

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 35 June 1978

WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

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EDITORIAL

Many members will probably have seen photographs of the excavations of the cemetery at the Monastery of St Guthlac site in Hereford in the local papers, and Ron Shoesmith, Director of Excavations, Hereford City Archaeological Committee, has contributed an article on this work.

The Hereford Civic Trust is not just a body of talkers, and actions speak louder than words, as was demonstrated earlier this year. On Saturday 20th May (The Feast of St Ethelbert) members of the Civic Trust, the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Hereford, the Dean, the Choristers of Hereford Cathedral conducted by Roy Massey, Organist and Master of the Choristers, all gathered at Castle Hill, Hereford for the Blessing of St Ethelbert's Well. It was a splendid ceremony, and it was made possible by the Trust raising money to repair and restore the stonework, the iron back plate and connect the water supply so that thirsty passers by can now be refreshed. David Whitehead, a member of both the Research Section and the Trust, has contributed some notes on the history of this ancient well.

The ARS Committee would welcome news of any features that members would like examined. There are still a number of places, mounds or tumps, or interesting names to places in the County about which little or no research has been done and we are always looking for suggestions for field days. If you do think of anything please let any of the Committee members know. A list of the Committee is always included in the News.

In the Winter programme we have included a talk by Mr S D Coates on Water Power in the Monnow and Trothy Valleys. This will be followed by a field day to visit the places discussed in Mr Coates' talk, so please make every effort to come to both.

Only one field day in the summer programme had to be abandoned because of the wet weather and that was the visit to Ewyas Harold. A return visit has therefore been included in the winter programme and Jean O'Donnell, the Leader, has posed some queries regarding this settlement. The visit to Tankard Walls, Bodenham, led us as far as a stone quarry, possibly the source of material for Hampton Court, which we were unable to obtain permission to visit. The real Tankard Walls was found to be on adjoining land over which, in the owner's absence, we were not able to investigate so this is hoped to be included in a visit early next year when the nettles are down. We did use the time to look at the ruins of Riffins Mill, Bodenham, and John Wride has supplied me with some extracts relating to it, taken from the Estate Ledgers. The millstones, cog wheels and water wheel are still in situ among the debris. If members have any information on this Mill I would be glad to receive it.

Our attention has been drawn to a newly formed local Club called the Hereford Search and Pathfinders Club whose interest is in using metal detectors on land in search of metal objects. We sincerely hope that they will respect archaeological sites, since a metal object removed in isolation from such sites can do irreparable damage to proper assessment of the archaeological value of the site.

Finally, I must express my thanks for the assistance of members with this News, and the invaluable work of the Assistant Editor.

PROGRAMME – WINTER – JULY TO DECEMBER 1978

Sunday 23 rd July	Kenchester	Visit excavations of Roman Building – examination of Finds (continuation of last year's dig). See ARS News No 34, pp 8-11 Meet at 11.00 am at dig site. Take bridle path opposite Magna Castra Farm – site few hundred yards distance. Party will be shown round by Mr S Rahtz of the excavation team. In afternoon possible visit to collection of farm wagons – information at meeting.
August	No meeting	
Sunday 17 th September	Ewyas Harold Re-arranged due to meeting on 30 th April rained off	Settlement patterns and Castle Site – see sketch plan. Leader – Mrs J O'Donnell Meet 11.00 am and 2.00 pm at Temple Bar Inn, Ewyas Harold
Thursday 12 th October	Talk by Mr S D Coates on Water Power in the Monnow and Trothy Valleys	Meet at Hereford Conservative Club Rooms, East Street, Hereford at 8.00 pm
Sunday 22 nd October	Monnow and Trothy Valleys	Follow up of talk by Mr S D Coates, who will be Leader. Meet at Skenfrith Mill at 11.00 am OS Sheet 142, one inch reference 457202
Sunday 19 th November	Whitebrook Valley in morning Redbrook Valley in afternoon	Guided walk by Mr S D Coates on Water Power and other activities. Meet 11.00 am, Gocket Inn on Monmouth/Trelleck Road B4293 about 2 miles on right from Monmouth. 2.00 pm Meet at Bush Inn in Redbrook Village.
Thursday 7 th December	Annual General Meeting	Tudor Room, Golden Eagle Restaurant, Commercial Street, Hereford. 7.30 for 8.00 pm. Dinner (your choice) at 9.00 pm from menu.

Note:

1. If any further information is required about this programme, or if in doubt in case of bad weather, please contact the Leader or a Committee Member.
2. Guests are welcome at all field meetings.
3. Members are advised to wear suitable clothing and footwear and to bring a packed lunch and hot drinks.

FIELD MEETING AT LONGTOWN AND CRASWALL, 19TH MARCH, 1978

The meeting, in spite of the rather inclement weather, was well attended notwithstanding the neglect of the Leader to adjust his watch to summer time! It was arranged in order to visit the ruins of Longtown Castle, now undergoing consolidation and partial excavation by the Dept of the Environment. This was followed, in the afternoon, by a visit to the remains of the Grandmontine Priory at Craswall to ascertain the progress in the deterioration of the ruins since their initial excavation some seventy years previously.

The early cylindrical Keep of Longtown Castle, crowning its lofty precipitously-sided motte, has now been rendered safe for posterity. Before consolidation, its crumbling ruins were in imminent danger of collapse, the masonry being in a particularly poor state on the S & E sides where a considerable portion of the wall footings and external base courses had been robbed away. The fairly extensive remains of the curtain wall of the inner bailey, with its small gatehouse and flanking half round bastions, have now been cleared of ivy, undergrowth and an accumulation of later lean-to buildings, making them visible in their entirety for the first time within living memory. It is to be hoped that the Dept of the Environment will continue their excavations within the inner bailey in order to determine the arrangement of its internal buildings, none of which survive above ground level. The area of the castle's second bailey to the S, which also had masonry defences, now mostly vanished, was also examined. The inner, the second and the castle's third bailey to the S of the first two lies within the massive rampart of a large square enclosure, traditionally representing the site of a supposed Roman fort situated midway between Kenchester and Abergavenny. To the N of this enclosure, and now built over, is the site of another outer enclosure, also of rectangular plan, which probably formed an outwork of the castle defences on this, its most vulnerable side. Extending down the hill to the S, a fifth enclosure, defended by a massive bank, seems to mark the extent of the small Medieval borough which grew up under the protection of the castle. Within it is the small much-restored and rebuilt church, vestiges of a street plan and market place and a few old houses. Like the similar castle boroughs at Clifford and Huntington, its foundation was never a success and it soon decayed, shrinking within the few acres of its defences.

At Craswall, the remains of the Priory, a mile to the N of the parish church and situated on the banks of the Nant Leth in Cwm-y-Cadno (or the Foxes Dingle) occupy an idyllic position. The excavated remains are now thickly overgrown with nettles, shrubs and small trees which have tended to further destroy the uncovered surrounding walls. Much of the carved stonework, of excellent quality, formerly exposed, has now vanished. The Dept of the Environment have shown interest in consolidating and preserving what is left. They must hurry for they are, even now, almost too late! On the hillside above, Abbey Farm, which incorporated much worked masonry from the Priory, has recently been rebuilt. The party, after examining the remains of the Priory and tracing its precinct wall and ancillary buildings, divided, one half returning to the cars, the others following the original approach track down the valley to the parish church, a pleasing little building of 13th C and later date, which was also examined. En route, the sites of two of the monastic fishponds pertaining to the Priory were examined. The upper has recently been cleared, and now filled with water presents an attractive feature to the remains of the Priory when viewed from the S. A short distance lower down the valley are the well preserved but breached remains of the Medieval earth and masonry revetted dam of a larger fish pool, now drained.

Both Longtown Castle and Craswall Priory are described in rather more detail in the two articles which follow.

THE GRANDMONTINE PRIORY OF ST MARY AT CRASWALL

Brief History of the Order of Grandmont and of the Priory at Craswall

The Order was founded near Limoges about the year 1076 by St Stephen of Muret. St Stephen was born in 1046 and from the age of 30 years he lived the life of a holy ascetic in a small hut at Muret until his death in 1124. On his death, the site at Muret was claimed by the local Benedictine House, so the community that St Stephen had gathered around him moved in 1125 to a site on the desolate mountain of Grandmont. The first priory at Grandmont appears to have taken the form of a church with an adjoining grouping of independent hermits' cells, but by the mid 12th century the cells were replaced by more conventional monastic buildings, grouped around a cloister. In fact, Grandmont followed a reformed and stricter version of the Rules of St Benedict.

The situation of Craswall Priory, in its remoteness and desolation, has even today certain strong similarities to that of the mother house. As such desolate sites were chosen by the Grandmontines, only a small number of brethren could be accommodated in each Priory and the number of cells increased rapidly as a result. By 1200 there were over 140 and the Order had become established.

St Stephen had divided the order into clerks and lay brothers. The clerks were set absolutely free from the care of things temporal so that they might spend their lives in prayer and contemplations. The lay brothers tilled the soil, took charge of the accounts and were wholly responsible for the business of the house.

The first English house was founded in 1204 at Grosmont in Eskdale near Whitby, Yorkshire. The second was at Craswall on land given by Walter De Lacy, a few miles north of his castle at Ewyas-Lacy (Longtown). Shortly after Craswall a third house was founded at Alberbury near Shrewsbury. The three English houses were poverty stricken, as they were administered for the benefit of the mother house in France.

The founding charter of Craswall gives the Priory six hundred acres of land between the Monnow and the Leth (the brook on which the ruins stand), together with wood and pasturage for their animals in the new forest as far as the outskirts of Talgarth, as well as licence to construct fishponds on the Monnow and Leth. In second and subsequent charters he gave to the Priory the manor of Holme Lacy and extensive lands in County Meath. These endowments were to maintain 10 priests and 3 clerks to reside perpetually at Craswall to offer service to God according to the custom of the Order. There would have been at least a similar number of lay brothers.

In 1252 the administrative powers of the mother house were delegated to the Prior at Craswall, who thus became head of the three English houses. This was continued for the next 50 years, when Craswall fell upon hard times and the supremacy passed to Alberbury. In 1253 the Prior sold the rich manor of Holme Lacy to Peter Aquablanca, Bishop of Hereford, for the sum of £366 13s 4d to buy lands and rents for the maintenance of the brethren at the mother house of Grandmont. By the sale of Holme Lacy, the major portion of the endowment of Craswall was thus diverted to Grandmont. Sixty years later, the patron of Craswall had expelled the remaining brethren, forbidding them to return unless they showed more discretion and wisdom and could lift up the house of Craswall, which had been nearly ruined by others. In 1291 the possessions of Craswall Priory were assessed for taxation at only £5 13s 4d. In 1295 the number of brethren were reduced to nine.

In 1315 there were rival Priors at Grandmont and this resulted in severe financial straits for the daughter houses, including Craswall, and the following years showed a lot of rivalry and bickering between the Priors of the three English houses. At the outbreak of the 100 Years War in 1337, Craswall was virtually penniless and in 1341 it was seized as an alien house, the brethren being maintained by the Exchequer. Exactly a century later, after further vicissitudes, the Priory was given to God's House (later Christ's College) at Cambridge. The exact date of its evacuation by the brethren does not seem to be recorded but may be assumed to have been about the time of its conveyance in 1441.

The Architecture of the Grandmontine Order

The original church at Grandmont, completed in 1180, was rebuilt in 1752 and destroyed in 1817 when all the stone was removed to build the prison at Limoges. However, other churches of the Order remain in France and the typical form is aisleless, with a plain tunnel vault and apsidal east end. Windows are only found at the east and west ends, there were no side windows. There were chapels to the N and S of the chancel.

As in the Cistercian Order, the early churches were uniform in plan and construction. The very early arrangement provided for men in separate cells with a common oratory, but after the introduction of conventional monastic buildings (post 1125) the only trace of this was to be found in the division of the common dormer into separate cells. This was practised from the first and was not a relaxation of the Rule.

A peculiarity of the churches of the Grandmontine Order is that the apse is of wider span than the nave, necessitating a break in the line of the wall near the chancel step. At Craswall this occurs in the Church and also in the apsidal S Chapel, but not in the N Chapel which has a square eastern end. Any break between the vault of an apse and a barrel vault over the main vessel of a church is unusual, but other than in the Grandmontine Order the span of the nave of a vaulted church is invariably wider than that of the apse vault.

The domestic buildings follow the normal layout of a Benedictine House. The Chapter House, however, possesses certain features characteristic of the Grandmontine Order. It is contained within the normal width of the eastern range of the cloister and does not project beyond the line of its eastern wall. Any additional accommodation which might have been required was obtained by lengthening the proportions of the chamber from N to S. The vaults of larger chapter houses, as at Craswall, were usually supported on two columns. The Priors of Comberournal, Lodeve and Charbonniers near Avallon are the best preserved 12th century houses of the Order in France. They have the unusual feature of a dormer staircase within the east alley of the cloister walk and their plans are strongly similar to the remains at Craswall.

The main body of the Church, S Chapel and Slype would seem to have been constructed at the time immediately subsequent to the foundation of the Priory, when the house was administered by Grandmont. It was built in the archaic trans-Norman style of 50 years before, *cp* the mother church of Grandmont. The N Chapel can only have been of a little later date. The more ornate Chapter House and cloister arcades were probably built about 1252 during the Priorship of Brother Reginald who was appointed Corrector of the three English Houses and to whom a much larger degree of autonomy was allowed. It would not be unreasonable to credit this man with the commissioning of the Chapter House in a contemporary style, or at least as contemporary as his West Country masons could produce. Masons' marks in the Chapter House are by similar hands to those that constructed the W front of Llanthony Priory. At this time the rich sedilia and piscinae would have been introduced into the Chancel. There are no architectural details about the whole site which can be given a later date than the mid 13th century.

Brief Description of the Priory

The Priory is situated not far from the sources of the Leth, a tributary of the Monnow. The position even today is remote and difficult of access, and at an altitude of 1240' above sea level. The hills surrounding are rough pasture and woodland, but a mile or so to the W rise the barren and forbidding slopes of the Black Mountains. A first impression is one of remarkable seclusion; hidden by trees, the ruins are so thickly overgrown that they are not seen until one commences to walk over their scattered stones. The ruins have remained undisturbed, uncared for and unnoticed (except for the excavations of 1904-7 and 1962) since the roofs fell in and the walls collapsed in all directions.

Through the site runs a small stream, the Leth, which diverted from its original course now crosses the site of the frater. The general state of the ruins is deplorable and the walls,

built of the local laminated red sandstone with inferior mortar, are everywhere dislocated by a riotous growth of trees, and bushes.

The excavations conducted under the auspices of the Woolhope Club in 1904-7 were only partial and included the clearing of the eastern portion of the cloister, the eastern half of the church and the whole of the chapter house. Little else seems to have been done. The excavations were seemingly undertaken with very little forethought, and no attempt was made to preserve the walls and other details uncovered. Succeeding years of neglect have caused irreparable damage and much carved work has been lost or dispersed. It would have been far better for posterity if the excavations had not been attempted until funds were available for the preservation of the walls uncovered or at least for the backfilling of the excavations with debris. The excavations of 1962, by C Wright Esq and the writer, threw light on the plan and detail of the N and S Chapels and the Slype. These excavations were backfilled as completely as possible with the limited time and labour available.

The main block of the buildings consisted of the Church with the cloister on the S side. The Dorter Range with Chapter House, etc, was on the E of the cloister, the Frater Range S, and the Cellarers and Lay Brothers Range W of the cloister. To the SW and S of the cloistral block are fairly extensive foundations mounds of other buildings.

The Church measured $107\frac{1}{2}'$ x $23\frac{1}{2}'$, and has walls $5\frac{1}{2}''$ thick unsupported by buttresses. The unusual thicknesses of the walls indicated that the building was vaulted throughout in stone. This would account for the great mass of rubble which still buries the floor in the western half of the church to a depth of over 10'. At a distance of $24\frac{1}{2}'$ from the east end the walls are set back, giving a width of $28\frac{1}{4}'$ to the presbytery or Chancel, which terminates in a semi-circular apse lit formerly by three tall round headed lancet windows. The roof of this part of the building had a rib vault which butted on to the tunnel vault of the nave; a boss and rib voussoirs are amongst the debris. On each side of the Chancel a plain chamfered round headed doorway leads into the N and S Chapels. On the N side there is a round headed aumbry recess and on the S side an intricate double piscinae sedilia for the priest, deacon and sub deacon. The beautiful "dog tooth" moulding of the sedilia arches has vanished since excavation. The sanctuary, approached by two steps, retains the base of a freestanding altar (near here was found the lead reliquary now in Hereford Museum). In the centre of the floor in front of the sanctuary steps can be seen the stone coffin, probably of the Priory's founder.

The N Chapel had a diagonal rib vault in two bays. At the E end were vestiges of a lancet window, in the S wall a double piscina in a round headed recess. There is an aumbry recess in the N wall and a freestanding altar. Traces of painted plaster in red ochre and black, showing vine scrolls were found.

The S Chapel was vaulted in a similar fashion to the main body of the church, and contained the usual double piscinae and aumbry. Vestigial remains of three lancets in its eastern apse were found but the altar had disappeared. The S Chapel also had an entrance from the E cloister walk.

The Slype had doorways to the E and W, and on either side a narrow stone bench. The N and S jambs of the W doorway were constructed at different periods.

The Cloister Garth, $64\frac{1}{2}'$ x $67\frac{1}{2}'$, adjoins the nave on the S side. Traces of the arcade wall remain on all four sides and the SE angle has been excavated. It supported an open arcade of trefoiled arches on double columns with EE caps and bases. Descending into the E walk of the cloister is the Dorter staircase, now much disintegrated. Access to the church was by a doorway in the S wall of the nave.

The East Range, S of the Slype, apparently consisted of the richly decorated Chapter House and adjoining undercroft, probably identifiable as the Warming Room with Dorter over.

The Chapter House, $37'$ x $21'$, was the most ornate portion of the Priory, but since the excavation of 1904-7, it has suffered more in proportion than any other part of the site. Rib vaulted in three bays N to S and two bays E to W, the vault being supported on two

circular columns. Remains of ornate EE clustered columned jambs of a central doorway and side windows are in the W wall, and three smaller windows in the E wall can be seen. A plain doorway on the S leads up into the monastic Warming Room, forming an undercroft to the Dorter which projects beyond the S range. A doorway on the W leads into the refectory antechamber, whilst to the E an extensive mound covers the remains of the Rere-dorter.

The South Range consisted of the Refectory and its antechamber, which formed an undercroft to undisclosed offices above. Only the doorway from the cloister to the antechamber remains in tolerable preservation, the remainder has been destroyed by the wandering of the Leth brook. Of the W Range only the merest foundations, buried under the grass, remain.

To the SW of the cloister buildings, and now parted from it by the stream, was a further complex of foundations, probably representing the Kitchen and Guesthouse, and some distance to the S are traces of a large barn and subsidiary buildings. The precinct wall, which is traceable in its entire circuit, remains on the W side to a height of a few courses. A little distance downstream is the massive masonry dam which held back the waters of the fishponds.

The architecture of the Priory is severe, except for the Chapter House, and inclined to be ponderous in detail. The stone is dark, and unless paint and plaster were used extensively, the buildings must have exuded a rather gloomy and depressing atmosphere which would have done nothing to alleviate the rigorous Rule of the Order.

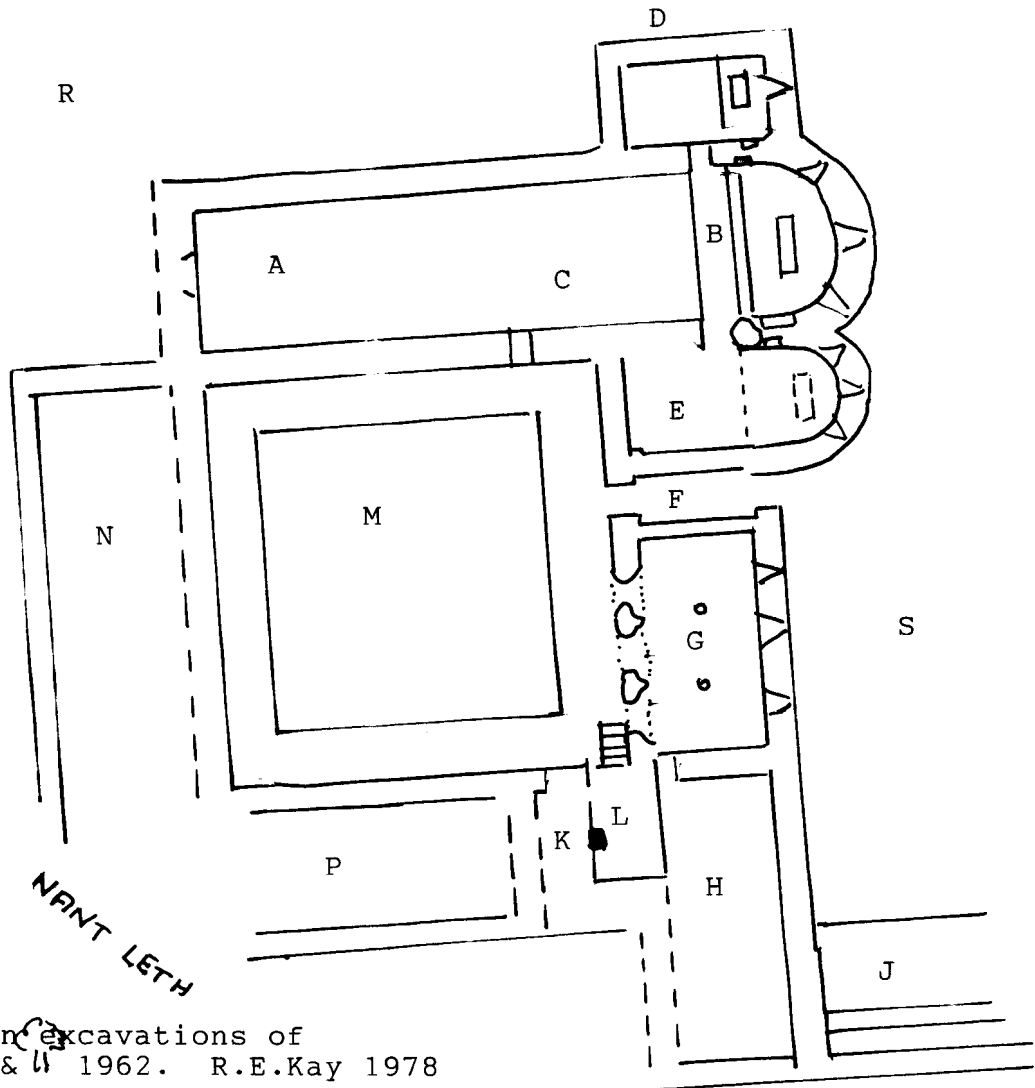
R E Kay
4th March, 1978

CRASWELL PRIORY

ROUGH SKETCH PLAN
Scale 1" to 40 ft.

LEGEND:

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| A | NAVE | K | ANTE ROOM |
| B | PRESBYTERY | L | DORTER STAIR |
| C | FOUNDERS TOMB | M | CLOISTER GARTH |
| D | NORTH CHAPEL | N | SITE OF WEST RANGE |
| F | SLYPE | P | REFECTORY |
| G | CHAPTER HOUSE) | Q | SITE OF GUEST HOUSE |
| H | WARMING ROOM) | R | MONKS GRAVEYARD |
| J | RERE DORTER | S | DEBRIS MOUND |



Based on excavations of
1904-7 & 1962. R.E.Kay 1978

LONGTOWN CASTLE

The large village of Longtown stands at the S end of a spur commanding the valleys of the Monnow and one of its tributaries, the Olchon, which flowing past on either side to the E and W, meet about half a mile further S. The castle, of masonry on a motte and bailey earthwork with extensive outworks, stands at the N end of the village. The principal earthworks consist of a rectangular enclosure of about three acres in area with a large, steep sided, circular motte at its NW angle. The ground slopes away on all sides except to the N where it is almost level, but rising slightly. Here are slight outworks, almost doubling the area of the castle and forming its fourth bailey. The W half of the principal three-acre enclosure is divided into two parts, of which the northern formed the inner or first bailey and the southern the second bailey. The inner bailey was bounded by a curtain wall on the NE, E and S sides, with an entrance gateway defended by projecting solid semi-circular bastions in the S wall. There appears to have been no substantial wall on the W side, where possibly the steepness and height of the scarp and its ditch may have made any more formidable masonry than a slight breastwork unnecessary. The motte is crowned by a fine cylindrical keep, which forms the dominating feature of the castle. Little trace remains of any substantial internal buildings to the inner or other baileys. The general earthworks appear to be of post-Conquest date but possibly on the site of and incorporating the earthworks of an earlier fortification. It has long been suggested that the site is that of a Roman fort, intermediate between Magnis (Kenchester) and Gobannium (Abergavenny) but apart from the general resemblance of the plan of the quadrangular three-acre enclosure and its N outwork to that of a Roman fort and its annex (or of a larger and then reduced fort), no factual evidence has yet been produced to support this theory. The keep, the remains of the curtain wall and gateway to inner bailey, and slight masonry remains of the defences of the second bailey, are all of late 12th or early 13th century date.

The circular keep is an interesting and comparatively early example of this type of building, and the unusual layout of the baileys of the castle is noteworthy.

The earthworks of the principle three-acre enclosure consist of a high rampart with rounded angles, with an external fosse which is now partly filled in or mutilated on the N, W and S sides. On the W side the rampart runs into the motte standing at the NW angle of the enclosure, while on the N side there is a gap between the motte and the rampart. The three-acre enclosure was divided into two roughly equal parts by a ditch running from S to N, now largely silted up. Only the southern portion now remains, but it probably continued northwards under the playground of the present school and through the gap existing on the N rampart, immediately to the E of the motte. Gaps, possibly of more recent construction, in the N and S ramparts afford passage for the present roadway, which cuts right across the enclosure in a N to S direction. On the W side of the gap in the S rampart, the bank contains remains of masonry built on to the natural rock which may be part of a former outer gateway. There is a small gap made by a path near the NE angle and an entrance through the E rampart near its S end may be original. The rampart of this portion of the enclosure, forming the third bailey of the castle, does not appear to have carried a masonry wall.

The N outworks of the castle, now partly built over, consist of a bank some one hundred and thirty yards long running in a N direction in line with the E rampart of the principal enclosure. There are signs of a return bank of its S extremity extending towards the W. Running almost in line with the tremendous W rampart of the inner bailey there is a low scarp, which taken in conjunction with the bank described above, probably formed a large rectangular fortified enclosure forming the castle's fourth or outer bailey. In the NW corner of this enclosure there was a slight platform, or terrace, about forty-four yards by thirty-seven yards and immediately S of this were some irregular slight mounds and hollows.

S of the castle and with defences continuous with it, is another large ramparted and ditched outer enclosure bounded on the W by an old lane, which spreads some distance down the hill. Within this and immediately S of the castle ditch are the remains of a wide counter scarp bank or hornwork, on the S side of which was erected the chapelry to the little

borough which must have been established in this outer enclosure. The chapelry seems to have been a building of 13th C date although it contains a 12th C capital. The building was drastically restored a century ago, when practically everything of interest was destroyed. S of the chapelry (which has no burial ground) can be seen the vestiges of the former market square, where fairs were held until about 1900. There are traces of an old well, and the cottages on either side and along the "street" to the S, where it passes through the earthwork defences near where the present roadway makes its exit, are of some antiquity. That on the W side was once an inn. With the failure of the de Lacy line, the borough apparently ceased to flourish and the earthwork defences were neglected. There could never have been more than ten burgesses.

The great keep is now a breached ruin, it apparently was of two storeys only; the thick walls are of shaly sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings. It is of late 12th or early 13th C date, but the windows appear to have been altered at a later date, probably in the 14th C. It is circular in plan. Externally, it had a plinth with a chamfered top, set back on a wide berm from the edge of the summit of the original motte. Above the second floor the wall face is set back with a chamfered capping to the lower part. The outer circumference was divided into three by nearly semi-circular projections; the easternmost of these projections was utilised as a chimney flue and the most southerly contained a circular stone stepped staircase, of which a portion of its western part remains. The rest of this projection is now destroyed, together with about eight feet of the walling at this point, for the whole height of the tower. The upper part of the walling, from a few feet above the second storey level, has all gone, as has also a part of the walling below this level on the N side, while the whole of the facing of the plinth or batter has disappeared. The ground floor has, in each bay, the remains of a square headed window with external and internal segmental relieving arches of ashlar and internally splayed reveals with a square rectangular recess in one of the splays of each window; all have been defaced. Of the jambs of the westernmost window only one or two fragments remain; of the northernmost, two of the jamb stones and one in the head remain, while the external relieving arch consists of 12th C dressed stones, enriched with carved rosettes or roundels, and the soffit of one of the voussoirs, which is exposed, is similarly carved. On the E side of the gap where the walling has been destroyed is a small portion of a splayed reveal, probably part of the entrance doorway. The ground floor had a timber ceiling supported on a main cross-beam with struts; the struts rested on stone corbels which remain; there are set-backs at the floor levels. On the first floor, the W bay has two and the N bay one small window with chamfered jambs and square heads with segmental rere arches, and the SE bay has the remains of one similar window. S of, and against the NW projection is the outlet from a garderobe corbelled out from the wall on two stepped corbels at the first floor level; the front and side walls of the garderobe are carried for a few feet vertically and the projection is roofed with a store lean-to capping of dressed masonry. Cutting through the chamfered capping to the upper set-back in the wall are seven small square openings, more or less regularly placed. By the gap where the wall has gone, some of the steps from the first to the second floor and the curved inner face of the vise may be seen. Behind the E projection on the ground floor the gathering for the flue remains, although the actual fireplace recess is practically destroyed. On the first floor a passage in the thickness of the wall leads to the remains of the garderobe.

The curtain wall ran SE from immediately S of the easternmost bastion of the keep for a distance of nearly forty yards; from thence it ran S for thirty yards and returned at right angles till it met with the W rampart, thus bounding the irregular shaped inner or post bailey on three of its sides. On the N and E sides three portions of this wall approximately six feet thick remain, the most westerly of which rises for some distance up the side of the motte and formerly joined up to the keep where a recess in the plinth indicates the junction. On the S side the wall is continuous from the S angle to about ten yards from the W rampart and stands to an average height of eleven feet; but the inner face of the wall for its whole length has been destroyed. At the E end about five yards of the return wall remains. In the S

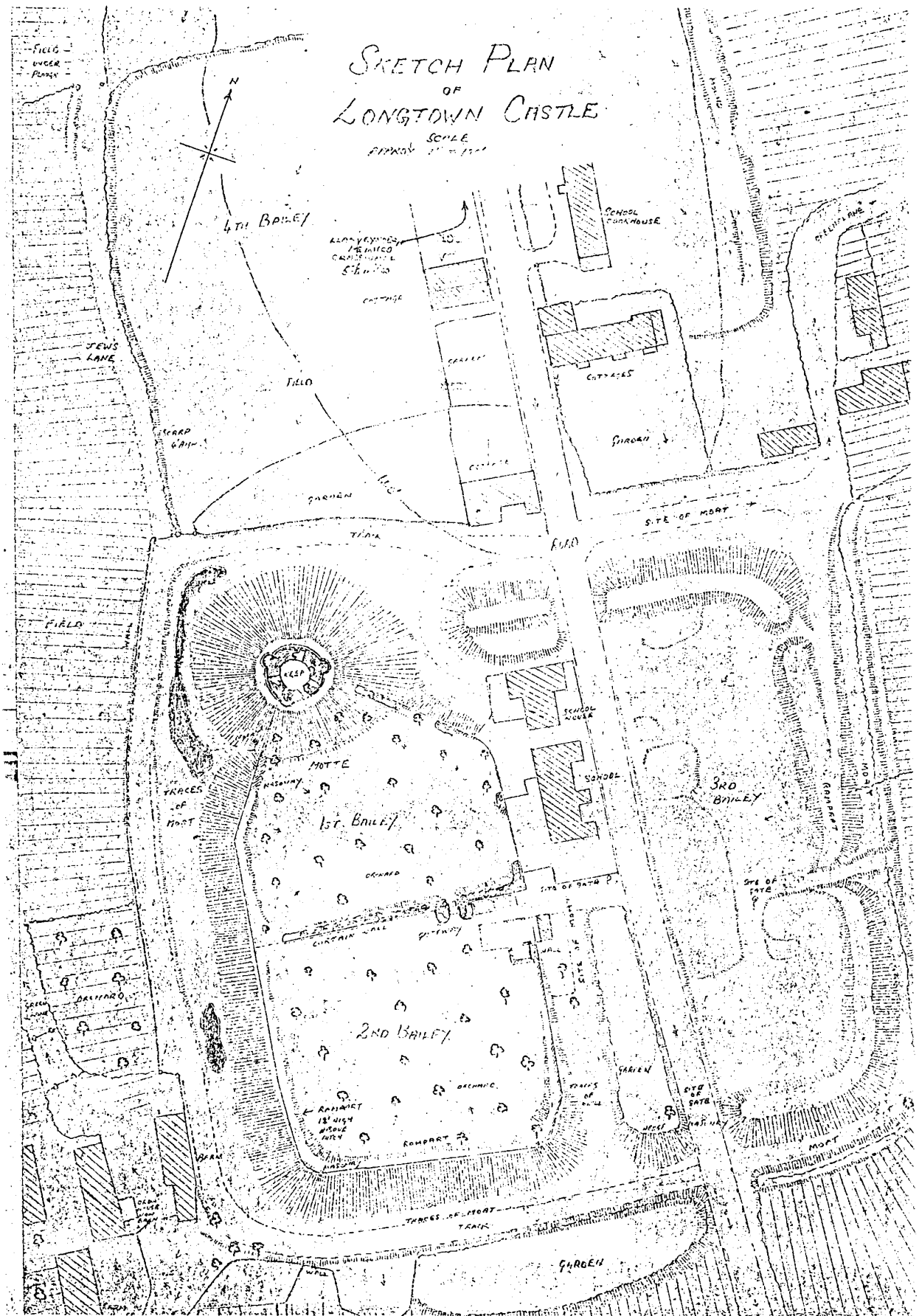
curtain wall, towards its E end, is the entrance; it consists of a semi-circular arched opening, with a pointed fore-arch with grooves at the side for a portcullis; flanking the opening and projecting into the second bailey are solid semi-circular bastions. The outer face of the westernmost bastion has been destroyed. A pent roof between the bastions and the archway has been removed at the recent clearance of the ruins by the Dept of the Environment. In the angle against the E bastion a recent stable has been similarly removed. The outer face of the curtain wall has a low batter surmounted by a string course of square section; this is only apparent in the straight southern portion of the curtain wall on either side of the gateway.

The wall which bounded the W side of the inner or first bailey and surrounded the second bailey may only have been a breastwork, but traces of its foundations, approximately eight feet thick, at the foot of the motte rather belie this suggestion. The gateway into the second bailey appears to have been near the junction of its E curtain with that of the inner bailey, where a small portion of walling still stands to a height of a few feet.

Notes on the Castle's History

The castle seems to have been founded by the de Lacys, the Norman Lords of Ewyas, shortly after the Conquest. Their earliest castle may have been the motte and bailey of Pont Hendre near Clodock, the pre-Norman centre of importance in the locality. The de Lacys seem to have been amongst the earliest adventurers to gain hold upon Welsh lands and encroach upon more, later taking a leading part in the English conquest of Ireland. They gave much land. to Llanthony Priory both from their Welsh possessions and in Ireland. Around about 1225 Walter de Lacy, the third Lord of Ewyas Lacy, founded the second of the three Grandmontine houses in England at nearby Craswall . The castle is said to have successfully withstood a siege in 1146 by the combined forces of Cadell, Maredudd and Rhys, the sons of Gruffyd ap Rhys, but the existing masonry and fabric of the castle seem to be of rather later date. After the failure of the de Lacy line, the castle subsequently became the property of the Earls of Abergavenny and the castle and borough fell into decay; there is no masonry in the castle which can be dated later than the mid 14th C.

The recent and continuing stabilization and partial excavation of the masonry remains of the castle by the Dept of the Environment may help to throw fresh light on its building evolution and history, and aid towards a more complete plan.



IN SEARCH OF ST ETHELBERT'S WELL, HEREFORD

By David Whitehead

The only near-contemporary reference to the martyrdom of Hereford's patron saint occurs in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 794. It states: "In this year King Offa caused King Ethelbert's head to be struck off". Not until nearly two centuries later is this event connected even remotely with Hereford. In a late 10th century will of a Shropshire thegn called Wulfgeat, among a number of bequests, "half a pound of pence" is left to St. Ethelbert's at Hereford (1). It seems that before this time the Cathedral, in common with many other primary churches in England, was dedicated to St Mary. Of more interest is an early 11th century list of English saints in the Liber Vitae of Hyde, where St Ethelbert is said to "rest at the bishop's seat at Hereford near the River Wye" (2). In the same century, before the Norman Conquest, several charters refer to the Cathedral as "St Ethelbert's Minster" (3).

Interest in the saint's career led to the writing of a Life, rich in local detail, early in the 12th century which was subsequently extended by the professional hagiographer, Giraldus Cambrensis (4). According to the earliest version of the Life, Ethelbert was buried in "a place called Fernlage near the River Wye". In the Giraldus Life this becomes "Stratusway" (the street by the Wye?), and is said to be situated near a minster. Burials of important personages in Offa's era generally occurred either in the porticus or in the western narthex of a minster church. Alternatively, following Roman practice, they took place away from the church in an open cemetery where a shrine would be constructed over the grave (5).

Neither of the Lives suggest that St. Ethelbert was interred inside the minster beside the Wye. Indeed, it was the heavenly light shining forth from the martyr's grave which attracted a distant prince who supposedly bequeathed large sums to build a new church which he "adorned with possessions in land and royal ornaments". Thus, it would appear that the murdered king was buried in the Dark Age cemetery of Hereford which, until the 12th century, was situated in the vicinity of Castle Green (6).

Significantly, in 1886, human remains which had presumably lain undisturbed beneath the Castle mound were found in a trench running from St. Ethelbert's Well to Castle Cliffe (7). It could well be, therefore, as the legend states, that St Ethelbert was buried near a spring which broke from the Hereford Terrace at this point and which later took the Saint's name. It was here in the 9th century, at the grave of the Saint – King Ethelbert", that a Shropshire landowner - Egwin Shake-head was cured of the palsy (8). Some two centuries later a similar miracle took place for Alnod, the son of Edric the Wild but, on this occasion, it was at the altar of St Ethelbert, suggesting perhaps, that by the Norman Conquest the Saint's relics had been re-interred in the Cathedral church where they had no doubt been destroyed during the conflagration of 1055 (9).

The earliest reference to the well occurs in 1250, when a piece of property belonging to the Cathedral is said to adjoin a "road leading towards the former fountain of blessed St Ethelbert". Later, in 1359, a mason, John de Evesham, is granted a tenement "near the lane leading to the well of St Ethelbert" (10). Sometime at the beginning of the same century an elaborate canopy in the early Decorated style, with trefoiled openings, was constructed over the well and was illustrated by Dingley (1684) and Stukeley (1721) (11). It was described by the latter as "a handsome old stone arch". The same feature is crudely depicted on Speed's plan of Hereford in 1610. It was probably constructed during the episcopacy of Richard Swinfield who was instrumental in securing the canonisation of his predecessor, Thomas Cantilupe. The well no doubt provided an additional focus for the pilgrims who came to Hereford to visit St Thomas's shrine in the Cathedral.

Speed's plan shows the well inconveniently situated below the keep in the castle ditch, but its exact position cannot be pinpointed until 1802 when it appears on a plan attached to a lease for several gardens in Castle Hill (12). The well is drawn as a circular feature enclosed by walls and approached by five stone steps. It was situated in the eastern corner of a garden soon to be occupied by St Ethelbert's House. At about this time, the early 19th century, the well was enclosed with iron railings at the expense of Mrs Joanna

Whitmore, who also placed the head of St Ethelbert - rescued from the west end of the Cathedral after its collapse in 1786 - in a niche above the well (13). By the mid 19th century the site had been enclosed in private grounds and covered with "a vast accumulation of rubbish" (14). As a substitute feature, the present drinking fountain was erected by Mr A Steel in 1904 and the site of the original well marked with a circular stone (15).

By the 1920's there was some disagreement about the position of the original well, and Alfred Watkins mentions an alternative site marked by a stone in the garden of Well Cottage, Quay Street. The confusion stems partly from the nature of the original feature which, as the 1250 implies, was a "fountain" - a running stream - and, therefore, could be tapped at various points on its way to the river. This is clearly apparent on Dingley's engraving, where a stream of water is depicted running from beneath the architectural canopy. In 1780, during the improvement of Castle Street, the new drains were connected to the culvert leading from the fountain to the river (16). Springs breaking from the Hereford Terrace near the river are not uncommon, and a similar flow emerged near King Street and gave its name to Pipewell Street, the earliest name for Gwynne Street. Apparently the well-filtered water of the gravel, because of its high salt content, had medicinal qualities. In the early 19th century the water from St Ethelbert's Well was recommended for ulcers and sores (17). Charles Watkins of the Hereford Brewery even thought of bottling the water in the 1860's but found the fountain where the water issued from beneath the Bridewell polluted by the city sewers (18). The drinking fountain erected in 1904 was restored by the Hereford Civic Trust and rededicated by the Right Reverend J R G Eastaugh, the Lord Bishop of Hereford, on St Ethelbert's Day, 20th May, 1978.

- (1) H P R Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (1972), 143.
- (2) W de Gray Birch (ed), Liber Vitaes Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester (Hampshire Record Society, 1892), 89.
- (3) A J Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1939), 152, 187.
- (4) M R James, 'Two Lives of St Ethelbert, King and Martyr', Eng Hist Review (1917), 214-44.
- (5) Medieval Archaeology, XVIII (1974), 150-1.
- (6) R Shoesmith, Hereford Archaeological Report (forthcoming); P Rahtz, 'The Archaeology of West Mercian towns' in A Dornier (ed), *Mercian Studies* (1977), 121-2.
- (7) Hereford Times, 2nd September, 1886.
- (8) Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera (Rolls Series, 1861-91), III, 422.
- (9) Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium (Cymmrodorion Soc, 1923), 84.
- (10) B G Charles and H D Emanuel (eds), Cal of earlier Hereford Cathedral Muniments (1955), 338, 987.
- (11) T Dingley, A History from Marble (Camden Soc, 1867), I, 66. W. Stukeley, Itinerarum Curiosum (1724), 67-8.
- (12) Hereford Record Office GH/I/182.
- (13) W J Rees, The Hereford Guide (1827), 67.

- (14) F T Havergal, *Fasti Herefordenses* (1869), 115.
- (15) A Watkins, 'The King's Ditch of the City of Hereford', Trans Woolhope Natur Fld Club, XXIII (1970) 154-5.
- (16) Hereford Record Office, *The Order Book of the Commissioners of the Hereford Paving Act 1778-1820*, f 44.
- (17) M Leather, *The Folklore of Herefordshire* (1912), 12.
- (18) A Watkins, *Loc cit* in note 15, 255.

NOTES ON MILLS FROM ESTATE LEDGERS

By John Wride

Riffins Mill, Bodenham (Thomas Turpin)

1821	Making new trough and penstock to water wheel. Also walling pond head and part of adjoining house. A new hop kiln in the mill.	
1827	Repairing mill trough.	
1828	Cleaning out mill carriage and repairing the weir and water wheel.	
1829	Cleaning out mill carriage and repairs to mill.	
1830	Repairs to mill wheel.	
1831	Repairing mill.	
1832	New water wheel and other cast from machinery at the mill. New trough and pond altered and cleaned.	
1834	Cleaning pond.	
1836	(Mary Turbutt).	
1840	Minor repairs at mill.	
1845	Widening and enlarging the mill pond. Filling up old water course and making a new one.	
1846	(Henry Hyde Junior).	
1847	Repairing bridge and making a new spindle to mill.	
1850	Repairing pond and building shed over water wheel.	
1854	New smut machine fixing and setting to work.	
1855	New shaft.	
1859	New heaver and drag for water course.	
1860	Rebuilding wall to water wheel.	
	R R Miles for new mill stones and fixing	£21.0.0.
1864	R R Miles for iron spindle and brasses.	
1865	Repairing and puddling pond, repairing water wheel, race and bolts.	
1867	R R Miles for French stones	£6.0.0.
	Ditto, new Dressing mill	£15.0.0.
1868	Making floodgate and frame.	

EXCAVATIONS AT THE COUNTY HOSPITAL, BURIAL GROUND OF ST GUTHLAC'S MONASTERY – MAY 1978

On Monday 15 May, Anne Sandford of the City Museum was called in to the County Hospital where skeletons in stone-slab coffins, had been uncovered during excavation work for an underground ducting passage. I was informed, and visited the site on Tuesday morning with Anne Sandford. It was rapidly established that the remains were those of monks belonging to St Guthlac's monastery which occupied the County Hospital and bus station sites from

1143 AD till the dissolution in 1536. The excavation, which was being hand-dug by workmen, was planned to be 2m wide, 2.5m deep and some 50m long.

In consultation with CHAC Chairman, it was decided to mount a small emergency excavation, partly staffed by the City Museum. The work achieved the following aims:-

1. Sufficient burials have been retrieved (25 adult males) to be statistically examined and provide details of the monastic population in terms of age, size and anatomical and pathological abnormalities.
2. Foundations overlying the burials have been established as belonging to the workhouse which later occupied the site.
3. An eastern limit to the burial ground has been established.
4. An archaeological presence has been established within the hospital precinct. The hospital staff now appreciate that their buildings lie on top of an interesting archaeological site and will have to take this into account in future development work.
5. This has been the first opportunity to examine the history of a part of Hereford which, until now, has been entirely dependent on documentary sources.

An article about the excavation appeared on the front page of the Evening News. The information did not reach the press from archaeological sources, and had we not started work by that time we could have had adverse publicity.

The hospital authorities and staff have been very helpful. A room has been provided to lay out the skeletons, photographic and X-ray facilities have been provided and various specialists on the hospital staff and from private practice in the Town have helped with the examination and classification of the remains.

The work is now completed. The complete record will be lodged in the Woolhope Club library and a short report prepared for the transactions.

Anne Sandford and Brian Napp are from the Museum, and Chris Vowles was taken on, on a temporary basis, by the CHAC Committee. When the nature of the site was established, I contacted Paul Gosling of the DOE and made a formal request for funds. The Department felt, however, that this was work which they could not support due to lack of funds for this type of project.

R Shoesmith
Director of Excavations, City of Hereford Archaeological Committee
June 1978

EWYAS HAROLD

The whole area of Ewias consists of curious problems associated with a border location which has seen many changes imposed on a native population.

Although the April meeting was a literal washout, those hardy enough to brave the rain surveyed the village and former borough of Ewyas Harold. Its main feature is the Pre-Norman castle motte which dominates the northern end of the village. A cut-off spur of cornstone overlooks a bailey which once held the major buildings. The sheer sides of this motte must have made it a secure site, but as it is fronted on the north by high land and the common to the east, it is not a particularly strategic position. It is enclosed by two water courses, one of which, the Dore, worked the 2 mills.

The present village lies to the south of the Dore and is therefore cut off from its defences. This suggests that the earliest settlement must have been below the castle bailey, and various land deeds of the 13th century support this idea by mentioning enclosures made by the Priory, which was built on land which belonged to the castle. It would be useful

to find evidence for this on the ground. There is also the likelihood that a road ran under the castle bailey and this would also support this as an earlier site for the village.

On the Priory site are visible signs of embankments, which surround a spring and may have been fishponds or a mill pond. It is our intention to take a closer look at these and to look for evidence of their purpose. The Priory left its site in the 14th century so that it seems likely that the pond continued in use.

Why did the 'Pentecost' reputed to have built the first castle before the Conquest choose this remote spot? Did it have evident signs of the prosperity or was there an existing road system into Wales which it could command? There is a possibility of a Roman road linking Abbey Dore, and it was suggested in the 19th century that the road running from the Craig to the Weir was Roman. It was remarked upon in the Archaeological Survey of the WNFC. This obviously needs investigation by the Section, together with any other possible alignments.

To help answer some of these questions there will be another practical field meeting to look for answers by observation and recording. This is scheduled for Sunday 17th September - see programme.

Jean O'Donnell



FORGE GARAGE, WORMBRIDGE

Field Meeting, 19th February, 1978

A group of eleven members met at Wormbridge to clean up and photograph the bellows and hearth of the old blacksmith's forge.

The buildings are now used as a garage and village shop. Mr T A Statham, the proprietor, readily gave us permission to remove hundredweights of boxes, gas cylinders and stores to make room for the operation. Mr. Webb's excellent photographs, some of which are reproduced at the end of this article, should perhaps have included one of the workforce, begrimed with soot and dust, and festooned with cobwebs at the end of the morning!

The photocopies of Mr. Webb's prints do not do full justice to the original pictures but they show the workshop much as it has been since at least 1900. It is thought locally that the buildings were coach houses associated with the inn on the opposite side of the road (now a private house, Lion Villa). It seems more likely that it was designed to accommodate vehicles which were being built, or repairs. The census of 1841 lists four wheelwrights in Wormbridge and the arcaded front of the workshop certainly appears to be of an early nineteenth century date. The present house is an enlargement of an earlier cottage and, when digging a car inspection pit in 1949, a compacted clay floor was discovered some 20 inches below the present ground level.

The forge is designed for operation by one man who would work the long bellows handle with his left hand whilst holding his work with tongs in his right. The anvil is set at a convenient angle so that, with less than a half turn, the hot metal can be brought to the hammering position. The bellows are supported by a timber framework and were manufactured by Alldays and Onions of Birmingham. The upper surface is a single piece of elmwood and the studs are of brass. Air was directed through a hole in the wall of the bellows alcove into the hearth. The wall would prevent heat and flying sparks from damaging the bellows or setting fire to the wooden frame. A small square window at the back of the forge is designed to support long pieces of metal for such operations as the welding together of two strips. On the right of the hearth, and built into the brickwork, is an iron trough divided lengthwise. One tank contained water for cooling and tempering the metal and the other held a supply of coal or coke for refuelling.

The establishment employed wheelwrights, carpenters and blacksmiths. At the back of the main building is a lean-to shed which covered the seasoning wood and also housed the six-foot-deep saw pit. Nearby, on open ground, lay the tiring platform. This has now been removed for safe keeping to The Dyffryn Farm at Wormbridge.

Having completed our on-site investigations we visited Mr E J Powell, who now lives at The Folly, St. Devereux. Mr. Powell has spent almost fifty years of his life living and working at the forge and was able to give us valuable and interesting information about its day to day running.

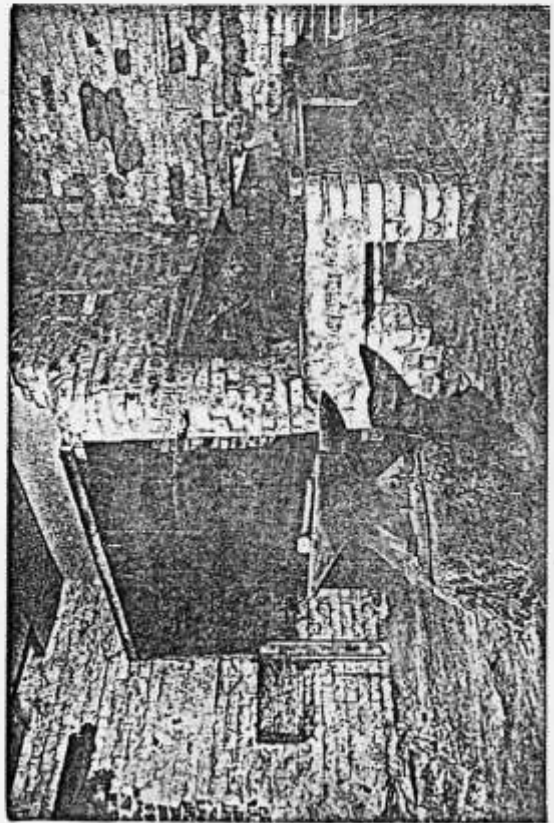
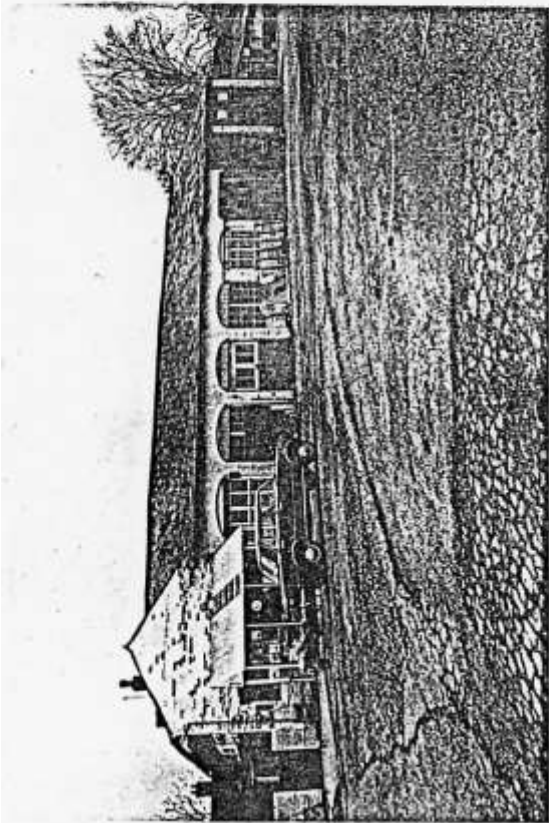
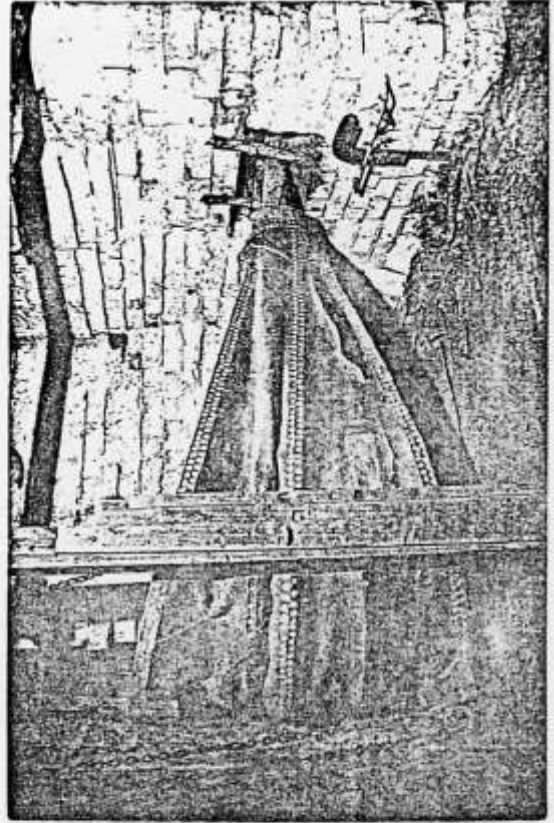
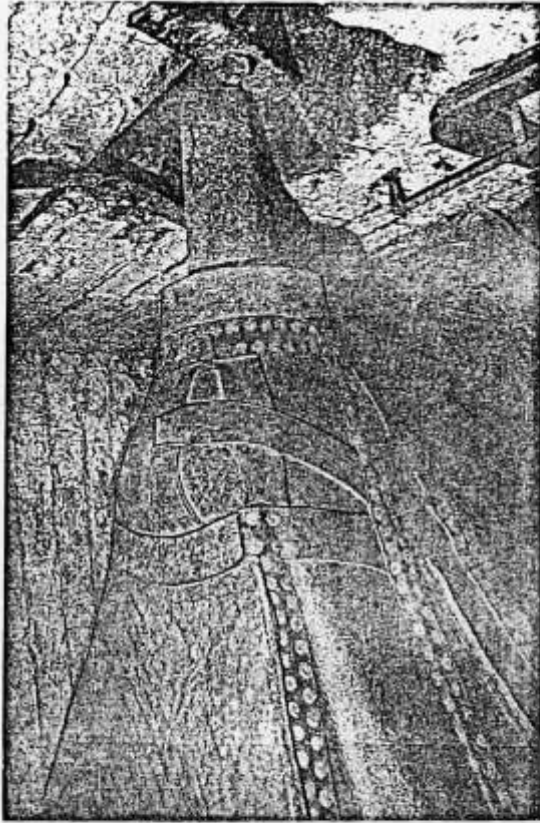
When he joined the business in 1925 there were 4 wheelwrights, two blacksmiths and two apprentices. He 'lived in' and, in addition to his 'keep', he was paid 2 shillings a week for the first year, 3 shillings a week for the second, 4 shillings for the third and 5 shillings for the fourth. He was then a qualified carpenter and wheelwright. His work involved the making of wheels, carts, waggons, wheelbarrows, gates, ladders and coffins, and repairs to all agricultural vehicles. The blacksmiths made hurdles and railings and, of course, shod horses and repaired farm implements. On a wet day, as many as ten horses might be brought for shoeing. He remembers that the long building was divided into four rooms with communicating doors. The first one housed the forge and was used mainly by the wheelwrights. The second was the carpentry workshop. The third was used for shoeing and the blacksmiths, rather inconveniently, had to carry the red-hot shoes from the forge. The end room, away from the dust and bustle, was the painting room. The painting of the finished vehicles was an operation of great care and individuality.

Mr. Powell told us that, in its heyday at the turn of the century, there were 7 wheelwrights and 4 blacksmiths working at the forge. One important source of income was the making of coffins for the Dore workhouse.

Mechanisation was already changing the work schedule when Mr Powell took over the business in 1934. The increased speed of the tractor necessitated the use of rubber rims for farm trailers and, later still, pneumatic tyres. Petrol pumps were installed and, gradually, garage work supplanted the old skills. The forge continued in use until 1960 when electricity came to Wormbridge.

Mr. Powell retired in 1973 and one of his last contracts was the reconstruction of an old farm waggon for Messrs Bulmers Ltd, Hereford. The various processes were followed with great interest and much-photographed by the local community. Some of these are preserved in Mr Powell's album for posterity. He is, rightly, proud of his skills. We hope that he will enjoy a long and happy retirement and be able to complete the memoirs which he is already jotting down in note books.

Mary Thomas



MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ELECTED FOR 1978

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr G C Warren
<u>Secretary:</u>	Miss M Thomas.
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Mrs R Skelton
<u>Field Secretary:</u>	Mr L Skelton
<u>Committee Members:</u>	Mr G Parker . Mr P J Wride.
<u>Editor:</u>	Mr C E Attfield
<u>Assistant Editor:</u>	Mr R E Kay.

ACTIVITIES OF OTHER SOCIETIES

The Bromyard and District Local History Society Summer Programme 1978 includes:

Saturday 8 th April	Exploring Little Cowarne with Mrs C Hopkinson.
Saturday 29 th April	Walk along the Rudall Brook with Mr Inett Homes.
Sunday 14 th May	Exploring Much Cowarne with Mrs J O'Donnell.
Friday 23 rd June	A walk on Bringsty Common with Mrs P Williams to look at houses on the common in Whitbourne.
Saturday 23 rd September	A visit to Aston Munslow to see "The White House" and Museum of Buildings and Country Life. This is the home of the Stedman family for over six centuries. House and gardens.
Friday 13 th October	Annual General Meeting at the Pavilion, Bromyard at 7.30 pm.

The Radnorshire Society, Field Section Programme 1978 includes:

Sunday 21 st May	Kinnerton Area. Meet Kinnerton Church 2.00 pm.
Saturday 18 th June	Bleddfa Area. Meet Bleddfa Church 2.00 pm.
Friday 21 st July	Joint WEA/Research Section, Further Education Centre, Llandrindod Wells 7.00 pm. Subject: 'The Medieval and Post-Medieval Timber-Framed Buildings of Mid-Wales'. Tutor – M Garner.
Sunday 23 rd July	Field Trip continuation of the above. Meet at the pub in Painscastle (centre of village) at 11.00 am <u>or</u> The Crown, Walton at 2.00 pm.
Thursday 10 th August	A walk along Offa's Dyke. Meet ODA Headquarters, The Old Primary School, Knighton. 11.00 am. Bring picnic lunch, etc.
Friday 22 nd September	Joint WEA/Research Section Meeting. At Further Education Centre, Llandrindod Wells, 7.30 pm. 'Castles of Wales and the March'. Tutor – J Spurgeon.
Saturday 23 rd September	Continuation of the above in the field. Meet outside Further Education Centre, Llandrindod Wells. 11.00 am. OR at Aberedw Church, 2.00 pm. Your car will be necessary.
Social Evening	At The Hundred House Inn, Bleddfa. 8.00 pm, 23 rd June, Midsummer's Day. Informal gathering. Bar snacks available if required. Friends welcome.