

# HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



**HAN 36     June 1979**

**WOOLHOPE CLUB  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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**EDITORIAL**

The Committee of the Research Section always spend some time in planning the programme for each half year. At the last meeting it was thought that members should be asked if they would like to put forward places or areas perhaps not well known (or unrecorded to their knowledge) worthy of investigation or recording. If you do have ideas or suggestions, or in fact any activities you think are worthy of consideration, please let the Secretary, Miss M Thomas, know.

We had obtained permission from the owner of the land to further investigate the mysterious Tankard Walls at Bodenham, but the visit was postponed due to the bad weather which prevented January and February programme visits.

The programme for the second half of 1978 was a "watery" one in the main, with concentration on Water Power, Mill sites and other aspects of this very interesting facet of industrial archaeology. The talk by Mr S D Coates on Water Power in the Monnow and Trothy Valleys was well illustrated by slides and was very enjoyable. We are indebted to Mr Coates for his work on this and the two subsequent field days on the Monnow, Trothy and Redbrook Valleys which were agreed to be most interesting by all who took part. A fascinating little book called 'Water-mills of the Monnow and Trothy and their tributaries' by S D Coates and D G Tucker, published by the Monmouth District Museum Service, is a very readable "must" for anyone interested, at a cost of £1.25 plus postage.

Members who attended the visit to Kenchester on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1978 were shown the extensive excavations and a large collection of pottery, bones, stonework, part of a lead cistern, coins and other domestic articles. We express our thanks to Sebastian Rahtz and Anthony Wilmott, co-directors with the help and guidance of Phillip Rahtz and Lorna Watts. I understand that the excavation of the complex of buildings was by no means exhausted when operations had to cease, and that a well was discovered during the last few days. It was not possible, however, to complete excavations due to lack of time and problems with water levels.

A list of paid-up members is included with the News letter, but some difficulties do arise when subscriptions are included with the main club subscription, or when members are in arrears.

Finally, may I thank all contributors to this News, and express my appreciation of the valuable work of the Assistant Editor, Mr R Kay.

**C E Attfield**

**PROGRAMME JULY-DECEMBER 1979**

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Huntington Mill near Kington. Failed borough. Motte and bailey castle (mill wheel in operation if conditions favourable). Leaders: J Wride and R Kay.	Meet Swan PH, Huntington 11.00 am and 2.00 pm
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> August (Social evening)	Archaeological barbecue – courtesy of Mary Thomas (bring something to grill and a bottle). 7.30 pm – please complete slip and send to	Hillside, Abbeydore.

Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	Mary if going. Tankard Walls, Bodenham – revisit to locate site of earthworks, possibly in coppice at Dudales Hope, in morning. Afternoon Whyle near Puddleston – shrunken village and lost chapel. Rosedale – Victorian water landscaping. Leaders: R Kay and S B Webb.	Meet 11.00 am, Englands Gate PH, Bodenham. 2.00 pm, Lamb PH, Stoke Prior.
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> October	Kington-Leominster canal, Part II – Wooferton to Stourport – Aqueduct, Southall Tunnel and other surviving features. Leader: G Parker.	Meet 10.30 am, Leominster Bus Station.
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Penyard Castle. Howell Hill – earthworks and opencast mining. Lime quarry and dam.	Meet 11.00 am, 25 Alton Road, Ross-on-Wye. 2.00 pm, Public House at Kiln Green, Map ref: 601196.
Thursday, 6 <sup>th</sup> December	Annual General Meeting – Tudor Room, Golden Eagle Restaurant, Commercial Street, Hereford. 7.30 for 8.00 pm. Dinner (your choice from menu) at 9.00 pm.	

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.

**KENCHESTER 1978 – INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS**

The excavation of the building complex to the east of the town of Magnis was completed. The site was discovered in 1960 by A Baker, by air photography. The plan appeared to be that of a Romano-Celtic temple, but excavation in 1977 revealed this to be a fallacy. In fact the site is a villa complex, probably related economically to the town of Magnis, and extending over four centuries of the Roman period. Though the entire Roman complex was excavated during the 1978 season, by far the most significant discovery has been that of an Iron Age roundhouse, most interesting in view of the hitherto held theory that Iron Age occupation in Herefordshire was limited to hill forts.

The work was directed, between March and August 1978, by Sebastian Rahtz and Anthony Wilmott, with the help and guidance of Philip Rahtz and Lorna Watts, and on-site assistance from Cameron Moffet, Carol Kuke, Paul Bullivant and Patrick Blackman. Roberta Tomber was in charge of finds analysis. The labour force consisted of fourteen employed on the Job Creation Programme.

- (0) The stream (E) was once again discovered this year, seeming to swing to the north in the western part of the excavation.
- (1) a), b), c) The existence of pre-Roman occupation, on the site, of which only vague traces were found last year, was confirmed in:1978. Again, the impression is that of an undefined streamside settlement. In the features interpreted as Iron Age, not only

was bone, daub and slag present, but also a considerable number of Iron Age pottery types, linear-tooled, and duck stamped rims being most common though rims decorated with chevrons and triangles were also present. A ditch (JJ) runs in a very wide curve to the north where it is cut by gravel pit AF (see below); a round timber structure (BC) was discovered, whose features lacked Roman material but produced a large amount of Iron Age pottery, slag, bone, burnt clay and worked flints. A ring of post-holes was cut by a pennanular ditch of 6.20 metres diameter. It would appear that two successive phases of building occurred on the identical site, with no change in size of the structure. Post holes of these two phases were discovered in association with, and cut by, the ring-ditch. Two pits which cut the ring ditch also contain Iron Age pottery, though Roman pottery is present in their top fill, which is slump from an all-period Roman dump, or midden area. Whether this is an individual homestead or one house in a settlement cannot at this stage be said. The greenish buried soil interpreted as an Iron Age ground level also produced finds of Iron Age pottery. A new enclosure (AL), again aceramic, was excavated, giving four possible pre-Roman enclosures. Ditch KK was followed until swallowed up by LL and MM. The huge curving ditch LL, noted in 1977, was found to continue uninterrupted to the north, maintaining its wide curve, and showed no signs of halting. To the west, the ditch was not picked up again and last year's conclusions remain valid. .

- (2) a) Immediately following the silting of ditch LL, at least three pits of enormous dimensions and completely irregular shape and depth were dug. These have been interpreted as gravel pits, the gravel probably being used for the surfaces further to the south (AH), though it is worth considering the possibility that these massive pits produced material for mortar or road construction in the town of Magnis itself. Reverse stratigraphy in pit AP would seem to indicate that the top soil and spoil from pit AF were deposited into AP. A coin of Hadrian, giving a TPQ for this operation, was found in the primary silting of AP. A constant silting of AF was followed by its use as a sump at the end of a cess drain (AR). A massive burnt layer overlaid these features, finds from which indicate a mid-late second century date for the burning and include a quarter of a lead tank (or modius?) and three large quernstones placed at regular intervals between the posts of the burnt Building (AJ). Querns have been found in some quantity on site, and a predominantly arable economy seems indicated. This theory is supported by the boundary ditches seen from the air in adjacent fields. The burnt building may be associated with the burnt joists (TT) and the polygonal ditch PP.

There would appear to be reaction to this fire, as the large boundary ditch MM was dug immediately after. To the north, water-washed burnt material formed primary silt in this ditch. It was lined on the inside by a row of large square post holes (indicating a radial defence measure). As was stated last year, the south boundary associated with MM was the stream. The Roman road may have been the north boundary.

- b) The plan of the masonry building FF was recovered. This rectangular building of several rooms was probably associated with the laying of extensive thick layers of red gravel on yard CC, to form internal floors and external surfaces. The massive foundations of this structure are of several phases. These include a wall thickening to twice the previous width in one part. A tower-like structure, or at least two stories are envisaged at present. The rooms excavated are very small, and include a room with a floor (or a first floor room) supported on a series of regularly-spaced posts. A feature of the building is painted plaster, with a palm-tree motif. The building may be associated with the burnt building or ditch MM. A feature of flimsy timber construction (AK) overlies the burning. The two narrow slots and vestigial joists are

interpreted as a raised plank path leading to the NE corner of building FF, and preserving the heavy soot burnt layer.

- (3) The complete plan of the major building (M) was revealed. An attempt to find the road frontage in the lane to the north of the site resulted in the discovery of the north wing, containing a mosaic with black and white border and guilloche patterning. The road was not found. The building seems to have been built in a single operation as a winged corridor structure, with a hall behind the corridor. The entrance was probably at the west side of the hall, between two wings. Enough masonry joints survived to show a constant series of alterations in the building. This includes the subdivision of the hall into three rooms, and the insertion of a corn dryer into the central one of these rooms; before the final elimination of the corridor.
- (4) This involved, at some stage, the levelling to sill wall level of the whole superstructure at the north of the corridor. This may have been contemporary with the major additions to the south wing noted in 1977 and including an apse. No such addition seems to have been made to the north wing. The insertion of the corn-dryer involved the building of a (?) lean-to annexe on the rear of the centre of the building. Unusually, it did not represent the last phase of occupation of the structure.

A path (BF) from the probable entrance led to a courtyard, which was patched in many phases (EE) and overlay the plank walkway (see above). The yard was walled on the east side, with a wall shaped parallel to the shape of the building frontage, and a narrow corridor separating the two. To the south, the courtyard wall joined the east wall of structure FF, and to the north a further exit ran to the north wing. The entrance of the complex from the road was along the same line as the plank walls, as may be evidenced by the finding of a barrel padlock key and door bolts in a similar position by the hedge.

The latest additions to the main building (M) can be tentatively dated by the well (BA) whose shaft is built of identically similar dressed stone, and whose construction pit yielded one of Constantius and three early coins of Constantine in near perfect condition, and one worn coin of Gallienus. This would seem to indicate an early fourth century date for these alterations, and perhaps for the mosaic also. The need for the well was probably the complete drying up of stream and trough (Y). It must be remembered that the latest ruinous phase of the trough included a late Roman cooking pot.

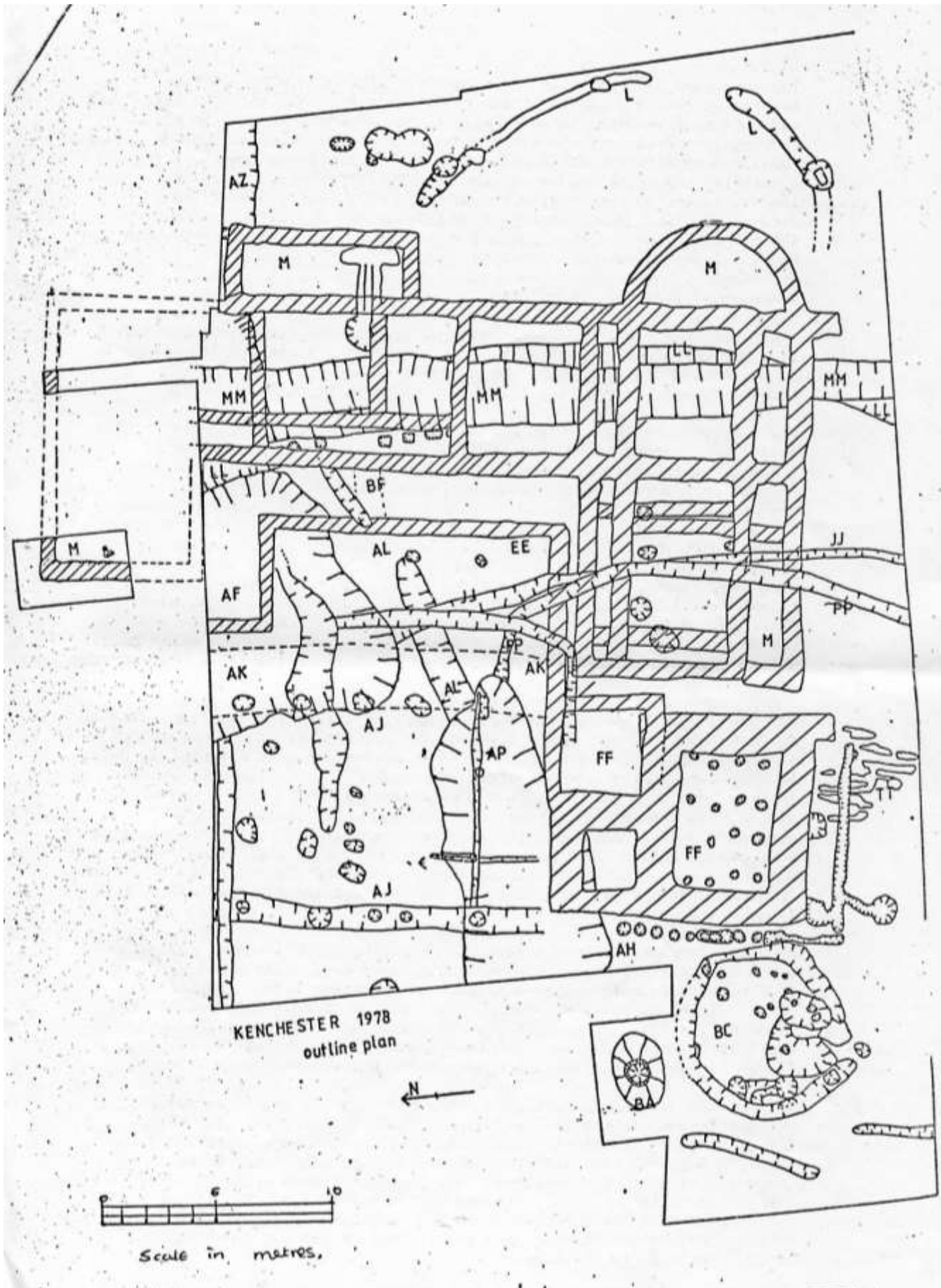
- (5) The mediaeval field boundary ditch was further traced, but of post-Roman features. The most interesting was the rutted road AZ which may indicate the first move from the Roman road. This overlay the north wing of building M and the ruts cut the external walls, which by now had been levelled. The road consisted of rubble, but included a finely worked oolite column base. Another similar base was found in a rubble-filled feature below the road. These exotic items may originate in the town rather than on this site.

The site in the route which left the Roman road and gradually became consolidated on the modern metalled track above the north wing is mysterious, as is the fact that the metalling is only four centimetres deep over the mosaic, which is destroyed by its ruts.

The site seems to be outside the ribbon development of Magnis, and may have continuity from the Iron Age and a separate origin and development from the town. It almost certainly had a mixed economy, primarily arable, and its produce probably found its way to Magnis. The discovery of several tiles stamped PPG and one RPG, suggests some trade or other link with Gloucester. Dr Webster suggests that this form was founded under colonial aegis to provide for the needs of the colonia. The finding of these tiles outside their place of origin, to which they have hitherto been limited, are of interest in the context and the status and origin of Magnis, and its function in the wider context of Western Britain.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge our debt to those who braved the elements in the spring of 1978, volunteers and paid personnel alike; to the Manpower Services Commission for their provision of an excellent workforce; to the DOE and Hereford and Worcester County Council for their help and organization; Blue Circle Aggregates and their staff for their co-operation, especially in the handling of post; and to Mr Dew, the tenant farmer, for agreeing once more to forfeit some of his crop. Last, but not least, I must thank our administrator and driver, Julie Dawson, and James Bailey, our excellent finds draughtsman.

**Anthony R Wilmott, Co-Director  
Hereford and Worcester County Museum,  
To whom permission to print this article is acknowledged**





## **FIELD MEETING AT KILPECK, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1979**

The meeting was arranged to visit Priory Farm, Kilpeck, to investigate if there were any existing remains of the Medieval priory which formerly occupied the site. This to be followed by an examination of a mound in Diggets Wood and to try and ascertain its date and purpose. The site is near Marlas Mill, less than three-quarters of a mile from Kilpeck Village. Both sites are listed in the Inventory of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments for Herefordshire, Volume I, under the Parish of Kilpeck. The brief descriptions there given are reproduced as follows:-

### **The Priory**

House, barn and earthwork, 370 yards south-east of church, occupies the site of a small cell of the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter, Gloucester, which was founded in the early 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The house is of two storeys, originally timber framed but mostly refaced with rubble. The roofs are covered with stone slates. Built early in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century on an L-shaped plan, with wings extending to the east and south. Timber-framing exposed on the north side. Inside there are some original moulded and chamfered ceiling beams. The barn, west of the house, timber-framed and of five bays, was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, with an early 18<sup>th</sup> Century wing on the north-west. Earthworks probably marking the site of the Priory lie about 70 yards south-south-west of the house and consist of a slight platform with one or two small banks to the east of it.

### **Mound**

On the south bank of stream, north-east of Diggets Wood, three-quarters of a mile south-south-west of the church, is roughly round, 26 yards in diameter at base and 6 feet high; condition fairly good.

At the time of the visit made by members of the Archaeological Research Section, Priory Farm (GR 447304) and its environs were obscured by a covering of deep snow, making a detailed examination of the supposed site of the Priory virtually impossible. However, the site was further visited and examined under slightly more clement weather conditions on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1979.

After the initially unsuccessful visit to Priory Farm on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1979, the members then proceeded to "Diggets Wood". At the time of the visit of the inspecting officers of the RCAHM (circa 1935), the mound in Diggets Wood was reported as being in a fairly good condition. On the occasion of our visit, matters were rather different. We must now report that this antiquity is no longer in existence! From information received from the present occupying tenant we were able to learn that during 1951 Diggets Wood had been completely clear felled. The land it had once occupied had been grassed and was now used as pasture. The wood had once covered the end of ridge falling to the north between two small streams. A small bungalow had since been erected just above the confluence of these two streams. During 1973-74, the mound, which was situated on a level shelf above the more easterly of the streams (GR 440295) was levelled by bulldozing, preparatory to ploughing and conversion of the site to pasture. The mound, at the time of its destruction, had a solitary pine tree growing on its summit. An examination revealed no trace of stone, darker soil or apparently anything of interest on the site or in the spoil heap which had been pushed into the deep course cut by the stream. Any surmise as to the original purpose of the vanished mound must now remain in abeyance. It would seem unlikely to have been sepulchral, and although the site is overlooked by steeply rising higher ground immediately to the east, west and south it would seem to have been a defensive construction, possibly of 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century date, similar to the larger and still well preserved mound nearby at Howton Farm, adjoining the A465(T) in the neighbouring parish of Kenderchurch (GR 415294).

## VISIT TO PRIORY FARM, KILPECK, 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL, 1979

The brief description of the farmhouse and outbuildings of Priory Farm, as detailed in the Inventory of the RCAHM, was found to be basically correct. However, since the date of that survey further alterations and additions to the house (north porch and retiled roof), barn and the other outbuildings were noticed. On the accompanying sketch plan, shaded buildings are of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century date, those unshaded are of more recent date. The cartshed (garage); adjoining G is of 19<sup>th</sup> Century date. Within the house, in addition to the mentioned exposed 17<sup>th</sup> Century ceiling beams, contemporary door frames were noticed.

South of the house, the garden occupies a level platform slightly raised above the surrounding ground level on the south and south-west, where it drops by a 3 feet high scarp into a newly re-cut drainage ditch. At G, amongst a heap of rubble forming a garden rockery, one worked jambstone was seen. At F, lying loose, is a square stone masonry plinth 1 foot 6 inches by 1 foot 6 inches overall, by 4½ inches deep and with a surrounding 3½ inch chamfer reducing its top area to 1 foot 2 inches by 1 foot 2 inches. At EEE are three rectangular stone troughs. Probably none of these pieces of worked masonry are Medieval and need not pre-date the present farmhouse. No certain trace of any worked stonework could be discerned amongst the rubble construction of the farmhouse or of the plinth of the barn.

South-west of the farmhouse the ground slopes away at an increasing gradient into a shallow valley. The lower part of this slope on the south, for a distance of about 75 feet east to west, has been artificially scarped for a height of 10 feet to accommodate at its base, at H, a fishpond, now silted and dry. Slight remains of a breached earthwork dam remain at K. The slight platform and banks mentioned by the RCAHM, south-south-west of the house, have been subsequently ploughed out and are now barely traceable. In the north-east corner of this slight southward sloping platform we were informed that the plough has been arrested by the presence of large quantities of sandstone rubble. This may mark the site of any Medieval buildings. It is at present partially occupied by a recent dump of earth etc. Immediately to the south of the slight sloping platform, within a rectangular brick foundation, is a copious spring and at C to the north a former pond has been drained and its site occupied by a yard and farm building of recent construction.

The manor of Kilpeck was granted by William The Conqueror to William Fitz Norman, who built the first timber and earthwork Castle. His son, Hugh Fitz Norman, gave land to the Benedictines for the founding of a small priory early in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. It was suppressed sometime between 1422 and 1448. Wade was of the opinion that the farm outbuildings were on the actual site of the Priory and that some of its masonry was probably incorporated in reconstructing the later buildings. However, there is no visible evidence of this being so.

With the possible exception of the fishpond, the indications of a Medieval building above ground at Priory Farm are virtually non-existent. Only trenching or an excavation of its reputed site, together with an examination of the surviving charters and documents of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, could perhaps resolve the matter.

It should be remembered that often the granting of lands to found a cell or daughter house of a larger monastic establishment was sometimes not in actuality carried out. The lands instead would sometimes be administered solely for the economic benefit of the parent house, with nothing more substantial than a grange on the lands so granted. A particular local instance of such a happening was the founding of an abortive daughter house of the Cistercian Abbey of Dore at Trawscoed, north of Bronllys in Brecon. This never became de facto, for the lands so given for the founding of the daughter house were immediately alienated by the mother house and never supported anything more than a grange, directly controlled for the benefit of Dore.

The Archaeological Research Section wishes to express its thanks to Mr & Mrs J R Pike for the facility to wander over the lands of Priory Farm and its outbuildings.

**R E Kay**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES BY W R PYE, WESTFIELDS, LYONSHALL, KINGTON**

### **Prehistoric, Neo Bronze, Herefordshire**

#### **Titley, SO 32805877**

A previously unrecorded standing stone of large proportions, 6 x 4¼ x 3½ feet. It is to be found against the butt of an old oak tree, to where it has been moved from its original position on the summit of the glacial moraine some 20 yds south east of the present position. It appears to be lying on its side. A deep groove or channel some 6½ ft long runs along the side of the stone and around the one side. This channel has an outer width of 8 inches, a depth of 4 ½ inches and an inner width of 4¾ inches. The channel is smooth and is man-made, being out of keeping with the rough conglomerate of which the stone is composed. Height OS is approximately 525 ft.

### **Prehistoric, Herefordshire**

#### **Titley, SO 32565882**

A very low circular mound five paces in diameter and 18 inches high is a possible barrow of different type to that on the western side of the field. It is on a slightly leveller section of the field, half way up the slope, and at approximately 540 ft, OS.

### **Lower Paleolithic, Herefordshire**

#### **Tupsley, SO 5273 4035**

In 1977, 12 year old Christopher Baker, 16 Seaton Avenue, Tupsley, Hereford, found an Acheulian Hand-Axe in his garden at a depth of 2½ ft whilst digging a hole for a game of 'Cowboys and Indians'. It is of poor quality stone, weighs .88 Kg (1lb 15 ozs) and measures 19.15 x 9.5 x 5.8 cms. It is a flat pear-shape, seemingly of Wymer type 'F'. It was found at a height of 200 ft OS, in boulder clay, is of greyish material, and unrolled. When seen was on loan to Hereford Museum.

## **THE OPENING OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TO WITHINGTON**

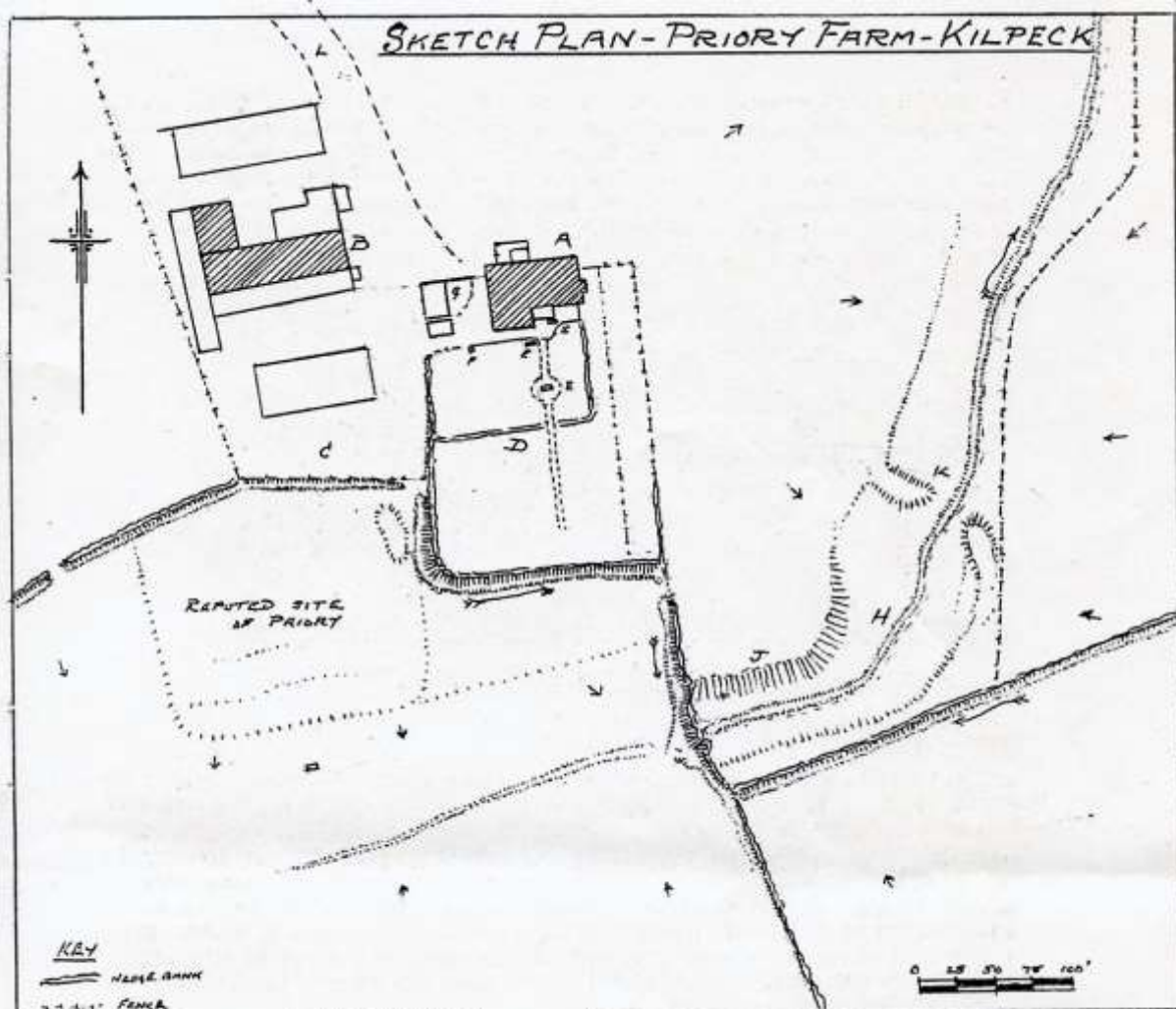
### **By G C Warren**

The construction of the second part of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal, from Ledbury to Hereford, started in the middle of December 1839. The Company's new bill authorising the raising of capital to permit this passed the Committee of the House of Lords towards the end of May 1839 and a new share issue of 2250 £20 shares was made. The H & G Canal Company Clerk, Stephen Ballard, estimated that the cost to finish the canal to Hereford would not be less than £7,6147 5. 6.

The canal was opened as far as Withington on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1844, and a dinner was organised as a testimonial to Stephen Ballard. The Hereford Journal of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1844 carried a notice asking interested persons wishing to attend the dinner to indicate their intentions by 24<sup>th</sup> February.

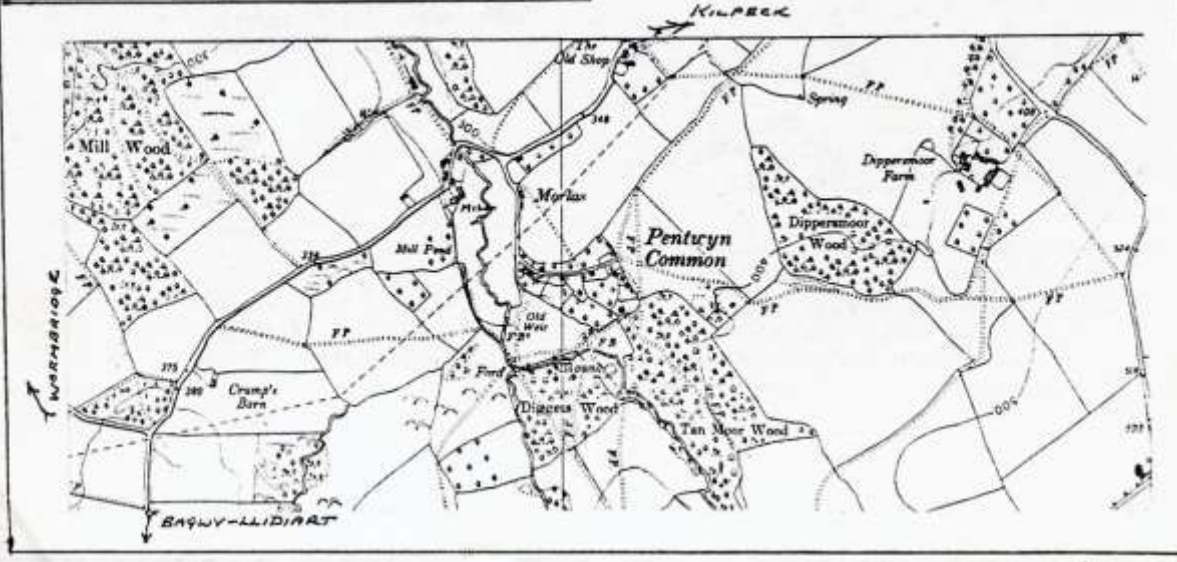
The Hereford Journal for Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February carried a lengthy report of the proceedings during the whole day. The copy of the Hereford Journal in the Hereford Reference Library is obviously the first edition as it points out that only brief notes of the speeches will be given, "reserving a more ample report for a Second Edition ...". One must hope that a copy of the Second Edition has been preserved somewhere.

However, in one of Ballard's pocket note-books there is an entry headed, in Longhand, "Speech, at opening of canal to Withington", and I have attempted a transcription of this draft. The reporter at the dinner was obviously fairly good at his job as his account of Ballard's speech tallies very closely with Ballard's own draft.



- KEY**
- HEDGE BANK
  - - - - - FENCE
  - A FAARMHOUSE
  - B BARN
  - C SITE OF POND
  - D GARDEN
  - E E STONE THROUS
  - F STONE PUNTH
  - G HAYSTACK RUBBLE
  - H SITE OF FISH POND
  - J ARTIFICIAL SCARP
  - K DAM EARTHWORK
  - L APPROACH DRIVEWAY
- SCALE APPROX 1" = 100'  
MENS ET DEL 2-4-79  
R.B.MAY

**DIGGETS WOOD MOUND**  
**SITE MAP - O.S. - 6 INS - 1 MILE**



HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL

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TESTIMONIAL OF RESPECT TO MR BALLARD  
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On the 26<sup>th</sup> instant this useful public work will by OPENED to WITHINGTON and on that day the Landowners and Occupiers of the Line with others interested in the undertaking HAVE INVITED MR S BALLARD, the Engineer, to a PUBLIC DINNER at the CITY ARMS HOTEL, HEREFORD, in testimony of the respect due to him for the manner in which the Works have been conducted through the several Estates on the line, and also to thank him for his exertions in bringing forward a work so beneficial to the county at large.

CHAIRMAN

F H THOMAS, Esq

VICE PRESIDENT

J D KEDWARD, Esq

COMMITTEE

MR G CROOSE, Burcott

MR T LANE, Castleton

MR C A MASON, Tarrington

MR R ACSTER, Thingehill

MR T EVANS, Solicitor, Hereford

MR W APPERLEY, Withington

MR TURNER, Westhide

MR J JAUNCEY, Nunnington

MR T BURLTON, Westhide

MR W TAYLOR, Showle

MR P BALLARD, Woodmanton

MR J B VEVERS, Yarkhill

LEDBURY COMMITTEE

CHARLES COOKE, Esq

JAMES GREGG, Esq

THOMAS JONES, Esq

Tickets including a Bottle of Wine, Dessert and Waiters 10s 6d each

Dinner on the Table at Four o' Clock

The Gentlemen who coincide in the above arrangements to testify their respect for Mr Ballard will oblige the Committee by leaving their names at either the City Arms or Green Dragon Hotels, Hereford; Feathers Hotel or New Inn, Ledbury; Lion or Oak Inn, Leominster; or the residence of either one of the Committee, previously to Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> Instant.

The Committee's Boat will leave Ledbury on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> at Nine o'clock, arrive at Canon Froome at Eleven and at Withington about One o'clock, where Mr Bosley will provide Coaches to be in readiness to convey the party into Hereford, at One Shilling each.

## OPENING OF THE GLOUCESTER AND HEREFORD CANAL TO WITHINGTON

The completion of the Canal has been for some time regarded as an object of great importance to this city and county, and the circumstance of the work having been finished up to Withington, about four miles only from Hereford, was therefore hailed with much satisfaction. A more suitable occasion indeed for paying a just tribute of respect and approval to Mr Stephen Ballard, the talented engineer, for the manner in which he has conducted the work through the entire line, could scarcely have been chosen and he was accordingly invited to a public dinner, which was given at the City Arms Hotel on Monday last. The interest felt on the occasion by all classes of citizens was intense, and the number and respectability of those who attended were beyond all expectation.

In pursuance of the previous arrangement a procession of five boats left Ledbury at nine o'clock the same morning, the first containing a band of music, the next the committee and friends; one with goods belonging to Messrs Bunning and Gibson; one the property of Messrs Crowley, ditto; and one with salt from Droitwich. These boats were all decorated with union-jacks, flags, etc. and had a very pleasing appearance. About twenty-seven other boats freighted with coal, etc. followed in the course of the day. The view from the wharf at Withington along the line of the Canal to the lock, was extremely picturesque, and the whole scene was peculiarly animating. On the wharf itself from fifty to sixty labourers were employed, and the whole preparations and arrangements, were completed in a very short space of time. There were here four or five carts from Leominster, waiting for the arrival of the coal boats, while several wagons laden with wheat for "exportation", if we may use the term, also arrived - in short, the whole scene was one of bustling, trading animation, and formed but a miniature emblem, we hope, of the activity which will one day be displayed at the terminus in the vicinity of Widemarsh. The present wharf is on Withington Marsh, close to the Cross-Keys inn, and opposite to the latter a very neat cottage has been erected for the residence of the engineer. Mr Bateman, of Lugg Bridge Mills, was the first to pitch a load of wheat early in the morning to be forwarded to its destination per the canal.

The procession reached the present terminus at half-past two o'clock having been five hours on the way from Ledbury; and some delay then took place in advancing towards Hereford, in consequence of a very heavy shower of rain, the weather having been inpropitious all the morning with the exception of intervals when the sun burst forth in great splendour. Three hogsheads of cider were given to the workmen, and with all good humour universally prevailed. No accident of any consequence occurred, the only circumstance of this kind being that of a horse led by a respectable inhabitant of this city getting into the canal, where he was soon released without sustaining damage.

The Messrs Bosley had supplied two stage coaches and a mail for the purpose of conveying visitors to Hereford; and there were likewise two or three flies, besides gigs and other vehicles; several equestrians and pedestrians were also present, and the total number of spectators was estimated at 1300; in fact the event was universally regarded as one of the utmost importance and interest. On land, Mr Ballard, the Committee and the visitors entered the different coaches etc. and forming a procession headed by the band, advanced towards Hereford, on arriving at which they alighted at the Hotel, being greeted with the greatest enthusiasm. At five o'clock a company amounting to about 200 and comprising many of the county gentlemen besides numbers of the citizens, sat down to an elegant repast provided in honour of the Guest, Mr Ballard. F H Thomas, Esq. presided, Mr J D Kedward fulfilling the duties of Vice-President and amongst the company we noticed the Rev John Hopton; Edward Griffiths, Esq; J. Griffiths, Esq; R D Hereford, Esq; The Mayor of

Hereford, (W Webb, Esq.); T. Davis, Esq, Capt Price, RN and R T Barra, Esq, City Magistrates; G. Croose, Esq; F L Bodenham, Esq; Rev W Gretton; Thos Evans, Esq; Proctor, Hereford; T Jones, Esq, Ledbury; H Edy, Esq; Samuel Baker, Esq, Gloucester; W P Price, Esq, Tibberton; E Shelton, Esq, Thorngrove, Worcestershire; Mr T L Tripp; Mr Thomas Pulling; Mr W Ashton; Mr Barnard; Mr Draper; Mr C Pritchard; Messrs Bunning and Gibson; Mr Vevers, Mr Pember; Mr Williams, Eign Street; and many others of our respected fellow-citizens, whose name we have not room to mention.

We are in possession of full notes of the speeches, but having to go to the machine at an early hour on Tuesday evening, we shall at present only give a brief summary of the whole, reserving a more ample report for a Second Edition which we intend to have ready in time for post on Wednesday afternoon, this day).

The toasts of the Queen - Prince Albert and the Royal Family - the Duke of Wellington and the Army - the Navy - (Capt Price RN returned thanks) - the High Sheriff (T G Symons, Esq) - the Lord Lieutenant of the County (Lord Bateman) - the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese - the Members for the County and City - the Mayor and Town Council of Hereford etc. were given from the chair.

The MAYOR in the name of the Town Council returned their united thanks for the honour shown them, which he duly appreciated, particularly as he felt that the Corporation had not aided so much as they ought to have done in bringing the canal to Hereford (Cheers).

The CHAIRMAN in the proposing of the toast of the evening said, I need not enlarge on the advantages of a ready and cheap communication by water (Hear). It carries to the best market at the least expense the corn and the cider of the tenant, and the bark and timber of the landlord - (Hear, and cheers). It brings to all that necessary of life in this climate, coal of superior quality to that with which we were heretofore supplied; and though at present some complaint might be made of the state of our roads, they must be continually benefited by the transfer of all heavy carriage to the Canal (Cheers). For all these benefits we are mainly indebted to an individual, to pay respect to whom we are this day assembled, who has planned and executed the line of the Canal with great professional skill and whose zeal, upheld by exemplary patience, and aided by the kindness of manner and the well-earned reputation of strict integrity, has conciliated the many conflicting interests in the course of the canal, and triumphing over every obstacle has reached its present temporary limit. He had the honour of proposing the health of their respected guest Mr Ballard.

(The mention of Mr Ballard's name was received with loud cheering, continuing for some:time, and repeated again and again.)

Mr Ballard returned thanks in an exceedingly neat and modest but very effective address. He spoke gratefully of the assistance which had been afforded him by gentlemen of the county and others in carrying on the work, and expressed the gratification which he felt in having witnessed its successful progress to Withington. He looked forward with anxiety to the time when it would be opened to Hereford, to which place and the county it would be a most important benefit (Cheers). Wherever he might hereafter be placed, he should always remember to the latest hour of his life the kindness which he had experienced in this beautiful, fertile, and hospitable county (Cheers). In conclusion Mr Ballard proposed the health of the Rev Mr Money and the members of the Canal Committee, which was given with enthusiasm.

The other speakers were Samuel Baker, Esq of Gloucester; Richard Hereford, Esq of Sufton; the Rev J Hopton; the Vice-Chairman; W Price, Esq; F L Bodenham, Esq; Mr Baylis

of Ledbury; Mr Robert Ballard; Mr J Tomkins; Mr Shelton; Mr S Ballard; Mr Croose; Mr Tripp; Mr Taylor; Mr Terry, surgeon and others. The various observations of these gentlemen went to show that the line of the Canal had been completed in the most satisfactory manner, the work being done in a superior style, and there having been no offensive conduct to others on the part of the navigators, and fewer offences on their part than usual among labourers of that description; that landowners who had opposed the work at first and objected to its course through their property, were now in its favour; that a plan would shortly be submitted for completing the Canal to Hereford; that many shares had been sold at a premium, and that although there had been considerable apathy on the part of the inhabitants of Hereford, yet that it was now fast wearing away. No time when the line would probably be finished was mentioned, but one gentleman expressed the hope that such would be the case within twelve months. It was calculated that when finished, coal might be purchased in this city at 13s 6d per ton.

Mr Thos Pulling in the course of a very neat address regretting the unavoidable absence of his father from the meeting, and urging on the citizens the importance of the work, said that in order to advance one step towards attaining so desirable an object the firm to which he belonged would be most happy to enrol themselves as shareholders. (Cheering).

The Chairman during the evening read a letter from Captain Watson, lamenting that he was unable to attend, but paying a high tribute of respect to the merits and talents of Mr Ballard. Indeed every gentleman who addressed the company spoke in the highest terms of the Engineer. Several excellent songs were given, and a more agreeable meeting has never been witnessed.

#### SPEECH AT OPENING OF CANAL TO WITHINGTON, 26.2.1844

I only wish I had the power of expressing to you my (a) gratitude for the great honour you have done me and for the very kind and friendly feeling shown toward me. If I could persuade myself I was deserving of it I should be very honoured and great cause there would be for it (b) for to have the good opinion of so numerous and highly respectable a company as this is an honour that anyone should be proud of. I thank you much for your kindness and good opinion but report that I cannot take to myself the honour you so kindly bestow (c), my humble service in bringing forward this canal must have been useless unless backed by powerful and enterprising men whose confidence and good opinion I have had the good fortune to obtain.

Ever since my first engagement in this undertaking, now nearly 17 years, I have been actuated by happier motives than merely those arising from my professional (d) capacity, I have felt an interest and strong desire for the success of the undertaking having always felt convinced that the canal must confer (e) benefits immensely great (f) and highly underrated (5) by the county generally.

I have therefore been buoyed up and carried forward through many difficulties that have beset the progress of the undertaking with the hope that its worth and importance to the county would instantly be seen and acknowledged and now, indeed, the time is come when that hope is realised.

It has been highly-gratifying to me to (g) observe the proceedings of this day and I feel fully recompensed (h) by these expressions of approbation for all my (i) labour and exertion in executing the now acknowledged useful work.



(3) I ought, I think, to apologise (j) on account of the unfinished state of the works, we have been so over anxious to open the canal for trade that we have merely made a passing way for the boats and have left undone every thing that we could put off and finish while the trading is going on.

I shall, in a few days, remove my residence to Withington when, I trust, in a short time we shall finish up and make the canal assume a very different appearance to that it has now.

(k) That part of the canal between Withington and Hereford we shall immediately commence and (l) the time I look forward to with great anxiety when we shall open the canal into this city.

(4) The nature of my profession is such that it is impossible for me to make even a probable conjecture where the remainder of my days may be spent after the works on this canal are finished; wherever my work may happen to be there I must go and where ever that may be to the end of my life (m) it will always offer me a pleasant reflection that it has been considered that my humble service has in any degree added to the value and welfare of this lovely county, this beautiful, fertile and hospitable county, and I will to the end of my life remember with the most pleasing sentiments of gratitude I have received from so many of you individually, and from all of you collectively.

- (a) grateful feeling
- (b) when it is considered
- (c) on me
- (d) engagement
- (e) many advantages to the county
- (f) and that the traffic upon it would be, would produce a sufficient revenue with proper economy and management, a sufficient revenue would be obtained for the capital necessary for the n, for its termination
- (g) see
- (h) for all my
- (i) toil
- (j) for
- (k) The works
- (l) It will be a
- (m) I shall

### Notes

1. The brackets (a) to:(m) represent parts crossed out in the draft and, in the long passage (f), are disjointed.
2. The punctuation has been provided by the transcriber to help make more sense of the draft, the paragraphing is original.
3. The entry in the pocket book headed "Speech at opening of Canal to Withington" is preceded by an earlier draft.
4. The references to "Withington" and "into this city" suggest that the speech was not given at Withington but in Hereford, probably at the dinner to celebrate the occasion at the City Arms Hotel, Hereford on 26.2.1844; see also (i) the advertisement asking for subscriptions to a testimonial dinner for S Ballard which appeared in Hereford Journal 2.2.1844 p 2 col 5, top, and (ii) the newspaper report of the event in Hereford

Journal 28.2.1844 p 3 col 6, top - this describes S Ballard's speech: "Mr. Ballard returned thanks in an exceedingly neat and modest, but very effective address".

5. The earlier draft says at this point "that the benefits which the canal would confer on the county were many, great and quite underrated by the county at large. X have therefore ....." The Mayor admitted in his speech at the testimonial dinner that the Council had not done all it could to help, and the comment was made in one of the other speeches that the apathy that had existed was now wearing away!

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES**

### **Lower Palaeolithic, Herefordshire**

#### **Mathon, SO 7524 4386**

In about 1970, J A H Evans, Hoe Farm, Mathon, found a recently identified Acheulian Hand-Axe on arable ground at 425 ft OS at his Farm. The axe is of fresh, unrolled flint, slightly patinated, with thermal cracking. It weighs .505 Kg. (17½ ozs) and measures 13.9 x 8.5 x 4.1 cms. An ovate hand-axe of the Middle Acheulian period is seemingly of Wymer type 'K'. It is currently on loan to Hereford Museum. Its slight patina is over a mottled orange-brown and white body with grey-orange cherty inclusions, and one fragment of cortex.

**W R Pye, Westfields, Lyonshall, Kington, Herefordshire.**

### **PYON KNAP**

The summit of Pyon Hill or Knap, rising over 300 ft above the surrounding countryside, is crowned by a brick and masonry built belvedere or summerhouse. Apparently of mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century date it was constructed by the owners of the fine Georgian house at the foot of the hill's southern slopes.

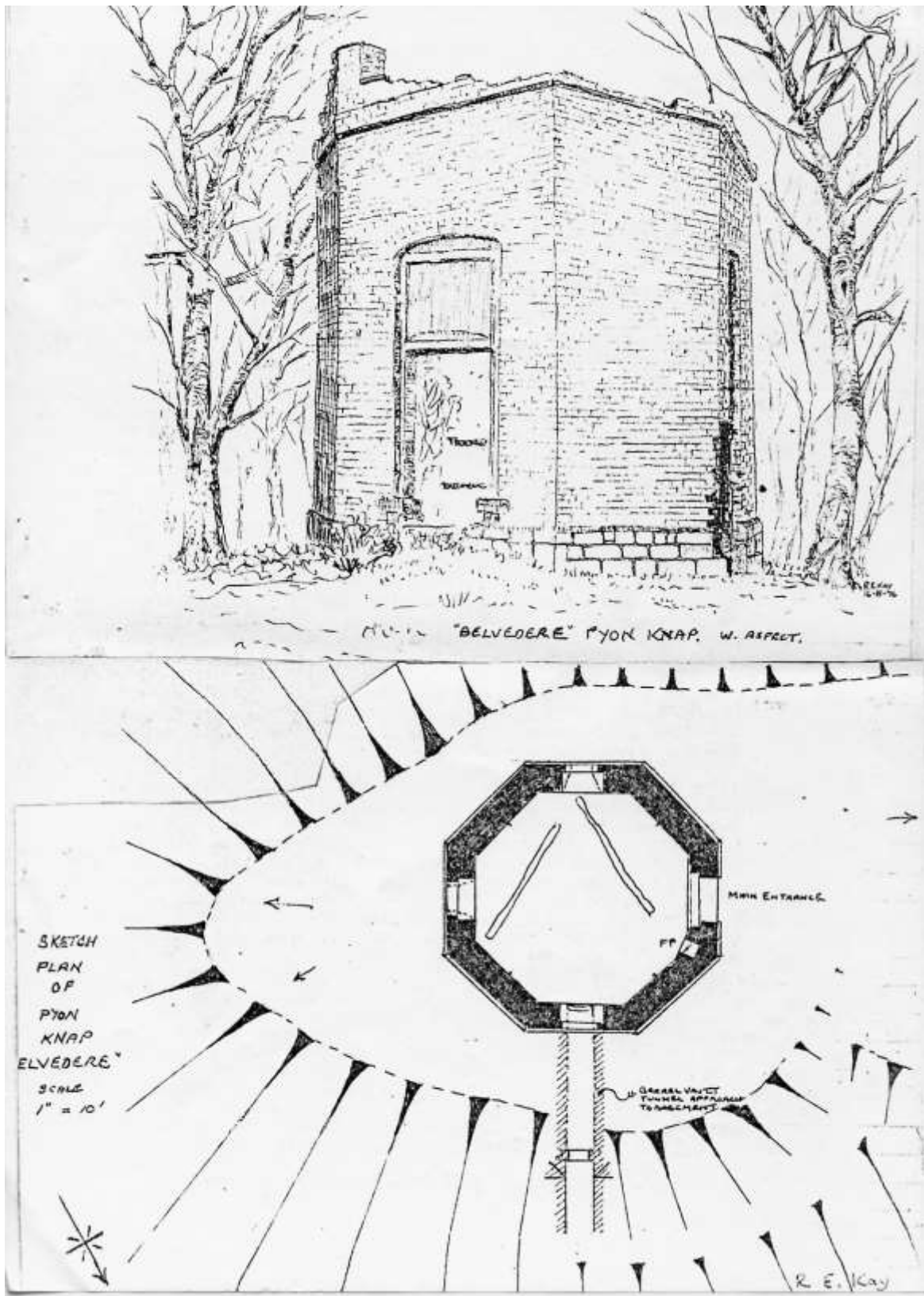
The building is of two storeys, including a semi-underground basement. The walls of this basement are stone built and it forms an octagonal masonry plinth to the brick nailed octagonal main room above. There is a small fireplace in the basement, which is approached by a barrel vaulted underground passage, still in good order. This unusual feature is also constructed in masonry. The basement is lighted by small deeply recessed internally splayed windows opening at ground level on the east and south. The floor of the main room was of wood planking resting on huge oak joists, two of which lie loose in the basement, which is choked with debris fallen from above. On the west is the entrance to the main room. It still retains its wooden frame, which effectively reduces in size the high stilted arched opening. In the East, North and South walls are gaping openings marking the position of the former windows which were of similar design and size to that of the entrance. The main room must have been of lofty, gracious proportions. It is now roofless and was apparently unheated. Traces of wall plaster remain. Graffiti over the inner arch of the entrance would seem to suggest that the building was derelict by 21.7.1886.

Pyon Knap is thickly clothed with woodland from base to summit and the building on its top is quite unseen from below or from a distance, even during winter when the trees are almost bare of foliage. Conical in shape and steep sided, the summit of the hill is like a narrow elliptical table top sloping down slightly from East to West and measuring approximately 150 ft x 35 ft. The immediate vicinity of the belvedere seems to have once been planted with box and other decorative shrubs and the summit platform is approached by a narrow grass-grown track which forms a well-graded spiral ramp winding around the hill and wide enough to accommodate a small cart.

The hill is a very prominent feature in the landscape, positioned as it is in the gap between the upland plateaus of Westhope and Wormsley Hills. Most unusually for such a commanding site, it does not seem to have been utilised for defence or any other purpose in prehistoric, Roman or Medieval times. It does, however, seem to have formed a sighting point when the line of the Roman road from Leintwardine to Kenchester was laid out. From the North the course of the road South East through Bush Bank, is directly lined to the

summit of Pyon Knap. Similarly, that portion of the same road North West from near Burghill Lodge, although on a slightly different alignment, also points to the summit of Pyon Knap.

R E Kay  
2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1978



## GLIS FARM

The County and National Boundary runs along the crest of the most easterly of the main ridges of the Black Mountains. At its foot lie the south flowing streams of the Olchon, the upper Monnow and its tributary, the Nant Lleth (Cwm-y-Canddo), and still further to the east are the valleys of the Escley and Dore, all separated by ridges of varying height, breadth and length and forming what may be loosely termed the eastern foothills of the Black Mountain massif. At their north end these subsidiary ridges are united to form an irregular escarpment which drops sharply to the broader vale of the Wye. Excepting the much lower gap between Little Mountain and Merbach Hill, formed at the head of the Dore, the deeper wider valley of the Wye can only be reached from the heads of the Monnow, Lleth and Escley by comparatively high saddles through this escarpment. At the heads of these valleys and on the slopes of their dividing ridges, Parc-y-Meirch, 1500ft+, Lefn Hill, 1593ft and Vagar Hill, 1420ft, we can view the highest tide-mark reached in Herefordshire of enclosed pasture and cultivated land.

The land hunger and expediency, both private and National, and the enterprise that made our recent ancestors tame such inhospitable slopes before the advent of mechanical ploughing, modern fertilizers, grass conditioners and fern eradication, exacted the curiosity of the writer. Hampered by a complete lack of agricultural experience, it was decided to make a brief study of one of these upland farms during 1978/79 to endeavour to find what one could learn from the buildings and the land itself, augmented if possible by local knowledge.

The farm chosen was Glis (probably an anglisation of the Welsh Glas Green), an intake from the mountain (common) sited at GR 289395 at an altitude of 1385ft in the parish of Michaelchurch Escley. The site is very near the summit of Vagar Hill, an almost flat-topped ridge separating the headwaters of the Escley from those of the Dore. This is not the highest farm in the locality; there are two that are even higher, Wern Genny at 1405ft, also on Vagar Hill, half a mile to the north-west, and Coed Major at 1528ft on Parc-y-Meirch near the source of the Monnow. The houses at Wern Genny and Coed Major are both at present occupied. That at Glis, together with its outbuildings, is roofless. It was thought that being such, a closer examination of the building structure and its land could be undertaken without inconvenience.

A more detailed description of the Glis intake and its immediate locality is now appropriate. Vagar Hill forms the north extremity of a broad swelling ridge, slightly rounded but almost flat on its top. It rises gently to the north from Glis Farm, reaching at a distance of less than a quarter of a mile its greatest altitude of 1420ft and rising again at a slightly greater distance to the south to 1419ft. The ridge continues to run in a general south to south-east direction, decreasing in height abruptly near Coe Mawr then more gradually. The underlying rock, similar to that of the Black Mountain itself, is of Old Red Sandstone. Its upper beds, hard and laminated, make a tolerable building material. Along the crest of the ridge, south from its neck near Wern Genny where it joins on to a shoulder of Cefn Hill, runs the old parish road, joining the present tarmac ridge road a little above Maerdy Farm, at GR 302382. This road predates the valley road, running past Llan-rosser, but has long fallen out of use. It is now represented by what is little more than a green trackway running through, at its north end, a thick growth of conifers and subsequently bordered for the greater part of its length to the south by a dry built wall or field bank on its east side, to which enclosed pasture and cultivated land extends as high from the valley of the Dore and its tributaries. On its west side is open moorland, sparsely grassed and thick with fern, sloping down to the boundary of the uppermost enclosed fields of the Escley Valley. Bordering this former parish road, on the very top of these west slopes near the scarcely perceptible saddle between the two summit swells of Vagar Hill, is situated Gils Farm, its modest acreage an intake from the moorland by which it is still surrounded on three sides. There is a copious spring at the south-east angle of the enclosure near its junction with the line of the parish road. The area selected for intake appears to have no other special advantage to other parts of the upper

west slopes of Vagar Hill other than this spring. It forms an irregular quadrilateral and has been sub-divided into three pastures, two bordering the former roadway and the third of an area equal to the other two, adjoining the other two and lower down the slope to the west. The little stream issuing from the mentioned spring forms the south boundary of the intake. The site chosen for the house, outbuilding and small rectangular home paddock is adjacent to the former roadway in the middle of the east side of the intake and on the boundary between the two smaller of the three pastures. Only the home paddock and that part of the boundary of the more southerly of the two smaller pastures bordering the former roadway have dry built walls of the local laminated sandstone. The other boundaries of the intake are formed of hedgebanks and fences. It is an exposed position open to the north and south and especially to the west, with little shelter other than the slight rising swell of the hill to the east. Further along the west slope of the hill to the north, between Glis and Wern Genny and situated at only a slightly lower altitude are the sites of two other small farms whose intakes now form continuous pasture and cultivated ground with that of farms on the valley floor. Castle Farm, the larger and nearest to Glis shows a few low ruined walls of house and outbuildings, abandoned circa 1900. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the ground Landlord of all these intakes seems to have been the Marquis of Abergavenny, and later the owner of Michaelchurch Court.

The buildings of Glis Farm consist of the house with integral byre and sty and a small detached outbuilding sub divided into cart shed and byre. No local information could be obtained of the exact date of the intake from the "common" moorland, but it was stated that the original cottage at Glis had been occupied by a quarryman. This would have been circa 1850, the intake having probably taken place sometime between 1790 and that time. An examination of the house, which is now roofless and ruinous and in a state of imminent collapse, shows that it is of two periods, both portions being built of coursed rubble of thin laminated sandstone slabs set in a poor sandy mortar lacking in lime content. The walls were internally plastered, but this has mostly fallen away.

The more recent portion of the house, to the East, is of two storeys and probably of mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century date. Soft wood used in window frames, lintels, etc. would seem to rule out an earlier date. The ground floor consists of a parlour with a doorway and single rectangular casement window in the south wall, both with flat wooden lintels. From this window there is an extensive view to the south and also to the west, to the wall-like main ridge of the Black Mountain. The doorway was sheltered by a porch formed of four massive stone slabs, now vanished, but its floor of another single large slab is in situ. The east, north and west walls are unlighted. The middle of the east gable wall is occupied by an internal rectangular projection housing the oak-lintelled fireplace, which at some unknown period, probably in the 1920's had been altered to accommodate a low oven range of cast iron, still remaining. In the northeast angle of the room, commencing against the north wall and ending high up against the internal fireplace/chimney stack projection, is a masonry stair with a 90° turn which led to the bedroom on the floor above. The side of this stairway, towards the room, is partitioned from it by huge vertical sandstone slabs. The recess to the south of the internal fireplace projection seems to once have had wooden doors and shelves forming a cupboard. The floor and supporting rafters of the upper room have collapsed. The internal projection of the chimneystack continues upward in the east gable wall and contains a small fireplace. The roof (and ceiling, if any) have gone and the only other remaining structure feature to the upper room is the rectangular opening of a second casement window in the south wall immediately above that on the ground floor. The other walls of the upper room are devoid of openings. The original roof, which was of sandstone tiles, had collapsed or been removed before the 1920's and had been replaced by one of corrugated iron supported on roughly fashioned pine poles. The roof over the older part of the house had been similarly replaced. They remained until some twenty years ago. With the disappearance of its roof, water has percolated into the fabric of the remaining walls, which are now unstable and in danger of

complete disintegration. The door lintel is now sagging with a pronounced bowing effect to the masonry courses of thin slabs above.

In the South-west corner of the parlour a narrow passage, some five feet in length, extends through the thick end wall of an earlier building which seems to have been its east gable, altered and heightened to accommodate the addition of the two-storeyed extension just described. This earlier building, of which the north wall is also still standing and of which the footings of its west and most of its south wall remain, appears to have once been a single-storeyed cottage of undetermined but probable 18<sup>th</sup> Century date. There is a small blocked internally splayed rectangular light, with rubble jambs and a projecting stone lintel, forming a dripstone, in the north wall. This earlier building is sub-divided by the lower courses of a thin partition wall. Subsequently used as the kitchen, etc. for the enlarged house, the east portion of the earlier building with fireplace and oven (much altered) formed the living area of the first cottage. The west portion had been utilised as a byre/stye with a possible "crogloft" over, reached by a ladder from the living area. Adjacent to the north-west external angle of this earlier "cottage" are the lower courses of what seem to have been the privy.

The home paddock, a rectangular area to the north and east of the house is bounded by a now ruinous dry built stone wall. It contains no features, except a few windblown and neglected apple and damson trees in its north-west corner. The smaller of the two pastures, north of this paddock, has a very disturbed surface, uneven with old quarry pits and grass grown spoil mounds. These hand worked quarries were evidently the source of the material used in constructing the field boundary walls and buildings in the vicinity and possibly for metalling the neighbouring parish road, although little is now visible of the latter surface.

The economy of Glis in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century would seem to have been based on sheep, a few cattle and pigs, with commonage on the adjoining moorland, together with quarrying for building stone on a limited scale. It would hardly have made for full self-sufficiency and no doubt the occupier would from time to time hire out for reward his labour to neighbouring larger farms in the valley below.

It cannot be stated that the known history of the Glis intake or that small portion of it that I was able to elucidate is typical of the higher hill farms in this part of Herefordshire. It is more probable that each has its own individual history and the original enterprise of making use of former waste could in many instances date back to Medieval times or earlier. It must also be remembered that: there were large intakes of mountain acreage during the Napoleonic Wars and more recently during the First and Second World Wars. Many of these intakes were not economical and quickly reverted back to the fern from which they were won. Strange to relate, the penultimate resident of Glis has for the last couple of decades and more been the occupier of Coed Major, the highest inhabited farmstead in Herefordshire.

A visit was made to Coed Major. Here is a small low farmhouse to which is attached, with its axis at right angles, a comparatively large barn, together with other outbuildings, some of whose walls are of unmortared masonry. The farmhouse/barn complex is of various constructional dates extending from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. The intake here must have had a very different history from that of Glis. The present occupier was of the opinion that it had been a "manor" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but there is no record of this. The little farm, of twenty acres or so, is sited at the northwest extremity of Parc-y-Meirch, a tract of land which occupies the northern part of the high broad truncated ridge separating the headwaters of the Monnow from those of the Lleth. This land, only cultivated and brought back into use again as good pasture during the Second World War, was originally part of a De Lacy grant to the Grandmontines of Craswall Priory, sited not a very great distance away in a sheltered position high up in the valley of the Lleth (Cwm-y-Canddo). The name Parc-y-Meirch (means meadow of the stallions) may give an indication of the Medieval economy of this upland tract, i.e. horse-breeding! The present economy of Coed Major is sheep; it may have previously been cattle. The EE capital and base lying loose on a wall of one of the

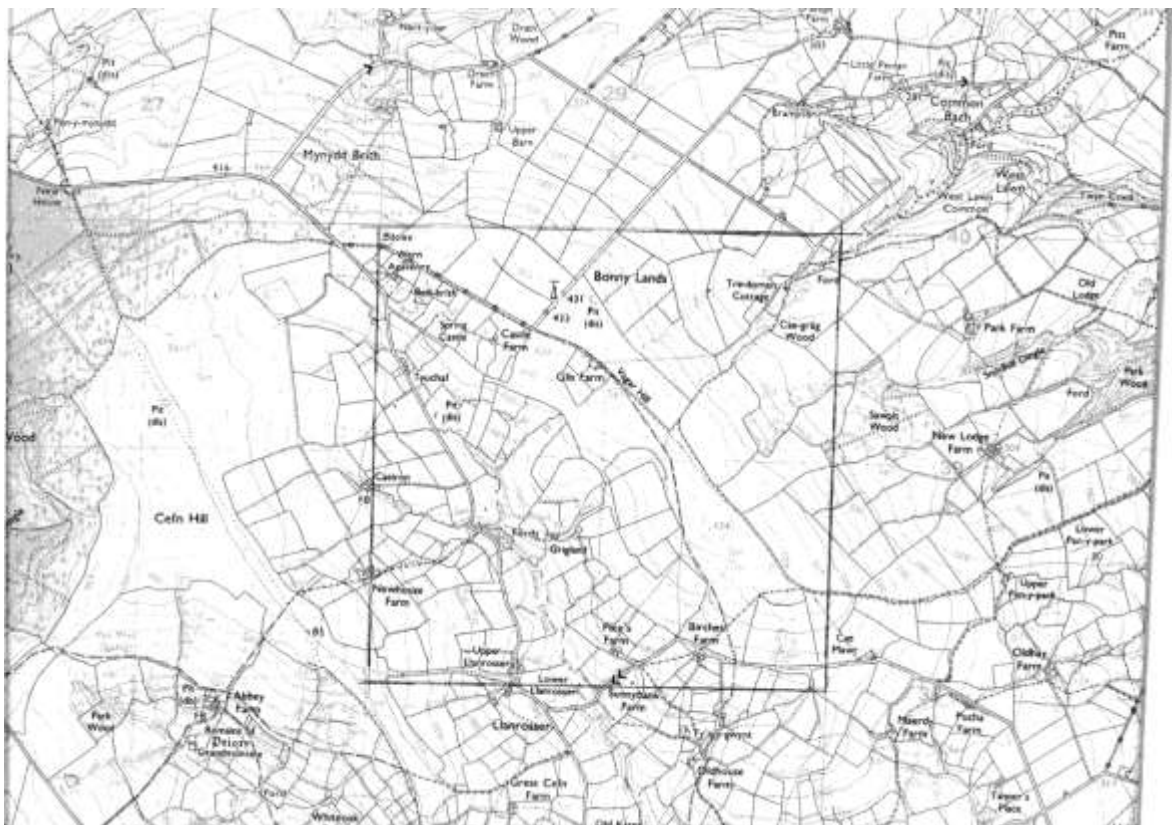
outbuildings should not be taken as evidence that any building at Coed Major incorporates or occupies the site of an early Medieval structure. The fragments have doubtless been removed at some time from Craswall Priory, where they seem to have formed part of the cloisters arcading. There are, however, the footings of a small rectangular drystone building near the track running close under Hay Bluff and just west of Coed Major. The remains are quite featureless and could be of almost any date. Above, at some little distance and high on the steep slopes of Hay Bluff itself, are the scant remains of a small lime kiln of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century date which has apparently taken advantage of a bed of cornstones among the red sandstone strata. The lime thus manufactured would no doubt have been used to enrich these upland intakes.

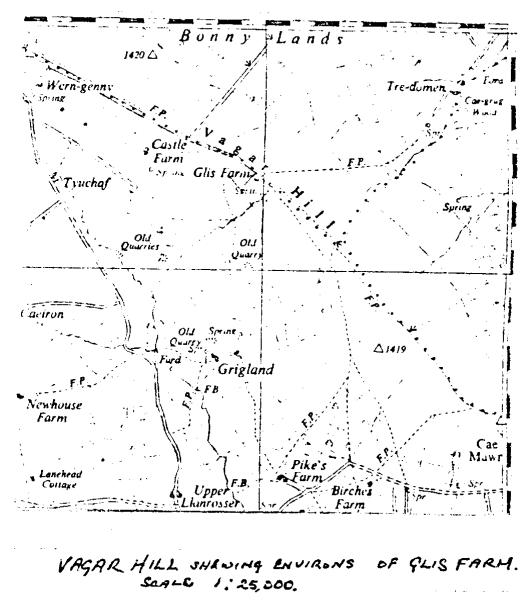
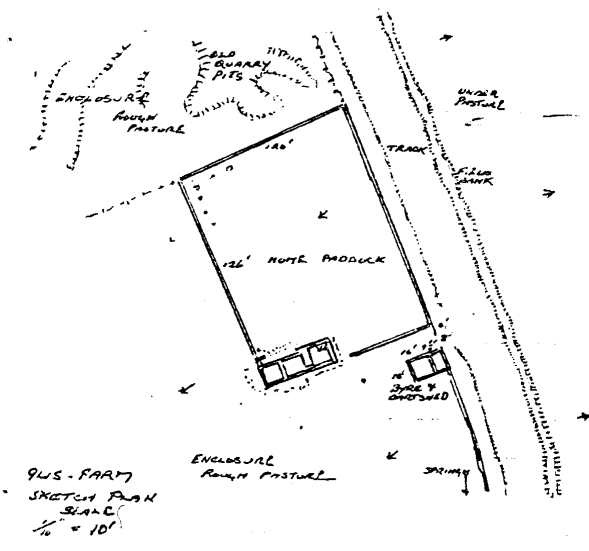
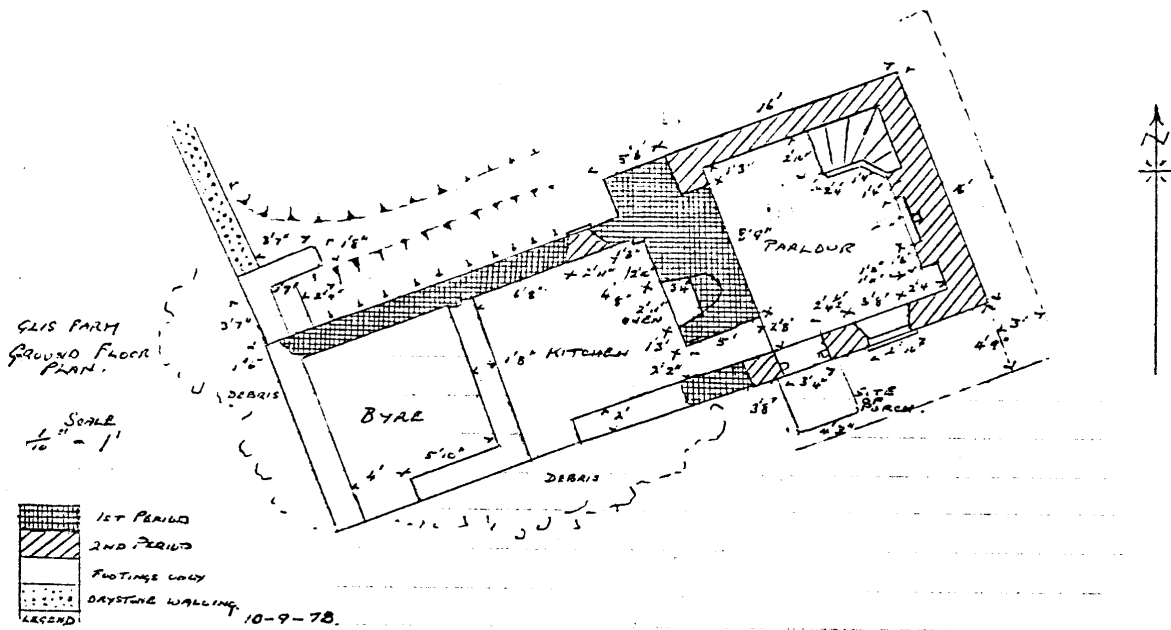
The hard life, the complete lack of amenities such as piped water, sanitation and light which we take for granted has extended right into our own times for the occupants of these remote and high hill farms, and it does not take too much imagination to envisage the primitive interiors of some of these houses, only a few decades ago, with their box beds or crog-loft and stone flagged or earthen floors. Often, as at Glis, the planks and supporting joists of the upper floor formed the ceiling of the lower storey while the underside of the flagged roof itself formed the ceiling of the upper storey. Such structures are already part of history, if not of archaeology. Water often had to be carried a couple of hundred yards or more, not only for the household but also for the farm animals. This is still the case at Coed Major, one of the last of such habitations still to be occupied. In another decade or so it too will be deserted, an echo of the forlorn dereliction and ruination of Glis.

It must be stated that this short unresearched article is the result of only two short visits of a few hours duration in total. There may be something of interest to the reader who with more time at his or her disposal, and knowledge of the subject, will take it as a spur to investigate in more depth the life and history of the rise and seeming decline of upland farming in west Herefordshire.

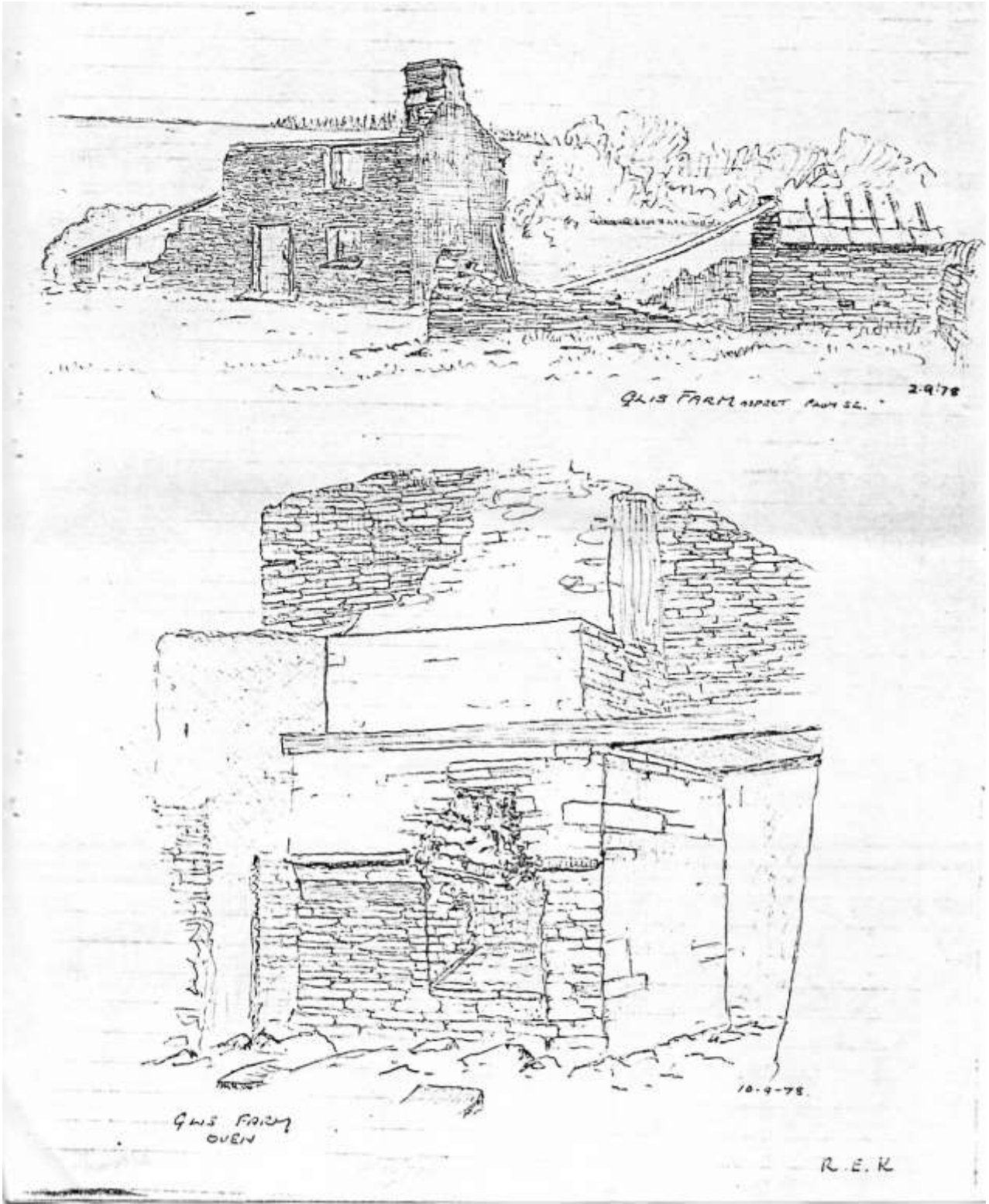
Acknowledgement for information, without which this could not have been written, is gratefully given to Mr Phillips of Coed Major and Mr Howells of New House Farm.

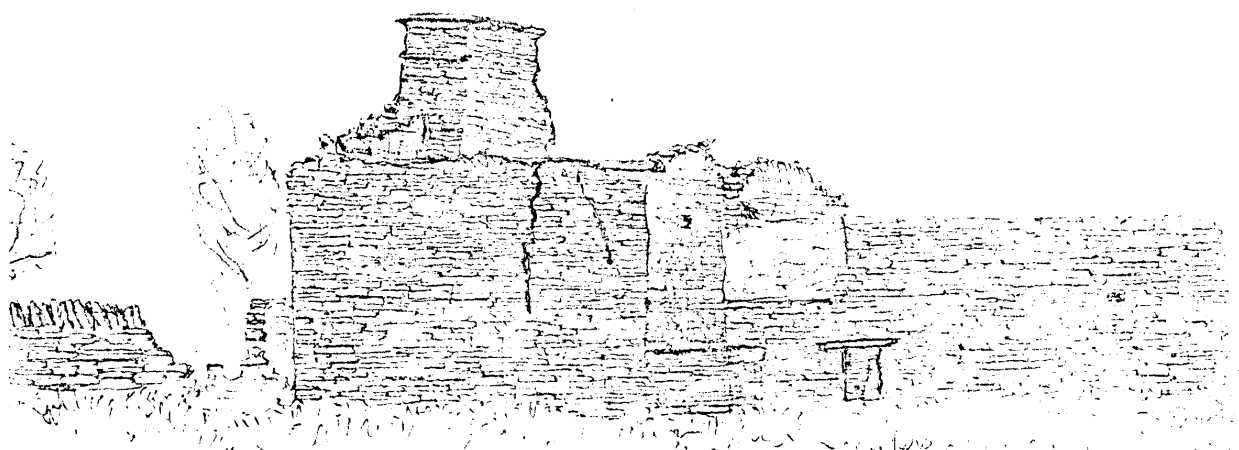
**R E Kay**





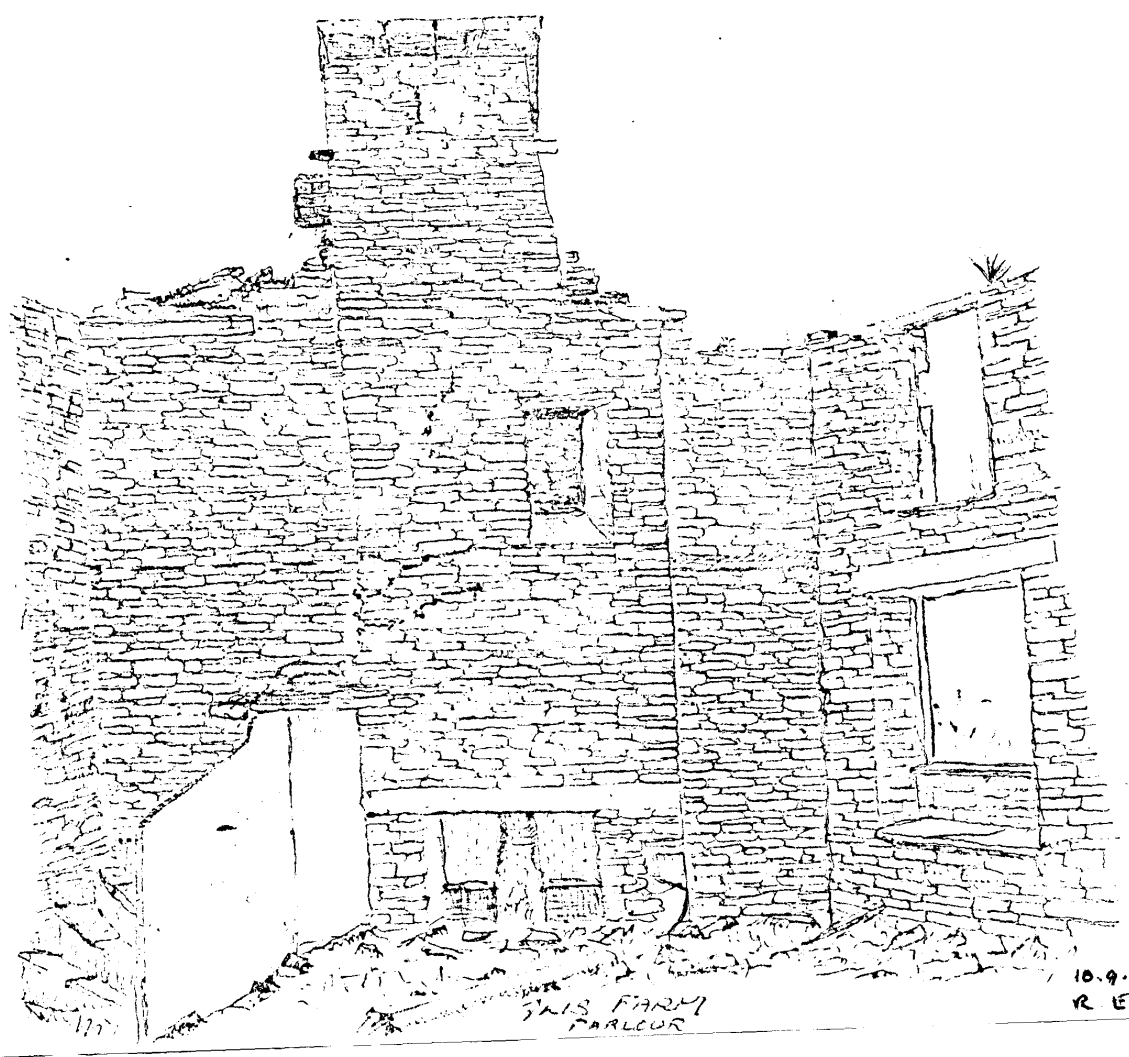






SHIS FARM  
ASPECT FROM N.W.

3/9/78



SHIS FARM  
PARLOUR

10.9.78  
R.E.K.

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