

# HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



**HAN 40      November 1982**

**WOOLHOPE CLUB  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

**CONTENTS**

EDITORIAL..... 2

PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 1982-FEBRUARY 1983..... 2

LETTER TO THE EDITOR..... 3

ON THE DOWARD ..... 4

FIELD MEETING – WALTERSTONE, ROWLSTONE AND LLANCILLO, MAY 1981 ..... 17

LYDNEY ROMAN TEMPLE ..... 23

LYDNEY CASTLE..... 25

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**EDITORIAL**

Our last programme ran from 28 March to 19 September and three of the Field days were taken up with searching for boundaries described in the Llandaff Charter. I cannot say that we were completely successful since boundaries which by translation include such features as woods, large honeysuckle bushes, and rushing streams with a crooked pool, are somewhat difficult to find. However, we enjoyed the excursions, met some very nice and helpful people, were introduced to Westons Vintage Cider, and gathered hazel nuts in September on our travels.

Ron Shoesmith, Director of Excavations for the City of Hereford Archaeological Committee, has been excavating within the old City walls in Hereford and has produced some interesting reports which we hope to include in the News. He has also updated his report on Urishay Chapel, Peterchurch, as a result of further excavation, and a copy has been received for future inclusion.

Frank Attwell has been investigating a Roman Bath-house site at Stretfordbury, Nr Leominster. He has very kindly supplied a copy of his findings to Mr Norman Reeves, the Historian of Leominster, for reproducing in the News. We are most grateful for this information. A selection of finds from the Blackwardine area from a previous dig is of course in the Leominster Museum. A visit to the Stretfordbury site is included in the next programme of field visits.

Members who helped in the restoration of the Mill Wheel at Buckton Mill, Leintwardine, will be interested to know that Mrs Veronica Bowater (a member) who lives at the Mill with her husband, has written a delightful article on the restoration of the Mill in the Shropshire Magazine, April and May editions 1982, under the pen name of Veronica Thackeray.

Finally my thanks once again to the contributors, Richard Kay the Assistant Editor, and the typists without whose work the News could not be produced.

**C E Attfield**

**PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 1982-FEBRUARY 1983**

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Examination of the Ponds, Penyard Woods	Meet 11.00 am at 25 Alton Road, Ross-on-Wye
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	Golden Eagle Restaurant, Commercial Street, Hereford	Annual General Meeting 7.30 for 8.00 pm (Members will be able to make an evening of it and enjoy a meal afterwards)
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 1983	Monnington Straddle and Vowchurch Common areas – Search for Llandaff Charter boundaries and Monastic Granges	Meet 11.00 am at Vowchurch Church or 2.00 pm Broughton Arms Public House, Peterchurch
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Stretford area Roman Baths site. Stretfordbury, Nr Leominster	Meet 11.00 am The Lamb Public House, Stoke Prior or 2.00 pm Public House at Stockton

Notes:

1. Items for inclusion in the News Letter will be gratefully received by the Editor, Mr C E Attfield to whom they should be sent. Subscriptions of £1.50 for 1983 should be sent to the Treasurer, Mrs R Wride
2. In case of bad weather contact the Secretary, Miss M. Thomas, or J Wride or Leader re programme.
3. Guests are welcome.
4. Members are advised to wear suitable clothing and footwear and to bring food and hot drinks.
5. Due to unforeseen circumstances the programme may have to be changed at short notice.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr Attfield

I told you I was amusing myself making some investigations into the Lords Wood, Great Doward, starting from the fact that an adjoining piece of woodland is known as the Devil's Ditch Wood, and I hoped this might indicate the presence of something very early. Whether it has or not I leave to you.

I found myself tracing an early eighteenth Century land boundary which made use of existing features where convenient and passes through an ironstone area of which you have seen the more spectacular fringe.

I think that the rather voluminous stuff I have typed out sets out all the important information, and I think I have now 'drawn every covert' apart from excavation or underground exploration, and I am now passing the buck to the group to take it further if they think fit. I have formed various theories as I went on, which further search in the woods caused me to abandon or modify.

One thing I think I should stress is that, so far as I can see, the area has been used primarily for wood growing for many generations and that if the ditches are old they would have (probably) a considerable depth of leaf mould in them. In the sheepstealing days (the hill was known as Mutton Tump because of the habits of the inhabitants) any stolen sheep was very rapidly reduced to joints and roasting at a dozen cottages and the skin etc down one of the mine pits, by the time any pursuer arrived.

I believe that the Adventure Centre are inclined on a wet day to suggest that people come up to the main caves to explore, and as there are many potholes it might be as well to get them looked at, if you have an enthusiast available, before they get known and used as such.

I apologise for the poor photos, taken with a cheap camera in midwinter. They are better than nothing and somewhere in most of them is my walking stick, stuck in the ground to give an idea of scale.

I enclose a photostat of a map that Miss Jancey made for me, and from the handwriting it is put by her at probably between 1730 and 1790.

The Ganarew enclosure award, though quite interesting, is of adjoining ground and not really relevant.

I wish you luck with the problems.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) **M P Watkins**

### Editor's Note

The following notes in this Edition by Mr. Watkins are a credit to his perseverance, research and observation. The photos cannot, unfortunately, be reproduced in the News but those members who visited the area on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1977 will perhaps recall some of the features so vividly described, and pointed out by the leaders M P Watkins and L Skelton on that day.

Since receipt of the letter, Mr Watkins has, I understand, moved to Goodrich. I record my thanks to Mr Watkins for this contribution.

## **ON THE DOWARD**

**By M P Watkins**

### **Reported Camp on Great Doward Hill**

In Fosbrooke's Wye Tour, Third Edition, on page 121 it is stated "On Great Doward Hill is a Camp, of which, through natural defences, only the West side is strongly fortified by entrenchments, because that part was deemed accessible." On the following page he writes about the British Camp on Little Doward in some detail and suggests that Caractacus probably posted himself there, "for how otherwise are the adjacent Roman Camps on the Great Doward and Symonds Yat to be accounted for". This seems very muddled; the Symonds Yat encampment, with three or more rows of banks, is probably Iron Age (although shown as Offa's Dyke on the OS Map) and the only Roman site I know on Great Doward is a small oval farm site surrounded by bank and ditch and a distance from any protective steps.

I had lived on Great Doward several years when I first read this description. I have watched for signs of the camp but found no encampment to which he might refer. The idea that he intended Little Doward and not Great Doward is flatly contradicted by the text, and also because the former is called "a valuable relic of British Fortification". It does however meet the description of not being fortified on the Eastern side because of the cliffs there. See plan in VCH p 210. The resident forester disclaims knowledge of other banks in the Lords Wood.

Great Doward Hill is limestone with, in part, a topping of Drybrook sandstone, and has in the past been extensively quarried for stone that was either burned nearby, or else (recently) disposed of as small fragments. It must be possible that quarrying has destroyed the evidence of this camp (but very unlikely). Apart from shallow quarries (which I do not think would affect any cliff capable of being defensive) and the working of scree at the foot of natural cliffs, there are two sizeable stretches of cliff that I understand are old quarries; one of these faces westerly (and so does not comply with the natural defences on the East side) and the other is a big quarry face about half a mile long facing roughly North East.

Great Doward Hill and Little Doward were waste of the Manor of Goodrich. The former seems to have been enclosed largely by agreement or by encroachments and the latter under an Act of Parliament.

There are many stone walls and banks of stone on Great Doward that seem to have been piled up in the course of clearing the land that they enclose, but the major portion of the E side of the hill is land which was waste of the Manor and, when enclosed, has been used as woodland. It is here that any 'camp' described by Fosbrooke, on the edge of one of the lengths of cliffs above the Wye, would be likely to be found. I have found no remains that clearly meet his description. They might just possibly be there on some portion covered by thicket but I think that is very unlikely.

Turning from the general to the particular details which led me recently to commence an investigation: Most of the E side of the Great Doward is administered by the Forestry Commission. The general history of this is that it was either riverside meadows (known as the Biblyn Meadows) or wooded manorial waste on which there were common rights. In 1718 an agreement was made by which the commoners gave up their rights in a considerable area (it is now known as the Lords Wood) and this was sold by the Lord of the Manor in 1840 to the predecessors of the Forestry Commission and has since been administered by them in their usual way. In the portion near my home there are extensive iron mine workings over a small area and there are a few adits elsewhere in this wood. The fringe only of the mining area is in the Lords Wood and the bulk of it is in adjacent privately owned woodland. I have until recently usually avoided this as being dangerous.

In the last twelve months or so I have had my attention attracted to the private woodland as a result of learning from a member of one of the old Doward families that it is called the Devil's Ditch Wood. It is at about 400 feet and runs down to the cliffs above the remains of the old Forge at New Weir (Symonds Yat), now also reverted to Woodland and called "the Hammer Ditch Wood". The SE portion of the Devils Ditch Wood is broken up with iron workings and spoil heaps and on the N side it appears to be bounded by a limestone quarry face. The whole wood was clear cut during the War. It belongs to an elderly lady and I think she has done nothing about it since, but it has been allowed to recover by natural regeneration, and it is a tangled thicket much used by wild animals, but too thick, I think, to be very useful for bird life. People usually keep out; it is too full of holes and is really rather remote. The result is that even in winter visibility is short and it is easy to lose one's sense of direction (See Appendix B).

I had hoped that the name of the wood might indicate a prehistoric ditch and have searched for signs of this without any assured success I had also asked a member of a family that has lived hereabouts for several hundred years, to be told that he did not know of any big ditch or bank there. Some weeks later he said to me "You were asking about the Devil's Ditch; if you go down to where the Forestry had a gate (what I have called the Minepits Gate) and walk along the bank on the left you will see lots of the Devil's ditches, some so deep you cannot see the bottom.". I said "You mean those old mine holes" and he said "yes".

This is the bank and ditch that I have now identified as being part of the 1718 boundary. When I first saw the ditch, years ago, I thought that it was a packhorse track along a wood boundary.

After a fairly thorough search through the very tangled Devil's Ditch Wood, I came to the conclusion that the only man made work there not attributable to mining is (a) a pathway (recent) which comes to an end at the N quarry face, and (b) the bank and ditch which I had by then decided must be that between this wood and the Lords Wood. This was before I was told that the Devil's ditches were the mine holes.

Starting from the spot where one of the old posts still stands of the former boundary gate, I was able to trace the extension of the boundary for some distance in each direction and then I went to documents for help and was able to trace the whole length of the 1718 boundary of the Lords Wood almost from the river by the Yat, right around until it reached the river again about a mile away. The rest of the boundary, against other land of the Lord of the Manor, I thought of little interest. (See Appendix C.)

This boundary as described by me runs counterclockwise, compared with the 1718 description which runs clockwise. I have set out details in appendices and there is some cross referencing, thus A A 4 would refer to Appendix A, Section A, Line 4.

The line starts with lengths of what I think were once lanes or packhorse ways, where there are signs of hedges on both sides; then by the Devils Ditch Wood it seems to me to become deeper and clearer, though cut through more difficult terrain, and it almost cuts off a promontory. I doubt whether it would be defensive, nor used as a pound (there is a drop on one side) and the only reason I have been able to think of is that extra precautions may have been taken to prevent cattle grazing on the top of Doward from getting on to the valley slope where they might kick rocks loose that could damage the Forge and the cottages near it. This length is one that I think some more knowledgeable person might well look at. Its digging was probably a much more laborious work than that of most of the rest of the boundary and a little direct archaeology might not be misapplied. I should also like to know whether the 'way' between Great and Little Doward is regarded as of any archaeological interest in view of its description in the Deed, and indeed I think that it would be as well to walk the whole length that I have traced.

I have tried to arrive at the age of the Devil's Ditch Wood boundary by tracing its connection with the mining complex through which it passes. It would be highly inconvenient to have a strong boundary fence through the middle of the mining area while it was being

operated, and there is no record of mining found by me in the manorial papers back to twenty years before 1718. On the other hand I expected that the boundary would keep clear of all shafts, but that is not quite the case.

The 18<sup>th</sup> C boundary starts at a point approximately a mile away as the crow flies from where the Whitchurch/Ganarew Parish boundary reaches the river. Repeatedly, along this line, there are signs of there having been a live hedge on the top of the bank and I have seen an entry in a late 18<sup>th</sup> C ledger, years ago, of a payment to a man for working on the Doward Wood boundary hedge for the then Lord of the Manor. This is what would be expected if the wood adjoined land in which there was common pasture.

There are various appendices showing the result of my scattered researches, and I think it would be suitable now if some Member(s) of the Club who are more skilled in such matters can view the boundary, with special reference to the length by the Devil's Ditch Wood and also that between the two Dowards. (See Appendix D.)

This brings me to the other question which has arisen as a result of my enquiry: the Devil's Ditches themselves, i.e. the iron mines. A friend of mine who was in touch with the Forest of Dean Mines office enquired of the Deputy Gaveler whether they had any records there and he produced two maps showing two small mines as recorded with dates in the last quarter of the last century. These are away from the complex with which I am concerned. There were also shown two shafts (undated) on the outside edge of the complex.

I have also referred to various Wye Tours and local Histories but they had nothing relevant and authoritative; some referred to King Arthur's Cave as a Roman iron mine. The fact that the Tours etc mention the New Weir (where the rapids now are) and the Forge there, with its noise and clouds of smoke, and the quarries and lime kilns, contrasting them with the scenes of natural beauty on the river, is indication that around the 18-19<sup>th</sup> C period there was no iron mining carried out and the only local memory of mining seems to be that in 1917 someone opened one of the mines and sent off a number of truckloads of ore by rail. At this time too, the Ladypark stalactite cave on the opposite bank was mined in the same manner. Going further back in time, the results of some searching in the County Archives are set out in an Appendix D - these are all negative.

The only local memory seems to be that a small shed near the complex is called 'the old smithy' and is said to be where the miners (? quarrymen) took their tools to be sharpened (it has quite recently had the roof fall in) and further away there is a heap of rubble known as 'the old public' which is said to have been a cider house where they went for a drink. The former might have been used in connection with one or more of the mines recorded on the District Gaveler's map. Memory is fairly long here; I recently asked a man of about 70 about the Forge by the River and was told that his great uncle had been hammerman there.

To sum up:-

1. Fosbrook gives a reasonably clear description of an encampment on Great Doward. His book reached a third edition and it is to be presumed that any gross error in this would have been corrected.
2. Almost certainly the only place which in any way meets this description is the part of the Lords Wood that adjoins the Devil's Ditch Wood.
3. There is a single ditch and bank across a promontory, and this has been used as a property boundary since at least 1718.
4. The 1718 boundary may have been partly defined by newly dug mound and ditch, but in parts it certainly made use of existing features. It looks to me as though the Devil's Ditch Wood boundary is more substantial than much of the rest, and may well have predated 1718.

5. If the Devil's Ditch boundary was intended to be defensive, some of the iron mining must have been carried out later, as its presence would militate against such use.
6. I have tried to find records of the dates of mining operations but with little success. Probably the earliest portion of the mining complex lies downstream of the Minepits gate, and so outside the area of Fosbrook's possible camp. This appears to be what has been called Roman. Here the mines were clearly antedating the 1718 boundary.
7. From superficial inspection nothing definite can be stated; from the manor papers it appears probable that this area of mining may have been abandoned before 1718 and it appears that, so far as the boundary of Devil's Ditch Wood goes, no inference can be drawn as to whether it is of earlier date because of the presence or otherwise of mine holes, than the holes themselves.
8. I think I have reached the point where I must hand over what I have worked out to the Group, so that they can, if they think fit, take it further.

#### APPENDIX A

##### Perambulation of part of 1718 boundary

- A. The boundary walked really starts at the top of a limestone quarry with kilns, behind the Wye Rapids Hotel. Lime was burned here and sent away either by barge or, later, by rail.
- B. It will be of assistance in following the description of the boundary from this point onwards to say that it is above the western bank of the Wye, which continues in an escarpment, usually with cliffs in it, running up to 300 to 400 feet at the top (with the ground then rising further but more gradually to about 600 feet at the top of Great Doward) and that between there and almost to the county boundary to the S there are really only three routes up which persons can climb without being in danger of having to crawl: the Minepits gate, the slope of the Biblyns and the valley between Great and Little Doward Hills (down which the boundary eventually passes).
- C. This boundary is a ditch with a mound on the downhill side for between 100 and 200 yards from point of departure when it reaches a natural gully, at one time used as a lane down the hillside. It is assumed from the planting that the downhill side belongs to the Forestry Commission. The boundary turns up the gully (Map L to K). There is a free flow of water down it; after about seventy yards up the steep slope there is a fork. The right fork is a continuation of a former lane with remains of a bank and live hedge on each side, but the boundary ditch with which we are concerned bears left (Map K to H) and continues more or less along the contour, with a bank on the left (river) side either made of drystone walling or earth and stone.
- D. This runs, except in one place, in quite gradual curves cutting off a strip of the top of the escarpment above the Wye including two promontories, on its way to Minepits gate (Map H).

At this stage of the boundary described in the last paragraph it is beginning to pass over iron bearing rock. The whole area is under thick woodland and from this point on I will call the land on the higher ground, between the boundary and the River, Lords Wood. That on the other side of the boundary (until it runs beside the public track) I am referring to as Devil's Ditch Wood (Map L K H).



E. Before I had explored it properly, I had thought that the ditch was a packhorse track for carrying ore down to the river, where I had assumed it would either be treated or sent by water for treatment elsewhere. I think that the track from the Minepits Gate would have been so used. The mine workings are scattered, in places very thickly, on both sides of the boundary, but care seems to have been taken that they and the bank and ditch should not conflict (Map K to H). For instance, at one spot a drystone wall waist high has been built on the side of the ditch opposite the bank to prevent rubbish falling into the ditch. (This is a point against the ditch and bank being defensive at the time of making the wall.) There is one exception to this, on this length; a circular mine shaft has been opened at one spot right on the line of the ditch, so that at this spot not only has the ditch (if it was precedent to the opening) completely vanished, but the bank has to turn out of its expected line for a few feet. The shaft may be an air hole. It would have stopped any use of the ditch as a roadway. I do not regard this shaft as conclusive evidence that the mine was there before the boundary; the latter might have had to be adjusted at a later date for the convenience of the miners. There are two other deep circular shafts within fifty yards. Just before reaching the Minepits gate the boundary has, I think, been rather flattened by timber extraction. The Minepits gate has vanished but it was on the line of the boundary and one ancient gate post remains (Map at H). From the Minepits gate the course becomes very sinuous for the next fifty yards. There are several old pits and shafts in close proximity on both sides and it twists and turns to avoid them, passing close to several during this distance. I think that they probably connect with the tunnels from the pancake (Map J). These pits appear to be the oldest in the area, two of them rather resembling small quarries than pits. There is a bank of mine wastes that has been walled back either to preserve the boundary or to prevent it spilling into an opening on just the other side of the boundary before the latter was made.

From that small area the course becomes one of more direct lines: up to the edge of the wood (it has been woodland on both sides from the start until now) and then along the edge of Lords Wood.

Assuming that the Lords Wood was taken out of common land, then either the new boundary followed a track or vice versa, because they run side by side (or the track cuts across an arc) for about 1,000 yards. The track is known as Forest Road. For the first length of it, to the Wood Gate (Map G) it is very overgrown and thereafter can be used by motor vehicles.

Up to the Wood Gate the boundary is clear. The Wood itself was cut about ten years ago and replanted with conifers, and a mass of brambles etc has grown there and has been allowed to encroach badly on Forest Road. The boundary appears to be much slighter along here; the ditch seems to be about three feet wide and the bank to be usually about knee high above the bottom of the ditch.

At the Wood Gate (Map G) a lane comes down from over the hill to the right and it can be seen clearly where the lane continued into the wood; there is a hollow way at least waist deep continuing the line. It appears that at one time a hollow across Forest Road has been filled up and a woodland ride made a few yards to one side, which now has a bar across it, and this is known as the Wood Gate. Years ago there were mature trees over this portion of the Wood and I have followed the hollow of the old road (which coincides in some stretches with the existing ride) and it runs via the Romano British site in the wood to the Biblyns gap, and must have reached the valley meadows there at much the same spot as the present road to the Biblyns does. The fact that the boundary has been less prominent after leaving the mining

area may be accounted for by the geological change from thin soil over rock to Drybrook sandstone, resulting in it running through sand and clay with much less stone in it to keep it in shape, but it seems to me that it was always much slighter than when it was the boundary of the Devil's Ditch Wood.

After the Wood Gate the bank and ditch continue, either alongside a rough roadway or close to it. The bank is to be seen all the way (Map G to F) but in places the road has taken in the ditch (it is used by cars here) and for part of the distance towards F there has been shallow quarrying of limestone up to but not including the bank. At F on the map the bank and ditch are destroyed by a fairly modern Forestry road leading to the Biblyns and on the far side of this there is a deep cut down what must have been limestone cliffs. This is wide enough for a donkey cart and it is well over a man's height in depth; the lower end of it has been removed but it must clearly have led to level ground and is still negotiable by a pedestrian. This must, I think, be the dark lane, though the name is forgotten. The level ground must have been widened to improve access to a quarry, now derelict, that has removed part of the cliffs between F and King Arthur's Cave (Map E). Much of these cliffs still remain and are the first purely natural feature forming the boundary.

The neighbouring farm was known as Kilyard Farm. It is now part of the Doward Farm.

From King Arthur's Cave the boundary follows the old farm boundary to D and C on the Map. In 1718 the farm appears to have been enclosed and the line of hedge was used. In the last century a straightening out was effected, by which a portion of the old farmland was fenced off and planted with sweet chestnuts and treated as part of the extensive woodlands of the Wyastone Leys Estate, which included Little Doward and the Doward Farm. The boundary can be followed for a length by the existing farm hedge, and then branches off to the head of the cleft between the two hills. The differences of planting, and occasional hazel bushes, still show the line.

At the point C on the Map we are on the parish boundary; also the boundary of the area of common land of the Manor of Goodrich, which was enclosed in the 19<sup>th</sup> C by special Act of Parliament. The three boundaries coincide down to the Wye. Along this line, which runs through tall woods there are occasional signs that there has been a live hedge. If one stands at C facing away from the river, the valley between the two Doward Hills has a wide, smoothly curved bottom, tending to end in low limestone cliffs on each side. I am no geologist but I think that this may well have been scooped out by ice. At C, the two hills have drawn close together but there is no sign of any ditch or stream draining the valley. If one then does an about turn, a V shaped cleft is seen opening at one's feet quite suddenly, and rapidly deepening and widening as it descends steeply towards the Wye. At the bottom of the cleft is one, or in part two, ditches which seem to be floored with stones or rocks (probably fallen down the sides). The whole is covered with a heavy layer of leaves and leaf mould. I have seen water running over the surface for a few yards at the top end, then it vanished and I could hear what sounded like water trickling from a height into a pool. I think that between C and B there is an underground stream below the ditch, which has worked a new bed in the limestone. Compare the Whippington brook on the other side of, and slightly upstream on, the Wye, where the OS map shows that the water only surfaces at intervals (that is a much gentler slope).

At B the valley has widened and the ditch has vanished. There is much scree of broken rock and this has, I think, been very thoroughly turned over (as has that below the cliffs facing the Wye) for suitable materials for consumption in a large lime kiln

near B, and the rejected rocks tend to have been left thrown up in ridges. The ditch is replaced by an artificial bank which runs right down to the Wye. In 1718 the land on both sides of the boundary A to C would have been common land. A short distance downstream from A are the remains of 'the Fishhouse' referred to in the Deed.

I very much wonder whether there was an ancient track up the valley. The pool at the bottom is said by the boatmen to be the deepest part of the river (Martin's pool). There is a very swift current at its foot.

## APPENDIX B

### The Mining Complex

This lies roughly opposite the rapids at Symonds Yat. On the W bank there is a fairly level space of land between the actual water's edge and where the hillside really begins to rise. Then the land rises at a very steep gradient. It is clear that this has been partly built up by mine waste being tipped. All this was sufficiently long ago for leaf mould to have accumulated and the slope to be completely masked in trees. The river is below the 100 ft level and the slope rises to just under the 400 feet level in this length of hill before it stops and the limestone or ironstone cliffs rise above it.

If we accept the identification of Niware of Domesday Book with the New Weir, the latter was at the length of the Wye, where the island is, and it had been converted early to provide power to drive a forge hammer. The ruins of the building are still there but by 1840 the weir had been broken during floods, and it and the forge had been abandoned.

There is possible access for packhorses up the slope and to, or through a slight gap in the cliffs by at least two tracks up the slopes, and there has clearly been another road but quite recent and incomplete up the cliffs to the north, and of course with access across Great Doward Hill itself.

It is a feature of Great Doward Hill that from close to the County boundary at Wyastone Leys (which includes Little Doward to the Symonds Yat rapids) there are only two gaps in the cliffs up which one could reasonably venture with a motor bicycle, though there are others (including the line A B C D on the sketch map) up which a horse might well be taken, although a merciful rider might walk part of it.

There is a track to H up not unreasonable gradients where it would be possible to take a small car if one was adventurous, as far as the cliffs at Minepits Gate. These stretch to the left and right hand and a number of adits have been driven into them, more or less horizontal. I am told that some of them connect with shafts further up the hill. In particular there is a shelf, known locally as 'The Pancake' of about two acres in area, marked on the OS Map as a quarry, which I think is at least partially artificial and which has the remains of a horse road to it from the bottom. From the top it could have been approached by a cleft, which is still passable but doubtless had a ladder, and another route via a tunnel in a projecting headland of rock. There are several openings in the cliff face in a hundred and fifty yards. There is a fine beech growing on this shelf that must be at least 100 years old.

Above the cliffs, for a distance of about four hundred yards and a depth of at most 400 yards (it is not easy to guess distances in thick wood and probably not more than two thirds of the area is affected) is a stretch of woodland, the smaller part belonging to the Forestry Commission and the larger part privately owned. The latter was cut

during the 1939-45 War and has been left to recover unaided by natural regeneration. I have walked over a good deal of this and it seems to have been very thoroughly but uneconomically mined. For instance there are three shafts approximately perpendicular, that I would put at about twenty five feet deep but without more than ten yards between each shaft. Other entrances go in at angles; some appear to be intended as corridors and others merely to be to scoop out the richer patches. In addition, there are quite a number of more or less circular depressions that may well be old shafts filled up with the spoil from those more recent. I have not tried to explore underground, and know that two of the shafts have for many years been used for the disposal of domestic rubbish. The whole area is covered with woodland and there are yews, which were omitted from the clear felling, that are so large that they must be of quite considerable age. The ground, under the leaf mould, seems in places to be stone rubble, and there are banks of this that are restrained from falling into the boundary ditch by drystone walling.

I hope I am not fanciful in saying that it seems to me to resemble Grimes Graves, with more shafts left open, and forested for several hundred years, with the result that there is a layer of leaf mould that has accumulated and masks everything. The trees are large enough to prevent practically all undergrowth except moss. They are planted very thick, being mostly coppice. This area is hatched black on the rough sketch map.

#### APPENDIX C

##### Details of the enclosure of the Lords Wood from the waste of the Manor of Goodrich

Articles of Agreement were entered into between the Duke of Kent and his heir, the Lords of the Manor (1) and thirty nine other persons called 'meese tenants' (2). It starts by setting out in the usual way details of relevant transactions in the past, and the present position and intentions of the parties.

It stated that the first named, as Lords of the Manor of Goodrich, owned lands, pasture, wood and woodgrounds commonly called and known by the names of Great Doward and Little Doward ... containing in the whole by estimation 1,100 acres and also commons or waste lands, being pasture grounds commonly called Long Grove (Llangrove) and Old Grove in the Parishes of Llangarren and Whitchurch, containing about two hundred acres.

Also that the meese tenants of the Manor were seized (presumably copyhold) as tenants of the Manor 'of and in several ancient messuages being meese places and lands ... within the Manor of Goodrich and the Lordship of Wilton and by virtue of which they claimed to have common right of estovers (i.e. a limited right to take wood) in the woods called Great Doward and Little Doward etc, as appendant or appurtenant to their said meese places, and also common of pasture in the said woods'.

There had been arguments about the enjoyment of the commons of estovers and pasture, and legal proceedings had been commenced, and to settle the matter it was agreed that the Duke of Kent should hold the Lords Wood (the detailed description is below) 'free from all claims and demands whatsoever of them the meese tenants', and that the meese tenants should benefit in return.

Accordingly the Duke agreed to convey to the meese tenants the rest of these commons which were then enclosed (there must have been considerable illegal

enclosure) 'containing in the whole by estimation 1,200 acres together with (inter alia) all lime kilns and quarries'.

Description of what is now the Lords Wood Parcel of enclosed land being part of the said wood called Great Doward, being then lately cut set out and divided from the other part of the said Great Doward by the mounds, ditches, fences, marks, boundaries and enclosures hereinafter mentioned and expressed ... i.e. All that the lower part of the said Great Doward which shoots down towards the river Wye and certain parcels of meadow and pasture grounds called the Biblyns as the same is now divided and distinguished from the upper part thereof which shoots towards Whitchurch. The boundaries of which enclosed parcel begins at the Bank of the River Wye above the New Weare and forge where stood a tenement or cottage formerly in the possession of one William Bayton about twenty yards above the tenement or cottage and inclosure now in the possession of Thomas Bayton and from thence goes down to the said Riverside including the New Weare and the New Forge and other buildings and enclosures there in the possession of George White as tenant to the said Duke of Kent to the said meadows and pasture grounds called the Biblyns and then leaving those inclosures on the East part or side thereof the said bounds go down to the lower end of the said Biblyns and there fall down again to the said River Wye below the Great Rocks there to a place in the said River called Martins pool near a watchhouse there lately built for the benefit of the fishery near which a ditch was lately made and a mound raised as a boundary for the said enclosed wood from thence it goes up an ancient ditch path or way which leads up between and divides the said Great Doward from the said wood called Little Doward to the lower part of a farm called the Killiards Farm and from thence it goes on to a place called King Arthur's Hall leaving the said Killiards Farm on the South West side thereof. And from the said King Arthur's Hall along the Killiards Rocks to a place called the Dark Lane and from thence to a place called the Green Rock Sladd being in many places distinguished by ditches and mounds lately made and raised for that purpose from thence it extends to the Common way leading from Whitchurch through Great Doward aforesaid towards the said lands called the Biblyns from thence by other ditches and mounds and fences it extends Eastward to a place called the Mine Pitts Green from thence it crosses over the way leading from the New Weare to Monmouth and stretcheth something Northward to the Lime Kilns on the other side of the hill above New Weare aforesaid from thence down to the gate in the way leading from New Forge towards Whitchurch and from thence down to the said River Wye near the place where the said William Bayton's cottage formerly stood above the cottage tenement and enclosure of the said Thomas Bayton and where the same boundaries did begin ... And all ... their claim and demand whatsoever in and to the said estovers and other right of common thereupon of what nature or kind soever which the meese tenants shall or may have or claim out of the said enclosed part of the said Great Doward and which contains in the whole four hundred and fifty acres be the same more or less."

#### APPENDIX D

There are a number of papers in the County Archives about the Manor of Goodrich and a day of investigation there produced interesting, but rather negative, results. To begin with the Lords Wood: there is an incomplete copy of the Conveyance of this from the owners of the Manor in 1840 to the Crown and it is described as containing

the Weir Cut 7a.1r.6p, Ellern Cut 27a.1r.30p, Dropping Well Cut 126a.1r.16p, Green Roaks Cut 65a.2r.24p, King Arthurs Hall Cut 15a.3r.34p and the Bibling Cut 12a.1r.0p.

Unfortunately the plan is missing, but the fact that it is laid out in 'cuts' indicates that it was normal (as was so frequent in the Wye Valley) to crop the wood periodically for charcoal burning. There was also included in the sale the New Weir and the Great House Works and land - 2a.3r.23p. - which I take to be the Forge. The Bibling meadows, between the Lords Wood and the Wye, and several cottages and gardens are included, and the weir itself.

The mention of Green Rocks ties in with a rather similar name in the description of the 1718 boundaries (where the name has now been forgotten) and it is interesting to note that this is close to a still existing lime kiln, which accounts for damage to the boundary and the virtual disappearance of the rocks.

The objects of the visit were to ascertain if evidence could be found to date the iron mines. This, it was thought, apart from direct statements, might be found either from references in a customary of the manor, or from rentals.

I found no mention of iron mines. But it may be that there is some mention in the 17<sup>th</sup> C rolls, or earlier, but they are in Latin and I can't cope with the language and the handwriting.

I looked for a customary, as I understand that it was common practice in the 17<sup>th</sup> C for the manor jury to record what the peculiar customs of the manor may be, for reference in the future. One is in existence but I did not find it and Miss Jancey, the County Archivist, was going to make a further search. If found, it may show who (lord or copyholder) is entitled to the mines and minerals under the waste or under the copyholds of the Manor.

There were a number of rent accounts, and I looked particularly for reference to mines, iron ore, or mining in those for 1688, 1728, and 1718 and 1782-3, but there was no specific reference. This compares with the quarries, as to which I next write.

The 1688 accounts show no reference to quarry rents or to lime kilns. In the 1708 accounts there is an entry for 'the stone at Doward now in hand £2 per annum'; another rent for the stone quarry 3/4 and for the lime kilns £12, and there are added items at the end 'Limekilns at the Blackstones (no rent shown); "three Kilns at the Green Rocks £3" and Limestone quarry (no rent shown). The last two may be memoranda for the next year's accounts but there seems to have been substantial quarrying for lime then, with the Lord of the Manor taking the rent.

In the previous account one of the rental entries with no detail given may very well be one of these items.

In the 1718 rent roll there are two lettings at £5 per annum each 'for lime kills on the unenclosed part of Dowards' and 'lime kills neare the Newweare in the uninclosed part of the Dowards'. As comparison with Lidbrook Mill shows the rent there to have been £8, it may be taken that the rent for 'lime kills' (the word is still so used locally) would have included quarrying rights.

The rent roll for the two years ending 1783 also shows no specific entry of quarry rents, although it is clear that quarrying was still carried on (possibly on freehold land) well into the 19<sup>th</sup> C.

It is accordingly clear from these accounts that the Lord claimed to own the limestone under the Manor waste and was paid for it when quarried. If that was so, it was almost certainly the case that the same would have applied to any other mines and minerals, including iron ore; that in 1718, if iron was being mined it would probably have been specifically referred to in the accounts; and that, as there is no reference to mines or iron ore in any of the accounts referred to, it is most improbable that there were active mines at that date.

This is confirmed by what appears to be a manuscript draft of sale particulars, for when the Duke of Kent sold the manor circa 1750 and which showed "A castle & manor in which are large commons and a quarry of stone". No mention is made of iron mines, though cinders are referred to (iron slag) also a forge for making iron, a mill for slitting iron and a grist mill'. It also mentions "Great Doward Wood containing 283a.3r.17p of underwood". There can have been no iron mining carried out at that time in Devil's Ditch Wood if the wood was then waste of the manor, as it would have been mentioned in this paper.

I then turned to published references without much success. There are references to an iron mine of Roman times on Great Doward (e.g. Mr. Cohen's lecture in the WCT) but these seem to have been copied from each other. They must, I think, refer to at least part of the mining complex.

There is only one proved iron mine of Roman or pre Roman date in the Forest of Dean and that is at the temple of Nodens, Lydney Park. When excavated, a Roman building was found to have been built over a filled-in shaft.

As far as I can see, the first reference to a mine on the Doward as Roman (and I expect that the complex has been worked at times over a long period) is in the very unscientific work "Iron Making in the Olden Times" by the Rev H G Nicholls, republished in 1965 by Nicholls, Forest of Dean, and writing on page 4 about the earliest mines, he says:

"They have the appearance either of spacious caves, as above Lydney and on the Doward Hill or of deep stone quarries as at Scowles, near Bream. Or they consist of precipitous and irregularly shaped passages, left by the removal of ore or mineral earth wherever it was found etc.'

On page 6 he quotes 'King Arthur's Hall', i.e. cave, as 'being evidently the entrance to an ancient iron mine'.

## APPENDIX E

### The Whitchurch Parish Tithe Map and Book of 1843

Reference was made to these documents after all the other researches had been carried out. The date is so soon after the acquisition of the Lords Wood that it is reasonably safe to assume that the land of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests shown here is identical with the land shown on the missing Conveyance plan, and also, though with less certainty, that this agrees with the land in the 1718 agreement and includes in addition any possible land formerly owned in connection with the forge.

The object of the documents is to set out the boundaries of lands throughout the Parish in different ownerships and to decide what tithe annuity was to be paid on each. It shows that enclosure on Great Doward was nearly complete, and that there

was then a good deal of land under cultivation that is now back to woodland or scrub. The main interest of the map is that it enables one to follow the then boundary of the Commissioners' land and that, where I have traced it on the ground, my boundary is the same as that of 1843, and presumably as that of 1718. It is not of a scale to show minute deviations. Fields on the large farms are named but not, usually, those on Doward Hill.

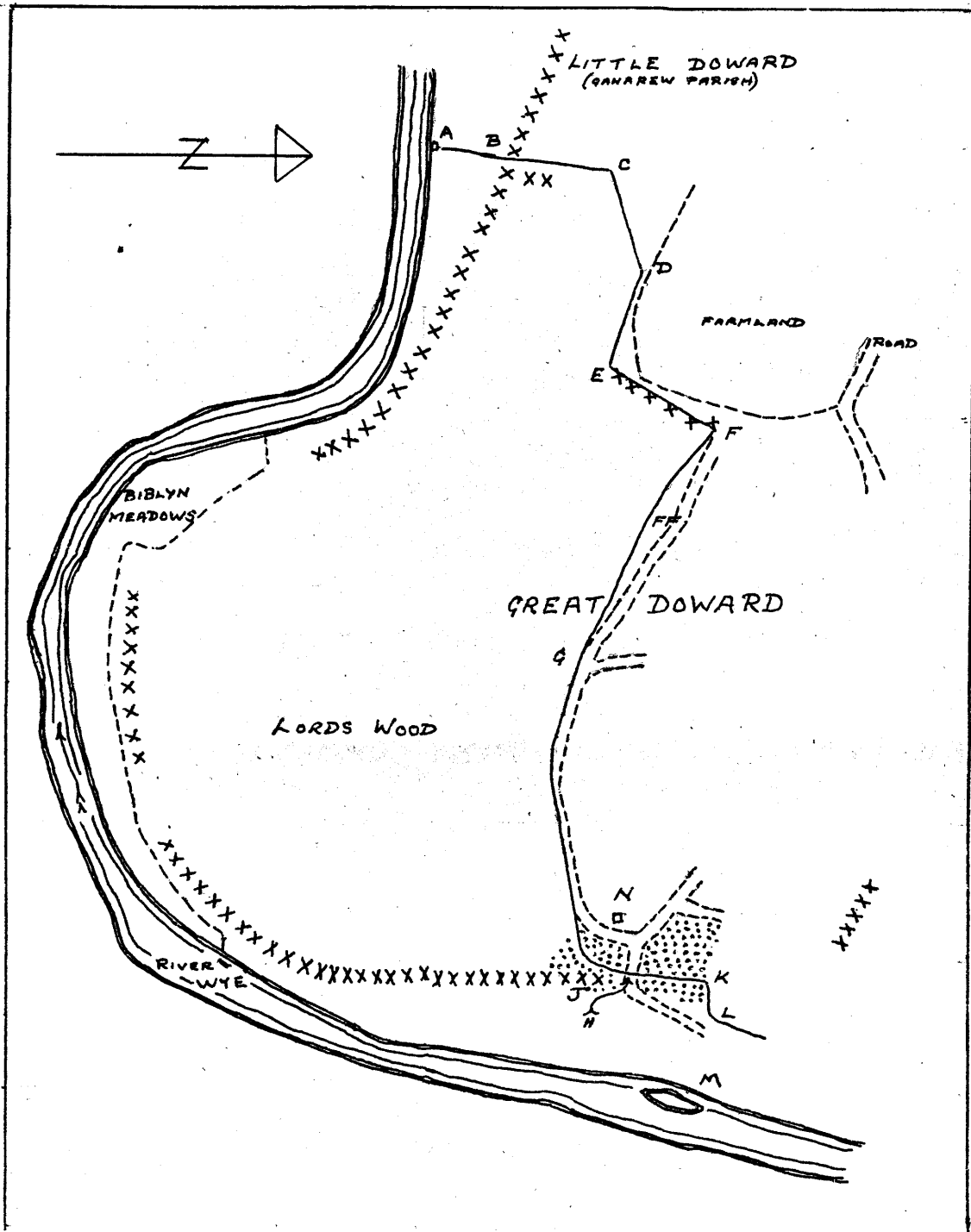
As to the Devil's Ditch Wood, there is no name used but the area that has been worked is shown as iron mine on the map and mine pits and brake in the book, while the land on the northern side that now seems part of the wood is shown as arable and a line of fence between is shown. The neighbouring building now known as the old smithy is shown as a blacksmith's shop.

The enclosure now known as the Devil's Ditch is tithe area No. 343, description minepits and brake; cultivation, wood; Rectorial tithe one shilling. This compares with the lands of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, in hand, of 265a.2r.7p. comprising Lords Wood and the site of the iron works (the former forge by the River) and tithed at £12.15.0, or about 1/- per acre, on Lords Wood, which is tithed as woodland. The Devil's Wood is tithed at roughly 2½d per acre.

The ground for nominating the mines as Roman seems to be the opinion of Mr Wyrrell of English Bicknor, who died at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> C, quoted on page 7. The line of deduction seems to have been: there were great quantities of iron slag in Whitchurch, which was dug for reprocessing. Much is there still. Coins, fibulae and other things have been frequently found in the beds of cinders, particularly at Whitchurch, especially one coin of Trajan; from this it is assumed that much of the smelting was done there in Roman times and that ore would have come from Great Doward Hill, and in that case the mine there would be Roman. This seems rather a non sequitur. Reference to the map of Roman Herefordshire in the VCH shows beds of scoriae over a large area (Nicholls quotes Tretire with Michaelchurch, Peterstow, St Weonards and Llangarron, and nearer at hand at Dixon, Monmouth and Overmonnow). Recent excavation has also shown a Roman smelting site and a villa-like building at GR 536152 near Hadnock on the opposite bank of the river, and it is clear that it was normal to take ore for smelting to sites quite distant from the mines, where charcoal and possibly water power were more readily available.



"DEVIL'S DITCHES" KEY SKETCH MAP (UNSCALED)



**LEGEND**

—— IT'S BOUNDARY VIDE APPENDIX A.

X X X X X CLIFFS

..... MINING AREA

A BANK JOINS RIVER AT IRON GATE

A-B BANK PROBABLY ARTIFICIAL

B-C MAINLY NATURAL DITCH

C-D BANK AND DITCH ABSENT

E KING ARTHUR'S CAUSE

MP. WATKINS HANS.  
R.E. KAY O.R.L. 20-3-79.

D-E BOUNDARY-KILYARD (NOW DOWARD) FARM

E-F "KILYARD ROCKS"

F DARK LANE

F-F "GREENSLADD ROCKS"

G WOODGATE

H MINEPIT GATE

J THE PANCAKE

K-L OLD ROAD

M APPROX SITE OF OLD FORGE

N MINEPITS COTTAGE

## **FIELD MEETING – WALTERSTONE, ROWLSTONE AND LLANCILLO, MAY 1981**

### **Introduction by Mary Thomas**

These three motte and bailey castles are closely linked geographically and historically with that of Ewyas Harold.

We are most grateful to Mr Bruce Coplestone-Crowe for his painstaking research into the archives and for his excellent detailed report on the history of the castles.

It only remains for me to supply a sketch map and brief description of the three sites.

### **Walterstone**

The motte lies about 100 yds west of Walterstone Church. It is circular, with a well defined deep ditch, which still partly contains water. The diameter, from the outer lip of the ditch, is about 200 ft and the height roughly 40 ft above the surrounding field level. The bailey can be seen to the east of the motte but has probably been cut into by the present road. South of the mound there are traces of a rampart which has been almost ploughed out.

### **Rowlstone**

The castle site lies about 100 yds NE of Rowlstone Church.

The motte is about 140 ft in diameter with a flattened top rising to some 12 ft above the surrounding ground level.

Any traces of a bailey are completely obscured by the farmyard and buildings.

### **Llancillo**

The motte at Llancillo Court lies about 100 yds east of the church. It is about 45 yds in diameter, surrounded by a wide dry ditch with an outer rampart which is well defined and substantial on the west side.

There is no obvious bailey but there are various scarps and banks which could have been defensive. The top of the motte still has traces of the rubble walling of the stone keep.

### **Notes by Bruce Coplestone-Crowe**

The castle at Walterstone was probably built by the Lacys within a few years of the Norman Conquest of England, and the castles at Llancillo and Rowlstone by military sub-tenants of the Lacys a generation later.

Walterstone seems to have lain in the castlery of Ewyas Harold in 1086. Referring to the lands of Roger de Lacy, Domesday Book (f184) says:-

“In the jurisdiction of Ewyas (Harold) Castle earl William (fitzOsbern), of Hereford, 1067-71) gave to Walter de Lacy 4 carucates of land which are waste. Roger de Lacy his son holds them, and William and Osbern of him. On the demesne they have 2 ploughs and there are 4 Welshmen rendering 2 sesters of honey. They have 1 plough. There they have 3 serfs and 2 bordars. This land is worth 20s.”

All this probably refers to Walterstone, which is said to be named after Walter de Lacy (Duncumb, History and Antiquities of Herefordshire, ii , 301 ). Ewyas Harold Castle had been built by Earl William, and he and Walter together made "a bold attack on the people of Brycheiniog", and other raids on the Welsh, during the course of which three Welsh kings were defeated (Orderic Vitalis, Bk 4, chap 7; Wightman (The Lacy Family, 167) surmises that these attacks were made in late 1069 and 1070). Walterstone probably came to Lacy during one of these campaigns and earl William gave him the land there – to hold within the jurisdiction of his castle at Ewyas Harold – on which to build a castle.

Roger de Lacy had other possessions in the castlery of Ewyas Harold in 1086. Speaking of the possessions of Henry de Ferrers, Domesday Book (f185) says:-

"In the jurisdiction of Ewyas (Harold Castle) Roger (de Lacy) holds of Henry three churches and a priest and 32 acres of land, and it renders 2 sesters of honey".

The three churches are probably those of Walterstone, Llancillo and Rowstone. Since Llancillo is named from St Tyssilio (Ilan-Tyssilio), who lived 550-610 and was the chief saint of Powys, it is probable that this was the oldest and more senior of the three churches. For this reason it seems likely that the (Welsh) priest (with his 32 acres of land and honey render?) resided there. The rectory of Walterstone and tithes at Llancillo and Rowstone are later found in the possession of Llanthony Priory, which was founded c 1103 by Hugh, brother of Roger de Lacy (Arch Camb, 1 (1846), 236). Roger had another undefined estate called Ewyas (DB, f184), but this lay outside the castlery of Ewyas Harold. It later formed the greater part of the marcher lordship of Ewyas Lacy.

The owner of Ewyas Harold in 1086 was Alfred of Marlborough. Alfred seems to have died during the actual making of the Domesday survey, and as he had no heirs his lands escheated to the King, who effected a division of them among other tenants-in-chief. Ewyas Harold was among the majority of Alfred's lands that passed to Harold, son of the Norman earl of Hereford called Ralph who died in 1057, at this juncture. Others of Alfred's lands passed to Bernard de Neufmarche, but the chief result as far as the Lacys were concerned seems to have been that they were allowed to remove Walterstone, the head of their lands in Ewyas, Llancillo and Rowstone, from the jurisdiction of Ewyas Harold Castle.

Within a few years of this, however, Roger de Lacy was deprived of all his lands for joining an unsuccessful rebellion against William Rufus. All his possessions were then given to his brother Hugh, who had them from 1095 until his death in about 1115. It was probably Hugh who joined Walterstone, Llancillo and Rowstone to his other lands in Ewyas to form the lordship of Ewyas Lacy, at the same time removing the administrative centre of those lands from Walterstone to a new motte and bailey castle at Ponthendre in Clodock (Ponthendre was itself the forerunner of Ewyas Lacy or Longtown Castle; A W Clapham in RCHM Herefordshire, iii, plxii). Walterstone became a demesne manor of the Lacy Lordship thereafter, but as part of the same reorganization of his lands in Ewyas, Hugh made over Llancillo and Rowstone to military sub-tenants who were bound to serve him in his new castle in Ewyas when the need arose. The castles of Llancillo and Rowstone most likely owe their origins to the creation of minor military fiefs within the lordship of Ewyas Lacy by Hugh de Lacy at this time.

As has been said, Walterstone became a demesne manor of the lordship of Ewyas Lacy. In 1292 Peter de Geneville (an heir of the Lacys) held the manor of Walterstone within the liberty of Ewyas Lacy, with 2½ carucates of land, a Welsh custom called kylch and honey in the forests (cf. the honey render in 1086) (Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem (2<sup>nd</sup> series), iii, no. 43). When Peter's daughter and heir Joan, wife of Roger de Mortimer, Earl of March, died in 1357 she had the manor of Walterstone and a moiety of the town and land of Ewyas Lacy of the king in chief for ½ knight's fee (ibid, x, no. 307).

The military sub-tenants settled by Hugh at Llancillo seem to have been the Esketot family, who were closely associated with the Lacys in Herefordshire and elsewhere. When Walter de Esketot died shortly before 1243 his lands in Herefordshire were divided between his two heiresses and their husbands. One of the husbands was Walter de Eylesford (Book of Fees, 804, 816). In 1331 Walter's great grandson Gerard gave certain of his lands to Wormsley Priory but reserved for himself and his heirs the Manor of Llancillo (Inquisitions ad quod damnum, I, 117, 121). The only lands the Eylesfords had in Herefordshire had been acquired through the Esketot inheritance, so it seems likely that the Llancillo – in the March of Wales and outside the shire – also came to them in this way. The father of Walter de Esketot (died ante 1243) was Richard III de Esketot who had been one of the founders of Wormsley Priory in John's reign, and his grandfather was Richard II de Esketot who had held 3 knight's fees of Hugh II de Lacy in 1166 (Red Book of the Exchequer, 282). Two of

these fees were at King's Pyon and Howton (in Kenderchurch; Fees, 804, 810, 816, 817 – all or part of both of these manors passed to Eylesford) and the third may have lain at Llancillo.

Richard I de Esketot, great uncle of Richard II, had been in the entourage of Roger de Lacy when in 1085 he had reached agreement with the Bishop of Hereford regarding the services due from the manor of Holme Lacy (V H Galbraith, "An Episcopal Land-Grant of 1085", EHR, 44 (1929), 372. Richard was probably from Ectot-l'Auber, dept. Seine-Maritime, cant. Yerville). Fifteen years later he was in attendance upon Hugh de Lacy when he gave the church of St Peter in Hereford to Gloucester Abbey (Hist et Cart Mon S Petri Glouc (ed Hart) iii, 256). It may therefore have been to this Richard that Hugh gave Llancillo. The presence of stonework dating from the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century in the fabric of Llancillo Church (RCHM Herefs, I, 164) argues for the existence in the vicinity of an active local manorial authority at that date (there is no evidence that either Llancillo or Rowlstone churches ever belonged to a religious house in the post-conquest period) such as would have been provided by Richard de Esketot. Richard probably threw up his earth and timber motte-and-bailey castle within a stone's throw of the church, at the same time rebuilding the ancient structure in the style of his own age.

Three or four generations after Richard's day, the timber defences on the motte were replaced in stone. The precise nature of the stone keep built on the motte early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century is unclear. Renn ("Round Keeps of the Brecon Region", Arch Camb, 114 (1965), 141) gives its external diameter as 50', which is rather large for a plain round tower or Juliet, and suggests that it may in fact have been a roofed-over shell keep. (When Alfred Watkins visited the site in 1923 he estimated the height of the motte to be 25' and gave the dimensions of the (oval rather than circular?) keep as 39' x 48'. He further observed that the rim wall of earth and stones on the top stood 5' high in places: Woolhope Club Transactions (1923) 287.) Renn goes on to compare the remains with those at Wiston (Pembrokeshire), which was built in 1220, but throws doubt on whether the structure at Llancillo was ever completed (p 134). Whether the keep was completed or not, it seems that on this basis we must attribute it to either Richard III de Esketot (1160-1220), the most prominent member of his family and one of the joint founders of Wormsley Priory, or to his son Walter, died ante 1243.

John de Eylesford, grandson of the Gerard of 1331, died in 1396, and when his heiress Katherine de la Monce died in 1399 she had ½ knight's fee at Llancillo of the earl of March, lord of Ewyas Lacy (Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem 1<sup>st</sup> series, ii, 189 no. 22 and 239 no. 34).

The military sub-tenants at Rowlstone seem originally to have been the family taking their name from Munsley (Herefs). In 1306 Robert de Oke gave the manor of Rowlstone to John, son of Vincent Scudamore of Abergavenny, for £100 (Skidmore, The Scudamore of Upton Scudamore, 70, 145; one of the witnesses to this deed was Gerard de Eylesford, lord of Llancillo). John was heir to his elder brother Robert, and seven years previously Robert and John had received various grants of lands and services in Rowlstone from Robert de Oke and his immediate family (ibid 68 -9, 70 ,144 -5). In 1265-82 Robert had himself received lands in the manor from Richard de Feypou (ibid 145). Richard was probably the grandson of a man of the same name who had married one of the heiresses of Ralph de Munsley, of Munsley and Lower Lyde, and his wife Ivette. Another Richard de Feypou and the husband of one of the other heiresses, Walter de Mucegros, each held 1/10<sup>th</sup> fee at Lower Lyde in 1243 (Book of Fees, 803). Ralph and Ivette flourished in 1173 (Capes, Records and Charters of Hereford Cathedral, 23) and Ralph may have been the son of Roland de Munsley, who held Munsley and Lower Lyde in c. 1162 (Galbraith and Tait, Herefordshire Domesday Book, 28, 44, 90) and who had 3 fees of Hugh II de Lacy in 1166 (Red Book of the Exchequer, 282). One of Roland's fees may have lain at Rowlstone. In 1086 Munsley and Lower Lyde had been sub-tenanted from the Lacys by one Ralph (Domesday Book, ff184,184b), who was probably the progenitor of the Munsley family.

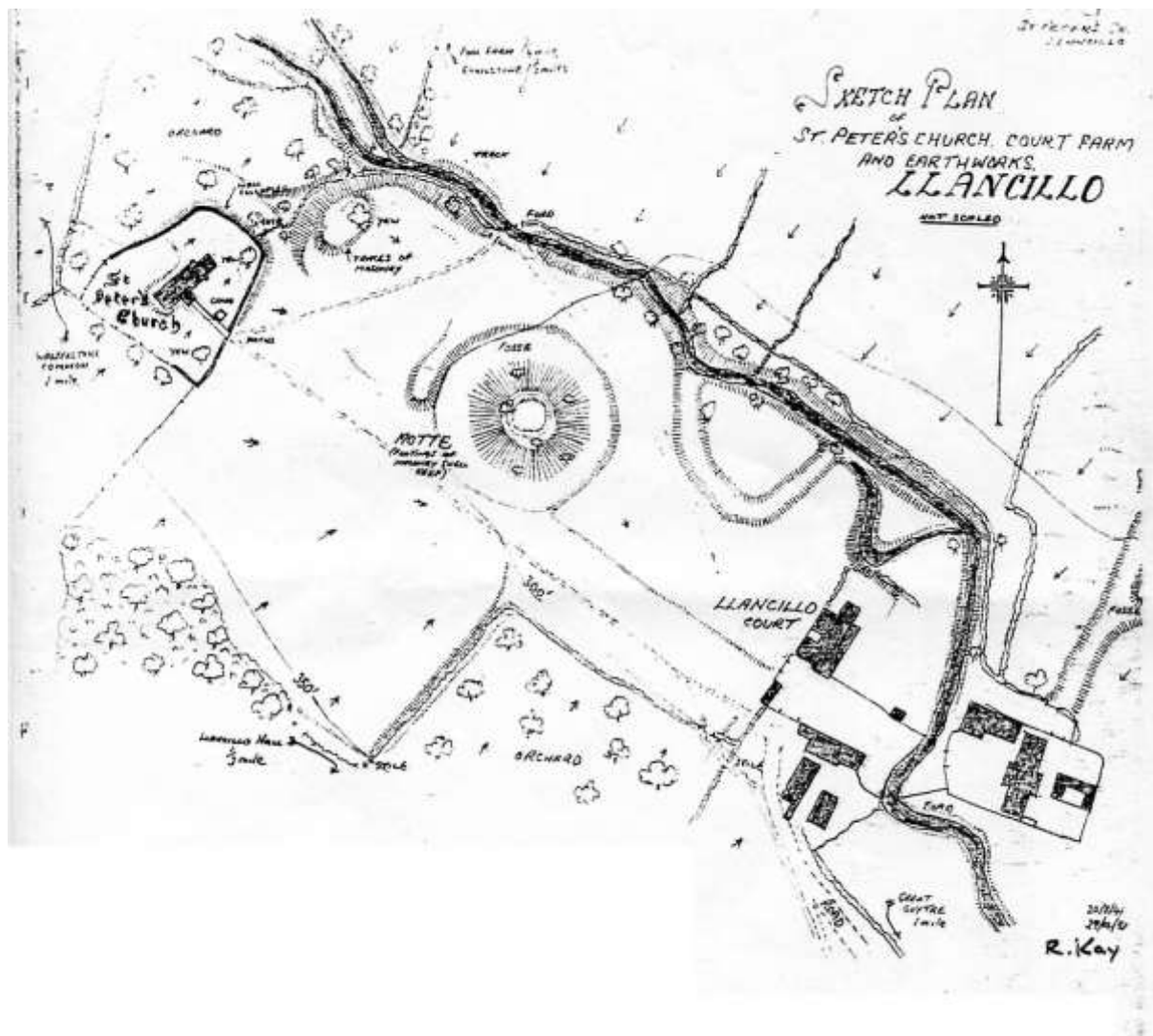
Bannister (Place-Names of Herefordshire, 16) asserts that early references to Rowlstone always call it villa Radulphi, i.e. Ralph – or Raoul's – ton, and it therefore seems possible that the place could be named from the Ralph of 1086. If this was the case, then Rowlstone would have passed in marriage to the Feypou family after the death of Ralph de Munsley, husband of Ivette, the last of his line, in about 1200.

The Feypous (from Phipou, dept. Eure, cant. Le Neubourg, comm. Saint-Aubin-d'Ecrosville) were important undertenants of the Lacys in their liberty of Meath, Ireland. Hugh II de Lacy gave the barony of Skreen to Adam de Feypou for the service of 21 knights (Gilbert, Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, ii, 21). Adam made a number of grants to St Mary's Abbey, among the earliest of which, dating from about 1177-86, is one witnessed by Ralph de Munsley, husband of Ivette (ibid., l. 91-2). Adam's heir was his son Richard, who was baron of Skreen in 1200 (Rotuli Chartarum, i, 98b) and he married a daughter of Ralph and Ivette. This match may have been encouraged by the Lacys, since they would undoubtedly have benefited from the fighting experience of their Irish tenants on the turbulent Welsh border. The Richard de Feypou of 1243 was probably this Richard's son. Another Richard de Feypou – the one who was baron of Skreen in 1279 (Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257-1300, 212) – demised the family's interest in Rowlstone to Robert de Oke.

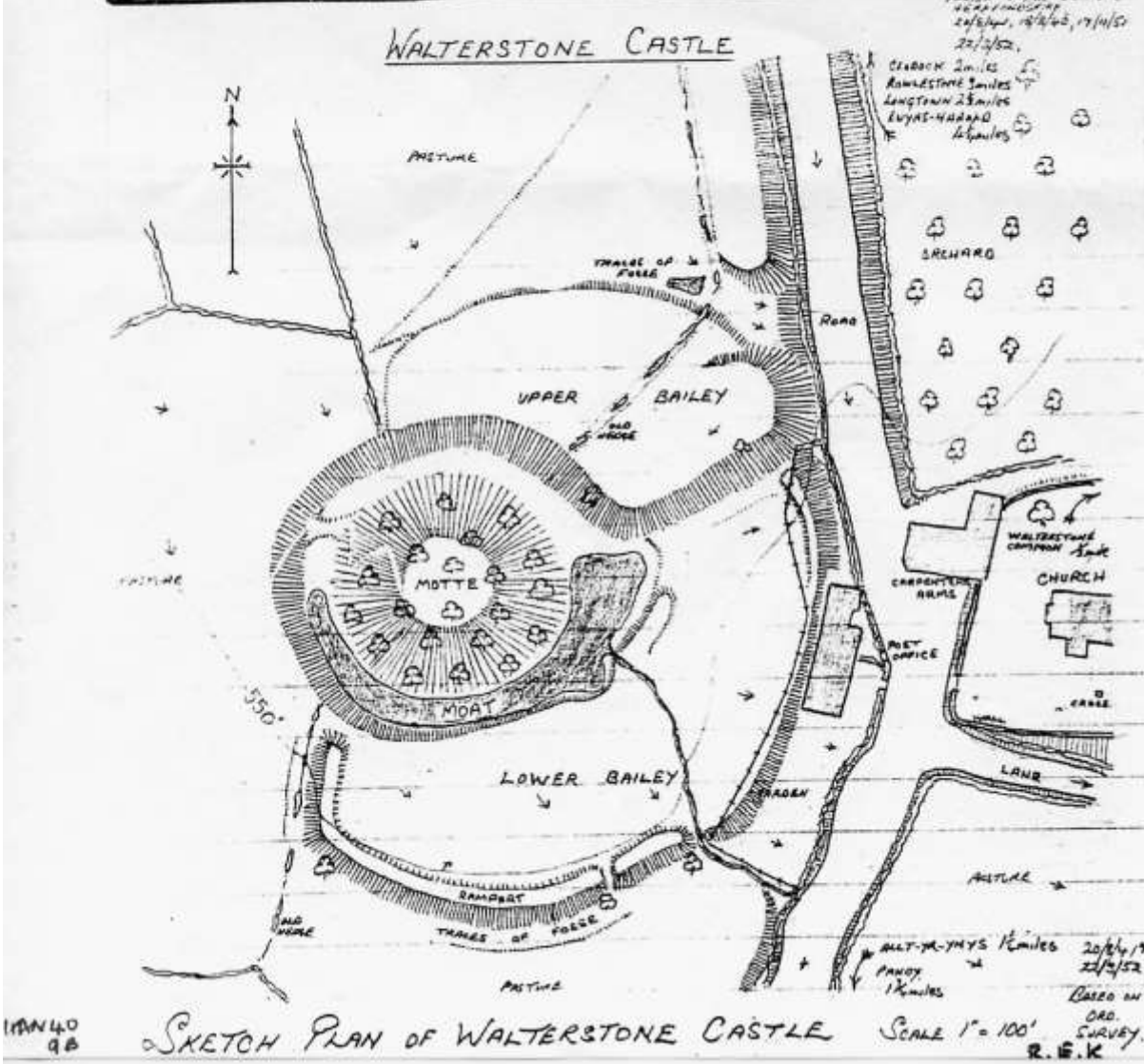
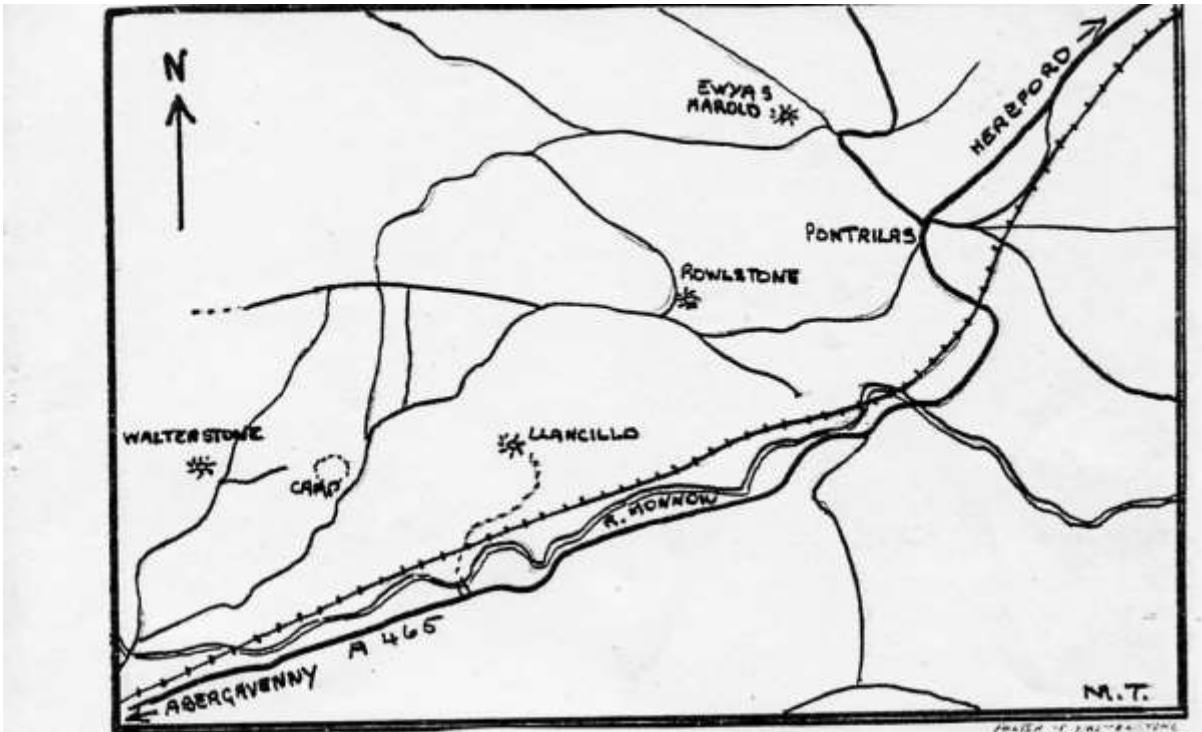
The tone of Robert de Oke's charter of 1306 suggests that he was then a widower and that John Scudamore's wife Cecilia was his daughter. It therefore seems possible that the passage of Rowlstone from Oke to Scudamore originated in marriage and in failure of male heirs. John Scudamore was probably the man who held Rowlstone in 1316 for ½ fee pertaining to the castle of Ewyas Lacy (Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem (2<sup>nd</sup> series) vi, no. 54). His son John had the same ½ fee in 1337 (ibid., vii, no. 710).

At some point the Hospitallers gained a moiety of the manor, but this included neither the church nor castle. In 1338 they had 200 acres of demesne land at Rowlstone (Rees, Order of St John in Wales and the Border, 42-4). This estate may have been among the vast possessions of the Templars that the Hospitallers acquired when their brother Order was dissolved in 1308. The first Richard de Feypou was familiar with the Order of Templars in Ireland and witnessed a charter of theirs to St Mary's Abbey early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Gilbert, op. cit., ii.12). They were already in possession of nearby Garway when Richard acquired Rowlstone, so it may have been through him that they gained lands there.

The first Ralph de Munsley (of 1086) was probably responsible for raising the motte (and bailey?) at Rowlstone, as Richard de Esketot had been at Llancillo. Unlike Llancillo, however, this motte never had its timber defences replaced in stone. This fact can probably be accounted for by the Munsleys being too insignificant (they seem to have lavished what spare cash they had on their churches at Munsley and Rowlstone, in any case) and the Feypous to remote to spend money on it. In the end, the Feypous, although they continued as powerful barons in Ireland, were content to make over their major mainland holding to a local family more interested in its maintenance and development.



In the churchyard SE of the porch are a few ancient grave slabs: (1) to James Scudamore 1690, Thomas Scudamore 1720, and others, stone slab with moulded edge; (2) to Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Scudamore 1653, John Scudamore 1695, and Blanch, wife of James Price 1714, stone slab with moulded edge. The wall tablets and floor slabs within the church are not of quite such a venerable age. The most interesting is a wall tablet in the chancel to Gilbert of "Alteruss". The remainder are mostly of 18<sup>th</sup> century date, those propped up against the west end of the nave do not appear to be "in situ". The plain communion rails and table (now serving as an altar) appear to be of 17<sup>th</sup> century date. The well-designed pulpit of oak, consisting of two sides of an octagon, erected against the NE angle of the nave, with panels carved with arabesque and other ornamentation, has an upper panel on the S side with the date 1632. It is built up with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century or modern work at the back with the initials and date IG 1745. Standing in the chancel against the N wall is a quire stall with plain seat and panelled back and ends of 18<sup>th</sup> century date, and with front made up of early to end 17<sup>th</sup> century panelling with return ends of 18<sup>th</sup> century date. On the north wall of the nave between the pulpit and the window to the W there was, prior to the restoration of the church and the stripping of the internal plaster, a painting of the Royal Arms over the former square lintelled chancel arch. There once existed further wall paintings. The plate belonging to the church is not of outstanding interest or beauty. There are two pewter patens 11" across. Each is provided with a foot 2½" high and is engraved in the centre in a running script "Llancillo". There are two of an exactly similar pattern at Rowstone.



**FIELD MEETING, 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY, 1982**  
**Notes by Bruce Coplestone-Crowe**

**LYDNEY ROMAN TEMPLE**

1. The name of the temple and its associated settlement

According to St Patrick's own testament he was born at or near the town of Bannaventa Taburniae where his father was a decurion. This place name is unknown to the present and is, moreover, difficult to translate into recognizable terms. Probably the best effort to date has been to construe it as "Banna-Venta-Sabrinæ", which can be translated as "the market on a hill by the Severn".

Early Medieval biographies of St Patrick give further information as to his birthplace and its situation. For instance, they give an alternative name for his birthplace, namely Nempthor or Nemthor, which is the phonetic equivalent of the place name Nemetodorum, the Roman name for Nanterre in France. In translation it means "the fortress or the temple of the holy place". Likewise, they tell us that his birthplace was situated in the province of Nentriae or Ventre, again a very obscure word but which can perhaps best be rendered as meaning "the province of the town of Venta", or Gwent.

Taken together, the evidence for St Patrick's birthplace, such as it is, seems to indicate a place called, descriptively, either "the market on a hill by the Severn" or "the fortress of the temple", but which was in any case situated in the district of Gwent. These descriptive elements of the name of the birthplace of St Patrick seem to come together at Lydney when it is remembered that, in the post-Roman era in which St Patrick and his father lived, the Lydney Iron Age hillfort, like many others in the west of England, was refortified and probably, like South Cadbury, inhabited as a town. The river Severn formerly ran much closer to the foot of Lydney hill than it does at present, and the whole area of the Forest of Dean lay in Gwent until settled by the English in the late seventh century. Although Nemetodorum (referred to above) is unknown as a place name in Roman Britain, the seventh century Ravenna "Cosmography" of the towns of the Late Roman empire identifies a place called Nemetambala as lying on the road between Venta Silurum (Caerwent) and Glevum Colonia (Gloucester). The latest authorities on the place names of Roman Britain voice the possibility that this Nemetambala was in fact the temple and settlement at Lydney.

When confronted with the place-name Nemetambala some years ago, Professor Ifor Williams gave two possible meanings for it. The first, taking the second element to be cognate with Latin umbo, navel or umbilicus, was "the holy place of the navel" and the second, taking the same element to be corruption of a word abala, was, "the sacred apple grove". The latest authorities on the place names of Roman Britain dismiss both these meanings but without, apparently, taking into account objects found on the site of Lydney temple. These objects indicate that either could be correct.

Mortimer Wheeler excavated the whole site in 1928-29, but a few years before this a small bone plaque had been picked up in the area of the temple. The plaque represented a naked Venus-like woman with a very pronounced navel and had clearly been given as a votive offering. Moreover, when at some time in the fourth century a naval officer called Titus Flavius Senilis commissioned a new mosaic for the floor of the cella, or innermost sanctuary, of the temple, he had included in its



outer edges, at a position that lay nearly opposite to the base of an altar, a small round hole, decorated in the form of an umbilicus, which led down to an earthenware jar that Wheeler conjectured took offerings down to Mother Earth. If some part of the rites performed in the temple included some fertility or earth goddess observance centred on the female umbilicus, then Nemetambala or “the holy place of the navel” would be an apposite ritualistic name for the temple complex.

In suggesting that the second element of Nemetambala was a corruption of a word meaning apple or apples, Professor Williams was taking cognizance of the fact that Nennius, writing in the ninth century, makes a rather obscure reference, in his list of the marvels of Britain, to the existence on a hill by the mouth of the River Wye of an ash tree on which apples could be found. In 1928 Wheeler found on the temple site a small bronze forearm, with the fingers of the hand (a left one) flexed as though to hold something between thumb and forefinger. Wheeler suggested that this was an apple, an object frequently found in a similar position on ornamental pinheads and other items. To the Celts, and particularly to the Irish, the apple was a sacred object in certain contexts. As illustrations show, one of these sacred contexts was when they were placed in a cauldron of water in order to produce pure, healing waters. The full significance of the bronze forearm, the Irish connection and the healing waters will be explained in the next note; suffice it to say for now that if sacred apples were familiar in the temple then it would seem to be not only (apparently) the basis for Nennius’ reference to an apple-bearing ash tree, but also sufficient reason for giving the place the religious name of Nemetambala or “the sacred apple-grove”.

The conclusion that all this seems to be pointing to is that we are in fact dealing with different names for the same place. In Roman times the official name for the temple and its associated settlement was perhaps Nemetodorum, with a popular or religious name in Nemetambala or Nemetabala. A local name for the place may have come to the fore after the Romans left and it then became known as Bannaventa Sabrinae, “the market on a hill by the Severn”. This change of name may reflect of course both increased Christian influence and a change in emphasis in the use of the site consequent upon its refortification.

## 2. The god Nodens

The principal deity worshipped at Lydney was Nodens, who had many different local or functional aspects, each of which may have been catered for in the many side “chapels” off the main cella. Originally he was a goidelic or Irish god who was introduced into western Britain by Irish raids and then settlement in the second century and later. To the Irish he was Nauda Argat-lam, Nuada “of the Silver Arm”. He gained his epithet by losing his left arm in battle and having it magically replaced in silver “with full motions of the hand” by Credne, a familiar of Aesculapius, the Roman god of medicine. Because of his arm, Nuada became a god of surgery and of healing in general. The significance of the forearm found by Wheeler will now be appreciated. The arm was socketed, and suitably gilded it may have formed an attachment to a small wooden representation of the god. If this forearm once held a sacred apple in the grasp of its hand, then the healing function of the god was clearly being emphasised.

## 3. The Vyne Ring

The presence of a large guest house at Lydney suggests that the cult of Nodens attracted devotees from a wide area. One of the pilgrims from afar was a certain

Silvianus. On a leaden plate recovered from the site in 1805 is scratched the following curse:-

“To the god Nodens. Silvianus has lost a ring; he hereby gives half of its value to Nodens. Among those who are called Senicianus do not allow health until he brings it to the temple of Nodens.”

By chance, this very ring is thought to be still in existence. This is the so-called Vyne Ring, which was found on or near the site of the Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) in 1785. The ring has a representation of Venus on it (compare the bone plaque, above) and was originally dedicated to her, but a secondary Christian inscription reads Seniciane vivas in Deo, “Senicianus lives in God”. Senicianus clearly hailed from Calleva and Silvianus may have done also. If he did, he must have valued the ring highly to make the long journey to Lydney in order to extract revenge on a suspected thief.

The road Silvianus would have taken to Lydney ran westward through Cirencester to Gloucester and Caerleon, at which place a person bearing the name of Senicianus is known to have had dealings. This same road seems to have borne Irish elements eastward from Lydney and elsewhere in western Britain in the post-Roman period. When Silchester was excavated in about 1900, in the well of a house was found a Roman stone which had been reused by the Irish in the fifth or sixth century. They had used it to record, in their characteristic Ogam script, the burial place of one of their number, EBICATOS MAQI MUCOI.

## **LYDNEY CASTLE**

The site of the castle was probably included in the manor of Lydney that William fitzOsbern, earl of Hereford, had in his possession before his death in 1071. From William it descended to his son, earl Roger, who forfeited all his lands in 1075 after an unsuccessful rebellion.

Thereafter, Lydney remained in royal hands until 1141, when the empress Matilda gave the whole of the Forest of Dean to Miles of Gloucester on the day she made him earl of Hereford. Earl Miles died in 1143 and was succeeded by his son, earl Roger, who himself died in 1155. Roger's heirs were his brothers, none of whom inherited his earldom or the Forest of Dean.

The castle site was excavated in 1930 by D A Casey (Antiquaries Journal, 11 (1931)). Casey surmised, on the grounds of design and of finds made, that it was built during the reign of Stephen, 1135 to 1154, in order to control production and revenues from the iron mines and forges of the Forest of Dean. As owners of the forest, earl Miles and his son would have been directly involved in these activities and we may therefore, perhaps, ascribe its construction to them. It had only a short life and was deliberately destroyed, perhaps during the reign of Stephen's successor Henry II, when many adulterine or unlicensed castles were slighted.