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THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN SHROPSHIRE

1775-1825

BY J. PHILLIP DODD, M.Sc.(Economics), F.R.G.S.

In Shropshire as in the country at large the fifty years following 1775 were productive of great change in the use of the land, the distribution of population and the location of industry. To Arthur Young viewing the Shropshire scene from Benthall Edge in 1785 the signs of transition were not altogether pleasing. On the one hand was "the beautiful winding valley two miles long, cut into rich enclosures and broken by tufts of wood. — (with) the Wrekin cut by enclosures three parts of the way up." This was a type of landscape familiar enough in Shropshire although strange still in other Midland Shires where enclosure of the bare windswept open fields was still proceeding. But Young could see also, "Colebrook Dale—a very romantic spot, it is a winding glen between two immense hills, which break into various forms, and all thickly covered with wood, forming the most beautiful sheets of hanging wood. Indeed too beautiful to be much in unison with that variety of horrors art has spread at the bottom; the noise of the forges, mills, etc., with all their vast machinery, the flames bursting from the furnaces with the burning of the coal and the smook of the lime kilns, are altogether sublime, and would unite well with craggy and bare rocks, like St. Vincents at Bristol.¹"

The Darby works, says Young, employed 1,000 men. The industrial prosperity of this part of the country was in large measure the reason for the extraordinary increase in the population of the Coalfield parishes between 1750 and 1801. Madeley parish, for example, grew rapidly as the following table shows :

Jan. 1782	440 houses	560 families	2690 persons
Mar. 1793	754 „	851 „	3677 „
Mar. 1801	943 „	942 „	4758 „ ²

This great local increase in population and the encroachment of industry on land capable of food production made these parishes dependent on external supplies of corn, meat and milk. The demand for milk, and for fodder for the hundreds of horses, ponies, and

¹A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. IV (1785), pp. 165-8.

²J. Plymley, *General View of Agriculture of Shropshire* (1803)

mules employed about the Coalfield and in the entrepot trade of the Severn, set a premium on pasture and meadow land of any description in the area. Some farmers, like Sergeant Roden of Benthal, found it profitable to reclaim the slag and spoil heaps. Edward Harries looking over Roden's farm in 1795 remarked, "He has improved two large rough pastures, with several coal pit mounts in them, into valuable watered meadows."³

Beyond Shropshire other rising centres of population were finding it difficult to obtain food in sufficient supply for workers in mill, mine, factory and workshop, who had neither access to land nor the time to grow their own food.

By 1800 grain from Shropshire was being sent to Cheshire, to the Denbigh collieries, and as far afield as Lancashire. Considerable quantities went by barge and trow down the Severn to Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire, and Wolverhampton, Dudley and Stourbridge also drew on the county for corn and meat. Turkeys went in droves from SW. Shropshire to Birmingham, six year plough oxen were bought by Leicestershire and Northants graziers for fattening, and Leicester sheep, too fat and coarse for Shropshire palates, were reared and fattened for the labouring classes of Manchester and Liverpool.⁴

Whether or not this export of provisions was at the expense of the labouring poor of Shropshire is a matter of social economics beyond the scope of the present discussion. Certainly in many parts of the county there was little surplus that could justly be spared. In many parishes at this time the standard of farming was deplorably low and the state of technical knowledge had remained almost static since the Middle Ages. Adherence to the wretched three course rotation, the employment of antiquated wooden implements and of oxen instead of horses for ploughing and other farm operations, were practices indicative of the backward character of many communities, notably in The Wealdmoors area, the Hundreds of Clun and Purslow, and the Wheatland.

A contemporary observer in describing this agricultural economy writes, "the occupiers of land in each township resided together in the same village. Their houses and farm offices consisted of those

³E. Harries, *Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. XXIV (1795), p. 381.

⁴Harries, *ibid.*, Also Rev. Rowley, pp. 59-270.
J. Plymley, *op cit.*, pp. 250-270.

strong-built, half timbered buildings — more picturesque in their exterior appearance than commodious in their internal arrangement. Behind each house was placed the garden and hemp butt, and then a few closes of their best land. The remainder of their farm was scattered in every direction over the township. — The closes were extremely small and of the most irregular shape. The fences both for their number and their breadth, occupied a large proportion of the land. The crookedness of the ditches, by keeping the water stagnant, added to, rather than relieved the wetness of the soil." Numerous "lanes of communication winding backwards and forwards from field to field, occasioned a still further loss of ground, capable of cultivation. — it is impossible in riding over the estates, to mistake the land which is so occupied. Its wornout condition, and the general slovenliness of its culture, points it out at once."⁵

Food production in these areas was at subsistence level with little or no margin to tide over the villagers in years of poor harvest. Documentary evidence⁶ of the state of farming on the stiff cold clays of the Wheatland country of the south east leaves us in little doubt as to the hardships endured by the farmers of these miserable holdings.

Some typical comments by incumbents of the Wheatland parishes in 1801 are as follows :

Abdon : " This is a small parish under the Clee Hills and some years does not supply the inhabitants with a sufficiency of grain."

Clee St. Margaret : " The season of gathering in the Harvest being passed the Produce does not one year with another above half support the inhabitants."

Hope Baggot : " This is a small parish and very unproductive with others adjoining which lie more in the Valleys. The Wheat crop does not exceed 12 or 14 bushels."

Neenton : " The wheat crop in this parish was abundant considering the poverty of the soil it bids fair to yield 20 bushels per acre." In the previous year the yield in this parish was not more than one bushel to the acre.

Many of the holdings were extremely tiny. At Hopton Wafers the arable comprised about 20 per cent of the total parish lands of

⁵J. Loch, " Account of the Improvements on the Estate of the Marquis of Stafford," 1820, pp. 173-8.

⁶Replies to 1801 Crop Returns, HO 67/

which at least another 20 per cent were uninclosed waste. Eleven families had arable holdings which ranged from 50 acres to $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, with nearly half of the arable held by two families. The average holding of the rest was $13\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

Studied from another angle, that of acreage of corn per head of population (including peas, beans, turnips and potatoes) the position in 1801 for these particular parishes was :

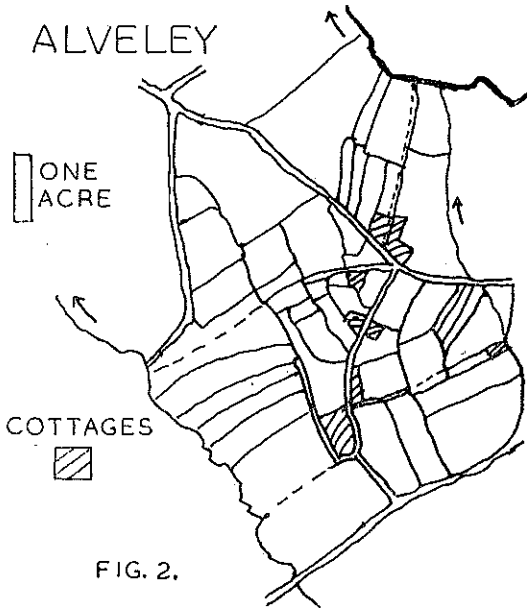
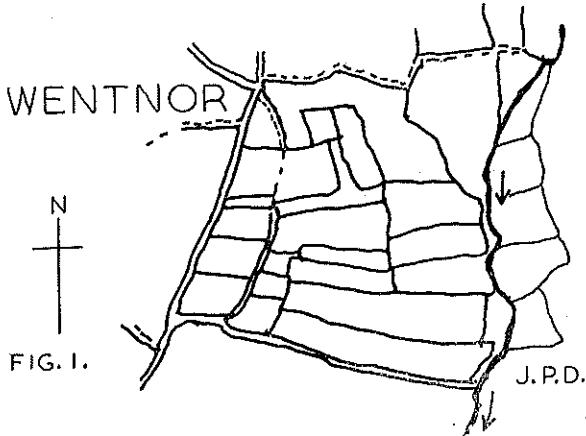
<i>Abdon</i>	<i>Clee St. M.</i>	<i>Hope Baggot</i>	<i>Hopton</i>	<i>Neenton</i>
Acres per head				
1.1	.66	.63	.56	2.37

Although these examples relate exclusively to the Wheatland I have little doubt that this type of subsistence agriculture, as described here and in the preceding pages, was common over much of the county. Even now, despite the lapse of nearly two hundred years many Shropshire parishes can still provide visual evidence of this 18th century field pattern. Figures 1 and 2 are examples from the parishes of Wentnor and Alveley, which illustrate this in two very dissimilar types of country. Alveley lies in the south-east of the county and is bordered by both Staffs. and Worcs. Physically the parish stretches from the 600 ft. ridge of the Sheepwalks in the east to the banks of the River Severn at 85 ft. O.D. in the west. Soils from west to east range from the Severn alluvium to the stiffish red clays of the Keele Beds, which towards the east are overlain by the pervious "hungry" Bunter soils and the Enville Beds. A generalised cross section of the parish is shown in Figure 4. Wentnor, very much in contrast, is situated in the heart of the Longmyndian border country with the village placed at 864 ft. O.D., on a long narrow spur of the Longmynd, above two small brooks, the River East Onny and its tributary, the Crifin Brook. Soils are thin and rather acid and are often sandy grits or sandy grit loams.⁷ Figure 3 illustrates the unusual position of the village, a fuller discussion of which is contained in a Paper by Miss D. Sylvester. S.A.S. XI, 1927-8.

The small irregular closes shown in Figures 1 and 2 vary from .7 to 1 acre in area and to-day still exhibit traces of the high pitched butts of the old ridge and furrow lands of the period. The Tithe

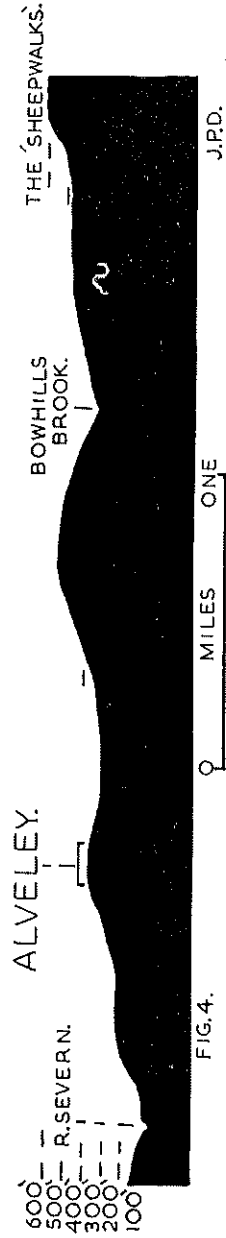
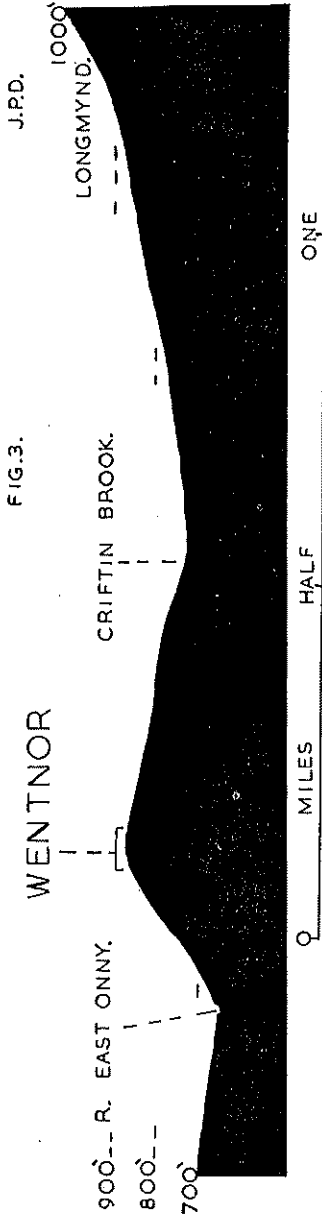
⁷E. J. Howell, "Shropshire," part 67 of Land Utilisation Survey, 1936, pp. 216-7.

J. P. D.



Survey of 1840-50,⁸ from which these examples have been drawn, is available for some 330 Shropshire townships and parishes and will in many cases provide proof of the former existence of similar field

⁸I have abstracted and mapped this information and hope to discuss these sources in a later Paper.



patterns, even where later field enlargement has removed much of the evidence on the ground.

It is possible that in, say, 1700, these fragmentary holdings, although inefficient in terms of food yield, could support the relatively small population. During the 18th century, however, the population like that of the rest of the country, exhibited signs of increase considerably disproportionate to what is believed true of earlier centuries. It is probable that in 1700 the population of Shropshire was *c.* 101,000, which by 1750 had become *c.* 121,000. At the Census of 1801, it became possible to learn the true state of the population for the first time. The total for the county was then given as 169,248. The estimates for 1700 and 1750, which I have discussed at length elsewhere,⁹ conform with calculations made by other writers on the subject.¹⁰ From the above it is apparent that even if the product of the land was sufficient to maintain the population in 1700 this was much less likely to be the case in 1800 with some 68,000 extra mouths to feed.

The enclosure of open field lands in Shropshire took place before the wave of Parliamentary Enclosures which transformed the other Midland counties after 1750.¹¹ Thus the only surplus land which remained to be brought into more intensive use was the waste. Arthur Young (1785), as was his custom, notes the more important waste and says the Stiperstones, Clee, Hatton and other waste, would let at 2s. an acre. Bishton in his Report to the Board of Agriculture in 1794 mentions the larger commons such as Morfe and Clun Forest and the extensive commons between Church Stretton and Bishops Castle, also several large commons between Shrewsbury and Market Drayton.¹² In the north west was Baggy Moor and other extensive tracts between Boreatton and St. Martins, which were usually water covered in winter. The Rev. Joseph Plymley repeats most of this information in his Report of 1803 and also notes that Clun Forest contained over 12,000 acres of smooth turf used as sheepwalk. It is of interest to note that over 20,000 acres were enclosed in this Clun upland country between 1845 and 1891. Plymley in a discussion of the landed income of the county estimates this at £671,600 per annum. From this he deducts

⁹M.Sc.(Econ.) dissertation, London 1954, "The Changing Scene in Shropshire 1750-1850."

¹⁰Darby, *Historical Geography of England before 1800*, W. G. East, p. 523.

¹¹For a full discussion see W. E. Tate, *S.A.S.*, Vol. LII, Part I, 1947.

¹²J. Bishton, *General View of the Agriculture of Shropshire*, 1794.

£71,600 for wastes which gives us a figure of nearly 11 per cent of the county as waste c. 1800.¹³

COTTAGES BUILT ON THE WASTE.
1650—1784.

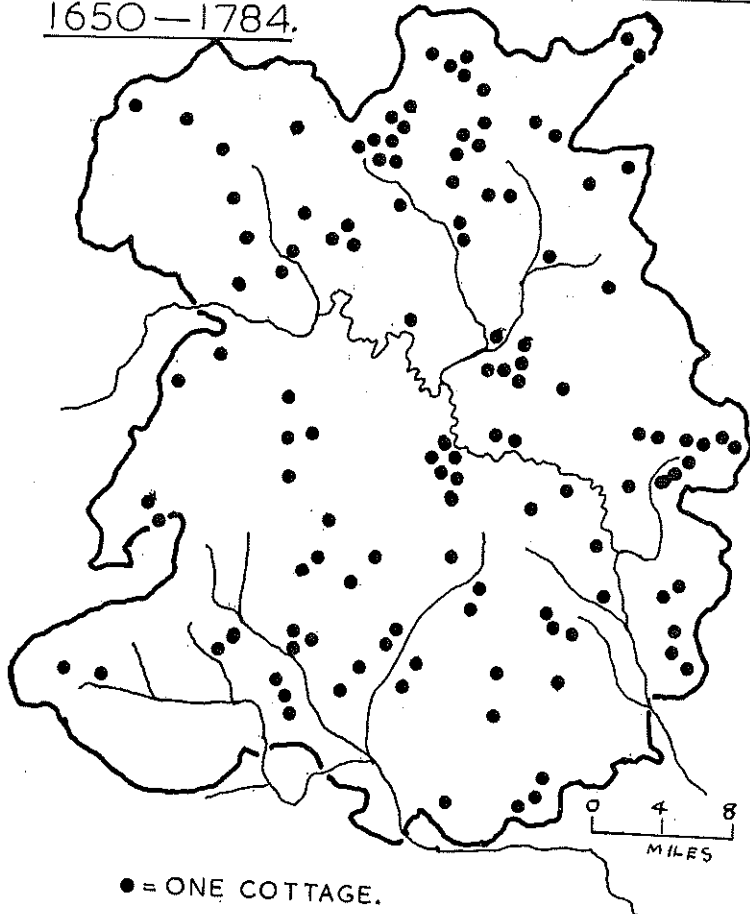


FIG. 5.

J.P.D.

Whatever the reliability of this estimate the fact remains that in 1780 considerable tracts of the county lay waste, the more important areas being Clun Forest, the Longmynd, the Clees,

¹³Rev. J. Plymley, *General View of the Agriculture of Shropshire*, 1803.

Morfe Forest, the NE. Heathlands, and the moorlands of the meres and mosses region of NW. Shropshire. The increase in population during the 18th century has been noted as imposing an ever growing strain on the land employed in food production in the county. It also accentuated a trend towards invasion of the waste by squatters. This was nothing new and is well documented in the Quarter Sessions Rolls and Orders by entries relating to the building of cottages both legal and unauthorised. Evidence from these sources has been mapped on Figure 5 for the period 1650 to 1784. The most significant feature of this distribution is the marked concentration of squatting activity in the northern part of the county. I hope to deal more fully with this element in the social history of Shropshire on some future occasion and will defer further present discussion except to stress the correlation of this map with Figure 11 showing the parishes affected by Enclosure after 1777.

The pressure on land resources was moreover aggravated by something rather more significant than a mere growth in population. The population of the county was not only increasing, it was also becoming more markedly urban. The Coalfield obviously attracted workers and increases of the order of 150 to 300 per cent occurred in these parishes from 1750 to 1801. Shrewsbury also increased its population though not on such a marked scale, and the other towns in the county, with a few exceptions, also showed appreciable increase. The net result of this was briefly that by 1801 over 17 per cent of the population lived on the Coalfield, another 8 per cent in Shrewsbury and 17 per cent in the other market towns of Shropshire. In effect the population had become 40 per cent urban dwelling by the turn of the century.

The implications of this fact as regards food production in the county is that although some 68,000 people* were concerned with the increase of the economic wealth of Shropshire through work in mines, forges, furnaces, manufacturing and trade, for the most part they had ceased to have any direct connection with the growing of their own food. From this it becomes apparent that the agricultural economy of the county was in danger of serious instability unless the land was farmed more efficiently and some of the waste was drawn into the system of cultivation. With much of the county poorly farmed and much lying waste, and two-fifths of the labour force

* Gross figures including non-workers.

taken out of food production, it obviously needed very little to throw the system out of gear. A run of bad harvests, for example, would be quite sufficient to induce the fear of famine and provoke civil disorder.

Between 1788 and 1800 there were several years when the weather was extremely unfavourable and poor harvests occasioned much distress among the poor. Arthur Young in an analysis of the replies to his circulars on the harvests of 1788 and 1789 says that the wheat crop of 1788 was very bad and that of 1789 yielded four bushels less. 1791 was an abundant year but the extremely wet summer of 1792 injured the wheat everywhere. The following year saw a very dry summer and yields were moderate. In 1794 wheat failed in many parts of the country and leguminous crops yielded less than the seed sown.¹⁴ In Shropshire peas averaged out at 6 bushels of 38 qts. to the acre compared with the usual yield of 18 bushels. Wheat gave under 12 bushels compared with the usual 15 bushels per acre. Barley and oats each yielded 18 bushels instead of the usual 25 bushels. The next year (1795) saw a very poor crop of wheat.

In Shropshire the year opened with the great frost of January 3rd which lasted until February 8th. This was followed by a disastrous thaw and severe floods throughout most of the rest of February. The wheat had already suffered from the wet autumn of 1794 which was unfavourable to seed sowing. The snow and floods were succeeded by cold winds which cut the young wheat and altered its appearance much for the worse. At harvest the crop averaged out at 10 bushels to the acre and although barley, oats and peas gave normal yields the succession of poor harvests had reduced corn stocks to a point where the country now faced a wheat famine.

The Rev. Richard Rowley, vicar of Middleton Scriven, writing to Arthur Young on March 9th, 1795, stated that even in the Wheatland stocks would not hold out to harvest time. Mildew had affected all crops in the neighbourhood and both he and Edward Harries refer to the lack of straw which prevented the poor from protecting their potatoes from the frost. The poor were then already in difficulties and had been obliged to mix potatoes with flour for breadmaking. Barley mixed with wheat had also been tried, Harries says, " There never was a time when, from the inclemency

¹⁴*Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. XXIV (1795).

of the season, the dearness of bread, and employment, from the long continuance of the frost, getting scarce, that the labouring poor stood so much in need of the assistance of those who have to bestow, nor was there ever a time when the hand of charity has been so open to relieve their distresses." In Shrewsbury, coal was given away, bread was sold at half price and flour at a reduced rate.¹⁵

As the year wore on the distress of the poor became more pronounced and measures of public relief were instituted in several parts of the county. On the Coalfield the presence of a large mass of hungry labouring poor constituted a grave threat to public order and a meeting of local industrialists was called at the Tontine Inn in July to discuss relief measures. A sum of money was subscribed for this purpose and among the principal subscribers were Richard Reynolds, 100 guineas, the Dale Company 100 guineas, and Thomas Botfield, 20 guineas.¹⁶ This crisis in agriculture coincided with a trade crisis which was initiated in 1793 and persisted until 1799. In 1793 also, war broke out with France and continued until 1815 almost without a break, except for the uneasy Peace of Amiens and the interlude prior to the Hundred Days before Waterloo.

The food situation continued to deteriorate and on October 18th, 1795, Mr. George Williams wrote from Shrewsbury to the Duke of Portland—"My Lord Duke, having travelled over most of the counties of England and Wales this summer I am sorry to say that there is a very great scarcity of wheat and if some (action?) is not taken to preserve it it will not last till next May, your goodness of heart and integrity will no doubt take it into consideration, I am, My Lord, etc."¹⁷

Food riots broke out in many parts of England and Shropshire did not escape similar demonstrations. In January 1796 the Quarter Sessions Rolls record a "true bill against three labourers at Cainham for riot and inciting a mob to destroy certain mills and to lower and lessen the price of corn, such riot continuing for six hours." Five others were charged at Stanton Lacy for similar offences. At the same Sessions the Justices passed a self-denying ordinance binding themselves to reduce the consumption of wheat

¹⁵Based on Harris, Rowley and Young in *Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. XXIV (1795), Telford's Report of the Severn at Coalport (Plymley 1803). Home Office Papers 42/37.

¹⁶A. Raistrick, *Dynasty of Ironfounders*, 1953, pp. 221-...60.

¹⁷H.O., 42/36-233.

flour in their families by one-third and also had the following notice inserted in the Shrewsbury papers. " Upon reading the resolutions of both Houses of Parliament and the minutes of His Majesty's Council respecting the High price and deficient supply of Wheat, It was unanimously resolved by the Justices and Grand Jury to reduce the consumption of wheat flour, between the present Sessions and the next harvest, by at least one third of the usual quantity consumed in ordinary times in their respective families and to recommend the same plan to be adopted by all descriptions of people throughout the County."

The Dale Company successfully maintained peaceful relations locally by purchasing stocks of rice and corn which were sold to its workpeople at three quarters of cost price. The scheme developed and in 1796 embraced the following subscribers :

Messrs. Bishton	(Snedshill Furnace)	£1,500
Mr. Botfield	(Old Park Co.)	£1,500
Mr. J. Reynolds	(Ketley Co.)	£2,000
Mr. R. Dearman	(Coalbrookdale Co.)	£1,500
Mr. W. Reynolds	(Madeley Co.)	£1,000

There were also many private subscribers. This policy together with the maintenance of employment helped the Coalfield population to tide over the most difficult period and here at least there were no food riots.¹⁸

The financial situation continued to deteriorate and in December of 1796 there was a run on the Newcastle Banks. The crisis threatened to involve banks in other counties and in February 1797 the Bank of England curtailed issues. By now the Shrewsbury Bank was in a precarious condition as was public credit in general throughout the county. A public meeting was called in Shrewsbury in March and a subscription list opened to maintain the credit of the Bank and enable it to continue payments. This action, supported by the Dale Company and other ironmasters and the large land-owners, enabled the Bank to weather the storm.

Although certain information is lacking regarding the cropping in 1796, I imagine the harvest was pretty fair. The weather, taken all round, was not unfavourable, and was the driest year Shropshire was to see for some time. March, an important month in the farming calendar, was very fair with only eight wet days, April was not much

¹⁸Raistrick, *op. cit.*

worse but May had nineteen wet days. June was an uncertain month but there was no doubt about July being wet—with only five days without rain. August, however, had only seven wet days and September ten. So the harvest should have been gathered without much harm. October was as good as could be expected with thirteen wet days and November had twelve. The winter, however, proved severe and the snow and frost which set in on the 26th of the month (Nov.) lasted until the New Year.

The next two years were worse and the spring and summer of 1797 were decidedly wet. There were sixty-six days of rain from April 1st to June 30th, and a further fifty-two wet days from July 1st to September 30th. In the following summer there were sixty-two wet days from July 1st to September 30th. July itself had only two days without rain. The autumn was just as wet with twenty wet days in October and twenty-one in November. The snow and frost which began on December 28th continued until January 15th following. 1798 could hardly be called a successful farming year but much worse was to come.

Following the severe weather of the New Year the spring of 1799 proved very wet. February, April and May averaged eight dry days each, and July had six and August ten. From the 17th August to the 24th September there was never less than nine feet of water in the Severn at Coalport which indicates what a disastrous summer this was. The winter was again severe and the Severn froze over from 21st December to the 4th of January following.¹⁹ The wheat crop was extremely poor and in 1800 it can be written off as a failure. For a graphic contemporary description we can hardly better the account of John Lucas who was then farming at Hanbury across the border in Worcestershire. In a letter to the Duke of Portland dated 28th November 1800, he says, "Your Grace will be pleased to remember the extremely unfavourable spring and summer of the year 1799 and the most unfortunate harvest which ensued, these circumstances, My Lord, combined rendered the Wheat Crop a very failing one. But it is very true that there was left on hand at Michaelmas 1799 at least a Quarter of a years consumption for the whole Kingdom of the Crop of 1798 according to the best information than can be obtained so that with (this) — and the Crop of 1799 tho a failing one we might had gone forwards

¹⁹J. Plymley, *op. cit.*, also Telford in same work.

tolerably well, but the Grand and total Evil was brought about in the Seed time of last year — It is a notorious fact beyond all doubt whatever, we were so overwhelmed with Torrents of Rain day after day, and week after week, that it was compleatly out of the power of vast numbers of people on heavy Clay Soils to sow half their regular Quantity, and when it was sown, such was the state of the Land, that it was beyond the art of human wisdoms to prevent a vast Quantity of it from bursting and perishing in the Grounds. And to this was Added a cold wet spring full as unfavourable for the Lent Crop as the seedtime was for the Wheat——.”²⁰

After this long succession of poor and failed harvests the whole of the country was by 1800 close to famine and under threat of a civil revolution. The Government were inundated with reports of food riots and threats of armed insurrection and every county could provide instances of intimidation of millers, corndealers and the larger farmers with threats of murder and arson. The common people generally believed, and not without foundation, that much of the shortage was due to farmers and dealers keeping the grain back so as to increase prices beyond the enhanced level already reached. The Vicar of Ditton Priors notes on the 7th December 1801, “A more abundant crop of every kind of grain has not been for twenty years nor better got than this present years crop. Our opulent farmers have stacks of old wheat by them now. They are alike our Hop Planters. In the months of May and June last they reported, there was no stock of Hops in the country, consequently the price of Hops advanced and at the time, there is plenty of old Hops to be had at a very reduced price. Many of the planters, have two years crop by them unsold, notwithstanding they have refused 10 guineas per hundred for them. Now they be glad to sell the same at £5 (?) per hundred. Can there be any method adopted to curb the savage and insatiable Avarice of People? Our Millers be the most imposing and oppressing they care not how high the price of Corn is, the higher it is the more their gain. It is a shame to see how, both Farmers and Millers, do feast themselves at Home and Abroad, ride upon pampered horses with their silver plated bits and stirrups. They are waxen fat, they shine, they judge not the cause of the fatherless, and the right of the needy they do not judge.”

Wheat which was 67/6d. a Qtr. in 1799 jumped to 113/7d. in

²⁰H.O., 42/53-

1800 and to 118/3d. in 1801.²¹ In a letter dated 8th November 1800 addressed to the Duke of Portland, then Secretary of State, Turner Edwards of Oswestry says the millers were practising a mean type of fraud on poor people by grinding their corn for toll, *i.e.*, taking payment in kind. "By this means they obtain 2/6d. worth of wheat at present price instead 6d. or 9d. a measure which is nearer the mark."²²

There was much evidence of secret meetings, the collection of arms, of disaffection among the militia lately embodied, and the Voluntary Associations were disbanded in some parts of England. Agents of the London Corresponding Society were active in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the Black Country, there was also much talk of plots by Jacobins and Republicans and of a grand rising of the colliers of the whole of the West Midlands. A letter dated 8th November 1800 speaks of a recent visit to Broseley, Wolverhampton, Bilston, Birmingham, Dudley and Stourbridge where the writer found these sentiments expressed—the common people would await meeting of Parliament and if their wants were not immediately redressed—they would redress them by violence. The colliers of these towns were in conspiracy although described as "poor misguided creatures." The letter is not signed as the writer was apprehensive of the consequences to himself if the matter were discussed openly. He says he would have told Mr. Whitmore of Bridgnorth had he known of the details the previous week.²³ At Whitchurch 5 guineas was offered for the discovery of the writer of a threatening letter to John Ackers, the Governor of the House of Industry. "Mr. Accers ths is to give you notice to get room in the industry for the Poor ths winter but it will not be for the same as it was last winter but as for Waiting for crops of corn t is no Use for them f ther was to come of the earth as wat we should think wat was gust according to the nation but be fore we come to you will fier all the cuntry as they shant ord the corn this winter as they did the last."²⁴

In response to the general outcry and the enormous spate of correspondence from all classes of the community, the Government proceeded to issue various emergency regulations. Export of corn

²¹Kennedy and Grainger, *The Tenancy of Land*, 1828.

²²H.O. 42/53, 214.

²³H.O. 42/53, 225.

²⁴H.O. 42/52, 249.

was forbidden, also its use in the manufacture of starch, hair powder, etc., and by distillers, cheese factories and the like. Importers of maize, rice and foreign wheat and flour were paid a bounty, and the poor were exhorted to use substitute grains for their bread. The Rev. Turner Edwards of Oswestry, writes, "Barley this year is superior in Quality to that of most other years. mixt in with wheat will make good nutritious Food. More should be used in bread and less in Beer. Breweries could be restricted to 2/3 of the usual consumption of malt. Bread could be made from wheat, Barley and Peas."

The Rev. Wilding of All Stretton experimented with potato bread, and with a mixture of potato, wheat and barley for bread, cakes and starch, and the Rev. James Mathews of Ford suggested that there should be only "household bread" for all classes of men—*viz.*, "a national loaf."²⁵

In actuality the Government found it very difficult to ascertain the true state of the harvest and of grain stocks in the country. Attempts had been made in previous years to obtain statistics but without much success. The earliest known crop returns of 1795 were made by the petty constables of townships on scraps of paper and exhibited varying degrees of illegibility and inutility. The forms for 1800 were sent out by the bishops to their clergy. The questionnaires were for the most part handwritten and the questions imprecise. The greater part of the replies I have examined give the yield per acre but not the acreage under each crop. This rendered the returns pretty useless and the following year (1801) the information was requested on a pre-printed form sent by the bishops to the clergy of England and Wales. A large number of these returns have survived and have been the subject of Papers in recent years.²⁶ For a general discussion of the 1801 Returns see Dr. H. C. K. Henderson, *Geographical Journal*, CXVIII, September 1952, and on the 1795 and 1800 Returns, Mr. W. E. Minchinton, *Agricultural History*, July 1953.

The Crop Returns for 1801 are filed according to dioceses, which in the case of Shropshire means that the documents are dispersed among three diocesan files—Hereford, Lichfield and St. Asaphs.

²⁵Mathews, *Thoughts on Scarcity and Remedies Suggested*, 1800 and Plymley, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-7.

²⁶Dr. Henderson, W. E. Minchinton, Dr. W. G. Hoskins, D. Williams, Dr. R. A. Pelham, P. Churley.

The returns have survived for some 80 per cent of Shropshire parishes, the most serious omission being among the parishes in the north west which come under St. Asaphs. This is somewhat strange as this diocese is on the whole well covered and returns are available for each of the Welsh parishes adjacent to this region of Shropshire. Several other missing border parishes adjoin parishes in the dioceses of Chester and Lichfield for which returns are available. The extent of coverage for the county is shown on Fig. 6.

CROP RETURNS. 1801.

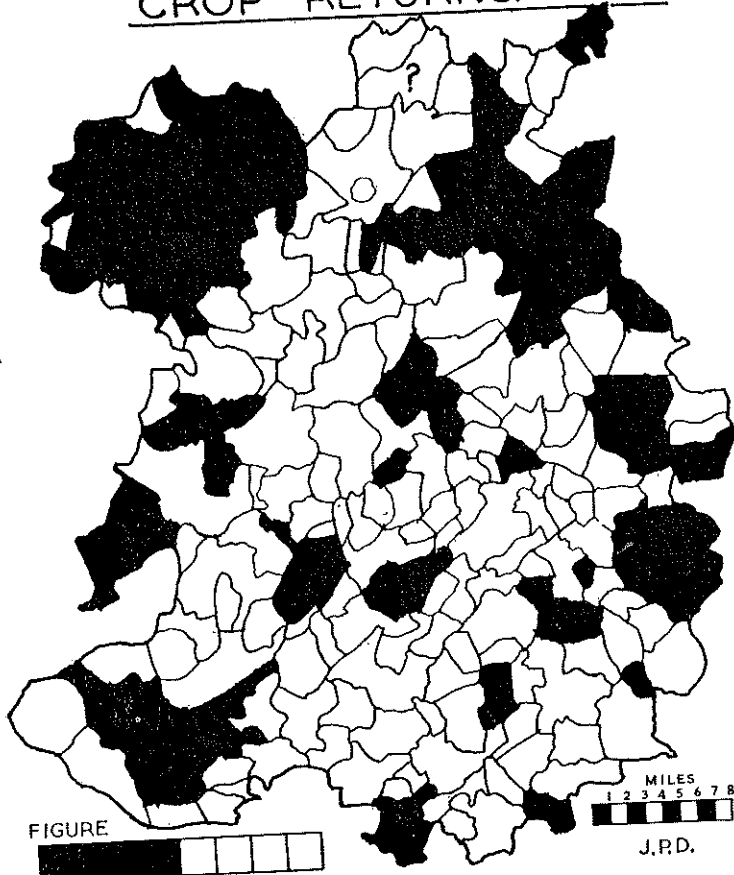


FIGURE
PARISHES MISSING.

FIG.6.

The official form, of which Fig. 7 is an example, requested a return of the acreage of wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, peas, beans, turnips or rape, and rye. Some of the clergy give highly interesting information in the "general remarks" column, others say nothing and a few do not even bother to sign the return. Quite a number quote yields per acre in bushels or gallons, some give the yield in older terms such as thraves or strikes, and a few add the bushel equivalent of the latter measures.

Parish of <i>Stapleton</i>		In the Diocese of <i>Lichfield</i>	
	Number of Acres	Remarks	
Wheat — —	221	<i>The Parish of Stapleton contains a common of excellent waste land, the produce of which if inclosed would be great. The whole Parish is in an excellent state of cultivation. The condition of the labouring Poor would be better if some little indulgence was shown them by the fuller (?) farmers, such as allowing them to plant Potatoes in their Fallows, the public worship of their church is well attended, and upon the whole the inhabitants are moral, orderly and industrious.</i>	
Barley — —	179		
Oats — —	61		
Potatoes — —	5		
Peas — —	36		
Beans — —	None		
Turnips or Rape	37		
Rye — —	0		

FIG. 7.

Comments such as the following tend to underline the impression already presented of the poor harvests of the preceding years.

"A very plentiful year, the crops exceeding any for the last ten years." (Culmington).

"The crops of all kinds of grain in this country the last harvest have been very abundant, on an average, one third more than the year before, and upon the cold lands twice as much." (Barrow).

"The farmers in this parish think their crops this year equal to the joint crops of 1799 and 1800." (Billingsley).

It was perhaps unfortunate that the clergy were given the task of collecting this information, yet it is difficult to see how else a reasonably accurate return could or would have been made. The farmers were already suspicious of the intentions of the Government in demanding these statistics, the obvious inference was that the information was to provide the basis of assessment for some new tax to support the war. On the other hand the fact that the clergy had been instructed by the bishops, raised in the minds of many

farmers the probability of some fresh tithe exaction more closely related to the productivity of the land than the existing system permitted. It is therefore not surprising that some farmers proved extremely unwilling to give the required information. The curate of Worthen writes, "The above report is what farmers thought fit to give me. They were extremely backward and cautious about it, so much so, that in some instances to my knowledge they accounted for no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of what they had. Perhaps on the whole it may amount to about $\frac{4}{5}$." Even the worthy Plymley, author of the revised *General View of Agriculture of Salop*, notes, "met with some delay in obtaining a proper return." (Coreley). The tone of the Rev. Forester Leighton is somewhat bleak and hints at a little moral persuasion, "Some of the farmers not choosing to give an Account of their Acreage, when first applied to ; has been the reason, that this return was not forwarded sooner to your Lordship." (Condover).

The comments also give a great deal of useful information on the type of land in cultivation, the reason why certain crops were not grown, the state of the poor and the condition of the poorer clergy. The returns as a whole suffer from the drawback that information was not requested on two points, *viz.*, the acreage lying fallow, and the acreage under rotation grasses. Some incumbents state the acreage of arable or the proportion of arable to grass and also the total cultivated area, but this information is only featured in a minority of the returns. It is thus not possible at present to map the distribution of arable lands from these returns. Were the returns complete for the whole county it might, after reference to other contemporary information, have been possible to make such a map. The further disadvantage attached to some of the returns that the farmers deliberately under-estimated the acreage of grain is not, in the case of Shropshire, particularly serious, as the clergy appear to have commented upon this, whenever the discrepancy is particularly flagrant. Quite a number of returns bear an attestation that the information is accurate.

Before assessing the value of the information which is available from these statistics and contemporary observations it may be of interest to comment on the missing returns. These fall into two groups, (1) instances where the information is complete for a large district except for one particular parish, (2) instances where the information is lacking for a large block of contiguous parishes. In

the first case the question of accidental loss or mischance affords the most probable explanation. Although this may also be the answer in the case of the second group, other possibilities cannot be ruled out entirely. The most important omissions are the parishes of the north west surrounding Oswestry in the diocese of At. Asaphs, and the block of parishes in the north east which largely correspond with the later "improved heathlands" of the Land Utilisation Report of 1936. In both areas from 1777 onwards enclosure of the waste had been taking place on an important scale. The more considerable landowners and the large farmers concerned in these enclosures were, in consequence of their enlarged holdings, extremely interested in any development however remote which posited additional taxation of the land. Whatever the feelings of the Government in the matter there is little doubt that a policy of increased taxation of farmers would have enjoyed almost universal popular support at this time. The farmers, middlemen and millers were left in no doubt as to the general animosity towards them. John Lucas of Droitwich is worth quoting on this point.²⁷ In writing to the Duke of Portland to, "Explain the causes of shortage and why the terrible hatred which is now raging against us is unjustified," he goes on to say that the weather is the cause of the calamity and although these circumstances "are in the recollection of all Gentlemen, and they cannot be ignorant of them, yet such are the unfortunate prejudices of the times, that to the War, to Farmers, Millers, Dealers, Monopolisers and Forestallers is the whole Calamity ascribed — millers and dealers should be protected." Some were frightened in the populous Counties and others had given over business because of threats.²⁷

Thus it is not improbable that farmers in these two areas, fearing the worst, might have declined to give the information. Alternatively the returns might have conveniently been "lost in transit" to London. In more than one parish in England there was a flat refusal on the part of the whole parish to give information. This was the case at Blackburn, where the Rev. Starkie says that the farmers refused to give any information and said that if the Government wanted the information they should come and collect it themselves.²⁸

²⁷H.O., 42/53.

²⁸H.O., 67.

Nor were the clergy entirely disinterested in the taxation of the land, at Stretton, for example, where the returns are also missing. The Rev. Wilding was not only a landed proprietor but also a considerable encloser of the Longmynd.²⁹ In the north west the Rev. Lloyd was likewise a landowner of consequence and very much concerned in the current series of enclosures. It is doubtless purely fortuitous that the missing parishes closely correspond with those parishes where enclosure was much in evidence (*see* Figs. 6, 11), and that whereas the Shropshire parishes in St. Asaphs diocese are missing the adjoining parishes in other counties, largely in St. Asaph's diocese, are available, and that Turner Edward's report for 1800, made on behalf of the Bishop of St. Asaphs, which gives nothing away as regards acreages in the area, has likewise survived.³⁰ All this is rather circumstantial and would lack point were it not for the evidence of the curate of Wem, which indicates what could have happened elsewhere in Northern Shropshire and leaves one inclined to wonder just how much of this was pure coincidence after all.

"To Lord Pelham, My Lord, After much trouble and abuse from some of the Parishioners I have got the return made on the other side. I was under the necessity of going from house to house thro' this extensive Parish and take the account that each farmer pleased to give me.

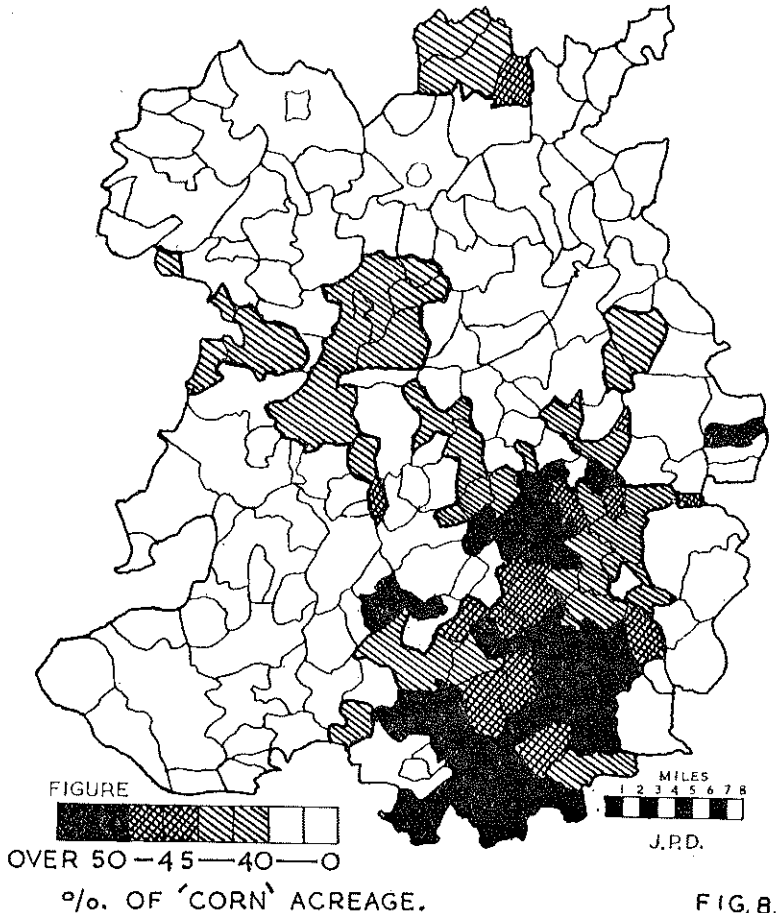
"My Rector withheld your Lordship's Letter likewise the Bishop's and the proper Schedule from me, that no account should be taken of his Parish.

"My Lord, I have wore one pair of Shoes out, in walking my Parish over, and these are bad times for poor Curates. I am, My Lord, with due regard, Your Lordship's Obedient and Humble Servant. Richard Walker. Nov. 16. 1801."

We now come to the returns which have survived and the first point of importance is that, despite the omissions, this great body of contemporary information is available for 80 per cent of the 220 parishes and chapelries of the county. Secondly from this information it is possible to map the relative importance of wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, beans, peas and turnips for considerable areas of

²⁹J. Plymley, *op. cit.*

³⁰H.O., 42/53, 214.

WHEAT. 1801.

the county without reference to other sources of information. Thirdly in the case of wheat the percentage of land devoted to this crop in the parishes of SE. Shropshire "The Wheatland," is so high as to make it possible to draw a county map, Fig. 8, which I have little hesitation in saying would require no important alteration in the event of complete cover for the county becoming available. Finally the amount of information available is sufficient with the

reasoned employment of material from other sources,* to permit the assumption of details for the missing parishes within the probability of error, hardly substantial enough to upset the validity of the maps based on these assumed figures.

Bearing in mind the reservations implied by these assumptions, the maps, Figs. 8, 9 and 10, provide a very useful picture of Shropshire farming at the beginning of the 19th century. The backward state of the south east with cropping at subsistence level has been noted earlier. Reference to Fig. 8 shows that this criticism is by no means undeserved. The region is shown as overwhelmingly dependent on wheat despite the fact that climate and soils, cold wet clays derived from the Old Red and Carboniferous rocks, did not favour productive cultivation of this cereal. The adherence to traditional rotations is to be observed from the importance of peas in the cropping, between one-fifth and one-tenth of the tillage area being sown with this crop. On the other hand highly fertile land to the south which could have carried excellent crops of wheat was otherwise employed. This is well borne out by the following. "The parish of Burford is very extensive and fertile, but its chief produce is Hops and Cyder." Crops indicative of more enlightened methods, barley, turnips and potatoes, are as one would expect relatively unimportant in this south eastern region.

The most important crop next to wheat was oats. In the Longmynd-Shelve area oats took precedence over wheat, and potatoes were also a comparatively important crop both here and in the extreme south west. This development is remarkable because Shropshire farmers, in general, were at this time not much interested in potatoes as a field crop. John Cotes, a considerable farmer of Woodcote near the Staffordshire border, was then engaged in a vigorous campaign to promote the growing of potatoes on the

* Without becoming involved in a mass of detail, in brief this extraneous material derives from contemporary sources such as Bishton, Plymley, Arthur Young and his correspondents, James Mathews, etc., Parish Registers, the *S.A.S. Transactions*; Quarter Sessions Rolls (printed abstracts); from early 19th century directories; county histories and writers such as Gregory, Loch, Hulbert, Kennedy and Grainger; and recent sources...G. W. Robinson, L.U.S. Reports and the Land Use Classification of West Midland Region. The documentary evidence has been balanced against the pattern of physical conditions for each missing parish as established from study of...topography, surface geology, soils, slope, aspect and drainage. For the latter Robinson, the L.U.S. and the L.U.C.W.M.R. reports have been most valuable. On the basis of this information each parish has been matched up with other parishes for which the crop returns are available.

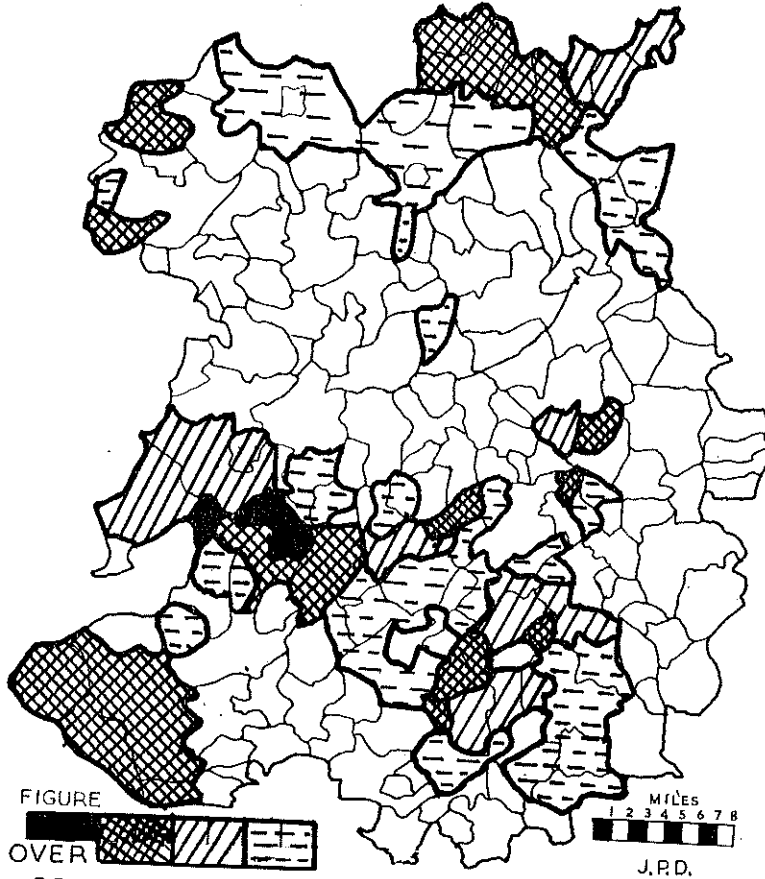
OATS. 1801.

FIG. 9.

fallows, and addressed a number of letters to the Board of Agriculture on the subject.³¹ James Mathews says that one of the best farmers in the Ford area sold several thousand bushels to the House of Industry at Ford during the famine of 1799 and regularly grew them for feeding to his stock. " — were this root cultivated to the extent it deserves to be, the possibility of dearth would be almost

³¹Plymley, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-9.

BARLEY. 1801.



FIGURE

70. 45-40-35-25.

% OF "CORN" ACREAGE.

FIG. 10.

precluded; as it would relieve the consumption of bread corn, animal food, and other articles, and leave the ground excellently prepared for a wheat crop. Is it not astonishing, that great farmers, especially if they live at a distance from towns, seldom raise a quantity sufficient for their own consumption? Is it feared they will create too great plenty? 'They are bulky articles (say the farmers), and make no return'."³²

³²Mathews, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.

Oats were also an important crop along the northern borders of the county (Fig. 9), a fact probably as much related to economic considerations as to those of soils and climate. Plymley says the farmers of the north west devoted a lot of time to running haulage businesses, this would imply a need for more fodder on these farms. At the same time we cannot disregard the possibility of an economic incentive to the growth of oats in this part of the county due to the current high price of oatmeal in the Northern counties. Oats were the staple bread grain of Lancashire and Cheshire and were used also for cakes and puddings. By 1800 Lancashire was producing about one-third, possibly less, of the grain consumed in that county and certainly took any surplus available from North Shropshire.

The cultivation of barley, as shown by Fig. 10, occupied a very marked band of country stretching from Oswestry in the NW. to Alveley in the SE. of the county. There is good reason to believe that the acreage under this crop had materially increased since 1750. In some parts of Britain, Wales and Cornwall for example, barley was a bread grain but in Shropshire its chief utility was for beer, not bread. Tea and coffee were hardly known in the county, at least as far as the great mass of the population was concerned. Beer, on the other hand, was consumed in large quantities by all classes but more particularly by working class families. It was an element of considerable importance in the wages contract of farm labourers, which at this time comprised two elements—the money wage of 1/2d. a day and a beer allowance of 3 quarts daily in winter, 4 quarts in summer, and 6 to 8 quarts at hay and corn harvest.³³ Beer allowances also appear in other industries and it is hardly surprising to find the Darby undertakings at Coalbrookdale putting up a brewery in 1804 to supply the customary beer for the workpeople. The annual supply was allocated as follows :

To forges 5,317 quarts ; rolling mill 1,458 qts. ; blast engines 1,956 qts. ; farm 83 qts. ; general warehouse 353 qts. ; Horsehay furnaces 5,281 qts. ; and Coalbrookdale foundry 179 qts.³⁴

The need for a brewery was evident.

Reference has already been made to the increasing population of the Coalfield towns, Shrewsbury also increased greatly in numbers over the period, and probably doubled its population between 1750

³³Plymley, *op. cit.*

³⁴Raistrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 229.

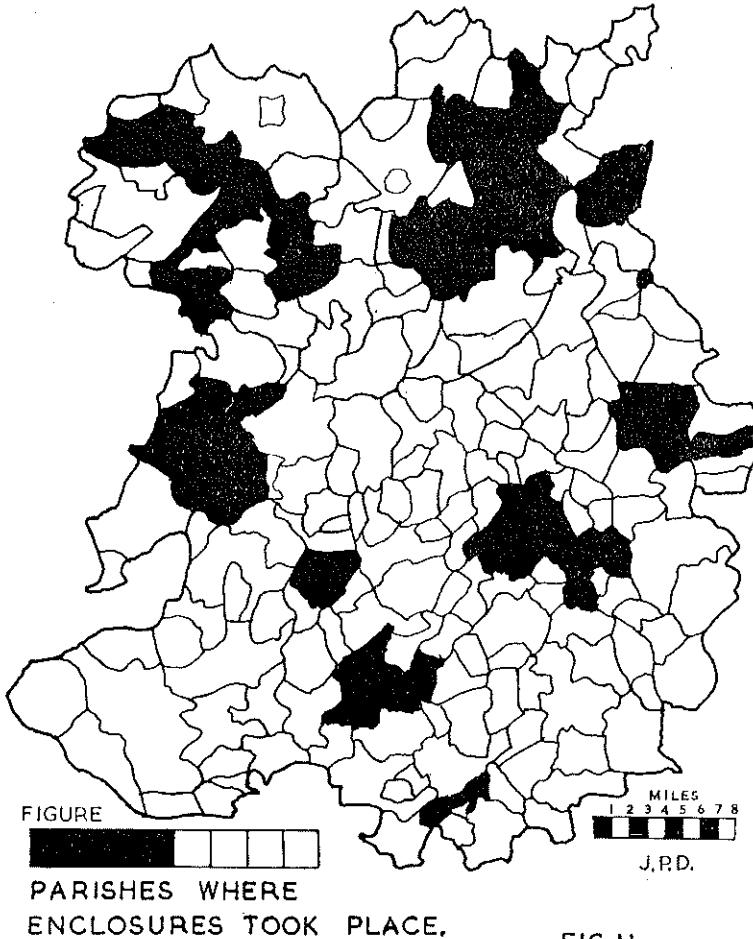
and 1800. Oswestry in the north west of the barley zone of Fig. 10 was a notable malting centre and the importance of the crop in the local farm economy can be gathered from the high feeling engendered by the contemporary practice of tolling barley in kind at Oswestry market. Objection to this by the farmers of the area became so pronounced as to occasion an important law suit in the early 19th century.³⁵ In the south-east of this barley zone Bridgnorth enjoyed a considerable export trade in "Eaves Beer." Therefore it is not improbable that the marked growth in population of the Coalfield towns, Shrewsbury, and probably Oswestry, was a powerful stimulus to the expansion of the barley acreage of this part of the county.

It has earlier been remarked that the increasing population of Shropshire during the latter half of the 18th century exerted considerable pressure on land and food resources of the county. This situation could only be relieved internally by a drastic improvement in current methods of food production, and by swinging fresh land into production. Improved methods of farming had been known in England for nearly 150 years, having been introduced by Sir Richard Weston at the close of the Civil War. Shropshire farmers appear to have been apathetic, if not actually resistant to the introduction of these new methods. Edward Harries, writing in January 1795, says that from Brace Meole to Cound was fine sound country, chiefly arable with several second year leys receiving first ploughing for wheat, heaps of lime ready for harrowing but, "scarce a turnip fallow though no land can be better adapted to that crop." Arthur Young ten years earlier had seen a variation of the Norfolk System at Benthal but notes that even so no sheep were folded. At Petton very few sheep were to be seen and no turnips were grown, yet farmers took the trouble to cart manure all the way from Shrewsbury. Plymley says that even when turnips were grown the farmers had to be shown how to weed them.

Although Shropshire farmers remained unreceptive towards the "new farming" they brought thousands of acres of new land into cultivation.¹¹ Much of this in the south of the county was marginal hill land, the Rev. Wilding for instance broke up tracts of the Longmynd moorland for wheat.³⁶ In the north, however, much of the lands involved were light hungry soils derived from the

³⁵S.A.S., Vol. VIII, 1885, pp. 145-186.

³⁶Plymley, *op. cit.*

ENCLOSURES 1760-1800.

Bunter sands in the north west, and in the north east from the light drift, which was itself largely second-hand Bunter material. These soils were extremely pervious and may on this account have proved attractive to farmers in the wet years at the end of the 18th century. Comparison of Fig. 10 with the map of the parishes affected by enclosure between 1777 and 1800 (Fig. 11) will readily demonstrate that there is a considerable degree of correspondence between the latter and the barley belt of 1801.

These light soils were eminently suitable for barley cultivation and this in conjunction with the need to increase the barley acreage in particular, and the arable in general due to the pressure of population on food resources, largely explains the correlation of the barley belt and the newly enclosed lands. The direct stimulus to enclosure was of course economic in origin, based on the opportunities to increase profits foreseen by local farmers and landowners. The material incentives afforded by the demands of the war economy and the high prices realised for grain over the period lent impetus to the process of enclosure, already facilitated by contemporary legislation. Barley, it may be noted, advanced in price from 26/1d. in 1791 to 67/9d. a Quarter in 1801. Contemporary with this period of enclosures was the process of engrossment and enlargement of farms. Harries considered that the number of farms in Shropshire had diminished by about one-third over the period of 30 years (1770-1800), and it was a pretty general practice to enlarge farms. Plymley states that the size of farms had increased in all parts of the county and two, three or even four farms were put together.³⁷ This engrossment of farms occasioned much bitterness at the time particularly among those dispossessed, and more than one clergyman refers with feeling to the hardships to which it gave rise. James Mathews, curate of Ford, in a pamphlet directed at Sir Richard Hill of Hawkestone, says quite bluntly, "I am of the opinion, then, that the consolidation of small farms is the grand cause of the present distress; that it is the greatest grievance morally and politically considered, under which the county labours; and that every other mode of relief, short of their reduction, will merely palliate, but not cure the evil." He goes on to declare that the large capital farmer was ready to pay extravagant prices to enlarge his holding knowing that he could recompense himself at the consumer's expense, and "when farms are occupied on the enormous scale of 500 to 1,000 acres, the land cannot be managed to the utmost advantage."

As the war continued the general inflationary trend of the war economy operated to enhance the profits of arable farming and to encourage the farming of units even larger than the 1,000 acre farms noted by Mathews.³⁸ In the Severn Lowland west of Shrewsbury for example there were at least four farms of between 2,000 to 4,000

³⁷*ibid.*, pp. 120-2.

³⁸Mathews, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.

acres each.³⁹ In 1815 came Waterloo and the end of the war, the end too of the conditions which had carried farmers, millers and landowners along on a tide of prosperity. The war contracts ceased, purchasing power fell abruptly and the country plunged into an economic depression from which it took a long time to recover. The transition from war to peace greatly diminished demand and rendered it "Impossible to employ to advantage a great part of the accumulated capital, and very much to lessen the call for employment in every branch of industry and labour—and contributed to the distress of a considerable part of the population, for whose talents of whatever nature, industry or labour, there is no demand."⁴⁰ Wheat which stood at 125/5d. a quarter in 1812 slumped to 64/- in 1815. A recovery to 94/9d. in 1817 was not a sign that agriculture was pulling out of the depression, on the contrary it was the result of a disastrous harvest, one of a series which with the change in the economic climate ruined farmers in every part of Britain.

In Norfolk alone, in 1816, there were enforced sales on twenty farms occasioned by distress of rent proceedings. The Board of Agriculture asked its correspondents to report on the state of farming during the spring of 1816. In Shropshire reports were made by Plymley, J. C. Wood of Westbury, T. Gwilham of Shrewsbury and Thomas Hames of Cruckton. Some of the oversize farms could now find no tenant willing to farm them, Wood mentions four near Westbury. Several farmers had signified an intention to quit their farms, and the landowners in general had been constrained to reduce rents by 10 to 20 per cent. Many labourers were in distress for want of work particularly in the Shrewsbury area. Plymley says that much land had been overvalued by young inexperienced valuers, some deliberately by agents being pressed by landlords to exact high rents. Although the "generality of farmers in this county are still able to pay their rent, they are getting poorer, every tax is collected with difficulty." County rates which should have been paid in January were still uncollected in April. Hames was of the opinion that the difficulties of some farmers had arisen from an attempt to live beyond their station.³⁹

The policy of easy credit, encouraged by the high price of

³⁹Agricultural State of the Kingdom in February, March and April, 1816, pp. 264-6.

⁴⁰Kennedy and Grainger, *op. cit.*

agricultural produce, both symptomatic of an inflationary economy, ceased on the appearance of depression. Loans were called in and farmers who had been living up to the hilt were called upon to repay at a time when prices were rapidly falling. Many could not stand the shock and such defaulters jeopardised the stability of country bankers, who were themselves obliged to suspend payment. Wood confirms the inability of farmers to meet all kinds of liabilities and says they turned off every farm servant that could possibly be spared, male and female alike. "The farmers are now spending their capitals, and where that is the stock of their farms only, its value has been frightfully diminished. If the distress continues, where will the capital of this part of the community be?"

The return of the sick, wounded and able-bodied discharged from the Armed Forces further increased the ranks of the unemployed, and imposed a crushing burden on the Poor Rates. Some of the smaller farmers themselves became parish paupers, and the rapid increase in the cost of pauper maintenance plus the general reduction in the purchasing power of the community at large, brought many more-prosperous farmers close to ruin. The price of farm produce continued to fall and in 1824 wheat touched bottom at 45/10d. a quarter.

Industry, however, was reviving and the Shropshire iron trade was returning to something of its old prosperity. The associated industries of the Coalfield and the river trade of the Severn likewise benefited from this recovery, as did Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and some of the market towns. Nevertheless, agricultural recovery was still a long way off, much of the marginal land enclosed under the stimulus of the war reverted to rough grazing and waste, and not a little arable went back to grass.

GLAZELEY

The manor of Gleslei at the time of the Domesday Survey consisted of two hides held by Rainald and under him by Azo. It had been held by Aelward whose land was free. Mention is made of a priest and a mill.

The lands of Rainald passed to Fitzalan, under whom this manor was held by Lestrangle, whose under-tenants were a family called de Pierpont. Simon de Perepunt was here about 1175, and in 1200 he was one of four Knights who were to choose a jury to try an Assize concerning land in Northleg (Norley Regis). In 1203 he was defendant in a suit wherein Roger de Wadeley accused him of disseising him of a tenement in Wadeley, Wadeley being in Glazeley. Alan de Pierpont, who was probably his son, occurs in 1221.

Guy de Glazeley witnessed a grant of Peter de Eyton in 1223, and was living in 1235. Alan de Perepont was lord of Glazeley in 1255, and is presumably the Alan fitz Wydo of 1256. In 1262 Alan de Glasleye was Regarder of the Forests of Morfe and Shirlet. In 1281 he was one of the knights to report on the King's Castle of Brug. In 1316 Guy de Glaseley was Lord of Glazeley, and was followed by his son Alan (1353) who was father of William (1353) and was living in 1359.

Thomas de Glazeley, who was living in 1384, is supposed by Blakeway to have been an ancestor of Henry de Wynnesbury, who in 1404 made a grant of lands in Holycote in which Thomas de Glasley had been enfeoffed. Thomas de Glazeley presented to the Rectory of Glazeley in 1391, but John Wynnesbury was lord of the manor in 1409. It seems probable that there was some connection between these families.

The connection of Wynnesbury with Glazeley seems to have come through Beaumeys of Donington, for Agnes de Beaumeys, whose estates vested in Wynnesbury, executed a deed concerning Donington at Glazeley in 1339. John Wynnesbury of Glazeley occurs in 1419.

Margaret, daughter and heir of John Wynnesbury, married Fulk Sprengnose, and as his widow in 1479 grants all her lordships or manors in Glazeley, Wadeley, Deuxhill, Tedstell, and elsewhere to her four daughters her coheirs, namely : Margery, wife of Richard Lee of Langley and secondly of Sir William Leighton ; Sibil, wife

of William Sandford of Edgton ; Margaret, wife of — Tindal ; and Mary, who became the wife of Thomas Acton of Longnor.

This fourfold tenure continued as late as 1501, at which date a fine was levied between Sir Thomas Leighton and others, plaintiffs, and William Leighton and Margery his wife, defendants, of the fourth part of the manor of Glazeley and of the lands in Deuxhill. Probably the other three parts were sold about this time, for before 1525 the whole manor was in the possession of the Newton family.

Sir Peter Newton, who appears to have been a legal luminary, was the first of his family (afterwards of Heightley in Chirbury) to settle in Shropshire, where he lived at the Council House in Shrewsbury. He was Sheriff of the County in 1503, and died in 1525 seised of the manor of Glazeley with the townships of Wadeley, Holycot, Tedstyll, Dewkehill and a water-mill with the advowson of the Church of Glazeley, held of Sir John Savage by military service, and worth £13 7s. 8d. ; his son and next heir being Arthur Newton, then aged 26.

Arthur Newton is stated by Leland to have "almost made away all his lands," and among them was Glazeley, for in 1525 we have Indentures between Arthur Newton son and heir of Sir Peter Newton and John Pakington of London, whereby the manor of Glazeley and Wadeley is conveyed to Pakington.

Sir John Pakington, afterwards of Westwood (Co. Worc.), was an eminent man of law and in high favour with the Crown. He presented to the Rectory of Glazeley in 1538. He left two daughters his coheirs, Ursula, wife of Sir John Scudamore, and Bridget, wife of Sir John Lyttelton, and the husbands of these two ladies present to the Rectory of Glazeley (*jure uxorum*) in 1554. But Sir John Pakington settled the manor of Glazeley with the advowson on his sister Joyce, second wife of John Corbett of Leigh, and their son Edward Corbett was of Glazeley in 1570, and presented to the Rectory in 1579.

At the Inquisition taken after the death of Thomas Wylde in 1599 the jurors stated that a certain Edward Corbett, Esq., was seised in his demesne as of fee of the manors or farms of Glaseley and Wadeley with their rights and members, messuages and lands, etc., thereto belonging, and of the advowson of the Parish Church of Glaseley ; and being so seised on 9 Jan. 21 Eliz. [1579] by his Deed Edward Corbett enfeoffed Francis Gatacre and others of the said premises to the use of himself and his wife Eleanor and the longer liver of them with remainder to Thomas Wylde and his

assigns forever. Eleanor died and Edward survived. By Deed dated 1 Mar. 32 Eliz. [1590] the said Thomas Wylde on his marriage with Elizabeth only daughter of Richard Cooke, Esq., granted the said reversion to Anthony Rooper, Esq., George Wylde, Esq. [his brother] and Thomas Ive, gent., to the use of his wife. Afterwards Edward Corbett died at Glaseley, and Thomas Wylde and Elizabeth entered into the said premises and were seised thereof. The jurors do not know of whom the farms or manors of Glaseley and Wadeley were held. The said Thomas Wylde died 21 June 41 Eliz. at Glaseley, and Edmund Wylde is his son and heir, aged 9 years and 10 months. His wife survives him and dwells at Glaseley.

In 1611 livery was given to Edmund Wylde, son and heir of Thomas Wylde, for lands in Glazeley, he being of age.

The Wylde family made their fortune as clothiers in Worcester. Thomas Wylde of the Commandery in that city (d. 1558), by his second wife Eleanor, daughter of George Wall of Droitwich, was father of Thomas Wylde who purchased the Glazeley estate. His son Sir Edmund Wylde held the Rectorial Manor of Kemsey (Co. Worc.) of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, and was living there in 1620, when he was serving the office of Sheriff of the County. He died the same year, while in office, and was buried in the chancel of Kemsey Church, where a handsome monument marks his grave and that of his infant son Walter. He married Dorothy, daughter and heir of Sir Francis Clarke of Houghton Conquest, and left an only-surviving son Edmund Wylde, who was a child at the time of his father's death; and John Wylde his cousin (son of George Wylde of Droitwich mentioned in the above Inquisition) and Walter Blount (whose wife was sister of John Wylde) appear to have acted for him during his minority. John Wylde, who was a Chief Baron of the Exchequer, presented to the Rectory of Glazeley in 1637.

Edmund Wylde of the Inner Temple is said to have been a man of pleasure, one of the professed admirers of Venetia Digby. He was not living at Glazeley in 1663 when George Cole of Glazeley Hall entered his pedigree at the Herald's Visitation. The only entry in the Register relating to the Cole family records the burial of Richard, son of George Cole, gent. Later on however Wylde may have lived at Glazeley, where he was buried in 1695, aged 77. He was the last male of this branch, and his estates at Glazeley and Eudon Burnell passed to his kinsmen the Wylde family of the Commandery, Worcester,

descended from Thomas Wylde (d. 1558) by his first wife Alice, daughter of Robert Ludington.

Thomas Wylde of the Commandery and Glazeley (1670-17—) presented to the Rectory of Glazeley in 1713. His grandson Thomas Wylde married for his first wife, Sarah, daughter of William Purton of Eudon Burnell, by whom he had a son Thomas Rouse Wylde, who built the mansion called "The Woodlands," in the grounds of which there is (or was) a monumental urn with an inscription relating to him. This became the residence of the family, who left the old Hall or Manor-house, which still stands west of the Church and is now a farm-house. Thomas Rouse Wylde married Anne, daughter of William Russell of Powick but had no children. He was buried at Glazeley in 1795, and his estates passed to his half-brother Ralph Browne Wylde, son of Thomas Wylde by his second wife Elizabeth, daughter of Ralph Browne of Caughley. He assumed the additional name of Browne and died in 1810. His son Thomas Whitmore Wylde-Browne died in 1878, and the Glazeley estate was sold to Thomas Martin Southwell of Bridgnorth. Soon after his death in 1908 his trustees sold the estate, which is now the property of William Tipping Crook.

The mention of a Priest in the Domesday entry points to the existence of a church at that date, but the building, which was replaced by the present church, was of no great antiquity. It was a brick structure with a wooden turret containing one bell. In the Edwardian Inventory there were two "bells of accord," with a "chalyce wt a patent of sylver betwen them and Deuxyll." In 1740 one of these bells had gone, and the other was scrapped when the present church was built. The only relics of the old church are the two Wylde monuments. One of these is a Brass in memory of Thomas Wylde, who died in 1599, which has been fully described in *Transactions*, Vol. VII, p. 229. The other monument is to Edmund Wylde, who died in 1695.

The present Church was built in 1875 from designs by Blomefield. The dedication of the old Church was unknown, and as the new building was opened on S. Bartholomew's day, it was dedicated to that Saint.

Thirty years after Domesday, Ingelbert, Priest of Glazeley, claimed Jurisdiction over Deuxhill, but this was refused by Richard, Bishop of London, on the ground that "all Saint Milburgh's lands constituted but one parish." Deuxhill with Middleton Priors

Chapel remained independent till the reign of Henry VIII. Peter Griffiths was presented to Glazeley in 1515, but in 1535 was Rector of the united Rectories of Glazeley and Deuxhill, a pension being then payable to the Prior of Wenlock. In 1759 these two benefices were united with the Rectory of Chetton.

The list of Incumbents in the printed Register is incomplete, but very few names of Rectors are recorded before the 16th century.

- 1349, Simon Dobyn
Patron, Alan Lord of Glazeley, resigned to
1349, Henry Warde of Tedstyle
1350, Richard de Walkeslowe
Patron, Alan Lord of Glazeley
1391, William de Walkesbache
Patron, Thomas de Glazeley
1393, Thomas Kullum
Patron, Richard Leighton
1393, John Dynchere
Patron, Richard Leighton
1409, William Longfield
Patron, John Wynnesbury
1513, Humphrey Burnell
Patron, the Bishop, by lapse
1515, Peter Griffiths
Patron, the Bishop
1538, Thomas Lawley
Patron, John Pakington
1554, James Morgan
Patrons, John Lyttleton and James Scudamore (*jure uxorum*)
1579, James Alcock
Patron, Edward Corbett
1600, Peter Barret
1637, John Poyner
Patron, John Wylde, this turr.
Edward Walker,
1667, George Walker
Patron, Edmund Wylde
1713, Samuel Casson
Patron, Thomas Wylde

1757, Charles Edmund Wylde

Patron, William Bromley, this turn

The following are Rectors of Chetton, Glazeley and Deuxhill :

1798, Edward Davenport

Patrons, Valentine Vickers sen. and jun. and Ralph B.

Wylde-Browne

1813, William Vickers

Patrons, Valentine Vickers sen. and jun.

1851, Richard Herbert

Patron, T. W. Wylde-Browne

1861, John Smyth Purton

Patron, Thos. Pardoe Purton, this turn

1892, Henry Kemble Southwell

Patron, Thos. Martin Southwell. He exchanged with

1895, Alfred Gray, exchanged with

1900, Herbert Hamilton Lucas, exchanged with

1905, James Shepherd

1907, Reginald Bentley Southwell (1948)

The printed Parish Register is contained in Shropshire Parish Register Society, Diocese of Hereford, Vol. V. (1909).

R. C. PURTON

ACTON BURNELL ROMAN ROAD AND BRIDGE SITE
O.S. Sheet 118. Grid reference 525025.

Shrewsbury 6-inch Sheet No. XLIX NE. Known as Radnor Bridge,
marked on map as Radnall.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first visited the site with Dr. Barker and Mr. Webster in 1951 after a fisherman had reported finding the remains of an old bridge abutment in the south bank of the stream, on what was thought to be the line of the Roman Watling Street.

Excavation was begun and carried out by the Research Group of the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

My thanks are first due to Mr. Downes of Acton Burnell Farm, for his great generosity in permitting excavation on his land and for allowing us to fence off a large portion of the field for the period of excavation. Secondly, to Lady Sybil Grant for permission to examine the abutment of the bridge in the stream.

Thanks are due, for the great help and encouragement which was received, to Mr. K. D. M. Dauncey, Department of Archaeology, University of Birmingham, and to Professor Richmond, Mr. I. D. Margary, Mr. Dunning and Mr. Webster, who have all visited the site and given much helpful advice; also to Mr. S. R. Turner for taking photographs of the bridge abutment.

The excavation would not have been possible without the friendly co-operation of members of the Research Group who have devoted so much time and energy towards its completion. Great help in the surveying was given by Mr. D. Hollingworth and in the digging and other work entailed in the excavation by Misses E. M. Jancey, V. O. Lloyd, B. Price, J. Thompson and Messrs. G. A. Cheshire, T. Hall, R. Lawton, D. Ross, H. Symons and S. Young. I would especially like to thank those members who have used their cars for taking workers and equipment to this rather inaccessible site.

EVELYN SLADDIN

December, 1953

Four and a half miles from Wroxeter the Watling Street, running in a south westerly direction towards Leintwardine (Bravonium) and Caerleon (Isca), must have crossed a narrow ravine cut by a stream which rises in the high ground south of Acton Burnell and flows north and west to join the Row Brook.

On the north side of the stream the line of Watling Street is marked by a lane which leaves the modern road south of Pitchford. South of the stream it can be distinguished in a hollow way crossing the fields to join the modern road again at Frodesley.

As the road approaches the stream on both sides this single line breaks into a number of routes taken by traffic at different periods. (Fig. 1). One road is carried by a large embankment twelve feet high and at the top twenty feet wide, with a stone retaining wall. Another road lies on the terrace at the foot of the embankment. The third route takes the line of a hollow ditch probably dug originally for the drainage of the Roman road. A modern bridle path follows the terrace line for a short distance and then branches westwards to converge with the third route at a lower crossing of the stream where in the south bank stands the remains of a modern stone bridge. This bridge which replaced a wooden footbridge early in this century was swept away in a storm, for the stream although normally shallow can be very swollen in times of heavy rain.

Mr. E. S. Cobbald in his book on the Church Stretton area presumed that the Roman road was carried upon the embankment which stands about forty feet above the level of the stream.¹ When forty yards up stream from the modern crossing a fisherman noticed in the south bank the overgrown remains of an early stone abutment, it was decided to excavate in order to work out the sequence of the different routes and if possible to examine and date this structure.

ROMAN ROAD NO. 1

Excavation showed the Roman road of the earliest period to be on the line of the terrace and extending under the embankment. (Section B-C.) A width of thirty feet was revealed by cutting into the embankment and then tunnelling for a further six feet. It was considered too dangerous to go further and the edge of the east side was not reached. At the point excavated the road was found to have been inserted into the natural ground by digging a shallow trench. This was filled with pieces of sandstone, large in the centre, but

¹E. S. Cobbald, *Church Stretton*, Vol. III, p. 64.

gradually getting smaller towards the outer edges. These stones were covered with a layer of smaller ones. Then came a layer of compacted sand and gravel varying from one to three inches thick. Over this was another layer of small stones covered with a surface of gravel. The gravel made a hard surface to the road and was in an extremely good condition. (Pl. I and II). A small trench filled with red clay marked the limit of the road on the west side and served in place of curbing.

Some feet into the embankment the footings of the road changed from large stones to layers of small stones about a foot deep. This seemed to suggest that the road had been widened to take the traffic whilst the embankment was being built, but it is unlikely that so good a road would have been made for a temporary extension, and a width of thirty to forty feet is quite normal for a main road. This does not rule out the possibility that the road was widened at some earlier date as a general improvement.

EMBANKMENT, ROMAN ROAD NO. 2

The embankment was constructed of a mixture of light sandy clay with small pieces of sandstone. This is the natural soil of the area and could have been taken from anywhere near the site. There were only two distinct lines of filling, one a concentration of small stones and the other a thin band of red clay which touched the surface of the Roman road.

Mr. I. D. Margary¹ says that in his experience the railway type embankment is usually of a later period than Roman, often constructed for the stage coach roads of the eighteenth century, but this does not appear to be the case at Acton Burnell.

We know that the Watling Street was in continuous use in the Roman period and on into medieval times and was still the main road south in the time of Domesday, as the Sheriff was asked to supply twenty-four horsemen to ride south with the King as far as Leintwardine.² It is obvious that the Roman Watling Street was the route taken. A moat thought to be the site of the early village of Acton Burnell lies immediately east of the road. The village presumably moved further east to its present site when Bishop Burnell built the castle there at the end of the thirteenth century.

¹I. D. Margary, *Roman Ways in the Weald*, p. 36.

²Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury*, Vol. I, p. 27.
V.C.H., Shropshire, Vol. I, p. 309.

One would expect, therefore, the road to show signs of long usage. If on the other hand this section of the road had been abandoned after the Roman occupation, there would be a period of silting before a medieval road was constructed. It is clear, however, that the construction of the embankment followed closely the early Roman road as the line of clay filling seals the surface of this road. The road neither shows signs of long wear nor a period of silting from disuse. In contrast the road on top of the embankment showed signs of considerable use. Only the footings which consisted of flat layers of local sandstone remained; the curbstone had slipped out of position down the side of the embankment.

RETAINING WALL FOR EMBANKMENT

At the point where the artificial embankment joined the natural rise of ground there was a massive retaining wall sixteen feet long. (Plan, Section E-F.) The Ordnance Survey Geological Drift Sheet No. 152 shows that there is a surface outcrop of Keele sandstone of the Leebotwood Coalfield across the area of the site. Where the road crosses the field this rock is immediately under the turf until it reaches the point of the retaining wall where it dips rapidly towards the stream. The intervening ground over which the various routes have crossed is covered with a glacial drift. The water draining off the rock of the high ground would make this area of light clay very sticky and difficult to cross. It would have been necessary to have some form of drainage for the first Roman road, and this need would explain the ditch running from the road on the west side and turning north parallel with the road to join the stream. The bottom of this ditch cut into heavy red clay similar to that used on the west side of the road. The ditch was probably deepened and extended when the retaining wall for the embankment carrying the later Roman road was built. The wall was ten feet deep built of large slabs of sandstone, heavily cemented between, and at the bottom there were three courses of diagonally pitched slabs; these rested on one course of flat stone. (Pl. II) This wall was a massive structure, obviously designed to take a substantial weight and in constructing it all traces of the first road at this point were removed.

On the east side of the embankment at point E a narrow wall had been inserted into the embankment for a short distance in a line almost at right angles to the retaining wall. This wall was very

slight and could not be compared with the work of the retaining wall. Its purpose remains obscure but it had obviously been inserted after the embankment was built, as its foundation was 2 feet from the base of the embankment and had not been constructed from the natural ground level. The filling of the embankment below this wall had subsided slightly after its insertion and there was a gap of a few inches below the bottom course of masonry. The wall was wider and more substantial towards the outer edge of the embankment and on the inside it was not squared-off but had one course jutting out from the next, leaving a jagged edge.

At the end of the embankment the appearance of the ground suggests that a cutting was made through the rock to maintain an easy gradient for the road. This cutting has been deepened by later traffic to form the hollow way.

The building of the embankment was an obvious improvement in the road but it was a large engineering undertaking and one would expect it to have been done for some specific purpose rather than for general improvement. The early road, although on a steep gradient, would have served for normal traffic. It would have been constructed by the Roman army soon after the establishment of the legionary fortress at Wroxeter in A.D. 48. Gloucester was established about the same time and this road linked the two fortresses and would have been a frontier line for a short period during the Roman conquest of Wales. The original bridge would presumably have been of wood, but as will be seen later the Acton Burnell portion of the early road was in use long enough to have its bridge replaced in stone.

QUARRIES FOR THE BUILDING OF WROXETER

Excavating at Wroxeter, Professor Atkinson discovered an early Baths building and Basilica which he believed to be the work of the 14th legion.¹ He and Miss Kenyon established that a civil town with large public buildings was planned, but not completed, at this date, the work being resumed twenty years later on a different plan.² Mr. T. C. Cantrill, in his Geological report on Uriconium,³

¹Atkinson, D., *Report on Excavations at Wroxeter, 1923-7.*

²Kenyon, K. M., *Excavations at Uriconium, 1936-7. Archaeologia, Vol. LXXXVIII (1940).*

³Cantrill, T. C., *Geological Report on Uriconium. Archaeologia Cambrensis, Vol. LXXXVI, 1931.*

says that the red sandstone used in these buildings was not to be distinguished from the Keele sandstone quarried at Acton Burnell and that in his opinion the stone was taken from this site.

There are several quarries from which stone has been taken on each side of the stream. It is possible therefore that the embankment dates from the planning of the civil town at Wroxeter, and was constructed to ease the gradient across the stream for carts carrying heavy loads of stone.

Mr. Cantrill goes on to say that much of the stone used in the later building at Wroxeter came from an area immediately SE. of the Acton Burnell site. (Map. Fig. 5) From Chatwall to Ruckley, incorporated in a road running parallel with the Watling Street, is a causeway, known as the Devil's Causeway, fifteen feet wide and built of large blocks of basalt from the Lawley hill nearby. (Pl. III) Some people have believed this to be a Roman road joining certain possible Roman sites ; others have rejected the idea, stating that it was most improbable that the Romans would have a road running parallel with Watling Street only one and a half miles distant. Mr. Cantrill, having specified that stone from Hoar Edge, Causeway Wood Coppice, Chatwall and Ruckley, through which the causeway runs, were all used in building at Wroxeter, suggests that it was possibly a quarry road serving this area and joining the Watling Street south of Pitchford.

It has always been assumed that the causeway followed the line of the modern road but there appears to be no evidence that it extended further south than Chatwall or further north than Ruckley, and one would expect a quarry road to take the nearest possible route onto the main road. A search of early archaeological reports proved this to be the case. The Rev. C. H. Hartshorne, taking a walk in the Autumn of 1838, fell in with what he took to be a branch road of the Devil's Causeway crossing Frodesley Park from Ruckley in the direction of Longnor Green.¹ At Longnor Green, Mr. Cobbald observed a number of large stones in the footway by the side of the road, of which he says " their mode of occurrence and general aspect are very suggestive of those seen at the Devil's Causeway at Ruckley." It is evident, therefore, that the causeway ran from Chatwall down the steep incline to Causeway Wood and up again to Ruckley, then round the tip of Hoar Edge, maintaining an easy

¹Rev. C. H. Hartshorne, *Salopia Antiqua*, J. W. Parker, London, 1841, pp. 135-6.

gradient across Frodesley Park to join the Watling Street possibly at Longnor Green. Having reached the Watling Street this traffic would have to pass over the Acton Burnell bridge on its way to Wroxeter.

Although this stone does not appear to have been used in the initial building at Wroxeter, it would certainly have been known to the Roman engineers, and the embankment at Acton Burnell would thus be built to serve not only the immediate area of Keele sandstone but also the larger potential sources of building stone a short distance south of it.

MEDIEVAL ROADS

The Roman road on top of the embankment was no doubt used throughout the later Roman period and on into medieval times, as long as the bridge lasted. The embankment is forty feet above the level of the stream, and when the bridge collapsed it was evidently considered a cheaper proposition to make a road along the west foot of the embankment and build a smaller bridge than to rebuild one to the former height. In taking the road across the retaining wall the shoulder of the embankment was removed and deposited as a mound on the west side of the road.

There was three feet of silting between the early Roman road and the medieval road, shown on section B-C. This road varied in width and construction, obviously having undergone many repairs during the course of its history. Near the stream it was twelve feet wide, made of large glacial pebbles, much worn on the embankment side. A few yards further south it consisted of lumps of sandstone in a broken and crumbly condition, having on the embankment side a well made track of glacial pebbles four feet six inches wide. This showed signs of wear in the middle. All trace of the wider road had disappeared at the point where the section B-C was cut and only the narrow pack-horse track remained. The wider track would be the earlier medieval road which would gradually diminish in importance as the Acton Burnell village developed. The Pitchford Estate maps show that the modern Pitchford-Acton Burnell road came into being as an eighteenth century turnpike road, and presumably the medieval track on the site continued as an important road until then.¹ (Fig. 2., Pl. I).

¹I am indebted to Mr. W. J. Slack for this information.

The track following the line of the Roman ditch appears to have been an alternative route and may have been used when the bridge for the main route was in a state of disrepair, as evidence shows that it was rebuilt several times. By following the ditch it would have been possible for a horse to ford the stream at that point, but the steep rise on the north bank would make it impossible for wheeled traffic. This route would be highly unsuitable in the winter but there was sufficient traffic to wear down the bank in two places. Some traffic left the road at the retaining wall, cutting a track into the Roman ditch, other traffic left the road sooner, making a direct line along the north-south line of the ditch. The metalling of the track was slight, about four feet wide, and made up of glacial pebbles thrown down to make a surface.

The Tithe map of 1846 shows both crossings of the stream but does not indicate whether there were bridges at both. However, Mr. Cobbald records that at the end of the nineteenth century there was a wooden footbridge at the lower crossing of the stream. It is unlikely that there would be two bridges so close together and in use at the same time, and it is more probable that the footbridge was built for the bridle path which leaves the main road on the terrace and turns west into the ditch making for the lower crossing. The wooden footbridge was replaced by a well constructed stone bridge which in its turn has been swept away and at the moment there is no possible crossing of the stream.

The Radnor Wood extends down to the stream on the north bank but beneath the undergrowth it is possible to discern the same sequence of tracks proceeding north as on the south bank.

BRIDGE ABUTMENT

The examination of the bridge abutment, which was discovered by the fisherman, proved a difficult undertaking. It was almost completely overgrown, and Mr. Cobbald says that in 1904 there was no sign of bridge or culvert at this point. A tree, growing out of the west face of the abutment, has fallen and now bridges the stream. The roots of the tree have disturbed the masonry and caused some of the stones to crack.

The abutment was only ten feet wide and appeared to be of medieval packhorse type, built largely of Roman worked stone. (Fig. 6.) It was realised, however, that this bridge was not in line

with the medieval road ; the east edge of the road being in line with the west face of the abutment, necessitating a difficult right turn for traffic to proceed from the road on to the bridge. (Plan.) It is therefore reasonable to assume that the bridge and the road are not contemporary, as there is no reason why a bridge should not have been built in line with the road. This suggests that the builders of the road found a bridge, or part of a bridge, in position and utilised it for their own needs.

An examination of the masonry showed that the east face of the abutment was quite different in character from the west face. (Pl. III & IV). The east face, which had been preserved under soil from the embankment, was built of regular courses of masonry up to a height of eight feet, above which it had been rebuilt. The west face contained Roman worked stone but the courses in places were irregular and showed signs of having been rebuilt. The stream face of the bridge had also been rebuilt ; after the first three courses of masonry the face was stepped back several inches.

The evidence strongly suggests that the east face and part of the core of the Roman bridge serving the early road survived and were incorporated in a medieval bridge.

There are no visible remains of the bridge serving the embankment road and at the moment excavation is made impossible by the existence of trees on the site. It was probably of stone, as this was plentiful and it would need to be a substantial structure to carry a road forty feet above the level of the stream. A large voussoir stone built into the west face of the medieval bridge suggests that it might have been an arched bridge.

SUMMARY

The site showed the sequence of roads from the Roman military advance, through the period of civil development and their use and adaptation in medieval and modern times.

Perhaps the most interesting point which arose out of the excavation was the way in which the Roman engineers dealt with the difficult gradient of the hilly country on that particular site, for the transportation of stone.

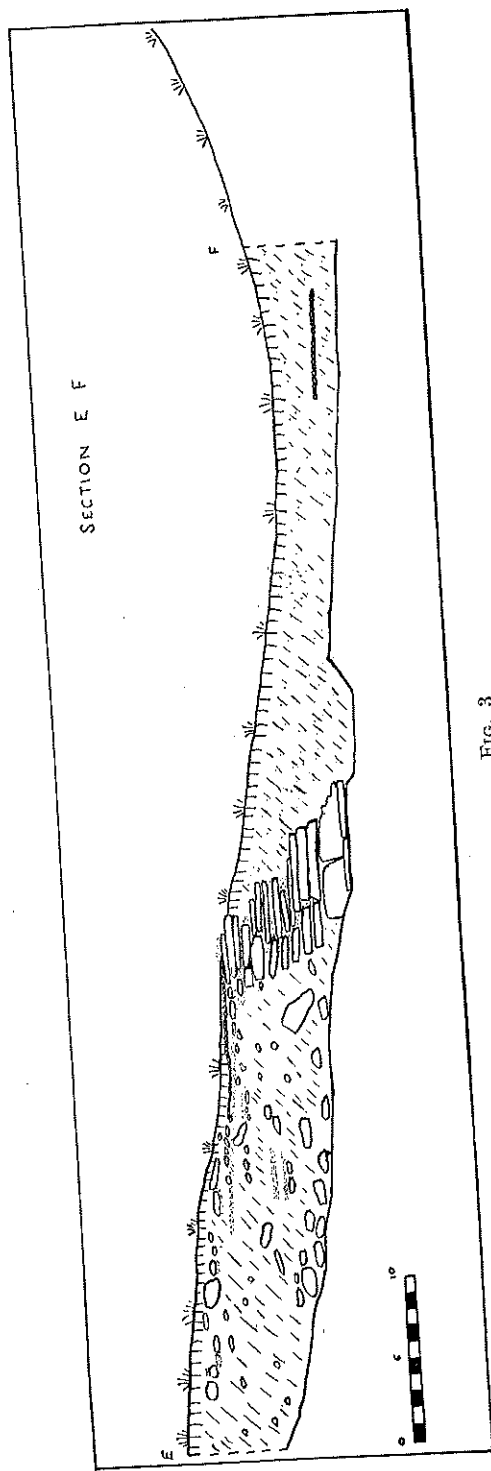


FIG. 3

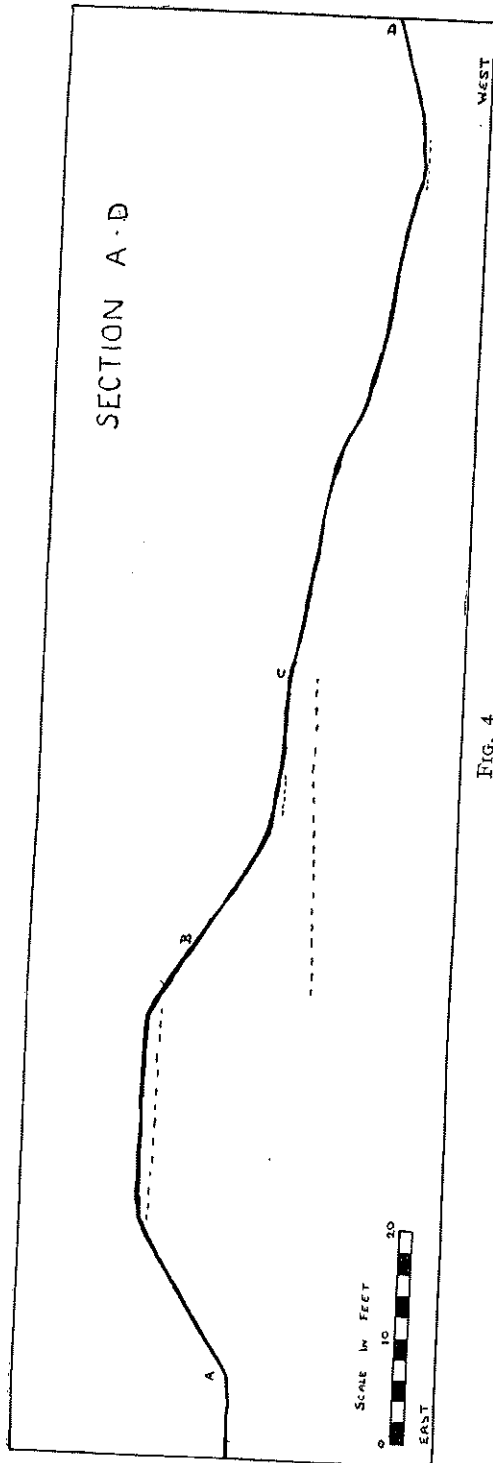


FIG. 4

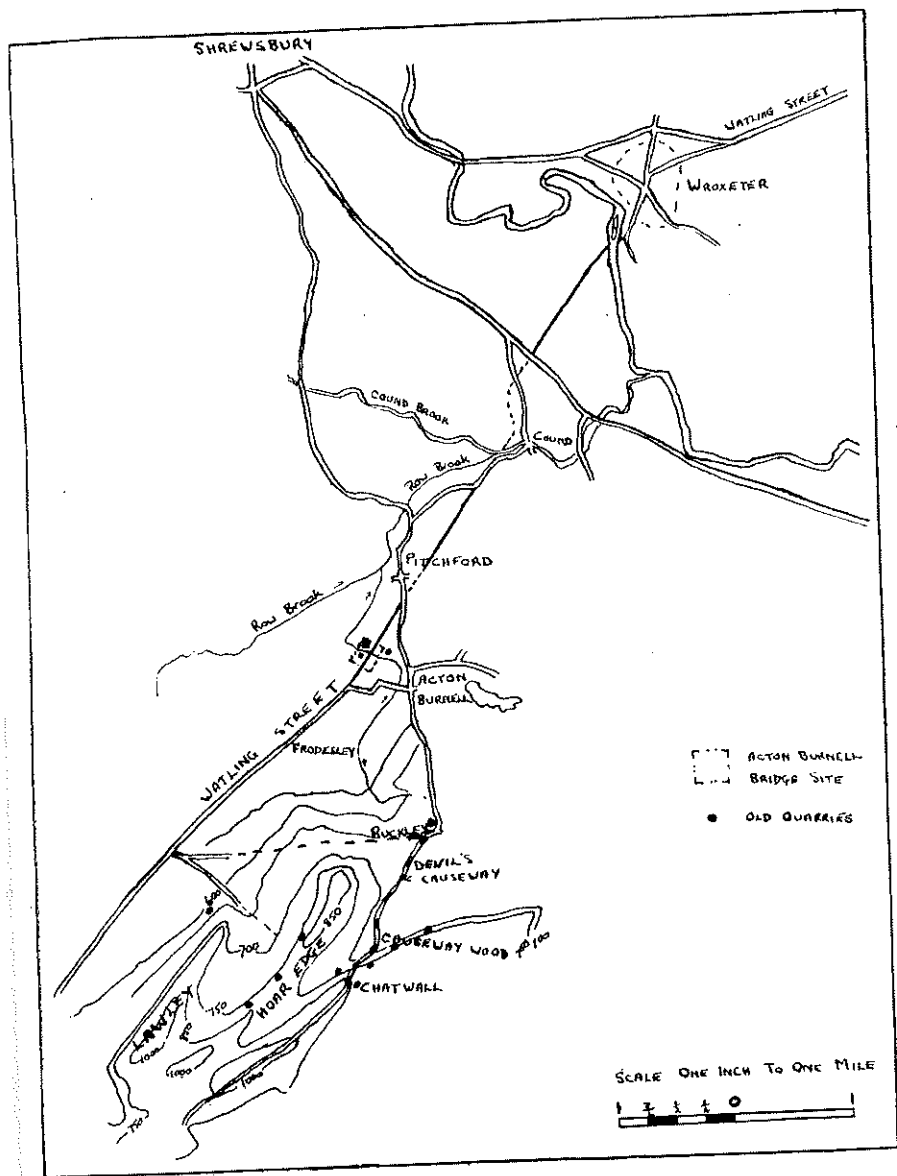


FIG. 5

Map based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. *Crown Copyright reserved*

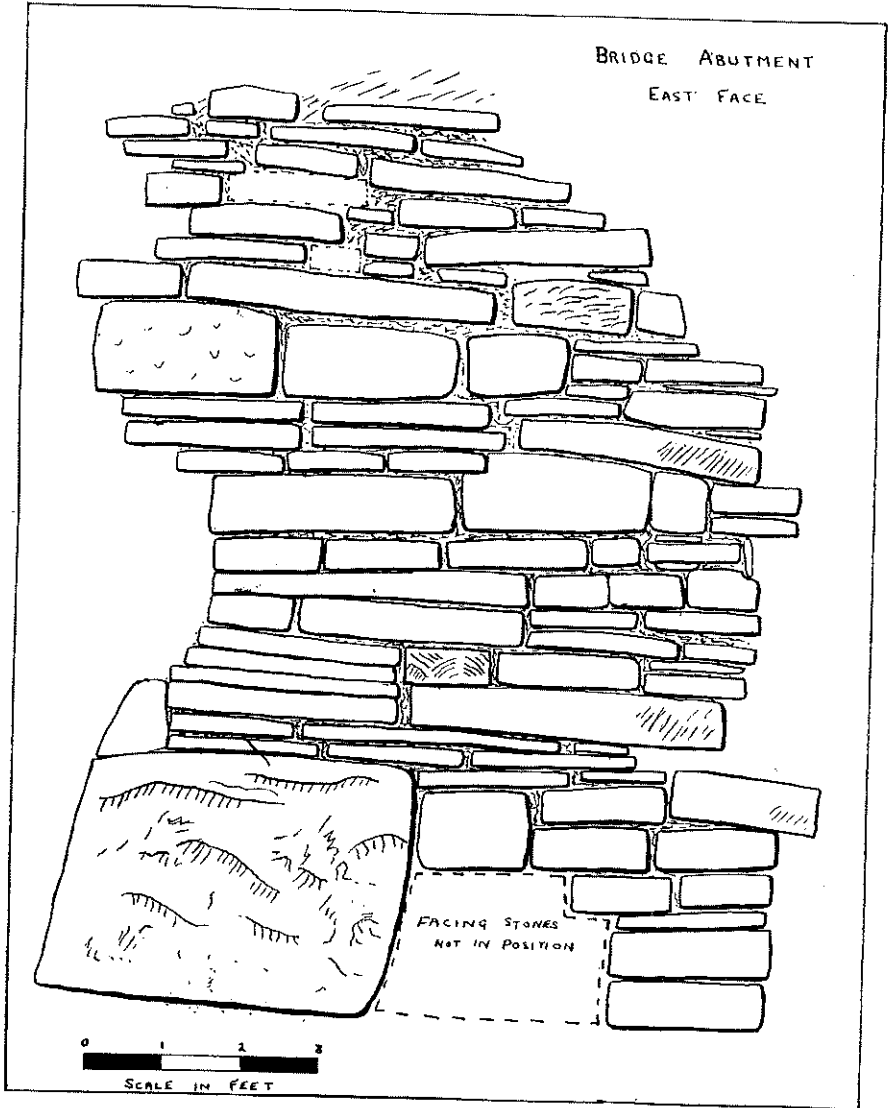


FIG. 6

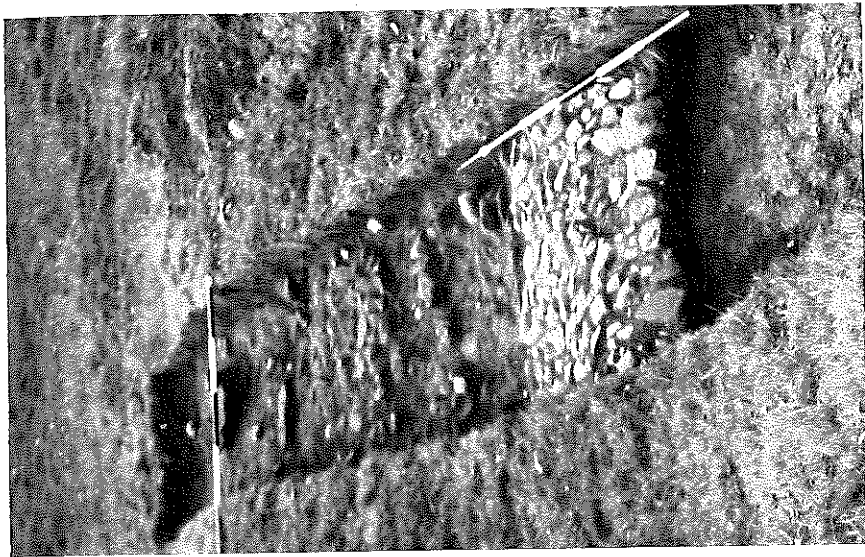


Photo · L. C. Lloyd

MEDIEVAL PACKHORSE TRACK
WITH REMAINS OF WIDER ROAD

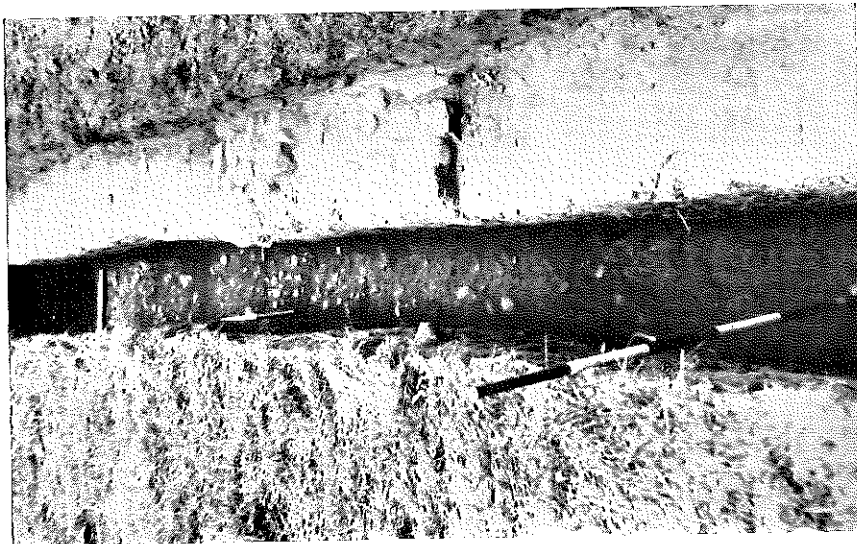


Photo : T. Hall

ROMAN ROAD NO. 1 WITH
MEDIEVAL PACKHORSE TRACK ABOVE



RETAINING WALL FOR EMBANKMENT Photo: G. Webster



SURFACE OF ROMAN ROAD No. 1 Photo: D. Hollingworth



DEVIL'S CAUSEWAY, NEAR RUCKLEY

Photo : I. D. Margary



BRIDGE ABUTMENT, EAST FACE

Photo : S. R. Turner



BRIDGE ABUTMENT, WEST FACE

Photo : S. R. Turner

PLATE IV

MASON MARKS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THOSE FOUND IN SHROPSHIRE BUILDINGS.

Mason marks have been defined as marks cut upon hewn stones for the purpose of distinguishing each man's work, so that in case of defective or faulty workmanship the overseer could at once know by whom it was done and by whom it ought to be rectified, and in case of piecework so that the artisan producing the work examined and passed by the overseer could receive the remuneration due to him for his labour.

The use of marks is not confined to any one country or age. They are to be found upon stones used in building by almost every nation of the ancient world.

There have been many theories about the meaning and reasons for the invention and use of marks. It must, however, not be forgotten that in the middle ages marks were not peculiar to masons but were commonly employed by many other trades, though so far as we know they were probably used by masons as early or earlier than by any other trade.

It is only during the last hundred years or so that any attention has been paid to the subject of mason marks, and this is not surprising when we remember the story which is told by most people dealing with the subject of the old priest at Poitiers, who on being shown the marks in his Church, remarked, "I have walked through this Church four times a day for nearly forty years and never noticed one of them, and now I cannot look anywhere but they flit into my eyes."

WHERE FOUND.

In early mediæval times the mark was generally placed on the face of the stone at an angle most convenient to the operative, but since the 17th century the mark has usually been placed on the bed of the stone. Marks are found on carved and squared stones but seldom on walling stones put in by roughwallers. Most of the marks on *moulded* and *carved* stones are found on the bed of the stone as one would be inclined to expect. Yet the roughwalling work should not be overlooked, for a careful search will often be rewarded by finding here and there one or two squared stones on which the mason in charge has set his mark. They are generally "binding" stones.

Mr. F. S. Waller, who superintended the restoration of Gloucester Cathedral some fifty years ago, states that in no instance had he found marks cut on Norman stones in any other position but the face.

One authority is inclined to put the date when it became more usual to cut the mark on the bed of the stone to a little earlier than the year 1600 when the craft had lost much of its former glory and power, and the marks themselves had lost to a great extent their value and symbolism. This *may* have been so in some districts, but I have found a great many marks on the face of stones in buildings in this county (Shropshire) of a later date, and I should be inclined to think the practise did not become general until at least a hundred years later.

The marks for the most part in early times were cut in the centre of the face of the stone, or the bed, as the case may be, and while some masons were careful to cut their marks in a straight position others appear to have cut them at the angle they happened to be standing when the stone was finished. In consequence marks are often found off the square or even upside down when the stone was placed in its position in the building, thus making it very difficult to distinguish certain W's from M's.

SIZE OF THE MARK.

The actual size of the mark is of no special importance. It may vary from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. to as much as 12 in. or even larger. On the Agger Wall in Rome the average size is 12 in. One writer states that he considered the operative mason increased the size of his mark according to whether the stone was placed low down or high up in the building in order that the mark might be more easily distinguished. While there are examples of this practise to be seen in the Norman work in Mount Grace Priory, Yorkshire as well as in Chichester and Canterbury Cathedrals, the custom is by no means a general one but rather the reverse. My own experience when searching for marks has been that the same mark is nearly always the same size wherever it may happen to be placed in the building, though I have come across cases of a mark varying in size, but the stones on which the slightly larger marks were made were not necessarily in a higher position than the others. Moreover the suggestion could not hold good in cases where the stones were

marked at the quarry, for the mason who marked them could not tell in what position they would be placed.

It must also be remembered that certainly in later mediaeval times the mason knew that his mark would probably very soon be obliterated by lime, either as a preparation for painting or other form of decoration, or with the object of making the interior of the building lighter.

In many mediaeval building accounts, when all the charges have been paid, one constantly finds : Item : for so and so many loads of lime.

To-day as one goes round the Churches it is surprising how many marks one finds which are inlaid with lime, showing that the stonework was once limewashed, and the lime cleaned off at a later period, adhering only where the incision of the mason's mark appeared.

“ UNMARKED ” STONES.

In any building where masons' marks are to be found there is naturally an exceptionally large percentage of finished yet unmarked stones. If every dressed stone was marked one would expect to find an average of 50 per cent with marks on, the other 50 per cent being turned inwards, but this, as we know, is by no means the case, in fact the percentage of marked stones is usually very, very small. On the other hand one does sometimes find large expanses of stone work with an almost 50 per cent of marked stones, one of the most usual places being the interior and exterior of Church towers built about the 15th and 16th centuries.

As regards work of the “ Norman ” period, Mr. G. G. Coulton in his book *Art and the Reformation* writes as follows :—

“ The first marks we find are often coarse and crude. The Norman pillars at Ely are covered with them. Making all allowances for ravages of time and the far worse ravages of well meaning restorers who have scraped the stone we may see that the marks were carelessly made—two or three are often found closely resembling each other and we cannot be quite sure whether they were originally identical or intentionally varied by different workmen who had chosen the same general type of mark.

“ It is only in later work we find the man's mark definitely

standardised—each mark answering much more closely to the other in size, angle and depth of incision.

“ This together with the roughness of the axework and joints suggests that these early Norman Churches were built by hordes of half skilled labourers whom the Clerk of the Works and the Master Mason had raked together as best they could, so that their numbers, their clumsiness and their indiscipline called for constant and strict supervision.

“ Each man was obliged to mark his stone when it was finished and the task masters could thus verify the amount of work done when pay day came round.”

Mr. Coulton goes on to suggest that the better or the more intricate the work the fewer are the marks found, due to the fact that the more experienced masons would be old and trusty enough to work in their own way and with little or no supervision.

SPECIAL MARKS FOR SPECIAL BUILDINGS.

A French writer, M. Victor Didron, noted that crosses were more frequently found on religious buildings—letters abound in churches—geometrical and fanciful signs in castles—and that the variety of marks is much greater in military than in religious buildings.

This may or may not be the case. Certainly one would expect to find a larger proportion of crosses on the stones in religious buildings, as also a greater variety of marks on military buildings due to frequent repairs from war damage; on the other hand I have in my collection some 600–700 different marks which appear in Canterbury Cathedral alone and the variety embraces marks found on all kinds of buildings.

TWO MARKS ON ONE STONE.

As no mason used more than one mark when one comes across a stone with two marks on it one is confronted with a problem for which I have not yet come across or been able to find an explanation that entirely satisfied me. These dual marks are by no means uncommon and there are some very good examples to be seen in Canterbury Cathedral.

One authority puts forward the view that one mark is the

countersign mark of a foreman, but as the work on which the two marks were found was of a very straightforward nature it would seem unnecessary to have the stone countermarked. Another authority suggests that one of the two marks was a direction mark to show the position in the building the stone was to occupy, but again stones with two marks on them are sometimes found in positions where directions were quite unnecessary. Yet another authority suggests that it was the result of two men working piecework on the same stone but if that were the case one would expect to find quite a large number of them in the same building. It is of course possible in some cases that where two marks appear on the same stone that the stone, cut and marked by one man, was found to be redundant—perhaps even placed in store, and eventually used by another workman for a different part of the building, who reshaped it to meet its requirement, adding his own mark to that of the other. Again, it may be that where some renovation or restoration has taken place and old material used, the mason doing the work has added his mark to that which was already on it. One's opinion that this may sometimes be the case is strengthened by the fact that the two marks frequently appear to be of different dates. Having studied all the information one can find on the subject as well as close examination of such stones one is forced to the conclusion that no one explanation meets all the cases.

SEVERAL MARKS ON ONE STONE.

Several marks on one stone are not uncommon but again it is difficult to find any one explanation which will meet all cases.

In Heswall Church in the Wirral for example there are three or four such cases. In one particular instance the red sandstone of which the Church is built was of poor quality and some four stones of better quality had been selected and on them are grouped the marks of the masons. The date is about the middle of the 15th century. A few of the individual marks which appear grouped on the one stone are also to be found in the less exposed parts of the building.

There is another example to be found at Bebington Church, also in the Wirral, where in the Sanctuary is a stone bearing four marks of which the main design is a Latin cross surmounting an equilateral triangle, but with a distinct difference added in each

case. It would seem likely that the four masons were members of the same Lodge and were responsible for the work of the Sanctuary. In the rest of the Church there are some forty-five other marks, none of which correspond with the four on the one stone. The date is 1530 A.D.

I have also come across one or two cases in Shropshire, one being at Highley, where there are also four marks on one stone, but I do not think they are all of the same date, and is perhaps one of those cases where the stone had been moved about in the course of alteration or restoration of the Church.

Another instance is at Ludlow where several marks appear on one stone on the outside of the Church near the porch. Some of these are true masons' marks but others are obviously cut by vandals.

SELECTION OF A MARK.

When we consider that the same shaped mark which appears on the Gizeh Pyramid is also found on the 14th century south door of Chester Cathedral and another mark from the same pyramid is found at Haughmond, Buildwas and Wenlock Abbeys, and yet another in Pompeii is also to be seen at Ludlow, Moreton Corbet, Shawbury and Stottesdon Churches, as well as at Wenlock Abbey, to give just three of many examples, it would be difficult to believe that the reason the mason had for selecting that particular mark was the same in every case.

The Greek letter " Tau " is a mark frequently found in Churches and may or may not have been selected by a mason in mediaeval times because it symbolised the Trinity, but the mason who used it as his mark on the Gizeh pyramid could not have chosen it for that purpose.

The equilateral triangle was considered by the ancient Egyptians to represent the perfect figure, and was typical of the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms, whereas to the Christian it represents, among other things, the Trinity, and was no doubt in early times selected by masons for that reason.

The Greek letter " Ypsilon " like our capital Y in form, represented the course of human life in which there are two diverging paths, one leading to happiness and the other to misery.

In selecting a mark in early times as also in mediaeval times it

would be only natural that a mason, if allowed, would not infrequently select some sacred symbol belonging to the religion of his native country.

Take for example the "Triquetra." This was frequently used in varying form in the decoration of early MSS., Liturgies and so forth. The period of the development of this art is given as that from Pagan Celtic times to the 9th century A.D. It appears in slightly varying forms from the Coronation Gospels of Anglo-Saxon kings, from the Sacramentarium of Rheims, from a door of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, as well as at Lichfield Cathedral and Fountains Abbey. It seems more than likely that the mark was selected by a mason knowing it to be a religious symbol.

It has been suggested that the origin of some marks maybe traced to the Runic alphabet. While it is true that some mason marks are identical with certain letters in the Runic alphabet, so also are some identical with letters in the Sabaeen, Semitic, Phoenician and other ancient alphabets. If one compares the letters of the ancient alphabets, excluding ancient Greek and Latin, as given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, one will be surprised at the large number which correspond almost exactly and in many cases appear to be identical with marks found on buildings in our own country.

It would seem that no single origin or source of the symbols will apply perfectly because marks have been, to all appearance, drawn from almost every source and system.

In ancient times a man would almost certainly adopt as his mark some special design which appealed to his religious or artistic taste, but I am inclined to think that the most *ancient* marks were probably drawn from alphabetical signs and the development to more elaborate signs gradually took place. In support of this, the Revd. Woodford, writing as far back as 1878 says, "Marks were first of all alphabetical, or based on the letters and numerals of the language of the country in which the mason was working. The Roman marks are apparently more symbolical and less alphabetical, though later the Runes seem to have been merely used as marks. As art moved on mathematical figures and religious symbols became more in the vogue. We think therefore that masons' marks developed as time went on from the alphabetical and numeralistic to the symbolical and exoteric."

LODGES.

There is no doubt that a very large percentage of masons belonged to Lodges and worked under definite rules. Professor Lewis writes that "all evidence seems to point to there having been bands of skilled workmen attached to great monasteries, cathedrals, and in later times cities, whose example and training influenced the districts around. When works of great magnitude were in progress these bands were no doubt increased, and when the works ceased they were lessened in numbers, the members dispersing here and there and leaving their marks in other places." There is also evidence to show that even in comparatively early times there were not only lodges more or less permanently fixed at all great buildings but that they also exercised control over lodges which had been started by and were fed with workmen from their own ranks. These Lodges, whether temporary or permanent, would naturally follow the same rules, and consider themselves as owning fealty to the head or "Mother" lodge from which they sprang. The members of such subordinate lodges might either return to the mother lodge on completion of the new work, when not permanently fixed in a district, or if several different buildings were required within a reasonable radius, become a permanent lodge there, and with assistance from the Mother lodge and other sources supply all the labour required.

KEY OR MOTHER MARKS.

Referring back for a moment to the subject of "Selection of Marks," as lodges developed and obtained a greater control over the Craft, I think the selection of marks by masons became, at any rate in some parts of the world, less of an individual matter, and in this respect I might mention a theory set forward in an interesting book by Prof. Franz. Rziha of Vienna, published in 1883, in which will be found a series of plates giving a large number of marks. Prof. Rziha contends that from certain primitive geometrical diagrams and their combinations a series of Mother diagrams or Keys may be obtained, on one or other of which may be fitted all the mason marks known. In his plates, sixty-eight in number, he claims to have fitted no less than 1147 marks into their respective diagrams, thus claiming to prove the correctness of his system.

A Key or Mother mark was in possession of a mason's lodge,

and from the knowledge of it a man could prove his mark if required to do so, and also on seeing a mark was able to judge of its origin.

One Key consisted of lozenges and squares, one within the other, and crossed by lines from angle to angle. Another had for its foundation the equilateral triangle with another inverted and treated by the same rules. Yet a third consisted of triangles and circles, and so on. From an examination of a number of marks he considered that he had discovered the Mother diagram of the masons of Prague, Dresden, Strasbourg, Cologne, Vienna and other towns. The theory is intriguing and somewhat fascinating, and certainly appeals to one when one draws a few such diagrams and fits in marks one has collected oneself, and one is inclined to think there may be something in the suggestion that some Lodges possessed such keys from which members selected their marks. In support of this it is certainly true that in any mediaeval work of any size, say for example, Ludlow Church, it is easy to pick out sets of three, five or even seven marks all somewhat similar, yet all with a distinct difference, which leads one to think that the masons who had selected them as their marks were members of the same lodge.

What is not very clear is why it was necessary to have sixty-eight keys to fit in the comparatively small number of 1147 marks. Moreover the Diagrams were very complicated and many marks of the same design could easily be fitted into quite a number of different keys.

It would appear that there were three grades of masons, apprentices, craftsmen and master masons. Opinions differ as to when a mark was given to or selected by a mason. It is on record in several Scottish Lodges that apprentices chose their mark on joining a lodge, but there is no proof that they were permitted to use that mark on their work. If, as we are led to believe, the mark was only placed on a finished stone, it is very doubtful whether an apprentice would be permitted to so use it until he became a craftsman or a "Fellow of the Craft" as was the term used.

The record one speaks of refers to the late 17th century and it is difficult to speak with any certainty of the custom earlier than this, but in considering the question of customs and usages of later times compared with those of an older period one important event must not be forgotten. The Reformation swept away many of the splendid old institutions and at the same time, in removing the necessity for the magnificent buildings of old, so disorganised the

craft of masons that many of the rules, customs and usages no doubt fell into abeyance, and was the cause of many lodges, large and small, being broken up. The process it is true was gradual. It finally resulted nevertheless, in quite a different system being formed in carrying forward the craft of masonry. Each man became more of an individual, and to a large extent lost the *esprit de corps* and united interest in the work which existed before.

BLIND MARKS.

In consequence of this upheaval and disorganisation brought about by the breaking up of a number of lodges the number of what are termed "blind" marks increased. By "blind" is meant the name given to those marks adopted by masons who were not members of an existing guild or lodge, but who were probably itinerant masons working more or less independently and who were perhaps supplied with work on a building of some size for a limited time. The late Mr. E. W. Shaw, who perhaps made the largest collection of marks at the time, and who studied them very closely, claimed that he could distinguish "blind" marks from others in the same building and I think it more than likely that his claim was justifiable. It might sometimes happen that where there was a large number of masons employed in a work of large dimensions, two masons would be found who employed the same mark belonging to different lodges. In such cases one of them would, for the time being, slightly alter his mark, which often took the form of a slight addition, termed a "difference."

INHERITED MARKS.

This remark about an "addition" or "difference" brings one to the somewhat debated point about "inherited" marks. At one time there was quite a general opinion that marks were usually inherited or that the son assumed his father's mark but with a "difference." Research on this point in more recent years has definitely pronounced against it, at any rate as a general custom. Where it did exist it was not limited to any one country. It may have been rather more common in Germany than in England or Scotland. Indeed with regard to Scottish masons Mr. Murray Lyon writes: "On the question as to whether or not marks were

hereditary by descent from father to son we have been able to discover only one instance of a craftsman having adopted his deceased father's mark." That was in 1609. In Germany in 1387, 1480 and 1482 there are records of three men, all celebrated masons, whose names are given, and whose marks were used by their descendants *with* alterations. At the same time the practise may have been more common than some of the records show, as we can readily understand that when a mason died his son would in all probability take over his father's tools, which would bear the father's mark, and he would adopt that mark as his own, or with a "difference," unless he possessed one of his own already. For we must bear in mind that if, as seems to have been the rule, an apprentice selected or was given a mark when he joined a lodge his father would not necessarily have reached the age when he had no further use for his working tools, and further, we do not know to what extent the tools belonged to the quarry owners, the employers, the lodge or the craftsman.

One is sometimes asked if any particular mark can be traced to or associated with any particular mason. Unless one has access to the records of very ancient lodges it would be a very difficult matter to trace any, but a few are given in the account books of the Worshipful Company of Masons of the City of London, but not earlier than the year 1620.

VALUE OF MASON MARKS.

In summing up the subject one might ask what can be said of the actual value of these marks—is there any—or is the interest and value merely limited to the satisfaction of amassing a collection of so many hundreds or thousands? It is interesting at least to be able to trace some of the journeys made by masons in past ages when building a stately edifice or a village Church, leaving their individual mark on the stones and passing on to erect yet another work. It is possible in this way, where other data is lacking, to fix the date on which certain buildings were erected quite accurately. In Cheshire, for example, within an area of a comparatively few square miles there are four Church towers all bearing the same mason marks. While the quality of the material seems to be the same it is interesting to notice the improvement in the quality of the workmanship. In tracing the movements of these craftsmen, it must be remembered

that some marks were much more common than others, and that one such mark occurring in the same locality does not necessarily indicate that the work was done by the same man ; but where three or four different marks are found which again appear in other neighbouring buildings there is very strong evidence that the same workmen were employed.

If this method of checking up marks was undertaken on a regular system over a large area there is no doubt some very interesting data would be forthcoming.

In an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* dated October 1876, there is an interesting description given by a Mr. Emanuel Deutsch, who, in examining mason marks at Jerusalem, was able to determine that they were on stones with which Solomon's Temple was built rather than the temple built by King Herod, because the marks were of Phoenician character, and whereas Phoenician builders were employed in the first temple, Herod employed Greek artisans who knew nothing of Phoenician letters and numerals.

In glancing at the small collection of marks that follow it will be seen that some thirty-six in number are to be found in Shrewsbury Castle. An interesting feature is that these only appear in the Council Chamber. It seems unlikely that so many masons would have been employed in so small an area, and when one notices that many of the stones have been recut and set in places different to that in which they were originally intended, it would seem that considerable alterations or restoration had at some period taken place and that the material used had been brought from another part of the Castle.

MARKS FOUND IN SHROPSHIRE BUILDINGS.

Turning to marks found in this County it is rather interesting to note that what one might term "angular" marks representing no apparent object, and which are so common in buildings in many parts of this and other countries, appear to be strangely lacking in this county.

Of the marks I have found, what one might term the "zig-zag" mark is the most common, though nearly all differ from each other ; yet although this is so common, I did not come across one in Ludlow Church from where I obtained some sixty other marks.

Arrow heads and arrows, the latter being an universal mark, are found in great profusion, though varying in shape and character a

good deal, there being some fifteen different varieties, the most interesting being Alveley, Buildwas Abbey, Highley, Hughley and Wrockwardine Churches.

Triangles, obtuse, acute and right-angled, in various shapes, are common. The right-angled triangle was considered by Pythagoras to be the emblem of justice, while to the ancient Egyptians it symbolised the origin of nature, Osiris, Isis and their offspring Horus, the world. Examples of a right-angled triangle are to be found at Alveley and Claverley Churches, as also at Wenlock Priory, though for what reason the masons adopted that triangle as their mark one cannot say.

Equilateral triangles are also numerous. Reference to their symbolical meaning has already been made. The double equilateral triangle, *i.e.*, one inverted and impaled on the other, represents the Shield of David, and is the fanciful union of fire and water and was supposed to possess occult influence against damage by these elements. I have not come across this mark in Shropshire but one is to be seen in Lincoln Cathedral.

The "hour-glass" mark in varying forms is to be found at Buildwas Abbey, Wenlock Priory and six Churches, including Old St. Chad's, Shrewsbury.

Crosses, as might be expected, are common, and they are to be seen in about 50 per cent of the Shropshire Churches in which marks occur.

The Pentalpha mark, which again is so common in some districts, is to be found in Buildwas Abbey, Wenlock Priory, Shrewsbury Castle and Claverley Church. This mark was used as a charm against evil spirits, as well as a symbol of safety and good luck. It was used as a potters' mark at Taphanes on a wine jar sealed with the cartouche of King Amasia, 564 B.C.—also on the coins of Atilla, King of the Huns, A.D. 433-353. It is called by some "Solomon's Seal," the badge of the Jewish nation, and it is also found upon tombs in the Roman catacombs. I might mention that the Pentalpha mark in Shrewsbury is very similar to one at Pompeii, although a more exact shape appears in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Compass mark, which again is so common on buildings in other parts of the country, I have only found in Lilleshall Abbey and Ludlow Church. There are different types of compasses surmounted by a cross in Ludlow Church, the only other examples I know of being at Canterbury Cathedral and Stonyhurst College.

There is also a compass mark surmounted by what looks like a banner at Ludlow Church, and this is unique in my experience.

The Square, the perfect ashlar, representing the mind of man purified by devotion and piety, as also typifying the four seasons and the four elements, is found in Shrewsbury Castle.

In Hughley Church there is a mark of a trident—a well-known Hindu caste mark and of frequent appearance as a mason mark in the East. Two of the same design appear in Yorkshire Churches, and one very similar to it on Hadrian's Wall.

I have only come across one example of the "Fylfot" or Swastika type of mark, that being in St. Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury. It is not uncommon, and there are examples of it in Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and other counties. It is a Scandinavian symbol, and was called "Thor's hammer" or the "fylfot"—many footed. In India it is known as the swastika, from the Sanscrit word "all is well." It is not found on Egyptian monuments or amongst those of any of the Semitic races. It is purely an Aryan symbol betokening "good luck." Incidentally it is not infrequently used as a bell-founders' mark, thereby invoking the protection of Thor from damage by lightning.

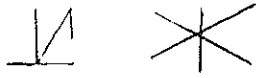
In Chelmarsh Church there are three shield-like marks which are an unusual design, but undoubtedly they are true mason marks. They are quite plain and bear no arms or other device, varying only in shape. The only other place I have found shield-like marks is at Eastbourne. These were not mason marks and I was given to understand they were Crusader marks.

In Ludlow Church there is a mark consisting of a small triangle with three extended sides. It is by no means an uncommon mark, but interesting because it is also found at Pompeii.

Examples of "Graphs" are to be seen in St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, and All Saints Church, Claverley.

I have not come across any "Compass trial" marks in any of the Shropshire buildings although there are plenty of examples of them in Churches in other counties.

E. P. COMBER



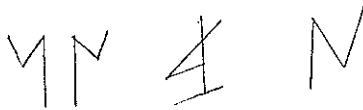
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ST. CHADS, BONNINGHALL



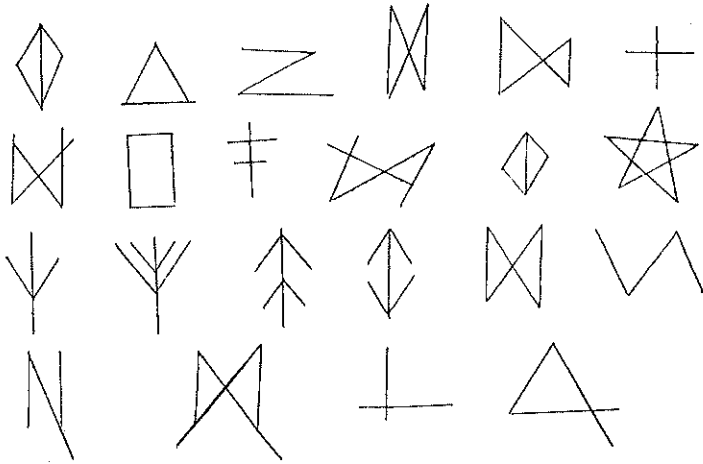
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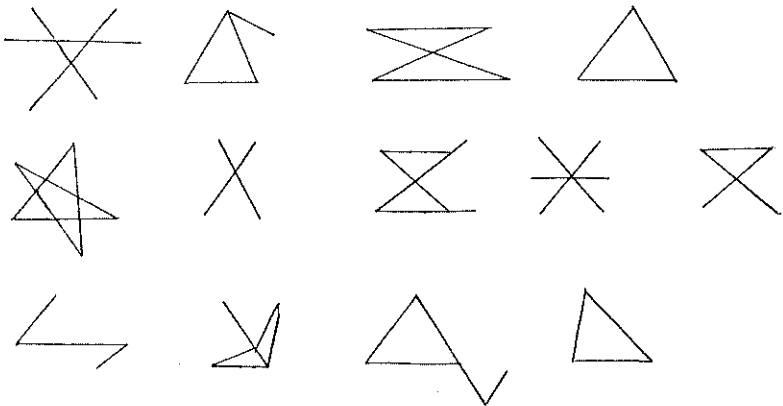
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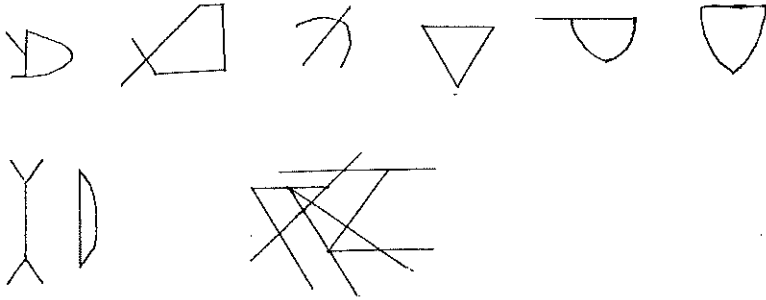
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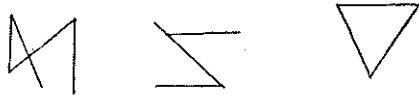
BUILDWAS ABBEY



ALL SAINTS, CLAVERLEY



ST. PETER, CHELMARSH



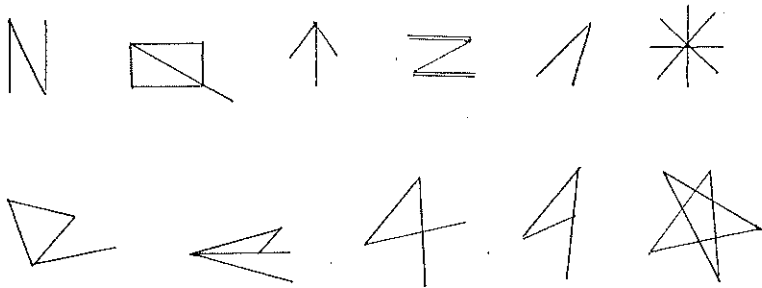
ST. PETER, COUND



ST. PETER, EDMOND



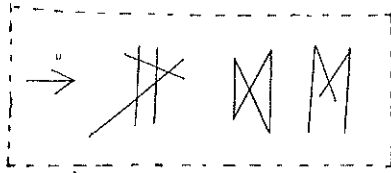
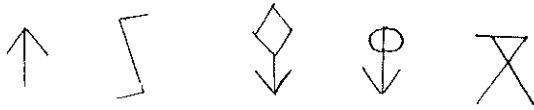
ST. MARY MAGDALENE, HADNALL



HAUGHMOND ABBEY

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS,
HIGH ERCALL

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, KENLEY



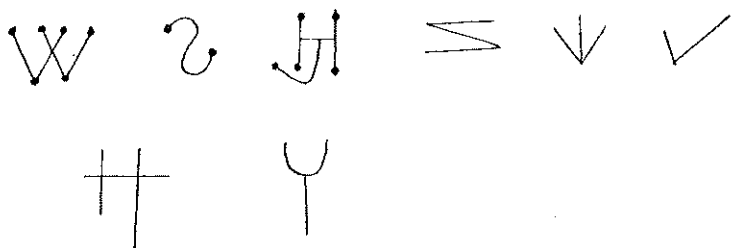
Four marks on one stone. This is unusual
ST. MARY, HIGHLEY



ST. LUKE, HODNET



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, HIGHLEY



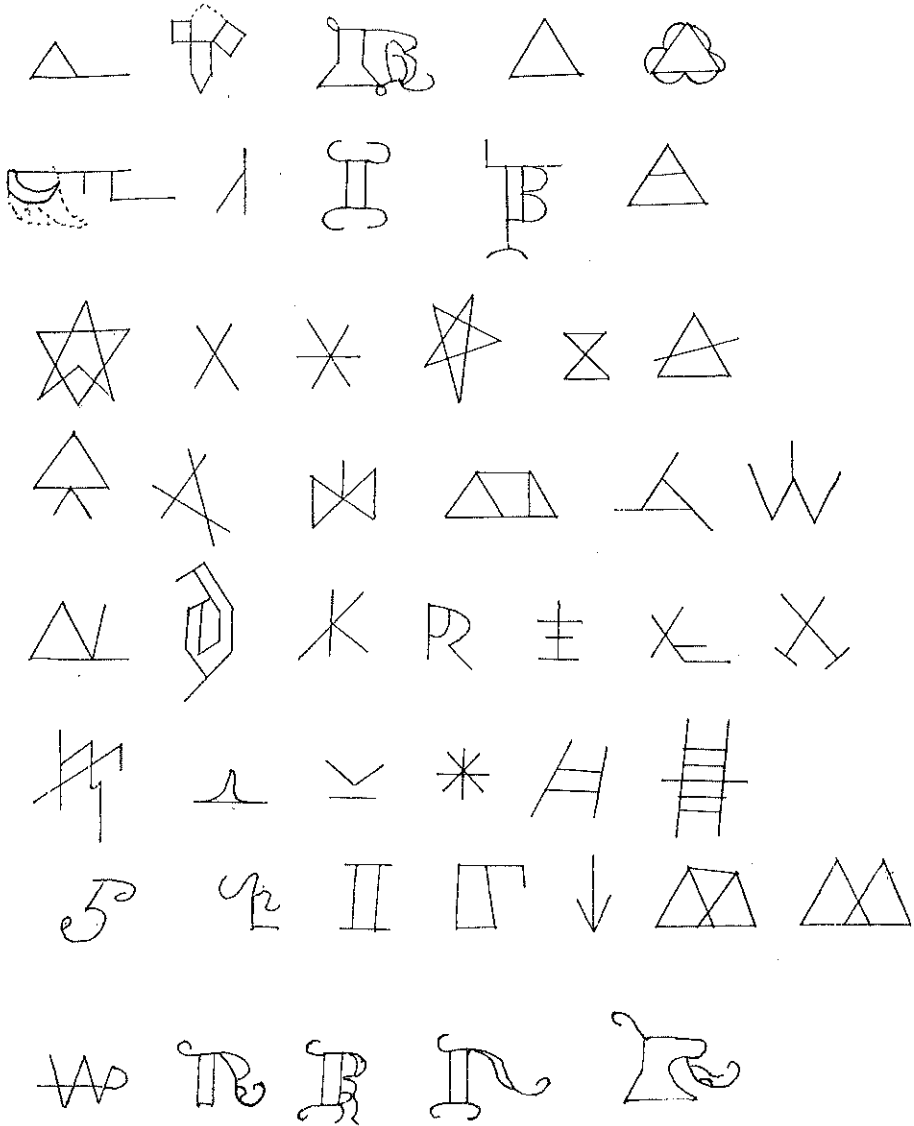
ST. MARY, KINNERLEY

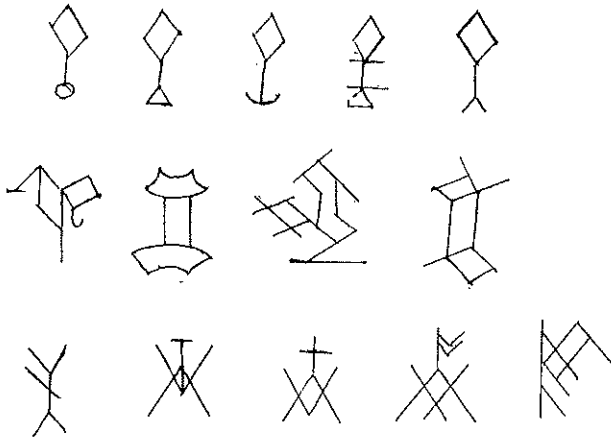
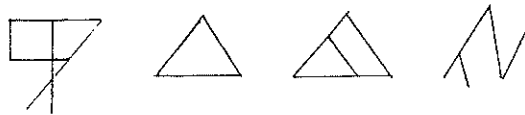


LILLESBALL ABBEY

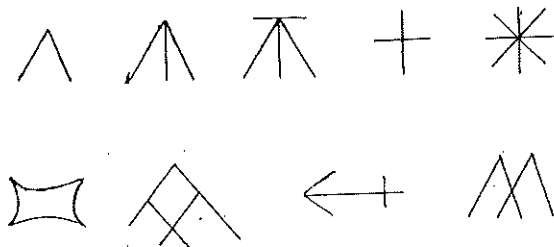


ST. MICHAEL, LOPPINGTON



ST. LAWRENCE, LUDLOW (*contd.*)

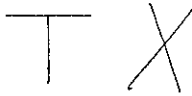
LUDLOW CASTLE



ST. BARTHOLOMEW, MORETON CORBET



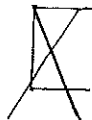
HOLY TRINITY, MUCH WENLOCK



ST. MICHAEL, MUNSLOW

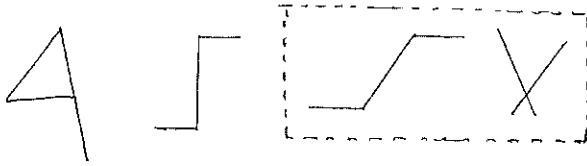


ST. PETER, MYDDLE



ST. MARY, NEEN SAVAGE

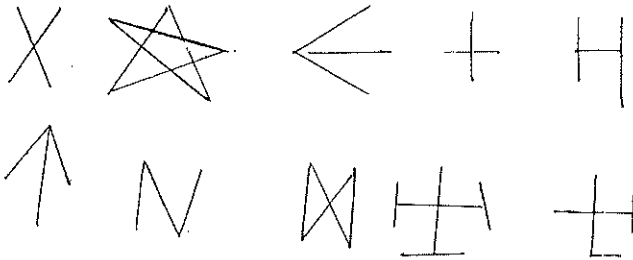
MASON MARKS



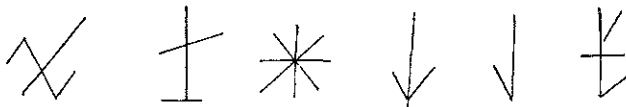
OVERTON CHURCH



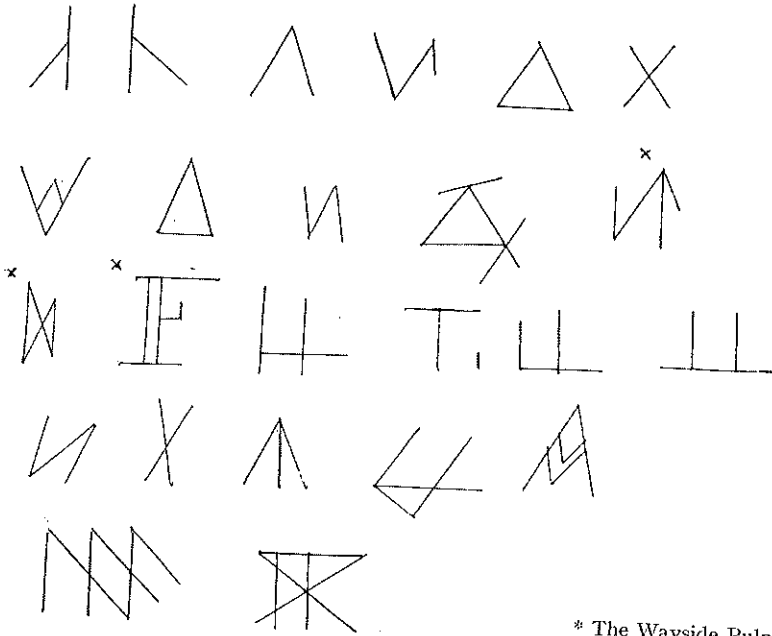
POYNTON OLD CHURCH



ST. BARTHOLOMEW, RICHARDS CASTLE

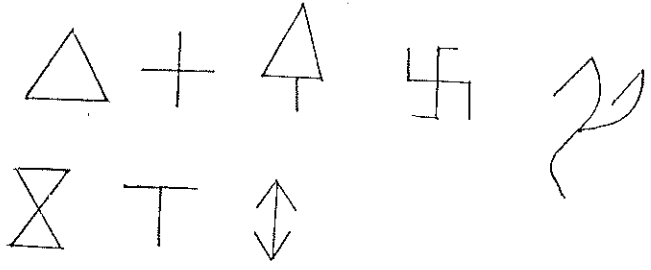


ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SHAWBURY



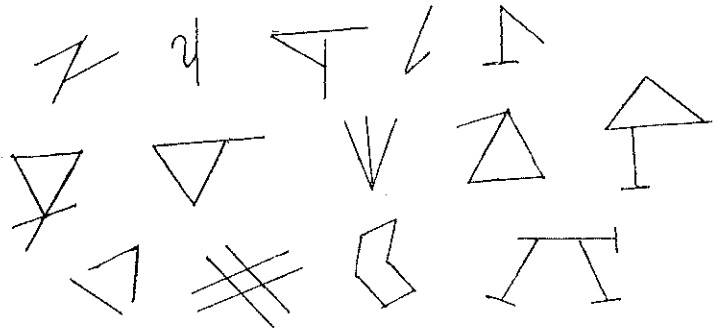
* The Wayside Pulpit

THE ABBEY, SHREWSBURY



ST. ALKMUNDS, SHREWSBURY

MASON MARKS



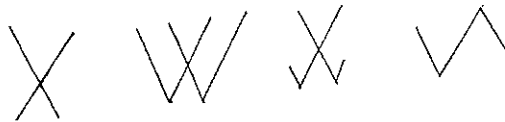
ST. MARY, SHREWSBURY



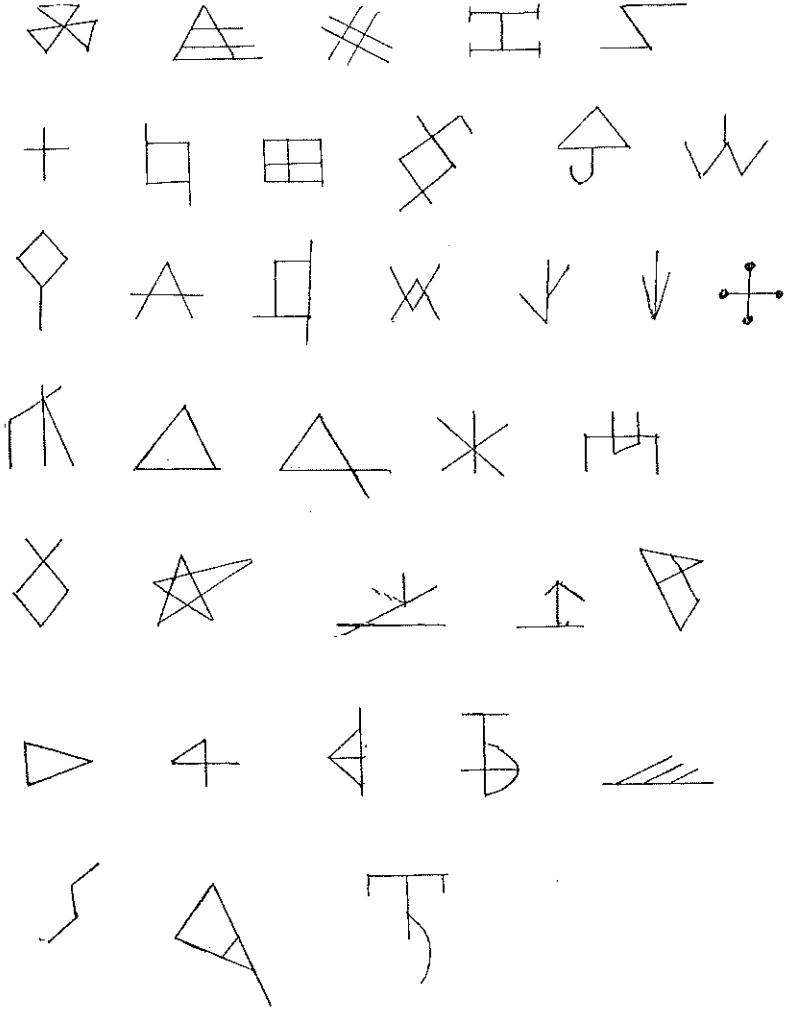
OLD ST. CHAD, SHREWSBURY



ST. MARY, SHERIFFHALES

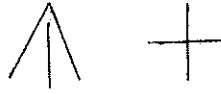


ST. ANDREW, SHIFNAL

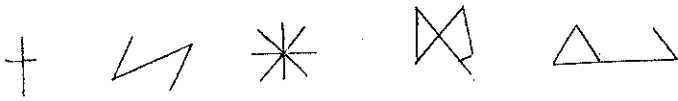


SHREWSBURY CASTLE

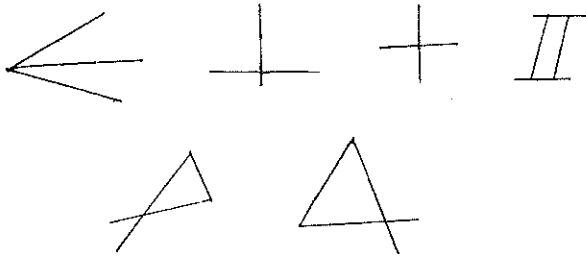
MASON MARKS



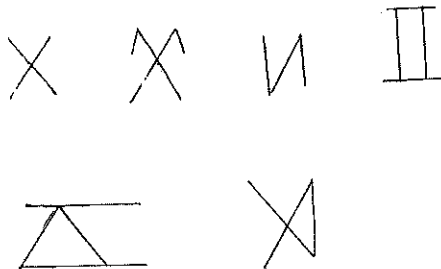
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, STOKESAY



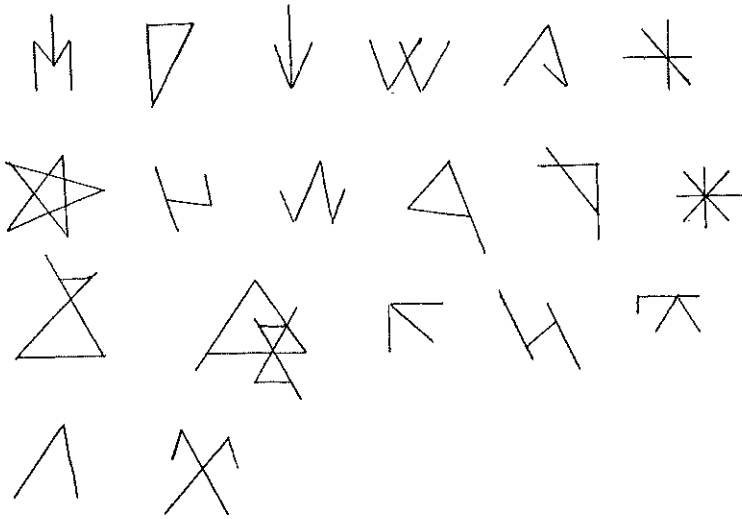
ST. MARY, STOTTESTON



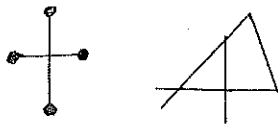
SUTTON OLD CHURCH



ST. BARTHOLOMEW, TONG



WENLOCK ABBEY



HOLY TRINITY, WHEATHILL



ST. PETER, WROCKWARDINE

LILY CRUCIFIX IN TONG CHURCH

Tong is without doubt the most interesting village church in Shropshire, but one of its most outstanding features seems to have passed unnoticed by anyone within the county. One of the early 15th century return stalls¹ on the south side has a misericord which, on its underface, has a carved reproduction of Christ crucified not to the normal cross but to a lily. The lily was, of course, the emblem of purity ; hence it is almost universally found as the centre piece of medieval Annunciations, with the Virgin Mary and Gabriel, one on each side. But the Lily Crucifix is extremely rare. In 1931 Rev. C. Woodforde, F.S.A., listed eleven examples,² all of which are of English origin. Since then a twelfth has been found on a 14th century roof in St. Helen's Church Abingdon, Berkshire.³ The Lily Crucifix is apparently unknown abroad and Shropshire may well be proud of possessing in Tong Church one of only a dozen known examples. Dr. W. L. Hildburgh, F.S.A., examined the iconography of the subject and the full significance of the lily in *Archaeologia*, LXXIV (1925). Several of the examples occur as part of an Annunciation scene.

JOHN SALMON, B.A., F.S.A.

¹In a most interesting article in *Trans. Historic Soc. Lancs. and Cheshire*, Vol. 97 (1945), Mr. F. H. Crossley, F.S.A., has discussed *inter alia* the provenance of the Tong and Ludlow stallwork.

²In *Proceedings of the Suffolk Inst. of Archaeology and Nat. Hist.*, Vol. XXI. The examples there given are an English alabaster in Kunstgewerke Museum, Cologne, misericord at Tong, a screen panel at Kenn (Devon), tomb panels at St. Mary's, Nottingham and West Wittering (Sussex), a painted wooden panel at Victoria and Albert Museum, and stained glass at York Minster, St. Michael's, Oxford, Queen's College Chapel, Oxford, Westwood (Wilts.), and Long Melford (Suffolk).

³A. E. Preston, F.S.A. in *Berks. Arch. Journal*, Vol. 40 (1936), illustrated.

ARMORIAL BEARINGS IN SHROPSHIRE CHURCHES

BY LILIAN H. HAYWARD

ACTON SCOTT

The most important of the families whose armorial bearings appear in this church is that of Acton. There have been Actons at Acton Scott for many centuries, probably long before the written records which have survived.

This family appears to have had three different coats of arms. The ancient arms of Acton of Acton Scott are stated to be, with variations, quarterly, per fess indented, az. and gu. In the first quarter a martlet sa. This appears on one of the hatchments in the church. After Frances Acton, heiress of Acton Scott, married Walter Acton of Aldenham, their descendants naturally used the arms of the Aldenham branch of the family. In a later generation Acton Scott passed to Edward, 2nd son of Edward Acton, 3rd baronet. He died s.p., and from him it passed to his younger brother, the Rev. John Acton, Vicar of Clun. He and his descendants retained the Aldenham arms, and with the exception of the ancient bearing on the hatchment, these are the Acton arms which appear in the church, although there are some small variations in the number of crosses. These are—Gu, two lions pst. arg. between nine crosses crosslet fitchee or. Crest. A human leg and thigh in armour, ppr. garnished or, coupéd and dropping blood.

After the present owner, Joyce Acton, married Mr. R. C. Fullerton-Smith, they assumed the name of Acton (which of course was Mrs. Fullerton-Smith's maiden name). They received a new grant of arms from the College of Arms, which incorporated the arms borne by the family for many generations, with some slight differences. For full pedigree of the Acton family, see Burke's *Landed Gentry*.

There are two memorials, and three hatchments, with armorial bearings, to the Acton family, in the church.

THE MEMORIALS.—I. On the north wall of the sanctuary, a very elaborate monument to Edward Acton of Acton Scott (d. 1747) (This is the Edward Acton of Acton Scott, 2nd s. of Sir Edward Acton, 3rd bart., referred to above), and his wife, Mary (d. 1741), relict of Mr. Bird, Shrewsbury. Arms ACTON, impaling Arg. a chevron, between 3 fleurs de lis gu. In chief, az. 3 mullets

arg. Crest, Acton. I have not been able to trace the impaled bearing which may be that of Mary's own family. I have not been able to trace her first husband nor herself.

2. On south wall of the Sanctuary a tablet to Edward Acton, nephew to Edward Acton I, and son of the Rev. John Acton. He m. Anna, eldest d. of Wm. Gregory, Esq., of Woolhope, Co. Hereford. He d. 1773. He left a d. and h. (Theresa) Susannah Acton (b. 1754), m. 1773, John Stackhouse, Esq., of Pendarves, Co. of Cornwall. Arms. ACTON, impaling GREGORY, or, bars gu., and in chief a lion pst. az. (On this tablet the lion is omitted). This family is a younger branch of the family of Styvechale, Co. Warwick.

THE HATCHMENTS.—1. Above the pulpit. Quarterly. 1st STACKHOUSE of Trehane. and Pendarves. Arg. 3 saltires in fess between a shed ppr. and a sheaf sa. 2nd WILLIAMS of TREHANE. arg. a hound courant gu. between 3 martlets sa. 3rd. Though oddly drawn this is probably meant for COURTNEY. Or, 3 torteaux. 4th. PENDARVES. Sa. a falcon rising between 3 mullets or. On an escutcheon of pretence, ACTON impaling GREGORY. (In this case the lion is shown in chief). This hatchment appears to be that of John Stackhouse, who m. Susannah Acton. (See pedigree on folding plate).

2. Hatchment lying in the gallery. The same as 1, but without the escutcheon of pretence. It bears a crescent, mark of cadency for a second son. John Stackhouse who m. Susannah Acton was a second son. 1 and 2 seem to relate to the same John Stackhouse.

3. On north wall. Quarterly, 1st and 4th ACTON. 2nd, said to be the ancient arms of ACTON of Acton Scott. 3rd, STACKHOUSE. Impaling KNIGHT. Arg.: 3 pallets gu. within a bordure engrailed az. On a dexter canton of the second a spur or. Thomas Pendarves Stackhouse Acton (d. 1835) m. Frances, d. and co h. of Thomas Andrew Knight of Downton Castle. She d. 1881.

OTHER ARMORIAL BEARINGS

In transept, north of the nave. WALPOLE. The bust of a man in profile, coupéd, ppr. ducally crowned, or, and from the coronet flowing a long cap turned forwards gu. tasselled or. charged with a Catherine Wheel of the last. This is the crest of Walpole, in this

case carved and not coloured, and here the Catherine Wheel seems to be omitted. Motto : *Fari quae sentias.*

This is a mural tablet to Horace Andrew Walpole (d. 1855), only s. of Francis Walpole, Esq., and Elizabeth his wife. His father descended from Horatio Walpole (1678–1757) brother of the celebrated prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole. (See *Burke's Peerage*, 1860, under Earl of Oxford). His mother, Elizabeth, was another d. and co h. of Thomas Andrew Knight, so the subject of this tablet was nephew to Mrs. Frances Stackhouse Acton, who d. 1881.

On north wall of chancel. THOMAS. Az. a tree ppr. impaling gu. a lion rampant arg. Crest, a demi-dragon (? sea-horse), vert, langued gules. This tablet is in memory of John Thomas, late of the Crifftin, parish of Wentnor, d. 1844. Motto : *vé et securitate.* These arms are practically the same as those of Francis Henry Thomas of Whitwick, Co. Hereford, Sheriff, 1826. The subject of this tablet may however be of the Bishop's Castle branch.

On south wall of chancel. PHILLIPS. Much worn and possibly incorrect. Carved and not coloured. Quarterly. 1st and 4th, Phillips, 3 birds. 2ndly, a lion rampant. 3rd, 2 lions in pale. Impaling, a saltire engrailed. Tablet to Captain Robert Phillips of the Bengal army. Born at Ludlow, 1750. Died at Shrewsbury, 1738. There were others of the name in the district—a rector at Rushbury, and a family at Chelmick, not far away. These bore arms with some resemblance to the above.

On north wall. URWICK. Arg., on a bend gu. 3 lozenges of the first, on each a saltire gu. Tablet in memory of William Urwick, b. at Felhampton 1758, d. at Afcot House, 1814. The family of Urwick was settled at Felhampton in the parish of Wistanstow, probably from the end of the 15th century, for an Urwick is said to have come there as a refugee from the Battle of Bosworth (1485). Members of the family were at Felhampton, certainly from 1524, until 1866. Most of the family were interred at their parish church, Wistanstow, but Afcott, where William Urwick died, is in Acton Scott parish, hence his burial there.

ACTON ROUND

In this church there are several monuments to members of the Acton family, of the Aldenham branch, but only one has armorial bearings. This is an elaborate mural monument on the north wall

of the chancel. The armorial bearings are much worn. ACTON (see Acton Scott) impaling sa. 3 . . . arg. This is a memorial to Richard Acton, 3rd son of Sir Walter Acton of Aldenham, Bart. He died 1713, aged 53, and was interred in the parish church of St. Peter's, Cornhill, London. As stated on the memorial, this was erected by Hester, widow and second wife, in 1715.

Richard Acton is described in Batham's *Baronetage* as a citizen and vintner of London. He had two wives. 1. Anne, d. of — Llewellyn, of Bristol, merchant, by whom he had two sons, who both died s. p., and two daughters, who both married and left issue. 2. Hester, d. of —, and relict of Matthew Gibbon, of London. She died s. p. Her will was proved July 30th, 1718.

The Hall, close to the church, is a fine Queen Anne building. Mr. H. E. Forrest writes that it was the ancestral home of the Acton family.

ALBRIGHTON (Shrewsbury)

In this church there are three memorials with armorial bearings, two to the family of Ireland, and one to that of Sparrow.

IRELAND

The family seems to have been settled about Oswestry. Late in the 15th century we find Robert Ireland settled in Shrewsbury. His son, David, freeman and bailiff, had two sons, Thomas, also freeman and bailiff, who, after the Dissolution, bought Albrighton (or Adbrighton as it was called) from the Crown, and David, who is credited with being the builder of Ireland's Mansion in Shrewsbury. The descendants of Thomas held Albrighton for about eight generations. (See Pedigree.)

Thomas Ireland (1712-89) m. twice. His first wife, Sarah, d. of Edward Lloyd of Leaton, was an heiress, but after her death, apparently without leaving children, her fortune reverted to the Lloyd family. By his second marriage he had a large family. With the loss of the Lloyd fortune his position declined, and he died in poor circumstances. His son, Thomas Pershall Ireland, died s.p., and the property reverted to the Crown, but was ultimately granted to his nephew (? brother), whose son succeeded in establishing his

title to at least part of the Albrighton estate. This son cut the entail and sold Albrighton to the Rev. William Inigo Jones. After intermediate sales it was acquired in 1853 by William Hanbury Sparrow, was succeeded by his son, William Mander Sparrow. (*S.A.S. Trans.*, Series 2, Vol. 1).

THE IRELAND MEMORIALS.—1. On west wall. To Thomas Ireland, who died 1729, also to his son Thomas Ireland, who died 1789, and to this son's second wife, Amy. Arms: IRELAND (gu.) six fleurs-de-lis, 3, 2 and 1 (arg.). Impaling—Dexter, PERSHALL (for the first wife of Thomas Ireland, who died 1729 (arg.) a cross formée flory (sa.). On a canton (gu.) a wolf's head erased (of the field). Sinister. This may *perhaps* be intended for ASTON for the second wife, Mary Aston. A fesse. Crest, IRELAND, a dove (arg.) in his beak a sprig of laurel (vert), beaked and legged (gu.). Motto: *Vincia.*

There are no tinctures on the above, except that the canton on the dexter impalement is gu. The proper tinctures are given in brackets.

2. On south wall. Monument to Thomas Pershall Ireland, who died 1792. Arms, IRELAND, as above. In this case with the tinctures. It is doubtful whether the fleurs-de-lis are argent or not.

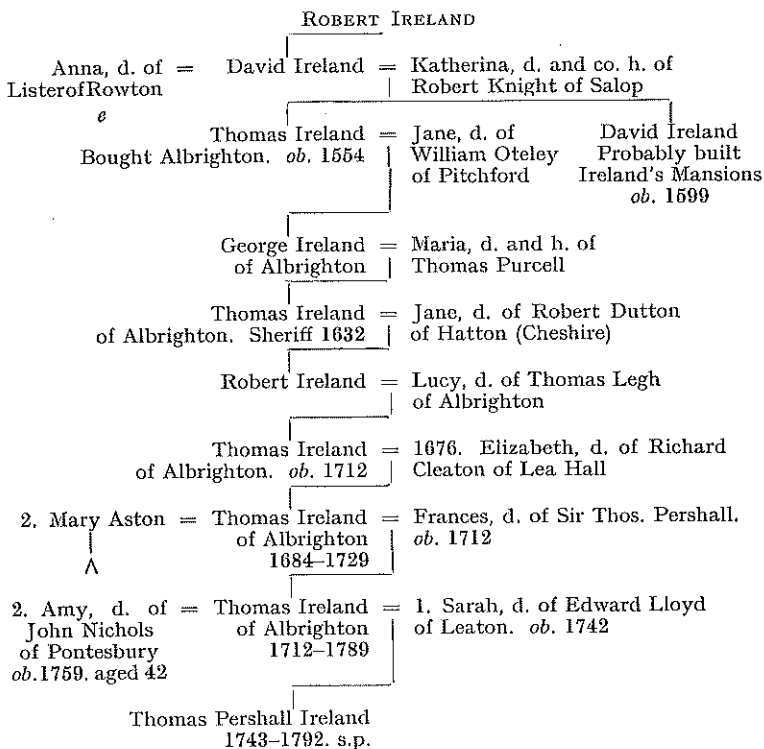
SPARROW MEMORIAL

Tablet below west window. In memory of George William Sparrow Sparrow of Albrighton, Captain, K.S.L.I., killed in France while leading his men in action, 1918.

The subject of this memorial was the elder son of William Arthur Brown who inherited the Albrighton estates from his uncle, William Mander Sparrow (see above under Ireland), and assumed the name and arms of Sparrow by Royal Licence in 1881 (See Burke's *L.G.*, 1925.)

Arms, SPARROW. Per fesse az. and arg. In chief 3 roses of the second, and in base an arrow in pale ppr. Crest, out of the battlements of a tower ppr. a unicorn's head, arg. armed and crined or, semée of pheons, az. Motto: *In Deo est solo salus.*

IRELAND OF ALBRIGHTON



ALVELEY

The most important family to whom there are monuments with armorial bearings in the church is that of GROVE, of which there seem to have been two branches, of which the connecting link has not been verified. Both branches bore the same arms, lived at Alveley, and probably both at Pool Hall. Pool Hall is a moated building, and though the present house dates only from the early 18th century it represents a far earlier structure. It was the home of the Grove family for many generations. They were settled in Alveley probably as early as the 15th century.

JAMES GROVE of Alveley held a capital messuage there on lease from the Abbot and Convent of Shrewsbury. His son,

HUMPHREY GROVE (I), after the Reformation purchased the inheritance from Thomas Throckmorton. He d. 1603. His son, JOHN (1561–1606) amassed a fortune in London, where he became a freeman of the Company of Grocers. He was a benefactor to Alveley, where he founded and endowed the school, and left a benefaction to labourers. He died s.p. His brother, HUMPHREY GROVE (II) left a family, of whom his son, HUMPHREY GROVE (III) died 1693, m. at Onibury, Anne, d. of Arthur Winwood. In the Hearth Roll (1672), several occupiers of the Grove family are named. These include Humphrey Grove, and Mrs. Mary Grove, wid. each with 7 hearths, the most in the parish, showing that they lived in large houses. His son, JOHN, left a son, JOHN, who left three children, John, Bromley and Elizabeth.

Of the other branch almost certainly connected, we have,

JAMES GROVE of Alveley, m. Elizabeth — (d. 1626). He died, 1574. His son,
 THOMAS GROVE, m. Anne (d. 1651). In 1643 he left lands of which the rents and profits were to benefit the poor of Alveley. He died 1648. His son,
 JAMES GROVE (II), d. 1663. His eldest son,
 JAMES GROVE (III) b. 1652, of Pool Hall, Alveley, became Sergeant-at-Law. He m. the Hon. Anne Grey, sister and co. h. of the 2nd Earl of Stamford. His eldest son,
 GREY JAMES GROVE (1682–1742) of Pool Hall. Sheriff 1731. M.P. for Bridgnorth, 1734. m. Penelope, d. and co. h. of Thomas, Lord Jermyn. His son,
 JERMYN GROVE, left a son,
 HENRY JERMYN GROVE of Pool Hall, m. Elizabeth ——. He died 1777, aged 48. His son,
 GREY JERMYN GROVE was father of a daughter, who possessed the estate in 1830.

GROVE Armorial Bearings.

1. On floor at west end of Church, a brass with effigy of man wearing ruff, doublet and gown, commemorating John Grove, the benefactor, who died 1616. Two shields. Dexter, GROVES (ermine) on a chevron, engrailed (gu.) an escallop shell (or.) between two (arg.).

In chief a crescent (—) for difference. Sinister, The COMPANY OF GROCERS. A chevron between 10 cloves, 4, 3 and 3.

2. On north wall a tablet to Penelope Grove, wife of Grey James^s Grove. She died 1728; and to Henry Jermyn Grove, died 1777. Arms, GROVE, as above, but with the tinctures. Impaling, JERMYN. This latter much worn. Morris (*S.A.S. Trans.*, I, VI, 431 n.) gives this as az. a crescent between 2 mullets in pale sa.

BRETTEL

On a slab in front of vestry a floor slab to Mary, wife of Thomas Brettel, Gent. who died 1728, aged 59. Also to Thomas Brettel, who died 1729, aged 68.

Arms, carved, but without tinctures. BRETTEL. A chevron, vair, between 3 eagles displayed. Impaling . . . A lion rmp. between 3 escallop shells.

DOVEY

On north wall, a tablet to Humphrey Dovey of Nordley, died 1700, in his 60th year. Arms, almost undecypherable, but Morris (*S.A.S. Trans.*, I, VI, page 406) gives them as DOVEY. Az. a fesse between 3 doves, wings expanded arg. Impaling . . . Az. a sun in splendour, or.

These arms are the same as those borne by Dovey of Farmcote (Claverley). Humphrey Dovey may have been of the same family.

BRESSEY

On north wall, a tablet to Joyce, daughter of Thomas Bressey, Esq., and wife of Rev. John Potter of Alveley. She died 1684. Arms, BRESSEY. Quarterly per fesse dancettee, sa. and arg.

ASHFORD BOWDLER

In this church three families are commemorated on mural monuments which contain armorial bearings. Hall which inter-married with Green, and Ricketts.

HALL AND GREEN

Hall was an old family long settled in the district.

Richard Hall (1704–1771) was son of Thomas (d. 1712) and Joane Hall, and was probably grandson of Richard Hall who died 1702. He married Elizabeth Bishop (1705–1731). This couple probably built the present house, which was insured as empty in 1771. Their daughter, Elizabeth, married Johnathan Green (1729–1792), Clerk, B.C.L. and D.C.L. His father was Johnathan Green of Leominster, Gent. He was of Ashford Hall, Rector of Burford, Vicar of Caynham and Curate of Ashford Bowdler. They had a large family, some of their descendants being known as Hall-Green. The third son, the Rev. Edward Green, also Rector of Burford, married (1794) Martha, d. of Benjamin Giles of Hope Baggot. Ashford Hall was sold to George Crawford Ricketts (see below) in 1802.

On the south wall of the church there is a mural tablet to Johnathan Green and his wife, Elizabeth Hall. The armorial bearing is rather peculiar. Vert, 3 stags, statant, 2 and 1 or, presumably for GREEN. Inserted on this is a newer bearing, thus. Quarterly, 1 and 4. GREEN. Gu. 3 escutcheons 2 and 1 arg. between 3 bars sable. 2 and 3. HALL. Gu. a chevron between 3 talbots' heads erased ar. The original bearing is that of Green of Stanton Lacy (Morris, *S.A.S. Trans.*, I, VI, 430). It appears as if this had been thought to represent the Ashford Bowdler family, and that later this was considered to be incorrect, and the correct version inserted on the top of the earlier version.

RICKETTS

This is an old family which claims to be of Norman extraction. The pedigree is given in Burke's *Landed Gentry*, 1858 edition. William Ricketts was present at the Conquest of Jamaica. His son, George Ricketts (died 1760) was of Canaan, Jamaica, and was General of the Militia. By his first wife, Sarah, d. of Raynes Wayte, Esq., of Chertsey, Surrey, he had no less than 27 children born alive. His eldest son, John Ricketts (died 1767) married Ann, d. of Alexander Crawford of Crail in Fifeshire. According to the long inscription on one of the monuments in the church, she was a lineal descendant of one Alexander Crawford who saved the life of King David I, when hunting. His eldest son, George Crawford Ricketts

(died 1811) of Gray's Inn, barrister-at-law, was attorney general, and advocate general of Jamaica, and a privy counsellor to the King in that island. (See armorial bearings below, No. 1). He married Frances, d. of Nicholas Bourke, Esq. He settled at Ashford Hall (where he died) and four years later purchased the estate of Combe, Co. Hereford. His eldest son, Thomas Bourke Ricketts (1781-1864) (see armorial bearings below No. 2). He married Harriet, d. of William Loftus, 2nd Dragoon Guards, and Lieut. of the Tower of London. He sold Ashford Hall in 1823 to Miss Charlotte Buckley. The next owner was General Lechmere Coore Groves Russell (died 1858), who was succeeded by his son, who died 1904, and then by a great niece, married to an American. She leased Ashford Hall to Lady Hereford, who died there 1924. Ashford Hall is now occupied by Mr. Richard Beesly.

Armorial bearings on Ricketts memorials.

1. On south wall. Mural monument to George Crawford Ricketts. Carved, but without the tinctures. These are given in brackets. RICKETTS (ermineois) on a chevron two swords in saltire (ppr.) the dexter surmounting the sinister, hilts and pummels (or.), between 3 roses (gu.). Impaling BOURKE (or.) a cross (gu.), in the first quarter a lion rmp. (sa.). Crest, RICKETTS. An arm embowed (ermineois) charged with two roses (gu.), cuffed (az.) the hand grasping a scimitar (ppr.).
2. On north wall an elaborate mural monument, bearing a long inscription, to Thomas Bourke Ricketts. RICKETTS. Crest only, as No. 1, but with the tinctures.

ASHFORD CARBONELL

1. On north wall of sanctuary. An elaborate mural monument to Thomas Yate, Esq. and Elizabeth his wife. She died 1769, aged 31. He died 1772, aged 55.

Arms, Quarterly, 1 and 4. YATE, arg. a fesse between 3 gates, sa. 2, ——— (possibly his wife Elizabeth) or, on a fesse sa. a tower of the field. 3, SPROTT, vert. 3 quatrefoils slipped 2 and 1 arg. Crest, a gate, sa.

2. Below the above are two small brass tablets bearing arms as above. One to John Yate, Gent., died 1777. The other to Elizabeth Duppa, 2nd d. of John Yate, Gent. and Ann his wife (presumably

John and Ann were the parents of Thomas, who died 1772 (see above, No. 1).)

3. On south wall of Sanctuary, a mural monument to Samuel Yate Sprott, of Ashford Court, Esq., who died 1802, aged 41. Arms, Quarterly, 1 and 4 SPROTT (as No. 1), 2 and 3, YATE (as No. 1) impaling OAKELEY, arg. on a fesse sa. 3 fleurs-de-lis or., between 6 crescents gu.

YATE FAMILY

Richard Yate of Roughton, who m. Anne, d. of William Holland of Burwarton, was father of another Richard Yate of Roughton. This Richard was father of John Yate of Ashford Carbonell who m. Anne, d. of Thomas Sprott of the Marsh, near Much Wenlock. Their son, Thomas Yate of Ashford Carbonell d. 1772 (see No. 1), and who had married Elizabeth — who died 1769. Their son, Samuel Yate of Ashford Court, added Sprott to his paternal name. He m. Lucy Oakeley at Lydham, 1802. So he died the year after his marriage.

SPROTT FAMILY

The Sprotts were originally a Staffordshire family of Ashmoor Brook. Henry Sprott, died 1673, m. Anne, d. and h. of Thomas Lockyer of the Marsh, near Much Wenlock, and became Sprott of the Marsh. His son, Thomas Sprott of the Marsh, born 1667, m. Joyce Bowdler 1690 (she died 1731). They had a son Henry, and other issue, including Anne, who married John Yate.

4. On north wall of the nave is a small mural tablet to Alethea Cheese, only d. of Edward Muscote or Murcote, Gent., and Elizabeth his wife. She d. 1713. Arms, MUSCOTE or MURCOTE, gu. on a cross engrailed arg. 5 roses of the field. Impaling CHEESE, az. (sa.) a lion rmp. gardant arg. between 10 torteaux(? plates).

Cheese seems to have been a good class yeoman family of the district. In the Parish Register of Astley Abbots, October 21st, 1699, there is an entry that John Cheese of Ashford m. Alethia Murcote of Bridgnorth.

ASTLEY

The church contains only one armorial bearing, upon a mural monument on the north wall of the chancel, to the family of Minor. Gu. a fess arg. between three plates. On an escutcheon of pretence the same arms. Crest, a dexter cubit arm, naked, holding a lion's gamb erased, all proper. Motto : *Fac et spera.*

These are the same arms as those borne by the family of Mynors of Staffordshire, and they may be of the same family.

The tablet is a memorial to John Bishton Minor, 1858, aged 54, to his wife Anne, d. of Walter Minor of Moreton Hall in this county ; she died 1838, aged 34, also to their children, including the successor, Augustus Henry Minor. John Bishton Minor owned the Astley estate. He was a benefactor to the parish, and was Mayor of Shrewsbury. His wife was no doubt related, and as her arms appear as an escutcheon of pretence it is reasonable to assume that she was an heiress. The name of Minor does not appear in the earlier parish registers of Astley.

John Bishton Minor's son, Augustus Henry Minor (1830-1819) sold the estate in 1865 to Thomas William Trouncer, living there in 1889. A younger son, John Minor (1832-1908) was of Edgmond House.

ASTON EYRE (OR EYRES)

There are no monuments with armorial bearings in this church, but in the west window, there is a small piece of old glass representing the Charlton crest. Out of an eastern coronet or, a tiger's head and neck, affrontee, gu.

The Charltons were lords of Aston Eyre for centuries. The Norman holders were the fitz Aer family. In or before 1339 Margery, the fitz Aer heiress, married Sir Alan de Charlton (1318-1349), who was apparently a younger son of Sir Alan de Charlton of Apley, and nephew of the Sir John de Charlton who married Haweis, Princess of Powis. The Charltons owned Aston Eyre at least as late as 1851 (Bagshaw).

Opposite the churchyard are the remains of the 13th century manor house of the fitz Aers, now incorporated in the Hall Farm.

NOTE

It may be observed that there are often varieties in the coats of arms of the different members of the same family, even in the same church. There may be marks of cadetship, slight differences in tinctures, and charges. When the memorials are much worn it is at times difficult to distinguish between or and argent, vert and azure, etc.

I again wish to acknowledge the help that I have received with the genealogies from the Rev. R. C. Purton, and other assistance from Miss Norah Mackenzie.

DIVERTED ROAD IN WALCOT PARK

By F. LAVENDER

The following notes may not be interesting to everyone, but it is important to have some sort of record whilst those in the locality are here to give their knowledge.

Tradition has it that the great Lord Clive after purchasing the Estate, diverted a road by Act of Parliament to prevent it interfering with the privacy of his Estate.

This road was that from Kempton village to the London-Montgomery Coach road, a mile south of Bishop's Castle.

I cannot trace the Act of Parliament among the Private Acts so may be it was a family arrangement or merely an *ex parte* diversion by Lord Clive.

It provided for a compensatory road from the Brockton-Lower Down road across to the new turnpike from Bishop's Castle to Lydbury North.

The 6-inch O.S. maps to which I refer are LXII—SE., LXIII—SW. and LXX—NW.

The old road ran from Kempton into the park, through the park gates, thence slightly to the south of the existing road towards the saw mill for about 150 yards. It then crossed the present road and bore to the right, as can be seen by the configuration of the ground and the line of trees along the eastern edge of Sheepcote Quarry. Just here the road is widened where the deer used to be fed. The edge of the quarry has evidently been extended or fallen in, leaving only part of the width of the old road.

It can then easily be followed along the line of old oaks and hedgerow trees up towards and through Park Plantation.

To the west of Park Plantation there is a double line of hedge or slang, evidently the old road, thence across a ploughed field, in the far hedge of which gateposts can be seen where the old road was at first gated, but now the hedge is continuous. From the gateposts one proceeds westerly towards a large tree stump, across another plough, and here the road is plainly marked or suggested by the number of non-local stones forming a line right across the field.

A line of tree stumps, bracken and nettles will then be seen running westwards to a green track at right angles. The old road crossed this track in a curve to the right, across to the hedge, and

can there plainly be seen running north and downhill to Spring Head Cottage, along a line of chestnuts, etc.

Spring Head Cottage is left on the right. Just before reaching Spring Head there are two trees still to be seen which are said to have been planted in the roadway as obstacles after the closure of the road. Leaving Spring Head on the right, the old road can be seen going due north uphill across a dried-up pond to the back of the Estate Cottages lying east of Lower Down Farm. This stretch was formerly a line of trees whose stumps can be seen on the banks of the road.

From the Estate Cottages the road ran NNW. downhill, again following a former line of trees to the SW. corner of the Roundabout, where it turned NE. and straight down past the quarry, and past Walcot Cottage (now Lake Cottage) to the ford marked on the O.S. map, across the top end of Walcot Pool. There the road cut across a field or two, and "the brickyard," along and up a slang on to the present main Bishop's Castle-Craven Arms road at the third milestone.

This slang is thus evidently not a relic of strip farming as might be thought, and this is borne out by its being slightly curved.

The alternative road, which is said to have been built as a compensation as is usual in diversion cases, was 300 yards to the west, and can be seen as a very straight road running at an angle from the Brockton-Lower Down road to the present main road. It is not, however, used at all except by gipsies for camping, and is, in fact, not usable, and was gated in 1927.

The present main road was not turnpiked until 1801, but there would, of course, always have been a track of some sort between Brockton and Lydbury North.

After crossing the present main road, there are signs of a continuation of the old road alongside the hedge leading north up to a quarry (a quarry would, of course, indicate the vicinity of a road, but, of course, the quarry, and the track leading to it, may have been used in building the present main road). Older inhabitants state this old road went "right on to join the London road."

Assuming the track, however, to have run straight on (*i.e.*, towards the old London road) it would according to the 1886 Ordnance map, leave the wood called "Worthen" on the left, but now the wood actually lies right across the presumed track of the old road.

It then, most probably, went straight on across " Broome Bed " to Mears Barn.

From Mears Barn I think it would follow the present footpath NW. for 300-400 yards, as this footpath appears to be a continuation of the present cart track from Lydbury North to Mears Barn.

Thence there is a choice of two routes, one almost due east to the old road from Bishop's Castle to Lydbury North (branch of the coach road), and this would mean turning left on the road up to the fork on the London coach road.

This makes a very doglegged route, and I prefer the other alternative, which is to continue straight on after leaving Mears Barn (instead of turning east) and follow the footpath due NW. and to the east of the Conery, with a R-angled curve, on to Stank Lane at O.S. mark 755'.

Stank Lane is the local name of the coach road lying on the west of the fork previously mentioned.

I prefer this route, first because it is almost straight all the way, and secondly because, where it enters Stank Lane, there are obvious signs of the entrance of a road, and the width of the entrance (at least 20 feet) would allow vehicles an easy turn, either left or right, on to the coach road.

This end of the road would not presumably have been stopped by Lord Clive as some of it was not on his Estate, but in any case, it had probably gone much out of use when the turnpike from Bishop's Castle to Lydbury North via the Greyhound was built in 1801.

The whole of the old road, if marked on the map, is practically a straight line from Kempton to the coach road on Stank Lane.

As for the other end of this old road, there is a lot of choice, but I suggest that it came via the existing roads from the Watling Street at Clungunford via the Twitchen, Purslow and Purslow Lane to Kempton.

THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN WOLRYCHE, 1723

For some three centuries the Wolryches of Dudmaston, in the parish of Quatt, near Bridgnorth, were among the more notable country gentry families of Shropshire, until, on 25th June 1723, Sir John Wolryche, the fourth and last Baronet, was drowned in the river Severn near his residence, Dudmaston Hall, in his thirty-second year. As to the exact circumstances of his death there is some uncertainty. In the newspapers of the time (e.g., *Whitehall Evening Post*, *Evening Post*, *St. James's Evening Post*, and *Post-Boy* of 2nd-4th July 1723, *British Journal* and *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* of 6th July 1723, and *Reading Mercury* of 8th July 1723), there is the following report, based on information from a correspondent in Shrewsbury: "on Tuesday Se'nnight, Sir John Woolridge, of Dudmarston (sic), in the County of Salop, Bar., was unfortunately drown'd in attempting to pass the Severn on Horseback." A statement to the same effect was incorporated in Abel Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xxv (for January-June 1723), p. 698, and in the Chronological Diary prefixed to *The Historical Register*, vol. viii (for 1723), p. 30. According, however, to J. B. Blakeway's *Sheriffs of Shropshire*, published in 1831 (six years after the author's death), Sir John "was unfortunately drowned in the Severn near his own house, in 1723, while engaged, it is said, in the diversion of hunting" (p. 170, s.a. 1716). Blakeway not unnaturally goes on to remark that Sir John "must have been passionately devoted to the chase of the fox if he pursued it at Midsummer, the season in which he lost his life." The source of Blakeway's statement as to the manner of Wolryche's death now appears untraceable. In MS. Blakeway 3 in the Bodleian Library (one of the volumes containing Blakeway's material for the history of individual Shropshire parishes) the antiquary has, in his section on Quatt, noted the Wolryche entries in the Quatt parish register, and against the entry for Sir John's burial is placed within brackets the words: "he was drowned near his own house in crossing the Severn in a fox-chase. *Monthly Mercury*." (t. 83). This, it seems, is the statement reproduced in the *Sheriffs*, but unfortunately I have as yet failed to trace the existence of any newspaper or periodical bearing the title *Monthly Mercury* in the normal guides and indices to such literature, and can only suppose that it has vanished without leaving behind in the great libraries of England

and the United States one single copy. In Blakeway's MS. pedigree of the Wolryches (MS. Blakeway 6, f. 328 v) there is a note in the hand of some one of the antiquary's numerous correspondents concerning the deaths of Sir John and two others of his family ; this says only that Wolryche " had the misfortune of being drown'd in the River Severn." A modern work of reference, the *Complete Baronetage* (ii. 124) says non-committally that Sir John " was drowned in the Severn while endeavouring to cross it on horseback, 25 and was *bur.* 26 June 1723, at Quatt." After the death of Sir John's sister in 1771 the Dudmaston estate came (in 1775) into the possession of William Whitmore, of the well-known Apley family, the kinsman of Sir John's mother, who was herself born a Weld of Willey ; William Whitmore's son bore the Christian name of Wolryche, by which indeed he was generally called, and his sister's son, on succeeding to the property, adopted the surname of Wolryche-Whitmore ; the tradition as to the event which set in motion this series of events which has come down to the present owner of Dudmaston, Captain G. C. Wolryche-Whitmore, is that the last male Wolryche of Dudmaston was drowned while returning home from a funeral.

The true facts can be obtained from two entries in the diary kept in the 1720s by the Rev. John Higgs, who was for many years before and after 1723 Perpetual Curate of Quatford, one and a half miles from Dudmaston. This diary, with other literary remains of Higgs, was in 1952 presented by its then owner, Col. A. A. Hanbury-Sparrow, to the Bodleian Library, where it is now catalogued as MS. English Misc. e. 344. I am most grateful to Miss D. M. Barratt for drawing my attention to this diary, which, among many entries of a formal type, contains much information on life and events in the Bridgnorth district in the 1720s. (Miss Barratt's account of " The Diaries, Sermons, and other Papers of Richard and John Higgs " may now be consulted in *The Bodleian Library Record*, vol. iv, no. 5 (September 1953) pp. 273-7). The diary, it should be explained, is written throughout in a strange perversion of the Latin language ; in my quotations I have inserted punctuation where necessary.

John Higgs was acquainted with the Wolryche family, and I have noted four references to that family in the diary apart from the crucial two which I shall quote later. In 1720, for instance, Higgs noted: " in via vidi Johannem Woolrych Baronettum ; dedit

manum" ("I saw Sir John Wolryche on the road; he shook hands with me"). In the following year there is the following: "Dominus Wolryche Miles dixit mihi cavere H[onorem] S[cutamorem] Impostorem" ("Sir John Wolryche told me to be wary of the impostor Honor Scudamore"); the impostor referred to was a woman who at this time was personating one of the Scudamore family in Bridgnorth district and who had imposed on the gullible Higgs. In 1724 Higgs noted: "Natalis Dies hic est Mariae Woolrych" ("To-day is the birthday of Mary Wolryche"). (Mary Wolryche was Sir John's sister.) It was doubtless, however, because he sometimes officiated at Quatt Church that Higgs came most often to the notice of the Wolryches, and it was after conducting the funeral there of one William Wells in 1727 that he was entertained at Dudmaston; the entry in the diary runs: "Cænavi ad Dudmaston; bene acceptus" ("I dined at Dudmaston and was well received"). Here as in the first entry quoted Higgs seems to show a certain naive satisfaction at the welcome given him by the gentry. These four entries occur on ff. lv, 14, 61 and 81 v of the diary. From a fragment of the diary of Richard Higgs (apparently John's uncle) which forms part of the same Bodleian MS. it would seem that Richard Higgs (who was a schoolmaster at Trysull, eight miles from Dudmaston) had also been known to the Wolryches: he was "bene acceptus" at Dudmaston in 1683, and took a message there in 1684 (ff. 134, 132). These various entries help to explain John Higgs' interest in the death of Sir John Wolryche.

Higgs was wont to attend horse-races in his district, and his entry for 24th June 1723 runs as follows:

"Ivi ad cursum equestrem ad Ch[elmarsh]. Equus Johannis Woolryche Baronetti palmam recepit et equus domini Acton de Madeley alteram palmam" ("I went to the horse-races at Chelmarsh. Sir John Wolryche's horse won one prize and the horse of Mr. Acton of Madeley won the other"). (f. 43.)

This entry was doubtless written by Higgs after his return to his vicarage at Quatford the same day; the diary was not always written up day by day, but the tone of this extract would suggest that when written the events of the next day were unknown. Higgs' entry for the 25th of June 1723 runs as follows:

"Audiui mane ad horam octavam Johannem Woolrych

immersum in Severn ad Brooksmouth ad horam sextam mane hodie. Pernoctavit ille (JW) ad Chelmarsh; tres servi fuere cum illo et navigatores in navicula intra quadraginta ulnas. Ebrius fuit (ut vereor) " (" At eight o'clock in the morning I heard that Sir John Wolryche had been drowned in the Severn at six this morning. He (JW) spent the night at Chelmarsh; there were three servants with him and some boatmen in a boat within forty yards of him when he was drowned. He was drunk, I fear "). (f. 43.)

At the foot of this folio is the following entry in the hand of Thomas Percy, native of Bridgnorth and later Bishop of Dromore, into whose hands Higgs' diary came after the latter's death: " June 25th 1723. Sir John Woolryche Bart of Dudmaston near Bridgnorth was drowned at six in the morning: He would swim his horse through Severn. His body was never found."

Sir John was extremely fond of horse-racing. His account-book survives at Dudmaston, and by Captain Wolryche-Whitmore's kindness I have been able to consult it at some length. It gives ample testimony of Sir John's passion for the turf, a passion which extended to most contemporary forms of sport: there are notes of purchases of horses, details of race meetings, statements of subscriptions made to various Plates, and so on. The course of events after the meeting at Chelmarsh on 24th June is all too plain. The races probably took place on Chelmarsh Common, somewhat to the south of Chelmarsh village, and it is pleasant to know that Sir John's last race-meeting was also a successful one. After the races there was an adjournment for purposes of celebration, perhaps, for instance, to the residence of the Nichols family then of Chelmarsh; after a protracted jollification, or at least before complete recovery from its effects, Sir John and his servants set out for Dudmaston, a mile and a half away across the river, at an early hour the next morning. The point " Brooksmouth " where Sir John was drowned must be either the point where the Mor Brook enters the Severn, or that where the river is joined by Quatt Brook a little lower down.

Sir John Wolryche, therefore, was drowned neither when fox-hunting nor when returning from a funeral, but when returning from a race-meeting; and his sobriety at the time is doubtful. There is, however, yet one further curious point concerning his end. The note

by Percy just quoted states that Sir John's body was never found ; yet the Parish Register of Quatt, made available by the kindness of Prebendary J. Robinson, shows plainly that Sir John's body was indeed found, for it was buried in linen and the appropriate fine paid as the law then required in such cases. (The date of burial was 28th June and not 26th June as stated in the *Complete Baronetage*). Sir John's account-book was used by his family for some time after his death, and there are the following references to the death and funeral :

" Money disburs'd upon Sir John Wolryche's death.

		£	s.	d.
June the 25th	Messengers in quest after the Corroner ...		5	0
ditto	To the Corronor	2	2	0
			
the 28	To the Parson for burying Sir John ...	1	1	0
	To the Clarkes fees for toaling the bell &c		6	6
	For burying in linnen	2	10	0
the 29th			
	The Undertakers bills for Gloves,			
	Escochion &c	46	7	6
	For a Coffin covered with Shagg & lead			
	lining	9	11	6

(Sir John is commemorated in Quatt Church by a monument—plain and severe as Sir John himself surely never was in life—later erected by his sister Mary).

Bishop Percy was born in 1729, nearly six years after Sir John Wolryche's death ; he acquired Higgs' diary soon after Higgs' death in 1763. Thus probably within little more than forty years of Wolryche's death an educated man born less than six years after that tragedy and within four miles of the site where it took place set down a " fact " about Wolryche's death which is demonstrably completely untrue. Here, then, is a " tradition " in the making, though this particular one is not known to have been propagated. The whole episode, besides possessing whatever interest may reside in the establishment of the exact manner of death of a Shropshire sporting squire, is a reminder of a possibility which may be unfortunate but which cannot be ignored : " tradition " may, as in this case, be incorrect.

THE CENTENARY OF EYTON'S
"ANTIQUITIES OF SHROPSHIRE"¹

BY J. F. A. MASON, M.A., D.Phil.

The year 1954 marks the centenary of the publication of the first volume of the *Antiquities of Shropshire* by the Rev. Robert William Eyton, Rector of Ryton. During the middle of 1853 subscribers to the proposed work were enrolling themselves, in answer to the prospectus which had been circulated: the Preface to the work had been completed at Ryton Rectory on 26th September 1853; and Part I of Volume I was sent out to subscribers in the last days of December, 1853. In the first months of 1854 Parts II, III and IV quickly followed, and Volume I was thus complete; its title-page bears the date 1854, in which three of its four parts were issued. The exact wording of the dedication to Lord Hill of the whole work was still not finally settled in June 1854, nine months after the drafting of the Preface. This lapse of time was due to Eyton's innate modesty which led him to begin the publication of his work in Parts: in fact Part I was given to the world in an exploratory spirit, and was only to be followed by others if the plan and method of Eyton's work met with the subscribers' approval. (The Preface, with its statement of Eyton's intention and its comprehensive survey of his sources, was naturally required to be published in Part I in order that its readers might be assisted in coming to the desired judgment.)

Part I of the *Antiquities* was received with acclaim in the select circles to which it penetrated. Perhaps it was scarcely surprising (though since the Shropshire subscribers were so numerous it was doubtless fortunate) that the two leading Shropshire weekly newspapers welcomed the work: *Eddowes Shrewsbury Journal* for 1st February 1854 found it "a work of high contingent promise," and *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* for 13th January held that "there can be no doubt that this publication will prove one of the most important and authoritative of its class." Outside the county the appearance of Part I was noticed in *Notes and Queries* on 7th January, and the opinion was expressed by Thomas Wright in *The Athenaeum* on 21st January that the work "promises to be a

¹ Material kindly placed at my disposal by Captain J. S. Eyton, grandson of R. W. Eyton, has proved of much assistance in the preparation of this note; the letters from Phillipps and Hardy cited later are from this source.

valuable book, and we think that it exhibits both care and judgment." More striking, perhaps, than these Press tributes was the verdict of the querulous inmate of Middle Hill, the famous collector Sir Thomas Phillipps, who (perhaps noting in the *Antiquities* a typographical exactness which his own productions were notoriously never able to achieve) wrote to Eyton on the last day of 1853: "You may imagine I am pleased with it [*i.e.*, Part I], when I tell you that I will subscribe for *ten* copies . . . If Free Trade and Law Suits had not impoverished me I would have subscribed for 50 Copies rather than your work should drop." (Phillipps' subscription was, however, later reduced to five copies). In commemorating Eyton's own achievement it is proper to remember also his subscribers within the county and without, and their continued support which made possible the publication of his work. One other person deserves mention: Eyton's brother J. W. K. Eyton, who conducted all negotiations with the printers of the *Antiquities*. (R. W. Eyton himself was to write at the end of 1879: "I know absolutely nothing of the business, or technicalities, or phraseology of printing. I believe myself consequently to have been considerably taken in, since my brother, who used to deal with the profession for me, died".)²

As the process of publication went on, so the laudatory Press notices continued. Among the more important of these was that of Parts I to III which appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for May 1854 and was doubtless written by the then editor, the antiquary John Gough Nichols himself; this is of interest for the amount of space devoted to the subject-matter of the *Antiquities*, for many contemporary reviewers tended to give what would now be regarded as disproportionate prominence to the plates with which the volumes were embellished.

The original estimate had been for a complete work consisting of five volumes or twenty parts; but the issue of separate Parts was later discontinued in favour of the publication of complete volumes; and the estimate of five volumes was in the event exceeded by more than half, for the completed work ran to twelve volumes. (The last of these, however, is much smaller than the remainder and

² Letter from R. W. Eyton to George Wrottesley, at William Salt Library, Stafford. The printer of the *Antiquities* was changed once: Tucker of Oxford Street printed the first three, and J. E. Taylor of Lincoln's Inn Fields the remaining nine volumes.

consists mainly of indices). Volume II appeared in 1855 and Volume III in 1856; two volumes appeared in each of the years 1857, 1858 and 1859, and three (including the shorter final volume) in 1860.

It is hoped, in an early number of these *Transactions*, to consider, at greater length than is at present possible, Eyton's background as a historian, to discuss his work as a genealogist and county historian, and to examine his *Antiquities* in the light of developments in the field of historical writing to which they belong during the century which has now elapsed since their first appearance. On this present commemorative occasion it must suffice to say that the *Antiquities* represented a new departure in at least three important particulars: in the limitation of its subject-matter to the feudal descent of manors between 1066 and the later thirteenth century, in the exhaustive consultation of sources on which it was based, and on the judgment and skill with which those sources were used.³ (Some contemporaries commented, both favourably and unfavourably, on another point: the publication of a county history in octavo instead of the then usual folio.)

This brief recollection of the first appearance of the most important single work ever devoted to the history of Shropshire may perhaps fitly close with two further opinions on the *Antiquities*, the first of 1860 and the second of 1943. On receiving the last volume Eyton's friend Sir William Hardy, later deputy-keeper of the Public Record Office, wrote to Eyton's publisher that the author had "placed himself by a great distance at the head of all our County Historians ancient or modern"; and recently Professor Stenton⁴ deftly placed Eyton's *Antiquities* in the high place among works on its own subject which it may properly claim: "the character of English feudalism as a permanent form of local order can be seen most clearly in the internal history of the fiefs created by the Conqueror. . . . Among earlier examples of this type of work the most valuable is R. W. Eyton's *Antiquities of Shropshire*."

³ The earlier work which most partook of these various excellences was probably Robert Thoroton's *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire*, published as long ago as 1677. (Cp. F. M. Stenton's remarks in *Victoria County History of Notts*, i (1906), pp. 245-6.

⁴ *Anglo-Saxon England* (2nd ed., 1947), p. 708.

NOTICE

It will doubtless be observed by Members that this Part of our TRANSACTIONS is extremely slim (especially in comparison with the Part last previously published, which was of more than usual length).

The fact is regretted, but unavoidable. The funds of the Society are circumscribed, and of course printing costs since the late War have constantly risen. The Council is anxious not to make any increase in the amount of the annual subscription for membership, which has remained at one guinea since the foundation of the Society some 77 years ago. To enable the Society's work to be maintained nevertheless at the high standard of publication which has always been its aim, the assistance of Members in such ways as the punctual payment of subscriptions and the introduction of new Members will be gratefully regarded.

Publication to the extent which funds allow will continue. But restrictions are evidently necessary. With a view to conserving space, contributors in future are requested to be as concise as reasonably possible.

OBITUARY

DR. F. W. PEMBER, D.C.L.

The Society has with many others to lament the death of Dr. F. W. Pember, in January 1954, a Vice-President of this Society for some quarter of a century. His qualifications, professional and academic, were basically legal. He was called to the Bar in 1889, and was later a Bencher of Lincolns Inn. But his interests extended into much wider fields of arts and sciences, in which he had read widely, and these added their quota to the graces of his friendly personality and converse. He was a Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, from 1914 to 1932, and during 1926-29 was a Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. Not a Salopian by birth, he came to this County about 30 years ago, when he bought and restored Broncroft Castle; and there are members of this Society with pleasing recollections of his hospitable entertainment on the occasion of a visit to that historic building. He had left the Castle a year or two before his death, but much of his time during the previous years of his residence had been spent in the peacefulness of its library and garden, and the surrounding uplands of Corvedale.

M.P.

W. J. SLACK

By the death on 1st July, 1954, of Mr. W. J. Slack, Shropshire lost its foremost authority on agricultural and agrarian history, and the country lost a worker who was becoming known as a leading expert in his particular field of study.

Walter John Slack was born on 27th September, 1897, at Cotton, Hodnet, where his father, Mr. Walter George Slack, farmed for some years before removing to Espley Manor. His mother was a member of the old Shropshire family of Rodenhurst. As the result of an attack of poliomyelitis at the age of seven he was left with a serious physical disability that precluded his going to school, and he was educated by private tuition. He afterwards successfully completed a course at the Harper Adams Agricultural College, Edgmond, and in 1926 took over a farm at Cound Leasowes, Cressage. Despite his disability, which severely limited physical activity, he proved a highly successful farmer, and in 1947 was able to retire. He served a term as chairman of the Shrewsbury branch of the National Farmers' Union, and later represented the union on the Shropshire branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

From an early age Slack had been interested in historical pursuits, and despite his lack of formal education he acquired a competent knowledge of medieval Latin and the ability to read manuscript records. From about 1935 onwards he devoted increasing attention to the agricultural and agrarian history of his

native county. The first fruits of his study were papers read before the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club, of which he had been a member since 1932, and these were followed by a substantial paper in the *TRANSACTIONS* of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, in which he traced the progress of enclosure in the manor of Condober from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

He had already conceived the ambition to write a detailed history of agriculture and enclosure in Shropshire. This entailed a thorough exploration of the entire county, for Slack was not content with second-hand information, but insisted on seeing for himself the character of the land and soil, the type of farming that was carried on, the evidences of enclosure, and the traces of old cultivations that he had trained his eye to detect. Between 1935 and 1939 he and the writer of this memoir visited nearly every parish in the county, mostly at week-ends, and Slack's keen and informed observation, his wide knowledge of ancient and modern farming techniques, and his "eye for country" made these excursions not only a delightful experience but also a source of valuable knowledge.

Slack was not only a good "field man"; he spent many laborious hours in library and record office, working on printed and manuscript sources. He was, indeed, an unusual combination of scholar and practical man, and his practical experience and his reading continually reinforced each other. This was particularly noticeable when he attended the annual conference of the Economic History Society a year or so before his death. It was impressive, and perhaps a little amusing, to observe with what respect the professors and doctors soon learned to listen to the contributions which he made to the discussions on agricultural and agrarian topics.

In 1951 the Shropshire Archaeological Society published *The Lordship of Oswestry, 1393-1607*, a series of extents and rentals which Slack had transcribed and edited, and for which he wrote an admirable introduction. This was a publication of considerable interest in a wider field than Shropshire, and did much to bring his merits as a historical worker to the notice of historians generally.

Slack was a naturalist as well as a historian, with a quick eye for and a good knowledge of the animals, birds and plants of the countryside. He contributed many observations to the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club's *Record of Facts*, lectured on "The Economic Importance of some Common Grasses" in 1946, led several excursions for the club, and in 1950-51 served for two years as President. He joined the Shropshire Archaeological Society in 1938, and was elected to the Council in 1939. He was also the treasurer of the Shropshire Local History Council.

At the time of his death Slack had practically completed the manuscript of his *History of Agriculture and Enclosure in Shropshire*, which will eventually be published. It would indeed be tragic if

the fruits of so much knowledge and research were not given to the world, but fortunately that is not likely to happen.

The following is a list of Slack's publications :

1937. The Open-field System of Agriculture. *Trans. Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club*, Vol. X, pp. 142-156.
1938. The Shropshire Village : its Origin and Evolution. *Trans. C.S.V.C.*, Vol. X, pp. 204-213.
1939. The Shropshire Ploughmen of Domesday Book. *Trans. Shrops. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. L, pp. 31-35.
- Everyday Life in the Manor of Condover in Medieval Times. *Trans. C.S.V.C.*, Vol. XI, pp. 68-75.
1940. The Condover Extents, 1283-1580 : a Study in Ancient Demesne Tenure. *Trans. Shrops. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. L, pp. 105-142.
1942. Shrewsbury as an Agricultural Community. *Trans. C.S.V.C.*, Vol. XI, pp. 264-271.
1945. Roads that grow and Roads that are made. *Trans. C.S.V.C.*, Vol. XII, pp. 112-120.
1951. The Lordship of Oswestry, 1393-1607. A Series of Extents and Rentals, transcribed and edited, with an Introduction. Pp. 176 with two maps. Shrewsbury : Wilding and Son, Ltd., for the Shropshire Archaeological Society.

L. C. LLOYD.

NOTICE

The remaining copies of Dr. Cranage's work, *An Architectural Account of the Churches of Shropshire*, are now stored at the Shrewsbury Free Library. They can be purchased in parts, at half-price, on application to the Assistant Secretary of the Society. These prices are as follows: the whole work (except Part I), £2 2s.; Parts 2 to 9, 5s. 3d. each; Part 10, 10s. 6d. Part I is now unobtainable. In addition to these, the Shrewsbury Churches (as a portion of Part 10) will be sold at 5s. 3d., the Appendix at 1s. 3d., and the General Survey at 2s. 6d.

Spare copies of *The Shropshire Hearth-tax Roll for 1672*, with Introduction by W. Watkins-Pitchford, M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.S., may be obtained at £1 15s. each, post-free, and of *The Lordship of Oswestry, 1393-1607*, edited and with Introduction by W. J. Slack, at £1 1s. each, post-free.

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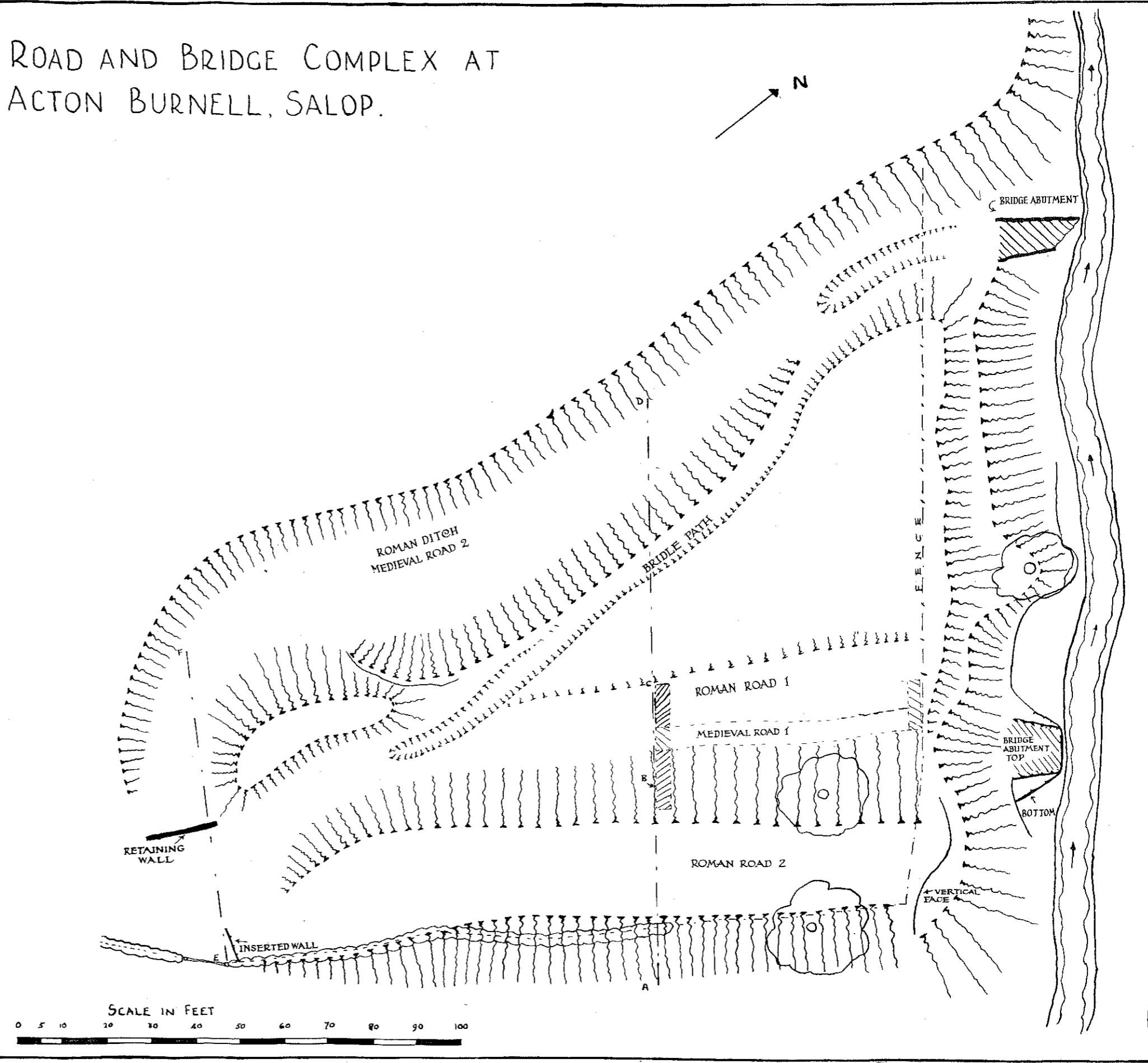


FIG. 1

SECTION B - C

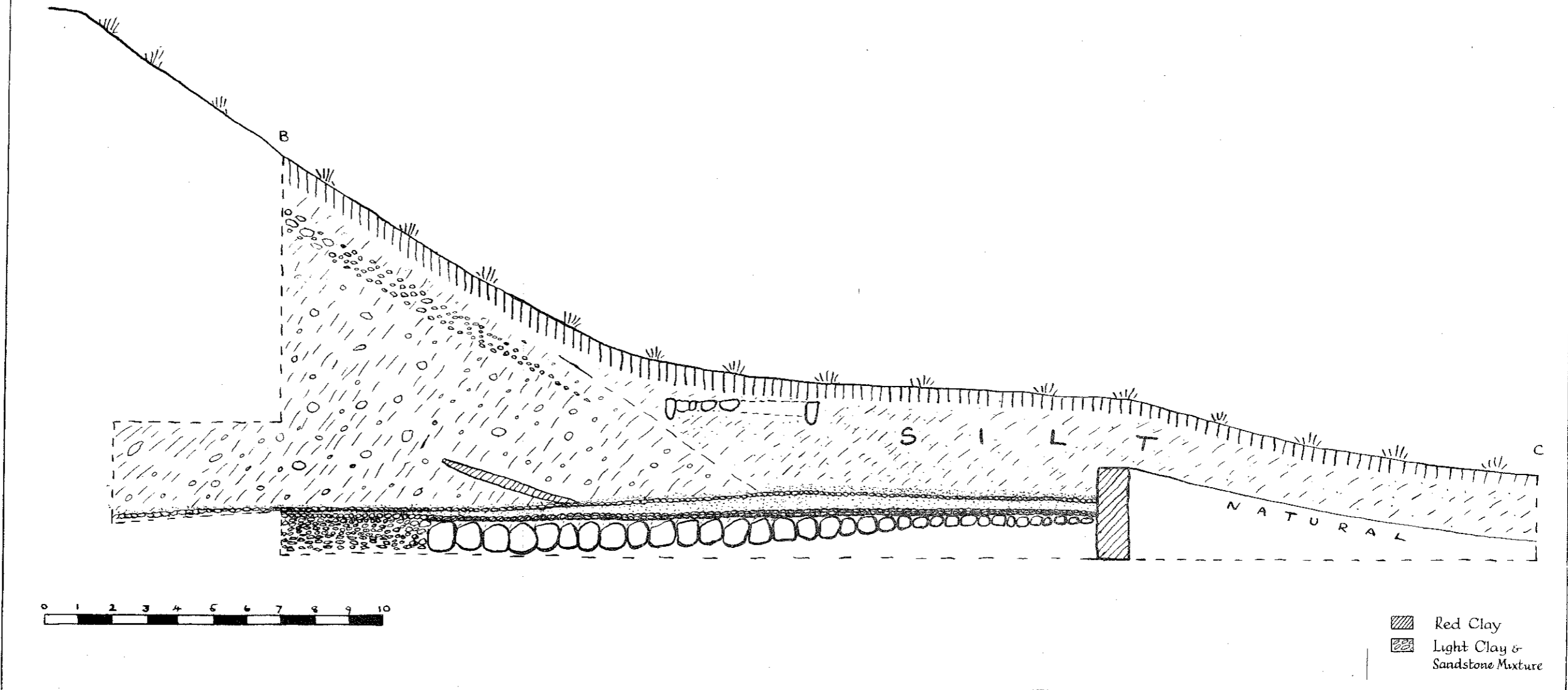


FIG. 2

OUTLINE PEDIGREE OF PENDARVES, STACKHOUSE AND ACTON CONNECTIONS

