 'Y'-shaped tracery fragments, all of green sandstone, were recorded, including four fragments (ST 003, 009, 014 and 039) where the arms of the 'Y' are asymmetric. All are cusped to their lower angles and have glazing channels to all three angles, the latter indicating that each fragment embraced two lights and an oculus. It is not possible to determine how many of these double-lights fitted into how many complete windows for, without their corresponding jambs, the original number of lights contained within each window cannot be ascertained. The asymmetric fragments have one arm of the 'Y' longer than the other, this arm starting to return inwards and

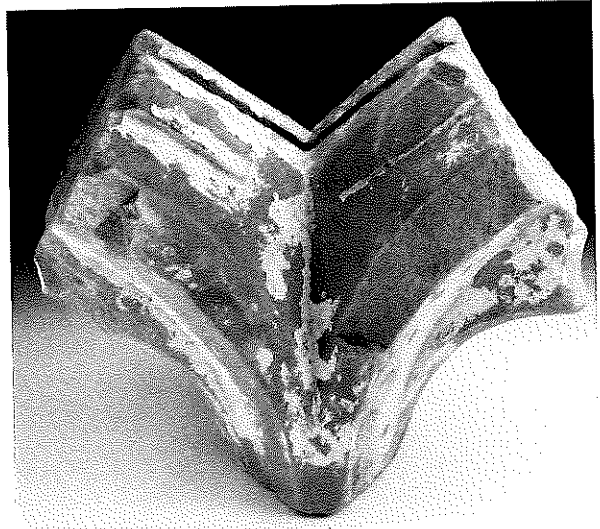


PLATE 11 ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS FROM THE POST-DISSOLUTION DUMP. A. Y-SHAPED TRACERY; B. MULLION-STYLE FRAGMENT; C. PILLAR BASE. (G NORRIE)

bearing a cusp to its upper surface as well as to the lower. This suggests that the longer arm returns to form a more intricate upper tracery, possibly of the reticulated variety. It is due to this and to the finding in the stepped passageway dump of pieces of painted window glass that it can be assumed that here are, *inter alia*, the remains of the central section of the great east window, common to friaries and their one concession to sumptuousness in their initial orthodox period. The symmetrical 'Y' fragments may have come from subordinate lights in this window and also, together with the plain green glass fragments, from simple two-light and oculus windows in the north and south walls of the chancel. Remnants of the nave windows would presumably still be buried in the western, unexcavated, area of the friary church site or have been lost in the mid-19th century when the carpet factory was built thereon. The greater part of the 'Y' fragments bear good limewash and mortar traces, samples of which have been taken for possible future analysis. They also bear incised centring lines to the cross-sections of the fragments' stems where those survive intact.

2. Square Window Fragments

[ST 001, 015, 016 and 136.]

Four green sandstone fragments of a square window, in all probability claustral (pers. comm. Richard Morris), and thus possibly from the proposed dorter range (see Interpretation below) facing the passageway from whence the fragments were recovered. Two of the fragments are from the window's jamb (ST 015, ST 016) and one from its head (ST 001), the latter including the upper part of a mullion. These fragments are related by their distinctive hollowed-out cusping and, in the head's case, similarly hollowed central spandrel. This sets them apart from other excavated fenestral cusping which is of the simple, uncut variety. The fourth fragment is a cill (ST 136).

All fragments have glazing channels and the cill also has a socket for a glazing bar.

3. Miscellaneous Window Jamb

[ST 053, 062, 070, 078, 080, and WB003.]

Six fragments of window jamb, two (ST 053 and ST 080) in green sandstone, the remainder in red sandstone. These fragments, although all similar in design, are clearly from at least two distinct features though it is not possible to state from what style of window they originated. This illustrates the problem cited above, of supposing that the window architraves were constructed only of the imported green sandstone. However, it could be that the important, especially church, windows were so constructed and some lesser claustral windows (though not all, as noted in (2) above) were of the local, and thus less expensive and prestigious, sandstone.

4. Mullions

[ST 077 and 121.]

Two fragments of well-moulded green sandstone mullion, almost certainly from the church building, but not identical and not seeming to be contiguous to the tracery described in (1) above.

5. Door Jamb

[ST 084.]

A fragment of, possibly, a door jamb in red sandstone with a clear rebate. If this interpretation is correct, then this represents another instance of a wall piercing in the more friable of the two sandstones.

6. Arch Respond Fragments

[ST 057A, 081, 099, 124 and 144.]

Five red sandstone blocks, the latter four carved in a semi-octagonal manner, the missing faces left unworked but fashioned to key into a wall. These can be interpreted as being from an arch respond, possibly an arch separating the chancel from the walking place. ST144 bears two very clear marks; either or both could be read as masons' marks or alternatively as directional and numbering devices. One mark, on the cross section of the block and thus not visible when that block was in situ, is in the form of a Roman nine-IX. This may indicate the ninth block in the respond; however, none of the other examples bear numbers, unless these are hidden by the surviving mortar. The other mark, on the central front face and thus clearly visible after construction, was a vertical arrowhead design. This is more likely to be a mason's mark; however, it could also indicate the direction in which the block should be laid, i.e. 'this way up'. A similar, but not identical, arrowhead mark has been recorded in the north-west part of Lincoln cathedral, dating from the Perpendicular period (Davis 1954).

Block ST057A is not a half-octagon but rather has a curved moulding to one side and could be part of a different respond or an embrasure.

7. Coping Stones or Arch Stones

[ST 089 and 137.]

Two green sandstone fragments. These can be seen as being either a form of coping stone for the

sloping edge of a pitched roof where it joins the gable or, looked at from the other direction, the first blocks of an arch where it springs from the respond or impost.

8. Mullion-style Fragments (plate 11B)

[ST 020, 023, 048, 050, 061, 063, 071-076, 082, 090-094, 105, 109-111, 116, 125, 134, 140, 141, 147 and 153.]

Twenty-eight green sandstone fragments, all identical in design: an elongated hexagon in cross-section with a vertical, mullion-style elevation. Unfortunately, although appearing to be mullions, there is no glazing channel. There is, however, a channel along the cross-section of one end, the other end, where surviving, being worked flat. None of the fragments shows a corresponding 'male' ridge which could fit into the channel thus forming a bonding dovetail to join two of the units together. If two of the units were joined, channel-end to channel-end, then the square hole thus created could be used to carry a glazing bar; however, this still leaves the lack of glazing channels as a problem. Another interpretation is that these are mullions from non-glazed, shuttered, windows, probably from the claustral area. This, however, leaves the unanswered question of the cross-section's groove, unless this was to carry a form of safety bar, or, if the units were joined vertically, to provide for a lateral strengthening bar.

These are the most problematic of the larger fragments, especially as they are so numerous. Despite extensive research no parallels have been found for these fragments but the interpretation of them as mullions from unglazed apertures with, originally, lateral strengthening iron bars, perhaps from a stone-built bell tower over the walking place where glazing would, anyway, have been undesirable, seems probable. Although many Franciscan towers or spires were more commonly of timber, stone towers did exist, for example at Coventry or Lynn Regis, though the latter was a late-14th-century addition (see Martin 1937).

9. Pillar Base (plate 11C)

[ST 030.]

A very well-preserved green sandstone pillar base. The pillar would have been a maximum of 4 inches in diameter and was therefore not a major load-bearing feature. It is probable that this came from a screen, sedilia, stall, or from the embrasure of a window or doorway.

### Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Dr. Richard Morris of the University of Warwick for his advice and comments during the compilation of this report.

### COPPER ALLOY OBJECTS (fig. 18) by I M Ferris

Two copper alloy objects came from the post-Dissolution dump blocking the stepped passageway.

1. Complete book clasp formed by the rivetting of two plates. Undecorated. A common type which, by association, must be 15th or early-16th century in date (see, for instance, Moorhouse 1971, fig 25, no 162).
2. Flat-backed buckle frame, with pin missing. Cut-out panels on the frame serve as simple decoration. A common medieval type (see, for instance, Allan 1984, fig 191 no M97).

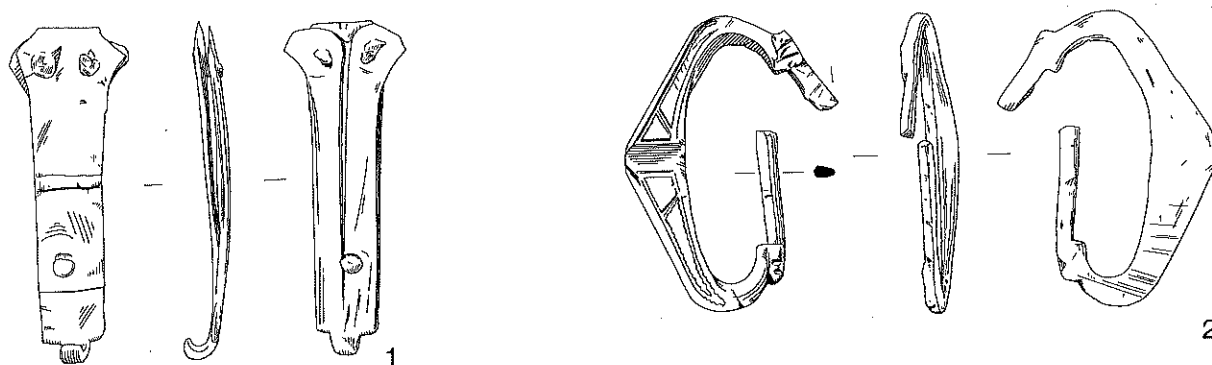


FIGURE 18 COPPER ALLOY OBJECTS (M BREEDON)

## HUMAN REMAINS by I M Ferris and T F Jones

A source of income for mendicant orders was the facilitating of burial within their churches, something that was for a time quite fashionable amongst the gentry (Martin 1937). Whether such a practice took place at Bridgnorth on any significant scale cannot be said. Robert, Lord Hinton (d.1309), who entered the order towards the end of his life, was recorded as being interred 'before the altar of St. Mary in the south part of the church' (VCH Salop, 1973, 89).

A certain amount of archaeological evidence has come to light over the years to attest to the presence of burials on the friary site. Most of these discoveries have unfortunately been poorly documented, though most have been assumed to belong to the friars' cemetery rather than to have been from inside the friary church. Notes accompanying Parkes' illustration of the friary site in 1815 stated that 'two stone coffins were found a few years back in the garden adjoining, and near the same spot, a coffin-shaped stone, with a cross fleury'.

Increased building activity on the site, from the 1850s onwards, led to the reporting of further finds of archaeological interest. In 1856, the Rev G Bellett noted that 'a few skeletons were dug up near this spot, and very lately, several others have been found' (Bellett 1856, 88). Clark-Maxwell, writing in 1927/28, summarised the finding of 'a considerable number of skeletons . . . in the course of the various enlargements of the works, some of them buried in graves cut in the soft sandstone' (Clark-Maxwell 1927-28, 62-63), including a grave marked by an inscribed stone (now in the town museum) and one burial accompanied by a chalice and paten (then deposited in the Stackhouse Library attached to St. Leonard's Church; now lost). Oral evidence suggested to him that the burials were concentrated towards the south end of the site. Other finds of human remains, noted in a leaflet 'Weaving in Bridgnorth' written in 1947, were uncovered in 1940 during investigations into subsidence on one part of the carpet factory.

A number of human skulls and other bones were found during the 1989 excavation, unstratified and redeposited in Victorian backfill inside Structure 1, and to the south-west of Structure 1 in evaluation trench 3. Due to the circumstances of discovery none of these remains is reported on here.

In September 1991, during the machine excavation of a foundation trench for the subsequent housing development, to the west of the western limit of the 1989 excavations, human remains were uncovered. These were not unfortunately viewed *in situ* by an archaeologist. These were reported as having been found as an east-west aligned skeleton with its head to the west, at a depth of 1m below the factory floor level on the upper terrace, and some 1-2m inside the projected continuation of Structure 1 into this area.

The bones from this burial were examined by the County Pathologist, Dr. T.F. Jones, on behalf of the Coroner's Office, from whose report the following summary account is abstracted.

'The bones received . . . consisted of the skull, lower jaw, part of the upper jaw with molar *in situ*, left and right humerus, left and right radius and ulna, sacrum, lateral parts of both scapulae, left clavicle, 11 assorted vertebrae, parts of the pelvis, most of the right femur . . . , approximately 30 rib fragments and eight metatarsals/metacarpals. . . . The teeth showed flattening of all the crowns due to chronic wear with calculus deposition at the mid part of the teeth indicating gum recession with chronic periodontal disease. No caries could be identified and x-ray of the jaw showed no root remnants for the remaining molars. The mandible showed evidence of bone resorption near the angle. X-ray of the humerus was normal. . . .

The body is that of an elderly adult male who has no obvious evidence of bony chronic disease. The cause of death is impossible to determine.'

### Interpretation and Discussion

Full interpretation of the results of the excavation is hampered by the fact that only a portion of the friary complex was subject to detailed area investigation. While many stretches of medieval walling had been spectacularly preserved under the Victorian carpet factory, most other archaeological features and deposits here had been either destroyed or badly truncated by later building activity. Nevertheless, to date, the excavations of 1989 are the most substantial to have been undertaken anywhere in the town, and an attempt will be made below to contextualise the information recovered by the excavations, using documentary sources as appropriate, and parallels from other friary sites.

The origins and morphology of Bridgnorth have recently been examined in detail by both Slater (1988 and 1990) and Croom (Croom 1992), but these contrasting studies demonstrate that there is not yet a consensus among historians on the way that the town has developed. Further work in this field of study may eventually allow town and friary relationships to be better understood – a subject beyond the scope of the present report – for, as was noted by Rahtz some years ago, medieval religious establishments did not exist in a vacuum, nor should they be studied in this way (Rahtz 1973, 130).

### Phase 1

The Order of the Friars Minor, also known as the Franciscan Order and, more popularly, as the Grey Friars, was founded in Italy in 1210. The Order expanded rapidly and within ten years had established houses outside Italy. In 1224 it was decided, at the last General Chapter at which St. Francis himself was present, to dispatch a mission to England. This mission was a considerable success; by 1250 about 40 Franciscan houses had been founded, mostly in the major towns where there were to be found both the greatest concentrations of the spiritually and economically dispossessed, at whom the friars' message was aimed, and the greatest concentrations of the wealthy, on whose largesse and benevolence the friars would rely for their needs.

For the establishment of their houses the Franciscans were often granted land at the margins of the towns, usually in a location close to one of the gates. The site of the friary at Bridgnorth, on an elongated and topographically awkward site squeezed between the River Severn and its sandstone river cliffs, is typical of such marginal locations. There is no documentary record of the precise foundation date for the friary at Bridgnorth, the first record being a royal order of 1244 for a payment of 40 shillings to the friars 'for the fabric of their church'<sup>1</sup>, thus indicating that the granting of land here had occurred at some time between 1224 and 1244, possibly towards the latter part of this period as the friars were still engaged in 1244 in the building or refurbishing of their church.

A small number of earlier-13th-century sherds of pottery from Bridgnorth attest to some activity on the site at this period, though what form this activity took is uncertain. The earliest identifiable feature on the friary site is a series of stakeholes and slots cut into the bedrock (see p40 above). These features represent either the severely truncated remains of an early, temporary timber building or of scaffolding erected for the construction and roofing of a later stone building. The friary was known to have been established by 1244, some time before the construction of stone buildings is attested by archaeological evidence.

It is worth considering the nature of evidence for early structures from other friary sites. Martin, in his seminal work on Franciscan architecture in England, noted that the founding friars of a number of early houses made initial use of existing structures, 'a small chamber in the schoolhouse at Canterbury, a house in Cornhill [London], and even a cellar in one instance' (Martin 1937, 4), and that purpose-built early churches were always intended to be of a temporary nature, being constructed of timber and plaster (Martin 1937, 13-14). Documentation relates, for instance, to an early, poorly built chapel at Cambridge, to the demolition in 1246 of a timber chapel at Oxford, and to the use of beech wood for the foundations of the church at Winchester in 1239, and, more locally, it is recorded that the Austin friars at Shrewsbury held their early services on the site in a 'simple chamber' (VCH, 1973); however, archaeologically these structures would have left little or no trace, and archaeological work in the last twenty years has added little new evidence to that list published by Martin (see Butler 1984 for the most recent summary of work on sites of the Houses of the Mendicant Orders).

An early presence at Bridgnorth was also represented by other activity. A number of documented instances of land reclamation perhaps provide a context for these archaeologically-attested incidents of dumping and levelling of large quantities of spoil, as recorded in evaluation trenches 8 and 9. Pottery from these dumps, while some earlier 13th century material was recovered – which would tie in with the historical sources – included 14th century sherds whose presence might suggest that the raising of the ground level of the lower terrace might have been a regular flood prevention measure, necessary on a number of occasions in the friary's lifetime.

In 1247 it is recorded that the friars at Bridgnorth gained leave to enlarge their original site by the alteration of a road 'without the ditch' and 'to allow the said road to be inclosed and be made within the ditch, for the increase of the area of the said brethren'<sup>2</sup> However, it would appear that despite this grant of extra land the friars sought to extend their space further by reclamation through dumping into the River Severn. This incursion, and a complaint that this was affecting the flow of water to the king's mills at Pendlestone, was recorded in 1272, though the outcome of the complaint is unknown.<sup>3</sup> The area of land thus reclaimed was, according to Eyton, a piece of ground '150 feet long and 50 feet wide',<sup>4</sup> a not inconsiderable addition to their cramped site.

In Shrewsbury, documentary evidence provides parallels to the Bridgnorth land reclamation episodes. The Dominican friars at Shrewsbury were involved in reclamation/flood prevention work, through dumping into the Severn, to provide 'modest purprestures' on both sides of the river, and in subsequent disputes over their actions (VCH, 1973, 89 and 92). Recent excavation at St. Julians Friars, Shrewsbury (Durham 1993) uncovered evidence for similar instances of land reclamation, or flood prevention, alongside the River Severn in the medieval period.

### Phase 2

The activity of Phase 2 represents the construction and use of stone buildings on the site of the friary. The small amount of diagnostic pottery recovered from contexts directly associated with the construction of the three

stone buildings examined (Structures 1, 2 and 3) suggests that this took place in the later-13th/early-14th century. Examination of the dumped architectural stonework fragments and window glass, derived from friary buildings, but not in direct association with any of the three excavated structures, broadly concurs with this date. Documentary evidence for a 13th-century building campaign includes reference to a royal grant in 1257 of six oaks from the Forest of Shirlett for the friary church and to a second gift of timber in 1282.<sup>5</sup>

The nature of the excavated structures suggests that building work was undertaken in a single extended campaign. Refurbishment in both the 14th and 15th centuries is attested by the painted glass and the floor tiles. These cosmetic changes were probably made to structures that stood otherwise unaltered from the late-13th/early-14th century up until the dissolution, when they were said to be in a poor state of repair.

Structure 1, lying to the south of the complex, can perhaps be identified as part of the eastern portion of the friary church, though evidence for this is in no way conclusive or fully convincing. An examination of comparative archaeological literature shows that excavated friary buildings, when represented only by their foundations, and when a full friary plan has not been recovered, are notoriously difficult to convincingly identify in terms of their functions (for example see Martin 1937; and Stocker's reinterpretation of the previously-accepted Franciscan friary church at Lincoln (1984)). Arguing in favour of Structure 1 at Bridgnorth being a church are its east-west alignment and a number of other unusual structure details. The discovery at different times of burials inside and around the building, bearing in mind the well-attested practice and fashion of interment within friary churches and on the sides away from the cloister, may also be significant. In addition, there is what may best be called the 'circumstantial evidence' provided by the close proximity of the post-dissolution dump, containing architectural stonework, glass and floor tiles, material which, in part, must derive from the stripping of the church.

The full dimensions of Structure 1 are not known, as only a portion of its eastern length lay within the area of excavation on the lower terrace. Its width was *c.* 10m. The building had to ride over the sandstone river cliff which bisects the site at this point, and, in order to achieve this, an undercroft, in the form of a 'crypt', was created under the east end of the building. As was noted by Martin, such features are not at all common at Franciscan friaries in Britain and Ireland and, indeed, only at Yarmouth and Buttevant, Co. Cork are similar features so far attested. In both cases, there was the need 'to compensate for the slope of the ground eastward' (Martin 1937, 18). These two crypts were used as burial vaults, but the Bridgnorth 'crypt' does not appear to have been used for this purpose.

Some idiosyncratic structural details may also point towards Structure 1 being the church. The western limit of excavation coincided with the line of a north-south aligned cross-wall which, though it might have been built to strengthen the structure as it over-rode the cliff, is more likely to have been one of two cross walls dividing the church nave from the choir and carrying the weight of a steeple over the walking place. Such an arrangement is very common indeed in friary churches (Martin 1937, 19–21). Belfries were one of the most diagnostic features of friary churches and Bridgnorth is attested as having two bells, one large and one small, at the dissolution. A number of architectural fragments in the post-dissolution dump may have been derived from a stone bell-tower (see Architectural Fragments Group 8 p.73), and others from an arch, perhaps in the wall separating the nave or the choir from the walking place (see Architectural Fragments Groups 6 p.72).

Much of the building material in the post-dissolution dump, blocking the stepped passageway to the north of Structure 1, could be derived from the friary church, though it has also been noted that some of the stonework must have come from the claustral ranges. The fact that this material is dumped outside Structure 1 may circumstantially support its identification as the friary church. This deposit is of a kind not previously recorded on friary sites. It included heavy and distinctive Harnage Slate roof tiles, contrasting red and green sandstone architectural fragments coated in limewash, a floor tile assemblage dominated by one, four-tile floral design, and predominantly light green and blue painted glass panels, with designs on these being once more dominated by floriform and foliate motifs. The possibly integrated design scheme on the tiles and glass could, perhaps, be seen as mirroring the particular concern of the Franciscan Order with the symbiotic relationship between Man and the Natural world, as reflected in the life of St. Francis himself. It is worth noting the total absence on site of decorated wall plaster, which might have been expected to have been used in the church, as is attested at Greyfriars, Oxford (Hassall *et al* 1991, 192).

The interpretation of Structure 2 is likewise problematic. There are no surviving internal features or associated stratigraphy, though its position in relation to Structure 3 – they shared one common wall and access is possible between the two structures – could provide a clue. Structure 2 was, at ground floor level, long and relatively narrow, with this floor probably being in the form of an undercroft. If there was an upper floor it may well have been wider, to oversail a claustral walk on the upper terrace level and so to create more space, as has been surmised for a dormitory building at Oxford Greyfriars (Hassall *et al* 1991, 193). The upper floor would have given direct access out onto the upper terrace level, therefore demonstrating another design solution for overcoming the awkward natural topography of the site at Bridgnorth. That it may have housed dormitories on



the upper floor, with the access here leading out into the cloister, is an attractive interpretation but in no way at present provable.

Bridgnorth is by no means alone in presenting problems in the identification of buildings in the claustral ranges. It has been noted that in such buildings undercrofted ground floors are common and that 'the use of the ground floor may be unrelated to the use of the first floor and may be uninformative about the inter-relationship between the two floors. It may be impossible to deduce from an excavation concerned with footings and dwarf walls what kind of structures stood above or to what height they stood' (Butler 1984, 132).

Structure 3, with its below-floor drain, connected at one end to a water-inlet and at the other to a culverted-outlet, may have served as the reredorter, housing latrines and washing facilities. Its position next to Structure 2 perhaps supports the identification of that structure as part-dormitory. If not a reredorter, then Structure 3 may have been an ancillary storage room for kitchens to the north. At Oxford Greyfriars a similar culvert was found, which the excavators suggested to be servicing the reredorter and possibly also the kitchen (Hassall *et al* 1991, 193).

In 1720 the first antiquarian report on the Bridgnorth friary site was made, recording that 'in the Court or Yard thereof are vaults underground which run parallel to the house for some space and extend themselves several ways but how far in some places is not known. The end of one of these subterraneous passages was lately discovered. It resembled the hearth of a chimney with seats on each side, without any appearance of a tunnel. In it were found jars and other earthen vessels. The height of this cavity was such, that a man of an ordinary stature might walk in it almost upright. It was walled on both sides, and arched with stone at the top, and paved at the bottom'.<sup>6</sup> It sounds as if part of the former conduit or of the friary sewage-disposal system had been uncovered.

Little that is certain can be said about the overall layout of the friary complex, especially given the fact that the identifications of the excavated buildings – as the church, a dormitory and the reredorter – are largely circumstantial. Unlike the monasteries, the planning of the domestic buildings at friaries did not follow any well-defined pattern, and layout was, more often than not, based upon the need to accommodate the buildings within an often limited space and on sometimes topographically awkward sites. At Bridgnorth this site was long and narrow: a sharp break in slope was reflected in the form of a river cliff more or less bisecting the site, with a strip of lower land next to the river probably being subject to periodic flooding. No regular plan of buildings could be easily fitted in to such a site.

At its dissolution in 1538 Bridgnorth friary was described as 'all . . . fallng downe' and as being extremely poor,<sup>7</sup> though the solid and well-appointed buildings suggested by the excavated evidence show that in its heyday it had been far from under-resourced and simply-furnished. An inventory of goods, compiled at the time of the surrender, makes mention of the choir, the refectory, the kitchen and the brewhouse, along with a conduit 'coming from the High Cross'.<sup>8</sup> It also records two bells in the church steeple, one large and one small, and a pair of organs. This account obviously provides little help in reconstructing the possible layout of the friary.

The earliest map showing the friary site is a town map dating from the late 16th century<sup>9</sup> (plate 12). On the site, named here as 'The Friars', there stands what would appear to be one, or possibly two, buildings, set back some way from the river frontage. To the north of High Town is a field named as 'The Conduit Field' in which stands an isolated building, 'The Conduit House'. This is probably the water source located by the friars and utilised by them, by way of a conduit, to supply the friary and the town.

The parcel of land formerly comprising the friary was partially mapped in 1777<sup>10</sup> as part of the overall planning of the Apley estates (see fig 2 for the pre-1860 map evidence). There were at that time a number of buildings on the site, including a large L-shaped structure which may be part of the same building shown on the earlier town map. This building again appears on Wood's plan of Bridgnorth of 1835,<sup>11</sup> where, for the first time, it can clearly be seen to be located on the lower sandstone terrace, towards the river frontage. One or two other smaller structures are also shown on the lower terrace, to the south, in an area not mapped in 1777. On the same plan is shown a 'carpet manufactory' on the upper terrace.

Between the two mappings the site was visited by J B Blakeway and S Lewis, early-19th-century antiquarians, and by artists who produced drawings of buildings here (see plates 2–4). Blakeway refers to the 'Old Priory', 'now converted into an Alehouse', 'the Great Hall of which is still in tolerable condition, the panelled oak ceiling, the stone fireplace and windows are in preservation'.<sup>12</sup> Lewis, in the late 1820s or early 1830s, saw the same building but noted that its window lights 'are stopped with plaster'.<sup>13</sup> He was the first person to equate the L-shaped building with the friary refectory, and that unconfirmed identification has been subsequently taken up by other commentators on the site. Blakeway's illustration of 1810 (plate 13) shows the front of a range of buildings which may correspond to part of the L-shaped structure on the 1777 and 1835 maps. Parkes' illustration of 1815 (plate 14) shows more or less the same architectural details.<sup>14</sup> Clark-Maxwell, writing in the 1920s, also followed Lewis, Blakeway and the Rev Bellett and identified the, by then long demolished, L-shaped building as the 'refectory', noting that workmen had removed a pulpit from there during its demolition (Clark-Maxwell 1927–28, 62–63).

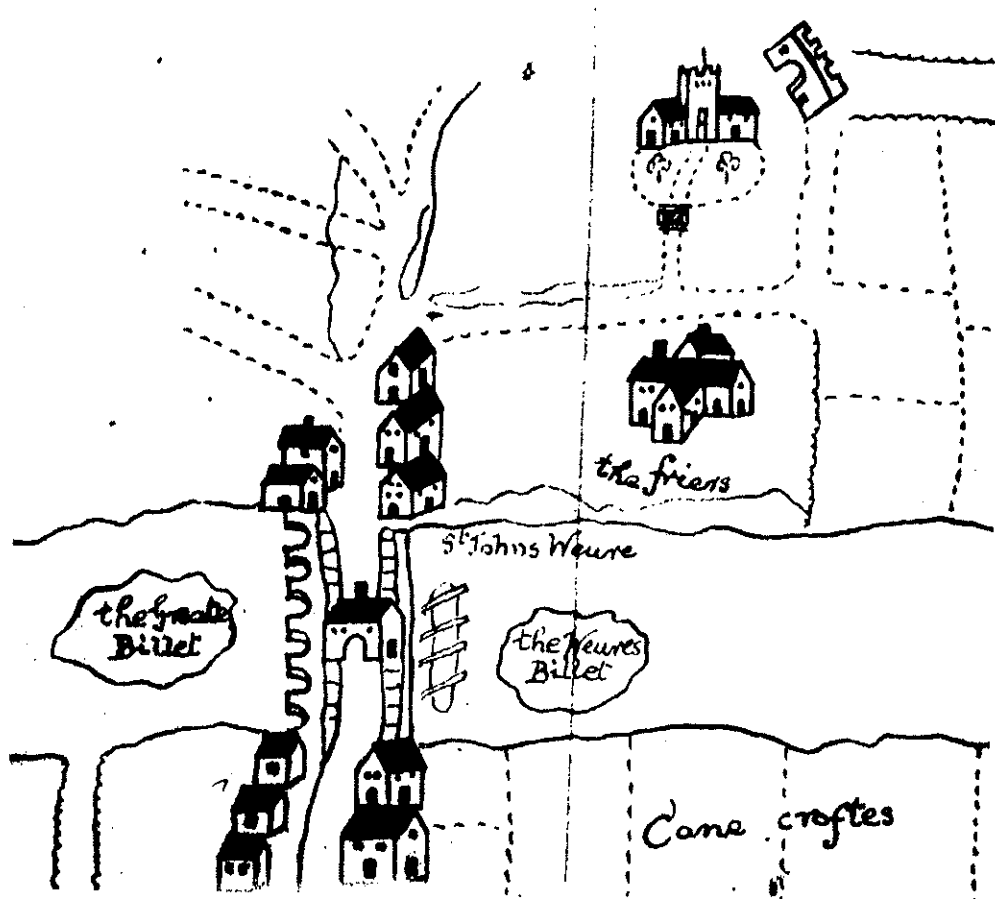


PLATE 12 DETAIL OF BRIDGNORTH TOWN MAP OF 17TH CENTURY, SHOWING 'THE FRIERS'

### Phase 3

The post-dissolution demolition and stripping of all ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings from the remaining, reusable buildings is well-attested by both documentary and archaeological sources.

At the dissolution, the friary was granted to Nicholas Holt, who sold some of the building materials from the friary,<sup>15</sup> including 'superfluous' buildings for which the sum of £11-0s-5d was received, lead on the ridges to the value of £1-6s-0d, and a bell weighing 2cwt 3qrs and sold for £2-12s-0d. The remaining buildings and the friary site were let for 15s-6d, while the possibly adjoining parcels of land, both gifts to the friary, were also assigned to tenants.

The easternmost excavated part of Structure 1 ('the crypt'), and all, or parts, of Structures 2 and 3 were now remodelled and then reoccupied, with the former stepped passageway between these structures now being blocked-off. It is possible, but unlikely, that the three structures were now linked as one single building. Another possibility, that the structure illustrated by Blakeway and Parkes can be equated with parts of the excavated remains, must also be discounted, despite a number of apparent similarities in plan. This illustrated and mapped building, in fact, stood some distance away to the north, calculations suggesting that it was located c. 50-60m north of the excavated Structure 1. This building was probably the so-called 'refectory', demolished in the 1860s.

The reused structures on the friary site may have been principally domestic in function, though documentation tells us that the 'refectory' was at some stage subsequently used as a malthouse, the first attested reference to this function being in 1795.<sup>16</sup> A number of malting tiles were found during the excavation in backfill deposits inside Structure 2 and were probably derived from the demolition of the malthouse in the 1860s.

The later history of the site is very much the history of the carpet factory, and is beyond the scope of this present report. Ironically, the carpet factory is now itself demolished and the site is occupied by housing, laid out next to the consolidated and displayed remains of the medieval friary.



*Convent of the Grey or Preaching Friars, Bridgnorth*

1810

PLATE 13 CONVENT OF THE GREY OR PREACHING FRIARS, DATED 1810. BLAKEWAY COLLECTION, BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD



REMAINS OF THE GREY FRIARY BRIDGNORTH

PLATE 14 REMAINS OF THE GREY FRIARY BRIDGNORTH, DATED 1815. D PARKES

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*Footnotes*

- 1 Liberate Roll, 28 Henry III [No 20] Mem 6. Transcribed in Clark-Maxwell 1927–1928, 65
- 2 Close Roll, 31 Henry III. Printed Calendar 1242–1247, 517. Transcribed in Clark-Maxwell, 65
- 3 Quoted by Clark-Maxwell, 50
- 4 Eyton, i, 352
- 5 Close Roll 1256–1259, 94; and Close Roll, 10 Ed I. Mem 4. Calendar 1279–1288, 157. Quoted by Clark-Maxwell, 51
- 6 Cox, *Magna Britannica*, 693–94
- 7 Letters and Papers Henry VIII, Volume 13(2) No. 41
- 8 The Inventory is fully transcribed in 'Inventories of the Religious Houses of Shropshire at their Dissolution', in *TSAS 3rd Ser vol v*, 1905, 378–379
- 9 Bridgnorth Borough Collection, SRR 4001/P/1/39
- 10 The Apley Estates Survey of 1777, SRR 3628/1
- 11 J Wood, 'Plan of Bridgnorth; From Actual Survey'. SRR 4001/P/1/8
- 12 Blakeway Collection no 18, fol 123, Bodleian Library, Oxford
- 13 Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary*, Vol.1, 250
- 14 D Parkes, 'Remains of the Grey Friary Bridgnorth' del 1815, British Museum Add. MS 21, 181
- 15 Ministers' Accounts. Henry VIII, 7444m27 (1538–39), 7430 (1538–39), 7431m33d (1540–41), in Clark-Maxwell, 65–66
- 16 Quoted in F W Head, *Weaving in Bridgnorth*, 1947, 8–9. The original sources have not been located.

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## THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHURCH ARCHITECTURE IN SHROPSHIRE

By Dr TERRY FRIEDMAN

The proud parishioners of the medieval parish church of St Mary's at Shrewsbury 'at a great expence, inclosed the burying-ground . . . with a handsome railing of cast-iron, which effectually secures it from the profanation of thoughtless or vicious idlers', an improvement which 'induces a hope that, by a timely and necessary repair, the ruin of one of the loftiest and most ornamental spires in the kingdom may no longer be apprehended', so reported *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1805.<sup>1</sup> The article goes on to summarize the state of church buildings in this 'large and opulent' county town. St Julian's, a medieval fabric partly rebuilt in the classical style in 1750, was adorned with 'beautiful' painted glass taken from Rouen during 'the French revolutionary rage', while the goodly sum of 200 guineas had been spent on a 'very handsome window' for the recently rebuilt St Alkmund's. Its interior and that of St Chad's were 'handsomely fitted up, and extremely well kept', though the 'pointed' style (Gothic) of the one and the other 'imitating the Grecian' (Classical) were criticised as '*fantastic*', and it was noted with consternation that the former and 'venerable' St Alkmund's had been 'unnecessarily destroyed' in order to build a more fashionable church. These various concerns with stylistic appropriateness, interior beautification and congregational comfort, restoration and preservation, rebuilding and new building, are a microcosm of church building activity throughout Shropshire in the eighteenth century. Much of this work is of good quality, robust and interesting if rather unadventurous in design. But, during the final two decades there was a remarkable flowering of architectural and technological innovation, a golden age.

One of the curious characteristics of this achievement is that it was concentrated in the hands of a small group of architects. Only two, John Carline (the designing half of a successful partnership with a local bricklayer named John Tilley), who was responsible for St Alkmund's at Shrewsbury, and John Hiram Haycock, designer of Tilstock chapel, were natives of the county. Edward Edgecombe, who designed St Michael's at Welshampton, came from Tewkesbury in neighbouring Gloucestershire, while George Steuart, architect of All Saints at Wellington and St Chad's at Shrewsbury, and Thomas Telford, architect of St Mary Magdalene at Bridgnorth and St Michael's at Madeley, and who also restored parts of St Mary's at Shrewsbury, were Scotsmen trained in London. Steuart's and Telford's Shropshire churches mark the first important appearance in the county of new and sophisticated approaches to classical design directly dependent on metropolitan fashion. This was apparently so much the case with Telford that in 1792, though by then a prominent architect, he still felt the need to enquire of a London contact if he had heard either criticisms regarding his design for Bridgnorth (then being considered by a House of Commons committee) or 'any observations that you thought could tend to improvement'.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to suggest some sudden appearance of alien cosmopolitan ideas utterly disrupting local design and construction traditions. More prudent and authentic attitudes towards interpreting Gothic architecture, which will be discussed in the second part of this study, and the acceptance of 'pagan' classicism for Anglican forms, were both gradual processes in Shropshire. Of course, architectural styles and fashions were not necessarily the chief concerns of authorities faced with the daunting task of remodelling or rebuilding their parish churches. Very often it was a matter of structural consolidation to prevent some impending catastrophe, as the accounts for St Mary's, Westbury make clear. A 70 foot breach having appeared in its medieval west tower the churchwardens met on 24 April 1753 to consider 'the best Method of securing the South East Corner . . . from falling down whereby in all probability a Large part of the . . . Church might receive damage'. At a second meeting it was decided that 'a very considerable part more of the . . . Tower is also in great Decay & Danger of

falling down', and 'to Avoid a further Expence in securing . . . the . . . Tower at any Time hereafter' it was decided to spend twice as much (£400) to build a new one. Richard and William Cureton subsequently put up a huge, fortress-like tower with extra thick walls. The only concessions to current classical taste are the ubiquitous Gibbs-surround and Venetian windows, both treated with little subtlety. At the same time the chancel was rebuilt in the same idiom, which a later visitor condemned as 'better suited for a nobleman's stable than a place of worship'.<sup>3</sup> As the century progressed church building in Shropshire became more ambitious, as well as increasingly complicated and contentious. To make sense of these activities, it would be helpful to begin by summarising some of the local classical landmarks up to the 1780s.

Medieval design traditions had survived well into the seventeenth century. Only in the late 1680s did a vigorous but indiscriminate and visually very odd ecclesiastical classicism creep into the county in the modest church at Minsterley, built by Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth, probably to the design of his architect to Longleat, William Taylor.<sup>4</sup> Little else happened until 1712–13, when St Peter's, Adderley received a powerful tower with giant Tuscan corner pilasters<sup>5</sup> (a motif which then also had begun to appear in domestic architecture in the region), and in 1713–4, when a major church of rare beauty and classical completeness was built under the patronage of the Countess of Bridgewater at Whitchurch (Plate 1). Following the collapse in 1711 of the medieval church of St Alkmund's, William Smith (1661–1724), a leading Midlands builder, agreed to put up a 'New Church . . . after the Doricke Order' according to a scheme supplied by a Derbyshire architect named John Barker (1668–1727), who also probably designed St Anne's at Manchester (1709–12).<sup>6</sup> Writing soon after its completion in 1713, Defoe thought St Alkmund's 'a very good church', and it was still admired fifty years later.<sup>7</sup> Its rows of regularly placed round-headed windows with blocked keystones and aproned sills framing large expanses of untraceryed glass and set against unbuttressed walls, its low-pitched roofs camouflaged behind balustrading, its boldly projecting semicircular chancel, its well-lit and uncluttered interior spaces where the nave and aisles are separated by arcades of classical columns and, above all, its use of a vocabulary entirely free of medieval reference, were new features in Shropshire. It was as if one of Wren's London churches had been transplanted into the country. This innovative repertory soon found its way into more modest churches up and

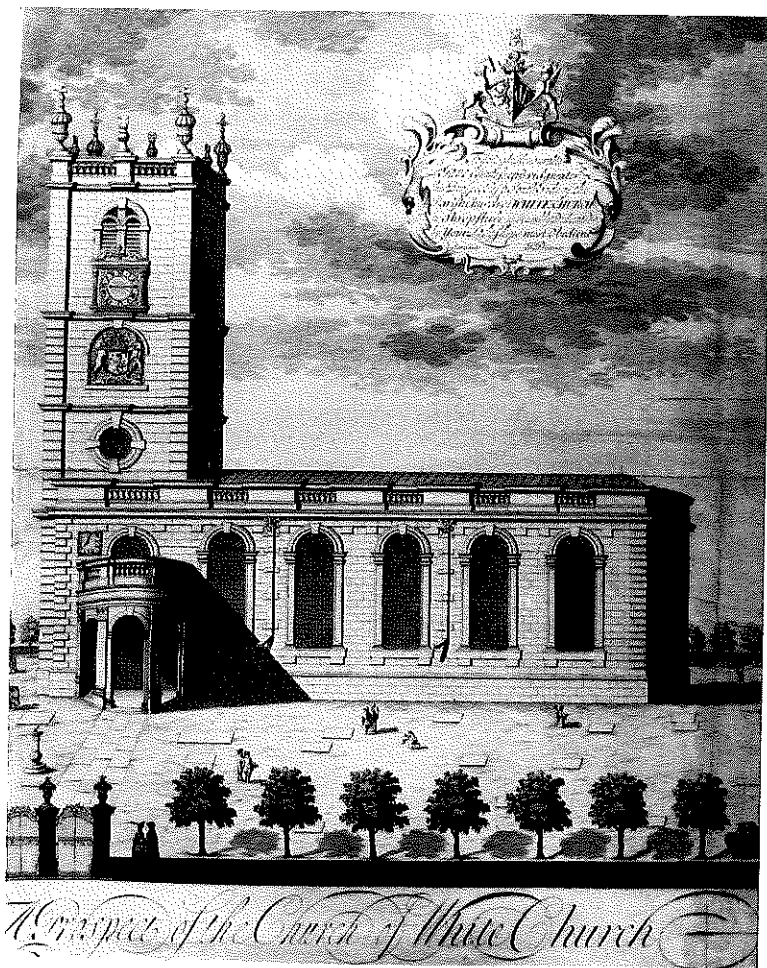


PLATE 1 ST. ALKMUND'S,  
WHITCHURCH, 1711–14,  
DESIGNED PROBABLY BY  
JOHN BARKER. A  
CONTEMPORARY VIEW  
ENGRAVED BY J. DOWNES OF  
THE SOUTH ELEVATION (SRR:  
NEG. B4682).



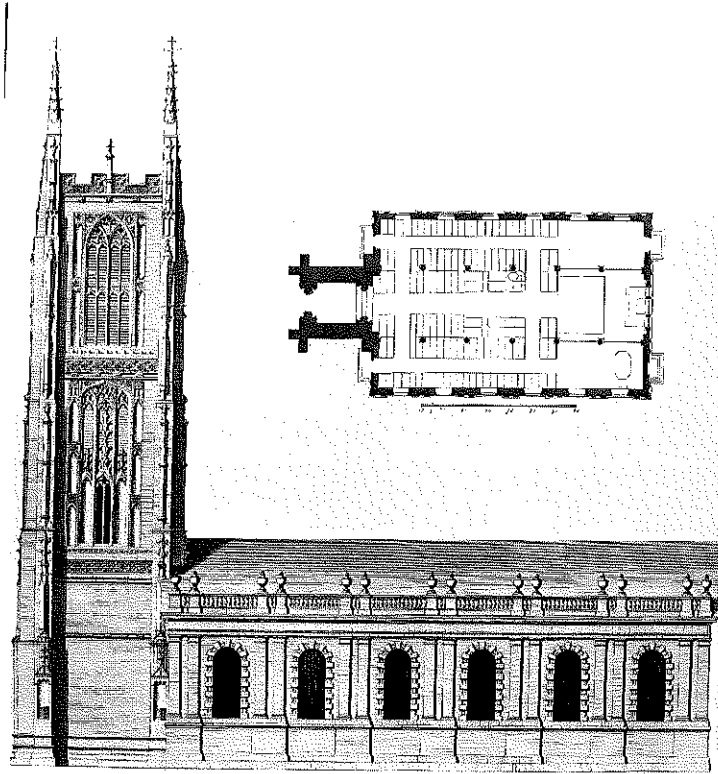
down the country. Notable among these are Great Bolas (1723–9), designed and built by John Willdigg, Eyton-upon-the-Wealdmoors (1733–43, architect unknown) and Quatt (1763–6) by Richard Cooley, with its big, circular bell openings in the top stage of the tower.<sup>8</sup> A number of other similar examples, many of which have not survived Victorian rebuilding, were lovingly recorded in watercolour by the Reverend Edward Williams during the 1780s and 1790s.<sup>9</sup>

In the middle years of the eighteenth century two other church types were much in evidence in Shropshire. One is the sober red brick preaching box lit by two tiers of windows and with a big Venetian window in the chancel, based on Wren's St James's, Piccadilly (1676–84), which the great architect recommended as 'beautiful and convenient, and . . . the cheapest of any Form I could invent',<sup>10</sup> and as such particularly suited to provincial imitation. This type is best represented by St Julian's, 1749–50 (Plate 2), designed by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard (1723–77).<sup>11</sup> It was the first classical church to be built in Shrewsbury, a curiosity in what was still a predominantly medieval townscape; and though the interior was uninspiring, it had the virtue of offering ample seating and clear views to the pulpit, to the extent that during the rebuilding of St Chad's and St Alkmund's in the 1790s the congregation preferred to take up temporary residence in St Julian's to the larger and more spacious medieval St Mary's.<sup>12</sup>

Another type, also rectangular and plain but distinguished by round-headed windows enriched with alternating large and small blocks (called a Gibbs-surround) and resting on a narrow string course – inspired by James Gibbs's All Saints at Derby (1723–6), which was widely known through the engravings in *A Book of Architecture*, published in 1728 and again in 1739 (Plate 3) – is associated locally with St John's at Wolverhampton (1756–9), just across the border in Staffordshire, apparently designed by T.F. Pritchard, and St Chad's at Norton-in-Hales (1756–8), by the Cheshire-based architect, William Baker (1705–71).<sup>13</sup> There were similar (but long since vanished) churches at Wombridge (c. 1757), Jackfield (1759) and Kemberton (1768–78), which were located in an enclave to the west and south of Wellington.<sup>14</sup> Jackfield (Plate 4), built as a chapel-of-ease for the poor, largely industrial population, was clearly inspired by the Derby model. Unusually ambitious, it has had a chequered history: as early as 1797 it was reported that



PLATE 2 ST JULIAN'S, SHREWSBURY, 1749–50, DESIGNED BY THOMAS FARNOLLS PRITCHARD. THE ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION DRAWING OF THE SOUTH ELEVATION, SHOWING THE RETAINED MEDIEVAL WEST TOWER (SRR: 6001/299).



*Instituta Satis Excellentis Curiam Cantuarum, apud Durbiam, novis ab imo constructis, una cum quibusdam Monumentis impo-  
sitae Praesulis, necnon et ex parte aedificatis, Satis cultas et mira magnificti, quae ad 1726 per octiduum ablati, in S. Honoris  
Sicuti ipsorum vestigia in Praesentibus, Per munitum Itaque et alio quatuor splendide habitata in his constructa sunt.  
J. Gibbs, Arch. S. Honoris. J. Kneller Sculp.*

PLATE 3 ALL SAINTS (NOW CATHEDRAL)  
DERBY, 1723–6, DESIGNED BY  
JAMES GIBBS. PLAN AND SOUTH  
ELEVATION, SHOWING THE  
RETAINED MEDIEVAL WEST  
TOWER, PUBLISHED IN GIBBS'S *A  
BOOK OF ARCHITECTURE*, 1728,  
PLATE 26.

‘No service has been done in this Ch: for some time: the coal mines have been worked nearer than within 20 yds: of the boundary of the Ch:Yard . . . which . . . produced several cracks in the Fabric’<sup>15</sup>

and the building was finally demolished around 1960, a very sad loss.

What all these churches, from Whitchurch to Kemberton, share in common is a classical vocabulary which had enjoyed its metropolitan heyday decades earlier. Local architects and builders, as well as their clients, often relied on pattern books for inspiration, and since few of those published in England during the eighteenth-century included designs for churches, those that did, especially Gibbs’s *A Book of Architecture*, tended to have a prolonged influence in the provinces. It was not until the late 1780s that local church design began reflecting current metropolitan architectural ideas and became up-to-date. Remarkably, the half-dozen progressive Shropshire churches in this category – Bridgnorth, Madeley, Tilstock, Wellington, Welshampton and St Chad’s at Shrewsbury – were all designed during a short, critical period between July 1787 and December 1788.

The earliest in this group is All Saints at Wellington. The medieval fabric had been in poor condition at least since 1747, when the authorities considered rebuilding, but nothing came of the venture, perhaps because the estimated cost of the work, £3,755.14s. 5d, was considered prohibitive.<sup>16</sup> However, on 3 July 1787 the churchwardens petitioned the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry for a licence to rebuild their church, which ‘through length of time is so much Decayed and Dilapidated that part . . . hath falin, and the remainder is taken down’. The bishop considered the matter on 20 September and in November granted a faculty.<sup>17</sup> The parish records which surely would have thrown light on the subsequent building history have not survived. This is an unfortunate loss because though the chosen architect, George Steuart (c. 1730–1806), had been active in Shropshire for some years as a country house designer (Millichope Park, 1770, Attingham Park, 1783–5, Lythwood Hall, 1785), Wellington is his first documented foray into ecclesiastical building, and we would wish to have more details about his involvement here. However, the five surviving preparatory drawings known to the present writer suggest that Steuart approached the work with a confidence and vigour hitherto unseen in Shropshire, and perhaps also with a belief that he had been offered an opportunity to create a radically new-looking church for the region (Plates 5–6).<sup>18</sup>

Wellington is the first Shropshire church to introduce an entrance front in the form of a monumental classical temple portico. The tall slim Tuscan pilasters linked by thin horizontal coursings and set against a series of



PLATE 4 ST MARY'S, JACKFIELD, 1759, ARCHITECT UNKNOWN. A PRE-1960 PHOTOGRAPH (SRR: NEG. B1495).

shallow arched recesses in which the windows lay ambiguously just in front or behind the wall surface, is handled so subtly that the temple form seems almost to fade into the structure. This pattern is continued blind around the corners, but in the remaining five bays of the side elevations changes to a simpler treatment in which the recesses are stripped of their framing pilasters, thereby making an entablature unnecessary and so lowering the roofline. Steuart had used this composition at Attingham Park as early as 1783,<sup>19</sup> and in applying it to a church solution succeeded in transforming and reinvigorating the tiered-window pattern which was the stock-in-trade of local church designers (Plate 2). At the east end is a large elliptically projecting chancel dominated by a slim three-light rectangular window (a neoclassicist's alternative to the broader, centrally-arched Venetian window beloved by earlier generations of Palladian architects). These delicately differentiated external wall treatments presage the tripartite functions of the interior: the temple-fronted west block as ceremonial access (vestibule flanked by vestry room and gallery stairs), the five bays of tiered windows lighting the congregational spaces (nave, aisles and galleries), and the brighter ellipse of the communion sanctuary.

Steuart's drawings reveal that he made two critical decisions during the designing stage. In the drawing attached to the July 1787 petition (Plate 5) the tower riding the portico roof soars from its low, rectangular clock-base through an open octagonal bell stage to an obelisk-like spire pierced by bull's-eyes through which the ring of bells could resonate. He decided against this composition – perhaps it savoured of the Gothic – in favour of a less dramatic monolithic bell stage (Plate 6) richly articulated by paired pilasters and open balustrades and crowned by a shallow dome, which is more in keeping with the character of the entrance block immediately below, and it was this solution that was built. Steuart preserved the window treatment from the petition drawing, in which each vertical pair of openings is linked by a recessed rectangle enriched with carved rosettes and floriated diagonals sandwiched between fluted and panelled lintels. He had introduced an almost identical motif – surely his own invention – in a design of 1783 for the plaster decoration of the hall ceiling at Attingham.<sup>20</sup> But at Wellington it functions in a wholly different and original way, mirroring in both composition and location the filigreed, cast-iron fronts of the original internal galleries (Plate 7). Though the vocabulary is strictly classical, combined with tiers of unusually thin quatrefoil columns the ensemble takes on an unexpected Gothic appearance.

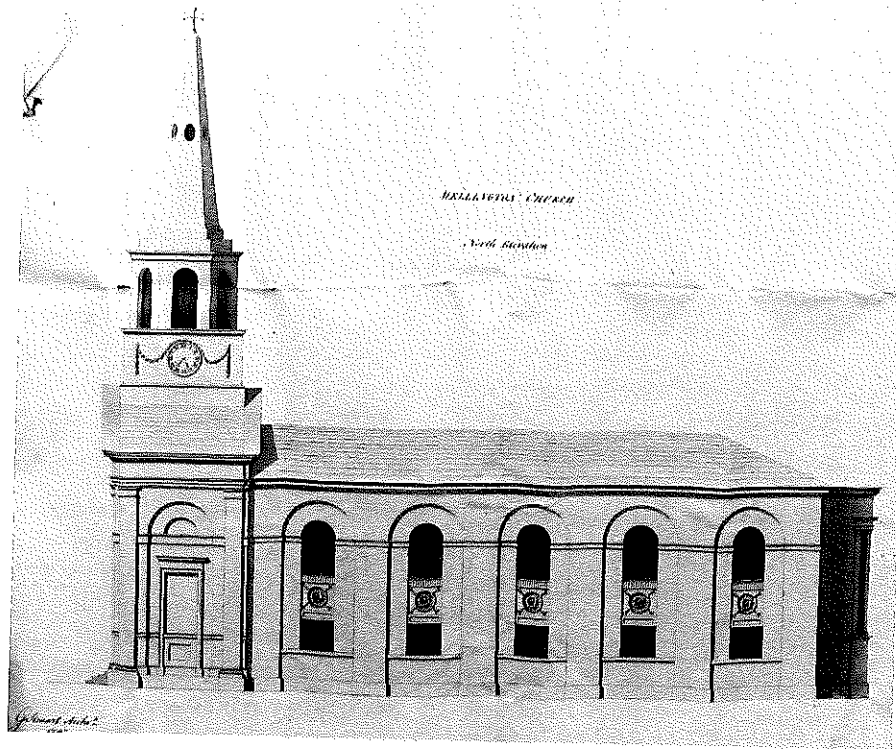


PLATE 5 ALL SAINTS, WELLINGTON, 1787-90, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. THE ARCHITECT'S PETITION DESIGN OF 3 JULY 1787 (LICHFIELD JOINT RECORD OFFICE: B/C/5/1781).

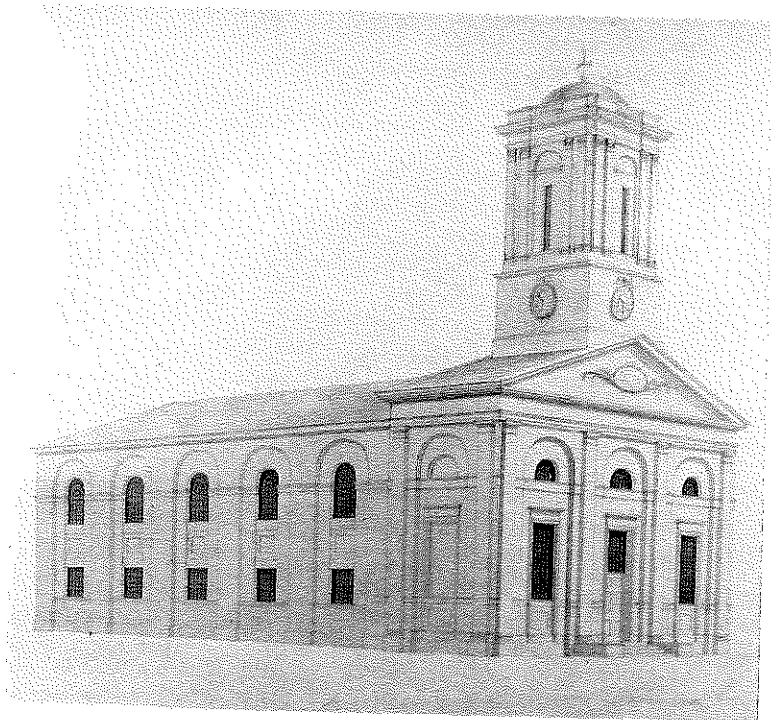


PLATE 6 ALL SAINTS, WELLINGTON, 1787-90, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. THE ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION DRAWING (SRR: 6001/372, III, F.91B).



PLATE 7 ALL SAINTS, WELLINGTON, 1787–90, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1895 PRIOR TO ALTERATIONS, SHOWING THE ORIGINAL DETAILING OF THE COLUMNS, GALLERY FRONTS AND CHANCEL (SRR: NEG. B4960).

These columns, too, are constructed of cast-iron and represent an early application of the new industrial technology that was being developed a few miles away at Coalbrookdale. Steuart used it advantageously to achieve the maximum structural support with the minimum of visual interruption of the pulpit, which at first stood in the central aisle of the nave at the entrance to the chancel. Though by no means the first large-scale employment of clustered cast-iron columns in a church, the technology was still fresh and exciting enough for the Bishop of Lichfield, on the occasion of the consecration of the ‘elegant, neat’ church at Wellington on 16 July 1790, to have especially applauded the ‘Cast-Iron Pillars [which] gave a superior lightness to any thing of the kind he had ever seen’, and for this accolade to have found its way soon after into the pages of *The Shrewsbury Chronicle*.<sup>21</sup>

Steuart’s advocacy of a new progressive classical architecture – which at the same time John Soane was characterising as consisting of plain forms in which ornament was ‘cautiously introduced . . . designed with regularity and . . . perfectly distinctive in . . . outline’<sup>22</sup> – was taken up in two schemes launched in the spring of 1788, when Wellington church, then in its early stage of construction, would have begun to attract attention among local architects.

John Hiram Haycock (1759–1830) proposed two alternative designs for a new chapel-of-ease at Tilstock for the Reverend Francis Egerton, rector of Whitchurch, one dated 18 March 1788.<sup>23</sup> The round-headed windows set in shallow arched recesses, and the rectangular three-light window in the semicircular chancel (Plate 8) recall Wellington, though it is worth noting that these features are also found in the buildings of the Yorkshire architect, John Carr, who, in 1771, had provided designs (unexecuted) for Whitchurch Rectory.<sup>24</sup> The most distinctive features of the Tilstock designs are the diminutive prostyle porticoes of coupled Tuscan columns, one pedimented (Plate 9), the other not, screening a lobby surmounted by miniature temple-like bell turrets. An accompanying estimate dated 25 April 1789 gives the cost of the first scheme at £650, and the second, which specified ‘Pews of Deal and other plain finishings’, at £50 less.<sup>25</sup> Neither was constructed.<sup>26</sup>

Six weeks after the Tilstock drawings, on 28 April 1788, Edward Edgecombe contracted with the patron, Mary Kinaston, to rebuild St Michael’s at Welshampton. Opened in July 1789 (and demolished in 1864), the

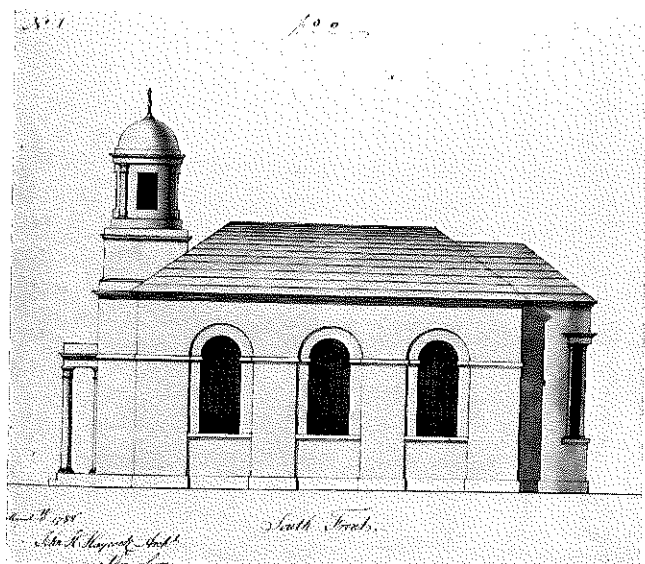


PLATE 8 TILSTOCK CHAPEL, 1788, DESIGNED BY JOHN HIRAM HAYCOCK. THE ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION DRAWING OF THE SOUTH ELEVATION, DESIGN NO. 1, SIGNED AND DATED 'MARCH 18TH 1788' (SRR: 3091/10, F.67).

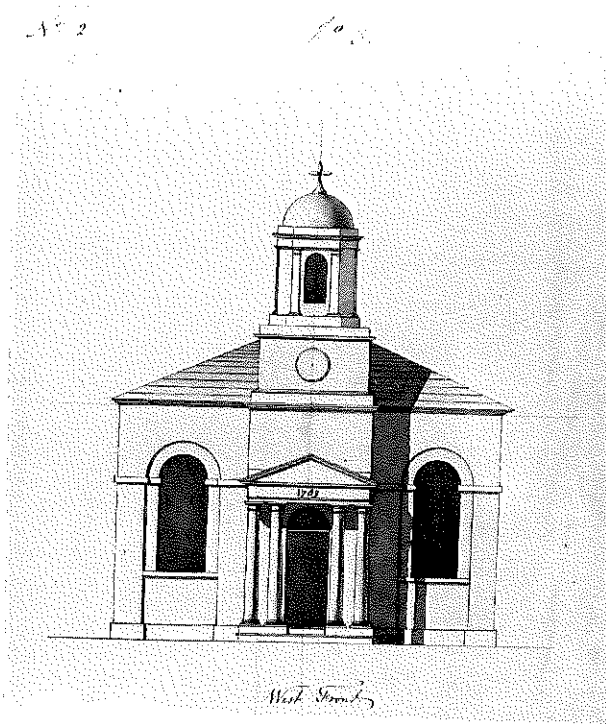


PLATE 9 TILSTOCK CHAPEL, 1788-9, DESIGNED BY JOHN HIRAM HAYCOCK. THE ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION DRAWING OF THE WEST FRONT, DESIGN NO. 2, DATED 1789 (SRR: 3091/10, F.69).

new church was described in *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* as 'very neat, and elegant', the work of 'the ingenious Mr. Edgecombe'.<sup>27</sup> This is apparently his earliest dated work and was surprisingly unconventional for a minor, provincial architect at the beginning of his career. The 'Articles of Agreement' specify the use of 'good unperishable Bricks and sound Grinshill free stone', with the bricks plastered over (and presumably whitewashed), and the masonry 'firm & ornamental . . . without any variations or breach of Error or Omission in anywise howsoever or deviation from the . . . Plan', which was to cost £434.<sup>28</sup> The contract drawing (Plate 10) shows a long broad symmetrical Greek Cross building with the western arm occupied by a lobby, vestry and gallery. Shallow but wide transepts create a central cross-vaulted space canoping the pulpit and reading desks. The south transept is lit dramatically by a large Venetian window set externally in a shallow arched recess, which is repeated on the north elevation but with the side lights blind. Both transept ends are crowned by big pediments. The introduction of Venetian windows in the centre of the side walls is uncommon and in this case was probably inspired by the church at Longdon in Worcestershire, built in 1785-7 to the design of William Marshall. It cannot be a coincidence that some of the work there was undertaken by Handy Edgcumbe, a

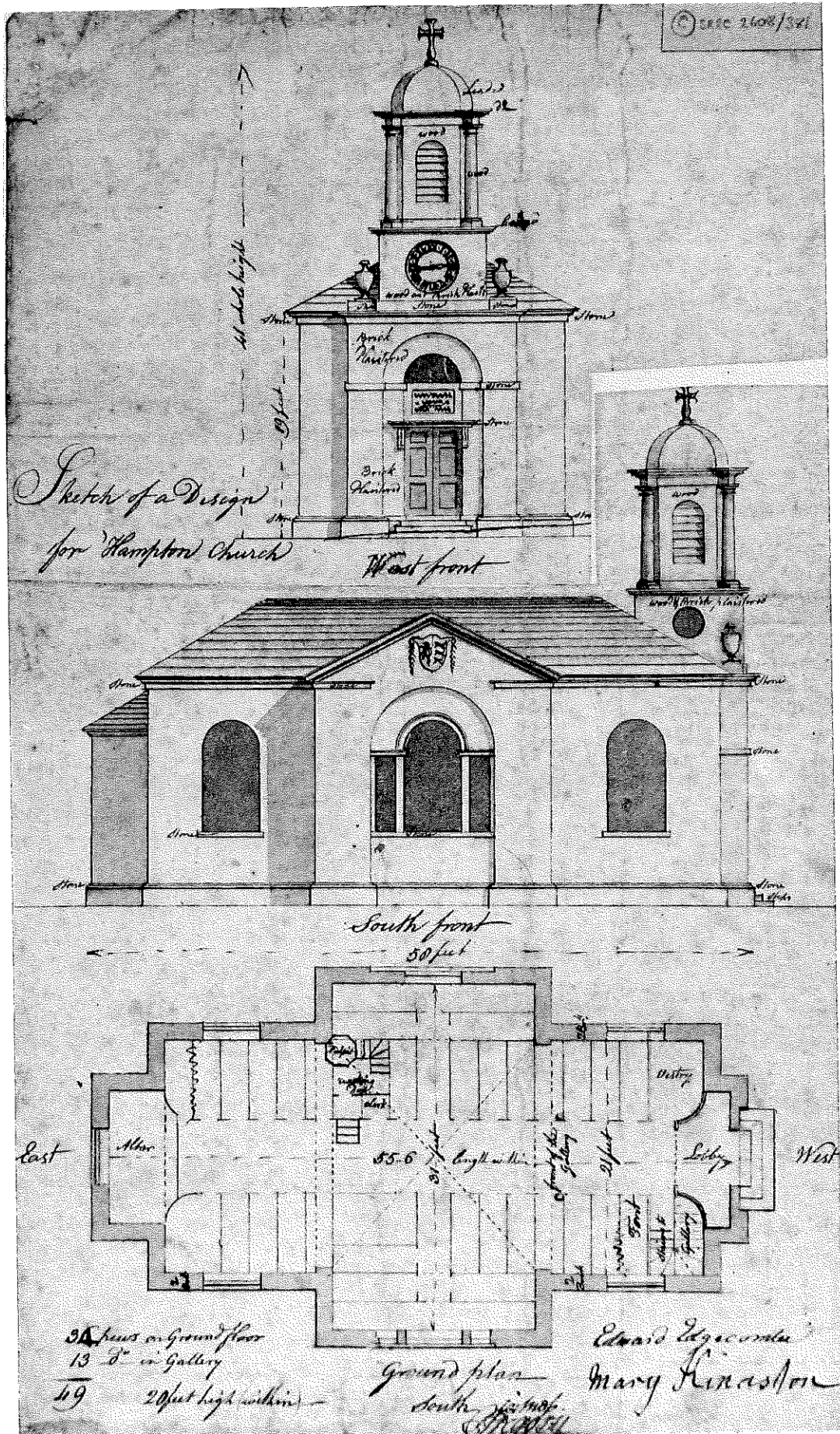


PLATE 10 ST MICHAEL'S, WELSHAMPTON, 1788-9, DESIGNED BY EDWARD EDGECOMBE. THE ARCHITECT'S CONTRACT DRAWING OF 28 APRIL 1788 (SRR: 2608/381, F.8).

Tewkesbury house carpenter and joiner, and no doubt a relative of our Edgecombe.<sup>29</sup> Rising above the lobby at Welshampton is a two storey, domed turret not unlike the ones proposed for Tilstock (Plates 8–9). However, on 2 July 1788 Edgecombe was requested by the parishioners to ‘erect a Steeple . . . instead of the Cupola’ as a result of the need to accommodate a larger ring of four bells.<sup>30</sup> The revised design – a triple-staged semi-detached octagonal tower (Plate 11) – may have been suggested by the similarly odd arrangement at Hodnet church (Plate 12), a dozen miles to the south-east, where the 14th-century, octagonal west tower stands proud of a body which had been partly rebuilt in a plain classical style between 1732 and 1740.<sup>31</sup>

In the Spring of 1788 Thomas Telford appeared on the scene. In April he was invited to prepare a scheme for repairing the medieval fabric of St Mary’s, Shrewsbury. In May he surveyed the decrepit structure of old St Chad’s and recommended immediate repairs, which the churchwardens unwisely disregarded. In the early hours of 9 July its great Gothic crossing tower suddenly collapsed:

‘The whole of the tower (except the wall on the South side) together with the floors, roof over the principal part of the body of the church, and part of the side walls, are entirely in ruin. The organ, galleries, pulpit, desks, pews, &c. are destroyed . . . So great is the devastation, that such of the remaining walls which are left standing, must be entirely taken down. In examining the ruins, it is discovered that the four masonry pillars which support the tower, were only cased with rubble, the inside being filled with common loose rubble. The timber of the roof appears quite rotten, and persons conversant in old buildings are surprized that this structure stood so long. . . . How very providential that this dreadful catastrophe did not happen at a time when the congregation were assembled for divine worship’ (*The Shrewsbury Chronicle And Shropshire, Montgomeryshire, Denbighshire, Merionethshire, Flintshire, &c. General Advertiser*, 12 July 1788).<sup>32</sup>

The scene of desolation was spectacular, and with the even more devastating collapse of the Romanesque west tower of Hereford Cathedral in 1786 still kept alive in press reports and popular prints,<sup>33</sup> the Shrewsbury incident unsettled the public. The *Chronicle* report quoted above commented:

‘We heard that a Drawing of the Ruins is taking, and that the same will be engraved. Our readers at a distance will then have an opportunity of forming a proper idea of the awfulness of the ruins, which it is impossible for language to describe’.

These events had decisive architectural consequences for years to come. The decisions to demolish the medieval churches at Madeley (made on 6 October 1788, with Telford’s designs for a new building requested on 8 December), Bridgnorth (Telford surveyed the old fabric two days earlier) and St Alkmund’s at Shrewsbury (initiated in 1794, despite claims made at the time that it was capable of repair and need not be demolished)



PLATE 11 ST MICHAEL'S,  
WELSHAMPTON, 1788–9,  
DESIGNED BY EDWARD  
EDGECOMBE. A  
WATERCOLOUR VIEW BY REV.  
EDWARD WILLIAMS, DATED  
25 JULY 1791, SHOWING THE  
CHURCH AS BUILT (SRR:  
6001/372, III, F.68).





PLATE 12 ST LUKE'S, HODNET,  
REMODELLED 1732–40,  
ARCHITECT UNKNOWN. A  
WATERCOLOUR VIEW BY  
REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS,  
DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1790  
(SRR: 6001/372, II, F.62).

were all agitated directly by the Chad's hysteria.<sup>34</sup> Construction of the new church at Madeley, which had been proposed in 1788 but held up for nearly six years on account of vestry indecision, finally got underway shortly after a bizarre incident, reported in *The Salopian Journal*, when during divine services in the old church on 17 September 1794 the

'noise made by the fall of a person who was seized with a fit, excited an universal apprehension that the building was giving way, and everyone endeavoured to make his escape by the shortest road. The confusion, distress and terror that ensued cannot be described: great numbers were much hurt jumping out of the windows, or being jammed in the door-ways, whilst the shrieks of Women and Children left behind increased the horror of the Scene'.<sup>35</sup>

Above all, the calamity profoundly affected the decisions about St Chad's itself.

The new St Chad's (Plate 13) is among the most ambitious and splendid churches of the 1790s to have been built in Britain, and gazing at it from The Quarry (now a municipal park) on a sunny day is to see one of the glories of Georgian architecture.<sup>36</sup> Its construction history is exceptionally well documented, though the development of its design is complicated and not altogether clear. Apparently James Wyatt was invited to submit designs soon after the collapse, and the fact that he was then involved in major repairs to the cathedrals at Hereford, Lichfield and Salisbury suggests that the Chad's churchwardens intended remodelling the damaged fabric in a suitably sympathetic Gothic idiom, but Wyatt failed to respond.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, a powerful faction within the parish succeeded in persuading the authorities to abandon this idea – suggesting that the ruin be consolidated for use as a burial chapel – and to erect a new church on a different site. Without any competition (Telford was not considered), the commission was given to George Steuart.

Steuart attended a churchwardens' meeting on 25 September 1788 'to take instructions for Designs for rebuilding'.<sup>38</sup> In February 1789 the parish petitioned the House of Commons for a Bill to permit the raising of building funds.<sup>39</sup> Between 10–21 April the architect submitted 'Several designs' ranging in cost from £9,000 to £18,000.<sup>40</sup> He also gave testimony to the Commons' committee, which was reported to the House on 28 April. Leave for the Bill was granted, but on 20 May 'several Hundred' parishioners requested a Parliamentary hearing on the grounds that the Bill contained many clauses (unspecified) 'likely to be injurious, burthensome, and oppressive to themselves and their Prosperity'. Nevertheless, an Act of Parliament was passed on 24 June 1789, specifying that the new church was to be built 'after such Model, and of such Dimensions and Materials, and in such Manner as [the churchwardens' committee] shall think fit'.<sup>41</sup> On 9 July Steuart's 'plan Marked No. 4 Now produced' was approved by the committee and then, on 17 July, by the Bishop of Lichfield.<sup>42</sup>

Of the 'Several designs' of April 1789, the approved No. 4 plan of July and the 'plans Elevations and Sections . . . contained in a Book of Drawings furnished by George Steuart Esquire Architect' to the committee on 20 November 1789, which consisted of three designs for a circular church and another for a rectangular



PLATE 13 ST CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY, 1789-92, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. 'A PERSPECTIVE VIEW' DRAWN BY THE ARCHITECT AND ENGRAVED BY T. MILLER, DATED 31 OCTOBER 1791 (SRR: NEG. B831).

one,<sup>43</sup> none can now be traced. Two unsigned, schematic line drawings of the south and east elevations of the circular church more or less as built (Plate 14), which later came into Soane's possession, may be from Steuart's office.<sup>44</sup> Not unexpectedly, the more traditional and cheaper rectangular version was chosen, but apparently during the ensuing negotiations one of the circular designs was slipped in and approved without the committee noticing!<sup>45</sup> The first stone was laid on 2 March 1790. The building went up fast and was ready for worship in the Autumn of 1792.

The 28 April 1789 Commons report refers to the proposed new site as 'a Piece of Land called *The Quarry*'. This was a narrow strip of land running north-south alongside a private garden belonging to a Mr Kirby and a section of the ancient town walls incorporating a tower which occupied the ground of what was to be the centre of the proposed church. It was agreed that the parishioners would at their own expense take down these intrusive structures and build a low wall with iron railings on the Quarry side. Here, open ground fell westward towards a curve in the River Severn.<sup>46</sup> This meant that the new building had to be orientated with the main entrance facing south and the liturgical east (containing the reredos and communion table within the chancel) towards the north. This resulted in a spectacular approach to the new church from the town centre to the south-east, from where the first view is restricted to the tall, narrow entrance portico and tower, flanked by a pair of vestry blocks which screen the main body (Plate 14). Then the body itself is revealed as an unexpected grouping of heroic rotundas which unfold along the western side, overlooking the quarry, and catch the full flood of the afternoon sun (Plate 13).

Though the composition was considered by contemporary observers to be 'very singular' and 'extremely novel',<sup>47</sup> its sources of inspiration are not difficult to identify. In a discussion with the committee on 10 September 1789 regarding the problem of acoustics,<sup>48</sup> Steuart cited a

'Similar Circular Building designed for a Tea Drinking Place in the Neighbourhood of Clarkenwell . . . now a Chapel [for] 7 or 800 people . . . has no Echo. the preacher Wonderfully well heard'.

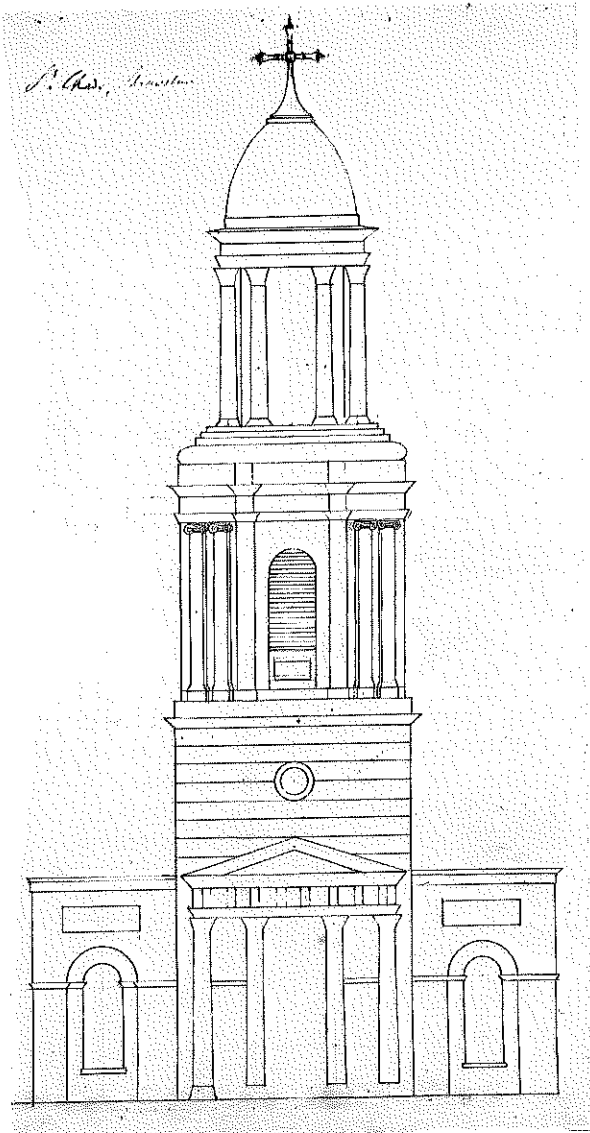


PLATE 14 ST CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY, 1789-92, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. A SCHEMATIC DRAWING BY AN UNKNOWN HAND OF THE SOUTH ENTRANCE FRONT (BY COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES OF SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM, LONDON, 47/6/13).

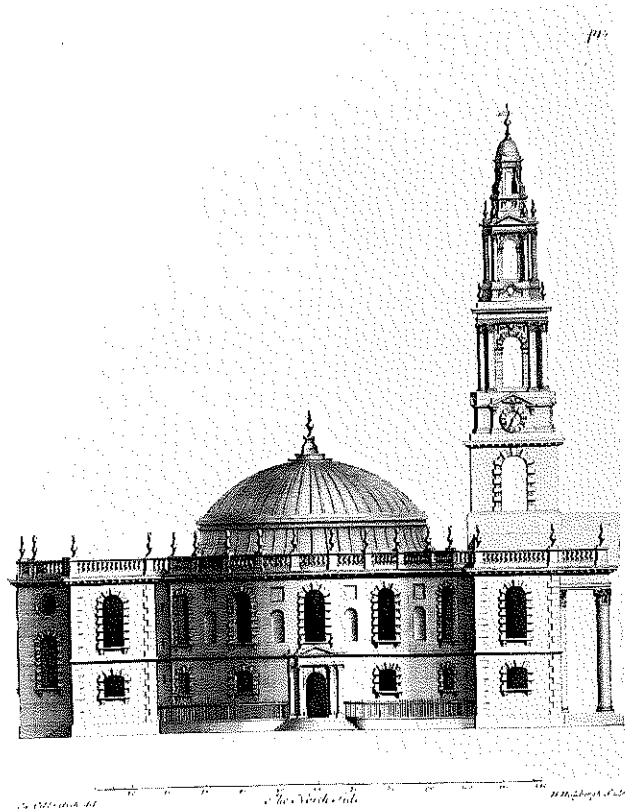


PLATE 15 ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON, 1720, DESIGNED BY JAMES GIBBS. THE NORTH ELEVATION OF ONE OF THE ROUND DESIGNS, PUBLISHED IN GIBBS'S *A BOOK OF ARCHITECTURE*, 1728, PLATE 10.

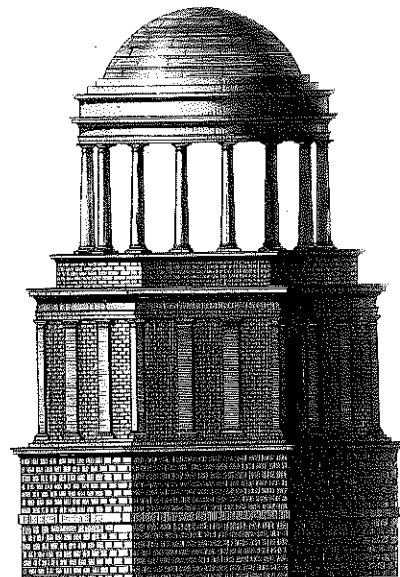


PLATE 16 TOUR MAGNE, NÎMES. A ROMAN BUILDING RECONSTRUCTED, IN C-L. CLÉRISSEAU, *ANTIQUITÉS DE LA FRANCE*, 1778, PLATE LVIII (DETAIL), ENGRAVED BY GAITTE.

That is, Spa Fields Chapel at Islington, London (1768–9, architect unknown, demolished 1886). He mentioned, too, the ‘New Church [at Edinburgh] of an Oval Shape [which] is much Approved’ (St Andrew’s, George Street, 1781–7, by Andrew Frazer).<sup>49</sup> Steuart must also have known the immense, polygonal-shaped Surrey Chapel in Southwark (by William Thomas, 1782–3, destroyed 1940) built for the celebrated Evangelical preacher, the Reverend Rowland Hill, younger brother of Sir Richard Hill of Hawkstone Hall, Shropshire and a relative of Noel Hill, 1st Lord Berwick, for whom Steuart was then building Attingham Park.<sup>50</sup> He might also have been aware of All Saints at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, designed by David Stephenson and under construction from 1789, with its great elliptical body, tetrastyle Tuscan temple portico and a tower-lobby flanked by lateral pavilions.<sup>51</sup>

This distinctive and dramatic composition has its origin in Gibbs’s so-called Round Designs for St Martin-in-the-Fields (1720, unexecuted) as illustrated in *A Book of Architecture* (Plate 15).<sup>52</sup> More than in any of its later eighteenth-century imitations, this prototype was transformed by Steuart in unprecedented and exceptional ways. Gibbs’s complex, multi-staged, gradually diminishing steeple was rejected in favour of a stockier, tripartite tower composed of independent and abruptly juxtaposed geometric forms: cube, octagon and domed cylinder.<sup>53</sup> The composition possibly derives from Charles-Louis Clérisseau’s paper ‘restauration’ of the ancient Roman monument known as the Tour Magne at Nîmes, as published in his *Antiquités de la France* in 1778 (Plate 16). This association with the past is continued at St Chad’s in the detailing of the Ionic order, John Nelson having been specifically instructed to carve capitals in the ‘Antique’ manner.<sup>54</sup> These are probably based on the Temple on the Ilissus as illustrated in James Stuart and Nicholas Revett’s *The Antiquities of Athens*, 1762.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the principal units of the building – tetrastyle temple portico, tower, pedimented vestry blocks, oval lobby and rotunda body – are treated with a separateness characteristic of advanced European neoclassicism. The contrasting surfaces of rusticated and smooth ashlar, the bands of string coursing, the series of identical square and round-headed windows and paired pilasters are perpetuated in regimented rhythms and carefully stratified layers as they journey round the 100-foot circumference of the rotunda, interrupted only at the north end, where a big Venetian window designates the rectangular chancel, which is contained entirely within the body (Plate 17). A visitor in 1794, who admired the church as ‘a most beautiful piece of Architecture . . . built of stone almost white’, was struck particularly by the ‘perfect’ circularity of the body where

‘No spouts are to be seen on the outside to convey the water down from the top. But at the East [north] end I observed the mouths of two spouts upon the surface of the ground which were conveyed within the walls’.<sup>56</sup>

Significantly, the proposal to break the skyline above the balustrades with figure statuary, shown in an engraving published on 31 October 1791 (Plate 13), was not implemented.

In the interior (Plate 18) the visitor processes along a central axis through a sequence of grand, domed spaces, arriving finally in the rotunda arena, with its encircling gallery and triumphal arched chancel. This reminded the bishop of Lichfield of a theatre,<sup>57</sup> and Lord Torrington (who disapproved of classicism for churches) of ‘a Pantheon – a Ranelagh or a dancing room’.<sup>58</sup> The original pulpit and reading desk, designed by Steuart, stood in the central aisle in front of the chancel, partly obscuring the communion table and a sedate reredos made of Norwegian oak.<sup>59</sup> These features can be seen *in situ* in a photograph taken prior to their removal and destruction in 1870 (Plate 19). The choice of ‘best New Castle Glass’ for all the windows, and a subdued, light-coloured paintwork, ensured the clarity of space and detailing requisite for late neoclassical churches.<sup>60</sup> In this case the interior may have proved too light and monochromatic because on 19 May 1791 the committee asked the celebrated Birmingham ‘Glass Stainer’, Francis Eginton about ‘his Terms for painting the Chancel Window’, presumably with some appropriate (but unspecified) Christian subject, which served as an alternative to a painted altarpiece.<sup>61</sup> This idea was not pursued, and in 1793 the committee enquired about the cost of ‘Making & putting up blinds to the Alter Window or any other Plan for preventing the present glare of Light’.<sup>62</sup>

The rotunda occupied much of Steuart’s energy during the design stage. He had heated discussions on how best to solve the problems of seating and echo in a space which needed to be large enough to accommodate a congregation of some 1,200 souls. When, on 3 September 1789, the committee considered his working drawings for the circular scheme, it concluded that ‘the Echo . . . will be very great’ and asked ‘Whether it can be prevented & What means [the architect] proposes . . . and Whether he has had Experience in Churches of this Construction that have been free of Echo’. Steuart replied by citing appropriate buildings in London and Edinburgh, as we have seen. On the same day the committee informed him in writing that ‘the Seats are by much too small’ and suggested a revised width of at least 3 feet 6 inches, yet at the same time pressing for a space which would hold 1,200 rather than the 900 indicated on his plan. They also enquired if ‘the oblong plan No. 3 which was first Approved of w<sup>o</sup>d. not remove the present Object[io]n. & be preferable to the present Circular plan in all respects’. Meanwhile, they ordered ‘all future progress in the Building . . . Stop’d’.<sup>63</sup> Steuart must have suspected the possibility of his grand scheme slipping away, and his reply to the committee a week



PLATE 17 ST CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY, 1788-92, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. NORTH ELEVATION SHOWING THE CHANCEL WINDOW (NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD).

later was confident and professional. Reaffirming the commodiousness of his recommended seating, and pointing out that the circular design was capable of holding 1,246 persons 'exclusive of Moveable Benches on the Floor before the pulpit' and that the 'Manner of the Chancel . . . Columns, Gallery and flat Ceiling all contributed to destroy Echo', he successfully persuaded the members that the rectangular design

'is no less liable to Echo which is Ocasioned by the Compact and close finishing where there is not Objects to break and divide the Sound. . . [in] both designs there are breaks and consequently no Apprehension of Such an Echo . . . the Space to contain 1200 in an Oblong removes half the hearers a great way from the preacher . . . there is not a doubt but it may be Executed for some less Money . . . Yet the design has Neither the Elegance or Novelty [of the circular one]. I am ready to Comply with whatever may be the Sense of the Trustees, but an Unalterable resolution is absolutely Necessary before the Work commences [with] clear digested Rules . . . the only way to Avoid much Expence in Alterations'.

He then played his ace by reminding the committee that 'three fourths of the Circular Foundation is already formed'<sup>64</sup>

The circular church had been saved. Yet, Steuart must have been mindful of the committee's wishes. By introducing exceptionally thin, wood-encased cast-iron columns at both nave and gallery levels, which resulted in uninterrupted views to the pulpit and desks, the age-old problem at the heart of Protestant worship of how to deliver the Word most effectually to a large congregation had been solved; a solution he had foreseen in pressing the committee to reject the rectangular design. On the other hand, by a clever arrangement of the box pews into four quadrants separated by central and transverse aisles, he succeeded in retaining within the cylindroid configuration of the building a vestigial Latin cross plan commonly associated with rectangular churches.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, beyond its acoustical and seating advantages, the rotunda form may have possessed a

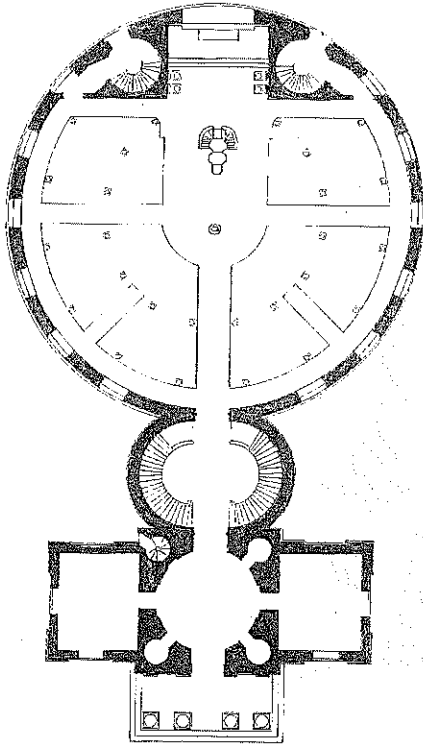


PLATE 18 ST CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY, 1788-92, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. GROUND FLOOR PLAN (COURTESY OF VICAR AND CHURCHWARDENS) ALTERED BY THE AUTHOR TO INCORPORATE THE ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT OF PEWS AND POSITION OF THE PULPIT AND FONT, BASED ON A C1850 PLAN (SRR: 1048/5125).

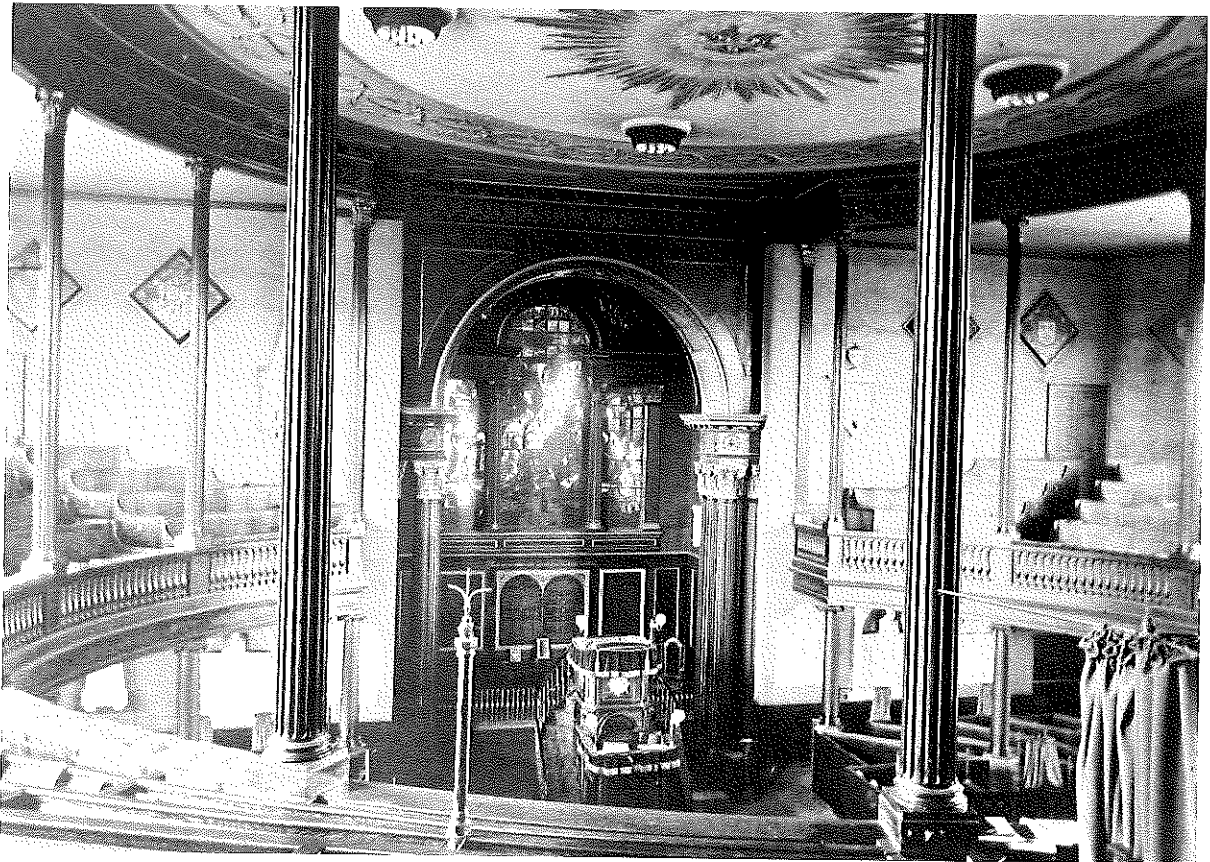


PLATE 19 ST CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY, 1788-92, DESIGNED BY GEORGE STEUART. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BEFORE 1870, SHOWING THE ORIGINAL REREDOS, PULPIT AND DESK DESIGNED BY STEUART IN POSITION (SRR: NEG. B3769).

special liturgical potency associated on the one hand with Chad (died 672), a venerated early British saint who was the first bishop of Lichfield, and on the other with the prominence given to the place of baptism in the arrangement of early church buildings, which had long been a subject of discussion among the English clergy.<sup>66</sup> Steuart seems to have given architectural expression to these interests by incorporating the functions of both the auditory and the baptistery in a single space. He placed the font near the epicentre of the rotunda well, where the central and transverse aisles intersect (which is also the point of intersection of imaginary axial lines passing through the concentrically arranged columns, like the spokes and hub of a wheel), and he haloed the flat ceiling directly overhead with plaster cherubs in a gilded radiance.

St Chad's is exceptional among major late Georgian churches in the extent and variety to which its building accounts record the activities of craftsmen and the technology of construction. With his practice based in London, Steuart took great care in providing the committee not only with a complete set of neatly bound presentation drawings but also with working drawings which would have been used on site (and probably then discarded), and he was also responsible for preparing detailed building contracts and keeping financial accounts. As a result of his professionalism, the operation attracted a talented team of both local and metropolitan craftsmen.<sup>67</sup>

Steuart's stance on charges and methods of payment rather confounded the provincial committee. In November 1789, a few months after his circular design was approved, he notified them how he expected to be paid: for designs and working drawings only, a rate based on 3% of the total amount of the contracts; or 5% if the committee wished 'that I should Superintend the Work' from start to finish.<sup>68</sup> The latter method was adopted, but when in 1791, about half way through construction, the building estimate had reached £9,634 and the parish had managed to raise only £4,193.5.2,<sup>69</sup> the committee insisted that unless Steuart agreed to accept 3% on his original estimate of £10,000 they would 'consider him from this time no longer in their employ [since] they are Unanimous in their Opinion that his Expectations are too enormous to be complied with'.<sup>70</sup> With 'some difficulty in my Mind, as to the propriety of an Answer', Steuart reiterated his demands on the basis that

'there are certain rules established in every profession for the direction of the practitioners in the transaction of their Business; And which it is the Duty of every Member . . . to Support. I hope therefore, when I Accept of whatever reward the Committee may deem my Attention to The building of Saint Chad's . . . deserves; it will not be considered as a precedent in the Conduct of any further Work'.

Steuart had agreed to charge on the contracts rather than the estimates on the recommendation of 'some Gentlemen of the Committee' and was now

'extremely Sorry if any Misconduct on my part has Occasioned the Commissioners to think my exertions not equally Worthy of the same Notice at this Advanced State of the Building as at the beginning. If it were but known the time I have already expended in the preparation of the Drawings, the Money paid to my Clerks for the Execution of them, the time and Expencc I shall be at for Near two Years more in Adjusting the Accounts with every Contractor; then I trust my Original Expectations of the customary pay of Gentlemen employ'd in the Way of My profession woud not be thought to deserve the Title bestowed upon it in the resolution. [Nevertheless, he agreed to] cheerfully Subscribe to the resolution conveyed . . . in Your Letter And . . . be Assured, that however Small the reward they may think my Abilities and Attention Worthy of, I shall pursue the execution of the Building with the same Unremitting Assiduity I trust I have hitherto done'.<sup>71</sup>

Despite this show of urbanity, the committee refused to 'recede' from its decision to allow their hard-working architect only 3% on the original estimate.<sup>72</sup>

The on-site management was at first (on 17 July 1789) placed in the hands of Joseph Bromfield (c1743–1824) at an annual salary of £50. He seems to have been a jack-of-all-trades: a local timber merchant, an ornamental plasterer of some ability (he subscribed to George Richardson's *A Book of Ceilings*, published in 1776), an 'able and experienced Architect' and later (in 1809) Mayor of Shrewsbury. However, he was dismissed from the St Chad's post within a few months.<sup>73</sup> Early in 1790 Steuart was asked to engage and send down 'a proper person to Succeed him as Superintendent of the Works as soon as possible'.<sup>74</sup> In this way the Scots builder, John Simpson (1755–1815), settled in Shrewsbury, where he established an outstanding reputation: his handsome marble monument in St Chad's, carved by Francis Chantrey, incorporates a portrait bust and an epitaph praising his 'Professional Capacity Diligence Accuracy and Irreproachable Integrity', and offers the new church as a 'Lasting Monument . . . of His Skill and Ability'.<sup>75</sup>

Preparations for construction were launched in the Summer of 1789. On 17 July the committee asked Steuart to supply 'Working Drawings & Elevations' in preparation for the call for building proposals.<sup>76</sup> The following advertisement appeared in *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* on 25 September:

'Such Persons as are desirous of giving in Estimates for Building Saint Chads' Church, according to the Working Plans and Designs, are requested to send their Proposals as follows, sealed up, to the Clerk. 1st. A Contract for the Stone Masons and Bricklayers Work, for the whole of the Church, to be executed by Measure. 2d. A Contract for Carpenters, Slaters, and Plumbers Work. 3d. A Contract for Iron Work, Glazing and Painting. The Whole as by Working Plans and Designs, which may be seen by application to W. Simes, Clerk to the Trustees. The Contracts to be delivered on or before the 5th of November next. Proper Security will be expected'.<sup>77</sup>

Steuart appeared in town during the last week of November with his 'Book of Working Instructions' (untraced) on which the contracts would be drawn up.<sup>78</sup>

On 30 November John Carline and John Tilley agreed to supply, at a cost of £1,693, some 19,240 feet of the 'best Grinshill Free Stone', a pale coloured fine-grained siliceous sandstone quarried at nearby Grinshill, which was ideal for both ashlar facing and delicate linear detailing.<sup>79</sup> They also contracted for the brickwork, which was to be executed by Jonathan Scoltock for a price not to exceed £1,200. Scoltock, who lived at Sutton near Shrewsbury, was described at a quarter sessions hearing in July of that year concerning Madeley church as 'an able and experienced Workman'.<sup>80</sup>

The carpentry and joinery contract, worth £2,644, which included roof construction and decorative carving for handrails, balusters, capitals and the reredos, was awarded on 26 April 1790 to John Hawkeshaw of St Marylebone, Steuart's London neighbour (he lived in Harley Street), but not before the architect was instructed to submit the bill of proposals to his cautious employers in Shrewsbury in order that they

'may be Satisfyied that [Hawkeshaw's] Terms are more eligible & Advantageous than those given by the Tradesmen in the Country, which they particularly wish to have that no imputation of partiality may be Ascribed to them'.<sup>81</sup>

Joseph Bromfield (the one-time Superintendent) and John Bishop contracted on 6 May 1790 to supply a rich variety of materials:

'Dantzig Timber perfectly sound [and] sawed English Oak English Bastard oak boards English prime seasoned Quarter Oak Board Peterburgh Fir Planks Best christiana white Plank Best Christiana Yellow Plank Riga Wainscot or clap board'.

Bromfield also contracted to do the plasterwork

'agreeable to the Drawings and Approbation of the Surveyor [including 269 feet of] plain Freese [1,816] Molded Cornice [205] enrich'd Freese [124] circular beed and double Quirk [and 254] Ogee [as well as 122] Corinthian Blocks [50] Doric Blocks [4] Corinthian Capitals [8] Pillasters Ornamented by Hand [and] Boys Heads and Rays in Center and Pannel enrich'd with Foliage in ceiling'

all for £300.

An advertisement in *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* on 13 May 1791 called for proposals from 'Those Persons who are willing to Contract . . . for Cast-Iron Sashes for the New Church' and for glazing 'with second London, or Newcastle Crown Glass'.<sup>82</sup> John Fradgley, a local blacksmith, won the contract for executing

'all the Iron Work . . . in a proper Workmanlike manner . . . with diligence and Dispatch so as the Workmen . . . be not by any Means hindered or delayed in the Execution of their respective Works through his . . . neglect or Default'.

The material was supplied by the well-known local iron-founder, William Hazeldine (who is also commemorated by a monument in the church), with a proviso that 'in Case any bad or insufficient Iron . . . shall not be properly wrought . . . the same shall . . . be rejected and returned and good and sufficient Iron . . . be found'. The firm of Francis Underwood, Mary Bottomley and Joseph Hamble of High Holborn, London, supplied 'Patent Metal' window sashes for £250, which were to be

'hung on Steel Centre[s] with Brass Knobs and Latches [and fixed to the sashes with] Iron plugs let into the Stone reveals . . . agreeable to the Model or pattern . . . furnished by George Steuart'.

In September 1791 Steuart submitted a design for an organ case, which it was agreed would be adopted



'Subject to the Altering of the figure of Apollo . . . to that of King David or some other device Suitable to the building for which it is intended'.<sup>83</sup> The David figure was chosen. Steuart had earlier been ordered to 'Converse with Mr. White and Mr. Green as to the Expence of building and putting up an Organ',<sup>84</sup> but the contract went to Robert and William Gray, who agreed to supply the workings in

'a good substantial Case with proper Doors to get at the inside Work, [with a back] of well seasoned deal and the front and sides of Mahogany. The Capitals . . . of Composition and Gilt, the Cornice white and plain, The freese part carved in Limetree and Gilt'.

The instrument, which cost £395.17.0, was 'played upon and approved by some [unnamed] Musician of Eminence in London . . . previous to its being brought down into the Country'.

In 1792 an electrical 'Conductor' was installed on the tower 'to preserve the Building from the Effects of Lightning'.<sup>85</sup> The new building was consecrated on 20 August of that year. On 27 December John Simpson and John Hiram Haycock were ordered to measure the completed fabric.<sup>86</sup> The final cost totalled an astronomical £17,752, of which £14,430 had been spent on contractual work, £1,000 on foundations, £1,000 on the organ, pulpit, font and incidentals (including £19.18.1½ 'for Convict Labour') and £980 on the purchase of the site,<sup>87</sup> with the architect receiving £342 in fees.<sup>88</sup>

The poet, Robert Southey, who disliked the new St Chad's,<sup>86</sup> suggested that Thomas Telford 'beheld [it] with some advantage, inasmuch as he saw in it everything that ought to be avoided in church architecture'.<sup>89</sup> Ironically, it had been the young Telford, fresh from a naval contract at Portsmouth dockyard and eager to establish a reputation in Shropshire, who had prophesied the imminent collapse of old St Chad's in a survey report prepared in 1788, which called attention to large fractures in the central tower and recommended immediate repair, only to be dismissed by an incredulous vestry (which claimed that 'professional men always wish'd to carve out employment for themselves') and then, after the catastrophe, to lose the commission to design the new church to Steuart!<sup>90</sup> Writing four years later regarding his design for the new church at Bridgnorth, Telford reported confidently that

'by the best judges it is much preferred to this very expensive contrivance of St. Chad which by no means answers [the parishioners] expectations as to grandeur and much exceeds it as to unnecessary expense'.<sup>91</sup>

St Mary Magdalene at Bridgnorth was an astonishing church debut: at once more orthodox in plan than St Chad's yet more progressive in its handling of severe and heroic architectural forms (Plate 20).<sup>92</sup> Telford's involvement with the church began in late 1788 when, following a survey, he reported to the churchwardens on 6 December that the roof timbers were

'very much decayed, as to render it totally unpracticable to be repaired by any means [the outside walls] tho' decayd . . . are perfectly sound & upright and when a little repaired will without doubt be sufficiently strong to support a new roof. [He recommended] a cast-iron Column to be fixd under the Beam of each pair of Principals . . . in order to relieve the out Walls as much as possible from the weight of a roof of so wide a span'.<sup>93</sup>

However, by the time John Aspery Smith (described as 'an able and experienced Architect' but perhaps no more than a builder) testified at the Shrewsbury quarter sessions on 12 January 1790 that he had carefully viewed the fabric and estimated the cost of demolition and rebuilding at £5,735.13s.9d, exclusive of the old materials,<sup>94</sup> the churchwardens were thinking in terms of a new building. Nothing more was done until January of the following year, when Telford was asked to resurvey; then after a further postponement he was invited on 5 November 1791 'to view different spots of Land for a New Scite provided he may think the Old one not proper'.<sup>95</sup> Having by this time concluded that the old church was 'in so decayed a state that it would be a very imprudent measure to adopt a Plan for Repairing [and] ought to be totally abandoned [in favour of a] new Church', and then weighing the pros and cons of no less than nine alternative sites within the town boundary, Telford, as he related in a letter of 29 December 1791, was suddenly 'struck' by the realisation that 'a proper Building may perhaps be adapted' for the old churchyard, which was perched dramatically on a rocky plateau at the end of town overlooking the Severn.<sup>96</sup> By mid-January of 1792 he was convinced this solution would be 'more ornamental to the Town [as well as] the most eligible and certainly by far the least expensive, as part of the New Church may be built upon the old foundations'.<sup>97</sup> However, the new building was rotated 180 degrees in order that the entrance front (Plate 21) faces towards 'one of the principal Streets' (East Castle Street), one of the side elevations shows itself 'to the lower Town & adjacent Country' and the tower over the main entrance is 'seen in all direction'.<sup>98</sup> Telford sent an 'Explanation' (untraced) and a copy of the design 'drawn on one sheet of strong

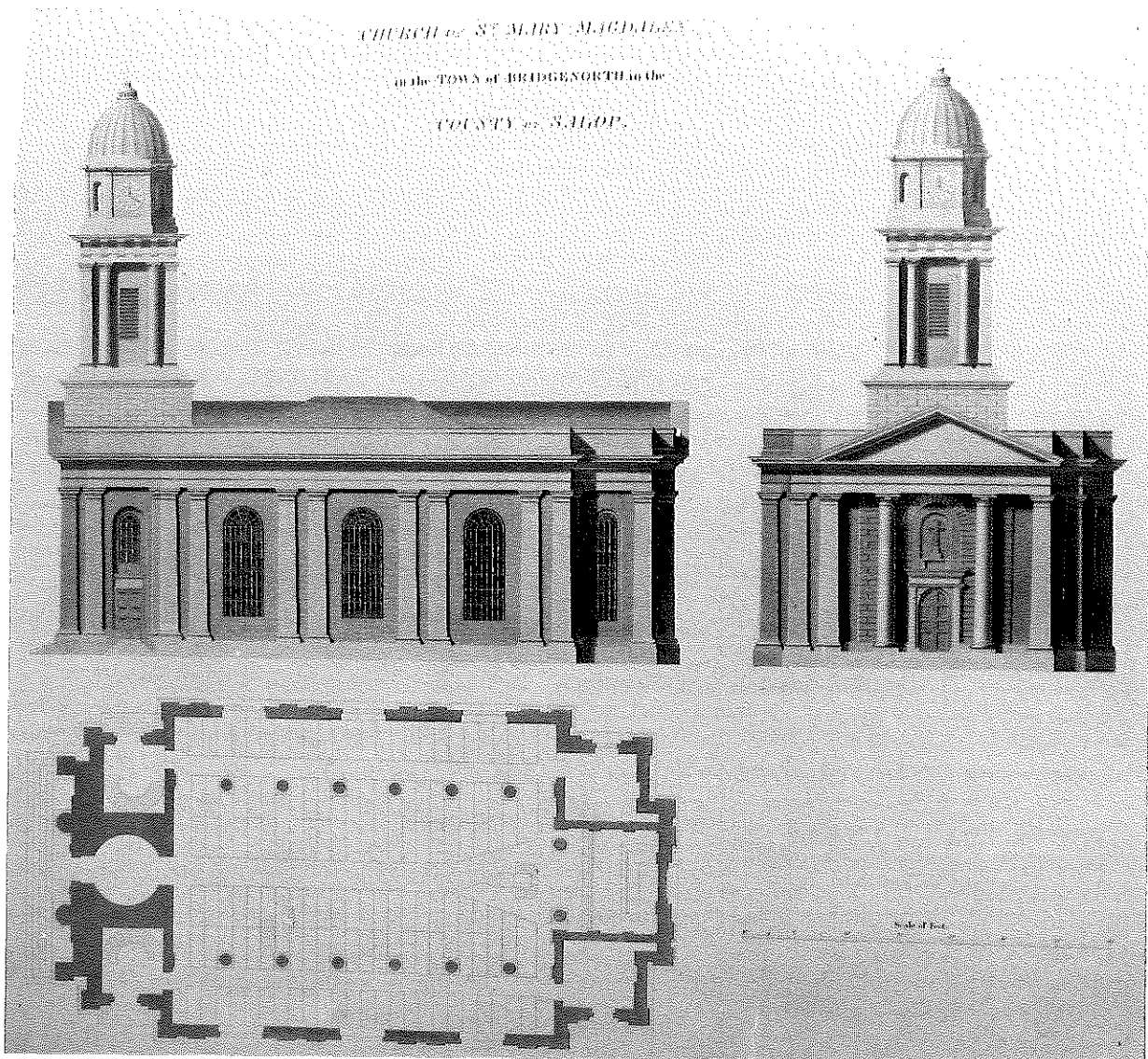


PLATE 20 ST MARY MAGDALENE, BRIDGNORTH, 1788–96, DESIGNED BY THOMAS TELFORD. PLAN AND ELEVATIONS, FROM *ATLAS TO THE LIFE OF THOMAS TELFORD*, 1838, PLATE IX.



PLATE 21 ST MARY MAGDALENE, BRIDGNORTH, 1788–96, DESIGNED BY THOMAS TELFORD. EAST CASTLE STREET ENTRANCE ELEVATION (SRR: NEG. B4959).

paper' with the parish's petition to the House of Commons in February 1792. This, he told the churchwardens on the 7th, 'met with universal approbation especially from all the Parsons'.<sup>99</sup> In March he assured them that

'I have not neglected the Working Drawings . . . nor will you be surprised at the time they required when you have seen the number that are necessary – they are now however nearly compleated and would have been wholly so, had not my drawing Clerk been taken ill'.<sup>100</sup>

Though no drawings for this project can be traced, Telford's ideas are surely accurately reflected in the engraved plan and elevations published in David Brewster's *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia* in 1830, and again in the *Atlas to the Life of Thomas Telford* in 1838 (Plate 20), which differ only in minor details from the church as built.<sup>101</sup>

With its boldly porticoed entrance and monumental rectangular body encompassed by a full-height classical Order of Tuscan engaged-columns, piers and pilasters resting on a low platform (so unlike Steuart's organization at St Chad's), the building resembles an ancient Roman temple.<sup>102</sup> Telford almost certainly had envisaged such an association. During the months (February–March 1792) his scheme was being scrutinised by the House of Commons, he borrowed two architectural pattern books from the Shrewsbury School library: the first volume of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens*, 1762, a pioneering archaeological demonstration of the theory of the architectural superiority of Greece over Rome, and the second volume of Bernard de Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité Expliquée*, in an English translation published in 1721, with its less accurate but more evocative re-creations of ancient buildings. The latter book was borrowed on 31 March, the day between the Bridgnorth scheme receiving Parliamentary assent and the first official meeting of the newly-formed rebuilding committee.<sup>103</sup>

How might Telford have used this material? At the end of January 1792, as the Bridgnorth presentation drawings were nearing completion, he introduced a refinement which he believed 'is likely to be more & more approved by judges', explaining that 'In making a Copy of the Elevation . . . I have discovered that by ten minutes work I can much improve' the design.<sup>104</sup> This consisted of introducing an overall sunk-jointed rustication on the bottom stage of the tower and in the area of wall on the entrance front directly beneath, which would not only add to 'the appearance of Neatiness' but show how the tower connects with the portico.<sup>105</sup> Stuart and Revett illustrate the external wall of the Athenian Stoa as a demonstration of 'the depth of the channels of the rustic', which is virtually identical to Bridgnorth.<sup>106</sup> Montfaucon's engraving of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome shows the Doric portico standing in front of an entirely rusticated and windowless wall, while the Maison Carrée at Nîmes, which he offered as 'a Model of the Best Architecture' and described as having the Order 'all round the Temple, that project or jut-out' from the wall,<sup>107</sup> finds an echo in the Bridgnorth masonry specification for

'the Shafts of the Pilasters all round . . . to project Eleven Inches before the face of the finished wall at the Base and seven Inches at the Neck of the Capital'.<sup>108</sup>

The spontaneous addition of rustication in the central and parts of the flanking bays (which are constructed of solid masonry because of the decision to place the access into the staircase lobbies on the side angles), though regarded by Telford as 'a very trifle', proved to be a masterstroke. By this robust treatment of surface textures the portico, though physically attached to the wall, has visually retained the fully sculptural presence of a projecting, free-standing structure. This was made more emphatic in execution by excluding the cross-embellished recess over the main door. The portico is partly disengaged from its vestibule-staircase block by treating its outer piers as almost free-standing units, then just behind them interpolating a less sculptural intermediary pair of piers, and finally, adding a third flatter outer pair to mark the edge of the body proper, resulting in a telescopic effect. What at first appearance seems a chaste exercise in academic classicism turns out to be a subtle and complex manipulation of the Order.

On the long elevations, the Order continues as paired pilasters (28 feet high) framing large simple round-headed windows (each 21 feet high). Perhaps with Steuart's two Shropshire churches (Plates 5 and 13) in mind, Telford explained in a letter of 1792 that

'two rows of windows convey the notion of there being two heights of apartments and [these] and the other divisions become an offensive number of trifling parts. . . . In order to avoid these faults . . . the body of the Church is brought forward distinctly, and a plain Order reaches the whole height of the said Walls, and instead of ten small Windows there are three very large ones, on each side. By this means it is hoped that the attention will be drawn to the body of the Church which is here meant to appear as one great and undivided apartment'.<sup>109</sup>

Thus, the interior (Plate 22) consists of a wide nave separated from the aisles by a double row of Ionic columns supporting a continuous entablature, with a flat ceiling of equal height throughout and no intrusive side galleries. The space is illuminated by an authentic Georgian monochromatic clarity achieved by the use of plain glazing throughout (admirably restored to the windows in recent years). A pair of full-height columns standing close to the side walls separates nave from chancel. The chancel was originally a windowless 20-foot cube (before being remodelled into a semicircle in 1872–6). This was an unusual arrangement which, according to *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, had the double advantage of providing ‘room for paintings or statuary over the altar, and on each side of it’ as well as theatrical top-lighting (a skylight recessed in a plaster dome) in order ‘to render [the space] more solemn’. The original interior, therefore, was particularly austere, and it has been suggested that Telford may have been influenced by recent developments in French church architecture.<sup>110</sup> He is not known to have visited France during these years, which were dangerous times for British travellers on account of the ‘revolutionary rage’, but engravings of comparable interiors, such as Chalgrin’s much admired St Philippe-du-Roule in Paris, 1768 (Plate 23), were available in England.<sup>111</sup>

Work on St Mary Magdalene began in late 1792 or early in the following season. John Rhodes and Michael Head agreed to undertake the construction ‘in a firm substantial expeditions and workmanlike manner’ and to finish it by Michelmas of 1795, for £4,500.<sup>112</sup> Their six-page contract is a model of its kind. It specified that the foundations were to be built of ‘Proper Stonework in Lime Mortar . . . laid in regular courses . . . Flat and Close to and upon one another [with] breaking Joints not only on the Outside but quite thro’ the Wall’. The exterior was to be ‘worked with squared Ashler properly tool’d or stroked no stone to be less than six Inches in thickness’, with the course above the Order of ‘sufficient breadth to allow for a three Inch offset all round’ the building, ‘the projections of the Bases of the Columns and Pilasters . . . going a sufficient way into the Body of the Walls’, ‘the offsets to be worked with a weathering to let the water run off’ and the remaining thickness of the walls to be built with ‘good scabbled Stones . . . in regular courses well bedded with the Joints properly broken’. The ashlar blocks were to be not less than six inches thick and have ‘proper bond stones to go quite through the wall’. The parapet was to be laid in such a way as to allow the water to ‘fall towards the Roof’. The tower was to be ‘firmly bound together [with] every fourth Stone a bond Stone to reach quite through the Wall the remaining thickness . . . to be built with good hard Bricks’. The roof was to lay on ‘heart of Oak Lathes with Cast Iron Pins’ and covered in the ‘best Welsh slate’. The internal walls, constructed with ‘good sound well squared scabbled Stone’, were to be plastered with ‘two Coats and finished with rough Stucco’, the ceiling with ‘three Coats . . . sett white’ and the entablature ‘in Stucco to be run round the whole of the Middle Aisle’. The pews and singers’ gallery at the west end were to be wainscotted in ‘Rigo Oak’; the columns and pilasters at the entrance to the chancel in ‘Deal Glued up each fifteen feet high’. All the windows were to be

‘Glazed in narrow Lead with the best Bristol Crown Glass each window to have a part about three feet by two feet made in a distinct frame and fixed on Centres so as to open and shut by a Chord and Pulley . . . the windows to be secure by proper Iron Barrs and the whole made to exclude the rain effectually’.

The ‘Skylight window to the Chancel’ was also to be glazed with ‘best Bristol Crown Glass in Cast Iron Barrs [with] plain painted or stained Glass at the top of the Plastered Dome’. In a rare reference to colouring, the woodwork was to be painted ‘three times in Oil in an Oak colour’ and the windows and stair ironwork in oil of an ‘Iron colour’. The builders were warned that ‘all bad and insufficient Materials . . . may be rejected by the . . . Surveyor . . . taken down and replaced with good at [their] Expençe’.<sup>113</sup> Telford was responsible for drawing up the contracts, and here surely is the voice of a young ambitious professional architect who was soon to emerge as a brilliant civil engineer. The new church was consecrated on 22 July 1796. Telford received £147.10.8 in fees for a job which cost around £8,659 and had occupied his attention over a period of some eight years.<sup>114</sup>

Meanwhile, Telford was tackling what he called a ‘very peculiar construction’ at Madeley, near Ironbridge.<sup>115</sup> When John Wesley preached in the medieval church of St Michael in 1764 it was too small for the size of the congregation, so a window near the pulpit was removed to allow worshippers assembled in the churchyard to hear Divine Service; and on another occasion Wesley was obliged to preach in the open air.<sup>116</sup> The building clearly needed improving, and on 6 October 1788 the vestry approved a report submitted by Jonathan Scoltock (whom we have already met in connection with the rebuilding of St Chad’s). At first he recommended taking down only the tower, but a month later, having provided an estimate for razing the entire building and erecting a new church, he was invited to produce a comprehensive design. A ‘Rough Draught of a New Church together with the Seat[ing]’ was discussed on 8 December and, though now missing, was described in the Vestry Minutes as measuring 80 by 40 feet ‘exclusive of the Tower & Chancel [and] Gallery’d round excluding one end’.<sup>117</sup> Eight months later, in July 1789, the parishioners petitioned the

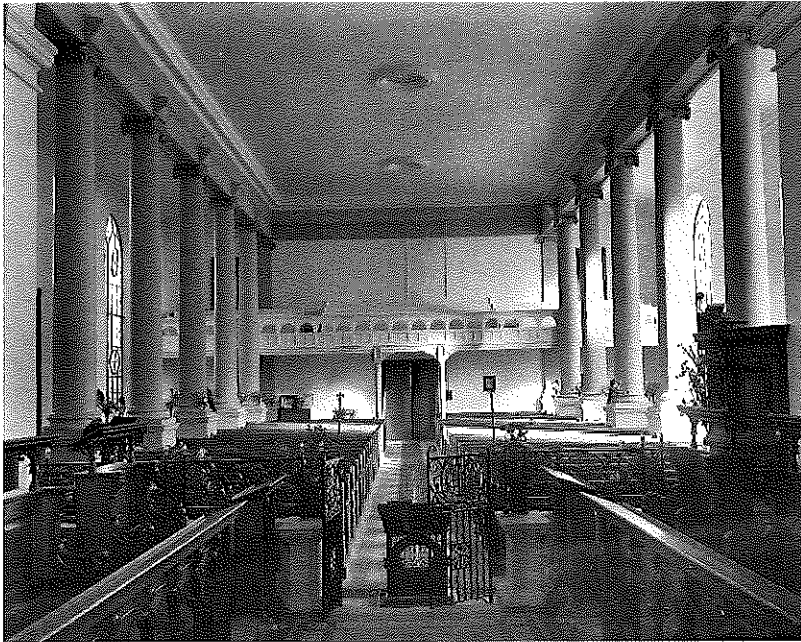


PLATE 22 ST MARY MAGDALENE, BRIDGNORTH, 1788–96, DESIGNED BY THOMAS TELFORD. INTERIOR TOWARDS THE WEST, SHOWING THE LATER SINGERS' GALLERY AND OTHER MODERN INTRUSIONS.

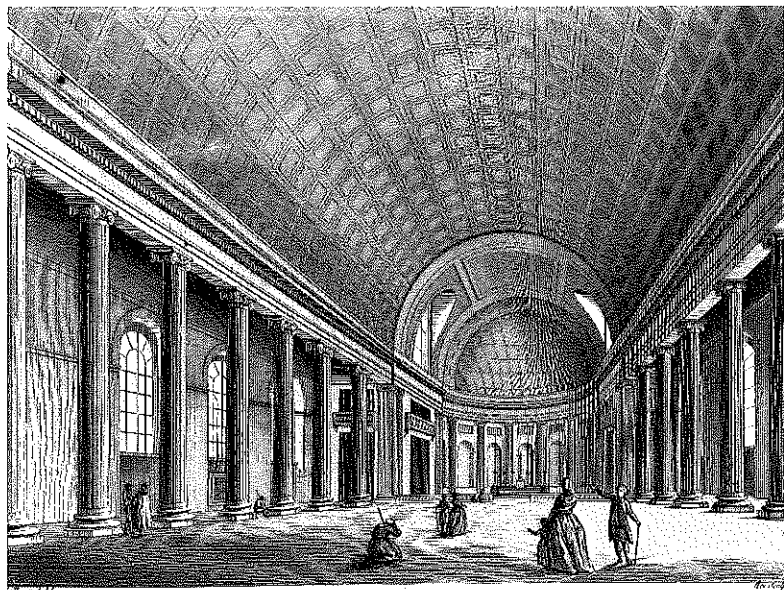


PLATE 23 ST PHILIPPE-DU-ROULE, PARIS, 1768, DESIGNED BY J.F.T. CHALGRIN. INTERIOR TOWARDS THE CHANCEL, DRAWN BY J-B. LALLEMAND AND ENGRAVED BY F-D. NÉE, FROM J-B. DE LABORDE AND OTHERS, *DESCRIPTION DE LA FRANCE*, PARIS, PUBLISHED IN 12 VOLUMES BETWEEN 1784–96 (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION).

VUE INTÉRIEURE DE L'ÉGLISE,  
de S<sup>t</sup> Philippe du Roule.

Shropshire quarter sessions for a Brief to rebuild at a cost of £2,500 'and upwards', with Scoltock giving evidence.<sup>118</sup> Nothing further happened until 14 March 1791, when the vestry resolved that it would be 'extremely improper' to build on the site of the old church since it was located at 'the Outside or Borders' of the parish and 'remote from more than five parts in Six of the Inhabitants'.<sup>119</sup> Three days later Mr. Walker (otherwise unrecorded) was paid £1.11.6 'for Drawing a Plan and Elevation for a New Church',<sup>120</sup> but these were not implemented.

When the Reverend Joseph Plymley visited on 15 December 1792 he found the walls of the old church propped up by timbers and the tower taken down 'for fear it would fall'. Aware of the disagreement among various parish factions regarding a suitable site, he remarked on the obvious practicalities of building on existing ground because the churchyard was 'sacred from long usage', whereas on newly consecrated ground 'it

might be difficult to prevent the coal pits which abound . . . from being worked too near'. On the other hand, the old site stood at

'an extremity of the parish, & as its increased population is principally at the other extremity, there seems a more pressing call to select a central situation . . . which, upon a principal of general fairness, shd. always be done'.<sup>121</sup>

The centre of the parish was also considered troublesome because it, too, was 'full of coal-pits'.<sup>122</sup> During a second visitation, on 19 February 1793, Plymley put forward an ambitious solution which entailed building two new churches, one on its present site and a second on another site to accommodate the 'more populous part of the Parish'.<sup>123</sup> Subsequently, Telford appeared on the scene. He is mentioned in the Madeley accounts for the first time on 31 May 1793 when he delivered a 'Plan of the New Church to be erected near the Dale Coppice'. The vestry approved but then requested that he supply an estimate for 'a Church of Brick and Slate roof, conformable to the said Plan', and also inspect the old church and prepare 'a Plan and Estimate for Erecting a New one (on the Old site) . . . sufficiently large to accommodate 800 Persons'.<sup>124</sup> However, the vestry was uneasy about the scope of such a scheme and on 17 July 1793 suggested that 'two Churches sufficiently large to accommodate 600 Persons each will be the most eligible Size', and Telford was again directed 'to prepare an Estimate and Plan to that effect'.<sup>125</sup> Then, after 'considering Plans of Churches of different sizes, produced by Mr. Telford, and of the most judicious spot for another Church', the vestry informed Plymley on 9 July that

'the necessity of two Churches was quite given up, one on the Old Site under certain regulations being considered sufficient, and the considerable expence which would attend the Erecting of two seemed to constrain them to abandon that Plan'.<sup>126</sup>

The reason given was that the additional expense was 'impracticable from the loss of trade [and] by diminution of demand' resulting from the war with France.<sup>127</sup> Though the vestry had decided by 16 September to build only one new church,<sup>128</sup> on 22 October it was still expressing a desire 'to build one first, at least, on the old site'.<sup>129</sup> In the light of such vacillation, it is fascinating to find a second church – at Malinslee in the adjacent parish of Dawley, erected 1804–5 (Plate 24) – almost identical to the one designed and built by Telford at Madeley between 1793 and 1797 (Plate 25).<sup>130</sup> One conclusion that might be drawn is that Malinslee is a belated expression of Plymley's two-churches proposal of 1793, and perhaps even the other half of a Telford twin-church scheme.

On 22 October 1793 Telford's design for Madeley, which held 900 to 1,000 'Sittings or kneelingings', was approved.<sup>131</sup> The working drawings were delivered about the middle of November.<sup>132</sup> However, early in the following year the Vestry had second thoughts about 'the large expence' and, concluding that it 'ought not to engage . . . upon so great a plan', requested a reduced design to seat about 600, costing no more than £1,600.<sup>133</sup> Telford delivered his final design on 20 January 1794, which was pronounced 'the most Eligible of any produced' and which the authorities 'determined . . . shall be carried into Execution'.<sup>134</sup> An advertisement published in the *Salopian Journal* on 7 May directed to 'Undertakers and Builders' called for

'Any Person or Persons willing to Contract for taking down the present Parish Church . . . and erecting a new one (with Stone and Slated Roof) are desired to send in their Proposals, sealed up [by 4 June]; The Plans, Report, and Working Drawings, may be seen, and further Information had, by applying to Mr. *D. Davies*, at *Madeley*, or to Mr. *Telford*, at the Castle, in *Shrewsbury*'.<sup>135</sup>

John Simpson and a local builder named Samuel Smith were awarded the contract on 4 June, but Smith hesitated to provide an estimate for 'a Brick church with a Welsh Slate Roof & Cast Iron Pillars', and when he finally did, on 18 August, it was passed over in favour of one submitted by John Smallman and a Mr Seale, for £2,000.<sup>136</sup> Demolition of the old church began on 15 September 1794, the foundation-stone being laid on 22 September, but work moved slowly and the new church was not opened until the Spring of 1797.<sup>137</sup> The consecration sermon preached by the vicar, Samuel Walter, from Isaiah 56:7

'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people'<sup>138</sup>

was particularly apt for a building serving working-class needs.

Plymley had criticized the old church for being 'ill contrived on the Inside [with] the Walls supporting the old

PLATE 24 ST LEONARD'S, MALINSLEE, 1804-5, DESIGNER UNKNOWN. WATERCOLOUR VIEW BY REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS, DATED 2 OCTOBER 1823 (SRR: 6001/372, III, F.105).

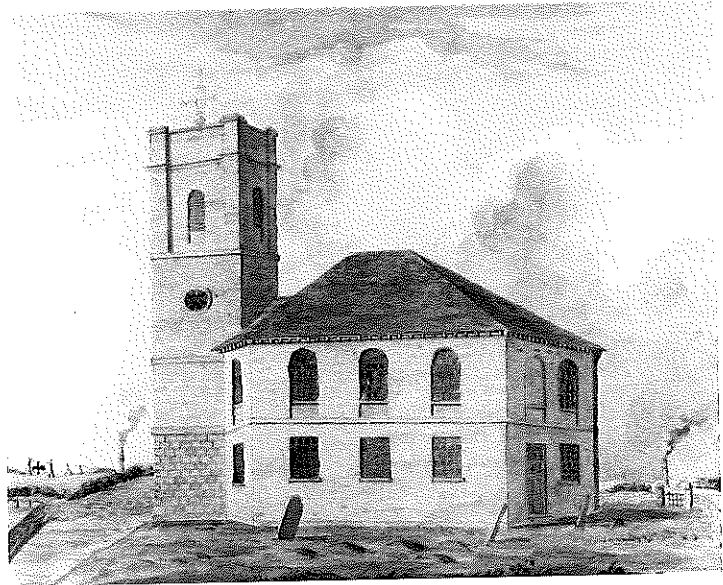
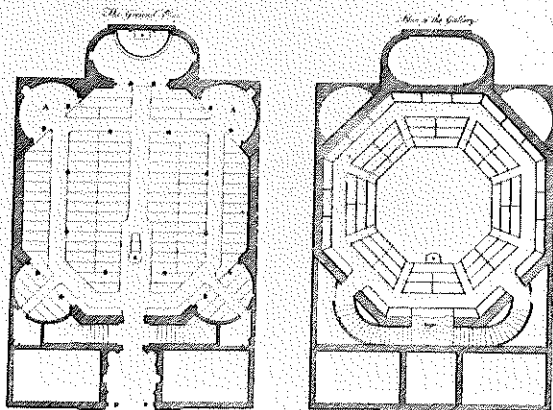
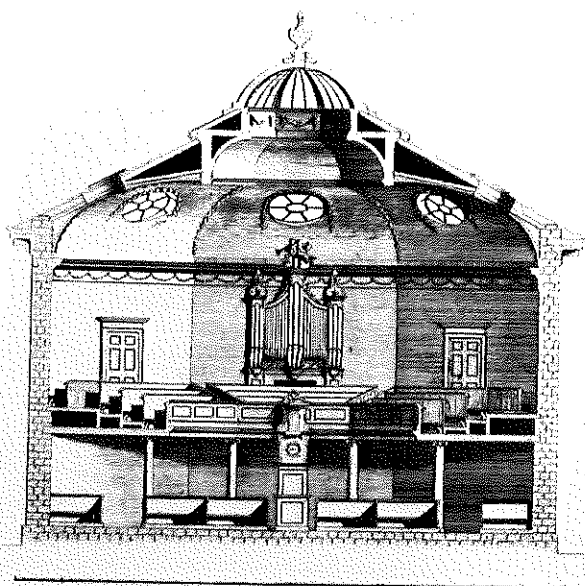


PLATE 25 ST MICHAEL'S, MADELEY, 1793-7, DESIGNED BY THOMAS TELFORD (SRR: NEG. B238).

Tower taking up much room [and] obscuring the Minister from part of the Congregation & other parts . . . are inconvenienced by heavy & low galleries'.<sup>139</sup> Telford was well aware of the visual and auditory clarity that could be achieved by a single compact centralized space of octagonal form (having supervised the construction of J.H. Haycock's Shropshire County Gaol at Shrewsbury, designed in 1785 and built in 1787-93, which features an octagonal chapel with a circular interior).<sup>140</sup> The 'very peculiar construction' he devised for Madeley not only satisfied these requirements but was closely bound up with the character of the congregation and the career of its late vicar. John Fletcher (1729-85), the celebrated Evangelist, had devoted his twenty-five year curacy to the spiritual welfare of a rural community struggling to find its way in the new mechanized society. Wesley had regarded him as his natural successor, and even after Fletcher's death (which preceded Wesley's) the Anglican congregation at Madeley continued to maintain close links with Methodism. Fletcher's successor, Melvyn Horne (1785-92) had been one of Wesley's itinerant preachers,<sup>141</sup> and Plymley observed that



*The Plans and Section of the New Octagon Chappel at Bath*

PLATE 26 OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH, 1767, DESIGNED BY TIMOTHY LIGHTOLER. PLAN AND SECTION, ENGRAVED BY W. LINDLEY, 1786.

'Sectaries in this parish, are, in fact, but few, for though many would be denominated Methodists, they frequent the church'.<sup>142</sup> Of course, the octagon was especially favoured by Wesley for his own 'common sense' meeting houses<sup>143</sup> and while its use in the eighteenth century as a pattern for Anglican churches is rare, the circumstances at Madeley are entirely justifiable. Furthermore, early in 1793, about the time Plymley put forward the two churches proposal, Telford made a visit to Bath, where he extolled the genius of John Wood, and also may well have taken the time to examine Timothy Lightoler's much admired Octagon Chapel in Milsom Street, opening in 1767 (Plate 26).<sup>144</sup> Plymley certainly knew the building by October 1794, when he attended a service there.<sup>145</sup> Perhaps the novel arrangement of apsidal spaces in the corners of the Bath chapel are reflected in Telford's use at Madeley (Plate 27) of a pair of elliptical recesses on either side of the west door mirrored by curved-ended vestry rooms tucked into the two eastern angles flanking the chancel.<sup>146</sup> *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia* article on Telford observed that

'Galleries being . . . considered absolutely necessary, the design was made with the view of forming and lighting the body . . . independent of them. For this purpose it was made 70 foot by 50, from which a space at each end of the four angles is cut off, to admit of large windows'.

These windows are nearest to the central space, which originally was occupied by a triple-decker pulpit. The plain appearance of the windows, with their thin iron frames,<sup>147</sup> the flat all-embracing ceiling,<sup>148</sup> the use of exposed cast-iron columns to support the galleries and above all the complete absence of ornament gives the building an economical elegance entirely suited to the no-nonsense nature of a parish church serving the Industrial heartland.<sup>149</sup>



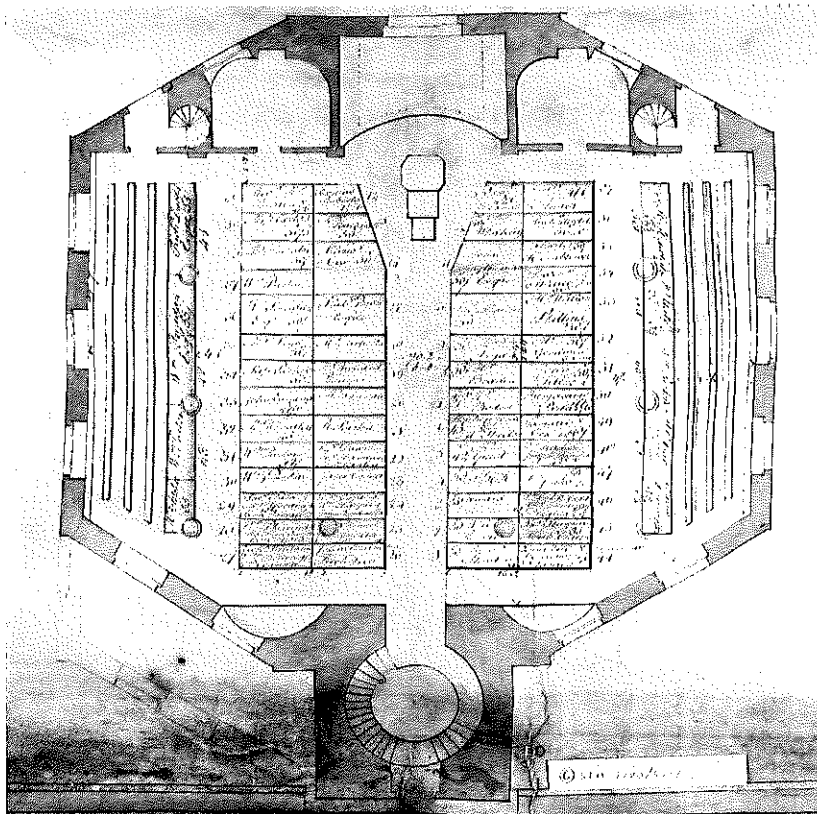


PLATE 27 ST MICHAEL'S,  
MADELEY, 1793-7,  
DESIGNED BY THOMAS  
TELFORD. GROUND  
FLOOR PLAN OF 1794  
(SRR: 2280/6/57).

Just as forms of progressive classicism succeeded in setting down firm roots in Shropshire church architecture, during the 1790s, medieval building traditions were being reinvigorated, and there was a growing belief in the greater legitimacy of Gothic for Anglican design. The desperate plight of some of the medieval cathedrals falling into decay and the means of their rejuvenation, which had been debated throughout the eighteenth century, captured the Salopian imagination at the close of this period as the result of two spectacular events.

Lichfield cathedral, which had been butchered during the Civil War, underwent a major restoration recommended by James Wyatt, which began in 1788 under Joseph Potter's supervision. He overhauled the west end, renewed mutilated decorations, reglazed the windows, refloored and repainted the interior. *The Gentleman's Magazine* commended the Dean and Chapter for 'their great liberality, diligence, and attention, in promoting this excellent work'.<sup>150</sup>

turn your conscious eyes,  
To where yon triple Towers majestic rise!  
See the fair Pile, that in a traitrous age  
Impious Fanatics' more than Vandal rage  
Defac'd, defil'd – by Piety divine,  
With renovat'd Grace, and pristine Splendour shine!<sup>151</sup>

Meanwhile, on Easter Monday, 17 April 1786, the west tower of the Romanesque cathedral at Hereford collapsed, bringing down the western section of the nave and the entrance front. The dean and chapter were attacked in the press for their 'more than barbarous indolence' in neglecting the fabric; a painting of the ruin was exhibited 'about the country' at 6d a go, and a local artist named James Wathen issued a series of dramatic prints illustrating the devastation.<sup>152</sup> In August 1788 *The Gentleman's Magazine* reported that a restoration scheme recommended by Wyatt had been approved and a public subscription launched to raise the required £7,500.<sup>153</sup> This work proved difficult and contentious, and continued into the next century.

The neglect of some church authorities in dealing with their venerable fabrics had profound repercussions in Shropshire. The condition of St Chad's, Shrewsbury by 1788 is perhaps the most dire example. While some churches suffered natural disasters – St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth, for example, was damaged by lightning in

1749<sup>154</sup> – Plymley's very detailed visitation reports make it clear that many more had been left to deteriorate either through indolence or lack of funds. Take the years 1792–1793. At Acton Scott 'the rain has again damaged the ceiling [and the] walls are greenish from damp'; Eaton-under-Heywood 'has so many cracks in it, that it shd; not be permitted to stand'; the walls of Llanvair Waterdine are

'much out of perpendicular. . . . The roof is uneven & somewhat out of repair. The floors are very bad, [the pews] irregular & the bottoms of them shamefully dirty the Pulpit is unstable',

while Shelve

'is in a most indecent state: The . . . corners . . . are badly cracked: the chancel wants plaistering . . . there are heaps of rubbish under the gallery. The chancel, Ch: & Porch, are more indecent than they otherwise wd. be, by a School being taught in the chancel a fireplace . . . has smoked the chancel & is dangerous to the Fabric'.<sup>155</sup>

Various remedies were tried. Failing structures were reinforced, sometimes successfully: at Pontsbury 'a strong Buttress was built on the outside [in] 1772 & . . . has had the effect of preventing [the walls] from moving further'; at other times less so: the tower of Diddlebury 'has been secured by Buttresses, but it is feared this act of support to one side endangers a fall on the other side'.<sup>156</sup>

The inexpensive practice of applying a coat of plaster and whitewash (slaked lime mixed with water) to disguise a multitude of sins was endemic in the eighteenth century.<sup>157</sup>

*On seeing HAUGHAM ABBEY, a fine old Ruin  
near Shrewsbury, white-washed.*

HOW awful once thy antient face,  
How spoilt by vain renewing,  
Of old thy gravity was grace,  
Now spruceness thy undoing.

Thou who wast once a rev'rend sage,  
Alike in fact and show,  
Art now ridiculous in age,  
And look'd a batter'd beau.<sup>158</sup>

Often the results of unconsidered and piecemeal renovation was stylistic muddle. Plymley thought it regrettable that in the 'very comfortable' refitting of the body of Chetton church 'according to a comon custom, the Architecture does not correspond with that of the chancel, or with the lower part of the tower'; at Beckbury the steeple and nave are of 'Grecian [that is, classical] Architecture . . . the Chancel is Gothic'; at Churchstoke the 'chancel has been rebuilt & the architecture of the Ch: [body] has not been copied'; and the altarpiece at Pontesbury is 'neat, but unfortunately a mixture of Grecian & Gothic'.<sup>159</sup> Elsewhere there were eccentric differences in fenestration: 'the newer windows have been injudiciously made not standing regular in regard to the old ones, nor imitate their form'; the 'chancel . . . has one Gothic window, none of the other windows are Gothic'; 'There are some modern [classical] windows . . . all unsuitable in form and some whimsical'.<sup>160</sup>

These hybrid churches, picturesque perhaps, mostly failed miserably to convey any sense of stylistic homogeneity. What ought to have been an unambiguous preference for Gothic for the repairs around 1750 to Battlefield church on the grounds that the original building of 1406–8 had been erected to commemorate the famous Battle of Shrewsbury on 21 July 1403, in fact resulted in the insertion into the nave of four giant Tuscan columns supporting a barrel-vaulted ceiling similar in appearance to St Julian's, Shrewsbury.<sup>161</sup> St Mary's at Kinnerley (Plate 28), where a fifteenth century Perpendicular tower crowned by a later wooden bell turret brutally collides with a Palladian body (1768–77, designed by T.F. Pritchard), though an extreme example is not uncharacteristic.<sup>162</sup> Little wonder that the more prosperous and ambitious parishes of Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth favoured wholesale demolition and new building in a unified classical idiom.

There is, however, a small but interesting group of rural churches of medieval date which were made over in the eighteenth century in the same style. In 1714 Henry Pagett, a Bridgnorth master-mason, rebuilt the tower and nave of Quatford in a convincing if unadventurous Gothic (Plate 29). The Articles of Agreement make it clear that the vestry intended to 'take downe the whole Church and Steeple [and] rebuild' it but incorporating medieval features: 'A Peere or Buttress in the Middle of each of the . . . Walls . . . with Two three light



PLATE 28 ST MARY'S, KINNERLEY, REMODELLED 1768-77 BY THOMAS FARNOLLS PRITCHARD. REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS'S VIEW DATED 1786 (SRR: 6001/372, I, F.17).

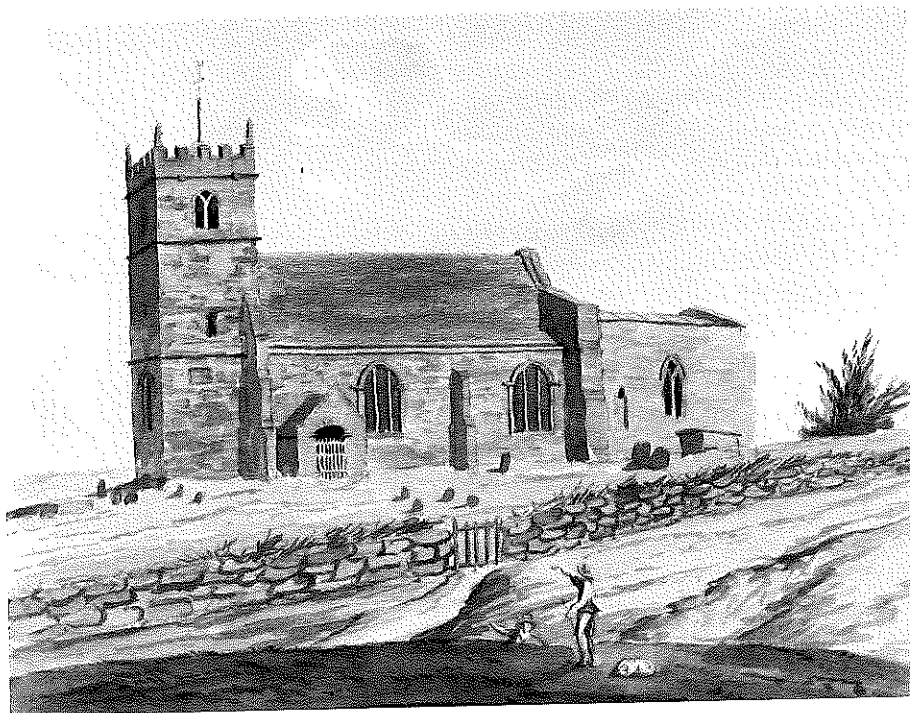


PLATE 29 ST MARY MAGDALENE, QUATFORD, REMODELLED 1714 BY HENRY PADGETT. REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS'S VIEW DATED 11 AUGUST 1790 (SRR: 6001/372, II, F.32).

Windows . . . Arched', as well as reusing existing materials: 'ye two old Windows now in the South Wall to be placed in the North Wall'.<sup>163</sup> In 1761-3 Pritchard added a small medieval style mortuary chapel to Acton Round church to house his Gothic monument to the Acton family.<sup>164</sup> The fifteenth-century church at Cockshutt, restored in 1776, had uniformly single-light untraceryed lancets in both the body and chancel.<sup>165</sup> A similar window pattern was introduced in monotonously serried ranks at Market Drayton in 1782-6.<sup>166</sup>

The chief problems facing Georgian architects and builders renewing medieval churches lay not only in making accurate choices from the bountiful repertory of medieval architecture but in a pervading sense of

uncertainty about the methodology of restoration, and some of the more controversial aspects of work in this field, even by famous names, came under attack. In the early 1790s *The Gentleman's Magazine* published a series of articles on Wyatt's restoration of Hereford cathedral. It reported on the collapse of part of the nave vaulting ('a scene shocking beyond description'), observing that the

'decayed appearance of the ceiling certainly required the utmost possible care, and indeed skill, neither of which seems to have been shewn, and which resulted in the deaths of several workmen. Perhaps if Mr. Wyatt had been present, no life would have been lost'.

When the scaffolding was removed to reveal the renewed west end:

'Were it the front of a new church, it would be admired; but it does not, nor ever can, correspond with the Saxon arches in the inside [and while the] nave looks *neat* and *nice* . . . all its grandeur and antiquity is no more . . . Mr. Wyatt endeavoured very much to lengthen the choir . . . had he succeeded it would have been all seeing and *no hearing* [the] proposed addition to the tower is so flat that it will not be adopted, and it had been well if none of the plans . . . had been carried into execution'.<sup>167</sup>

When Sir Richard Colt Hoare visited in 1797 he criticized Wyatt's Gothic as 'too light for the fine massive Saxon near it'; two years later he found the 'solemnity [of the building] much injured by its being painted a dead white', and on a final visit in 1802 condemned the new west front as

'beneath criticism, the work of the modern Goth, Wyatt, who in his endeavors to restore and improve had destroyed the beauty of many of our most interesting Gothic buildings'.<sup>168</sup>

Hereford was again the subject of criticism in the October 1798 issue of *The Gentleman's Magazine*,<sup>169</sup> one of a series of 212 densely argued and influential articles published between 1798 and 1817 by the architect and writer, John Carter (leader of the anti-Wyatt lobby) entitled 'The Pursuits of Architectural Innovation', which attempted to codify the nature of English Gothic and current perceptions about its restoration and conservation. Wyatt's work at Lichfield underwent similar vituperation:

'Every method of confusion is introduced; the periods of the Gothic architecture are cruelly confounded . . . the South transept buttressed up . . . with two such masses of stone-work as would disgrace the clumsiest country mason . . . Methinks . . . there is a fashion in all things, our affection for the externals of cathedral worship is to be drawn off by making playthings of the sacred structures',

and so on.<sup>170</sup>

It was in this climate that the two most ambitious 'Gothic' endeavours in Shropshire unfolded: the restoration of St Mary's at Shrewsbury, which began in 1787, and the rebuilding from 1793 of St Alkmund's, just across the road.

Remedial work on St Mary's medieval fabric had been going on since the late Stuart period, and probably earlier; thus, in the opinion of Mr Pidgeon, the historian and Corporation treasurer, 'affording the antiquary and man of taste a rich and unique field for observation'.<sup>171</sup> In 1706, 2,232 yards of internal wall was plastered at a cost of £29.7s.10d, and an altar screen of 'heavy Grecian design' installed.<sup>172</sup> The completion of repairs to the 220-foot high tower and spire in 1739 was marked by the much publicized occasion when Richard Cadman, in an attempt to fly down a rope stretched from the tower top into a meadow across the river, belly-first and firing a pair of pistols, plunged Icarus-like to his death!<sup>173</sup> In 1754 the spire was shattered by a high wind, repaired, damaged again two years later and again repaired (by William Thompson of Lichfield at a cost of £57.7s.4d).<sup>174</sup> In 1786, according to *The Stranger in Shrewsbury*, the nave walls were 'very injudiciously raised some feet above their original level, which altogether destroys the ancient proportions, and gives the whole building a top-heavy appearance'.<sup>175</sup> This led to the launch in the following two years of a more professional restoration programme under the supervision of Thomas Telford.

During the twelve months from November 1787 he received £95.3s.6d 'on Account of the Repairs of Saint Mary's Chancel'.<sup>176</sup> This work is described in the churchwardens' account book in vague terms but is probably to be identified with the installation of a new pulpit and pews, including the mayor's seat, and a new front to the organ loft, all apparently made of oak.<sup>177</sup> On 3 September 1788 Telford reported that 'the Sermon was preached the first time in the new Pulpit which I have just finished in the Gothic style . . . I believe [it] carried off more applause than the Sermon'.<sup>178</sup> This was perhaps not an unnatural reaction from a congregation long accustomed to the imposition of classical style furniture in its medieval church. Removed and destroyed by the Victorians, the only record of its appearance known to the present writer is an anonymous drawing in the Shropshire Records and

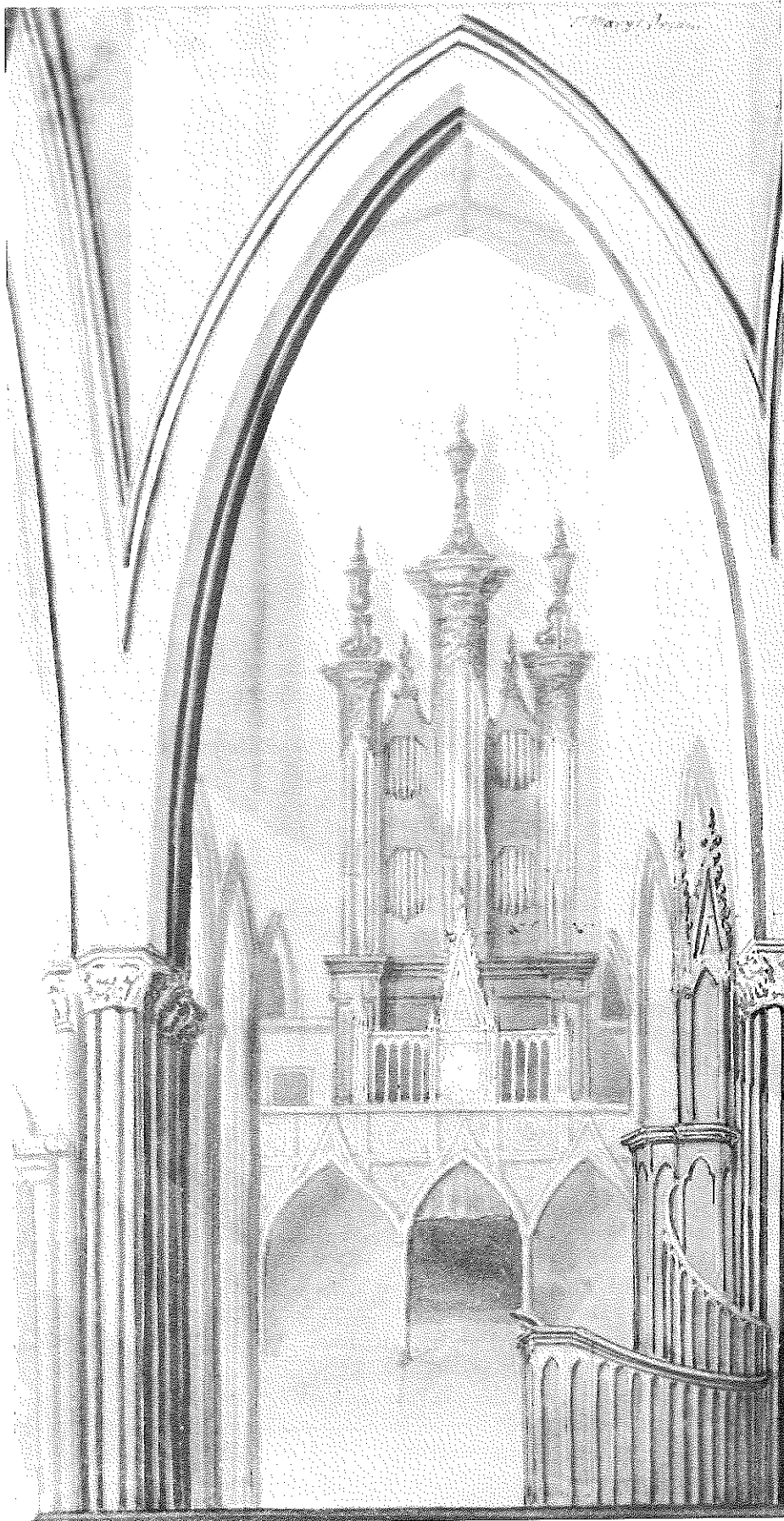


PLATE 30 ST. MARY'S, SHREWSBURY, PULPIT, READING DESK AND WEST GALLERY, DESIGNED 1787-8 BY THOMAS TELFORD. EARLY 19TH-CENTURY VIEW OF THE SUBSEQUENTLY DESTROYED FITTINGS (SRR: 6001/199, F.245).

Research Centre (Plate 30) showing a tall spiky affair attached to the north-west crossing pier. In the background is the Baroque organ supplied by John Harris and John Byfield in 1728–9 and the clock given by Andrew Swift in 1747<sup>179</sup> rehoused in Telford's gothicized west gallery. In addition, an altar of unknown appearance consisting of a slab of Sienna marble bordered with jasper, once the property of Telford's patron, Sir William Pulteney, MP for Shrewsbury, was donated in 1789 by the then curate, Hugh Owen.<sup>180</sup> None of these items have survived.

In the following year perhaps, the oak-panelled choir roof was ornamented with 'plaster and painted . . . patterns of trefoil tracery, and . . . embossed with carved roses and devices' salvaged from the ceilings of St Chad's and St Alkmund's.<sup>181</sup> At Easter 1790 Carline and Tilley received their first payment (£70) as building contractors.<sup>182</sup> On 20 February 1791 the St Chad's rebuilding committee presented a large and magnificent Jesse window of medieval stained glass removed from their partly destroyed church (since it was unusable in the new classical one), which was reinstalled in the choir of St Mary's, and remains one of its treasures.<sup>183</sup> Telford received an initial payment (10 guineas) on 13 July 1793, and £75.7s.11½d was expended on undesignated 'Alterations' during the following year.<sup>184</sup> The work so far was only cosmetic, and structural rehabilitation of the fabric was not undertaken until after 1798. Meanwhile, Telford was engaged on improvements to at least five other medieval churches in the county. They are worth examining in some detail since it was undoubtedly his experiences there that account for his major success at St Mary's.

As an architect-engineer Telford's approach to restoration was practical and unsentimental. For example, in assessing the condition of the fabric of old Bridgnorth church in 1791, he concluded that

'the essential parts . . . are in so decayed a state that it would be a very imprudent measure to adopt a Plan for Repairing [since it would lead to] a train of unlimited expenses . . . a very small proportion only . . . would be preserved, and if any part should be preserved, that part would still remain suspicious and be very improper for connecting with the new Work'.<sup>185</sup>

So, as we have seen, the old church was demolished and the new one wholly committed to classicism. On a visit in 1793 to St Mary's, Bitterley, Plymley expressed fears to the churchwardens that the steeple

'will become ruinous, if not attended to; & that the floor of the Nave is already too bad for safety or decency. The desks both for the clergyman & clerk infirm; & the pews in general rather unseemly. Indeed the whole of the Fabric is susceptible to great improvement . . . The great respectability of the Parish, . . . makes [me] confident that this necessary work will be properly gone thro' with . . . the longer repairs of any kind are delayed the more burthensome they become'.

On a return visit in March 1794 Plymley recorded that the parish had invited 'Mr. Telford the Architect' to survey the fabric, and that he found it 'extremely dangerous & that nothing short of taking down & rebuilding would be advisable'.<sup>186</sup> In 1794–5 Telford examined St John the Baptist, Whittington, a medieval fabric which had been partly classicized in 1747 (tower) and 1785 (chancel), and recommended rebuilding the nave in conformity.<sup>187</sup> But elsewhere Telford took measures to preserve the original fabric. In 1793 he installed emergency brick buttresses at St Mary's, Cleobury Mortimer, to prevent further lateral spread of the walls, and also wooden tie beams across the nave, concealed above a plaster ceiling.<sup>188</sup> Plymley's 9 April 1794 visitation reported that the

'situation of this Ch: was thought dangerous & it was intended to have a new one built [but] was afterwards overruled & the whole has been repaired at a considerable expence, buttressed & cramped with Iron'.<sup>189</sup>

Telford's extensive improvements to All Saints, Baschurch offers more detailed insight into his working methods. He is first mentioned in the accounts on 27 February 1789, when he received one guinea for 'his Survey & Report of the State of the Church'.<sup>190</sup> The parish petition to the Shropshire Quarter Sessions on 6 October seeking permission to collect funds, described the building as

'a very ancient Structure, and by Length of Time (notwithstanding the great Expence the Parishioners have, from Time to Time, been in repairing and endeavouring to keep the same up) is become so ruinous that [they] cannot assemble . . . for Divine Worship without great Danger to their Lives . . . upon the Oath of Thomas Telford, an able and experienced Workman, who hath carefully viewed, the Roof must be entirely taken off and the North Wall the Whole of the North Aile, and the Chancel . . . rebuilt'

at an estimated cost of £1,200, exclusive of old material.<sup>191</sup> On 13 April the Bishop of Lichfield granted authority to rebuild 'according to the plan of the intended Alterations'.<sup>192</sup> Carefully drawn and measured plans of the church (Plate 31) 'in its present State' (bottom) and indicating proposed 'Repairs' (top) are presented

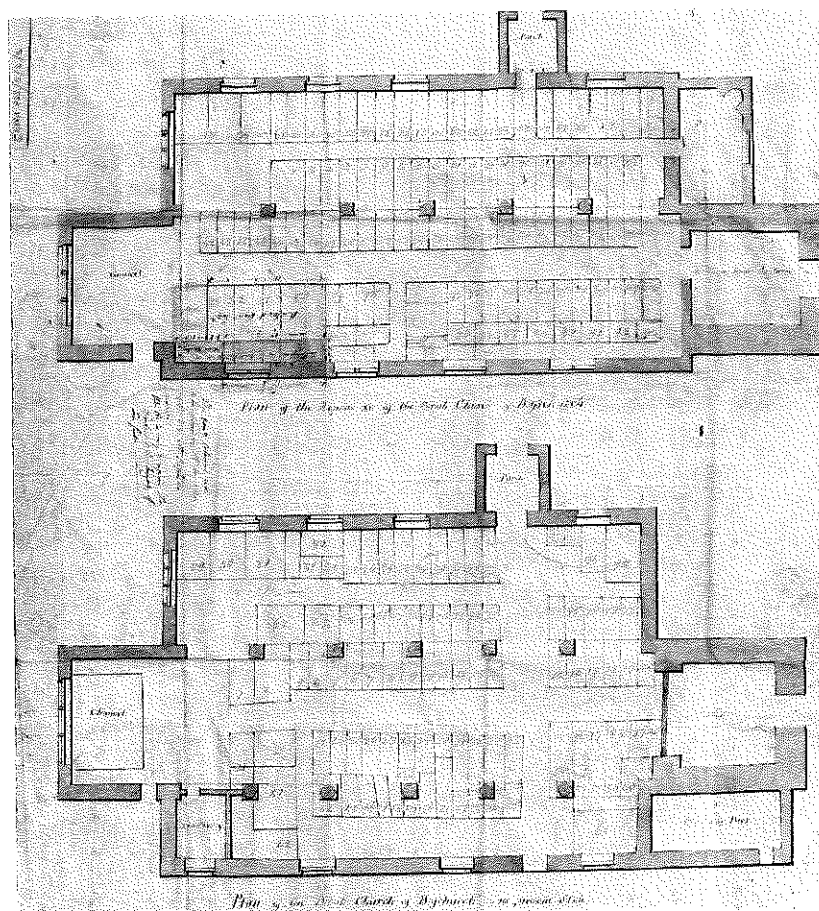


PLATE 31 ALL SAINTS, BASCHURCH, REMODELLED 1789–93 BY THOMAS TELFORD. 'BEFORE' AND 'AFTER' PLANS ATTACHED TO THE PETITION OF 13 APRIL 1790 (SRR: P22/B/2/5).

side by side. The north aisle with its row of columns and the vestry and bier-room on either side were to be taken down and replaced by a new north wall with regularly spaced two-light windows, creating a curiously lopsided building with an aligned tower, nave and chancel but only one aisle and an off-centre porch. Since the Bishop had condemned the old pews as 'exceedingly irregular . . . very indecent and incommodious', they were replaced and regularised, thereby achieving nearly the same accommodation (93 rather than 95 sittings) but in a reduced space. By 18 April 1790 advertisements had been placed in the Shrewsbury, Birmingham and Chester newspapers calling for building proposals and estimates.<sup>193</sup> A month later Telford presented his bills: two guineas 'for a plan Estimate, & Attendance at Quarter Sessions', 11 guineas 'for plans, Elevations, Reports, Working Drawings [all untraced] & Attendance in order to Settle the Contract', £1.10s.6d for 'plans of the Church in the Old State & with the propos'd Alterations on paper & Parchm[en]t. sent to Lichfield', and one guinea for 'Examining the Timber in the Roof'.<sup>194</sup> On 30 May 1791 he reported on the state of finances: £1,157.14s.0d had been spent, including three guineas on repairing 'the Pillars and Arches along the middle of the Church', £10.4s.9d on the 'Alter piece & . . . altering and refixing the [communion] Table and Wainscotting', £4.9s.0d on 'Painting the lower part of the Pews at 1s. each', £3 for 48 feet of 'Oak panneld Wainscotg. to raise the pews at the East and west End', £1.10s.0d for 60 feet of 'Grinshill Stone Jambs to the Windows instead of Red Stone', £5.17s.6½d for 120¾ feet of crown glass at a half-penny per foot, £1.5s.0d for 'taking out and refixing the . . . windows of Paintid Glass [at the] Chancel End', 17s for 136 feet of pavement 'within the Comm[unio]n. Railing being of clean'd Work instead of Toold only'.<sup>195</sup> On 30 March 1793 'Mr. Haycock' (either William or his son, John Hiram) received 10s.6d for undertaking three trips from Shrewsbury to 'Measure the Church Work'.<sup>196</sup>

In 1797 St Michael's, Chirbury was repewed by the partnership of Brown and Owen of Baschurch for £380. Plymley reported on 18 April 1798:

'This Ch: has had all its old pews, forms, & Galleries removed uniformly pewed with 100 Pews of very neat

workmanship in Oak, & with neat Japanned Nos. upon each. This was done at the expence of the Proprietors [the Trustees of Shrewsbury School] . . . each . . . paying a proportionate piece p. foot: 50 square feet cost £9 10s. The allotment was made by a neighbouring clergyman, Mr King of Worthen; & Mr. Telford Architect'.

Moreover, the parishioners erected 'a neat Gallery on Gothic Pillars over the West door',<sup>197</sup> perhaps reflecting Telford's improvements of nearly ten years earlier at St Mary's, Shrewsbury.

Let us now return to this church. In January 1798 one of the churchwardens, Rowland Hunt, recounted

'I was frequently spoken to on the very decayed & dangerous State of the Church – & [responded] according to my usual practice of putting Questions which would lead Gentlemen to judge for themselves, rather than to dictate my own opinion. These and other Queries were submitted to an Architect who . . . confirmed the dangerous & decayed state of the Edifice'.<sup>198</sup>

On 30 September the gentlemen-churchwardens were instructed to write to 'Mr. Potter . . . of Lichfield to desire Him to make a Survey, a Report, & an Estimate'.<sup>199</sup> Joseph Potter (c1756–1842), described in a subsequent document as 'an experienced Architect of Gothic Architecture',<sup>200</sup> had supervised Wyatt's restorations at both Lichfield (1788–93) and Hereford (1790–3). His report on St Mary's, submitted in January 1799, is a model of professional common sense and good housekeeping. He recommended that 'a Plan of Repair be adopted & followed on progressively as the Parish may afford; The State of The Times & the Value of Money being m[u]ch considered', a reference to the depressed economy resulting from the current conflict with France and Spain. He advised pursuing financial loans 'so as to avoid the Expence of borrowing Money & also the Disappointment to Tradesmen of not being paid Proportions of Money due to them'. The architect was to

'inspect & report in writing at certain Periods of the work its State & Progress; & . . . make up the Estimates as going forward; so that on his ascertaining the Money being laid out; Cash may be paid on account to the Contractors so that one fourth Part of the Money shall remain'.

Disputes were to be referred to the architect. Each contract was to have 'a running Clause, so that what is added may be done or diminished at contract-Price'. A book was to be kept 'so that any Inhabitant paying Loans may enter his opinion in writing . . . so that as far as possible, *The Will of all* may be considered' (a potentially nightmarish scenario). The construction was to be 'executed according to the character & Architecture of the Build[in]g. as described in the Draw[in]g. & Report'.<sup>201</sup> These procedures were confirmed on 17 March 1799 and on the same day Telford, John Simpson and Richard Lee (the principal carpenter then employed by the Shrewsbury corporation) were asked to survey the church and report on 'the Repair wanting and also the method of carrying them into Execution'.<sup>202</sup>

Telford's report of 5 April 1799 is a remarkable conservation document.<sup>203</sup> It deals with the building on four points. Firstly, those 'parts which are much decay'd and which require to be Immediately attended to, for the security of the fabrick and the safety of the Congregation', including securing 'the present beautifull [nave] Roof by placing another Roof over it . . . connected by Iron work so as to render it perfectly safe', replacing the 'very much decay'd' parapet, and 'some triffling repairs' to the windows, at an estimated cost of £239.6s.6d. Observing that 'the outside Ground is much higher than the floor of the Church' so that 'Rain & Wet could not be well kept from flowing' into the interior, he recommended re-covering the south porch with Westmorland slate (at £23.14s.6d) rather than removing it altogether, which he would have preferred to do. The lower part of the tower should be 'scrap and pointed with Mortar made up Carefully and judiciously to match the Colour of the Stone', and since

'the Timbers which support the Bell Stage have been cut very injudiciously, and some of the present supports are very Improperly fram'd considering the Effect which the ringing of the Bells have upon the Tower & Spire, it appears absolutely necessary to lose no Time in strengthening the framing by additional Trusses these must be introduc'd with judgement . . . so as to connect with and support the present framing'.

This was to cost £83.9s.6d. Secondly,

'What is advisable to be done in order to prevent the External parts of the walls falling hastily into decay but which may be carried on Progressively [the] whole of the outside walls which are expos'd to the Effects [of] sun & weather [and where] the surface of the stones are reduced to a state of lose sand and . . . in the joints wash'd off to the depth of from one to 2 Inches and the Wet sinking into this soft surface'.



Telford rejected the technique of pointing as

'a proper remedy or likely to prove Effectual, for the wet would still continue to sink into the soft surface of the stone and the Pointing would be either wash'd or brush off by the rain & frost . . . if it did remain it would prove prejudicial, by retaining the Water as in a Cup . . . the most advisable way is, to work-off all the soft parts of the face of the stone walls to the depth of 1½In. or 2In. and this ought to be done by run[nin]g. a small Chisel draft round the joints & work off [the] middle part of each stone. by neat Axed work, by this means a fresh & hard surface would be Exposed to the Air, and the walls would have a smooth Iregular appearance'.

The cost of performing this on the tower, south aisle, transept and upper nave walls, and then 'inserting stones in the place of Such as may be very deeply decay'd', was calculated at £213. Thirdly,

'The manner in which several parts of the Building ought to be replac'd which altho. not in immediate want of repair are yet so much decay'd, as to render it Improper to attempt to repair them much longer',

which concentrated on the parapets and roofs, at a cost of £466.5s.6d. Fourthly,

'Those parts of the Building which have by degrees been changed from their Original Character, and which may be replac'd at a given Expense, and at any time, when the finances of the Parish or any other funds, can be conveniently appropriated [such as] the Ornamental features which altho. not absolutely necessary to the security or preservation of the Church are yet characteristic of its Style of Architecture and prove a desireable addition to it [such as the tower pinnacles] . . . those which ought to be plac'd on the parapits of the church the ornamented Cielings to the Transept and side Aisles'.

Telford reckoned the cost 'to Execute the pinnacles properly in stone and Ornament Cielings by means of Paintings, as in the Instance of the Chapel & Library of the public Schools [Shrewsbury School] but more Enrich'd', at £97.14s.6d, or an additional £100 'if instead of Painting the Cieling were made [of] Ornamental Groins in Stuco'.

His companion report provided technical specifications for the builders 'of the mode in which the work is to be perform'd', such as examining the walls

'quite thro their thickness and the parts clear'd off, to a levell surface to receive the new Work [using Grinshill ashlar] not less than 12 Inches in breadth on an Average [so as to resemble] the present one [the] remaining thickness of wall to be built with good hard well burnt bricks laid in Mortar'.

The parapet was to be heightened to four feet, with coping 'resembling the present Coping'. The new roof was to be built of

'good sound English Oak clear of Sap . . . the Straps to be made of best Swedish Iron . . . the whole . . . to be covered with ¾ Inch boarding out . . . of Petersburg Deal Planks . . . agreeable to the annex'd Drawing mark'd (No. 1) [the tower] scarp'd or Toold in the joints, & pointed with Mortar made to . . . the Colour of Stone, to be Compos'd of Ground quick lime Iron Dust & washed sand . . . the Lufferboarding of Oak. & painted 4 Times in Oil, of an oak Colour'.

All the work, costing a total of £1,333.3s.6d, was to be completed by 25 September 1800.<sup>204</sup>

The 'particulars [enabling] the different tradesmen to prepare estimates' were formulated on 7 April 1799, and on 30 June the churchwardens were instructed to 'contract with such Architect or Architects as they shall judge proper for repairing the Church'.<sup>205</sup> On 16 March 1800 Telford was asked

'to make a plan of the repairs for the side aisles according to his recommendation [and] give his opinion of the cause of the Pillars . . . being out of the Perpendicular',

and on 30 March to supply a 'Plan for altering the Organ Gallery'.<sup>206</sup> On 10 December 1801 Telford, Simpson and Hunt inspected the work and considered that

'the two new and double Tresses which support the Frame of the Bells, seems excellently calculated to answer that purpose; and will tend to secure this part of the Building for a long period'.

They analyzed the structural deterioration of the spire's stonework:

'the Stone from excessive and constant Exposure, are in part become cariated and the Water lodging in these parts, the Frost and Thaw cause large pieces to fall off . . . and therefore this part of the repair which at first appears ornamental only is as needful for preservation as the [tower] was for support . . . new Roof, of the Body . . . is admirably framed and does the greatest Credit to the inspector and contractor . . . the Gothic Ornament of the Ceiling, are from heat and new laying something [*sic*] opened in their Joints require . . . Slips of half inch Deal either screwed on or carefully bored for Nails . . . so as not to loosen the Gothic Work on the underside'.

A small door was recommended installed in the tower to 'prevent the Staircase to the Bells being used improperly'.<sup>207</sup>

On 20 July 1802 Hunt reported on the state of the finances, which providentially had altered owing to 'the Peace [and] the Restoration of Plenty' (in fact, no more than a lull in the War between October 1801 and May 1803). That is, stocks soared from 56% to 75%, '& therefore near £20 in each Hundred better than before'.

'The Parish may now put an End to their difficulties by borrowing the whole Money they owe & also what further they want [which] may prevent in future the Decay of their Church . . . Borrowing may be injurious to an Individual, because his Wants may be increased & can not perhaps be ascertained;- but to a Body Corporate with a definite Object, it is a Prevention of Mischief, by anticipating an increased Demand owing to progressive Decay. [The required £2,000] is so very small, relative to the extent & opulence of the Parish . . . a very small Privation will enable us to perform a very sacred duty: & those who come after, will have their Burthen made still lightur, by a decayed church having become a Building in full repair. Should the Church fall, an Estimate of a New one, would not be less than [£]6000 & the Payment probably about 10,000'.

Hunt then turned to the fabric, noting that the 'Buttresses within the Tower, & the Roof over Part of the church, have been reported as highly creditable to the architect Mr. Telford, & to Mr. Simpson as a Builder'. With rare insight he observed that

'Gothic Build[ing]s. having stood from 700-to-1000 Years, have proved the Merit of their Structure. Whereas other Buildings have been replaced three or four times in the [same] Period - Nor are the apparent Ornaments in Gothic Buildings without their full use in the Preservation of the Edifice, & known to be so to architects, just as the Eye. Brow & Eye-Lash are highly servicable to the organ of Sight'.<sup>208</sup>

This enlightened layman's view of medieval architecture was very much a product of the 1790s, a decade which saw the publication of a number of erudite and well illustrated books, among them Joseph Halfpenny's *Gothic Ornaments in the Cathedral Church of York* and John Topham's *Some Account of the Collegiate Chapel of Saint Stephen, Westminster*, both issued in 1795, The Society of Antiquaries' *Some Account of the Cathedral Church of Exeter*, 1797, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Specimens of the Architecture of the Abbey Church of Bath*, 1798 and *Some Account of the Cathedral Church of Durham*, 1801, James Bentham's *The History of Gothic and Saxon Architecture in England*, 1798 and Thomas Warton's *Essays on Gothic Architecture*, 1800.<sup>209</sup> Thus, we find Hugh Owen in 1808 publishing one of the most scathing condemnations of a supposed maltreatment of a local medieval church, St Alkmund's, which had been demolished, except for its 184-foot high Perpendicular west tower, and rebuilt in a Gothic style between 1793 and 1795. The new church had cost £3,005.14s.5d, when half that amount, Owen claimed, would

'probably have completely repaired the old structure, and newly arranged its seats, by which it might have been rendered, beyond all comparison more convenient than the generality of churches now of late erected in this country, where room is calculated to an inch, where all seats are paid for, and where the poor are crowded into three narrow aisles; in short, where all is close, and too often unimpressive . . . The solemn appearance of the old church . . . was really superior to most churches of its age and size, when the unsightly galleries and pews were removed previous to its demolition'.

By contrast, he thought the new church 'exhibits one of those attempts that have of late appeared at imitating our ancient pointed architecture' but which prove little more 'successful than the generality of such moderne structures'.<sup>210</sup> Nevertheless, the renewed St Alkmund's was (and in part remains) one of the most interesting British churches of its day.<sup>211</sup>

The old fabric had received modest improvements over the years: a classical altarpiece in 1712, and in 1775 a singers' gallery at the west end and renewed steeple battlements and pinnacles.<sup>212</sup> In 1788 the top of the steeple was thought to end too abruptly and was rebuilt by John Cheshire, a celebrated Midland's steeple-mender praised for his talent in revitalising 'ill-proportioned [and] ruined spires'.<sup>213</sup> Nevertheless, by 1793 the fabric was said to be in an advanced state of deterioration. Richard Baker of High Fields near Market Drayton and John Smith of Coppice Green near Shifnal were invited to make inspections.<sup>214</sup> Baker reported on 5 August that the walls were

'by length of time very much decay'd and in several parts bulged, and some of the Timber in the Roofs very rotten, the Lead very bad, and the Stone covering exceedingly ruinous. The Roof over the middle Ile appears sound but the Walls on each side are bulged and now kept together by Iron cramps fixed to each end of the beam. The Stone under the Battlements is molten'd away whereby they are in some danger of falling [the aisles are in a] weak State . . . I do not think there is any immediate danger of it giving way . . . provided you keep the Timber and Walls dry they cannot get much more ruinous for a Year or two . . . I mention this only to prevent any alarm and uneasyness in the Parish . . . although it certainly appears necessary to repair the whole, or take down, and rebuild the same on a less or more compact Scale the later of which appears to me the most advisable mode . . . a compleat repair will be near equal to a new church'.<sup>215</sup>

Both men hoped that the expense 'unavoidably incurred should be rendered as light as possible' and warned against 'any unnecessary and lavish expenditure'.<sup>216</sup> Perhaps with St Chad's (which cost £17,752) fresh in their mind, this set the tone for the subsequent rebuilding. On 11 August, having digested the report, the churchwardens resolved that 'it is expedient to erect a new Church exclusive of the Steeple [with the contractor] allowed the old Materials', at a cost not exceeding £2,000.<sup>217</sup> They solicited designs not only from Baker (who was paid 4 guineas for a 'Plan', now untraced),<sup>218</sup> but from the partnership of John Carline (1761–1835) and John Tilley (died 1796?), who had supervised the remodelling of the steeple in 1788–9.<sup>219</sup> They charged £84 for some nineteen working drawings for St Alkmund's, of which only one appears to have survived: a signed ground plan (Plate 32) specifying a vestry room and a 'Waiting Room for [the] Poor' flanking the main entrance under the west tower, as well as an arrangement of 110 pews on the floor and in the west gallery, with additional window seats for the poor, accommodating a total of 520 persons.<sup>220</sup> On 18 October the rebuilding committee accepted unanimously Carline's scheme 'deliver'd this day' and he was asked to prepare working drawings; the 'principal part' of these had been delivered by 11 November, with Carline and Tilley promising to complete the rest by 2 December.<sup>221</sup> Their proposal, delivered with the drawings on 23 December 1793, refers to the use of cast iron muntin bars and sash frames, 'a plain neat font with statuary Marble bason' and 'a neat gothic [communion] table . . . with statuary Marble top'. There was also to be a pair of external porches at the east end

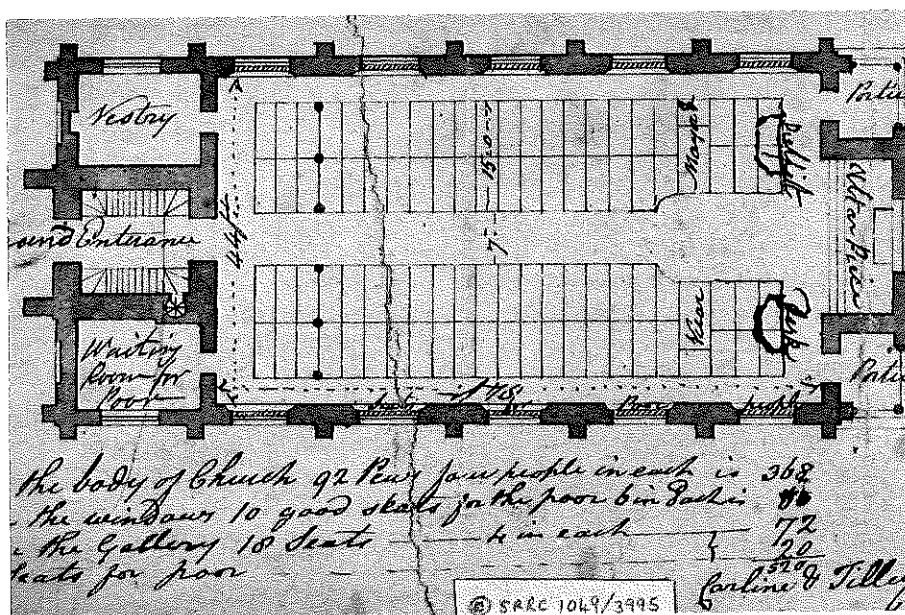


PLATE 32 ST ALKMUND'S, SHREWSBURY, 1793–5, DESIGNED BY JOHN CARLINE. PLAN OF 1793(?) SIGNED BY J. CARLINE AND J. TILLEY (SRR: 1049/3995).

providing access directly into the body, each tucked into the angle on either side of the chancel and supported on a single Gothic colonnette, an unusual feature which was perhaps necessitated by the east end lying adjacent to the main thoroughfare. The estimated cost of the new building was £2,450. A notice had already appeared in *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* on 22 November calling for

'Such Persons as are willing to contract for the rebuilding . . . according to the working Plans and Designs, which have been adopted for that Purpose . . . to send their Proposals, sealed up, before the twenty-third Day of December . . . including . . . the Value of the old materials, Chandelier Sconces, &c. excepted. The working Plans and Designs may be seen at Messrs. Lloyds. Ironmongers, Pride Hill, any Time after the First of next Month. Proper Security will be excepted, and a Covenant to compleat the whole Undertaking on or before the 25th of March, 1795'.<sup>222</sup>

On 30 December 1793 the churchwardens wrote to their counterpart at All Saints, Wellington asking to 'let us have a site' of their parliamentary petition to bring in a Bill for rebuilding, as 'we have a Similar business now in Hand'.<sup>223</sup> On 1 February 1794 they were advised by their London representative that

'nothing is necessary but to prove the Allegations of your Petition – stating the ruinous Condition of the present Church and the necessaity . . . for rebuilding it; you may also bring with you the Plan of a new Church, but it is not absolutely necessary, though usually done . . . I hope you will not fall into the same Error as the Gentlemen who conducted (with me) the St. Chad's Church Business did, of not enabling themselves to raise a sufficient Sum of Money in the first Instance – My Opinion is they woud. Not have been put to the necessity of a second Application if they had entered into proper Contracts at first'.<sup>224</sup>

On 14 January the churchwardens accepted Carline and Tilley's proposal and agreed to give John Simpson and a Mr. Lee (probably Richard Lee) 'the preference as Surveyor', with Simpson winning the contest on the following day. The petition was read in the House of Commons on 5 February and an Act was passed on 17 April.<sup>225</sup> On 23rd of that month the *Salopian Journal* advertised for 'Such Persons as are desirous to Contract for taking down and rebuilding St Alkmond's . . . to send in their Proposals and Estimates, sealed up . . . before the 8th of May'.<sup>226</sup> On that day Carline and Tilley's estimate of £2,490 was accepted, with J.H. Haycock as security for their performance, and on 15 May the churchwardens ordered that 'the plans and report be lodged in the Vestry Room till the whole Building is compleated, and not be taken out by any person'.<sup>227</sup> The following day *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* announced: 'The workmen have begun to take down that old venerable structure St. Alkmond's Church'.<sup>228</sup>

The contract with Carline and Tilley (described there as the 'Stone Masons'), dated 15 May 1794, and with the partners in collaboration with J.H. Haycock (the 'Master Builder') for the carpentry and joinery, dated 24 June, are among the most comprehensive to come down to us from the eighteenth century.<sup>229</sup> They are invaluable not only for their wealth of technical vocabulary and usage, but for the picture they evoke of a building which, though surviving today, was unsympathetically remodelled in 1895–1900 and of which few original internal features now remain. Carline and Tilley agreed to demolish the old church, sink foundations six feet below ground level and three feet thick using 'good building Bricks . . . well grouted', and then to 'well & sufficient erect [the new church] in a workmanlike manner'. Furthermore, to set a 'neat stone plinth, cleansed of Grinshill freestone . . . on the inside of the Church level with the floor . . . to project one Inch before the face of the plastering' (as a dry-course); to construct the outer walls two feet six inches thick with nine inch Grinshill stone facing

'wrought & cleansed in a neat manner . . . proper Bondstone to go through the wall . . . backed with sound building bricks laid on proper Bond & good Mortar neat Mouldings to the Windows Doors & Cornices'.

Also, to frame the roof and truss it with

'six pairs of principals . . . of good fresh sound Timber best blue slates from Llangynog or Dernant Slate-Quarry . . . each slate to cover the fourth pin, with good double Oakheart Laths & nailed on with ten pound rose nails & the slating close pointed on the under side with Hair mortar . . . the ridge and flashings to be of Lead not less than six pounds to each foot . . . the flat over the Chancel . . . and the Gutters . . . with lead not less than seven pounds to each foot . . . with five Lead waterpipes not less than 3 inches in diameter from the Roof to the Ground Line'.

The inside corners of the body and chancel, and the ceiling were to be 'framed of deal or out of the sound old Oak Timber' retrieved from the soon to be demolished fabric; the gallery floor was to be framed with

'sound fresh oak timber . . . with proper cirbing . . . laid with good sound Bastard Oak Boards braded and adz'd off [the entrance doors] framed and hung double of best dry red deal [those at the east end of] light wainscott [hung] flush with the wall inside [using] substantial Hinges good locks and fastnings [pews] fronted with good clear quarter Riga Oak and framed bead and flush . . . finished with a neat moulded Oak Capping . . . each fitted up with Oak Desks, proper seats not less than 12 Inches wide & Bracketts of red Deal . . . Doors hung with good Hinges and Iron Locks [a seat] fixed up in each recess of the Windows with Angle beads round the Doors and Windows [gallery fronts of] good quarter Riga Oak . . . with pannel'd pilasters plinth and moulded Cap and Gothic frett & Mouldings . . . torus plinth . . . continued round the walls . . . to receive the plaistering'.

The furnishings included

'a neat Gothic Table for the Communion of Riga Oak with a plain neat Statuary Marble slab top, the Marble to shew two Inches on the edge [chimneypieces of] plain Welsh Black marble with neat wood dressings [the ceiling] plain plastered three Coats, with enriched Cornices . . . Two small flowers . . . to suspend Chandeliers from'.

Carline and Tilley agreed to undertake the work 'entirely perfect & compleat in all respects' so that the authorities would be at 'no further Charge'. They would also

'provide all Materials Scaffolding tools Machines Carts Carriages Utensils and all other things Necessarily used . . . by them in the Execution . . . give due personal attendance upon the Execution . . . take effectual care that [it] be carried on . . . in a good substantial manner & with Expedition . . . so as the whole of the . . . work be compleated [by 29 September 1795]'.

The carpentry and joinery contract specified that Haycock would

'provide all Timber Boards scantlings Cramps Nails spikes Brads screws Hinges Locks Bolts Ketches Glue . . . to be of the best of their seul kind approved by the surveyor',

and to execute the work for £1,000, which would include all carriage costs except the 'Iron straps [and] scrue pins' for the roof (provided by Carline and Tilley) and the 'Carved Capitals and top of the tipe' of the pulpit (prepared by them). Haycock also agreed to provide 'a sufficient number of workmen at all times to be employed in or about the . . . Work . . . so that the Masons Bricklayers & others . . . be not delayed or hindered'.

There was an elaborate method of payments linked to the progress of construction. Carline and Tilley received equal instalments of £300 on the signing of the contract, the laying of the foundation, when the building reached the spring of the window arches, when the cornice was set, when the roof was covered and, finally, when the plastering and glazing was finished and the pews wainscotted, with a residual £290 paid within a month of completion of the whole building (totalling £2,490). If work was not finished by the deadline through 'the neglect default or delay of the . . . Contractors . . . accidents by fire & Tempest excepted', they would forfeit £50 per month until the commission was concluded. They also entered into 'a Bond with sufficient sureties' which entailed a £500 penalty.<sup>230</sup> Hiram was to be paid in unequal amounts ranging from £100 to £200, with a £20 incomplection fine.<sup>231</sup>

The old church was demolished by the middle of June 1794 and two months later the new brick foundations were laid.<sup>232</sup> Minor changes to the wall treatment at the west end were discussed in September.<sup>233</sup> By December the roof timbers were ready for installation, and on 16 December the committee reprimanded John Simpson, the surveyor, for 'very seldom or never' attending to inspect the work.<sup>234</sup>

Attention now turned to the interior. On 30 December Carline produced drawings of 'Gothick Ornaments for enriching the Ceiling', which he proposed executing for an additional sum of £40.<sup>235</sup> In June 1795 he received 5 guineas for 'Extra ornament in the plaistering of the Cieling over the alter' and installing roof timbers 'to suspend Chandalers from'.<sup>236</sup> In October 'a pair of Chandaleers' was ordered 'agreeable to the plan produced, No 4', designed almost certainly by Carline, which was to cost no more than 32 guineas.<sup>237</sup> It was also decided to paint the internal window surrounds and plinth a stone colour and the window seats oak colour.<sup>238</sup> On 9 March 1795 John Betton was contracted to glaze the twelve side windows with 'New Castle seconds Glass' at £70, to be finished by 1 July.<sup>239</sup> On 20 October Thomas Upton, a local painter and undertaker, submitted a proposal for painting itemised on his tradecard (Plate 33).<sup>240</sup> Carline and Tilley designed the iron railings surrounding the churchyard, which were supplied by the Coalbrookdale Company at Ironbridge.<sup>241</sup> The new church opened for worship on 8 November 1795.<sup>242</sup>

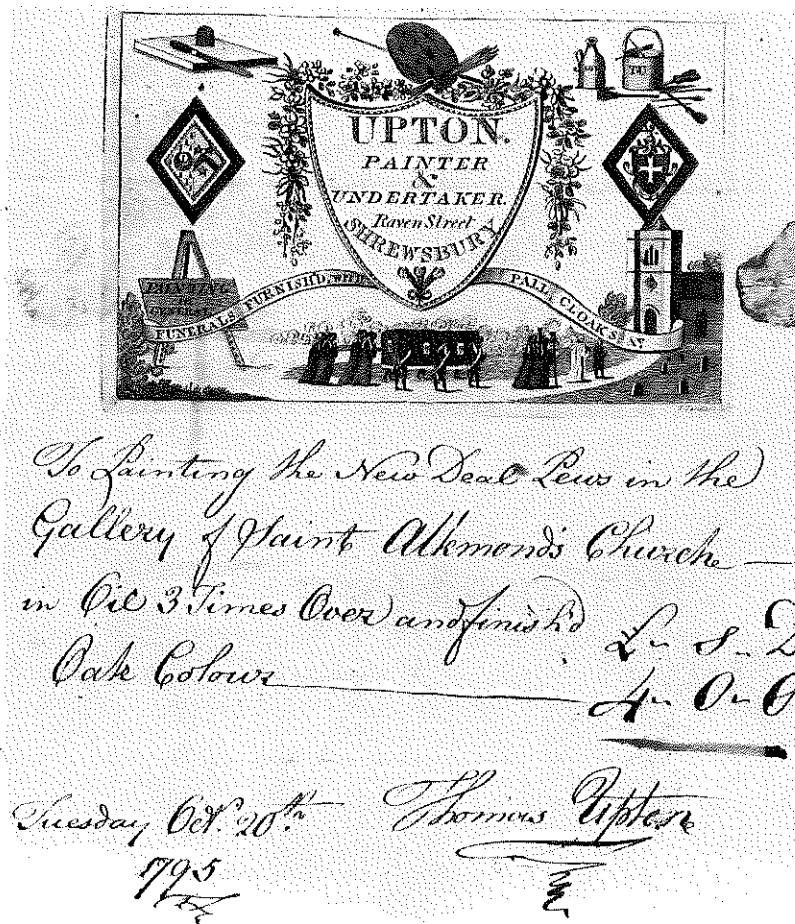


PLATE 33 THOMAS UPTON'S TRADECARD AND BILL FOR PAINTING THE GALLERY PEWS OF ST ALKMUND'S, SHREWSBURY, DATED 20 OCTOBER 1795 (SRR: 1049/3992).

Let us now look at this building (Plate 34). The side elevations are uniformly divided into seven bays, each (excluding the eastern porches) dominated by a large lancet window separated by slender unpinnacled shelving buttresses ornamented with tiered panels of quatrefoils. If this architecture appears too papery, regular and undynamic it is redeemed by the technological virtuosity of the window detailing. Carline and Tilley's contract called for 'Window frames & muntins to the whole Church . . . of Cast Iron with one Casement in each window and glazed with New Castle seconds Glass, all the Iron Muntins frames & Glazing to be completed agreeable to the drawings No 11, 12'.<sup>243</sup> This is not the only part of St Alkmund's which features iron, both cast and wrought: the building contract mentions iron cramps for the cornices and parapet walls, 'strong wrought Iron straps and screw pins' for securing the roof frame and 'a wrought Iron handrail' for the tower staircase as well as roof slates 'drill'd and hung with Cast Iron pins', cast-iron gallery pillars 'according to the drawing . . . No 13' and 'neat Gothic Cast Iron ballusters' to the communion rail. Iron rather than stone or wood was already being used in window sash construction in Shropshire early in the eighteenth century: a 1736 agreement for remodelling Holy Trinity, Much Wenlock refers to 'Ironwork for nine windows' entailing 'Takeing the Stone out of the . . . old Windows & fitting the Iron work in for the Glass'.<sup>244</sup> Cast-iron sashes were used at Welshampton in 1786<sup>245</sup> and, as we have seen, they were favoured by Telford at Bridgnorth in 1792 and at Madeley in 1796,<sup>246</sup> and by Carline and Tilley at St Chad's in 1791, on that occasion the contract going to the London firm of Underwood and Company.<sup>247</sup> In 1793 J. Bottomley (who may have been related to Mary Bottomley of the partnership of Underwood, Bottomley and Hamble, which supplied 'Patent Metal' window sashes for St Chad's in 1791) published an iron-work pattern book in London which features 'Gothic Windows for Chapels' (Plate 35).<sup>248</sup> But those at St Alkmund's are extraordinary. On this occasion Carline and Tilley ordered castings from the Coalbrookdale Company at Ironbridge, which since 1779 had been connected to Shrewsbury by the Leighton turnpike and so was able to supply goods more quickly and cheaply.<sup>249</sup> This was vital because the elaborate filigree of Perpendicular-style glazing bars, which are of a more extreme thinness

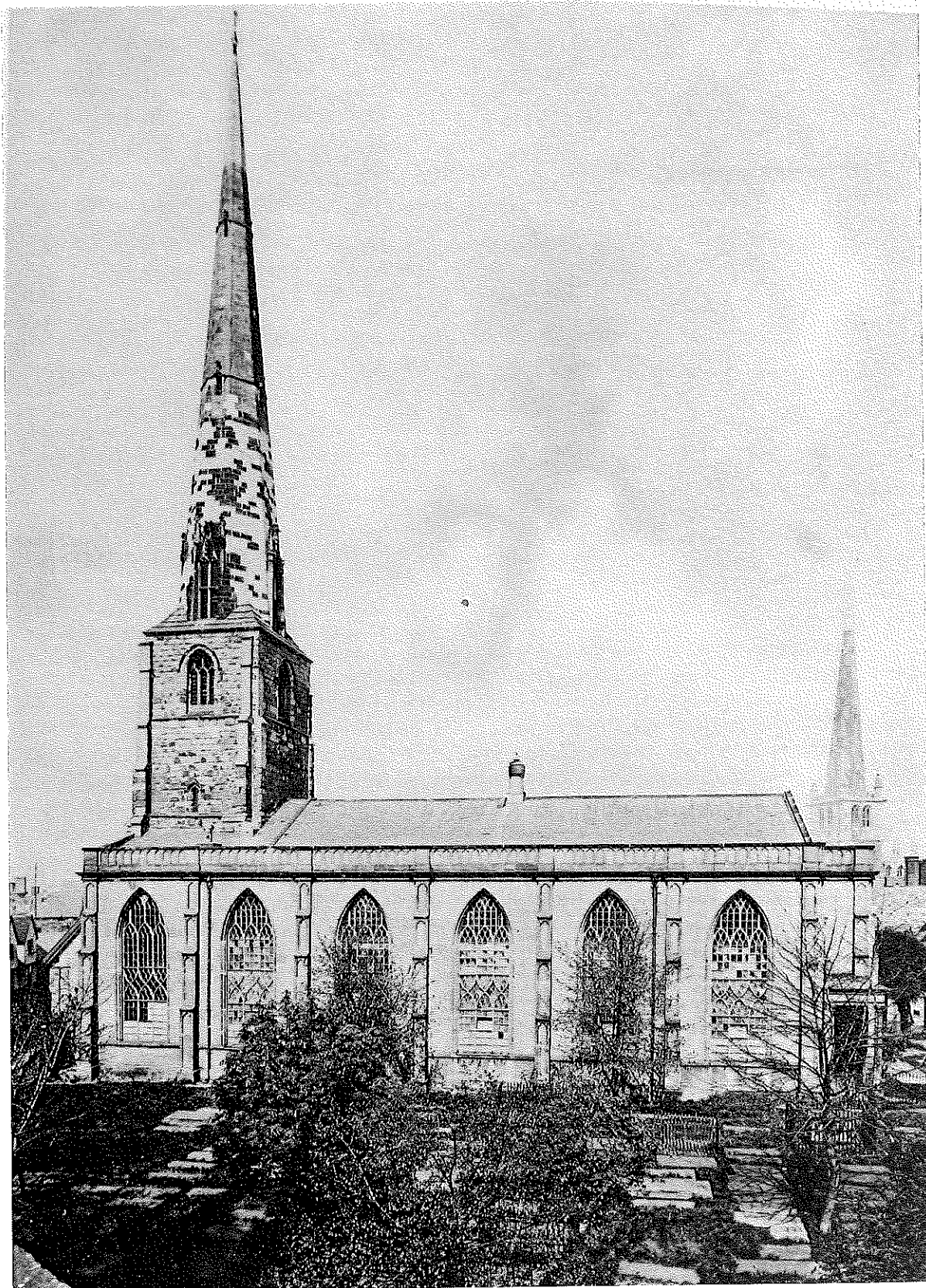


PLATE 34 ST ALKMUND'S, SHREWSBURY, 1793-5, DESIGNED BY JOHN CARLINE. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SOUTH ELEVATION PRIOR TO 1895-1900, SHOWING THE ORIGINAL CAST-IRON WINDOW SASHES AND THE MEDIEVAL WEST TOWER BEREFT OF CROCKETS (SRR: NEG. B 3814).

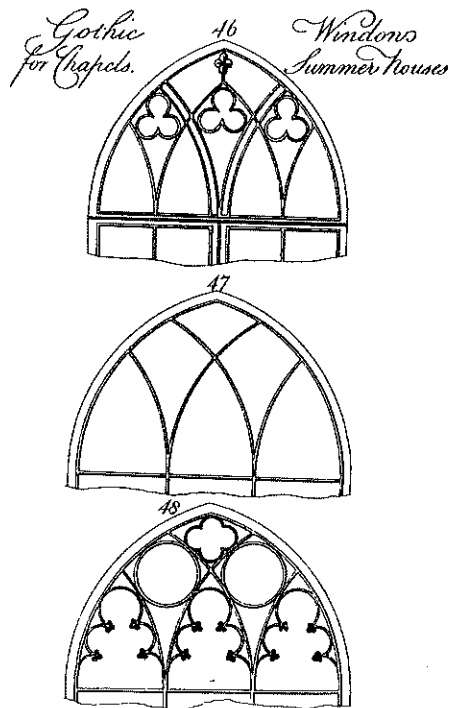


PLATE 35 J. BOTTOMLEY, A BOOK OF DESIGNS, 1793. PLATES 46–8 SHOWING 'GOTHIC WINDOWS FOR CHAPELS SUMMER HOUSES'.

than any contemporary examples, fills the entire frame of thirteen large windows (of which five – at the four corners and in the chancel – were left untouched by the Victorians).<sup>250</sup>

The purpose of such a *tour de force* becomes apparent when we look at the unsullied interior preserved in a unique pre-1895 photograph (Plate 36). Here we can see the ranks of box pews, the Gothic Revival metal chandeliers suspended from plasterwork 'flowers', the sedate bands of Gothic moulding in the cornice and ceiling, the cast-iron and mahogany Gothic communion rail and the pair of eastern porch doors. The pulpit and reading desk, originally a single piece of furniture placed in the central aisle, were separated and repositioned in 1811 on either side of the chancel opening. The elaborately panelled reredos is a Victorian replacement of one made of oak wainscotting.

The original interior, therefore, was a plain preaching box, without aisles or side galleries, illuminated by large expanses of clear glass, with the louvred upper sections of the side windows providing both ventilation and protection from direct sunlight.<sup>251</sup> The congregations' attention would be concentrated on the east wall of the shallow chancel, which is filled with a spectacular single-light window of painted glass whose imagery is uninterrupted by the skeletal muntins securing the individual panes of glass, thereby providing a pictorial surface similar to the traditional painted canvas of an altarpiece but on a grand scale.

There is good reason to believe that Carline had this very effect in mind when he designated the use of cast-iron frames in the contractual specification of May 1794. As early as 4 January of that year he wrote to a member of the committee:

'the window of stained glass will certainly be a very great ornament to the church I hop the Impropriators will not ommit it the expence of it is [£110] which is no object to them but will be more than four times that sum in appearance, and solemnity'.

On 3 October the churchwardens resolved that

'a window of Stained Glass be placed in the Chancel instead of the window intended in the plan. – and that Mr Eginton of Handsworth Green near Birmingham be applied to for a design . . . not to exceed £150'.<sup>252</sup>

Francis Eginton was described elsewhere as a 'heav'n-taught Artist' and credited (rather extravagantly) with bringing the technique of glass painting 'to a greater degree of perfection . . . than it ever attained in any former period'.<sup>253</sup> He advised that £150 was 'inadequate for a Stained Window Suitable and proper for a Church', and so a larger sum was allocated. Of the three designs shown to the committee on 31 October, two cost £160 each





PLATE 36 ST ALKMUND'S, SHREWSBURY, 1793-5, DESIGNED BY JOHN CARLINE. INTERIOR TOWARDS THE CHANCEL PHOTOGRAPHED 1891 PRIOR TO A MAJOR REDECORATION, SHOWING THE ORIGINAL WINDOW AND CEILING TREATMENTS, AND FRANCIS EGINTON'S 'FAITH' WINDOW, 1794-5 (SRR: NEG. B4766)

and the third, with 'the Figure of Faith', at £200, was chosen.<sup>254</sup> *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* reported on 7 November:

'On Friday last the Parishioners of St. Alkmund's consulted Mr. Eginton, respecting the Subject of the Chancel-Window in the New Church, when the Artist's Design was unanimously approved of . . . An emblematic Figure representing Faith kneeling on the Cross! with expanded Arms, lifts her adoring Eyes towards the Crown of Immortality! which is seen in a Stream of Light issuing from an opening in the Clouds! towards the upper Part of the Picture! – On one Side of the Figure is a Cup, representing the Holy Sacrament! and on the other Side, an open Bible with this Inscription, "BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE!"'.

It was claimed that 'Many of the Inhabitants [were] quickened with so lively an Invitation to the Altar'.<sup>255</sup> Faith wears a red silk robe over a white vest bound at the waist by a blue sash; the background is rendered in the pale hues of brown and yellow for which the artist was renown. The glass is signed 'Frs. Eginton 1795'. The figure was taken verbatim from Guido Reni's altar painting, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, 1638-9 (then in the Electoral picture gallery in Düsseldorf, now in the Alte Pinakotek, Munich), presumably via an engraving by C. Hess, dated 1792.<sup>256</sup> By September 1795 the glass was ready and Eginton requested 'an Iron frame . . . to keep the Lettice Wyr . . . six Inches from the Window'.<sup>257</sup> By 30 October, when it was installed and he was paid, the churchwardens commended him for its 'highly satisfactory . . . manner' of execution.<sup>258</sup> *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* reported on the same day: 'The elegant painted Window . . . is arrived and has this week been put up, which does great credit to the abilities of the Artist'.<sup>259</sup>

When Lord Torrington attended Sunday service in the old church on 21 July 1793, he painted a dismal picture:

'According to my intention to devotion, I enquired for the Church of St. Alkmund . . . where a famous preacher holds forth [the Reverend Richard de Courcy]. So I went soon after ten o'clock; and was shewn into

the Corporation seat . . . and well I came early, as the church was crowded to hear their famous preacher . . . This gentleman possesses, with all his countrymen, a lack of judgment; as never knowing when, or where to stop; – like Mr [Edmund] Burke, an everlasting tongue, which, upon the smallest rest, will renew for another 3 hours! His discourse was rash, and bewilder'd . . . spun on everlastingly; till, at last, he became . . . heated, and attack'd those who found fault with his preaching . . . He went on for an hour, and twenty minutes!! . . . his audience sleep'd and waked; stood up and sat down . . . The service was drowsily perform'd by a sick looking curate'.<sup>260</sup>

The new church was viewed in a more optimistic light. In contrast to St Chad's, with its unconventional design, its London architect and its horde of metropolitan craftsmen, St Alkmund's was hailed as a triumph of local design and building acumen. *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* article quoted above made it its business to praise

'the taste of Messrs. Carline and Tilley . . . for the Design of this beautiful Church, and . . . their well known skill and care in conducting every part of the execution; but more particularly to the Masonry; The Joiner's Work reflects the greatest credit upon Mr. John Hiram Haycock, and the Plaistering by Mr. Joseph Bromfield, claims equal commendation. All the Iron Work was cast by the Coalbrook-Dale Company'.

Yet, the building was not free of troubles. As early as 1801 the authorities spotted a defect in the guttering which was causing water 'to socke through the Walls' and the problem was referred to the arbitration of 'three indifferent persons one Arbitrator to be named by each party' and the third by common consent.<sup>261</sup> Thomas Harris and a Wrexham architect named Thomas Penson surveyed the fabric and concluded that it had not been 'compleated according to the Contract'. A copy of their report was sent to Carline, who asked Richard Baker to undertake an independent inspection; the churchwardens chose Joseph Pottery of Lichfield as their man. Their respective conclusions are unrecorded and nothing more appears to have been done. In 1801 Samuel Scoltock refused to inspect the roof. In 1806 Telford declined on the grounds that he was planning to be away from Shrewsbury at the time. In 1807 John Simpson and Joseph Bromfield were invited to survey, and reported that 'there is no danger of any thing falling to hurt or annoy the Congregation'. They also presented 'a scheme of securing the Roof without taking down the Ceiling in which case the Congregation would not be disturbed nor the Seats damaged'.<sup>262</sup> This appears to have put the matter at rest.

Few Counties of England at the close of the eighteenth century could claim to possess such an outstanding group of new church buildings as Shropshire. This brief but spectacular flowering, which has its counterpart in the innovative public and domestic buildings of Iron Bridge (1778), Attingham (1785), Longford Hall (1792) and Cronkhill (1802),<sup>263</sup> more than compensated for the fallow mid-Georgian decades when architectural style and vocabulary was misunderstood and the methods of repair and rebuilding more haphazard, and consequently more disappointing artistically. Church building was often an elaborate and bureaucratic activity, dependent as much on the written word as on artistic ingenuity or managerial and on-site constructional skills, as must by now be self-evident to the reader. Towards the close of this period the participating non-professionals – vicars, churchwardens, parishioners and local landowners – grew more ambitious in their building aspirations and, in turn, their architects and builders grew more erudite. Contractual arrangements between parties were put on a more emphatic and professional footing. Presentation and working drawings, some of them beautifully rendered, like those for Tilstock Chapel and Welshampton, became indispensable tools in the creative process and it is, therefore, particularly unfortunate that almost all the drawings associated with St Alkmund's, St Chad's and St Mary's at Shrewsbury and the churches at Bridgnorth, Madeley and Wellington have vanished. On the other hand, the wealth of contemporary manuscript material surviving among the parish records gives the modern reader a unique opportunity to look over the architects' and builders' shoulders, so to speak. One of the main purposes of this study has been to draw attention to these vital and often neglected sources as the bedrock on which to assess the significance of Georgian church architecture in Shropshire.

The architectural history of Shropshire churches in the eighteenth century is well served by rich holdings of contemporary material in the Shropshire Records and Research Centre, Shrewsbury (henceforth SRR). This includes parish records – vestry minutes, churchwardens' accounts, contracts and bills; Quarter Sessions records (QS/1/1–8, covering 1709–1808, see L. Kenyon and O. Wakeham, (eds), *Abstract of the Orders Made by the Court of Quarter Sessions for Shropshire*); the Rev. Joseph Plymley's visitation reports of the 1780s and 1790s (SRR: 6001/6860–6865 and The British Library; Add MS 21,018); the remarkable three volumes of late-eighteenth century watercolour views of Shropshire churches drawn by the Rev. Edward Williams (SRR: 6001/372) and a collection of architectural photographs arranged by parishes. H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, 3rd edition, 1995 (which includes details of the careers of architects mentioned in the present article), D.H.S. Cranage, *An Architectural Account of The Churches of Shropshire, 1894–1912*; J. Leonard, *Shropshire Parish Churches*, 1994; N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England Shropshire*, 1958 and *The Victoria History of the Counties of England Shropshire*, 1968 (VIII) and 1979 (XI) are indispensable. C.R. Lounsbury, ed.,

An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape, 1994, reflecting British usage, offers contemporary meanings of specialized architectural and building terms.

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- 1 Ambulator, 'Five Churches in Shrewsbury', June 1805, 624–5. 'The new Church [St Chad's], the House of Industry, two handsome Bridges . . . the new Gaol & the Shire Hall, all of which have been erected within these very few Years conspire to make the Town of Shrewsbury respectable', reported 25 July 1794 (F. and K. Wood, eds, *A Lancashire Gentleman The Letters and Journals of Richard Hodgkinson 1763–1847*, 1992, 63)
- 2 SRR: P41/B/11/4, Telford to Hazelwood, 29 March 1792
- 3 SRR: 1361/49 (churchwardens' accounts 1746–65, unpaginated). *VCH Salop*, *op cit*, viii, 328. The new tower, built 1753–4, cost £980.4.4 (SRR: 6000/12666, building accounts). SRR: 6001/372, II, f.5 (1790 view). The body was rebuilt 1887
- 4 J. Leonard, *op cit*, 76–7; *VCH Salop*, viii, *op cit*, 253, 329
- 5 The Brief for 'Rebuilding' the tower was obtained in July 1709 (SRR: QS/1/1). SRR: 6001/372, II, f.68 (1790 view); DHS Cranage, *op cit*, II, pl.LXXVII.
- 6 Churchwardens' accounts, quoted in BFL Clarke, *The Building of the Eighteenth-Century Church*, 1963, 35. The cost of construction was £4,287.4.2 (CW Chalkin, 'The Financing of Church Building in the Provincial Towns of Eighteenth-Century England' in P Clark, (ed), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600–1800*, 1984, 295)
- 7 D Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 1724–6 (1962 ed., II, 73). S Markham, *John Loveday of Caversham 1711–1789 The Life and Tours of an Eighteenth-Century Onlooker*, 1984, 445, describing St Alkmund's in 1765 as 'a very beautiful church'. Smith reused the composition in his churches at Burton-on-Trent, Lichfield, Newcastle-upon-Lyme and Lincoln, the last (St Peter-at-Arches) put up in collaboration with Abraham Hayward, a builder from Whitchurch (J L Hobbs, 'The Hayward Family of Whitchurch', *The Shropshire Magazine*, January 1960, 21)
- 8 W G D Fletcher, 'The Building of the Church at Great Bolas, 1726–1729', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 4th series, X, 1925–6, 222–32; L Garner, *The Buildings of Shropshire The Tudor and Stuart Legacy 1530–1730*, 1989, 76 and SRR: 6001/372, I, f.73 (1788 view). G Harrison, *The Church of St. Catherine at Eyton-upon-Wealdmoors Shropshire A Celebration 250 Years of Worship 1743–1993*, 1993. SRR: 4237/Ch/29b–c ('A true Estimate delivered in with plans by Richd Colley for a New Church & Steeple at Quatt', costing £1,126.1s.6d) and J Leonard, *op cit*, 78, figs. 210–11
- 9 SRR:6001/372, including Berwick chapel (I, f.44), Fitz (II, f.17), Chetwynd (III, f.5) and Newport (III, f.82)
- 10 'The Letter . . . Upon the Building of National Churches', quoted in *The Wren Society*, 1932, IX, 17
- 11 SRR: 600/299, ff. 258–66 (building accounts); 6001/199, II, ff.424, 428 and 6001/372, I, f.127 (views of exterior prior to Victorian alterations). T Phillips, *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury*, 1779, 106–7; H Owen, *Some Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury*, 1808, 292–5. H Owen and J B Blakeway, *A History of Shrewsbury*, 1825, II, 427, remarking that the building displayed 'a solemnity of effect, not often found in modern churches'. Pritchard was baptised at St Julian's on 11 May 1723
- 12 *The Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 12 June 1788 and 16 May 1794. On 11 June 1796, following the completion of St Alkmund's, £5 was paid to St Julian's 'towards the whitewashing of their Church in lieu of any small damage that might have been done . . . whilst used by St Alkmund's Parishioners' (SRR: 4355/Ch/8). See T Carr, *Shrewsbury, A Pictorial History*, 1994, fig.38
- 13 For Wolverhampton, S Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, 1801, II, Pt.I, 164, pl.XXIII. According to H Owen, *Some Account*, 1808, 300 'Mr Pritchard was the architect of . . . the handsome new church at Wolverhampton'. For Norton, SRR: 6001/372, II, f.67 (1790 view) and R Morrice, 'The Payment Book of William Baker of Audlem (1705–71)' in J Bold and E Chaney, (eds), *English Architecture Public and Private*, 1993, 233, 242. For Derby, where William and Francis Smith were the builders, T Friedman, *James Gibbs*, 1984, 76–8, 298–9, pl.61
- 14 For Wombridge, SRR:6001/372, I, f.75 (1790 view) and *VCH Salop*, *op cit*, xi, 299 pl.36. For Jackfield, SRR:6001/372, III, f.64 (1791 view). In 1765 the parish of Kemberton applied for a Brief to pull down and rebuild the church. A 'plan of ye church' is mentioned on 11 April 1768; on 20 April 1769 James Smith agreed for £110 to rebuild 'according to the plans &c Annex'd [with] the Chancell to be built According to the last plan, which is half of an Octagon' (SRR: 4436/CW/1, churchwardens' accounts 1719–1872), as shown in SRR: 6001/372, III, f.1 (1791 view); the drawings are untraced
- 15 Rev. Joseph Plymley's visitation report, 20 July 1797 (SRR: 6001/6865, f.121)
- 16 SRR: QS/6/2, No. 220 (24 December 1747), 'An Estimate for Rebuilding Wellington Church according to ye anext plan [untraced] taken by Richd. Ellis', perhaps a classical design since it was to have 'pilasters'. For the medieval church and other pre-1787 work see *The Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1758, 574, and *VCH Salop*, XI *op cit*, 241, pl.33. The new church is discussed in C Lowe, *The Story of The Parish Church of All Saints Wellington Shropshire Historical and Descriptive Handbook*, nd, M. McCrea, *A History of The Parish Church of All Saints, Wellington, Shropshire*, nd, MA Scard, *The Building Stones of Shropshire*, 1990, 26–7, illus
- 17 Lichfield Joint Record Office: B/C/5/1781
- 18 Steuart's documented designs are all for a rectangular, three by six bay building with a west tower, elliptical chancel and internal north, south and west galleries: (a) Lichfield Joint Record Office: B/C/5/1781, ground floor and gallery plans inscribed 'Plans Wellington Church G Steuart 1787' and elevation inscribed 'Wellington Church North Elevation G Steuart Architect', attached to the Faculty dated 3 July 1787 (Plate 5). (b) British Museum, King's Maps, K. Top. XXXVI, f.19–1, ground floor and south elevation inscribed 'G. Stuart Archt.' and on verso 'Wellington in Shropshire built in the year 1788'. (c) Private collection: perspective similar to b. (d) SRR: 6001/372, III, f.91B (Plate 6). (e) Fischer Fine Art Ltd, London: east elevation inscribed 'Wellington Salop', *British and European Architectural Drawings 18th–20th Century An Anthology*, 1981, No. 81, illus
- 19 B. Coulton, *A Shropshire Squire Noel Hill, first Lord Berwick 1745–1789*, 1989, 75, illus; *Attingham Park Shropshire* (National Trust guidebook), 1994, 29, illus
- 20 *Attingham Park Shropshire* (National Trust guidebook), 1994, 8, illus
- 21 23 July 1790. SRR: 3916/1/3, No. 37, a visitation in 1829 described Wellington as 'A modern church in stone, Grecian an oblong Nave. Iron Pillars on each side support roof. A handsome & commodious structure Very strong & well constructed small square Grecian tower', measuring 90 by 48 feet, with a chancel 9 by 14 feet, seating 'about 1500', with the pulpit in the 'centre of the area of Nave', 'Regular and handsome' seats, and a note that 'The sum paid: ye Builders Messrs Smith & Son have entailed to complete the Church is 2504£. . . The builders have engaged to finish by End of Sept 1838'. In 1898 the 'unsightly' cast-iron columns and

- gallery fronts were encased in marble-painted wood to make them 'more massive and attractive' (Parish records: Faculty, 15 September, with C.R. Dalgleish's drawings, illustrated in G Evans, *Wellington A Portrait in Old Photographs and Picture Postcards*, 1990, 30)
- 22 *Plans Elevations and Sections of Buildings*, 1789, 4. The text is dated 10 September 1788, the plates January 1789 (E Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785*, 1990, 428-30)
- 23 SRR: 3091/10, ff.65, 67,71 (inscribed 'March 18th. 1788 John H Haycock Archt. Shrewsbury' and on porch 'Erected 1789') and ff.69, 73 (unsigned, dated on porch '1789')
- 24 SRR: 3127/9-43 (deposited in the church)
- 25 SRR: 3091/10, f.75
- 26 SRR: 3091/10, ff.13, 33, 49, 53, 57a-b, reports and estimates for repairing the existing fabric by John Cartwright, 13 and 30 October 1789; ff.57d, 79, reports and estimates for rebuilding the chapel in 1827-8 by 'Mr: Haycock', either J.H. Haycock (died 1830) or his son, Edward (1790-1870)
- 27 'On Sunday last was opened for the first time, the new Church of Welsh-Hampton . . . It is a very neat, and elegant little Church, built at the sole expence of Mrs. Kynaston . . . plan'd and executed by the ingenious Mr. Edgecombe' (*The Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 18 July 1789)
- 28 SRR: 2608/381, f.9, describing Edgecombe as an 'Architect' from Shrewsbury; the accompanying drawing (f.8) inscribed 'Sketch of a Design for Hampton Church', signed 'Edward Edgecombe' (Plate 10)
- 29 Illustrated tradecard of 'Handy Edgcombe House Carpenter Joyner & Cabinet Maker . . . High Street Tewkesbury' annotated with 'Work done at Longdon Church' amounting to £4.6s.11½d (Worcester, St Helen's, Record Office: Longdon 850/2(2) ). N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England Worcestershire*, 1968, 216
- 30 SRR: 2608/381, f.9v
- 31 SRR: 2275/71-97 (building accounts), 6001/372, II, f.62 (1790 view); J Leonard, *op cit*, fig. 64
- 32 Vol. XVII, No. 840. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1788, 649, reported that the 'antient fabric . . . tumbled into ruins with an astonishing crash, which greatly terrified the Inhabitants'; *The Leeds Intelligencer*, 22 July 1788, that 'So great is the devastation, that such of the remaining walls . . . must be entirely taken down'; both texts were paraphrased in the parish petitions of 11 February 1789 and 8 February 1791 to the government in London (*The Journals of the House of Commons*, XLIV, 111 and XLVI, 156) and in the published *Act for rebuilding* (Stat. 29. Georgii 3, c.31, 1789). Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, II, 246, quotes an 'eye-witness' account. For contemporary views of the ruined church, see T Carr, *op cit*, fig. 42; J B Lawson, 'Thomas Telford in Shrewsbury: the metamorphosis of an architect into a civil engineer' in A. Penfold, (ed), *Thomas Telford Engineer*, 1980, fig.1; SRR: 6001/199, f.156; 6001/372, I, f.50
- 33 T Friedman, 'The Eighteenth Century Disaster Print' in M. Howard, ed., *The Image of the Building: Case Studies in the role of drawings and prints in British architectural history*, Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historian of Great Britain 1996. Press reports of other church catastrophies is a subject of T Friedman, 'High and Bold Structures': A Georgian Steeple Sampler', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 1991, 6-20
- 34 'When the church of St Chad . . . fell down . . . the parishioners of [Bridgnorth] took it into their heads that [their church] also threatened ruin, and accordingly rebuilt it, of which they now heartily repent' (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1801, 978). 'The sudden fall of St. Chad's roused the parishioners of St Alkmund's to an examination of their church' (Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 198)
- 35 A version of this account appeared in the 1 October 1794 issue
- 36 Apart from studies quoted elsewhere in the present article, St Chad's is discussed in J Dugdale, *The New British Traveller, or Modern Panorama of England and Wales*, 1819, IV, 171; J B Lawson, *op cit*, 4; P F Norton and M Hill, *New Saint Chad's and its Architect*, 1967, revised c. 1975; N Pevsner, *op cit*, 257-8; D Stillman, *English Neo-classical Architecture*, 1988, II, 439; M Whiffen, *Stuart and Georgian Churches*, 1948, 53
- 37 This episode, for which there is no contemporary documentation, is related in H Owen, *op cit*, 179-80, and Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 248-9. The Rev. John Brickdale Blakeway (died 1826) was in an enviable position to know the details of St Chad's rebuilding as he was Vicar of nearby St Mary's (H Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury*, 1837, 49-52) and George Steuart had designed Lythwood, Shropshire c. 1785, for his father
- 38 SRR: 1048/68, f.26
- 39 *The Journals of the House of Commons*, XLIV, 111, 11 February 1789, which refers to the collapse instilling 'great Terror and Surprize' and the necessity 'to erect a new Church'
- 40 SRR: 1048/68, f.26
- 41 *The Journals of the House of Commons*, XLIV, 299 (28 April 1789), 378, 488. 'An Act for rebuilding' (Stat. 29. Georgii 3, c.31, 1789).
- 42 SRR: 1048/63, ff.2-5
- 43 SRR: 1048/74
- 44 The provenance of the two drawings (Sir John Soane's Museum, London: Drawer 47, Set 6, Nos. 12-13) is unknown; Margaret Richardson suggests that Soane may have acquired them when he was preparing his own designs for the Commissioners' Churches in London in the early 1820s (letter to the author, 31 March 1995)
- 45 Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 249-50.
- 46 I am grateful to Robert Cromarty for directing my attention to this site information, as recorded in the Town Assembly meeting, 14 May 1789; see also the 5 May 1792 entry. Moreover, Anthony Carr points out that at the 2 October 1789 Assembly meeting the conduit in the quarry was ordered removed and on 1 October 1790 a new reservoir was recommended 'agreeable to Mr Stuart's Plan'. An early 18th century prospect showing the town walls and 'Quarry' is illustrated in T Carr, *op cit*, fig. 1
- 47 H Owen, *op cit*, 181 and Owen and Blakeway, II *op cit*, 250, respectively
- 48 SRR: 1048/63, ff. 14-15
- 49 *Country Life*, 23 September 1971, 747, figs. 4-5; A J Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh 1750-1840*, 1966, fig. 21, respectively
- 50 D McBride, *A History of Hawkstone*, 1989, 9. The Surrey Chapel was engraved in Thomas's *Original Designs in Architecture*, 1783, pls. 20-1 (*The Survey of London Banksides*, 1950, XXII, 119, pl. 85)
- 51 N Pevsner and I Richmond, *The Buildings of England Northumberland*, 1992, 425-6, pls. 69-70. H Owen, *op cit*, 181 noted 'A church very similar [to St Chad's] was erected a few years previous . . . at Newcastle-upon-Tyne'
- 52 PIs. 8-15 (T Friedman, *James Gibbs*, 1984, 55-7, 310-11, pls.28, 292). Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 248 n.1, refers to these designs in connection with St Chad's
- 53 This shape must have been dictated partly by the necessity of accommodating an unusually large ring of twelve bells (H Owen, *op cit*, 183-4). On 21 June 1798 the churchwardens requested 'the opinion of some able Architect not resident in Shrewsbury be obtained respecting the state of the Tower, and whether it is safe to put up the . . . Bells'; on 5 July the Lichfield architect, Joseph Potter reported that the structure was in 'every way secure and well adapted for the purpose' (SRR: 1048/63, ff.196-8). H Owen, *op*

- cit, 185, thought the tower 'has not that distinct air of lightness, combined with grandeur, which constitutes the chief merit of that kind of structure' and recommended as 'more beautiful' the top stage 'lengthened into a spire', perhaps a recollection of Stuart's rejected Wellington design (Plate 5), and in his MS notes for a second edition of *Some Account* (unpublished) remarked that 'A Greek steeple is an incongruity in architecture' (Shrewsbury School Library: S XII, 67; courtesy of J B Lawson)
- 54 SRR: 1048/68, ff.6 (3 October 1790), 24 (1792)
- 55 Vol. I, 29–35, pls. VIII–XI
- 56 F. and K. Wood, *op cit*, 61. Critics of the next generation condemned this treatment: Robert Southey compared the 'preposterous . . . large round body and small head [to] an overgrown spider' (quoted in L T C Rolt, *Thomas Telford*, 1958; 1985 ed, 37). 'This building is an inconsistent mass, possessing neither the simplicity nor unity of original invention. Monstrous in its proportions, it is imposing only from its bulk. The parts do not harmonise, nor are they subservient to one leading principle; the details are in bad taste and there is nothing which indicates the conception of any genius' (H Owen, MS *Some Account*, see note 53)
- 57 'I admire . . . the beauty & the neatness of the Building, but it wants the solemnity necessary in a place of worship, I almost conceive I am entering a Theatre' (F and K Wood, *op cit*, 62, dated 25 July 1794), a sentiment repeated by H Owen, *op cit*, 188
- 58 C Bruyn Andrews, (ed), *The Torrington Diaries Containing the Tour Through England and Wales of the Hon. John Byng (Later Fifth Viscount Torrington) between the Years 1781 and 1794*, 1934–8, III, 233 (20 July 1793, referring to the Oxford Street Pantheon, 1769–95, and Ranelagh Gardens Rotunda, Chelsea, 1742)
- 59 The original arrangement of pews, pulpit and font is recorded in ground floor and gallery plans of c1850 (SRR: 1048/5125–5126). *The Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 6 January 1792, advertised for 'Such Persons as are willing to Contract for Building and Erecting a PULPIT and DESK in the New Church of Saint Chads, (according to a Drawing and Report thereof which may be seen, on Application to the Clerk of the Works at the said Church), are desired to send in Proposals . . . on or before Thursday the 19th of January next'. Richard Spendlove supplied oak timber for the pulpit for £47.14.6½ (SRR: 1048/67, f.56); the wainscot was supplied by Campbell and White of London in 1792 (1048/68, f.16). Stuart's pulpit design is discussed in SRR: 1048/63, ff.92 (27 October), 93 (10 November 1791). The original reredos was 'a plain wainscott panel on which are the Creed etc painted in the true churchwarden taste' (H Owen, MSS *Some Account*, see note 53)
- 60 SRR: 1048/63, f.80 (2 June 1791) specified that the clear quality of the window glass had to be 'first Approved by the Surveyor'. The original painting specification is typically ambiguous: on 4 June 1795 Bowen and Morris contracted to 'finish the painting in the Church . . . the Colour to be fix'd upon by the Churchwardens' (1048/63, f.181), but here and elsewhere (f.113; 1048/68, f.25; 1048/4262) no particular colour is mentioned. T Howell, *The Stranger in Shrewsbury*, 1825, 55–6, remarked: 'The interior has a rich and noble appearance, especially since its recent painting, which in some measure has corrected that light and theatrical effect hitherto complained of'; the repainting included imitation porphyry columns (Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 252). The interior was more recently repainted predominantly white
- 61 SRR: 1048/63, f.79; also f.87 (25 April 1791)
- 62 SRR: 1048/63, f.139 (13 June 1793). A 'huge venetian window terminates the church letting in such a glare of light as to render a green venetian blind absolutely necessary' (H Owen, MS *Some Account*, see note 53). In 1807 the parish purchased Eginton's *Resurrection* window removed from Lichfield cathedral (see note 151); in turn, it was replaced by the present *Descent from the Cross*, after Rubens, by the Shrewsbury glass-painter, David Evans (M L Charlesworth, *St Chad's Church Shrewsbury*, nd)
- 63 SRR: 1048/63, ff.12–3
- 64 SRR: 1048/63, ff.14–5 (8 September 1789)
- 65 'It accommodates a very large congregation, every individual of which may command a good view of the officiating minister; and considering the large space to be filled, it is well adapted to the voice' (Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 252). By 'the judicious disposition of the pews, the officiating clergyman is visible from almost every part' (J Dugdale, *op cit*, 171). H Owen, *op cit*, 187, thought the columns exhibited the 'wildest disregard to the proportions' of the classical Order
- 66 For example, J Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae: or the Antiquities of Christian Churches*, 1711, quoted in R Bingham, (ed) *The Works of The Rev. Joseph Bingham, M.A.*, 1855, III, 102
- 67 On 5 November 1789 Stuart was requested to attend the committee to 'give his directions . . . in forming . . . the Contracts with Such persons whose proposals shall be Approved' (SRR: 1048/63, f.25). Details of the building programme and the various responsibilities of individual craftsmen and workmen are recorded in SRR: 1048/63 (Trustees Minute Book 1789–97, fair copy of 1048/61); 1048/66 (Supervisor Bromfield's Day Book, 1789); 1048/67 (Day Book 1790–2); 1048–68 (Account Book 1790–3); 1048/69 (Day Book 1791–3); 1048/74 (Carline and Tilley, stonemasons, and Jonathan Scoltock, bricklayer contract 30 November 1789); 1048/77 (John Hawkeshaw, carpenter and joiner contract 26 April 1790); 1048/78 (John Bishop and Joseph Bromfield, timbermen contract 6 May 1790); 1048/80 (John Fradgley and William Hazeldine, ironworkers contract 21 August 1790); 1048/81 (William Simes, plumber contract 12 November 1790); 1048/82 (Underwood and Co., sash-makers contract 12 August 1791); 1048/84 (William Simes and Richard Nicholas, glaziers contract 29 September 1791); 1048/86 (Robert and William Gray, organ-builders contract 24 September 1791); 1048/75, 76, 79, 83, 85, 87 (craftsmen's printed bonds); 1048/4262 ('Estimate of the Building & finishing St Chad's' 29 January 1791)
- 68 SRR: 1048/68, f.26 (15–29 November 1789)
- 69 SRR: 1048/4262 (29 January 1791). On 8 February 1791 the parish petitioned Parliament for an additional Bill on the grounds that the original sum of £10,000 was now 'considerably deficient' (*The Journals of the House of Commons*, XLVI, 156, 455, 686), thereby securing a further 'Act for enlarging the Powers' of the original one, on 6 July 1791 (Stat.31. Georgii 3, c.75, 1791)
- 70 SRR: 1048/63, ff.66–7 (31 January 1791)
- 71 SRR: 1048/63, ff.69 (10 February), 70–1 (17 February 1791)
- 72 SRR: 1048/63, f.161 (3 July 1794). Various payments to Stuart between 1788 and 1794 are recorded in 1048/63, ff.28, 78; 1048/68, ff.7, 11, 15, 26–7; 1048/69, f.14; 1048/4262
- 73 SRR: 1048/63, f.4. Bromfield is described as 'an able and experienced Architect' in a 9 April 1793 Brief regarding the rebuilding of St Andrew's, Church Aston (SRR: QS/1/7, ff.148–9). James Lawson has observed that Bromfield's 'activities precluded the day to day supervision appropriate to a clerk of works on a job virtually unsupervised by the architect. Only when [John] Simpson is appointed is there a proper daybook and supervision. He was required . . . to keep an impartial eye on locals who had little experience of major public works' (letter to the author, 5 September 1995)
- 74 SRR: 1048/63, ff.33 (28 January), 39 (11 March 1790)
- 75 The monument is illustrated in M L Charlesworth, *op cit*
- 76 SRR: 1048/63, ff.4–5
- 77 Advert dated 24 September 1789, and SRR: 1048/63, f.17
- 78 SRR: 1048/68, f.26 (15–29 November 1789); 1048/63, f.28 (26 November 1789). The contracts are listed in note 67
- 79 M A Scard, *op cit*, 3, 12
- 80 SRR: QS/1/6, ff.296v–7 (14 July 1789); and again in connection with rebuilding Weston church (QS/1/7, ff.4–v, 6 October 1789)
- 81 SRR: 1048/63, f.35 (11 February 1790). The proposal was approved 22 April 1790 (f.44)
- 82 Advert dated 12 May, 18 May 1791 being the deadline for proposals

- 83 SRR: 1048/63, f. 88 (8 September 1791). The 24 December 1791 organ contract refers to 'a plan Drawing . . . furnished by . . . Steuart'. The old organ case had been graced with a David figure
- 84 SRR: 1048/63, f.78 (19 May 1791). Samuel Green supplied a magnificent instrument to Greenwich Hospital Chapel in 1789 (M.I. Wilson, *Organ Cases of Western Europe*, 1979, 367, pl.261)
- 85 SRR: 1048/63, f.117 (2 August 1792)
- 86 SRR: 1048/63, ff.129-30
- 87 SRR: 1048/63, f.126 (30 October 1792). For Telford's use of convict labour for building (J B Lawson, *op cit*, 11)
- 88 Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 250
- 89 Writing in 1839, quoted in L T C Rolt, *op cit*, 37. Reactions against the building began as early as 1808 with H Owen, *op cit*, 188, remarking that the 'beauty of the materials, and the admirable execution' could not compensate for the lack of convenience, simplicity, chasteness, dignified taste and an 'awfulness throughout' (in the Picturesque sense), all of which were 'essential to the perfection of a sacred structure'; and in his MS *Some Account* (see note 53) describes the church as 'an inconsistent mass'
- 90 J B Lawson, *op cit*, 4-5. For details of this debacle see A Gibbs, *The Story of Telford*, 1935, 15, Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 245-6
- 91 SRR: P41/B/11/5, f.26 (7 February 1792)
- 92 Views of the medieval church and a pre-demolition record plan drawn by Telford in 1792 in the Apley Estate papers (mentioned in SRR: P41/B/11/5, f.19, 13 January 1792) are illustrated in *An Introduction to St Mary Magdalene's Bridgnorth A Telford Church*, nd, 7-9. Other views are in R Hyde, *A Prospect of Britain The Town Panoramas of Samuel and Nathaniel Buck*, 1994, 39-4, pl.5 (dated 1732) and SRR: 6001/372, I, f.121 (14 September 1789)
- 93 SRR: P41/B/11/5, ff.1-2. A 5 November 1791 letter refers to Messrs T and S Baker & Co., Shrewsbury having 'Sometime ago . . . recommended Mr. Telford to survey our Parish Church' (P41/B/11/5, f.5)
- 94 SRR: QS/1/7, f.18
- 95 SRR: P41/B/11/5, ff.3-5 (4-5 January), 5 (5 November 1791). Telford's report (ff.7-13), submitted 15 December 1791, is one of the most interesting episodes of the period concerning the relationship between church building and town planning, though beyond the scope of the present article
- 96 SRR: P41/B/11/5, f.15
- 97 SRR: P41/B/11/5, ff.19-20 (13 January 1792). Within a week a design was 'under hand' (ff.20-22, 19 and 21 January 1792)
- 98 The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust: Letters of Thomas Telford, I, Telford to Little, 11 March 1792
- 99 SRR: P41/B/11/5, ff.4-6 (6-7 February 1792), P41/B/11/1 (20 February 1792 letter). On 7 February Telford also advised the parish 'to state a large sum in your Act I shall nevertheless take every measure in my power in order to confine the expense' (P41/B/11/5, f.26). *The Journals of the House of Commons XVIII*, 73, 128, 399, 424, 547, 574, 626 (proceeding 7 February-30 March 1792); Act of Parliament, Stat.32.Georgii 3, c.30, 1792
- 100 SRR: P41/B/11/4 (29 March 1792)
- 101 D Brewster, *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, 1830, VI, Pt.2, 644, pl.CLXXXV. A crude view of the entrance front appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1801, opposite 977
- 102 D Brewster, *op cit*, 644, noting how by stepping back the end bays of the side elevations the building acquired 'some resemblance of the ancient porticos'; also that the 'Tuscan order, besides being the most economical, has, when constructed of this magnitude, an air of majestic gravity'. J Rickman, *Life of Thomas Telford*, 1838, 32-3, regarded Bridgnorth church's 'only merit' to be 'simplicity and uniformity'. An early portrait of Telford (Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury) shows him measuring an elevation drawing of a Tuscan temple portico with corner piers (probably incorrectly associated with Bridgnorth church by VCH Salop, *op cit*, iii, frontispiece), which recalls Inigo Jones's St Paul's, Covent Garden (1631-3), a church which had become an icon for the 18th century revival of classicism as demonstrating, 'the superiority of the Roman architecture in its plainest form, over the finest barbarism', that is, Gothic (R and J Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described*, II, 1761, 194-5)
- 103 Shrewsbury School Library: *Borrowing Book 1736-1799*, page E, 3 March 1792 'Stuart and Revett Antiquit: of Athens for Mr. Telford', 31 March 1792 'Montfaucon Antiquities vol 2 for Do', both with notations that each volume had been 'returned' (courtesy J B Lawson). Anthony Carr has observed that Telford's curiosity about ancient Classical Britain had been sparked as early as 1788, when he excavated the Roman city of Viroconium, modern Wroxeter (L T C Rolt, *Thomas Telford*, 1985, 36-7). In a letter of 10 March 1793, written shortly after a visit to London, Telford mentioned having 'examined most of the public Buildings and the Books which were to my purpose' in the British Museum and the Society of Antiquaries, including standard editions of Vitruvius and Palladio, William Chambers's *Designs Of Chinese Buildings*, 1757, probably William Kent's *The Designs of Inigo Jones*, 1727, The Society of Dilettanti's *Ionian Antiquities*, 1769 (or 1785), Robert Wood's *The Ruins Of Palmyra*, 1753 and *The Ruins of Balbeck*, 1757, volumes devoted to ancient Egypt and Herculaneum, 'several Models of Indian things sent from the East' and again Stuart and Revett, 'so that with the information I was before in possession of. I have now a tolerable good general notion of Architecture' (The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust: Letters of Thomas Telford, I).
- 104 SRR: P41/B/11/5, ff.22-3 (31 January 1792)
- 105 SRR: P41/B/11/5, f.25 (7 February 1792)
- 106 Chapter V, Pl.XXXII
- 107 Pages 42, 72-3, pls.5, 13
- 108 SRR: P41/B/7/1, 17 October 1792
- 109 Quoted in L T C Rolt, *op cit*, 39
- 110 'Inside the most impressive feature is the arcade on both sides which consists of giant unfluted Ionic columns carrying a straight entablature . . . something much propagated in the late C18 from France' (N Pevsner, *op cit*, 80). D Brewster, *op cit*, 644, mentions that 'Originally, there was only a narrow gallery at the entrance end for the singers; but some years after the church was completed, in order to obtain more pews, a gallery was erected along each side'. The original pews were wainscot; the pulpit and reading desk were made by Edward Downey Jr. and Robert Baker (SRR: P41/B/8/4, ff.1, 54, 65) and the chancel was 'embellished with a very handsome Grecian altarpiece' (J Dugdale, *op cit*, 157), all later replaced
- 111 See also Potain's St Louis, St Germain-en-Laye, 1765 (A Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 1980, 124-6, 132-3, figs. 157-8, 169-70)
- 112 SRR: P41/B/8/1, f.59
- 113 SRR: P41/B/7/1 (17 October 1792). Telford negotiated a £42 royalty for the use of stone quarries at nearby Quatford (P41/B/8/1, f.59; P41/B/8/4, f.33; P41/B/11/4, 29 March 1792). For the stone see M A Scard, *op cit*, 63, illus
- 114 SRR: P41/B/8/1, ff.3, 15; P41/B/8/4, f.65
- 115 J B Lawson, *op cit*, 9, fig.3
- 116 VCH Salop, *op cit*, xi, 69
- 117 SRR: 2280/6/95 (Vestry Minute Book 1766-1807, unpaginated) for 6 October, 3 November, 8 December 1788. The final design was due 22 December. On 5 November 1796 'Mrs: Scoltock' received £3.3.0 'for Journeys, Plans, &c by her late Husband . . . in . . . 1789' (2280/6/4, f.23)

- 118 SRR: QR 159/3 and QS/1/6, ff.296v-7 (14 July 1789). Scoltock submitted an estimate soon after 6 July (SRR: 2280/6/95)
- 119 SRR: 2280/6/95
- 120 SRR: 2280/6/4, f.18 (17 March 1791); the drawings are untraced
- 121 SRR: 6001/6865, ff.136-8
- 122 SRR: 1066/16 (17 April 1793)
- 123 SRR: 6001/6865, f.138. Plymley 'proposed two churches shou'd be built, one upon the present spot & one near Lincoln Hill' (SRR: 1066/16, referred to 17 April 1793)
- 124 SRR: 2280/6/95
- 125 SRR: 2280/6/95
- 126 SRR: 6001/6865, f.137A and v (9 July 1793)
- 127 SRR: 6001/6865, ff.138-9 (22 October 1793). SRR: 2280/6/95 (8 July 1793) refers to 'Innumerable difficulties' implementing the two churches proposals. France had declared war on Britain and Holland on 1 February 1793.
- 128 SRR: 2280/6/95
- 129 SRR: 6001/6865, f.139
- 130 John Simpson, who constructed Malinslee, had earlier tendered unsuccessfully to build Madeley church. The Faculty petition for rebuilding St Leonard's, Malinslee, 13 January 1804, refers to the work being done under the patronage of Isaac Hawkins Brown of Badger and Rev. Thomas Gisbourne of Yoxall 'according to the Plans Schemes or Models . . . annexed', that is, an unsigned west elevation and plans of the ground floor and gallery, still attached; the faculty dates 22 February 1804; seats in the new church were allocated 24 January 1806 (Lichfield Joint Record Office: B/C/5/1804/Dawley). Brown was a churchwarden of St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth (Stat.32.Georgii 3, c.30, 1792). For Malinslee see *VCH, op cit xi*, 129-30
- 131 SRR: 2280/6/95, when Telford was 'desired to make out a set of working drawings'
- 132 SRR: 6001/6865, f.137C (15 November 1793): 'Mr Telford attended and produced working drawings and other directions necessary for the information of the Undertaker who may happen to be engaged in Building the Church'. See also the undated letter to Plymley (f.137B and v)
- 133 SRR: 2280/6/95 (4 January 1794)
- 134 SRR: 2280/6/95. 'Mr. Telford as pr Bill for drawing plans &c' £14.15.0 (2280/6/4, f.21, 2 March 1795). A faculty was granted 5 April, the bishop pressing for work 'with all convenient dispatch' (SRR: 2280/6/95). The last service in the old church was held 14 April 1794
- 135 Vol. I, No 15
- 136 SRR: 2280/6/95 (4 June, 7, 18, 25, 28 August 1794); 2280/6/4, various payments to Smallman and Seale. On 29 July 1794 Simpson was paid for an 'Estimate for a Brick Church', on 26 September he and Smith received £21 'for their trouble & expences in making Estimates for a Stone & Brick Church' (2280/6/4, f.20v); on 28 October 1796 and 1 June 1797 Samuel and William Smith (by name) received a total of £40 for 'surveying the . . . Church' (2280/6/4, ff.23, 25)
- 137 SRR: P180/A/2/2 (formerly 2280/Rg/6), note in front, Plymley recorded on 21 June 1797: 'a good new Ch: that has holden 1800 persons without being full, has been built of white stone under a contract for 2000£: some alterations were made in the building & the pewing . . . & will be all compleated for abt. 2500£ (SRR: 6001/6865, f.139)
- 138 SRR: P180/A/2/2, recording the consecration on 16 April 1797
- 139 SRR: 6001/6865, f.136 (15 December 1792)
- 140 *VCH Salop, op cit, iii*, 124-5. *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, 1830, VI, Pt.2, 644, noted that the dimensions of the body of Bridgnorth church 'corresponded to that recommended by . . . Wren, as the maximum for an audience hearing distinctly'
- 141 B Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, 1973, 267-71, and *John Fletcher Vicar of Madeley during the Industrial Revolution* (Ironbridge Gorge Museum), nd, 2
- 142 B Trinder, 'The Most Extraordinary District in the World' Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale, 1977, 46. A 17 April 1793 parish church memorandum refers to the 'liberality' and 'honour' of the Quakers, who are 'good & enlightened men, & are interested that all shou'd have an opportunity to worship God in the way they wish' (SRR: 1066/16)
- 143 D Linstrum, *West Yorkshire Architects and Architectures*, 1978, 197, pl.154
- 144 W Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath from 1700 to 1830*, 1980, 54-6. The Octagon was built as a proprietary chapel. The visit to Bath is described in Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust: Letters of Thomas Telford, I, Telford to Little, 10 March 1793, quoted in LCT Rolt, *op cit*, 40
- 145 E Wilson, 'A Shropshire Lady in Bath, 1794-1807', *Bath History*, 1992, IV, 99-100. *The New Bath Guide*, 35, a late 18th century publication, said the Octagon Chapel was held 'in great esteem for its neatness and elegance'
- 146 The Madeley plan published in *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, 1830, VI, Pt.2, pl.CLXXVI, indicates that Telford dispensed with the pairs of flanking recesses and instead installed pairs of free-standing columns to either side of both the west door and chancel
- 147 Supplied from Birmingham (SRR: 2280/6/4, ff.22v-3v; 2280/6/95, 17 May 1796). The iron gates were supplied by the Coalbrookdale Company (2280/6/4, f.23, 6 March 1797).
- 148 On 9 September 1800 Plymley recorded that 'the roof is complained of as being too flat: it is to be repaired or altered' (SRR: 6001/6865, f.140)
- 149 On 10 March 1793 Telford recorded a recent visit to Birmingham to consult 'a Man who works in Stained Glass whom I have employed . . . his name is Eginton' (see note 144), perhaps with the intention of acquiring a window for Madeley, though nothing came of it. On 6 July 1797 John Horton was paid £1.12s.7½d for a 'Window Curtain' (SRR: 2280/6/4, f.25v); on 13 August 1811 the churchwardens ordered 'a Crimson Window Curtain & blind for the South Window' (2280/6/96). The chancel was remodelled in 1910
- 150 Senex, 'Ancient and Present State of the Cathedral of Lichfield', May 1789, 401-3. See also B V, 'Historical Account of the ancient Cathedral of Lichfield', February 1783, 118-20 and 'A Subscription for the Repair of Lichfield Cathedral enforced', June 1788, 502-3. The glazing was largely the responsibility of John Britton, Shrewsbury's premier glazier, who made his name on the success of this commission (*ex info*. Robert Cromarty)
- 151 From a poem celebrating the opening of Lichfield Theatre (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1793, 942). The same source reported in June 1795, 520, the installation of Eginton's *Resurrection* window, removed from Lichfield, in the chancel of St Chad's, Shrewsbury, which in turn was subsequently removed and destroyed (see note 62)
- 152 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1787, 578-9
- 153 August 1788, 672
- 154 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1749, 378
- 155 SRR: 6001/6865, ff.22, 91; 6001/6861, f.96v; 6001/6863, f.147, respectively
- 156 SRR: 6001/6863, f.127; 6001/6862, f.61. Buttresses added to existing churches could be indiscriminate, ungainly and very ugly, as at Dawley (*VCH Salop, op cit, xi*, 128, pl.34)
- 157 'A few handfulls of sea salt, mixed with about one cwt. of lime, to be used in white wash, will make it adhere to the wall and destroy insects', *Merchantile Advertiser*, 16 April 1830 (R S Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York 1800-1804 Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers*, 1965, 276)

- 158 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1753, 140, signed J P, dated Shrewsbury, 3 February 1753, referring to Haughmond Abbey
- 159 SRR: 6001/6864, f.36 (Chetton), 6001/6865, f.45 (Beckbury), 6001/6863, ff.50 (Churchstoke) and 127 (Pontsbury). These mixtures are confirmed in contemporary views of Chetton in 1790 and Beckbury in 1789 (SRR: 6001/372, II, f.48; I, f.124). The altarpiece installed in 1764 in St Lawrence, the medieval parish church of Ludlow, 'unfortunately is Grecian architecture' (6001/6865, f.92v)
- 160 SRR: 6001/6865, f.76 (Cardington); 6001/6863, f.84 (Hanwood); 6001/6865, f.171 (Rushbury)
- 161 A proposal 'to take down & rebuild' the church in April 1742 (SRR: QS/1/3, f.21v) is said to have been implemented by 1749 (W G D Fletcher, *Battlefield Church, Salop. An historical and Descriptive Sketch*, 1889, 22-3, illustrating an undated but 18th century engraving of the church drawn by James Bowen inscribed 'This Church was rebuilt a few Years since', and mid-19th century, pre-restoration sketches of the Tuscan-columned interior). In 1793 Torrington described the steeple 'in sad decay [and] the roof, and windows of the body . . . gone, but the chancel is preserved' (C B Andrews, *op cit*, III, 238). T. Carr *op cit*, fig. 122; SRR: 6001/372, III, f.65. The fabric was restored 1861-2 (J Leonard, *op cit*, 67-8)
- 162 SRR: P151/B/2/2 (building accounts 1757-97). A large number of similar examples are illustrated in 6001/372
- 163 SRR: 4236/Ch/2 (15 February 1713/4)
- 164 G Jackson-Stops, 'Acton Round, Salop', *County Life*, 9 March 1978, 614-7, figs. 3-4. Pritchard was paid £60 on 6 January 1763 for 'Erecting a Monument by . . . order' of Sir Richard Acton (SRR: 1093/Box 32, Bills and Vouchers 1763). See also the Kentian Gothick chapel at Coton Hall (SRR: 6001/372, II, f.30b)
- 165 D Pratt, *A Pictorial History Ellesmere and District 1790-1950*, 1983, 62. The church was altered in 1886
- 166 In January 1782 Richard Baker (1743-1803), son of the architect, William Baker, proposed 'taking down repairing and rebuilding' St Mary's, Market Drayton for £2,164 (SRR: QS/1/5), which included making 'Sixteen new windows . . . glazed with second Bristol Crown Glass of such form and dimensions as shall be agreed upon' (SRR: 997/3/1, 23 February 1786). J Dugdale, *op cit*, IV, 160, thought the renovations left the church 'despoiled of its Gothic honours'. SRR: 6001/372, II, f.61 (1790 view)
- 167 'A Correspondent', February 1790, 172
- 168 M W Thompson, ed, *The Journals of Sir Richard Colt Hoare through Wales and England 1793-1810*, 1983, 80, 108, 201
- 169 Page 824
- 170 Viator, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1795, 924-5
- 171 H. Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury*, 1837, 38. For detailed architectural histories of the fabric see H Owen, *op cit*, 227-9, 250-1; Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, II, 310-22, 370-2, 409-10, including the years after 1803 not covered in the present article
- 172 SRR: P257/B/3/3, f.31 (20 June 1706); Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, II, 322. Two magnificent benefaction boards, now hanging in the tower vestibule, record various gifts between 1629 and 1747
- 173 T Friedman, 'Modern Icarus, or the Unfortunate Accident', *Church Monuments*, Journal of the Church Monuments Society, 1994, IX, 68-71
- 174 T Phillips, *op cit*, 98; Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, II, 371-2; SRR: 6001/299, ff.90v, 92
- 175 T Howell, *The Stranger in Shrewsbury: or, An Historical and Descriptive View of Shrewsbury and Its Environs*, 1825, 62
- 176 Shrewsbury School Library: 'School Bailiffs Accounts 1664-1807', f.275. Remodelling the chancel was no affair of the parish; it was paid for by Shrewsbury School and other impropriators according to their proportion of tithes (*ex info*. James Lawson)
- 177 SRR: P257/B/3/5, f.97 (Churchwardens' Account Book 1784-1805) f.97 (13 April 1788) 'Resolved Unanimously that the present repairs and alterations of the Church be compleated, that the whole be measured and a price fixed by Mr Telford'. Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 322
- 178 Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust: Letters of Thomas Telford, I, Telford to Little.
- 179 Benefaction boards (see note 172); SRR: 6001/299, f.55; Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, II, 322
- 180 H Owen, *op cit*, 250
- 181 Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 316
- 182 SRR: P257/B/3/5, f.200, with further payments of £20 in 1791 (f.234), £40 in 1795 (f.308) and £42.1.2 'in full' in 1797 (f.342)
- 183 SR: P257/B/3/5, f.205; at Easter 1795 Mr Taylor received £2.1.4 'for a large Curtain for the Church Window' (f.306). Owen and Blakeway, II, *op cit*, 316-7
- 184 SRR: P257/13/3/5, ff.278, 294. In 1797 John Nelson, the carver, was paid £14.14.8½ 'in full' (f.342)
- 185 SRR: P41/B/11/5, f.7 (15 December 1791). Robert Cromarty has noted the contrast between Telford's earlier (1788) conservationist opinion of the medieval church at Bridgnorth (see note 93) and that expressed here, when the church-wardens' proposal for a new building perhaps afforded the 'chance of augmenting his reputation on this superb site' (letter to the author, 13 September 1995)
- 186 SRR: 6001/6862, ff.32-34v, recording visits on 25 July 1793 and 23 March 1794. The church (shown in 1791, SRR: 6001/372, III, f.32) was demolished 1876-80
- 187 SRR:3818/In/3, ff.1-2; 3818/Ch/10 (with sketches of roof trusses); M A R Ockrim, *The Life and Work of Thomas Harrison of Chester 1744-1829*, PhD, University of London, 1988, 424-6. Edward Edgecombe, the architect of Welshampton church, was also involved in 1805 (SRR: 3818/Ch/4). SRR: 6001/372, I, f.55 (1788 view)
- 188 E Childe, 'Cleobury Mortimer', *The Trans of the Shropshire Archaeol and Nat Hist Soc*, 1879, II, 54; J B Lawson, *op cit*, 8; The British Library: Add MS 21, 018, ff.19-20 (1794 view)
- 189 SRR: 6001/6860, f.48, adding 'whether this will be effectual is doubted by some'; also 'There is a Gallery at the W. end: & another within a fine Gothic arch opening to the E. chancel. It is newly built for the singers' but had been removed to the north chancel by 1800. The church was remodelled in 1874
- 190 SRR: P22/B/1/1 (Vestry and Churchwardens' Accounts 1777-1811), which also itemize various minor repairs from 1777, including reslating the roof (1778), repairing walls (1779), work on the steeple (1784-6). The church (shown in 1788, 6001/372, I, f.58 inscribed 'Baschurch 1788 (this side rebuilt 1790)') was again rebuilt 1894 (D H S Cranage, *op cit*, II, pl.XCII)
- 191 SRR: P22/B/2/1; QS/1/7 (1789-96) ff.4v-5. P22/B/1/1 records 'Business to Mr. Telford' on 20 February 1790. The printed Brief was issued 1 March 1790
- 192 SRR: P22/B/2/5
- 193 On 18 December 1789 a text was delivered to Mr Wood; on 18 April 1790 he was paid £3.0.6 for placing the adverts (SRR: P22/B/1/1)
- 194 SRR: P22/B/1/1 (19 May 1790)
- 195 SRR: 1580/1; P22/B/2/6. On 19 September 1791 the churchwardens agreed to borrow £400 in order to pay some of the bills (P22/B/1/1)
- 196 SRR: P22/B/1/1
- 197 SRR: 6001/6863, f.35a (23 February 1797, with sketch plan) and f.37 (18 April 1798), which also records that 'The Impropriators of the Tithe [Trustees of Shrewsbury School] have given a handsome pulpit & desk, wch. cost them 40£'
- 198 SRR: P257/B/6/5 ('Report of St. Mary's Church from 1798 to 1802')
- 199 SRR: P257/B/3/5 (Churchwardens' Account Book 1784-1805) f.345; P257/B/6/5.
- 200 SRR: P257/B/6/5
- 201 SRR: P257/B/6/5 (17 March 1790). The drawings and report are untraced



- 202 SRR: P257/B/3/5, f.346
- 203 SRR: 1041/Ch/71 (P 257/B/6/1, a copy). P257/B/6/3 (costing details)
- 204 SRR: 1041/Ch/72 (P 257/B/6/2, a copy). 'Lufferboarding' is ventilation louvres
- 205 SRR: P257/B/3/5, ff.350, 365; also P257/B/6/5
- 206 SRR: P257/B/6/5, ff.367-8
- 207 SRR: P257/B/3/5, f.398; also P257/B/6/5. For a contemporary assessment of this phase of the work see Owen and Blakeway, **II**, *op cit*, 314
- 208 SRR: P257/B/6/5
- 209 M Roberts, *The Emergence of Clarity Images of English Cathedrals 1640-1840*, 1988
- 210 H Owen, *op cit*, 274-6, 286, views repeated in Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, **II**, 298-9. Owen also disliked his own church (St Julians, 1749-50), which was 'an assemblage of architectural bad taste that is not perhaps exceeded excepting in the more splendid instances of . . . St Alkmund's and St Chad's . . . The inside has much the appearance of an assembly room . . . To this defect may be added a flat ceiling with very tasteless and heavy decoration' (H Owen, *MS Some Account*, see note 53)
- 211 D H S Cranage, *op cit*, **II**, 893-5; J Dugdale, *op cit*, **IV**, 173; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1796, 369; H Owen, *op cit*, 274-80, 286-7; Owen and Blakeway, *op cit*, **II**, 273-6, 299-301, 415; T Phillips, *op cit*, 100-5; H Pidgeon, *op cit*, 57-8; SRR: 6001/199, ff.365-402 (including f.387, view taken during demolition); 6001/372, I, f.128 (1789 view), 6001/299, f.121v. Two interior photographs (SRR: 1588/1-2) show the fittings in detail, including the organ over the west gallery
- 212 SRR: 4355/Ch/2 (Churchwardens' Accounts 1775-1803), 1775-6 'Building a Gallery adjoining to the Tower', including John Nelson 'for Carving & Gilding the Circular frame for Dial' £5.6.0. The steeple renewal was undertaken by William Hayward (H Owen, *op cit*, 276)
- 213 Gothicus, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1789, 214. Cheshire received £30 on 6 June 1789 as part payment for 'rebuilding the Spire' (SRR: 4355/Ch/2). 'The easet with which he took down and restored the decayed parts by means of ladders without scaffolding, and with one assistant only, was truly surprising. The expence was about 100l' (H Owen, *op cit*, 278)
- 214 SRR: 1049/3937, ff.1-2. Baker and Smith were described as 'two eminent Architects' in connection with this commission (1049/3941).
- 215 SRR: 1049/3938. Baker asked for correspondence to be addressed to the Post Office, Wheatley, Oxfordshire 'as I shall be in this part 'till the 21st instant'. Might he have been involved with the architect, Stephen Townesend, who was then (1793-5) rebuilding St Mary's church there? (H Colvin, *op cit*, 984).
- 216 SRR: 1049/3941, 'Letter to the Lay Impropiators', 19 December 1793. Smith and Baker were paid 3 and 5 guineas, respectively, for 'examining the Church' (SRR: 4355/Ch/2, 1793-4 disbursements).
- 217 SRR: 1049/3937, ff.2-3. This evidence may not bare out the claim that 'an accurate survey' revealed no serious defects and only after 'a few active parishioners, influenced by the suggestions of interested individuals' sanctioned a 'hasty and ill-advised procedure' was it resolved 'with scarce a single dissenting voice' to demolish the church and rebuild 'on a more contracted scale' (Owen and Blakeway, **II**, *op cit*, 298-9).
- 218 SRR: 4355/Ch/2 (1793-4 disbursements).
- 219 Carlina was paid £36 on 8 July 1789 on Cheshire's orders; Carlina and Tilley £5.11s.5d on 23 March 1790 for 'superintending the Repairs of the Spire' (SRR: 4355/Ch/2, 1790-1). In April 1786 Carlina had testified that Stapleford church required rebuilding, at a cost of £1,300 (SRR: QS/1/6).
- 220 SRR: 1049/3943. N Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900*, 1991, 116. Carlina and Tilley's 15 May 1794 contract mentioned 'plans Elevations and Sections of the . . . Church . . . contained in a Book of Drawings signed by . . . John Carlina & John Tilley, & approved of as well by . . . the Trustees' (SRR: 1049/3978, ff.1-2), which refers to 19 drawings, including a number devoted to structural detailing.
- 221 SRR: 4355/Ch/8.
- 222 Headed 'Saint Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, Nov. 18th, 1793'. The advert was ordered on 11 November (SRR: 4355/Ch/8). Lloyd was a church warden.
- 223 SRR: 1049/3944 (30 December 1793). Wellington replied on 31st: 'You have been misinformed . . . we had no Act of parliam.' (1049/3945). The draft subsequently prepared for St Alkmund's, referring to its decayed state and surveys 'by several Skillful and experienced architects', suggests not to mention that the estimated cost 'upon a Moderate Computation' would exceed £3,000 (1094/3959). Negotiations with the impropiators regarding finances are in 1049/3937, ff.3-4; 3948 (14 January 1794). The final building cost was £3,005.14.5 (H Owen, *op cit*, 275).
- 224 SRR: 1049/3951, signed David Jones. See also 1049/3974
- 225 *The Journals of the House of Commons*, **XLIX**, 124, 304, 456, 460, 485 (17 April 1794). The churchwardens enquired of their London representative on 1 March 'whether there is any necessity for Carlina the Architects coming up [to London] respecting the Plan for the New Church' to testify to the Commons' committee; 'We apprehend their is not, because the Bill takes no Notice of any Plan . . . It is an object extremely material to the Parish, to avoid every unnecessary expence' (SRR: 1049/3965); see also 1049/3967
- 226 Also calling for the loan of £1,500 'in any Sums not less than 100l. each, to be secured on the Rates of the Parish' (SRR: 1049/3972; 1049/3970 and 3971, draft advert dated 22 April)
- 227 SRR: 4355/Ch/8
- 228 Vol. XXIII, No. 1145
- 229 SRR: 1049/3978, ff.1-14 and 3979, ff.1-9 (4355/Ch/10-11, duplicates); also 1049/3977 and 3990. Carlina and Tilley received a total of £2,060 (4355/Ch/8, various payments 15 May 1794-5 August 1796)
- 230 SRR: 1049/3978, ff.10-13; 1049/3975-3976 (8 May 1794)
- 231 SRR: 1049/3979, ff.2-3, 7-8
- 232 SRR: 4355/Ch/8 (15 June and 15 August 1794)
- 233 Tilley reported on 12 September that 'to make the Blank windows at the Vestry and Engine House according to the drawing No 8 - he will be obliged to cutt the Abutments of the Tower considerably', so it was decided to 'work up a plain Wall instead of the Blank Windows' (SRR: 4355/Ch/8)
- 234 SRR: 1049/3980, addressed to 'Mr Simpson Architect Milkstreet', Shrewsbury.
- 235 SRR: 4355/Ch/8 and 1049/34 (December 1794)
- 236 SRR: 1049/3990 (18 March 1795); 4355/Ch/8 (12 June 1795)
- 237 SRR: 4355/Ch/8 (23 October 1795)
- 238 SRR: 1049/3991 (16 October 1795); 4355/Ch/8 (23 October 1795)
- 239 SRR: 1049/3989; 4355/Ch/12
- 240 SR: 1049/3992. Upton was paid £4.17s.0d on 26 October 1796 (SRR: 4355/Ch/8)
- 241 SRR: 4355/Ch/8 (17 April 1795, 3 February 1796), 1049/3988 ('Estimate for the Iron railings -52:8:0 . . . in every respect the same as the Present Railing except the Spaces of the Balusters which are to be only Six in a Yard (Lineal)', 'Casting Including Patterns'

- £42); 1049/34 (27 April 1795). On 14 December 1795 the Dale Company at Coalbrookdale were asked to supply 'Bars for the Iron railing to go round the Church (as ordered by Mr Carline) as soon as possible' (SRR: 1049/3993)
- 242 H Owen, *op cit*, 275
- 243 SRR: 1049/3978
- 244 SRR: QS/6/1, File 1, No. 72
- 245 The 28 April 1786 Articles of Agreement included 'all the window Frames Bars & Casements . . . to be of Cast Iron' (SRR: 2608/381, f.9)
- 246 SRR: P41/B/8/1, f.59 and 2280/6/95 (17 May 1796). By the end of 1790 'Cast Metal Bars' for windows were delivered to Baschurch (SRR: P22/B/1/1, Vestry and Churchwardens' Accounts 1777-1811, 2 December 1790).
- 247 SRR: 1048/4262 (29 January 1791), 1048/82 (12 August 1791)
- 248 J Harris, *English Decorative Ironwork from Contemporary Source Books 1610-1836*, 1960, 12, 18, pl.125
- 249 B Trinder, *The Darbys of Coalbrookdale*, 1974, 45-6
- 250 Similar cast iron sashes were introduced by Richard Baker at St Peter's, Adderley, which he remodelled 1793-1809 (DHS Cranage, *op cit*, II, pl.LXXVII; BFL Clarke, *op cit*, 225-6)
- 251 Carline supplied 'proper Lines and hooks . . . to open & shut the windows' (SRR: 4355/Ch/8, 31 December 1795)
- 252 SRR: 1049/3946. According to H Owen, *op cit*, 286, the window cost £210, and SRR: 4355/Ch/8
- 253 'Versus: Written by J. Morfitt, Esquire', 1794, in Anon., *A Brief History of Birmingham Intended as A Guide to the Inhabitants & Strangers*, 1805, xviii and S Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, 1801, Part I, 122
- 254 SRR: 4355/Ch/8
- 255 The article goes on to report that the parishioners were so pleased with the window and the 'well executed decent Plan of their Church' that they were 'inclined . . . to decorate the West End . . . with an Organ'. This is shown in an early photograph (SRR: 1588/1)
- 256 D Stephen Pepper, *Guido Reni A Complete Catalogue of His Works*, 1984, 284, pl.213; N Pevsner, *op cit*, 256
- 257 SRR: 4355/Ch/8 (11 September 1795). Carline and Tilley charged £8 for wiring the window 'to Mr Egingtons proposals' (11 September) and 6s3d for 'Setting up Scaffolding & for Mr Egington' (24 October, SRR: 1049/34). On 25 September the parish clerk was asked to direct Eginton to 'compleat the Stained window . . . as soon as possible' (4355/Ch/8). On 14 December Fradgley received £6.3.3 for supplying the 'Frame to the Chancel Window' (4355/Ch/8)
- 258 SRR: 4355/Ch/8. Mr Tombs received £2.0.1 on 6 November 1795 for transporting the window from Birmingham
- 259 30 October 1795
- 260 C B Andrews, *op cit*, III, 234.
- 261 This arrangement had been agreed between the churchwardens and Carline and Tilley on 15 May 1794 (SRR: 1049/3978, f.13).
- 262 SRR: 4355/Ch/8, under 18 April 1801 (report of defect); 18 April, 1 May and 5 June 1801 (Harris and Penson); 1 May 1801 (Scotlock); 24 June and 5 August 1801 (Baker and Potter); 30 July and 6 August 1806 (Telford, who had produced a survey plan of the parish in 1791, 4355/Ch/2, 1791-2 and inside back cover); 29 May, 2 and 14 July 1807 (Simpson and Bromfield)
- 263 N Pevsner, *op cit*, 37-42, pls.58(b)-62

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## GLEBE TERRIERS AND LOCAL HISTORY: SHIFNAL 1612–1853

By S. WATTS

In the last fifteen to twenty years the study and publication of probate inventories has illuminated many areas of economic and social history. In Shropshire the analysis of hundreds of inventories has highlighted the diverse character of the county's communities. While probate inventories are unrivalled in the range and the detail of the information they contain, glebe terriers which have similar advantages to inventories in surviving in considerable numbers and in being compiled in a comparable format have been little used by local historians. The aim of this article is to consider the potential of glebe terriers in investigating the history of a parish using the terriers of Shifnal as a case study.

The purpose of glebe terriers was to describe the income of parish clergy, especially that derived from glebe land, with the intention of preventing encroachment upon it, as it was feared that the dispersal of Church land after the Dissolution of the Monasteries and Chantries had resulted in hardship at parish level. A canon of 1571 first directed bishops to deposit terriers of glebe land in their archives, and this canon was repeated in 1604.<sup>1</sup> Shifnal's earliest glebe terrier is dated 1612 and the next 1636; after this there is a long gap until 1681. However, from the end of the 17th century until 1853 terriers have survived at three to five yearly intervals. The preamble at the head of the 1729 terrier stated that it was compiled on the occasion of the triennial visitation of the bishop of Lichfield; the occasional longer gap, as for example from 1705 to 1718, may mean, therefore, either that a terrier was not taken, or that it has not survived.

Glebe terriers usually began by describing the parsonage house and its outbuildings, and sometimes the various rooms of the vicarage or rectory, even naming the material of which the house was built. Glebe terriers have thus been used by historians of vernacular architecture such as Barley to trace changes in parsonage houses, and by inference in the farmhouses of husbandmen and yeomen with whom he regarded vicars as comparable.<sup>2</sup> However, terriers vary in the detail they give about the parsonage house; the early Shifnal terriers, for instance, only mentioned that the house was of four bays. The terrier of 1779, which was drawn up after the construction of a new vicarage, was rather more informative, stating that the new building had 'a vestibule with two large parlours in front with a hall, kitchen, two pantries and a scullery backwards'.

The various outbuildings of the vicarage houses are often described in detail, and can reveal whether the vicars were actively involved in farming and the type of farming. Change in the outbuildings can indicate changes in farming practice. The 1612 Shifnal terrier mentioned a barn but gave no details of other outbuildings except to say that they were newly built. In 1698 there was a range of outbuildings which included a barn, a cowhouse, a stable, a coal-house (in many areas a wood-house would still have been more usual at this date), and two fold yards. The presence of both barn and fold yards is evidence of the mixed arable and pastoral farming which probate inventories suggest was typical of Shifnal at the time. This range of buildings was apparently unchanged until 1775 when, after the construction of a new vicarage house, the outbuildings were described as 'now rebuilding'. In 1779 the completed outbuildings consisted of a brewhouse, two stables, a cowhouse, a barn with one bay threshing floor and a pigsty; the vicar was apparently still actively involved in mixed farming. In 1801 a coach house had been built and by 1841, although the farm buildings were still in use, the surroundings of the house were greatly altered by the laying out of a flower garden and 'pleasure ground' on six perches of land given by Lord Stafford, lord of Shifnal manor.

The next and usually the longest section of the terrier dealt with the glebe lands. These lands are usually

assumed to have been given by the local lord at some time in the remote past, perhaps when the church was first established in the area. Most terriers describe the glebe land in detail giving the acreage and often its agricultural use. Terriers can thus be invaluable in reconstructing the pattern of land use in a parish between the 16th and 18th centuries. Many authorities have pointed out that glebe terriers can be used to discover the location and extent of the open fields or areas of enclosure but examples of local histories which have followed their advice are rare.<sup>3</sup>

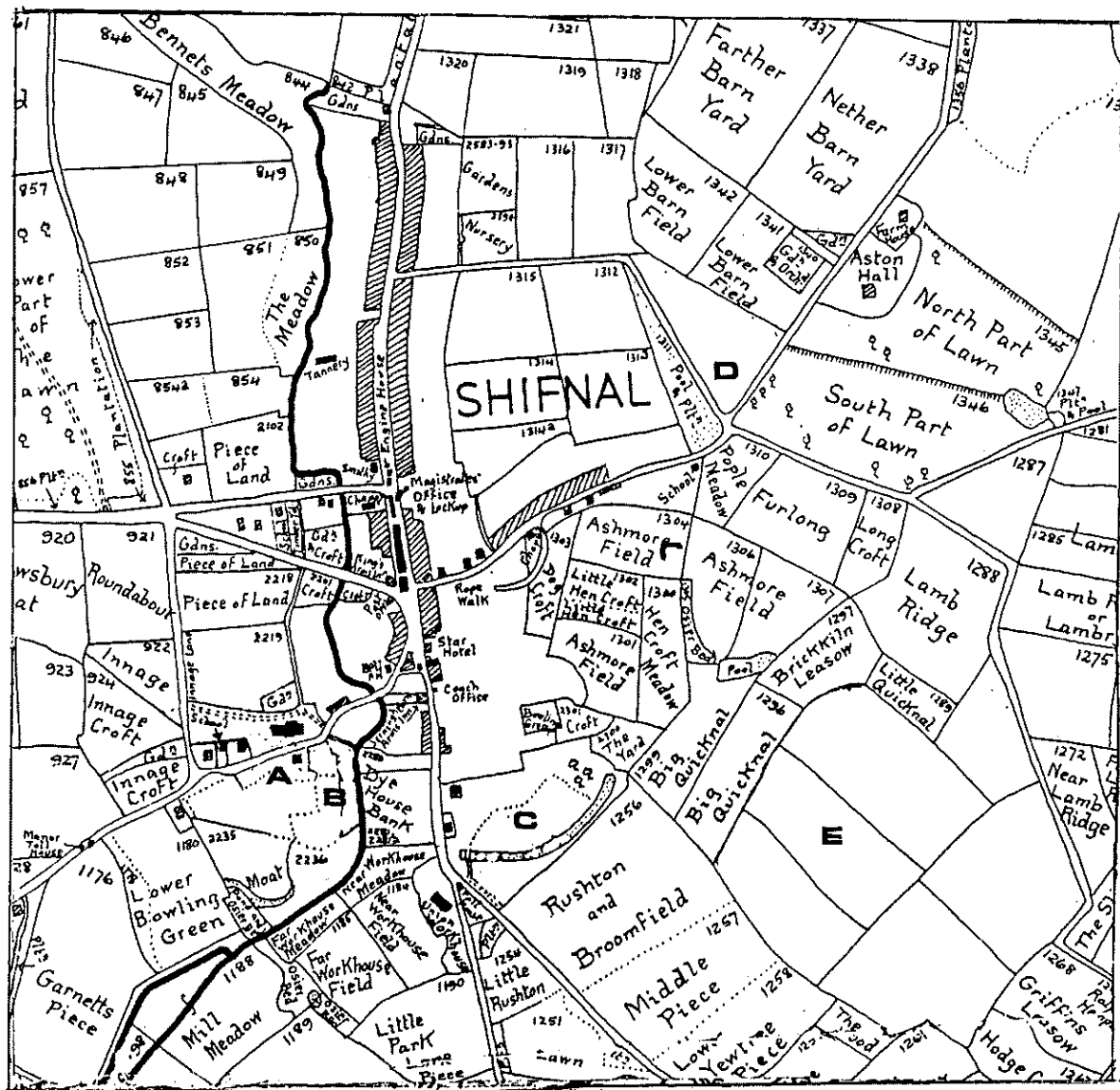
Some of Shifnal's glebe land was situated immediately adjacent to the vicarage to the south and east (Vicar's Banks B) but the larger part lay to the east of the Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury road through the town. (See Map 1.) The 17th and 18th century terriers do not mention the open fields even though Shifnal is unusual for Shropshire in retaining its open fields until parliamentary enclosure at the end of the 18th century.<sup>4</sup> Shifnal is a large parish of about 11,000 acres with many hamlets in addition to the market town containing the church. Originally most of the hamlets would have had their own open fields, though there is no evidence that the formerly wooded area of Woodhouses ever had them, and the fields of the large hamlet of Priorslee were probably enclosed in the 16th century after the dissolution of Wombridge Priory.<sup>5</sup> Stanton, Upton and Hatton, at least until the early 18th century, retained their own open fields. The fields around the town which remained open until the late 18th century were situated to the north and west of the town away from the glebe land. A survey of 1720 showed that the town fields were cultivated by tenants of the townships of Haughton, Drayton, Wyke and Shifnal town.<sup>6</sup> Although Shifnal was unusual in retaining open fields, they were relatively small compared to those in the champion country of the Midlands partly because, although its agrarian economy was biased towards corn growing, animal husbandry was also important, and partly because there were many closes in the open fields. The 1720 survey showed that most tenants with open field strips also had enclosed arable and pasture land. There are thus various reasons why Shifnal's terriers have little information about the open fields, while in other areas they might be much more useful. Despite the importance of arable farming in Shifnal parish, the terriers refer mainly to pasture, and suggest that the importance of pasture was of long-standing. The earliest glebe terrier, that of 1612, refers to the glebe pastures to the east of the town as being 'anciently' enclosed. These pastures were named in 1698 as the Quirknolls (See Map 1, E), and were said to cover forty acres. The terriers reveal that the land surrounding the Quirknolls was also pasture and also enclosed by 1612; the area remained pasture during the whole of the three and a half centuries covered by the terriers.

Although the Shifnal terriers do not refer to the open fields while they remained open, they illustrate the process of re-arrangement and exchange of land which frequently followed enclosure. The terrier of 1801, drawn up after the 1793 act of enclosure, showed that the vicar had acquired two acres of former open field by exchanging the New Pool (D) with Moreton Slaney of Hatton Grange. Moreton Slaney also exchanged some of the land in the former open fields for the meadow called the Old Pool (C) and the croft which formed part of Vicar's Banks (B) known as Dyehouse or Dyas Bank.

Occasionally a single word describing the situation of the glebe land can be revealing: the two enclosed crofts near to the vicarage house and its outbuildings were said to have been bounded to the south by the 'pale' of the lord of the manor's park in 1636. At least part of the emparked demesne was used for deer from the Middle Ages until the 17th century, when it was leased for regular cultivation, and this phrase helps to locate the area in which the deer were kept. It is known from other sources that deer-keeping was under pressure from arable and pastoral farming in the park, and the word 'pale' was not used in later terriers.<sup>7</sup>

The terriers can also illustrate the spread of buildings which accompanied the growth in population in the 17th century. Between 1612 and the next detailed terrier in 1693 cottages with gardens had been built on the glebe crofts. (See B and C on Map 1.) Terriers also support the evidence of inventories that craft industries processing agricultural produce were developing in the town. One of the crofts (B) was said in the late 17th century to abut on the land of Andrew Phillips, tanner, and this tannery seems to have operated for many years. The terriers provide, too, evidence of land improvement. Two pools belonged to the church in 1612, the Old Pool (C) and the New Pool (D). By 1693 the Old Pool was described as having been 'many years since converted to a meadow', and the New Pool was also partly drained.

This glebe land was important in determining the relative wealth and independence of vicars, particularly as they customarily only received part of the tithes. Vicars who farmed their own glebe and collected some of the tithes were well placed to benefit from the inflation of the 16th and early 17th centuries.<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to give an exact acreage for the Shifnal glebe land in the 17th century as the surviving terriers are few, the acreage recorded is variable and may also not have been measured in statute acres, but from the 1698 terrier it appears that the crofts near the vicarage, including the meadows near the stream, amounted to about four acres, the meadow where the Old Pool had been was about three-quarters of an acre, and the Quirknolls pastures were about forty acres. This, though not a large farm compared with many in Shifnal parish, compared favourably with the customary medieval holding of about 20–30 acres. The inventory of Abdie Birch who died in 1636



1/2 mile

A Vicarage house

B Vicar's Banks

C Old Pool

D New Pool

E Quirknolls

MAP 1 SHIFNAL GLEBE LAND

illustrates the economic importance of farming to the vicars.<sup>9</sup> His total personal wealth was £208.13s.4d; he had an unusually expensive library, which with his clothes was worth £40, but most of his estate was tied up in grain and stock. He had £30 worth of corn, various cattle valued at £53 and sheep at £18. The vicars must have paid labourers to work their land but it was all under their direct control until the mid-18th century when the Quirknolls were leased to John Cuxon, butcher, and thereafter they were always leased. After enclosure the land in the former open fields gained by exchanges was leased but the closes near the vicarage remained under direct control until after the period covered by the terriers.

Thus the terriers show land being drained, cottages being built, both on glebe land and on surrounding land and the change in the lord of the manor's park from deer park with pale to farm. In the first half of the 19th century some glebe land was involved in new economic trends when a few acres were sold to groups engaged in improving communications. A small part of the former open field known as Wyke field gained by exchange after enclosure was sold by 1836 to the Shifnal District of the Holyhead Turnpike, and the 1853 terrier recorded that a small area of the ancient Quirknolls pastures had been sold to the railway company.

As well as describing land, terriers also listed income from any dues. In Shifnal for instance, during the 18th century the vicar was entitled to mortuaries: five shillings for celebrating a marriage, eight pence for a burial, eight pence for churching women and a further eight pence for registering a child. A relatively high fee of ten shillings had to be paid for a 'lestall' or burial place in the chancel.

Such fees are common, but more unusually the vicar of Shifnal also received yearly pensions from surrounding churches. Such pensions can be a record, sometimes the only one, of an early stage in the development of the church in the area. (The only other source which refers systematically to such pensions is perhaps the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535.) Before the system of parishes evolved some churches such as Shifnal were minsters acting as centres of large areas known as *parochiae*. These minster churches sent out priests to the surrounding villages and hamlets.<sup>10</sup> Shifnal is believed to have been such a minster church with a college of priests until the church was given to the newly founded Shrewsbury Abbey in about 1088.<sup>11</sup> The large *parochiae* were often centred on large lay estates, and as parts of these became separate manors in late Saxon or early Norman times, their lords provided them with chapels which later became independent parish churches. Annual payments such as the five shillings from Kemberton and Sheriffhales and the two shillings from Ryton represent dues to their former mother church.

Terriers usually describe the tithing customs of the parish. Payment of tithes to churches had been a legal obligation in England since the end of the 8th century, and had been levied on a parochial basis since the Lateran Council of 1179. During the Middle Ages rights to tithes or part of them were often donated to monasteries and the parish concerned then became a vicarage with the monastery as rector. After the Dissolution these rights to tithes were forfeited to the Crown and frequently sold to laymen. It has been estimated that by the mid-17th century one-third of tithe rights were held by laymen.<sup>12</sup> Tithes were classified in two main ways: firstly they were divided into predial tithes arising from produce of the land, mixed tithes arising from stock on the land and personal tithes from the industry of occupiers of land. An alternative classification was into great tithes, usually of corn, hay and wood, and small tithes of all other crops.<sup>13</sup> Usually when there was a rector and a vicar, the rector, whether lay or cleric, had the right to the great tithes and the vicar to the small tithes. In 1409 Henry IV gave the great tithes of Shifnal to support his new foundation of Battlefield College. In the early 16th century Richard Moreton of Haughton and Thomas Forster of Evelith jointly leased these tithes from Battlefield, an arrangement which gave rise to continuing disputes.<sup>14</sup> In 1568 Richard Moreton became the lay improprator when he leased (and later bought) the great tithes from the Crown.<sup>15</sup>

As even the small tithes were an important part of the vicars' income, terriers frequently listed all the items on which tithe was due, any money payments or moduses in lieu of tithes in kind and the methods by which tithe was to be levied. Although the canon of 1604 concerning terriers had asked for details of profits from tithes, in fact the Shifnal terriers of the 17th century did not mention them. In 1698 William Lloyd Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry required that all terriers be returned giving details of tithing customs.<sup>16</sup> Because small tithes were such an important part of the vicars' income, they made every effort to establish a claim on any new crop, therefore ensuring that crops new to the area were listed in the terrier. By the 18th century tithes were so unpopular that there were considerable difficulties in actually collecting them but vicars were usually successful in establishing their right to collect them. In some areas, however, attempts to impose tithe rights on new crops such as hops, turnips, tobacco and coleseed resulted in expensive litigation. Turnips, it was argued, were fed to cattle and cattle were already tithed; therefore turnips were being tithed twice. Potatoes were often grown in large quantities, and it was questionable whether they should be subject to great or small tithes. The produce of market gardens was also disputed as to whether it belonged to great or small tithes, but it was agreed that it should be classed as great tithe if tilled with a plough, and small tithe if tilled with a spade.<sup>17</sup>

Glebe terriers of the 17th century rarely give details of titheable crops, but from about 1700 terriers can be useful in dating the spread of new crops, particularly root crops which were excluded from probate inventories.<sup>18</sup> While the terriers do not give the wealth of detail about the quantities or values of crops such as turnips or potatoes which inventories give about cereals, they indicate when a crop was being grown in sufficient quantity for the vicar or rector to want to secure his tenth. Some historians have pointed out the potential value of using terriers to identify new crops. Barratt, for example, has noted the cultivation of woad revealed by some Worcestershire terriers,<sup>19</sup> and Thirsk has assumed that the increasing references to hemp and flax in the late 17th and early 18th century terriers are a reliable indication that production was expanding.<sup>20</sup> In spite of these illustrations of the value of tithe lists in dating the spread of new crops, in fact they have rarely been used for this purpose in investigating agricultural change in a particular parish or group of parishes. The works of improvers such as Walter Blith, Sir Richard Weston, Andrew Yarranton and Robert Loder are usually quoted to illustrate the cultivation of new crops. The accounts of agricultural innovators are obviously valuable in giving precise dates of planting new crops, where they planted them and the profits they gained, but it is not possible from the records of a few articulate reformers to estimate the extent to which the reforms they advocated were put into practice.<sup>21</sup>

The 1621 Shifnal terrier simply states that the tithes of corn and hay belong to the rectory and the small tithes to the vicarage; the first full list of small tithes was in the terrier of 1695 and covered wood, wool, lambs, mills, calves, milk, pigs, geese, flax, hemp, orchards, gardens, hops, fruit, carrots, rape, bees and eggs. In 1705 herbage (presumably referring to sown grass) and vetches were added, and in 1722 potatoes were first included. This list stayed the same until the 1841 terrier, which stated that tithes had been commuted for £307. For any individual parish the number of new crops mentioned may be small, but comparisons on a county-wide basis might yield interesting patterns.

The details laid down for the collection of tithe on these products were so complex that disputes were probably inevitable even without the hostility evoked by their collection. The rules were particularly complex relating to the tithing of stock; for instance according to the 1705 terrier, in the case of lambs, 'the custom of tithing lambs is thus, The Owner first chuseth two and then ye Vicar chuseth one, then the Owner chuses nine more and the Vicar one and so on. If there are some odd ones at last the Vicar has one of the seven, which method is used likewise in tithing piggs and geese, but if there be but seven in all of each kind the Vicar has one according to the Rule here prescribed. The which hath usually but six Lambs or under that number every year pays the Vicar three pence for each Lamb, the Vicar may demand the same rate for odd Lambs in a considerable fflock. Odd fleeces under seven if they do not come to seven, the Vicar takes a penny a sheep; odd fleeces under seven of those that have a considerable tith the Vicar may continue then to the yeare following, and then tith them together with that years produce.' In Shifnal these rules remained in force until commutation in 1836. On some titheable products, probably those which even such complicated rules could not adequately regulate, moduses had at some time been established – milk was due one penny per cow, a goat was paid on every calf calved or colt foaled and a goat for every stall of bees.

Glebe terriers can thus illuminate various aspects of economic change in a parish, and comparison with other parishes could heighten their value further. For most of the old parishes in the Lichfield diocese a fairly large number of terriers survive (see Appendix 1); they are in English and present few problems in transcription.

#### Appendix 1 Glebe Terriers for Parishes in the Lichfield Diocese

(L J R O, B/V/6. 19th century parishes with only one or two terriers are not included.)

	1st terrier	Last terrier	No. of terriers
Acton Burnell	1612	1861	34
Adderley	1682	1869	26
Albrighton	1612	1845	28
Atcham	1612	1767	23
Baschurch	1612	1857	38
Battlefield	1693	1845	25
Berrington	1685	1849	33
Bolas Magna	1612	1869	45
Boningale	1733	1832	10
Broughton	1693	1857	22
Cheswardine	1636	1845	30
Chetwynd	1612	1801	19
Childs Ercall	1612	1861	24
Church Aston	1701	1763	14

	1st terrier	Last terrier	No. of terriers
Condover	1612	1832	29
Cound	1612	1849	23
Dawley	1612	1853	39
Donington	1612	1853	34
Drayton in Hales	1612	1845	20
Dudleston	1693	1849	21
Eaton Constantine	1682	1845	28
Edgmond	1682	1867	28
Ellesmere	1612	1849	28
Eyton	1635	1832	32
Grinshill	1682	1849	25
High Ercall	1612	1861	36
Hodnet	1612	1849	25
Ightfield	1612	1849	37
Kemberton	1612	1841	31
Kinnersley	1612	1861	30
Leebotwood	1698	1828	25
Leebrockhurst	1612	1845	25
Longford	1635	1849	35
Loppington	1612	1849	40
Myddle	1612	1853	32
Moreton Say	1635	1849	28
Montford	1612	1845	33
Ness Magna	1612	1857	38
Ness Parva	1685	1759	11
Newport	1693	1810	25
Norton in Hales	1612	1861	32
Pitchford	1612	1853	38
Quatt	1612	1857	34
Rodington	1635	1832	38
Ryton	1612	1857	31
Ruyton XI Towns	1603	1853	35
Shawbury	1679	1849	21
Sheinton	1612	1828	30
Sheriffhales	1612	1828	34
Shifnal	1612	1853	38
Shrewsbury: St. Alkmund	1612	1862	27
St. Chad	1694	1861	25
St. George	1841	1857	5
Holy Cross	1682	1861	16
St. Julian	1685	1845	24
Smethcott	1612	1841	24
Stanton Hineheath	1612	1824	24
Stepleton	1612	1849	26
Stirchley	1612	1869	40
Stockton	1612	1810	18
Stoke on Tern	1612	1861	33
Sutton Maddock	1612	1845	28
Tibberton	1701	1857	24
Tilstock	1841	1853	4
Tong	1698	1845	10
Uffington	1693	1869	23
Upton Magna	1612	1849	33
Waters Upton	1612	1869	30
Wellington	1694	1845	30
Welshampton	1682	1857	27
Wem	1696	1845	18
West Felton	1633	1857	34
Weston under Redcastle	1718	1849	19
Whitchurch	1612	1849	28
Withington	1685	1845	30
Worfield	1612	1857	23
Wrockwardine	1612	1883	39
Wroxeter	1699	1849	30

Listed as additional in the Lichfield calendar:



	1st terrier	Last terrier	No. of terriers
Fitz	1612	1853	37
Frodesley	1612	1849	30
Harley	1612	1853	32
Hordley	1612	1845	28
Kenley	1693	1853	26
Leighton	1612	1849	34
Lilleshall	1612	1849	35
Moreton Corbet	1612	1845	29
Preston super Wealdmoor	1612	1853	39

Appendix 2 Glebe Terriers for Parishes in the Hereford Diocese

(HRO 8. All terriers are listed.)

Parish	1st terrier	last terrier	No. of terriers
Abdon	1604	1802	4
Acton Scott	1589	1589	2
Ashford Bowdler	1589	1627	2
Astley Abbots	ND		1
Aston-on-Clun	1589	1801	7
Aston Botterell	1589	1607	2
Aston Eyre (See Morville)			
Badger	1607	1615	3
Beckbury	1607	?	2
Bedstone	1589	1634	3
Benthall	ND		1
Bettws	ND		1
Billingsley	1607	1636	3
Bishops Castle	607	1607	2
Bitterley	1589	1589	2
Bockleton	1635	1679	4
Bromfield	1622	?	2
Broseley	ND		2
Bucknell	1607	1639	5
Burford (1st portion)	?1589	1616	2
Burford (2nd portion)	1589	1615	2
Burford (3rd portion)	1589	1678	2
Burwarton	ND		1
Cardeston	1636	?	2
Cardington	1589	1607	2
Caynham	1589	1588	2
Chelmarsh	1589	1607	2
Chetton	1589	1615	2
Churchstoke	1744	1744	1
Church Stretton	1699	?	2
Clee St Margaret	1801	1801	1
Cleobury Mortimer	ND		1
Cleobury North	1589	1604	2
Clun	1604	1607	3
Clunbury	1628	1636	2
Clungunford	1589	1607	3
Cold Weston	1607	1801	4
Coreley	ND		1
Deuxhill and Glazeley	1607	1802	3
Diddlebury	1637	?	2
Ditton Priors	1589	1625	4
Dowles	1589	1698	2
Easthope	1607	1625	3
Eaton	1607	1619	3
Egton	ND		1
Greete	ND		1
Habberley	1607	1624	3
Hanwood	1589	1601	3
Highley	1625	?	2

Parish	1st terrier	last terrier	No. of terriers
Holdgate	ND		2
Hope Bagot	ND		1
Hope Bowdler	1616	1616	2
Hopesay	1589	1636	3
Hopton Castle	1604	?	2
Hopton Wafers	1604	1682	3
Hughley (See note below)	1607	1810	5
Hyssington	1607	?	3
Little Wenlock	1589	1802	6
Kinlet	1589	1607	3
Llanfair Waterdine	ND		1
Long Stanton	1589	1716	3
Ludford	1715/16	1715/16	1
Ludlow	1589	1736	3
Lydbury North	1604	1604	1
Lydham	1607	?	3
Madeley	1699	?	4
Mainstone	1607	1607	1
Meole Brace	1589	1607	3
Middleton Scriven	1636	?	2
Milsom	1618	?	2
More	ND		2
Morville/Aston Eyre	ND		1
Much Wenlock	1607	1639	4
Munslow	?1604	?	2
Myndtown	ND		2
Neen Savage	1607	1607	1
Neen Sollars	1589	1589	1
Neenton	1589	1618	3
Norbury	ND		1
Oldbury	ND		2
Onibury	1589	1802	3
Pontesbury	1639	?	3
Pulverbatch	1607	?	2
Ratlinghope	1801	1801	1
Richards Castle	ND		3
Rushbury	1589	1802	2
Shelve	1589	1636	4
Shipton	1589	1589	1
Shrawardine	1589	1693	3
Sidbury	ND		2
Sibdon Carwood	ND		1
Silvington	1682		1
Stanton Lacy	1607	1607	3
Stoke St Milborough	1589	1607	3
Stokesay	1607	?	2
Stottesdon	1607	1624	22
Stowe	1604	1619	4
Tasley	1589	1607	2
Tugford	ND		4
Upton Cresset	1614	?	2
Wentnor	1607	?	3
Westbury	?	1801	5
Wheathill	1589	1615	3
Willey	1801	1801	1
Wistanstow	1607	?	2
Woolstanton	1614	1634	4
Worthen	1589	1636	5

NB Stanton Long terrier for 1607 has attached to it the terrier of the same date for Hughley.

## Appendix 3 Glebe terriers for Parishes in the St Asaph Diocese

(National Library of Wales.)

Parish	1st terrier	last terrier	No of terriers
Llanhaedr (SA/TERR/308–12)	1757	1856	5
Llansilin (SA/TERR/746–51)	1685	1856	6

There are also extracts from Llanyblodwell (SA/MISC/568 and Melverley (SA/MISC/570).

NB The figure in the final column often contains undated and duplicate terriers.

- 1 D M Barratt, 'Glebe Terriers' in L M Munby, (ed) *Short Guides to Records No 13*, (ed.).
- 2 M W Barley, *The English Farmhouse and Cottage: Rural Building in England* in J Thirsk (ed), *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol V, ii, 1985, 590
- 3 W G Hoskins, *Local History in England*, 1972, 156; F G Emmison, *Archives and Local History*, 1974, 43; W E Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 1969, 126–134; D M Barratt, 'Glebe Terriers', 38; W B Stephens, *Sources for English Local History*, 1973, 114; A Rogers, *This Was Their World*, 1972, 89
- 4 B Trinder, *History of Shropshire*, 1983, 30
- 5 The accounts of William Charlton, bailiff of Wombridge Priory just prior to the Dissolution referred to three open fields in Priorslee; PRO SC6/3006. A Star Chamber case of a few years later refers to the alleged pulling down of hedges which is often a sign of protest against enclosure; PRO STAC2/20/390
- 6 Shifnal Manor Survey c.1720, SRR 6001/2600
- 7 A letter from the keeper of the deer to the Earl of Shrewsbury in the early 17th century claimed that care of the deer was becoming more difficult because of pressure from arable and pastoral farming; Lambeth Palace Library, Shrewsbury Papers, MS 702 f 37
- 8 F Heal, *Economic Problems of the Clergy*, in F Heal and R O'Day, (eds), *Church and Society in England, Henry VIII to James I*, 1977
- 9 Inventory of Abbie Birch, 29 Nov 1636, LJRO B/C/11
- 10 J Croom, 'Fragmentation of the Minster Parochiae of South-East Shropshire' in J Blair, (ed), *Ministers and Parish Churches*, 1988, 67
- 11 U Rees, (ed), *Shrewsbury Abbey Cartulary*, 1975, 254
- 12 R J Evans, 'Tithes', in J Thirsk (ed), *Agrarian History*, Vol V, ii, 389.
- 13 W E Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 126
- 14 Grant of tithes to Richard Moreton and Robert Forster, WDG Fletcher, *Battlefield Charters*, TSAS, 3rd Ser., iii 1903, 259. Continuing disputes shown in PRO E134/27 Eliz/Mich 4
- 15 SRR Brooke Papers T/1/5
- 16 R J Evans, 'Tithing Customs and Disputes: the Evidence of Glebe Terriers 1698–1850', *Ag Hist Rev*, 18, 1970, 17
- 17 W E Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 1969, 138
- 18 N and J Cox, *Probate Inventories: The Legal Background*, Pt 2, *Local Historian*, 16, 4, 1984, 219
- 19 D M Barratt, 'Glebe Terriers', 38
- 20 J Thirsk, *Rural Economy of England*, 1984, 183
- 21 D Hey, 'North West Midlands', in J Thirsk, (ed) *Agrarian History V*, i, 1984, 129

I am grateful to the Shropshire Records and Research Centre for permission to use the HDG Foxall transcription of the Shifnal tithe map.

*Abbreviations*

LJRO	Lichfield Joint Record Office
PRO	Public Record Office
SRR	Shropshire Records and Research Centre
TSAS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society

## NOTES

### A STONE AXE-HAMMER FROM BEARSTONE, SHROPSHIRE

*By* M D WATSON

In April 1993 a previously unrecorded prehistoric stone axe-hammer was brought to the attention of the writer. It had been found some months earlier half a kilometre south of the hamlet of Bearstone in the civil parish of Woore, in north-east Shropshire.

The actual findspot was at SJ 72223910, within a small field on the north bank of the River Tern, which at this point forms the Shropshire/Staffordshire county border. It was discovered on the surface of the field immediately after it had been ploughed for the first time within living memory.

Previous to this during 1990 an artificial pond had been excavated by the landowners some 30 metres to the west of the findspot. This pond lay within a former small loop of the River Tern which had existed prior to the straightening of this stretch of the river by the National Rivers Authority during the 1980's. The excavated spoil from the pond, was subsequently deposited and spread over the field in which the axe-hammer was found. It seems likely therefore that the axe-hammer originally came from the area of the present pond and was redeposited along with the rest of the excavated material at its eventual findspot.

#### Description

The axe-hammer is an outstanding example of its type and is remarkable for both its exceptional size and quality. It is 303 mm long and has a maximum width of 86 mm towards its butt end, giving the implement a proportionately slender appearance. It has an elongated shield shaped outline with sides curving symmetrically towards the blade end. The blade end itself is asymmetrically expanded and has a maximum width of 95 mm along the somewhat sharp cutting edge. The flat and smooth butt end is roughly rectangular in shape and measures 85 mm wide by 70 mm deep. The perforation is centrally positioned 86 mm. from the butt end. It is of a distinct 'hour-glass' type in that it expands towards the upper and lower surfaces from a cylindrical central portion, with diameters ranging from a minimum of 27 mm to a maximum of 33 mm. In side view the axe has a slightly concave profile. The implement has a weight of 3.760 kg.

There are no signs of any damage to the axe-hammer which is in pristine condition. It is extremely well shaped, displaying almost perfect symmetry, and finely finished with a high quality polished surface. A few minor irregularities can be seen along the axe sides on its face towards the blade end, and on the butt end.

The axe-hammer was examined by Dr R Ixer of the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Birmingham, though a thin section was not taken. The distinctive grey-green stone type is a micaceous low grade, meta-sedament/meta-siltstone or possibly a greywacke. It was not possible to assign it to any particular known petrological grouping or provenance.

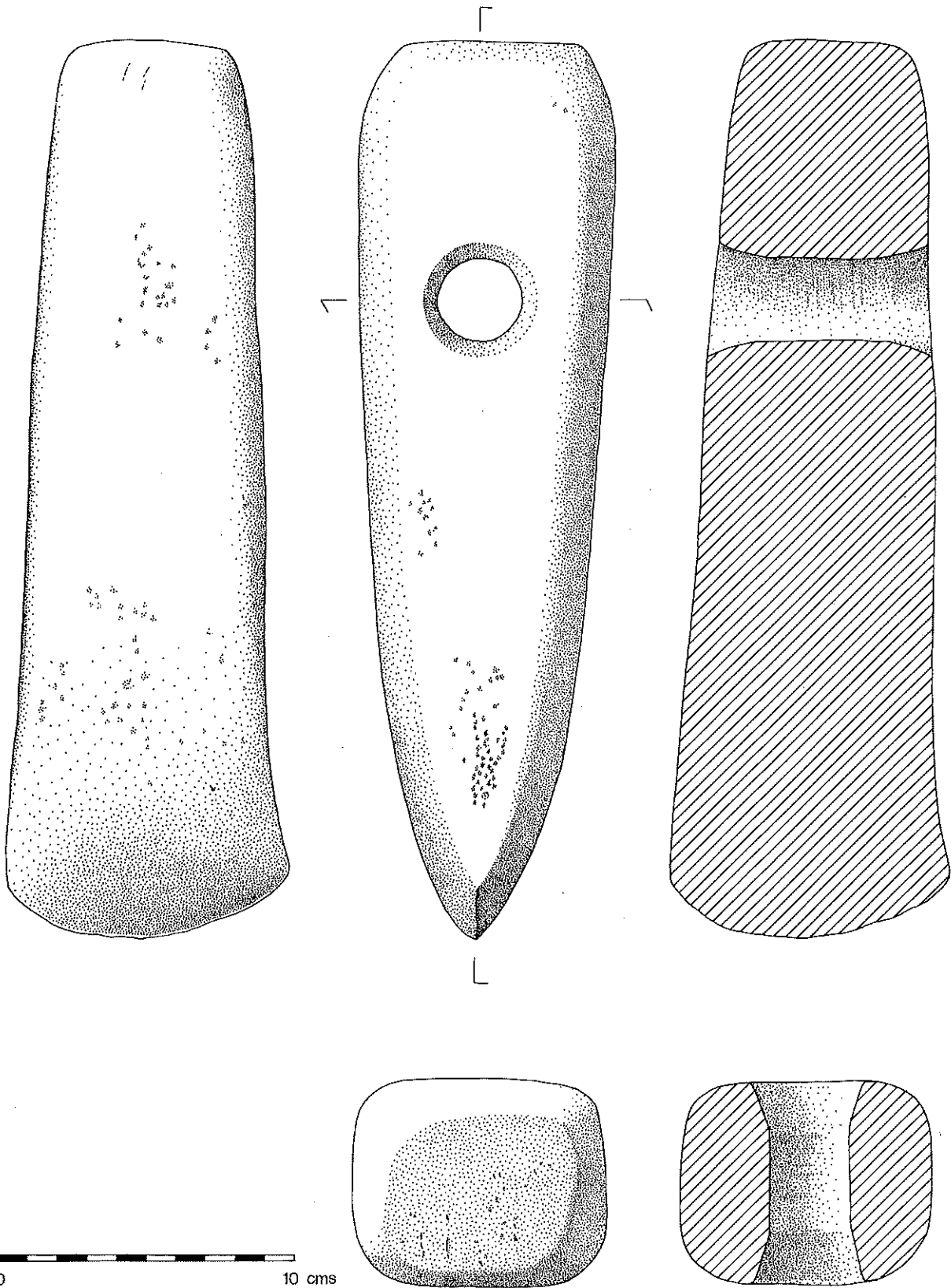


FIG 1 AXE-HAMMER FROM BEARSTONE

## Discussion

The slightly concave shaped profile of the Bearstone axe-hammer enables it to be assigned to Roe's Class II<sup>1</sup> which consists of concave shaped axe-hammers. The expanded blade end further allows it to be assigned to Class IIb. Only a small proportion of axe-hammers belong to Class II, the majority of examples from the British Isles (82%) being convex in outline.

Although clearly attributable to a distinct artefact class, the axe-hammer has a number of unusual features that make it somewhat exceptional. Most striking of these is its great length of 303 mm, compared to an average length of 214 mm for Class IIb axe-hammers. The amount of blade expansion however, is average for a Class IIb example. A further peculiarity is its marked slender proportion in relation to its length, a feature which has more in common with battle-axes than axe-hammers. The outstanding quality of its finish, its well formed symmetrical shape and its finely polished surface is also more in keeping with the battle-axe series than the generally cruder shaped axe-hammers. Despite this there can be no doubt over its belonging to the axe-hammer class of stone implements.

There are no close parallels for the Bearstone example, while the few that have the closest resemblance come from wide ranging localities and are of differing petrologies. It may be that shape and size of axe-hammers was influenced as much by the original shape of the selected raw material as any overriding typological considerations (F Roe pers comm). This may account for its somewhat unusual features.

The dating of axe-hammers is generally assigned to the Early Bronze Age on the basis of their similarity to the better dated battle-axes, which are believed to have been current during the period 1650–1250 BC. That they are also often made from the same types of stone as battle-axes, is taken as further indication of their being produced concurrently. There is some evidence though to suggest that axe-hammers may have continued in use as late as the 11th century BC, long after battle-axes had ceased to be made.<sup>2</sup>

The function of axe-hammers is also a matter of much speculation. Suggestions have included their use as weapons, agricultural implements, or an industrial usage. Neither the provenance of the Bearstone axe-hammer nor the implement itself throws any further light on the possible uses of these artefacts.

## Notes

- 1 F E S Roe, 'Typology of stone implements with shaftholes', in T H M K Clough and W A Cummins (eds), *Stone Axe Studies*, CBA Research Report 23, 1979, 23–48
- 2 K Leahy, 'A dated stone axe-hammer from Cleethorpes, South Humberside', *Proc Prehist Soc*, 52, 1986, 143–152

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr John Roberts for allowing me to record the axe-hammer; Dr Rob Ixer for his comments on its petrology, and Heather Bird for the drawing of the implement. I am most grateful to Fiona Roe for her comments on the axe-hammer and her generosity in providing information on comparable material.

# A SALVAGE RECORDING AT THE BULL INN, BUTCHER ROW, SHREWSBURY

By M D WATSON

In February 1992 during the excavation of foundations for an extension to the rear of the Bull Inn, Butcher Row, Shrewsbury, workmen exposed the tops of previous unrecorded walls. This was brought to the attention of the writer who carried out a salvage recording of the exposed structural remains.

## The Bull Inn

The Bull Inn is first recorded as a public house in 1863.<sup>1</sup> There are however, frequent references during the 17th century beginning in 1624 to a house called The Bull in Butcher Row.<sup>2</sup> This may have occupied the site of the present Inn though this need not imply it then served as an Inn.

The present Bull Inn is a three storeyed brick building of early 19th century date whose ground floor has been largely re-built as a result of a series of modernisations. Prior to the 1992 building works a through passage abutting onto the adjacent Prince Rupert Hotel gave direct access from Butcher Row to the rear of the Inn. This passage was of relatively recent date having replaced an earlier and now destroyed covered passage that ran through the centre of the ground floor of the building. This was known as Bull Passage, first documented as such in 1882<sup>3</sup> and still apparently in existence in 1955.<sup>4</sup> It gave access from Butcher Row to the rear of the Bull Inn where previously stood a row of five small 19th century houses. These houses and the passage were removed sometime c. 1960 when a low brick built extension was erected, itself in turn demolished to make way for the 1992 re-building.

## The Results (fig. 1)

The structural remains exposed comprised two short lengths of sandstone walling at the rear of the Bull Inn, which though separate, are likely to have originally formed part of the same building. The walls were found immediately below the floor level of the demolished 1960s rear extension and yard surface.

The first to be encountered was an angular section of wall situated some 12 metres from the rear wall of the Inn. It was seen to extend parallel to the Butcher Row frontage for a length of 1.25m before turning in a right angle for a short distance towards the street frontage. The wall was constructed of red Keele Beds sandstone bonded with an orange coloured sandy mortar. Its outer face comprised of courses of roughly squared blocks, while the interior was built of well squared and jointed masonry. The wall core was made up of sandstone rubble and the total wall thickness was 0.75m.

Excavation within the angle of the wall showed it to be a cellar extending to a depth of at least 2.25m (at which depth excavation ceased) though it is likely to have extended even deeper as the base of the walls were not encountered. It was seen to be cut into natural ground made up of yellow sand with gravel and pebble inclusions, and likely to be the capping of sand known to overlay the central part of Shrewsbury.

The cellar had been filled to a depth of 1.90m with building rubble, including bricks, tiles, mortar, and occasional sherds of late-18th/early-19th-century pottery. Below this fill was a 0.30m deposit of coal dust and coal fragments, presumably resulting from a period of use as a coal cellar. Underlying this at a depth of 2.25m a

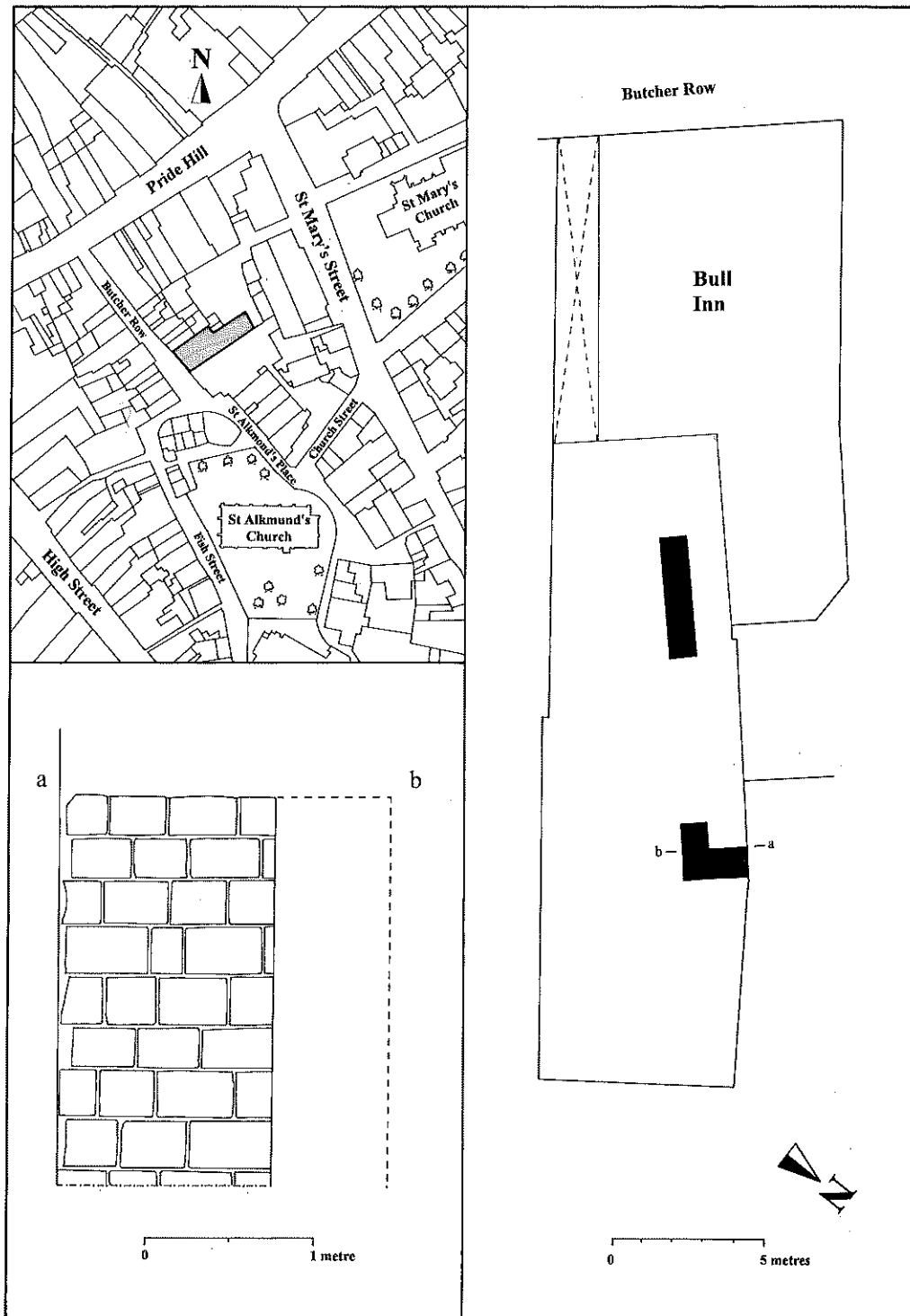


FIG 1 THE BULL INN, SHREWSBURY: LOCATION AND CELLAR ELEVATION

surface of compacted light brown clay was encountered. Only a small section of this, c. 1.00m sq, was exposed, and was found to contain sherds of late-13th/14th-century medieval pottery embedded into its surface.

The exposed cellar had been cut through by the adjacent boundary wall that separated the Bull Inn and 3, Butcher Row, and which in so doing had truncated the former cellar structure. The boundary wall was built largely of sandstone rubble in its below ground section with the remaining upper portions of brick. It appeared to be all of one build and of 19th-century date.



The second length of walling exposed was some 3 metres distant from the rear wall of the Bull Inn. It extended for a length of 2.2m and was on the same alignment as the western return of the cellar wall, though at a slightly higher level. Only the two uppermost surviving courses of the wall were exposed but this was sufficient to demonstrate that both its inner and outer faces were of ashlar build indicating that this section at least was part of an above ground structure. Like the cellar wall it was comprised entirely of red Keele Beds sandstone, had a rubble core, was bonded with orange sandy mortar, and was 0.75m in thickness.

The coherent alignment of the two sections of walling along with their similarity and form of construction leaves little doubt that they were originally part of the same structure.

### Interpretation

The structure is best interpreted as the cellar or undercroft of a former building set back from the Butcher Row frontage and laid out end-on to the street. The original plan of the building is uncertain, though it is likely to have been rectangular. While no direct dating evidence for the structure was found, there are a number of factors which confidently allow a medieval date to be assigned to it. Firstly, it pre-dates the former Bull Passage, which was aligned across it and could therefore only have been laid out when the building no longer stood above ground. Bull Passage itself is first recorded in 1881, and the archaeological evidence for the backfilling of the cellar would suggest an early 19th century date for its creation. The property boundary wall dividing the Bull Inn from 3, Butcher Row and which truncated the cellar was also seen to be of probable 19th-century date.

The cellar itself was constructed of good quality masonry of Keele Beds sandstone which in Shrewsbury is usually indicative of a pre-18th century date. Indeed the use of this building material is paralleled throughout the town in a number of medieval buildings and structures dating to the 13th/early 14th century.<sup>5</sup> Such a date would be consistent with the medieval pottery found at the base of the excavated section of cellar. Finally, the Burghley map of c. 1570 shows two substantial buildings to the rear of the Butcher Row frontage and at right angles to the street in approximately the position of the recorded cellar. The site of one of these may well be represented by the Bull Inn cellar.

Though only a fragmentary survival the Bull Inn cellar is of some importance in being yet another example in Shrewsbury of an undercroft of a probable medieval domestic hall situated to the rear of the medieval street frontage. This phenomenon has been highlighted and discussed in some detail by Baker<sup>6</sup> who draws attention to the concentration of such buildings along Pride Hill. The evidence presented here from Butcher Row demonstrates the potential for the survival of further, as yet undocumented, examples elsewhere in the town.

### The Finds

#### *Pottery*

13 sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during the salvage recording. A short archive report was produced.<sup>7</sup>

Although a small group the fabric and forms are typical of pottery found in Shrewsbury in both secular and ecclesiastical contexts.<sup>8</sup> Unusually for a medieval pottery group from the town there are no sherds from ceramic cooking pots although the small size of the sample may account for this. The 4 stratified sherds associated with the cellar/undercroft would all be consistent with a late 13th–14th century context.

#### *Stone Mortar (fig 2)*

This was brought to the attention of the writer after the site investigations. It was apparently recovered by the contractors during the initial site clearance works, though it was not possible to establish the context from which it came.

The mortar is made of Hoar Edge Grit, a buff brown sandstone with granular inclusions of quartz pebbles. The mortar fragment consists of approximately half the complete form and comprises a full bowl section and rim with a single lug with rib. It is square in section with inner walls tapering slightly inward towards the base. Both the body and lug with rib have a solid unrelieved design, the flat rib narrowing only slightly towards rim

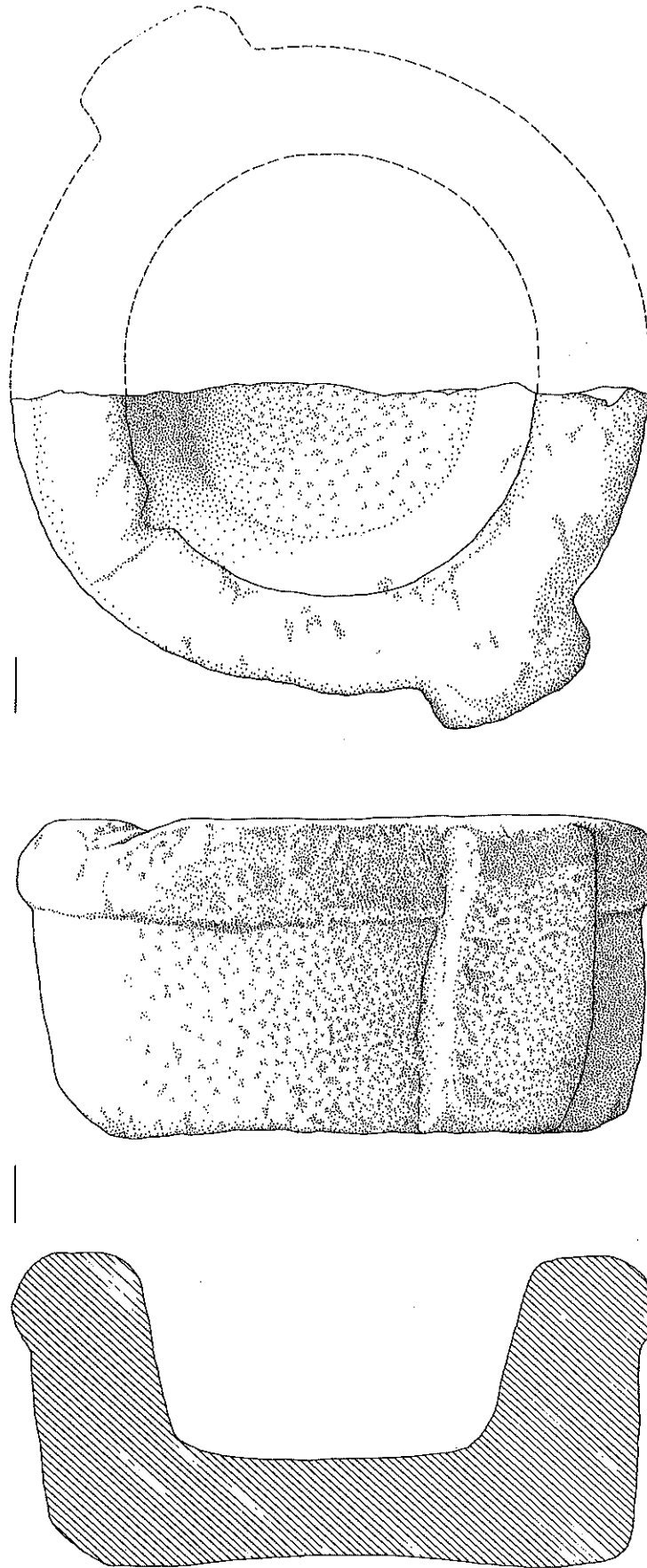


FIG 2 STONE MORTAR, THE BULL INN, SHREWSBURY

and base. The base is round in shape, with a concave dished surface. There are no exact parallels to this example, but a 12th-century date is likely in view of the presence of the side rib.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Acknowledgements*

Thanks are due to Ken Barton for his assistance and co-operation during the recording; to Victoria Buteux for providing the medieval pottery report, Greg Price for Figure 1 and Heather Bird for Figure 2.

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## REPORTS

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN SHROPSHIRE IN 1994-5

A summary of archaeological work undertaken in the county reported to the Archaeology Service,  
Shropshire County Council  
*compiled by H R Hannaford*

<b>Parish</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Site and Description</b>
Bayston Hill	SJ457096	Whitley Grange. A training excavation was undertaken by Birmingham University on the Roman villa site (SA62) at Whitley on the south side of the Rea Brook. Part of the former bath house was revealed. The excavations were directed by Dr Roger White and undertaken within the framework of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project.
Bridgnorth	SJ716929	East and West Castle Streets. Excavations undertaken by the Oxford Archaeology Unit revealed the presence on the West Castle Street frontage of significant stratified medieval deposits of 12-15th century date. These deposits were of over 0.6 m thickness and lay beneath over 1.7 m depth of modern fill. (Mudd, 1995)
Chirbury	SO304983	Mitchell's Fold Stone Circle. Vandalism to the stone circle, involving the uprooting of two of the standing stones, necessitated the archaeological excavation of their socket holes prior to their re-instatement. The excavation and recording was undertaken by English Heritage's Central Archaeology Service. (Blore, 1995)
Dawley, Telford	SJ667093	Lawley Furnace (SA3917). Land reclamation works on the former open-cast mining site revealed substantial remains of the early 19th-century blast furnace and evidence of 17th- to 19th-century coal and ironstone mining operations. (Hannaford, 1994a)
Hadley, Telford	SJ653132	An archaeological evaluation was carried out in May 1995 of land immediately adjacent to the site of the medieval Apley Castle. Whilst no trace was found of the medieval settlement which was thought to have been located near to the medieval house, an early post-medieval walled garden was known to have been located within the study area; the walled garden was later occupied by 18th- and 19th-century agricultural buildings, and these were described by the evaluation. (Horton, 1995)
Kinnerley/Llanymynech and Pant/Melverley	SJ253195- SJ350180- SJ256113	Seven Vyrnwy Confluence. In the early part of 1995, Earthworks Archaeological Services undertook a survey on behalf of the National Rivers Authority of the floodplain of the Rivers Severn and Vyrnwy at their confluence prior to the determination of new flood defences. The survey was intended to locate areas of archaeological potential

- within the study area, and has resulted in the production of an extensive gazetteer of archaeological sites. (Smith, 1995)
- Little Ness SJ423189 Wood Farm, Adcote. Field-walking of the cropmark complex SA487, which comprises a D-shaped enclosure, a pit alignment, and a linear feature, recovered a number of sherds of Roman pottery, including Severn Valley ware and 4 sherds of early-mid 4th-century Castor ware. A fragment of mid 2nd-century Mancetter-Hartshill *mortarium* and further Severn Valley ware sherds from an adjoining field suggest that the enclosure was occupied during the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. (White, 1995)
- Much Wenlock SO626997 Carver's Cottage, Barrow Street. An archaeological evaluation revealed the presence of a raised garden bed of 13th/14th-century date and a number of pits and gullies of similar date in the garden to the north of Carver's Cottage. Further excavations in the field to the south of the cottage located a ditch of about 1200AD marking the back boundary of the medieval property. The evaluation also identified a path running southwest from Barrow Street to Racecourse Lane as 'Reve Lane'. (Horton, 1994)
- Shrewsbury SJ492125 High Street/Butchers Row. Fieldwork carried out as part of a pilot study for the proposed Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Database revealed the presence of a substantial medieval terrace (first identified in the nineteenth century as an 'inner town wall') along the slope between the High Street and Butcher Row/Fish Street, and the remains of a structure tentatively identified as 'Burghes Hall' at the south end of this terrace. The pilot study was funded by English Heritage and undertaken by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council. (Baker, 1995)
- Shrewsbury SJ49341231 Bowdler's Passage, Wyle Cop. Underpinning works in 1994 on the modern brick building on the north side of Bowdler's Passage cut into a pit containing bell-casting debris in the form of soot and mould fragments. Although no dating evidence has yet been obtained from the soot samples, the location of the pit under the passageway would suggest a medieval date. (Hannaford, forthcoming)
- Shrewsbury SJ496141 Greenfields. An archaeological evaluation of the site of a housing development off the Ellesmere Road revealed remains of an enclosed Romano-British settlement. The existence of the rectilinear enclosure was revealed by geophysical survey and trial trenching. Pottery recovered during the initial trial trenching suggested a date between the mid-2nd to mid-4th centuries. The evaluation and subsequent excavation of the site was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. (Early, R, 1995)
- Shrewsbury SJ490099 Meole Brace. The construction in 1994 of the new park-and-ride facility at Meole Brace on the site of the former race-course was preceded by an archaeological evaluation by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council. This established the northern limits of the surviving remains of the Romano-British roadside settlement (SA2) part of which was excavated before the building of the Shrewsbury By-pass. These remains were preserved *in situ* during the construction of the park-and-ride by being buried beneath a screening bund. A watching brief carried out by Birmingham University accompanied the construction works and observed and sectioned the early 20th-century military trenches which also crossed the site. The remains of the race-course grandstand were also observed. (Hughes, 1994; Hannaford and Phillipotts, 1994; Jenks, 1993; Newton and Hughes, 1994)
- Shrewsbury SJ49061000 Meole Brace. Excavations by Birmingham University were carried out in the summers of 1994 and 1995 on a prehistoric ring-ditch site (SA14) adjacent to the access road to the new park-and-ride site.

		Finds have included Late Neolithic pottery and Early Bronze Age flint artefacts and waste flakes. (Hughes, 1995)
Oswestry	SJ29102977	Bailey Head. The remains of the well in the former market place was uncovered during re-surfacing works. The well appears to have been sunk in the 18th century. (Hannaford, 1995b)
Uffington	SJ542152	Haughmond Abbey. During dredging of the pool to the south of the abbey precinct, the remains of a medieval and post-medieval building (SA4705) were revealed lying between the pool and forestry commission track which runs along the east side of the abbey precinct (Hannaford, 1994b)
Whitchurch	SJ541416	34/40 High Street. An archaeological evaluation carried out by Gifford and Partners revealed beam slots and a yard surface of Roman date within the area thought to have been occupied by the Roman fort (SA909). (Gifford and Partners, 1995)
Worthen	SJ3702	Snailbeach Lead Mine (SA984). Reclamation works on the derelict mine workings were completed by Shropshire County Council in 1994. The reclamation works were accompanied by an archaeological watching brief. The programme of consolidation of various surviving mine buildings continued with works on the Cornish Engine House and Miners' Dry being completed in 1994, and on the Crusher House and Office complex in 1995. (Hannaford and Price, 1994 and forthcoming)
Wroxeter	SJ5608	<i>Viroconium</i> . Extensive geophysical survey work undertaken within the Roman city by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, English Heritage, produced evidence giving further insight into the intensity of occupation within the city.
Wroxeter	SJ580093	Uckington. During a watching brief on the excavation of test pits for a water pipeline, a scatter of Roman pottery and building materials was noted, possibly indicating the site of a villa (SA4706). (Hannaford, 1995a)

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(The numbers in brackets are the County Sites and Monument Record numbers for individual sites.)

# ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE SHREWSBURY MUSEUMS SERVICE, 1995

By MIKE STOKES

This has been a quieter year than 1994. The following are the main items brought to the Museums Service for identification.

- 1 Romano-British brooch, Rhyn Park (SJ 303368)
- 2 Silver 'Dolphin/Polden Hill', Colchester derivative fibula, Albright Hussey (SJ 503178)
- 3 Bullion Gold Finger-ring, Condover Park (SJ 492052)

Romano-British brooch (SJ 303368)

This find with its highly arched bow and fantail leg is closely allied to the *Aesica* brooch. This is an uncommon (but not rare) type of British brooch that began life here around the middle of the first century AD, probably before the Invasion of AD43. The *Aesica* is generally considered to have derived from two Continental brooches, the Langton Down and Rosette types, quantities of which (both home made and imports) were in use by the early decades of the first century AD.

The find, at 55mm long, is larger than most examples of the type, which are generally between 35–45mm in length, and at 46.4gm considerably heavier. It is made of copper-alloy, but without analysis it is not possible to be more specific. The body was moulded in one-piece and because of its complicated design breaking the mould would have been necessary to retrieve the casting, and therefore can be considered a 'one-off'. To get over this problem, caused by the highly arched bow, many *Aesicas* were cast in two parts (the bow being made separately) and riveted together.

The *Aesica* type can be said to have been in use between cAD40–80. With no other information the best clue in dating this particular brooch is to be found in the method used to secure its spring/pin mechanism to the body. On either side of the brooch head there are two 'wings'. The spring was held against these by a single, small, central rearward hook behind the head of the brooch. Remains of this hook are clearly visible. Although this method was widely used on many different types of brooch it was not very successful as it was not very secure. Once the small hook was damaged the spring was lost and the brooch rendered useless. This form of securing the spring/pin mechanism was in use c AD40–c AD65. These dates can be applied to this find.

Most examples of the *Aesica* type in Britain are from the Midlands, particularly south of the Fosse. This brooch, being found at the site of a legionary marching camp, was undoubtedly taken there by the military. However, it is much more likely to have been made in Britain than on the Continent.

The Museum is grateful to Mr. Jacques the finder and Mr. Trevor, the landowner, for permission to publish this find.

John Darley



Silver 'Dolphin/Polden Hill', Colchester derivative fibula, Albright Hussay (SJ 503178)

The fibula is broken at mid-point and only the headplate and upper bow survive. The head/bow junction is decorated with incised lines and dots to represent symbolic 'dolphin' eyes. It dates from the mid-1st to very early-2nd century AD. This type of brooch is comparatively rare in the west of the Roman province of Britain, being more common where early troop dispositions occurred. It is also unusual for early silver to survive as it was regularly recycled. This brooch is an important reminder of the high quality items that have been lost to us.

Bullion Gold Finger-ring, Condoover Park (SJ 492052)

The ring is of bullion gold and is octagonal in shape with a maximum diameter of 24mm. The band is 4mm in width and is formed by hammering into a series of facets roughly in lozenge form within the flattened zones. The flattened band is joined by a simple overlapping hammered technique. Octagonal rings manufactured in this way may generally be ascribed to the middle or late Roman Empire, particularly the 3rd century, although a bronze and silver example are known from excavations in St. Albans from a context which can be dated to between AD365-380. A date in the 4th century seems likely for this piece. Even so, gold of Roman origin is a comparatively rare survival as much of it was gathered up and recast as coinage during the ensuing Anglo-Saxon period. In the early years of the Empire the wearing of gold jewellery was reserved for the senatorial and imperial classes. However, by the late Empire this law had been relaxed and an item such as this could have belonged to a wealthy merchant or even an ex soldier if not to a member of the upper classes. The circumstances of its recovery from an area which has produced other items of Roman date, although not of precious metal, suggest that it was a piece lost during travel along a trackway.

## REVIEWS

T Wilson and S Ireland, *The Coinage of Wroxeter in the Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury*, Shrewsbury Museums Services Occasional Papers No.1, 0 9500122 5 4, £1.25

This is the first in a much needed series based on the important collection of finds held at Rowley's House Museum from the excavations at Wroxeter. The genesis of the series lies in the happy liaison between the museum and the School of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Warwick whose students have in past years been working through the rich collection at Rowley's House cataloguing and sorting the material. From this work they have then written up dissertations and shortened versions of these will be appearing as future monographs.

The accumulation of 6000 coins from Wroxeter represents, in the opinion of one of Britain's leading numismatists 'one of the largest numismatic archives from any urban settlement in Roman Britain or, indeed, the Roman Empire as a whole, that has been recorded in both full numismatic detail and stratigraphic context.' (Brickstock & Casey, in press). It is indeed fitting therefore that the monograph series should start with the 1600 coins from this total now residing at Rowley's House.

It should be stated from the outset that the text is not a complete catalogue of the coins but rather discusses aspects of the coinage in which the general public might be interested. The text starts with a brief historical introduction to Wroxeter and then outlines the evolution of Roman coinage during the Romano-British period. This is followed by a chronological outline of the collection giving a rough breakdown of the periods within the collection ranging from a denarius of 124 BC to the small bronze coin of Arcadius which may date to as late as AD 402 but missing out a coin of Valentinian III putatively assigned to the site following a reinterpretation of the 19th century coin list (Casey 1975). The last sections are perhaps the most valuable since they deal with topics all too rarely discussed by numismatists but which are nonetheless of great importance to those dealings with site finds. The state of the coins explains how coins may deteriorate or corrode differentially and then deals with the specific problems of plated coins and contemporary copies. This is followed by a short section on minting methods, and the problems of identification they cause and the book ends with a discussion of the collection as a [teaching] resource, covering the topics of Imperial portraiture, propaganda and religion. Throughout, the reader is referred to the numerous plates at the back of the publication. Individually, the photographs are of rather variable quality due to the differing metals from which the coins are made and have been reproduced at the odd scale of 1.6:1 rather than the standard 1:1.

Whilst this is clearly not the final word on Wroxeter's coinage (and at this price was clearly never intended to be), it is a very useful publication, especially so when used in the museum and looking at the coins on display. The text is sound and lucid and is not loaded with jargon. As such, it forms a worthwhile and welcome introduction to an important body of material and a useful volume to have on one's shelves.

Roger White, University of Birmingham

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R H Thompson and M J Dickinson, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 44: The Norweb Collection Tokens of the British Isles 1575-1750 Part IV Norfolk to Somerset*. London, 1993

In the Middle Ages, the official coinage in England was struck in gold and silver only and the smallest coin was the silver farthing which in the late 15th century weighed 3 grs. Under Elizabeth I the smallest denomination was the silver halfpenny, an equally tiny coin, measuring 11 mm in diameter and weighing 3½ grs. James I attempted to resolve the problem of the provision of small change by allowing Lord Harrington to purchase from the Crown a patent for striking farthings in copper. Similar patents were sold by his son, Charles I, to other entrepreneurs. However, these copper farthings were unpopular with tradesmen and general public alike and were suppressed by Parliament in 1644. Parliament planned to issue a low denomination copper currency. However, with the execution of Charles I in 1649 the royal prerogative to strike copper coins ceased. In the same year, unauthorised tokens in place of these copper coins began to be issued by a variety of people or bodies in Britain. They were principally local tradesmen, who, of course, benefited most from the existence of tokens, but included also town and city corporations (such as Bridgenorth where tokens were issued in the name of the chamberlains of the town) and even some private individuals. Their primary purpose, to facilitate trading, was sometimes declared on the tokens in phrases such as 'for necessary change' and 'welcome you be to trade with me'. These tokens, conventionally known today as 'Tradesmens' tokens' served effectively as the small change for the period until 1672 when their use was forbidden by Royal Proclamation. Around 12000 different tokens were issued in the British Isles 3,500 in London alone and clearly they made a major contribution to the coinage in circulation.

Tradesmens' tokens were usually struck in copper or brass, very occasionally in mixed metal or in lead. The chief denominations were the half penny and farthing. Penny tokens are uncommon and the eleven tokens of this denomination in the Shropshire series are an unusually high proportion for any county. In shape they were most often round; others however were square (as the half penny token of Richard Amber of Bishops Castle), octagonal (as four tokens in the Shropshire series) or heart-shaped (as the tokens of Thomas Mason of Bishops Castle and Peter Baker of Shrewsbury). The inscriptions on them normally included the christian and surname of the issuer, his trade or occupation and the village, town or city where he resided. The denomination, the initials of the issuer and his wife and a device such as the arms of his tradeguild, a tavern or shop sign or a pun on his name might also be given.

The standard catalogue of tradesmen's tokens is the edition by G C Williamson of W Boyne *Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century*, 1889 and 1891, which lists 107 tokens which are attributed to Shropshire. Subsequently 'new' Shropshire tokens have come to light while research has shown that a number of those tokens which had been attributed to Shropshire by Williamson in fact come from other countries. The current listing of tokens that is most often cited is that by Michael Dickinson *Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and their Values*, 1986. This assigns 115 different tokens to Shropshire, which may be compared with 86 from Herefordshire, 92 from Cheshire and 136 from Staffordshire. There has been no separate detailed study published of the Shropshire token series as there has for some counties such as Staffordshire. Photographs or drawings of Shropshire tokens are not included by Williamson or Dickinson in their catalogues.

The Norweb collection of British Tradesmens' tokens is one of the largest and most comprehensive private collections of tokens to have been formed. It is being published in seven volumes of which this is no 4 and consists of tokens from Norfolk, Northants, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Shropshire and Somerset. The purpose of the publication is to 'put the tokens . . . at the service of those who would base studies on them' (p xvi). Each token is illustrated and a succinct description given, cross referring the entry to a more detailed description in Williamson and indicating where the reading of the token differs from that given by Williamson. The description includes the weight in grains and grammes, the metal (generally copper or brass) and the alignment of the dies. Very brief information is given about a few of the issuers. There is a long and informative introduction and a good bibliography.

The collection includes only fifty eight different Shropshire tokens, that is about half of the known examples, which is not unimpressive considering that it is not a specialised collection found by an enthusiast of the county, and that, on the whole, tokens from Shropshire are considered to be rare. Their provenances show that most

were purchased from coin dealers but a number come from two earlier outstanding private collections, that of Ralph Augustus Nott (1883–1960) and that of H Lowe of Altrincham, Cheshire which was auctioned by Spinks in December 1979. To place the collection in context, the principal collection of Shropshire tokens today is that in the Rowley House museum in Shrewsbury (73 examples). The national collection at the British Museum had only 50 Shropshire tokens but more recently acquired 23 examples from the Norweb Collection. No other museum houses an extensive collection of Shropshire tokens. Of the private collections, that of H Lowe was of exceptional importance and included 70 Shropshire tokens. It is a great pity that it was not preserved in its entirety.

The volume is important for a number of reasons. Above all this is the first time that a large collection of Shropshire tokens has been published with an authoritative and reliable text and with good, clear photographs of each different example. Secondly, the standard catalogue by Williamson is not accurate in many of the readings of the legends or descriptions of the detail on the tokens. This volume corrects many of these. On tokens where the inscription is either unclear or incomplete it reconstructs the correct details in full, citing duplicates in other collections, such as that of H Lowe. (Reference is not made to the Rowley House Museum collection). Tokens of the same design but from different dies are identified and the pairings of different dies are given for the first time. These will help to indicate which token issues were extensive or perhaps struck over a longer period of time.

The Norweb collection published here includes all the common examples of Shropshire tokens. It updates Williamson and usefully complements Dickinson's authoritative but brief listing. It paves the way towards the ideal of an eventual publication in full of the Shropshire series, which would have good illustrations of each example, transcriptions of the legends and full descriptions of the designs as well as information on the issuers and an explanation of the types. Such a catalogue would be a useful contribution to both local history and numismatic studies and would be of value and interest to a wide range of people, both within and outside Shropshire, including local historians, museum curators and finds researchers.

Paul Robinson, Curator, Devizes Museum

David Trumper, *Britain in Old Photographs: Shrewsbury: a second selection*. Alan Sutton, 1995. 0 7509 1136 0. Pp. 128. £7.99.

George Evans & Ron Briscoe, *Telford: A Pictorial History*. Phillimore, 1995. 0 85033 955 3. Pp. 120. £12.95.

The picture book continues to be the most popular of local historical publications. In addition to the two works under review at least three volumes of old photographs were published in Shropshire in 1995, one on Ludlow, and two on Telford. New technology has made possible the reproduction of aged and faded prints to a standard which is both aesthetically pleasing, and sufficiently clear to make them useful as historical sources. The 1990s is proving to be the period when the greater part of Shropshire's pictorial heritage is being made accessible to the county's historians, just as the decades before the first World War were the time when the bulk of our parish registers became available.

David Trumper's volume is concerned with Shrewsbury's suburbs. The introduction could have stressed some recurring themes in the history of the outskirts of the county town, which might have increased readers' understanding of the subject. It would have been better to devote space, for example, to a simple explanation of the nature of burgage plots, than to dubious tales about the settlement of 45 Frenchmen in Frankwell in the late eleventh century. Similarly a more measured discussion of the impact of roads and railways, of allotment-type gardens, and of the modest mansions in the suburbs would have given the book a degree of unity. The background to most of the pictures is thoroughly researched although a few errors creep in. Charles Hulbert used the textile mill in Coleham for weaving not for spinning cotton, and the Poplar Island tragedy took place in 1857 not 1878. Nevertheless the book is full of fascinating evidence about Shrewsbury's history during the past century, and David Trumper adds much to the photographs. It is good to know, for example, that the VE day street party in School Lane, Coleham, was jointly organised by the Salvation Army and the landlady of the *Hen and Chickens*. We see German prisoners of war from World War I being marched past Rocke Street. An advertisement draws attention to the tennis courts operating in 1922 in one of the hangars on the wartime airfield at Monkmoor. A painted sign proclaims that the *Bird in Hand* provided accommodation for charabancs. The book's faults are minor ones, and anyone with a serious interest in Shrewsbury's history will need a copy. George Evans and Ron Briscoe provide 175 pictures of the Telford area. The theme of the introduction is the lost villages of the region, but the role of industry in shaping the landscape and the communities within it is

generally underplayed. The editing of the volume could have been improved. Plates 125 and 127 appear to be from the same original, and it is unfortunate that plates 144, 145 and 153, which show the Rotunda at Ironbridge, are not all visible on the same spread, and that no arguments are advanced to date them. The text is littered with errors. The Benthall Wheel (plate 159) was not undershot. The railway which ran past Dark Lane is no longer in use (plate 121). Bull-baiting did not continue at Oakengates until 'the end of the last century' (plate 74). Nevertheless the book offers much that is interesting and unavailable elsewhere, particularly the groups of people, shown on prints that probably originated in private collections. Some, like the two views of the ambulance at Oakengates (plates 72/73) have been very effectively researched. It is curious that no explanation is given of what appears to be a World War I tank in a picture of a park in Wellington. The reproduction of the prints, as in other Phillimore publications, reaches a high standard.

Both these books are of value to local historians because they bring into the public domain photographs from private collections. They raise some broad questions about the future of local history publishing. The supply of pre-1960 photographs is finite, and the boom in picture books cannot continue for ever. Will the past advance towards the future, and shall we see in the late 1990s volumes featuring miniskirts, op art posters and queues at cinemas for *A Hard Day's Night*? Or will we be studying high definition reproductions of the photographs from these two volumes and other like them on CD Roms?

Barrie Trinder, Nene College

Justin J Corfield, *The Corfields, a history of the Corfields from 1180 to the present day*, Corfield & Co., Victoria, Australia, 1993, 0 646 143336. Pp. [1]-352. No price.

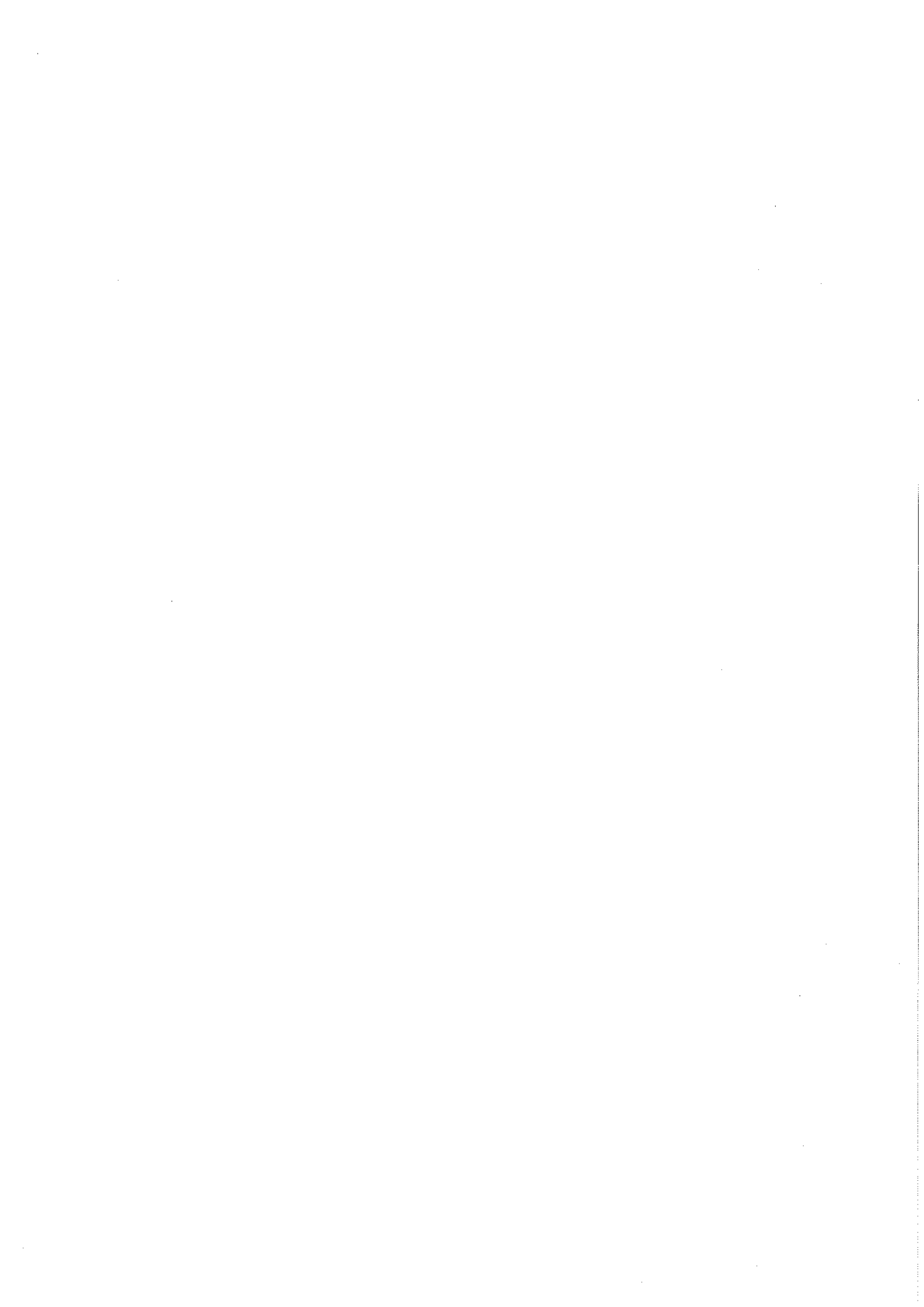
The author has aimed to trace the history of the whole Corfield family as completely as possible from the twelfth century to the present day, and from their origins in Shropshire to their spread all over the world. In doing so he has amassed information on some 9,000 individuals, many of whom can be traced back to one ancestor, Ralph Fitz-Edward, who purchased Corfield in Shropshire in 1180. The author is fortunate in that some of the groundwork was done by Frederick Channer Corfield in the late nineteenth century, but this does not detract from the huge amount of research undertaken by the author, not only in searching records but also in visiting relevant places and contacting Corfields the world over. The resulting information has been organised, sourced, indexed and illustrated in an exemplary manner. The illustrations are a notable feature of the book, appearing on virtually every page, and include not only a large number of family trees, but also maps, prints, wills, deeds, views, coats of arms, newspaper cuttings, letters, and photos of people and places both old and new. The book is divided into ten chapters, the first nine dealing with the different branches of the family and the tenth chapter given over to a miscellany of Corfields not yet linked into the principal trees. The amount of information given about each individual varies considerably, more coverage being given to those who rose to prominence or whose lives were particularly interesting, but salient details are included for all. Each chapter has its own source notes. At the end of the book there is a bibliography of publications by and about Corfields, a Roll of Honour (of World Wars I and II, and the Vietnam War), a list of parish registers consulted, and two indexes, one to every Corfield mentioned in the text and the other to every other surname mentioned (except maiden surnames). Everyone who has any Corfield ancestry and has an interest in it should obtain a copy of this exceptionally good book. Anyone interested in family history per se would be well advised to look at this book as a fine example of what can be achieved by application, intelligence and a sense of style. Everyone else with an interest in history may care to browse through it to see what is revealed about the family in society and how infinitely varied and geographically widespread over the centuries they become.

Janice V Cox

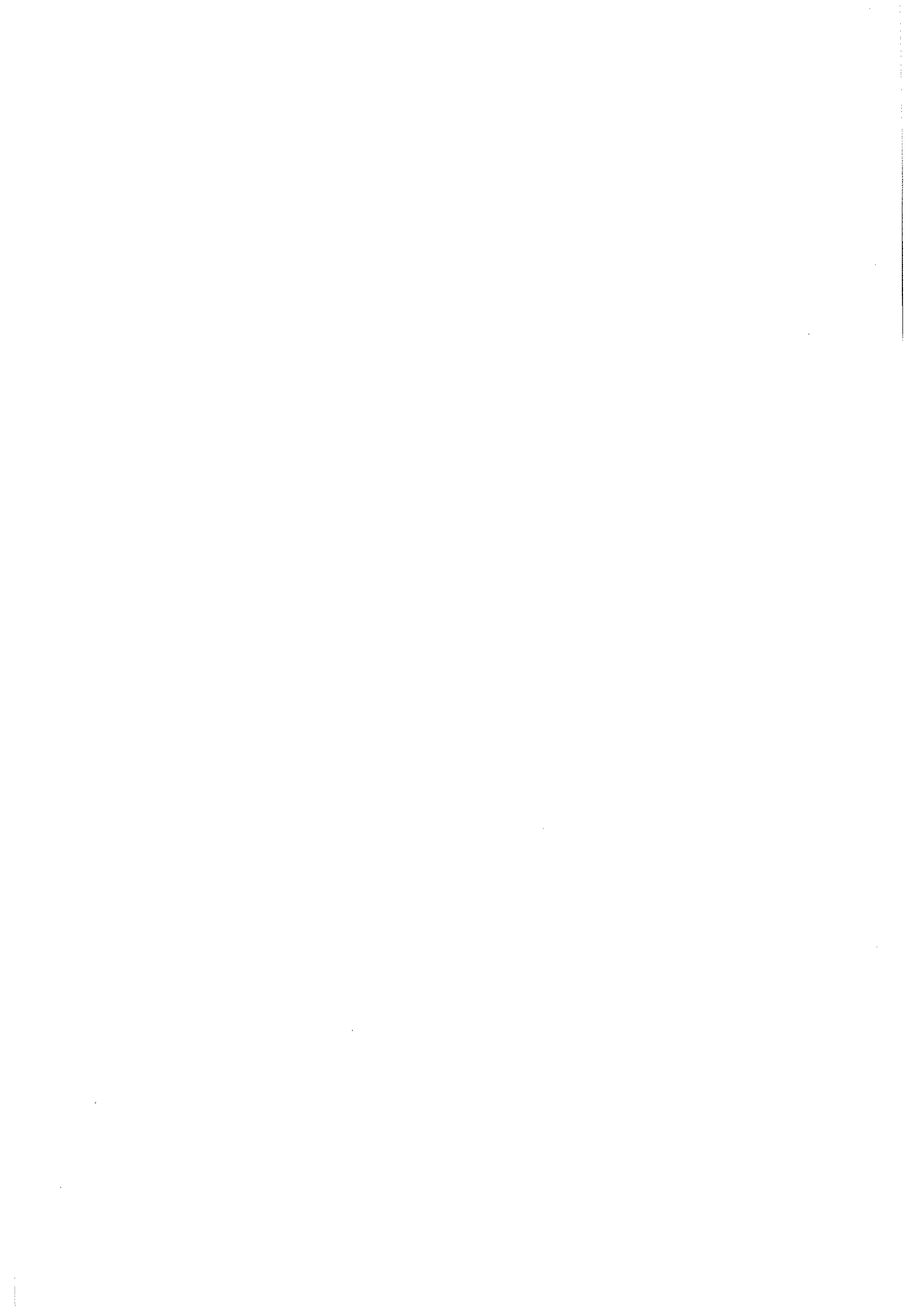


## RULES

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











Cover illustration: St Chad's, Shrewsbury, 1789–92, designed by George Steuart. 'A perspective view' drawn by the architect and engraved by T. Miller, dated 31 October 1791.