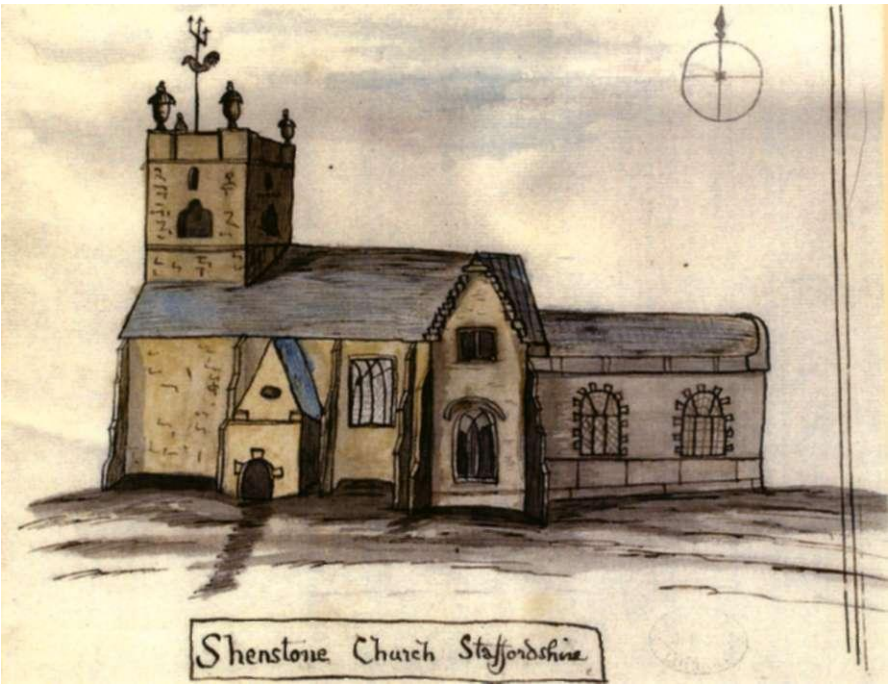
A Landscape Survey of the Parish of

Shenstone



Edited by Richard Totty

for

The Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society

Lichfield 2009

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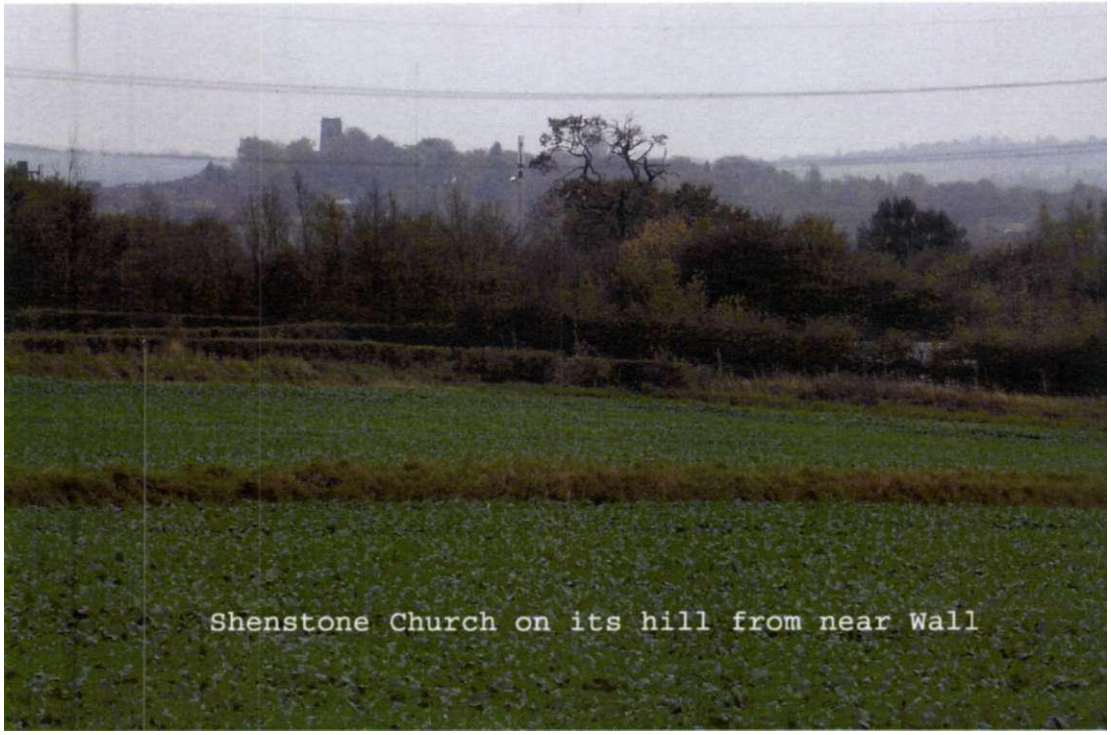

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The Staffordshire Archaological and Historical Society

President John Hunt, B.A. , Ph.D., FSA, F.R.Hist.Soc, P.G.C.E.

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Lichfield 2009 www.sahs.uk.net

St John's Church Shenstone in a 1784 water colour

(from a print in the William Salt Library)

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We would also like to acknowledge the interest and enthusiasm of the many Shenstone residents who have supported and shared in the research of the project, opening their homes to members of the buildings group, sharing their own knowledge of the village and parish, and participating in the various community-based events that the Society has promoted during the course of the project. Particular thanks are owed to Shenstone Library, and to the committee of the Wesley Hall.

THEMES

1. Introduction

2. Topography

3. Archaeology

4. Manorial History

5. Settlement

6. Population

7. Buildings

8. Industry

9. Roads

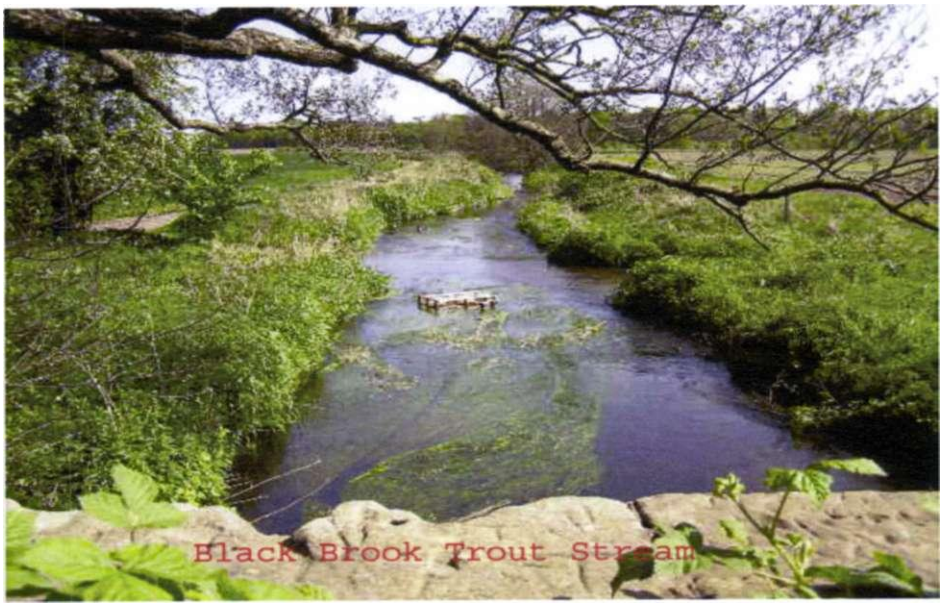
10. Agriculture

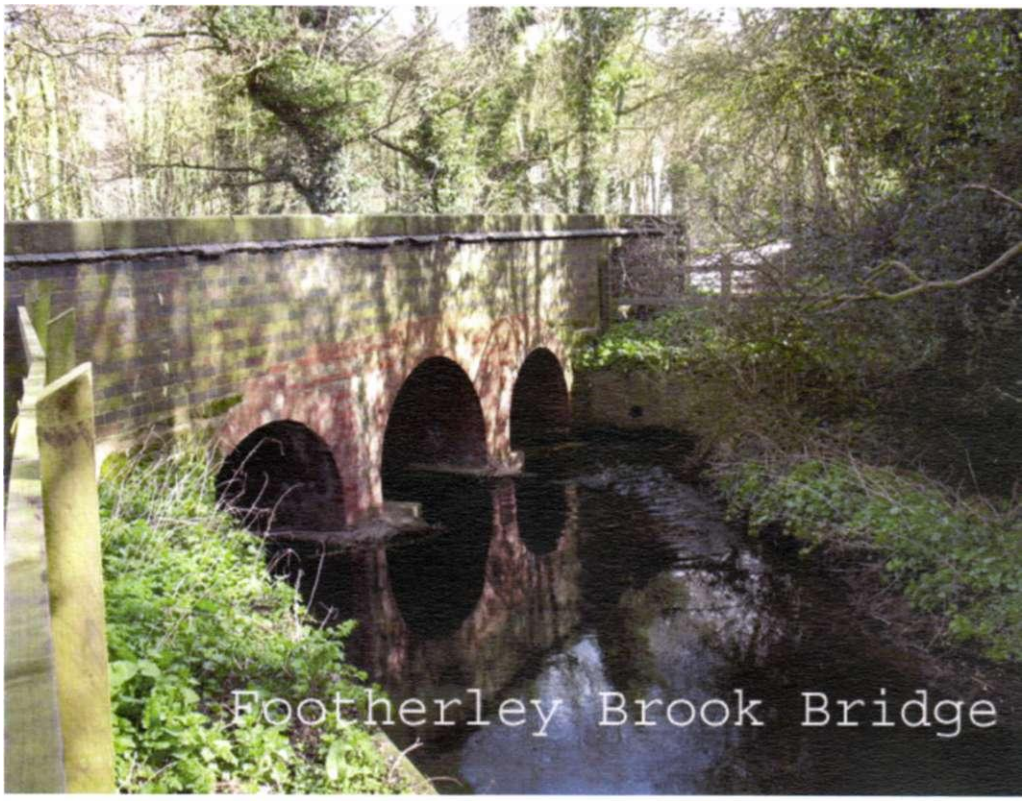
11. Country Estates

12. References

13. Appendices

14. Acknowledgements




Footherley Brook Bridge

Hilton

INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of The Shenstone Project', a research project undertaken by a group of local enthusiasts. In 2005 the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society applied for financial support through the Local Heritage Initiative of the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a landscape study of the parish of Shenstone. The aim was not to produce another standard village or parish history, as this had already been done, but rather to look at aspects of the evolving landscape of the parish, particularly land use and settlement within the landscape, to better understand how Shenstone developed over the years to be the place and community it is now.

The project considered similar projects undertaken in other parts of the country, whose discoveries suggested possible areas and ways of research. The group decided to consider evidence of possible early Anglo-Saxon settlements; the character of medieval settlement; economic and industrial activity; continuity and change in settlement history and land use and allied topics. A variety of research methods were used. Historic documents ranging from the Domesday Survey of 1086 to Nineteenth Century Tithe returns provided a wealth of data to sift through and analyse. The County's Historic Environment Record (HER) at Stafford holds important records of archaeological sites and finds which were analysed. Field walking often provides significant clues to human activity in an area, but sadly some local landowners were reluctant to permit access to their land, which hindered much research here. There have been numerous archaeological investigations in the parish mostly connected to the Roman site at Letocetum (Wall) just to the north of the parish boundary and reports of these have been sifted and assessed. Buildings in the parish were assessed from the English Heritage database of Listed Buildings and by personal observation. Antiquarian Historians from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries cheerfully combined documented fact with local folk-lore to the confusion of the modern researcher. In short a wide variety of assorted information was unearthed, sifted through, analysed, discussed, argued over and eventually sorted into order, whilst retaining the flavour of the approach of the individual research groups

The area is a particularly rewarding one to study, for even today walking along the lanes of Shenstone parish, looking at the farms and cottages, the scene has changed little over 200 years. Early maps show that today's roads follow very closely the lanes of the 1800s , and many of the lanes were established even earlier. Many buildings in the present landscape have footprints which go back over centuries and others seem little changed over the years. However in some part of the parish modern farming methods have increased the sizes of fields and with the destruction of hedges that formed the field boundaries the landscape has changed, and this is particularly true in the most northerly parts. Modern housing development has been extensive in some parts of the parish but other parts have preserved their predominately rural character.The recent construction of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road through the parish has had a major impact but more information about early settlement has come from the detailed archaeological surveys that took

place before and during the building process.

The landscape has been shaped by the people who lived in Shenstone ; but this is not a history of these people but a consideration of the results of their activities over two or even three millenia. You will not find here a detailed discussion of the people who lived in this parish although from time to time some of them will receive a mention.

We have summarised our research under a number of separate headings each of which contributes to our better understanding of the landscape. The parish is large and there are a number of separate settlements , many of our findings are therefore presented as snapshots of a particular place at a particular time.

TOPOGRAPHY

Shenstone Parish

The parish of Shenstone in Staffordshire lies roughly at the centre of a triangle delineated by Lichfield to the north , Tamworth to the east and Walsall to the south west. It adjoins Warwickshire at its most southerly tip. (Figure 1) In 1851 a directory recorded that 'Shenstone, anciently called Senestown, is a large and pleasant village, with many neat houses and gardens, on a gentle acclivity west of the Birmingham road, three miles S of Lichfield. Its parish is extensive and comprises several villages and hamlets, and about 8000 acres of light, but fertile land, well watered with trout streams.' (White 1851)

The land varies between the 300' and the 500' contours with one high spot on the eastern boundary known Castlebank Plantation - the site of an Iron Age hill fort "Castlebank" at 600'. Shenstone has been described as being in a basin formed by a gentle rise to the north , which screens Lichfield from view, and the more marked rise to the east of the Hints ridge , and Barr Beacon to the south west. The ridges are of Bunter Pebble beds with the floor of the basin mainly Keuper Sandstone and Bunter Sandstone, with some local glacial material and some bands of marl in it. Being mainly sandstone the rocks tend to be porous and the water seeps through them to give rise to a number of wells but causes the surface soils to be poor and dry in some areas. (Hebden 1961/2)

There are no major rivers in the parish but a number of small watercourses have supplied mills and a forge in the past. The Cranebrook flows in an easterly direction through the north west of the parish , through the hamlet of Hilton to join the Hammerwich Brook , which flows from Hammerwich to Chesterfield, just to the north west of Shenstone Village. Together these form the Black Brook, the largest of the watercourses, which also flows to the east to exit through a narrow valley into the next parish, Weeford. In the south west the Bourne Brook flows from Bourne Pool which is just in Aldridge

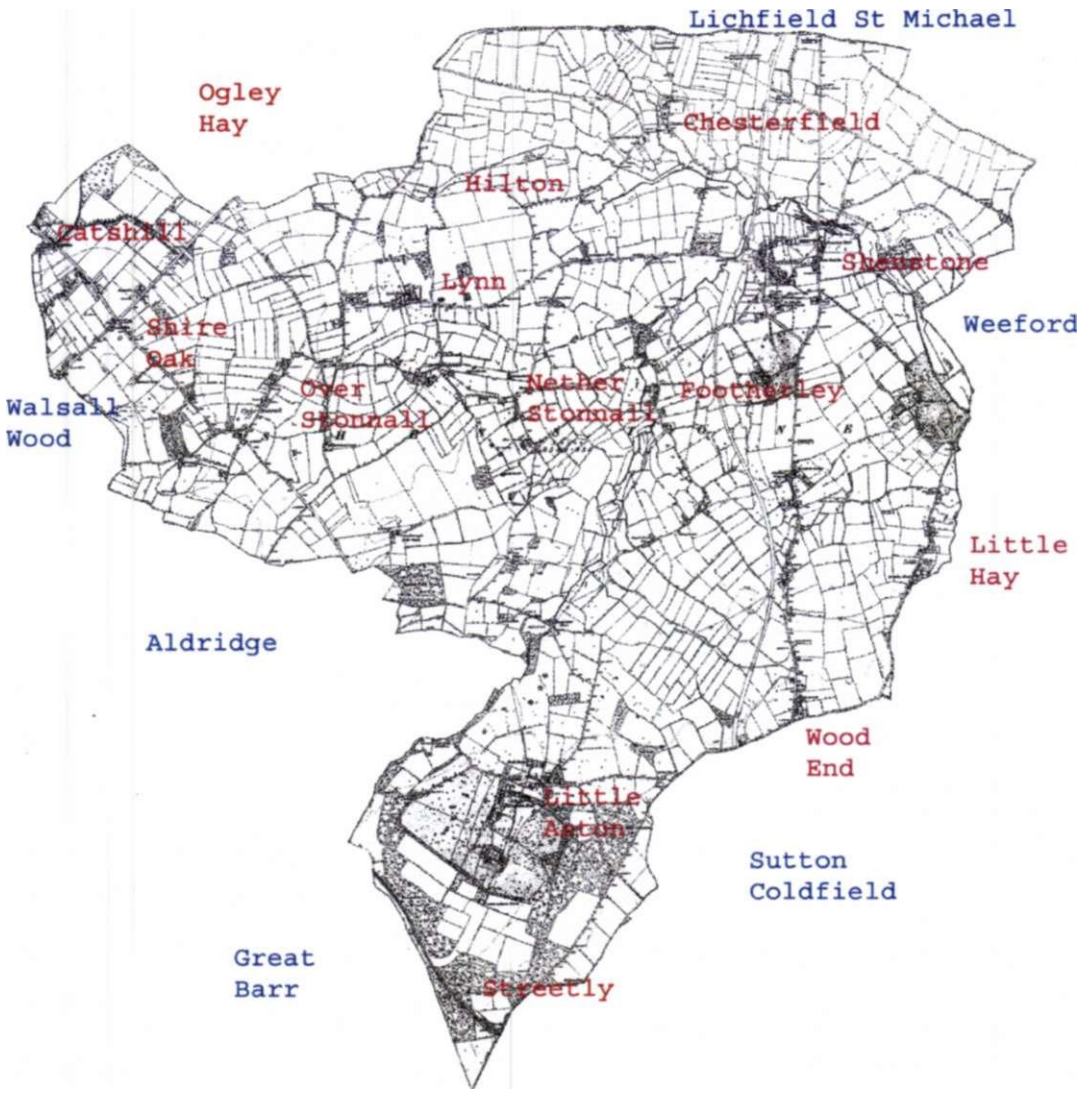


Figure 1 Shenstone Parish in the 1880s , showing adjacent parishes north to top , one mile = 3 cm. (Based on First Ordnance Survey Levelling)

parish in a north easterly direction, through Footherley to join the Black Brook a few hundred yards downstream from the confluence of the Hammerwich and Cranebrooks. A tributary of the Bourne, the Footherley Brook flows northwards through the hamlet of that name. A separate brook flows due north through the hamlet of Little Hay to join the Black Brook just before it leaves the parish at Thickbroome. (The Black Brook becomes the Bourne Brook again before its confluence with the river Tame at Fazeley). A number of smaller streams flow from the ridge to the east of the parish through the Stonnalls into the Bourne Brook. One of these, the Penn or Penk runs from upper Stonnall to join the Quebb 'a little water from Wall Heath in the lands called Smith's marshes, unites with the Penn and passes to Birrell's farm, near Lynn and Owlets Hall to the Bourne. The Quebb flows through dry and sandy soil'. (Sanders 1792) The predominate flow of streams in the parish is therefore to the north or east.

Many Anglo Saxon charters describe boundaries of estates in terms of recognizable topographical features. An estate at Ogley Hay just to the north

west of Shenstone is described in a charter dated 996 whereby Sigeric Archbishop of Canterbury confirms a grant by Wulfrun to the monastery at Wolverhampton, originally granted to him by King Aethelred in 985. The northern boundary of the estate is not clear but the southern boundary seems to have followed the Shenstone parish boundary. There are references to swamps, marshes and dykes which seem to refer to the headwaters of the Cranebrook - if this is correct this represents early attempts to drain or manage the landscape the area. Also mentioned in this area is a fen at the swine fold. The estate in Ogley Hay was of 1 hide in 1086 and was described as waste. (Hooke 1983) This suggests that an area in the extreme north west of Shenstone parish was originally mainly marsh and fen, and this is consistent with the very flat landscape visible in the area today.

Place Names

A certain amount of topographical information may be obtained from place names. The name Shenstone itself means bright or beautiful stone; certainly Shenstone church is built of local sandstone. Horovitz has pointed out that there is no bright stone at Shenstone and what little stone that exists naturally is a dull sandstone. He postulates that what is being named is some visible monument left by the Romans. But there is no actual evidence for this. Stonnall means Stone nook , or a small stony valley in a hollow , and the soil here is certainly stony. Hilton means hill settlement - the area around Hilton does not look hilly today but this may refer to a small hill arising out of the Cranebrook marshes mentioned in the Ogley Hay charter. Chesterfield means open land by a Roman town - fairly obvious as the hamlet of Chesterfield is less than a mile south of the Roman settlement at Wall. Aston means eastern town but is a very common settlement name in England. In this context it probably means a settlement east of Aldridge. It was referred to as Little Aston upon le Colefield at one time and there is an ongoing dispute about the meaning of Colefield; either it meant cold open land or open land where charcoal was made. In any case it emphasises that Little Aston was on the edge of the large area of woodland / heath that made up Aldridge Common and Sutton chase. Footherley means woodland clearing by the dirty ford and this may refer to the colour of water draining from the peat lands close to Footherley. Woodend implies a clearing in woodland or breaking out into open ground and Little Hay a small settlement in a wooded area. (Gelling 1984, Smith 1956, Hebden 1961/2, Horovitz 2005)

Another Anglo Saxon charter mentions places in Shenstone .This is in a grant by King Eadred to Wulfhelm his minister of land at Barre and Aston (Eastun). The boundary clause is relatively clear and mentions Streetly (straet lea), the Bourne Brook (bradan burnan) and Radley Moor (reod lege). (Hooke 1983)

Shenstone Village

Shenstone church is placed on a small plateau rising above the surrounding plain , and this makes the church tower a prominent feature when viewed from any of the hills surrounding the parish. This was likely a very deliberate intention within the early medieval landscape, perhaps being linked also to a

lord's hall on the same site. The Blackbrook and its tributary the Bourne Brook flow in a semicircle north of and close to this raised platform and the older parts of Shenstone village are in the space between this platform and the watercourse. This is clearly a defensive site with the church hill surrounded on three sides by the marshy river valleys. The main street of Shenstone village also forms a semicircle inside that of the watercourse which seems to account for the unusual curved shape of the main village street to the north of the church plateau.

The village of Shenstone has been described as 'on a hill rising out of the flat basin floor above any possible flooding, supplied by local wells with water and surrounded by the more fertile soils of the Keuper Sandstone. Beyond it to the south and west lies the remainder of the basin, flat and badly drained in part, and mainly consisting of infertile soils developed on the Bunter Sandstone and the Bunter Pebble Beds'. Hebden argued that 'any outward growth from Shenstone would be likely to keep to the Keuper sandstones at first, e.g. to Footherley and Woodend, and only after that to cross into the more difficult lands of Stonnall'. (Hebden 1961/2)

The landscape around Shenstone village itself has also been described in a recent local authority report. (Anon 2009) By the eleventh century the area lay within the Royal Forest of Cannock where the landscape was dominated by a mixture of woodland, wood pasture and heathland. There is evidence of some clearance for pasture or even arable farming dating from the Anglo Saxon period. The landscape around Shenstone village as it exists today consists of a twentieth century settlement surrounded by large fields mainly in arable use which has lost much of its historic field systems. The surviving elements of the medieval landscape are limited and principally consist of an area of ancient woodland to the west, and areas of wetlands which survive along the Crane Brook and the Black Brook. There is also an area of Medieval irregular enclosure to the north of Shenstone village. The wetlands are the fields which line the sides of river valleys and whose origins may be of a variety of dates. They would have traditionally been used as meadows and by the mid-seventeenth century the lush pastures in these areas were being used to fatten cattle. Some of these were to be extensively drained from the seventeenth century onwards. To the south of Shenstone village is an area of eighteenth to nineteenth century planned field systems. These areas are characterised by either small or large fields that share very straight boundaries, giving them a geometric planned appearance. Laid out by surveyors these field patterns result from late enclosure during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These particular fields are those just to the south of what is now Shenstone Court Farm - originally the Moss Estate. The current landscape is of modern re-organised fields, created out of earlier field systems of a variety of dates. Due to intensification of agricultural practices in the past 50 years the earlier characteristics have been eroded.

Conclusion

The landscape of the parish is thus a mixture of marshy land around the flattish river valleys, with outcrops of sandy heaths in the east and south, the

whole surrounded by rising ground. The soil is either waterlogged with poor drainage or is sandy and easily dries out. The village of Shenstone itself has grown up to the north of the church which was built on a substantial sandstone outcrop rising sharply from the surrounding marshes.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Archaeological Environment

The archaeological character of the area has been described in a recent local authority report. (Anon 2009)

The overall character of the area for the earlier Prehistoric period is likely to have been of a heavily wooded landscape perhaps supporting a pastoral economy.

Archaeological finds and crop marks provide evidence of continuous human activity in this area from the Palaeolithic onwards. Axes have been found dating from the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages and a flint scraper found in the area possibly dates to the Mesolithic. Evidence of a more permanent presence dates from the late Neolithic onwards with a ring ditch and possible henge visible as a crop mark. There is also a barrow and a ring ditch with a central burial all dating to the Bronze Age and visible as crop marks.

The line of the Roman Road, Ryknield Street, runs through the area to the west of Shenstone village . While there may be little evidence of this remaining on the surface there is considerable potential for stratified remains at a lower level. Ryknield Street meets Watling Street just to the north of the parish and the Roman town of Wall (Letocetum) is located just beyond the north west boundary. It is likely that the north of the parish sat within the agricultural hinterland of Wall and as such may contain as yet undiscovered evidence of Romano- British farmsteads. In the north a farmstead of second to third century AD date was excavated and found to contain evidence of agricultural activity and a small metal working industry. To what extent these and similar remains are the result of new plantations or a continuation of the Iron Age pattern of land distribution and agriculture is not currently understood.

It has been suggested that the remains of the medieval church tower contains Anglo-Saxon masonry (Gould & Gould 1973/4) and the manor / estate was mentioned in Domesday Book (see Settlement).

The medieval moated site situated to the south west of Shenstone village remains in a very good condition (see Country Estates and below) but the remains of the surrounding deer park have been significantly compromised by twentieth century developments which have resulted in substantial increases in field size and boundary loss.'

Castlebank

At the extreme west of the parish, on the hills that separate Shenstone from Walsall Wood, lies the earthworks known as Castlebank at a height of about 300 feet above the Shenstone basin. The fort has been very little studied and there is no public access. From Castle Hill Road a series of embankments can be seen but the whole site is well wooded . It seems to be typical of 'iron age' hill forts , the best known example of which in the vicinity is Castle Ring , nine miles to the north. (Much of the fort is within the grounds of a house, known as Castle Fort, erected by Major K H Smith an enthusiast for Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture from parts of Lymore Hall, Montgomeryshire .) Castlebank plantation is shown on eighteenth century maps but the name implies a newly planted wood rather than the remains of ancient woodland.

The following is taken from a Walsall Borough Council report; 'The monument includes the buried and earthwork remains of the slight univallate hillfort at Castlebank Plantation. It is located on the crown of a hill, to the north-west of Castle Hill Road. A bank and outer ditch encloses a roughly oval area orientated south-east to north-west, and measuring 170 metres long and 140 metres wide. The earthworks are best preserved on the north, east, south, and parts of the west side, where the bank varies between 1 metre and 2 metres high and up to 8 metres wide, and the ditch is 1 metre to 2 metres wide and up to 4 metres deep. There are indications of a further ditch to the north-east and south-west, which suggest that the hillfort may originally have been bivallate with two rings of defences. Where there are small areas of erosion in the bank it can be seen that the bank was constructed from earth and river-washed cobbles.

In the north-west of the hillfort a deep former clay-pit, now containing a pond, has removed the traces of the banks and ditch, and an access drive cuts the earthworks on the south-western angle. These are not included in the scheduling. Breaks in the defences to the north-east where the land slopes gently to the north suggest that this is an original entrance to the hillfort. In the south-east on the external slope of the bank are the remains of deep quarry pits.

Small scale excavation and archaeological observation in advance of development undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s have indicated that archaeological remains survive within the hillfort despite the construction of the house and outbuildings. Castle Fort, a jettied half timbered house with brick and stone was reconstructed on the hillfort having been moved from its original site in Wales. In addition, two imported timber framed barns are located within the banks at the crown of the hill. Castle Fort, the timber framed barns and all modern paths and surfaces are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.
This hillfort forms a rarely recorded element of the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age landscape of this area. It is well preserved with almost the entire circuit of earthworks surviving as upstanding and buried features. Despite some disturbance from the construction of the house and outbuildings,

archaeological recording in advance of development in the 1980s and 1990s have indicated that archaeological remains survive within the hillfort. These will preserve evidence including buried land surfaces below the banks and other features such as storage pits or middens which will preserve artefacts and environmental deposits which will illuminate both the natural environment surrounding the monument during its occupancy, and also provide information about the diet and agricultural regimes followed by the inhabitants.' (Walsall B.C.)

The Bronze Hoard and Burial at Greensborough (Gainsborough) Farm

In 1824 labourers removing sand for a new Rickyard at Greensborough Farm, Lower Stonnall, uncovered a grave dug into the underlying sandstone containing human bones and some remains of wood. Nearby they found around 20 items made of bronze with two small pieces of metal, one lead and one copper. We can't be sure from the surviving accounts if the metal was meant to be part of the burial or not but it seems that these were the personal possessions of two men rather than an actual hoard . Included were parts of two swords, two spear heads and two axes as well as items not well understood. There is no clear account of the discovery and the items have long since disappeared - they were last noted in the possession of William Tennant the landowner. The site is on the south side of a sandy knoll raised above the surrounding land which at the time of the burial was probably marsh - this is the middle of what became known later as the Peat Moor. Nothing has been found since in the area. Members of the Society carried out field walking in a large field immediately north of the sandy knoll - no evidence of human activity before the nineteenth century was found.

Grove Hill

Grove Hill, between Over Stonnall and Thornes, has an earthenwork mound on the summit possibly enclosed by a ditch. This visual observation has not been investigated further.

Shenstone Park

Shenstone Park is east of Shenstone village and is described in more detail below (Country Estates)

Activity of prehistoric and Roman date in the Park is indicated by chance finds of three polished flint axes from within the Park and worked flint including three scrapers and Roman pottery from field walking near the Black Brook and around the moated site just south-west of the current house known as Shenstone Park. The Roman pottery from the east and south-east of the moat included orange wares, and large unworn mortarium rims of both hook and hammerhead form, one of the latter decorated with streaks of red brown slip. The quantity, size and condition of the Roman pottery suggests a settlement here. Smaller quantities of Roman pottery were found near the Black Brook. The medieval pottery was concentrated around the moated site. It included buff/white ware and a rim sherd of a cooking pot in grey fabric. The

quantity of medieval pottery indicated occupation of this area; the moat has been suggested as the site of a hunting lodge in the park. Smaller quantities of medieval pottery were found near the Black Brook indicating manuring of arable land. (Hodder 1988/89) The large rectangular homestead moat, measures 106m north east-south west by 75m transversely, the arms being from 10m to 17m wide and about 1m deep. (see Country Estates) There is an outer bank 8m wide and 0.3 m high flanking the south eastern arm. In 1958 the moat had water on it but latterly it has been described as dry or at best waterlogged. The island in the middle is now tree covered. (See Appendix for a discussion of moated sites.)

Roman / Romano-British sites in the Watling Street Wall area

The agricultural landscape and economy of the Shenstone area in the Roman period is reflected through a number of sites identified in the vicinity of Watling Street and within the agricultural hinterland of Wall

English Heritage note the following sites within the parish. (The locations of the sites are identified in Figure 2, Gould 1971/2)

Site A (North of Shenstone village and south of Lawton Grange, west of the Garden Centre) has been identified as a Roman building within an enclosure, the presence of tesserae, window glass and roof and flue tiles indicate the site of a villa. The rectangular enclosure shows up well on aerial photographs of the site.There are crop marks of an adjoining field system, probably Celtic, and there are indications of mixed farming suggested by various enclosing ditches which may be a droveway for animals.

There is a very full report of the excavations which took place at this important site from 1930 to 1936. The earthworks were thought to be a military work from the first century and erected rather hastily as the sides deviate from a rectangular layout. The later occupation of part of the site was undoubtedly civilian, and large amounts of pottery, including much Samian ware, were found suggesting use until the fourth century. None of the pottery was earlier than the end of the first century AD or the beginning of the second century suggesting that the military occupation may not have been quickly followed by the civilian one. Only two coins were found, one from AD37 and the other from AD193-195. Crucibles and slabs of lead found during excavations point to a local industry but despite the lead working the site was certainly a farmstead. The excavators describe the site as on rising land with sand and soft sandstone immediately below the soil, on a small spread of gravel giving access from the east. (Gould 1963 ; Chatwin and Hodgkinson 1940)

Site B (North of Shenstone Hall east of the A 5127) appears to be a Romano-British enclosure seen as a crop mark and is possibly part of a farm complex or part of the Site A complex. Roman pottery was found on the surface. Site C, to the south west of Site A has crop marks, not investigated further and is also probably part of site A.

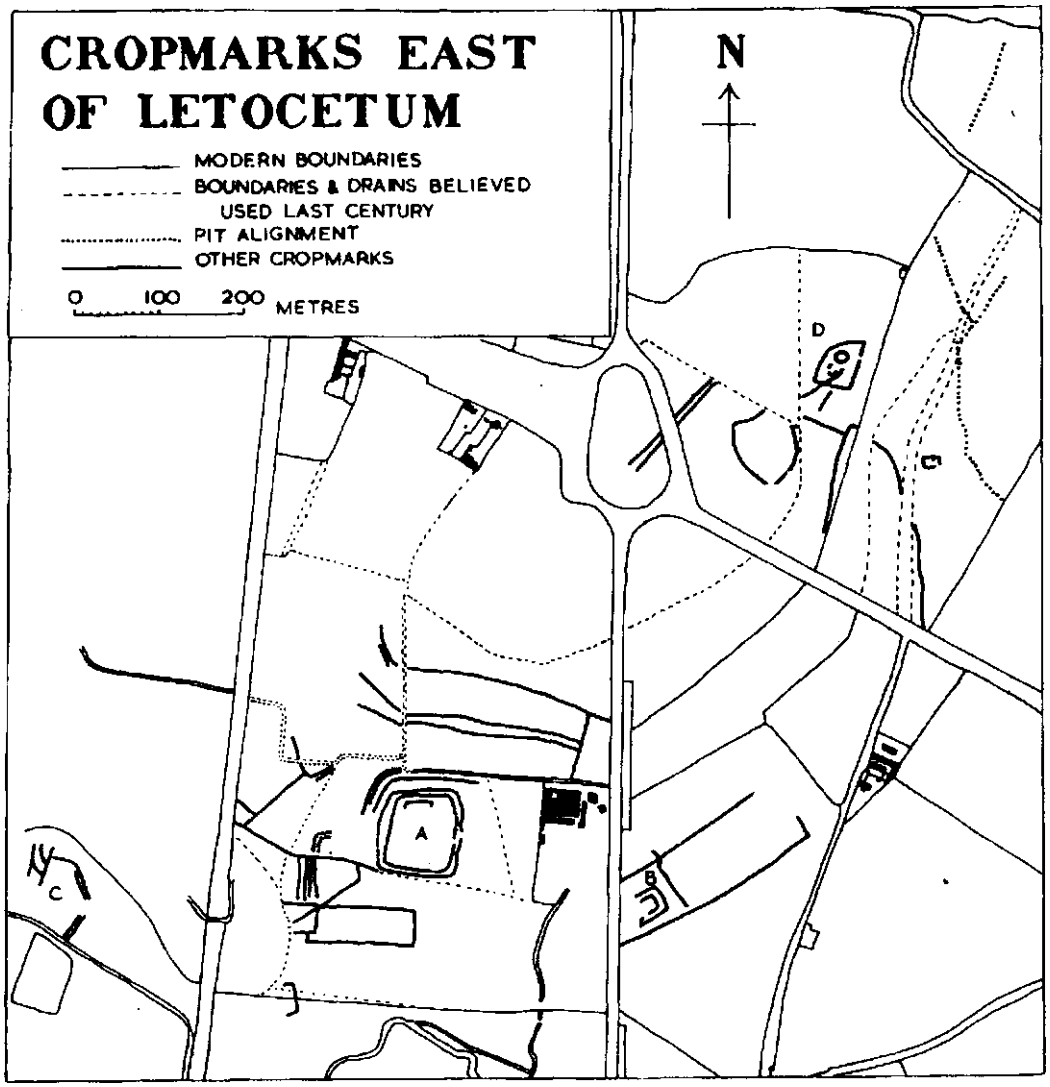


Figure 2 Cropmarks to the south and east of Letocetum (Wall) (Gould 1971/2) The road layout is shown as it was before the building of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road and the Lichfield Eastern By Pass, both of which have obliterated some of these features.

Site D (North east of Shenstone village, north of the A5 and now mostly under the Lichfield Eastern by pass) had cropmarks of a Romano-British settlement site consisting of polygonal enclosures, a ditched roadway and hut circles. The soil is of sticky clay. An excavation in 1960/61 of an irregular line of pits produced inconclusive results. (Whitehouse 1979 ; Gould 1971/2)

Cropmarks of a possible pastoral Romano-British large rectilinear enclosure (200mx250m) were identified on aerial photographs at a site between Lynn and Hilton to the east of Thorneyhust Lane . Sections were dug through the cropmarks in 1965 showing a ditch 2m wide and 0.75m deep. Once thought to have been a Roman marching camp the absence of gateways and the very gently rounded corners casts doubt on this and suggests a farming use is more likely. (Round 1972/3)

Gould also identifies a site to the south of Owletts Hall overlaid by ridge and furrow but probably an early field system. Here is a field marked on the 1818 map as Island Meadow, which seems to indicate a sandy island outcrop within a marshy area. The field has an unusual shape, the northern boundary being almost semicircular, very different from the normal straight field boundaries in this area and this suggests an early enclosure.

Other crop marks have been seen in this area both within and just outside the parish boundary and Roman pottery has been found near some of them. (Gould 1971/2)

Recent Excavation at a Medieval Site at Lawton Grange

Recently the M6 Toll Road (The Birmingham Northern Relief Road , BNRR) has been constructed through the north of the parish and here a medieval site has been excavated, known as Site 13, at Lawton Grange, with Watling Street to the north, the A5127 to the east and the Sutton Coldfield to Lichfield railway line to the west. This site is a little to the north of the Roman Site A. The landscape here was defined as 'very active' with a variety of sites implying social and economic organisation within the local landscape.The report on this site notes an expansive local community of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, apparently representing a previously unknown medieval settlement site situated at the northern margins of the manor, just beyond Sutton Chase and Shenstone Park, and to the north of Chesterfield, this latter settlement certainly being in existence by 1324 (Wrottesley 1888). Comprising a rectangular post built structure interpreted as a byre or barn, together with a sub-rectangular enclosure that may have been used for stock control, two clay-lined ovens and several pits, this complex may be readily associated with a medieval farmstead. Regrettably the excavated area did not reveal any habitations, leaving open the question of whether these features are to be associated with a farmstead or farmsteads, or with a more substantial settlement. There is no pressing reason to assume that this represents more than one or two farmsteads. In addition to animal husbandry, the ovens indicate cereal production and processing, being used to dry grain, while an excavated feature (Feature 133066), containing charcoal, charred cereal grains, seeds and nutshell, also had some form of drying, smoking or curing function. While the find of ten unstratified sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery give cause for some interest and concern, their presence on the site may be explained in various ways, and well have more implications for the environs of Site 13 rather than for Site 13 itself. This apart, the pottery from the enclosure and ditch, and from the ovens, is suggestive of a site not fully utilised before the middle years of the thirteenth century, a dating that is consistent with the impact of assarting activity and population expansion within Shenstone. The high proportions of cooking pot fabrics, the limited range of fabrics, and the distinct preponderance of locally produced wares, are all suggestive of a relatively low status settlement functioning within a modest socio-economic context. The presence of a few sherds of Deritend ware does not detract from this impression; direct and indirect links with Birmingham are to be expected.

The sampling of charcoal and plant remains, while confirming that the site was indeed agrarian in nature, also produced results that resonate closely with some aspects of the documentary record. The presence of oak, alder, birch, hawthorn, hazel, gorse, broom, blackthorn and holly is sometimes reflected directly and indirectly in such as the Forest Pleas, and in personal names, like those reflecting heathland locations, or more specific names, such as Richard del Haselwode. A medieval provenance for finds of hazel nuts clearly fits the local environment, and confirms the observation that hazel was common locally. The presence of hedgerows is also consistent with a managed agrarian landscape; the Forest Pleas noted the use of hedges and ditches to enclose assarts in Shenstone (see Settlement). Finally, the charred plant remains demonstrated the importance of rye in the pit and oven samples, while other taxa recovered represented plants closely associated with arable or cultivated ground. Difficult soils meant that barley, oats and rye were widely cultivated across parts of the region (Hunt 1997). A hardier and more tolerant grain, rye was apparently well suited to assarted and cleared land, as seems to be the case in Shenstone. The Forest Pleas relating to Shenstone and Stonnall in 1271, although making reference to rye on the assart of Robert de Gresbrok in Stonnall, leave no doubt as to the local importance of oats and winter corn as the staple crops at this time. Interestingly, in the pleas for 1286, there appears to have been a shift in emphasis, and perhaps of practice. While there are occasional references to oats, the prevalent practice was one of sowing winter corn and spring corn; in fact, if the references to sowing these respective crops are totalled in the 1286 record, it is found that 68% refer to spring corn. Although caution is clearly necessary, the presence of spring-sown rye at Site 13 might suggest a dating in the 1280s or later for the samples.

The pottery evidence suggests a contraction or abandonment of settlement at Site 13 during the course of the fourteenth century, after c. 1310, an impression that the absence of fifteenth century pottery perhaps reinforces, and the possibility of linking this to the impact of the Black Death mid-century onwards cannot be overlooked. However, settlement can shift or contract for many different reasons, often highly localised, perhaps related to individuals or their tenures. It is possible that the growing adversities in the first half of the fourteenth century did pose difficulties for some Shenstone settlements, particularly those farmsteads located on poorer lands, but it is difficult to demonstrate in this instance. Furthermore, in so far as can be seen, there does not appear to have been a catastrophic fall in population at this time. (Hunt 2008).

MANORIAL HISTORY

Before the Conquest a free man named Godwin held the manor of Shenstone, probably as a retainer of the earls of Mercia, and with lands in all five hundreds of the shire. By 1086 it was a part of the Staffordshire honor of Earl Roger de Montgomery, with Robert d'Oilly holding the manor as his tenant. Assessed at three hides with land for twelve ploughs, the manor was valued at 100 shillings. Most probably before 1135, the de Bray brothers, Richard and Tanetin were enfeoffed with land in Shenstone by Robert d'Oilly.

Tanetin's son, William, inherited the manor as a minor, Henry d'Oilly selling the wardship, c.1156-62, to Ralph the King's Clerk. However, in c.1164, Henry d'Oilly confirmed to William de Bray the lands in Shenstone which had been held by his father and uncle, held by the service of • of a knight's fee, a tenure confirmed by an entry in the Pipe Rolls of 1166-7, together with the scutage of Swinfen. The vill of Swinfen came to William by his marriage to Isabel, the daughter of Richard de Vernun and his wife, Avicia. William had at least two sons, Roger and Philip, the former becoming a priest and holding the benefice at Shenstone, paying annually 5 marks rent from the church to his brother. (Eyton 1880, Eyton 1881, Grazebrook 1896)

The church of Shenstone had been given in 1129 to Oseney Abbey, founded by Robert d'Oilly (Grazebrook 1896), and consequently the Abbot and Convent of Oseney also had interests in the parish. Around 1190 they permitted William de Bray a chantry in his 'curia' of 'Calewenhulla', an unknown location although there is a tradition of a chapel formerly located in Nether Stonnall. (Grazebrook 1896) Abbot Hugh also conceded to William the right to do justice over thieves caught in the abbot's manor of Stonnall, but there were instances of dispute between William and the abbot, as in the case of 'novel disseisin' in the manor of Shenstone in 1203. A Fine of 1209 addressed at least some issues when it allowed to the abbot and his men of Stonnall rights of common of pasture in Shenstone, certain easements, conceded the church of Shenstone to be the right of the Abbot and his successors, and acknowledged that the charter which the abbot held, granted by William de Bray, was lawful and true. (Wrottesley 1882, Wrottesley 1882a, Grazebrook 1896)

William de Bray apparently survived his sons, as he made arrangements for the fee and manor of Shenstone, the appurtenances of which included at least two mills, and parts of Swinfen, to be transferred to Robert de Grendon with his marriage to William's daughter, Avicia. Henry d'Oilly gave his assent, and received homage for the manor from Robert. After Avicia died, survived by her husband and an heir, Robert de Grendon successfully negotiated his retention of the manor and the wardship and marriage of his son, on which William de Bray could have made a claim. The fact that Robert's son was in any case William de Bray's heir must have facilitated any such arrangements. (Grazebrook 1896)

Thus the manor of Shenstone passed to the Grendon family, Robert de Grendon being recorded as holding the fee in 1235-6 and 1242-3 (Maxwell Lyte et al 1920, Maxwell Lyte et al 1923), and in the Hundred Rolls of c.1255, where he held of the heirs of d'Oilly (Wrottesley 1884). Robert remarried and seems to have lived until 1272, to be succeeded by his son Ralph. (Wrottesley 1885) Ralph was dead by 1280, but before his death he demised the manor for a term of four years to Robert Burnel, the bishop of Bath and Wells. Demises are often indications that those granting them were facing financial difficulties, although in this case other motives may have been present. Whatever the truth of this, the bishop held both the manor and wardship of Ralph's son, also named Ralph, whom he married to Joan Burnel, and who in turn inherited the manor. (Wrottesley 1890) Their son,

The Inventory of Ralph de Grendon 1331/2

Ralph de Grendon , Lord of the Manor of Shenstone , and father of Robert de Grendon died in 1331. His will has not survived but the inventory of his goods and chattells which would go with it has. It is in two parts , the first lists the items at his house in Grendon and the second his property at his house in Shenstone. The inventory is mostly in Latin but with many words in English , as if the writer did not know the Latin words for these items. The inventory , translated , is;

Inventory for Ralph de Grendon

Shenston First was found

In the Chamber 1 old curtain with Rydell valued at xiii^{d} . Item iii old trussingcoffers at ii^{s} Item two large chests (?for documents) at iiij^{s}

Item ii old chests at ii^{s} Item 1 formell with banker in front of the hearth at 14$^{d.}$ Item 1 old sack with 1 barhund at 5^{s} Item ii worn carpets at 4^{s} Item 5 cushions at 10^{d} Item 1 summer saddle at 2^{s}

In the Hall 1 old dosser at 4^{s} Item ii moveable tables with trestle at ii^{s} Item 1 ?polum & h(?b) aner at ii^{s}

In the Cellar 1 Table cloth at 14^{d} Item 1 ?turnell at 6^{d} Item 1 breadtun at 10^{d} Item 2 flakes for wine at 12^{d}

In the Kitchen 1 brass pot at 5^{s} Item 1 grid-iron at 12^{d} Item 1 frying pan at 6^{d} Item bacon at 15^{s}

In the Bakery 1 boltingwich at 4^{d} Item 2 troughs at 2^{s} Item 1 breadingboard at 8^{d} Item 2 fates iii cumblyns at 4^{s} Item 1 heyre at ii^{s}

Item 8 cattle at £4. Item 2 draught animals at 10^{s} Item two draught animals for the cart at 16^{s} 8^{d} Item 2 ?swans at 13^{s}4^{d} Item 1 old cart at 3^{s} 4^{d} Item 1 cart harness at 10^{d} Item 3 carts with iron ?tires and yoke at 3^{s} Item 2 iron harrows at 18^{d} Item 2 sacks and 1 old wind lynchen at 18^{d} 1 strike measure at 4^{d} Item 2 ?bills 2 shovels 2 dung-forks at 6^{d}

In the Granary 20 quarters of oats at 40^{s} Item hay at 30^{s} Item forage at 10^{s} Item from the issues of the new grain vij$^{?s}$ Item 2 quarters of corn at 32^{s} 7^{d} Item 7 quarters of rye at 23^{s} Item for 50 thraves of straw of the aforesaid grain 4^{s} 7^{d}

Some of the English words remain obscure but ; Rydell - a curtain , trussing coffer - chest used for packing , formell - a form , banker - tapestry covering for a chair etc.,dosser - back cloth for a chair , flake - a rack , boltingwich - vessel for bolted flour. Frying pan is clear enough though as is bacon.

This document is important in that it establishes that Ralph de Grendon had a substantial house here , before 1331 with Hall , Chamber and Cellar , plus kitchen , bakery and barn , even if the permantent furniture was minimal. It also shows that he had cattle , and had been growing corn , oats and rye in his fields. However the site of the manorial hall has not been established with certainty.

This is one of the earliest documents from Shenstone to have survived , and it is preserved at the Staffordshire Record Office; it's very worn and faint in parts but just about legible.

Robert, followed them in 1337 but he died childless about 28 years later and by a deed that his father had arranged, Grendon's Staffordshire property was destined subsequently to pass via Robert's sister to the Rochfords, while their Warwickshire estate went to the Chetwynds. (Wrottesley 1891, Wrottesley 1891a)

The later manorial history of Shenstone is one of frequent changes of ownership and after the earlier complex but clear history of ownership the period after the manor passed into the hands of the Rochfords is not at all clear. At some stage the manor came into the hands of George Stanley , Lord Strange , probably by purchase from the Rochfords.

In 1500 the manor appears to be in the hands of Lord Strange. In 1563 there is the first mention of Moss or Mosshouse as a separate manor - Thomas Stanley claimed the manor under a lease from the Abbott of Oseney. (Stebbing Shaw records that the Abbot of Oseney had granted the manor of Mosse to Thomas Stanley 6 February 1515 but this has not been verified in the research for this project.) In 1580 Queen Elizabeth granted the manor of Shenstone to Ambrose Dudley Earl of Warwick - and he was in possession this year. His heir Sir Richard Dudley had his estates seized and the manor reverted to the crown

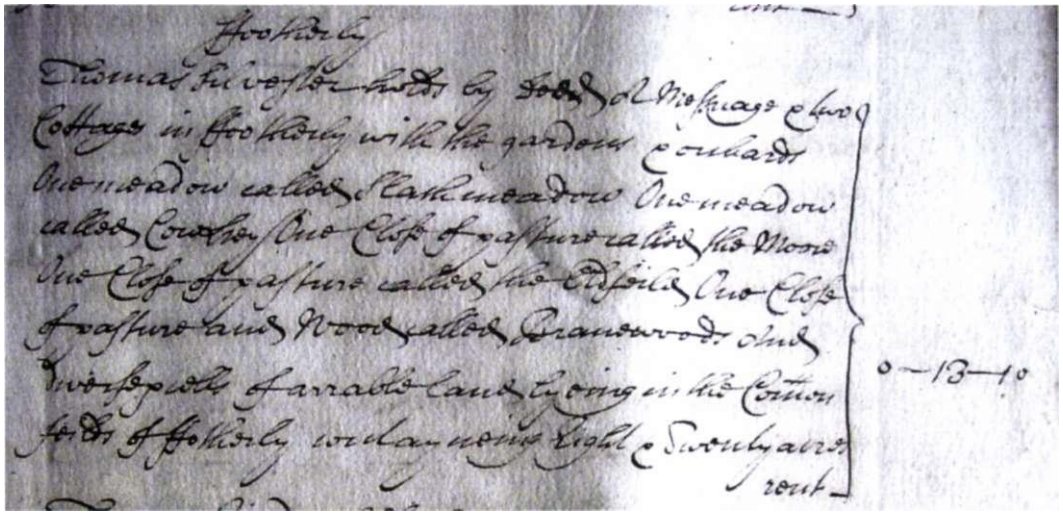
In 1605 James 1 granted the Manor of Mosshouse with rights in Shenstone, Overstonnall, Netherstonnal and Thornes to Rowland Frith and Peter Alport. This is an very impressive document with an intact impress of the Great Seal of James 1, which still survives and is kept in Lichfield. (LJRO D1851/8/72) In 1608 the manor of Shenstone was surveyed and ' an extract from a survey of the manor of Shenstone' survives in Lichfield. Although it lacks a map there is a very detailed listing of the tenants of the manor and their holdings, the nature of their tenancy, field names , acreages and value given. Whilst it is said to be an extract this seems to mean a copy of the entire survey. It names major landholders such as John Swinfen gen. for that part of the manor of Swinfen which is in Shenstone ; Roger Fowke gen. for the manor of Little Aston ; Thomas Frythe for Thornes ; Foulk Grevil for Shenstone Park, as well as the smaller tenants. (LJRO D(W)3222/93) Most of the land was by this time held by lease rather than by one of the more traditional methods of manorial landholding such as copyhold. Rents were almost all financial although there is at least one example of the rent being one red rose.

By 1629 William Fryth and Thomas Moreton were lords of the manor and in 1640 the manor was sold to two Lichfield lawyers , Lake and Hey. A further series of sales and divisions took place which led to William Tennant becoming Lord of The Manor in the mid eighteenth century. This continual change of ownership, some of the owners being non-resident, led to a regime of benign neglect, there were few attempts to run Shenstone manor as an estate and it remained a collection of scattered hamlets and self-contained farms.

A Survey of the Manor

In 1608 a full survey of the manor of Shenstone was prepared for the new owners. It lists all the tenants of the manor, describes their holdings in detail and gives the annual rent that they paid.

For example the extract below relates to Thomas Silvestre who held lands in Footherley which included a messuage (house plot) and two cottages with gardens and orchards. He also held two meadows and two closes of pasture , one of which contained a wood.



'And diverse parcels of arable land lying in the Common fields of Footherley containing eight and twenty acres' . For all of which he paid rent of 13s 10d.

This is typical of the entries in the survey ; some held more , some less . Some of the major tenants held several cottages and many pastures , meadows and woodlands ; the smaller tenants held just land in the common fields.

LJRO D3222/93

Antiquarians

The parish of Shenstone has been the subject of much antiquarian discussion. The Rev. N Sanders published his volume on the History and Antiquities of Shenstone in 1792 but it was based on work he carried out some 20 years previously when he lived in Shenstone. The book describes the parish but it is much concerned with the ownership of the Manor of Shenstone and the histories of the various notable families who lived or had lived in Shenstone. He describes many houses but most of these have been rebuilt in the nineteenth century and in some instances it is not clear from his description of exactly where they stood. Much of the book is of a genealogical nature but Sanders makes occasional comment on the state of agriculture, and other more general aspects of the parish , some of which are referred to in this report. As an example he says that' the whole of Aston is very bad land, full of morasses'. (Sanders 1792).

Stebbing Shaw, in his monumental work on Staffordshire devotes a chapter to Shenstone and includes several excellent engravings of views in the parish. Much overlaps with Sanders on whom Stebbing Shaw drew substantially. (Stebbing Shaw 1801) Stebbing Shaw is particularly good in describing the complex history of the ownership of Shenstone Manor.

Stebbing Shaw says of Shenstone ;

> **The soil is a mixture of earth, inclining to a red cast, and sand; hence it is generally dry, even soon after great rains. The situation is accounted very healthy and the air fine, but rather too sharp for very infirm constitutions, or those that labour under consumptive complaints or asthma. Marling is customary in some parts but it is not equally good in all places. Lime has been a good article in improving and forcing crops of grain, but though it be fetched only five or six miles from Hay Head, Rushall or Walsall is a dear article and yet seems absolutely requisite on the Shenstone lands. A still greater improvement is the dung, and other manure, which is fetched in great quantities from Lichfield and Walsall. There are several good rivulets in this parish which supply mills with water and contain excellent trout and other fish.**

As proof of the good air he names several long lived individuals (Susannah Southwell of Woodend who married at the age of 112). He continues with a long description of the peat moors near to Druids Heath but says that there is no practice here of cutting and drying of peat for fuel.

Harwood's History and Survey of Staffordshire included work by another Staffordshire antiquarian, Sampson Erdswick, and includes brief accounts of each hamlet in the Parish.

Rev. R.W. Essington was vicar of Shenstone in the mid nineteenth century and his 'Annals of Shenstone' is a lively description of parish life at that time. He includes brief notes on the history of the larger houses , but much of the book is connected with church activities.

The problem with these antiquarian writers is that they rarely name their sources and it becomes difficult to verify the accuracy of their statements. No doubt much is correct but the occasional clear mistake gives rise to doubts as to their reliability. (Sanders says that Stonnall is near to the centre of

Staffordshire.) Generally when writing of events in their lifetime they are likely to be reliable but the further back they go the less this is so. The antiquarians provide entertaining reading and occasional bits of information about the landscape which are mentioned in the relevant place in this report.

SETTLEMENT

Early Settlement

The origins of settlement in Shenstone parish have been discussed in detail by Hebden, and this section is much indebted to his paper, in which considerable more detail will be found. (Hebden 1961/2)

Shenstone is mentioned in the Domesday Book and this establishes the existence of an estate here before the Norman Conquest. There are early references to settlements in the parish and these include Stonnall (1192), Hilton (1250), Footherley, Woodend and Aston (1278), Over Stonnall, Nether Stonnall, Lynn Chesterfield and Thornes (1300) and Little Hay (1633). (Hebden 1961/2)

Tracing settlement development through old maps in Staffordshire will generally begin with Yates' map of 1774 and then move on to examine Enclosure Award and Tithe maps and early edition Ordnance Survey maps. In some cases we have information available from estate plans and surveys.

Yates'map of 1774 (Figure 3) is the first map to show all the settlements within the parish. Clearly identified is the village of Shenstone itself, and the hamlets of Chesterfield, Lynn, Hilton, Over Stonnall, Lower Stonnall, Aston, Footherley, Shenstone Wood End and Little Hay. All of these are recorded by Hebden as having been is existence since at least 1300 with the exception of Little Hay for which there is no evidence before 1633. The hamlets of Wall, Mill Green and Thickbroome (to the east of Shenstone Park) are just outside the parish. It is noticeable that the north-west part of the parish, which extended through the valley of the Crane brook, almost to Cat's Hill, was relatively unpopulated. The large area of the parish to the east of Chesterfield is similarly almost devoid of habitation and there is another area of sparse habitation to the south of Footherley.

Hebden's view is that Shenstone and Lower Stonnall were the original nuclei of settlement in the east and west of the Shenstone basin. Chesterfield and Aston were also nucleated settlements but Footherley, Wood End, Upper Stonnall, Lynn & Thornes were "street villages" and daughter villages of Shenstone and Lower Stonnall. (Hebden 1961/2) (See Appendix)

This view is supported by fines levied for enclosures on the Royal Forest of Cannock in the late 1200s. Hilton and Little Hay are rarely referred to in early documents; Ralph de Hilton appears in a Shenstone charter of 1250 but the first reference to Little Hay is in a 1633 court roll. Hilton is now just a handful of scattered houses - Little Hay has the appearance of a nineteenth century

village. Lynn seems to have declined - mentioned in early documents, by the sixteenth century it was no longer mentioned as a separate township.

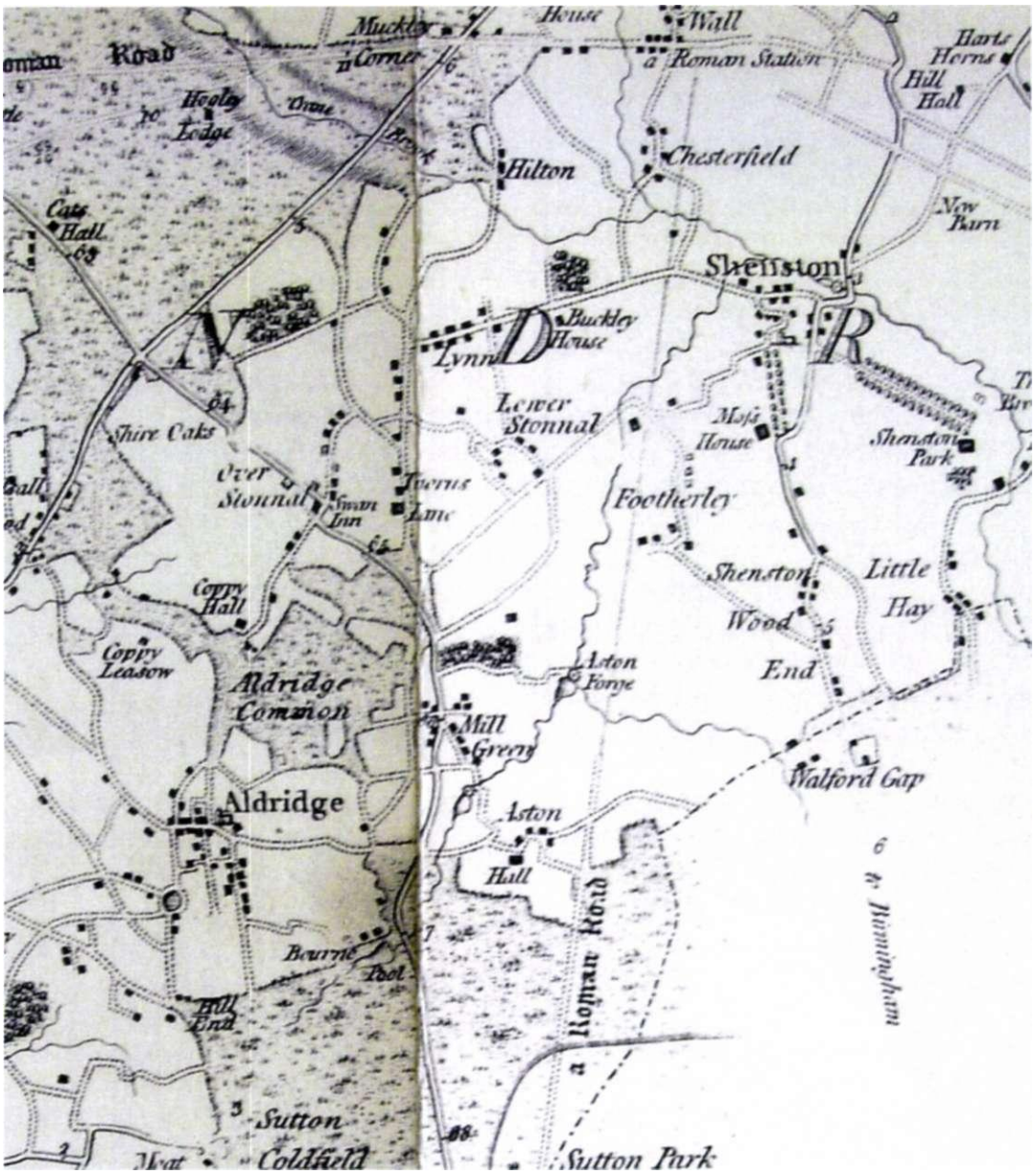


Figure 3 1774 Map of Staffordshire . Extract showing Shenstone area (Yates)

Thornes like Hilton never developed and Footherley has also remained a scattering of houses. Little Aston was clustered around its green a few hundred yards from the Hall but there were no settlements near to the two other large houses in the parish, Moss House and Shenstone Park. The village of Shenstone grew in an arc north and east of the church - the largest house, Shenstone Hall, is several hundred yards away on the other side of the Lichfield to Birmingham turnpike.

Anglo Saxon Settlement

A perennial question when investigating settlement patterns is where were the Anglo Saxons? The Roman settlements and farmsteads are reasonably well identified (see Archaeology) and by the early medieval period the place names of the townships are clearly well established. But between these two lie some 700 years of Anglo Saxon occupation - where were they living? We know that they did not occupy the Roman sites which gradually decayed and were eventually abandoned. Two clues that we have are the two Anglo Saxon charters mentioned in the Topography section which show that the Anglo Saxons were in Shenstone and had names for places in the landscape, and the evidence from the excavations of the old St John's church in Shenstone village which appears to have Anglo-Saxon masonry in the foundations. (Gould 1973/4) This suggests that there was an Anglo-Saxon settlement on the hill where the church now stands. Furthermore Gould reminds us that in a 12th charter by William de Bray confirming Robert d'Oyley's grant of the church of Shenstone to Oseney Abbey William states that the grant includes 2 virgates of land given to Shenstone church by Godwin son of Ernwi. (Godwin is noted in the Doomsday Book as the pre conquest holder of Shenstone). This confirms that there was an actual church at Shenstone before 1066. However elsewhere in the parish there is no surviving evidence of Anglo Saxon occupation, other than in the place names of the various hamlets in the parish most of which have an Anglo Saxon origin and show that Anglo Saxons had settled in these places.

By the time of Domesday there is a noteworthy settlement at Shenstone, (see Manorial History), and it is known who held Shenstone before the conquest, but this is the only settlement in the parish which is mentioned.

Forest Clearances

There are references of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries to assarting in the forest of Cannock at Stonnall. For example in 1271 Robert de Grysbok had 2 newly assarted acres in Stanhope in Robert de Grandsons fee to the King. Robert son of Henry de Stanhope now holds it and it has been sown once with sailing (rye) and once with oats. Robert de Grendon himself was fined for newly assarting 4 acres. Also in 1271 Elias de Lynde was fined 6s for an acre and a half of old assart in La Lynde of the fee of Robert de Grendon; Adam son of Bartholomew of Shenstone 18s for one acre the same & seven other tenants of Robert de Grendon between 6d and 9s for the like.

In 1286 there are several references to 'new purprestures' in the fee of Robert de Grendon in Shenstone . For example Eva de Bosco (Eva 'of the Woods') had one acre enclosed with a ditch and a dead hedge which was to be thrown down. Others two had there dead hedges (fences) thrown down. (Wrottesley 1884) These are just examples from many entries in the 1262 , 1271 and 1286 forest courts. (Birrell 1999) Assarting is to clear the land of trees and implies the grubbing up of tree stumps and converting the land to agricultural

use, in these cases all arable. Typical assarts were from 1 to 4 acres in extent and were sown with winter corn (mostly), spring corn or oats although some were still fallow at the time of the court hearing. A purpresture is an encroachment and implies occupation of the land but not the clearing of it. All of these were in the Stonnall area and indicate that extensive clearing of the forest was in progress through the east of the parish in the thirteenth century.

The 1838 Tithe Map and Apportionment

One of the best sources for understanding the parish is the Tithe Map, drawn up to establish the tithes due to the church. There is detailed information on each field and house in the parish, with the names of the owners and occupiers and the use to which the land was put. (LJRO 1838)

The whole parish comprised 8,452 acres, of which 4,953 were arable; 2,560 meadow and pasture; 486 were woodland and plantations and roads were 156. Farms, homesteads and their gardens amounted to 167acres. One immediate observation is that the area of woodland was tiny - less than it is today, and much less than it was in the medieval period.

Over half of the parish land (4,352 acres) was owned by six landowners, with William Leigh of Little Aston owning no less than 2,590 acres (of which the hall and park amounted to 770). The other leading landowners were Henry Case of The Moss holding 437 acres; John Gough of Shenstone Hall holding 365 acres; Edward Grove of Shenstone Park holding 358 acres; Samuel Addison holding 332 acres and Sir Robert Peel (whose home Drayton Manor was outside the parish), holding 270 acres.

A further 1,500 acres belonged to 10 families who owned between 100-250 acres each. These included Samuel and Margaret Adcock; Elizabeth Biddle; G and J.Brawn; George Burton; Thomas Caddick; Joseph Eld; Thomas Neville; Maria Simpson; John Wilmore and George Willmoor. The remaining 30% of the land belonged to small landowners and householders, personal and corporate.

By listing the owners and analysing the occupation of each plot of land, it is possible to make a detailed survey of the whole parish. Consider for example this snapshot of Shenstone in 1838.

A Snapshot of Shenstone Village, 1838

Stebbing Shaw, writing in 1801, said of Shenstone:

> **Shenstone village, adjoining to the church hill, has something in its appearance very pleasing. The houses in general look neat; many of them have little courts of gardens in front, which add to their rural appearance, and are in number about 35, in which reckoning we do not include the seats of those gentlemen who live at distance from the village.**

The coming of the toll road led to a by passing the village, which was left it as a little back-water, detailed as such in the 1838 tithe map. (Figure 4)

The properties shown on the map are identified by their number.

No. 23 The Bull's Head Public House, outbuildings and yard. This with fields 21 (arable) and 25 (pasture) behind (7 acres) and also 53 was owned by Edward Grove of Shenstone Park, and let to William Pearson, who presumably combined inn-keeping with some agriculture.
Nos. 30-31 belonged to Thomas Biddle who owned several small properties in the parish including these small houses and gardens here which he let out.
No. 32 was a private road.
No. 33 (pasture) 47 (arable) were 4 acres of fields belonging to Henry Smith (see below).
No.35 owned by William Chamberlain (with 34 and 34a). The house, garden and shop were let to Samuel Tonks, plumber, glazier and painter.*
Nos.36-37 were owned by Thomas Hodgkins. 36 was a 114 acre pasture field; 37 was let to a blacksmith, Thomas Yeomans *: house, smith's shop, barn and yard. Thomas Hodgkins rented a house and garden at no.38 and the arable field next to it (no. 40).
No.39a was a wheelwright's shop occupied by Joseph Hodgkins,* with no.39 his house and garden. 38, 39,39and 40 were in the ownership of the Rev. Cowley.
41 belonged to Mary Stringer with George Stringer, tailor and draper* as tenant.
No.43 This was a Butcher's shop with a 1.5 acre field attached. With No.44 (house and outbuildings) it was owned by Henry Smith* (who also owned 33 and 47 above, together with land totalling over 30 acres and is listed as farmer and butcher in 1834 directory).
No. 45 was an outbuilding and garden owned by Robert Hilton, who also owned 81,82,98. A Robert Hilton is noted in the 1834 Directory as Shopkeeper and baker.
No 46 a garden owned by William Hilton, who also owned 56 (his home) and 56a, 57, 58- houses and gardens which he let.
48 and 52 (both a garden), 49,50,51 (each a house and garden) belonged to Ruth and Aaron White. They owned other lands and properties in the parish to a total of 90acres, but Ruth White is listed as living at 50-51, with the rest tenanted.
54 belonged to Mrs Susan Dandridge, who ran an Academy here*
56,56a 57,58 belonged to William Hilton. He occupied 56 (house and garden) and 46, a garden, across the road. He is noted as a shoemaker and constable in 1834.
59,59a 60,61, 85 ,86.87,88 (each a house and garden) and 63, (a 2 acre arable field) belonged to James Lonsdale. Including property elsewhere he owned 33.5 acres and let 8 houses in the village living elsewhere himself. 59a was let to Thomas Pearson, joiner.*
80 owned by Mary Hobby, shoemaker* house, outbuildings and garden. She also owned C319- a small garden beyond the village.
83, : two houses and a garden, belonged to William Tonks, who is noted as running an Academy * (also owned 325) Thomas Adlam Tonks, parish, vestry, magistrates and savings bank clerk.* owned C322,326-7, gardens outside the village.

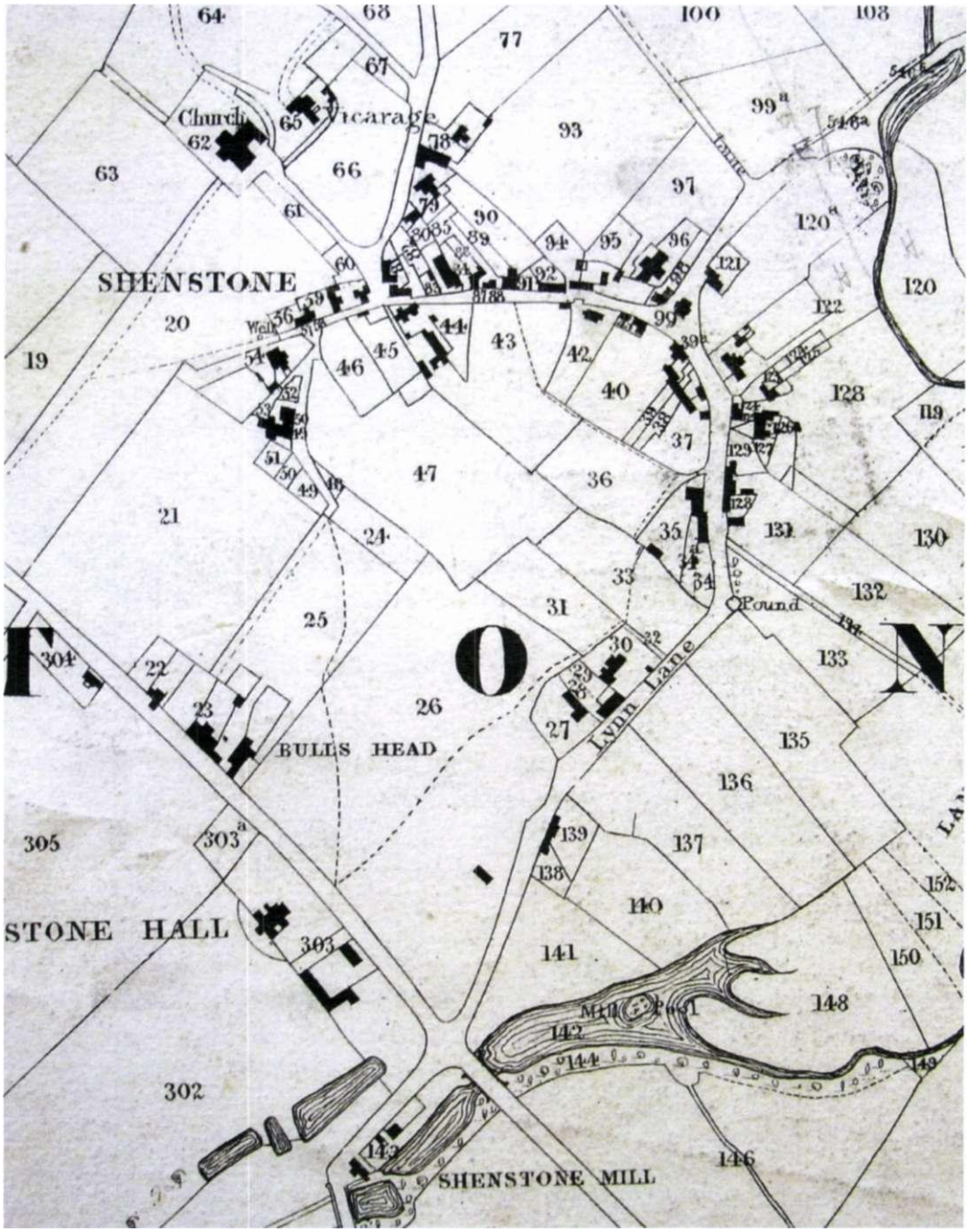


Figure 4 1838 Tithe Map Shenstone Village LJRO B/A/15

84 William Nevill (who also owned three gardens) may be the Shoemaker*. Also in 1834 a James Nevill is listed as shoemaker and James Nevill, junior a tailor.

92, house and garden was owned by Jonathan Knott and let to William Hodgkins, a Blacksmith*. Knott also owned 91 next door, which was let out.

93,94,95,96,97 belonged to Halford Wootton Hewitt who rented out the two fields and the houses. No. 95 was a butchers (John Garratt*)

99 is the school and playground.

123-8 belonged to Thomas Preston

129-133 Reverend Law, who owned 89 acres in the parish, of which 130-133 are noted as cherry orchards and arable.

136-143, 148,150 Samuel Day was a corn miller at Shenstone Mill, just south of the village. Mary Day was listed as owner with 28 acres and Samuel as occupier

*occupation given in White's 1834 Staffordshire Directory

Also listed in the 1834 directory for Shenstone village, but not on the tithe apportionment are:

James Princett, net maker (possibly). the James Pinceps who rented C131-3, cherry orchard and arable fields); Benjamin Shorthouse, nurseryman ; William Turner, gardener ;John Western, threshing machine owner and Joseph White, shoemaker

The Inns listed in the 1834 Directory were the Fox and Hounds no 82 (Jo and Tho Stringer) in the village ; the Bull's Head Inn no 23 (Tenant -Thomas Wheeler) on the turnpike road ; the Old Leopard, no 256 ; just north of Shenstone Mill (owned by John Titterton who also owned a small croft, C179) and The Hope and Anchor-a beer house (Elizabeth and Ann Higginbotham).

All this indicates a village with the usual rural trades of blacksmith, wheelwright and corn miller, nurseryman, plus village amenities of butcher, shoemaker, tailor, draper, baker and shop, plumber, inn-keeper. More unexpected are the two academies as well as the village school.

Over Stonnall 1838

A similar analysis can be done with the other hamlets in the Parish ; Over Stonnall is shown in Figure 5. Of interest is the Old Chester Turnpike Road at the top of the figure (north is to the right). This is shown with the marked kink in the road where the turnpike joined Stonnall Lane, and it was several decades before this was straightened out to its present alignment. There must have been a small open area here as a tree is shown in the centre of the cross roads. The toll house was off the map to the left a hundred yards or so south, on Druid's Heath.

There were substantial farm buildings at the junction, A155 and A170, which were part of the house and farm of George Wright, and a little further up the road was the farm of Joseph Eld (A209). Both were owned by William Leigh. Other farms in the village included that of Thomas Nickson who was a typical small farmer occupying a house at A183, and also the fields A184-186, A188-189 and B054 which he rented from Ann Brown, who doesn't appear to have lived in the parish. William Smith who occupied a house and farm buildings at A192 was a more substantial farmer, as well as A187, A190, A191, A193, A238 and A239 he occupied several other fields to the north and east, renting from several different landlords. Thornes Hall, owned by William Leigh was untenanted but the surrounding cottages, all owned by William Leigh, were occupied. The church B30 was owned and occupied by the Revd. Woolley. The three fields at the bottom left, B43, B44 and B45 were known as Chapel

Hill suggesting that they were near the site of the old Stonnall Chapel before it's demolition. As well as the turnpike and the village

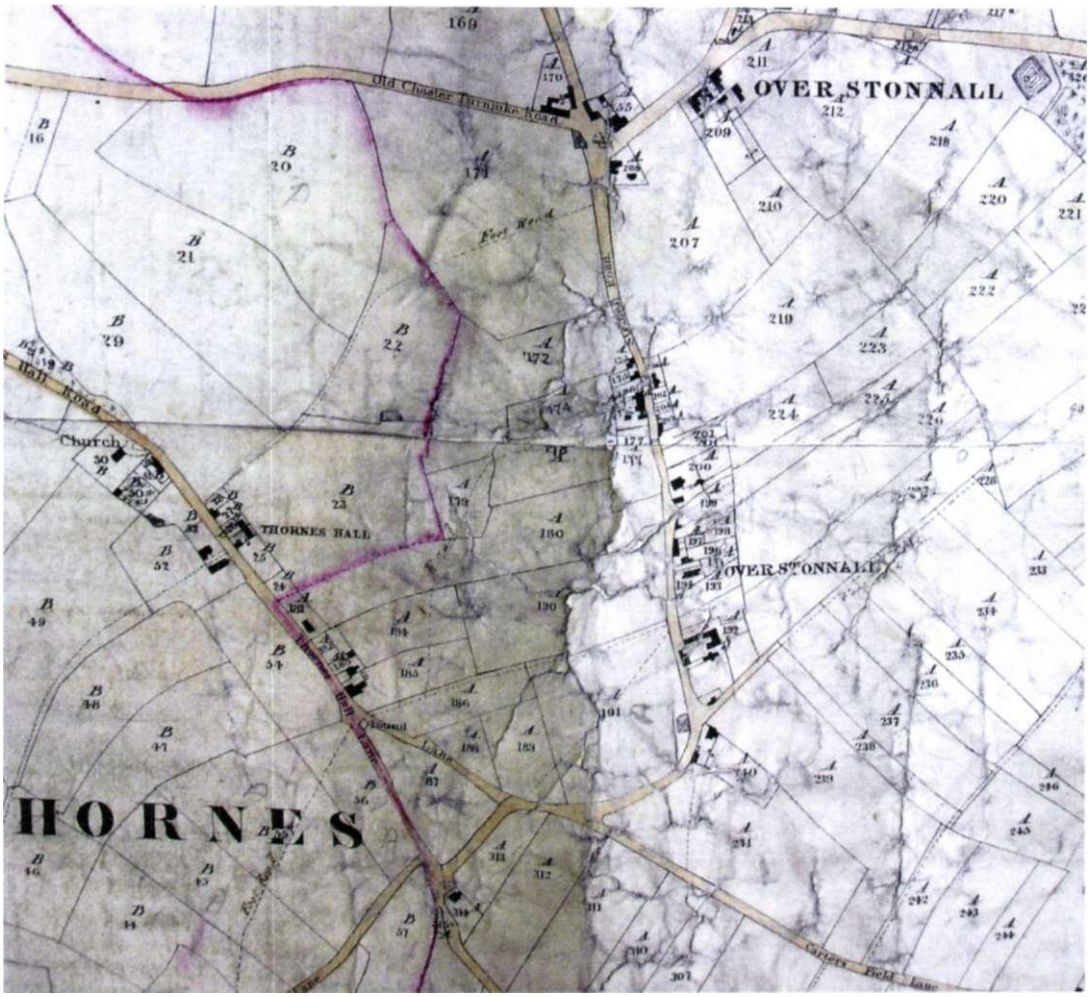
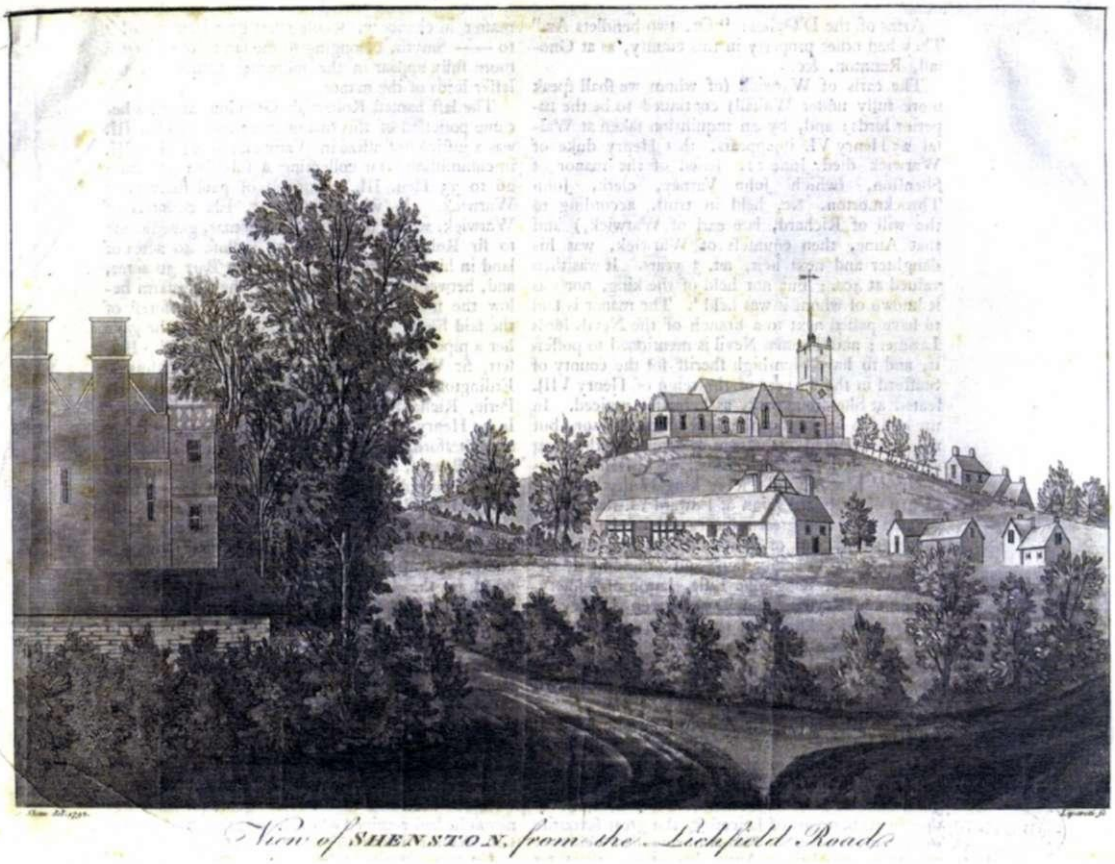


Figure 5 1838 Tithe Map Over Stonnall LJRO B/A/15

lanes, foot roads over the fields are also shown. The village pound is shown on Thornes Hall Lane and the adjacent field A187 was known as Pinfold Piece. The one Public House here is the Swan, A176 , occupied by George Swan but owned by Joseph Bagnall. The one shop is A199 occupied by Benjamin Russell who according to the 1834 directory was a joiner.

A238 is a long thin field known as the Slang - with its neighbours a survivor of the open fields. It is one of a series of fields of the same length all in a row , A233-239, but the thinnest of them all. (The name Slang means a long thin strip of land.) These seven parallel fields were probably part of one of Stonnall's open fields which was enclosed early in the eighteenth century. Another long thin field was A225 , called the Flatt, a name applied to fields created by the closure of open fields and A223-227 all have Flatt as part of their names so they would have been part of one of Stonnall's open fields.

View of Shenstone from the Lichfield Road 1792



The building in the foreground is the side of Ivy House before it was extended on the left hand side and before the porch was raised from two to three stories . The row of cottages are the White cottages at the top end of Main Street today .The church on the hill is the old St John the Baptist. Today only the tower of this church is still standing. The vicarage can be seen slightly down the right hand side of the hill.

The artist was standing near a field surrounded by trees. On the 1816 map of Shenstone this area is labelled A.ADAMS a GARDEN. Today it is the library and other Main Street buildings, and today the artist would have been standing in the garden of a house down Doctors Lane.

The artist was standing on a track, coming from in front of Ivy House and continuing behind him to the Birmingham road then onto the old road to Lichfield which went around past the Mill.

In the picture there are two chimneys at the side of Ivy House. Today there is the rear one just about visible from the road projecting where the extension joined with the original building. The chimney on the front must have been altered or demolished to make a passageway through the building from the original part to the extension.

The porch extension can be seen by the quoin stones on the left hand side only going up the porch for two stories . The top only has brick up the corner. The quoin stones on the right hand side are covered by the semicircular bay extension.

(Print reproduced in Stebbing Shaw's History ; reproduced here from a copy in the William Salt Library)

POPULATION

How many people lived in the parish of Shenstone ? Where did they live ? The answers to these questions are essential to an understanding of the effects of recent human activity on the landscape of the area. Before the national census returns were made starting in 1801, the best information is given by manorial surveys, tax records or data collected for religious purposes. Tax records have to be used with caution . In themselves, they do not present a 'snapshot' of the whole population. Taxation thresholds together with evasion exclude many from the record , but historians can make allowances for factors such as these and still use the material to gauge a general impression of population size and its development. In addition some records may present other information about a settlement (such as occupations or migration) and often permit identification of the wealthy and hint at the prosperity of a place. The poor are infrequently recorded. Whilst most of these assessments record precise information the interpretation of the figures therefore needs to be approached with caution. There is no certainty as to what percentage of the population was covered by each exercise, nor is there any agreement as to how to estimate the full population from any of the assessments. Much depends on the energy of those collecting the tax or making the returns and the extent of deliberate evasion. The interpretations of the recorded figures given here are very broad brush and are indicative of levels of magnitude only.

Domesday

The recorded population of Shenstone at the time of Domesday was 21 villeins and 4 bordarii, perhaps representing a population in the order of 125 people.

Fourteenth century

The earliest tax records now readily available are the 1327 and 1332 lay subsidy rolls. The 1327 roll lists 36 tax payers (those whose goods were worth less than 10s were exempt), comprising 34 men and two women. The 1332 roll lists 41 tax payers (again those whose goods were worth less than 10s were exempt), comprising 39 men and two women. The subsidy rolls suggest a population in the order of 460 to 510 people, that is, a fourfold increase since the late eleventh century (Wrottesley 1886, Wrottesley 1889). Such demographic trends inevitably had a significant impact upon the landscape of manor and parish, and the pressure of an increasing population inevitably led to the assarting in the thirteenth century, already noted, which provided more land for cultivation.

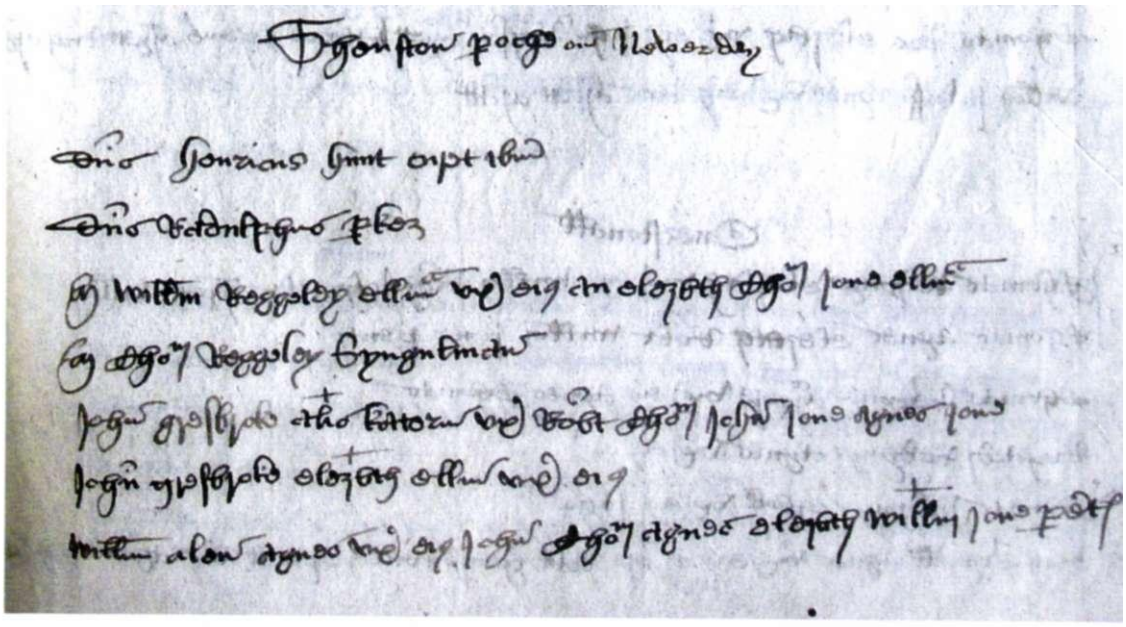
The next set of records readily available are the 1377 and 1381 subsidy rolls (Fenwick 2001) That part of the Offlow Hundred subsidy roll of 1381 listing the taxpayers of Shenstone has not survived but the 1377 roll gives the number of people taxed as 236 . In theory the 1377 tax was of 4d a head of every man and woman over the age of 14 excepting honest beggars. Of 48

Religious CENSUS of 1532/3

This is a census of families in the Archdeaconry of Stafford , by parish , and then by townships. The reason for undertaking the census is not known but as individuals who have died were included it is thought that it is a list of souls , of individuals both living and already dead , for whom prayers would be said The individuals who have died are marked in the original with a cross.

The original is in Latin, with many abbreviations , which has been transcribed and translated. Each household is listed with all the members of the household . In each parish the clergy come first then the gentry then ordinary people. The name of the head of the family is given first, then his wife or wives, other family members with the same surname, and then parents (if any) The census is discussed in more detail by Ann Kettle in her introduction to the printed version in Historical Collections for a History of Staffordshire 4th series volume 8 Shenstone included Nether Stonnall , Over Stonnall , Chesterfield .Thornes and Aston.

The **Shenstone** entry starts two thirds down sheet 106



Shenstone parish on New years day

Revd. Henry Hunt vicar of the above
Revd. Ralph Parker
William Reggeley Esq. Eleanor his wife Ann, Elizabeth Thomas Joan Eleanor
Thomas Reggeley Esq. Singleman
John Gresbroke Alice* Katherine his wives, Robert Thomas John Joan Agnes Joan
John Gresbroke Elizabeth* Ellen his wives
William Alen Agnes his wife, John Thomas Agnes Elizabeth, William* Joan his parents

There are 433 names listed in the whole parish , of whom 129 lived in the township of Shenstone.

LJRO B/A/27N

vills within Offlow Hundred, Shenstone had the sixth highest assessment, surpassed only by Burton-on-Trent, Walsall, Marchington, Barton-under-Needwood and Tutbury. Allowing for evasion and exemptions, it will be immediately evident that this list of taxpayers still represented a very substantial population within the manor, certainly not fewer than 500 people.

Sixteenth Century

The list of families in the archdeaconry of Stafford, of 1532/3, is an unusual document. (Kettle 1976) It's purpose is uncertain although it lists over 50,000 names of people in the archdeaconry (which then comprised most of the County of Stafford). The list contains the names of members of individual families and includes some who were probably dead. It's not a census but is most probably a prayer list or something similar. It is not complete but it is difficult to determine just how many people living in the county were not included, and it probably does not represent a fixed proportion of the inhabitants of each place. For the parish of Shenstone the document lists in all 61 families, two single men and two priests with 433 persons living in the whole parish (plus about 25 who were probably dead). This total of 433 is therefore a ***minimum*** number of inhabitants of Shenstone in 1532/3.

The value in this document is that it gives a listing for Shenstone by township within the parish which for the first time gives an indication of the distribution of the population within the parish. Only about 30% of the population lived in the village of Shenstone itself and although it is the largest township it is only slightly larger than Aston. The village of Shenstone is also where the two priests and two men with the title master (magister) lived and it is clearly the most important place but the other hamlets in the parish were not much smaller.

In Shenstone there were seventeen families , one single man and two priests being 129 living individuals. In Nether Stonnall there were six families and 48 living individuals while in Over Stonnall there were thirteen families and 81 living individuals. In Chesterfield there were seven families and 43 living individuals; in Thornes two families and 15 living individuals and in Aston there are sixteen families and one single man being 121 living persons. This shows a fairly even distribution of the population around the parish.

At the Offlow Hundred muster of 1539 there were 74 men from Shenstone, 43 able and 31 indifferent. (although this included an unknown number, probably quite small from Swynfen.) These were the men from Shenstone who travelled to the muster, which was held not very far away in Lichfield St Michael's parish. Their number would not include boys or elderly men above fighting age or men ill or disabled. This seems rather on the low side when compared with the 433 inhabitants listed in the 1532 religious document but there may well have been a high level of avoidance. (Boyd 1901)

The Diocesan returns for 1563 give 83 households in Shenstone , which suggests a total population of a little over 400; this is in broad agreement with the 1532 family list. (Dyer & Palliser 2005)

Seventeenth Century

In 1642 every male in England over the age of 18 was required to sign a declaration of adherence to Protestantism. (HoL HL/PO/JO/10/1/106) In total 240 men signed in Shenstone and although elsewhere some women signed none did so here. The return for the parish breaks down signatories by township. In Shenstone 66, Footherly 42, Chesterfield 19, Lynn 37, Aston 24, Over Stonnall 35, Lower Stonnall 17. Only one man did not sign and was designated a recusant and refuser. Thus 28% of the population lived in the village of Shenstone itself - much the same as in 1532 , but the importance of Aston has declined. Given an equal number of women in the parish and a population comprised of 25% children the total population might be around 640.

The 1666 Hearth Tax was levied on houses , and gives the names of the occupier, essentially the head of the household , and includes those not chargeable giving information about both rich and poor. (Anon 1923) The 1666 tax records 206 names of whom 122 were chargeable and 84 not chargeable. Those chargeable were broken down into townships: Shenstone 30, Aston 10, Lynne 14, Footherley 20, Nether Stonnall 12, Chesterfield 8, Over Stonnall 25. Of the houses 25% were in Shenstone village, and the proportion in the other townships is much the same as in 1642. Overall these figures suggest a population of between 800 and 900 in 1666.

The 1667 Poll Tax was a complex tax, but essentially all paid, including children and servants excepting those in receipt of parish alms. (Sanders 1794) Professionals and others of rank paid more. The list of names is more comprehensive than the previous year's Hearth Tax but many are the same; the list only names those who actually paid and does not include the members of their households. Those assessed are listed by township ; Shenstone 40, Aston 19, Footherly 14,Wood End 12, Chesterfield 7, Over Stonnall & Hilton 18, Thornes 9, Lyndons 19, Nether Stonnall 14. The total is 152 of which 26% were in Shenstone village. Not knowing the number receiving parish alms there is no means of assessing the total population.

1676 The Compton census of this year (Whiteman 1986) lists 465 conformists no papists and 20 non conformists, making 485 in all. This census was for religious purposes and should have recorded all over the age of 16 but it is not clear just how accurately this instruction was observed by incumbents making returns for their parishes.

Eighteenth Century

Rather oddly given the amount of earlier information available there does not seem to be a reliable source of population estimates for the parish in the eighteenth century.

Nineteenth Century

By the early nineteenth century more accurate population figures became available through the census returns. In 1801 there were 1339 persons in the parish, in 1811 1378, in 1831 1827 persons and in 1851 2043 persons. As with all census returns the number who avoided being counted is unknown, and the number recorded depended much on the diligence of the enumerator.

Conclusion

What can we deduce from all of these population figures? Firstly that there was a steady increase in the number of people living in the parish, from around 125 in the eleventh century, to around 500 in the fourteenth century, to around 800 in the seventeenth century to 1339 in 1801, and then a very rapid increase to 2043 in 1851. Where it is possible to conjecture it would seem that Shenstone village held between 25 and 30 % of the population, consistently over these centuries, the remainder distributed over the other townships, the largest of which was initially Aston, although it faded in importance later. The bulk of the population in the parish was in a strip from Shenstone village in the north east to Aston in the south west, with Footherley and the Stonnalls in the middle. The east of the parish and the north west of the parish, having no townships of note, seem to have been quite lightly populated, and this remains so today.

BUILDINGS

There are three developed areas, Little Aston, Stonnall Village, and Shenstone Village. The remainder, including named places such as Chesterfield, Footherley, Little Hay and Hilton consist of small numbers of buildings, spaced thinly across the landscape. Most of these dwellings appear to be associated with land use.The residential buildings of Little Aston, Stonnall and Shenstone Village are mainly late twentieth century properties.The majority of buildings both nineteenth and twentieth century are built of brick and tile. Buildings not in this material are usually industrial, such as corrugated iron on barns and prefabricated industrial buildings.

Shenstone Village

The village is now defined by the railway in the West, the Birmingham Road in East, the Lammas Lands in the North and Shenstone Court in the South.

Examination of maps show that the village streets retained a very similar pattern from 1800 to 1950 and the numbers of buildings, indicated by solid marks on the maps, remained consistent. Within this period newer buildings replaced older ones but the number of buildings remained very close. After 1950, rapid development took place and by 1980 the numbers of buildings within the village had increased in the region often fold.

Today, within the village boundary are two churches, four public houses, a station, library, village hall, school, and a number of local shops. Most of these functional buildings were available in the past but some were found in different positions within the village.

There are maps which show the footprints of buildings standing on the same spots in the village with basically the same shape as in the 1840s as they have today, for example the buildings on the North side of Church Road . However the later maps show that some footprints have evolved over the years.

There are a number of buildings in the village where modifications to the structure can be seen, for example, blocked doorways and heightened roofs. One building, Ivy House, can be seen to have sections added at different periods. For example the porch was extended from two stories to three.This can be seen from an early drawing of that part of the village.

Farms around the parish

The ancient parish of Shenstone has some fifty farms, or their remnants. Many have a brick built farmhouse which has at its core a 2:1 box with some form of side or cross wing. The ground plan arrangement today has in many cases been radically altered, where often the small brick outbuildings have been either abandoned or demolished to make way for larger industrial style units. However in many of the layouts it is possible to get an idea of the earlier arrangement. Many of these farmstead buildings date from early Victorian times, but are based on earlier, medieval sites. Usually the farmhouse was relatively close to the farm buildings and in some cases the house formed part of the farmyard, rather like a courtyard. In other cases it was set back a little, to allow a passageway into the nearby farm yard.

Standing Buildings:

In the survey area of the Shenstone tithe map (LJRO B/A/15) the majority of new builds, opposed to rebuilds or extensions, during the past 150 years have been in Shenstone Village, Stonnall Village(Upper Stonnall), and South of Little Aston Village. A little development took place in Shenstone Village in the 1940s but the majority of these new builds took place after 1960 as can be seen by studying the Ordnance Survey Maps of the period. There are a number of Victorian and Edwardian developments in Shenstone Village, some are infill between existing properties and some are developments of existing properties. The major development was New Road on previously undeveloped ground. The later new builds (post 1960) on virgin land have used farmland, orchards and allotments either in the heart of the village or hugging the perimeter, keeping a tight profile of the village as can be seen from the OS Maps. The more recent developments in Stonnall village and the Little Aston area appear to be mainly from the 1950s onwards.

In Upper Stonnall the development appears to be infilling following the Main

Street and then with some farm land being used as you head towards the Upper Stonnall / Lower Stonnall divide.

The majority of the other buildings standing in the twenty-first century appear to be either developed from or added to existing structures originating in or prior to the nineteenth century. Many of these buildings can, in parts, be identified by the map markings on the tithe map. By following the maps through the OS of the 1870s to modern day equivalents changes can be seen where extensions have been added or parts of buildings demolished (at least in two dimensions). Some of these buildings can also be identified on earlier maps, where available, such as Estate maps or Enclosure awards.

Looking pre-1800 the only available map which has some clarity concerning buildings is Yates. (Figure 3) Unfortunately the footprints of the buildings on this map are basically squares which makes it impossible to compare them with later maps in terms of extensions or demolitions but the map does allow a few buildings to be identified in position when set against a landmark, for example Ivy Cottage Lower Stonnall stood alone in the fork of a road and still does today. The map is also available for highlighting clusters of buildings, and the settlements, giving an indication of numbers of buildings and the pattern of the settlement when compared against more modern maps.

Within Shenstone village the use of map analysis has allowed the evolution of some buildings to be traced. For example, Lincoln House (Main Street) today is one large building , whereas at the time of the tithe map it was quite clearly two buildings. The Cottage, Oddfellows Hall and The Fox and Hounds Public House are other properties examined in this way.

Over the rest of the survey area the majority of buildings either in the settlement or within the farmlands appear to be farm related, farmhouses , farm buildings or smallholdings .Using Local Live mapping on the internet it is possible to see many of the buildings as photographs which allows the buildings to be identified either as working farms, converted farms or the remains of farm buildings.

Over 60 farm properties were found, reasonably evenly distributed within the survey area. A small number were on or near the boundary and may not actually be in the area, for example Camp Farm south of Little Hay had its original farm buildings inside the survey area but the new farm house is in a new field outside of the area. Of the farm properties most had brick built farmhouses of the cross or L formation. Many had some brick outbuildings intermingled with more modem style buildings, a few had most of a conventional farmyard and a few had clearly developed the conventional farmyard for domestic residential purposes.

Over the period, religious buildings have grown in number with new Parish Churches at Shenstone, Stonnall and Little Aston, a new Methodist Church at Shenstone and a chapel at Little Hay. Most Public Houses have remained as Public Houses. Most shops and village services, such as blacksmith, baker and shoemaker have closed down and new shops have been built within the

villages and garages on the main roads. Larger houses within the area have either undergone change of use, to Care Homes and a School, or have been demolished and the land used for new housing.

Buildings in Shenstone Village

A number of buildings in the village have been partially or wholly remodelled over the years. The English Heritage Listings mention this on a number of occasions. Changes are revealed by different building styles, and interestingly, not only have some buildings been remodelled but some had been re-oriented. Their position and orientation can be followed both on the Enclosure Award Map (1816) (SRO Q/Rdc/76) and the Tithe Map (1838) (LJRO B/A/15) which show the outline and orientation of the buildings. Representations of buildings on earlier maps such as Yates' map of 1774 show buildings simply as square blocks with no detail at all.

Many of the post-Georgian buildings were built at varying angles often linked to the angle of the road or plot. Some, still standing or shown on maps, had a definite East-West orientation, and most of these were pre-Georgian period. A few, such as Stowe House in Church road, built in the Georgian period, appeared to have been deliberately built on the East -West orientation and did not follow the line of a road.

The question arises with the pre Georgian buildings, where remodelling had taken place, how much change in position and orientation has happened and was there a relationship with nearby buildings?

Lincoln House.

From the map footprints it appears to have turned through 90degrees with a new front entrance. The original building had an East - West line, facing its outbuildings on one side and the old church on the other. Today it follows a North - South line, with the front door looking down Main Street, having incorporated some of the outbuildings with a join between them and the original house. Earlier maps suggest that buildings on its north were quite substantial, perhaps a small farmyard.

Ivy House, Main Street

According to English Heritage this was originally orientated 90 degrees from today's alignment. If the buildings along Doctors Lane were originally standing on the site of outbuildings to Ivy House it would be similar to many of the farmyard arrangements mentioned above. If Ivy House had originally been East - West orientated, like Lincoln House it would have been looking up to the Church.

The Bull's Head

In 1818 this public house had buildings to its northern side, the main one of them being orientated East / West. It has since been extensively remodelled. Had it been turned 90 degrees to face the road when it started to cater for the travelling trade? Was it originally facing the outbuildings on an East / West orientation? Was it originally a farmstead? Many public houses started life as a farm, possibly brewing their own ale and providing their own fare.

Shenstone Hall.

This was originally a farm house with farm buildings at the side . It was remodelled in the Gothic Style. Was it enlarged at the same time? It may also have oriented towards the farmyard on an East -West orientation and altered at the very time that the road to Lichfield (now the A5127) was realigned . Before this the road turned sharply east to the mill and then up to Lichfield ; this would have been approached through the farmyard in a northerly direction indicating the house might have been facing that way.

Another farm house along the Birmingham road, the farm opposite Shenstone Lodge also stands East - West

Around the village there are, or were a number of buildings with East - West orientation sitting neatly in the field patterns which were basically orientated North - South. In the centre of the village there is a cottage called The Cottage". This building has a cranked footprint, however the main section away from the street lies almost in an East - West position. On its South side according to the 1816 map a large building stood in the adjacent plot, a building with small projections on different sides. In the William Salt Library at Stafford there is a picture of 'A Barn In Shenstone'. (SV.IX.9a and b, one dated 1814) This picture shows a barn to have the same projections as the footprint on the map, and in the picture you can see a church which matches Shenstone Church from that position. The cottage would have been facing the barn. Could the grouping have been part of a small farmstead? (see over)

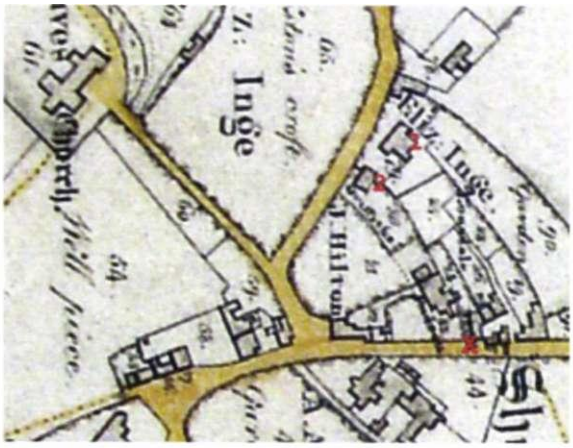
At the top of Church Road lies Spindle Cottage. This cottage is orientated East - West. There is a barn (possibly remodelled) next to it. Was this cottage and barn part of a farmstead? Further along were two more buildings with East - West orientation, then further along to where Haddon House stands today were two more buildings on the same alignment. There is no sign of outbuildings on these maps, maybe they were cottages for the farm labourers.

Further away from the church at the top of Pinfold Hill we find 5/7 Pinfold Hill, orientated on the East - West line and known the date back to at least the seventeenth century. From an old map footprint there was a long thin projection from this building, possibly a cart shed, and other smaller buildings near by. With open land to the rear was this also the shadow of a farmstead?

Print of Shenstone Farm by H.C.AIIport c. 1818

A picture showing barns and cattle. As well as the church tower we can see a three gabled building in the middle background and a single gabled building to the left of the barn. Right foreground is a cartshed. Using the 1816 map I radiated out in a northerly direction from the Church of St John where I found the cluster of buildings shown below. The footprint of the barn is quite distinctive. To the right can be seen a T shaped building. In the picture this building has three gables and one building today matches this , namely Stowe House in Church Street. (1) It has distinctive gables at the rear of the property. The building behind the barn cannot be seen in the picture. This is Vine Cottage. (2)

To the left of Vine Cottage on the map we can just make out a building footprint, twisted approximately 45 degrees to the road. This is the single gabled building in the picture to the left of the barn. Today no building is standing on this spot, the position being the top left hand corner of the Fox and Hounds car park. To the front of the barn can be seen a row of four bays attached to a Z shaped building. Today this building is known as The Cottage. The end bay can be seen in the picture being used as a cart shed. The position of the church is interesting . It should be to the left of the barn and not to the right. To have drawn this picture the artist would have needed to move position a number of times to have been able to see around the corners of the cartshed and the barn. **(X** =approx viewpoint)



In open space behind what is now the Methodist Chapel, stood Gresbrok (Greysbrooke) Hall standing on an East - West alignment. The remains of this building were demolished mid-nineteenth century and only artistic impressions exist to give some idea of what it may have looked like.

Finally down Pinfold Hill two more clusters of buildings stood on an East - West alignment, three buildings on one side of the road and a row opposite. The antiquity of these buildings is unknown but they were drawn on the early enclosure maps and fitted between the roadway and the footpaths at their rear, indicating they could have evolved with the land patterns. They have since been demolished.

When the buildings on the East - West alignment are plotted two curves show up. The inner curve makes a semicircle around the hill relatively close to the church, and the other curve follows the village limits.

The conclusion from this is that most earlier houses in Shenstone Village appeared to originally have stood on an East - West orientation, or were sited near other buildings with that orientation, possibly linked to the field patterns which basically followed a North - South layout within the village. Most of these houses appeared to have links with other nearby buildings, some of which were definitely farm related and others had the appearance of being buildings related to the working of the land, indicating the strong possibility of being crofts or farmsteads. When the close relationship of the house and farm was loosened at a later date, such as change of use from farm to Inn, a number of the houses were remodelled and at the same time possibly re-orientated. The distribution of these buildings showed a relatively even spread. The arrangement of these older buildings appeared to make two distinct curves, an inner curve around the northern side of the hill at its base, and an outer curve around the North Eastern edge of the village. The former group were all roughly equidistant from the old church. The latter group tended to be following the lines of the North - South orientated fields, either the end along Pinfold Hill or the side lines along today's Birmingham Road.

Listed Buildings

The English Heritage Listed Buildings Report lists 52 buildings in Shenstone mostly grade 2. Full details and photographs of many of the properties can be found on the English Heritage website and these building will not be described further here. Many of them are farmhouses or barns constructed in the late eighteenth or the early nineteenth centuries. Whilst many of the farmhouses remain relatively undisturbed some of the barns have been or are being converted to residential accommodation. The two substantial country houses still standing are Shenstone Hall, on the main Lichfield to Birmingham Road in Shenstone and Little Aston Hall and its Orangery.(See Country Estates) There are a few large houses in Shenstone village itself, such as Ivy House and Lincoln House as well as several seventeenth century cottages such as 5 and 7 Pinfold. Two of the Shenstone Public Houses are included , the Bulls Head and the Fox and Hounds. Some of the more unusual items include a milestone, the Shenstone Hall Garden Wall, the

lodge and gates that are all that survive of Moss House, 'Mallory', a lovely 1930s house on Hardwick Road in the extreme south of the parish, and a 1960s Royal Observer Corps monitoring post adjacent to the new Birmingham Northern Relief Road. The churches of St Peter Little Aston, St Peter Stonnall and St John Shenstone are all listed as is the surviving tower of the original church of St John Shenstone. (English Heritage)

5/7 Pinfold are possibly the oldest houses in Shenstone village and are described as having early seventeenth century core, resurfaced late eighteenth century and altered twentieth century, of red brick with the remains of a timber frame. The interior of number 5 has double spine beams to both ground and first floors, ovule moulded with run-out stops and exposed joists also chamfered with stepped run-out stops. There is a sandstone fire surround with a large fireplace beam. (See opposite for further details, photographs of beams in appendix).

St John Shenstone

When the old church was destroyed and a new one built in 1853 the tower of the original church was spared and ruins of other parts of the building still stand. Excavations immediately below and to the west of the chancel arch in 1973 revealed square offsets cut into the lower stones of the chancel wall suggesting Saxon work. (D & J Gould). The church was thought to have been built in the reign of Henry IV but with many subsequent alterations and repairs. Surviving masonry appears to be of the thirteenth century . The north transept originally bore the date 1647 . It is thought that the south transept of the old church was built of material taken from a demolished chapel at Stonnall, but there is no documentary evidence for this. (The 1563 diocesan returns list Shenstone amongst the parishes without chapels which indicates that any Stonnall chapel had gone by then.) The old church has been described in detail. (Jeavons 1970/71) The church is built on a substantial platform rising above the surrounding plain, and this platform houses both the church and the burial ground. Whilst the new church is close to the centre of this platform the original church was built off centre to the south west and a case can be made for the manorial hall being sited here. (Hunt and Hodder 1992)

Case Study 1:
Examining the footprints of buildings from maps to examine whether the building can be identified against modern day footprints. (Stonnall)

Many of the buildings standing today can be traced through their footprints to approximately 200 years ago. Some of these buildings could be much older, and some are known to be older as indicated by date stones and earlier map markings. The buildings standing may have had a number of alterations, they may have been extended sideways or upwards, they may have had different materials inserted such as tiles on the roof instead of thatch, and bricks either

HOMES AND WATSON TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS

Throughout Shenstone we snatched tantalising glimpses of timber, a beam here, a gable there and a cottage with a Cruck End.

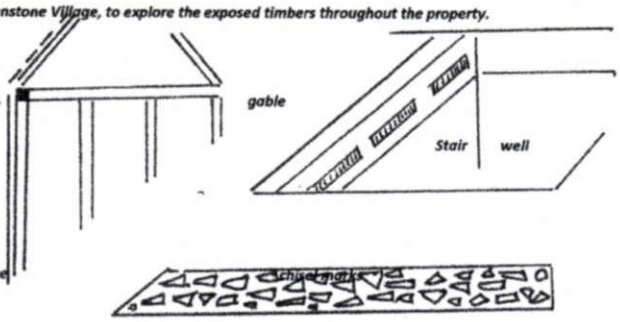
The conservation report and listed buildings surveys hinted at vestiges of frames hidden within later brick coverings.

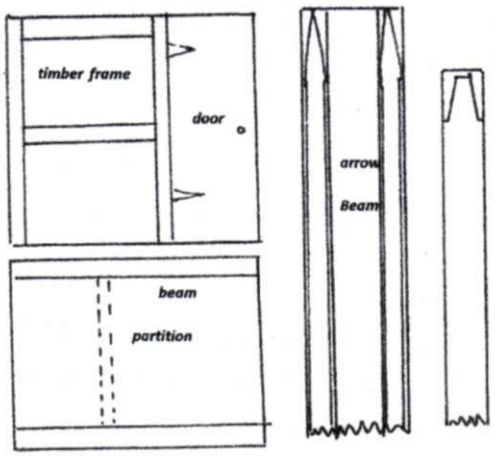
We were lucky to be invited into 5 and 7 Pinfold Hill, Shenstone Village, to explore the exposed timbers throughout the property.

The upper part of the gable (right Hand) can be seen from the road. Timbers cross the face and the end of the wall plate can be seen.

Up the stair well chisel marks are visible on timbers where once plaster keyed onto the wall.

Into the roof space a 'new' stair hatch has been created. The mortice slots are visible where joists once rested, enclosing the hole.





Upstairs you can walk through an original wall into a 'new' extension .Here you can see part of the original timber frame now forming the inside wall.

The main room beams , both upstairs and down are carved to a high standard with arrow mouldings along each long side from one side of the room to the other.

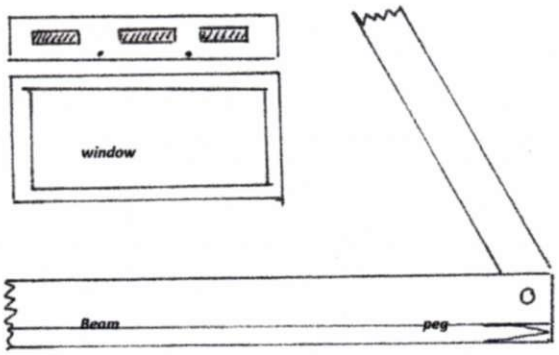
The interconnecting joists have chamfered stop ends.

Upstairs, partitions intersect both beams and floor boards, indicating they were inserted later than the beams and floor boards.

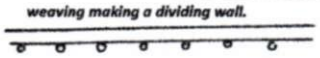
Some timbers appear to have been reused. Over a window One piece has mortice slots and peg holes, now no longer used and in a position most unlikely to have been used in the past.

The arrow moulded beams on the second floor have pins through the ends. These correspond to the positions of the roof trusses.

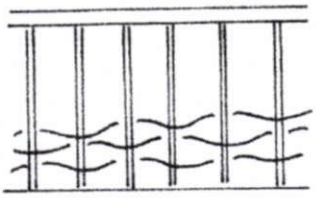
It appears the trusses are linked to the beams, possible with mortice and tenon joints, then pinned with wooden pegs.



On the ground floor by the fireplace there is a beam with peg holes on the underside. Did vertical poles originally fill the space with wattle weaving making a dividing wall.



Holes under beam



We would like to thank Mr & Mrs Howard and Mr & Mrs Wemys for their kind invitation to view their properties.

inserted between timbers instead of wattle and daub or bricks placed in front of the timbers creating a new wall. Some parts of the building may have been demolished and not replaced, where outhouses had fallen into disrepair and been abandoned for their original purposes.

Some of the buildings are in positions that can be found on the Yates' map of 1774, however with Yates the buildings are represented by square shapes and do not identify the building by its footprint shape. A number of buildings can be identified on this map by their position in relation to other landmarks, for example where there are two roads making an intersection, if there is only one building at that intersection then it will more than likely match the standing building. Even if it has been demolished and rebuilt, the standing building will have connection with the site. An example in the area shown is Ivy Cottage, standing at the junction of the two lanes, on its own both in 1775 and today. (Figure 6)

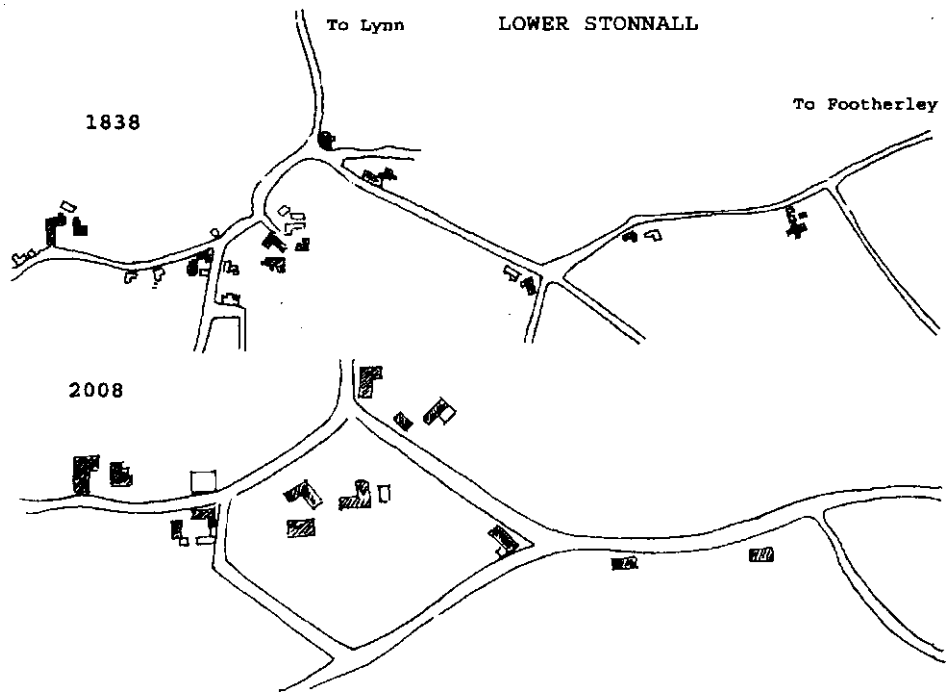


Figure 6 Development of buildings in Lower Stonnall, 1838 and 2008

On the Lower Stonnall map of 1838, on the left hand side stands Ivy House Farmhouse and the large barn by its side. The barn has a date stone with 1747 and the name John Smith inscribed. The house appears to have had the roof lifted by a couple of feet to make room for attic rooms but its footprint matches the shape on the map. The Barn has recently been converted for residential use but the external shape matches the shape on the map. As you move towards the centre of the area it can be seen that the roads have been altered but the main farms and their barns are still prominently marked in the

same positions as 1838. One of these barns has also been altered for residential use with large glass windows infilling the arches. Moving across a little we see the Ivy Cottage nestled in the crook of the two lanes. As we look to the extreme right we see a small cluster of buildings in 1838 and today just one building represented on the same spot. In 1838 this was the site of the brick works, today there are two semidetached cottages and no brick kilns remaining. The surrounding field is extremely bumpy as if holes had been dug, maybe for the clay, leaving a fascinating landscape now all grassed over.

Case Study 2:
Examination of Yates' Map of c.1774 to compare the clustering of buildings and the accuracy of positioning of buildings when compared with later maps, using Chesterfield in the north of the Survey Area.

The modern settlement of Chesterfield, in the North of the Shenstone Study area, is clustered along the Northern section of Ashcroft Lane starting basically where Ashcroft Lane is intersected by Raikes Lane. Apart from a slight spread along Raikes Lane the clustering and positioning of the modem day can be seen matched on the 1838, 1818 and the Yates' map of 1774. (Figure 7)

When we look at the Yates' representation of the area there are a number of issues to bear in mind;

The buildings are represented by filled in squares, without any apparent signature footprints (it has to be assumed the buildings in 1774 were not all exactly square and of the same size).

The map is of a smaller scale compared with the 1818 map and 1838 maps and the quantity of detail would have been much reduced because of this.

There is the possibility that Yates used a square to represent a cluster of buildings on a site, such as farmhouse and farmyard buildings, indicated on the map by just one square. This may be the case at the Northern end of Ashcroft Lane where there is today a farmhouse and farmyard buildings but Yates only draws one square at that point.

Bearing this in mind, it may be claimed that Yates was reasonably accurate in relation to the clustering and also reasonably accurate to the numbers and positions of buildings at this part of his map when compared with the 1818 and 1838 maps.

With the Yates map it is more reasonable to state the accuracy when there is some form of landmark to use as a guide. In this situation the landmark is the intersection of Ashcroft Lane and Raikes Lane which makes a crook in the road .At this crook in 1774 there was a building, in 1818 there were two

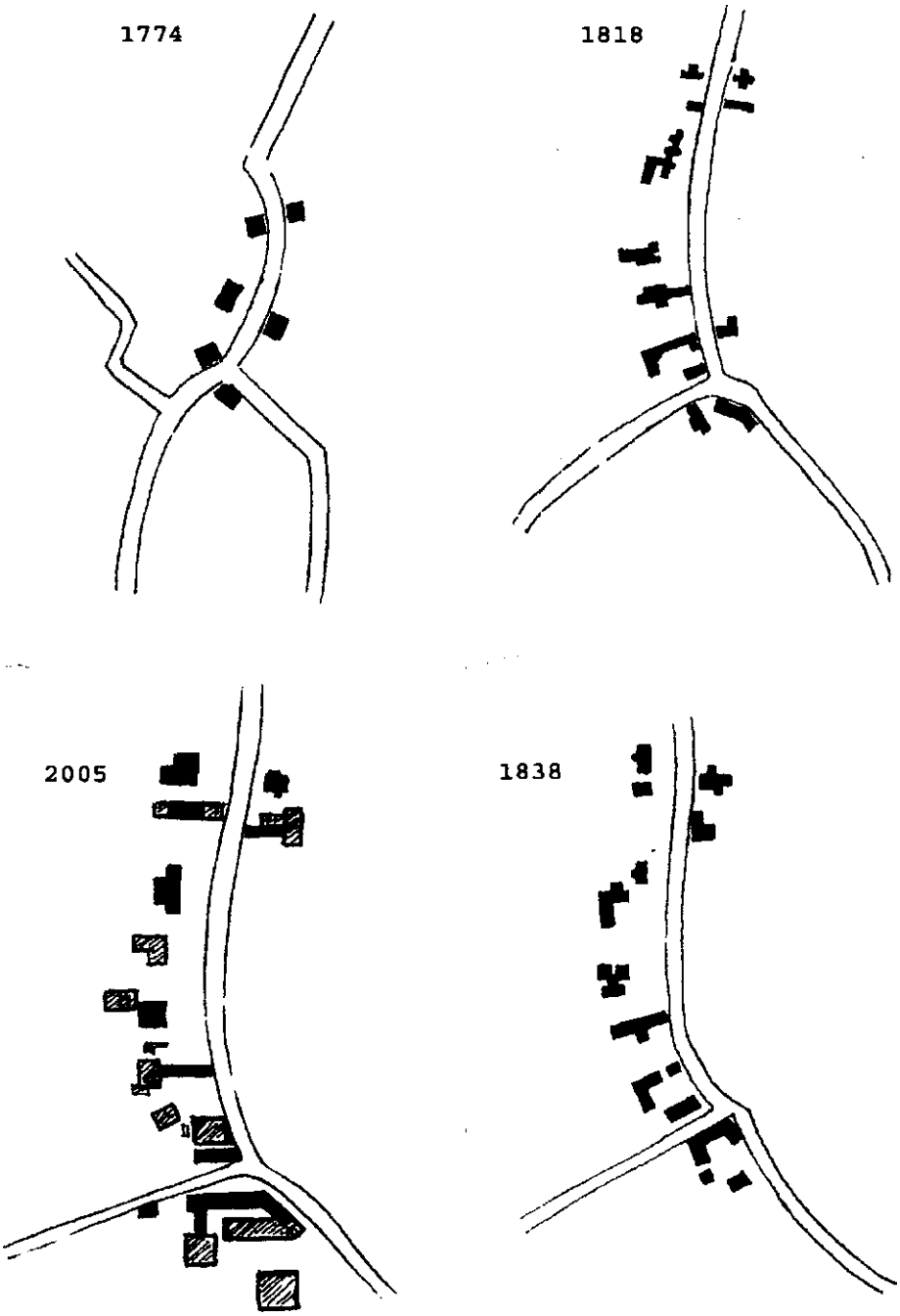


Figure 7 Chesterfield , development of hamlet showing the location of buildings as on 1774, 1818 , 1838 and 2008 maps. Ashcroft lane runs north south and Raikes lane runs to the south west.

and by 1838 there were three; today there are five. By just examining the maps it is very difficult to say whether the Yates square in the crook remained standing in the cluster of buildings standing in the crook of the roads today.

However when a site visit is made, there is some evidence that the long building stretched along the roadside was made up of two parts, presumably one part being slightly older than the other and possible being more in the position draw by Yates.

Case Study 3
Study of the changing shapes of buildings by examining their footprints on a series of maps. Example of The Bakery at the rear of the Fox and Hounds, Main Street, Shenstone.

To achieve this study available maps were compared for two dimensional development and then old photographs gave some three dimensional visual material. On the earliest map available, Yates 1774, it is not possible to positively identify the squares and give them names against known buildings today, even though the clustering pattern matches the pattern on later maps.

On Lord Berwick's Estate map of 1796 (LJRO D4363/C/9/3)the buildings in Shenstone village appear more clearly marked and a number of them can be identified by a) their position and b) their footprint shape. The Fox and Hounds can be seen on the corner of a road which fits Church Road and the lane up the hill to the church. The building has almost the shape of the 1818 and 1838 footprints as shown of those maps, being an L shape. On the 1818 map the Fox and Hounds appears with clearly marked projection. There is a projection on the front towards Main Street, which does not appear to exist today.

The 1818 map shows no buildings behind the public house until Vine Cottage, part of the way along Church Road. On the 1838 map there is a new building behind the public house, again shaped as an L. Today a stone can be seen set into the pavement in a position which would be correctly positioned for a doorstep into this new building. On the 1884 map this new building behind the public house has two new projections on the inner courtyard area. On this map the building also appears to be on a slight twist compared with the earlier map. (The 1884 map may be more accurate than the 1838 map, as there are other buildings slightly wrongly angled on the 1838 map compared to both the 1884 and the 1818 maps). The only other idea is the first building behind the pub was pulled down after only a few years and another built virtually in the same place but marginally twisted around. Photographs have been seen of the building at the rear of the pub and the twist of this building compared with the pub can clearly be seen. Another photograph shows doorways on the Church Road side and one of these doorways could quite easily fit the stone step in the pavement. From the Photographs and other notes given to us we discovered the building to be a bakery. By 1922 the two small projections on the inner courtyard side had either been demolished or just omitted from the map but another building had been constructed behind the bakery at the back of the plot comprising a number of sections and a curved end matching the curvature of Church Road. Today a brick building stands approximately at this spot. By 1967 the bakery had gone and the building at the back of the plot was a simple two sections rather like the building standing today.

The site of Little Aston Mill, Forge Lane

- an exploration by Roland Watson

The mill and the pool no longer exists, the history is long and well documented with references to the mill as a forge in the 1500s and change to a corn mill in the early 1800s, with its final demise in 1904 when a fire completed its history. This article is an account of my personal visit to the site, to illustrate how a different impression is gained by visiting a place compared to just looking at the maps and reading other peoples accounts.

Having looked at the early maps, Yates 1774 and the Tithe map of 1838 then at modem day equivalents I thought I would have a good idea of what to expect .Even at the start of the journey I found it a little unnerving travelling along the country lanes at a snail's pace trying to look for landmarks over banks and hedges, modern maps are so clinical, distances are often deceptive, and bends and curves are viewed differently from the driver's seat.

Having arrived at the sharp bend over the small bridge I realised I was at the spot so I squeezed the car into a corner of the lane, got the maps out and started to view the scene. I knew the pool wouldn't be there but it took a few turns to convince myself I was looking in the correct direction, partly because the row of cottages alongside of the lane appeared differently aligned on one of the earlier maps from the 1800s

Having mentally sketched out the site of the pool from the protective metal railing I then went to the other side of the bridge .Looking over the parapet I could see the stream gushing over the cascade .It seemed a long way down to the lower level and the surrounding ground. The pictures I had seen gave the impression the floor level of the Mill was level with the bridge , something was different. Then upon looking more closely I realised there were low walls one each side of the water course, these must have carried the old bridge across the stream at a much lower level. The bridge I was looking over was a modem one which had been moved slightly to one side and raised quite a bit higher than the old one .Having realised that, it enabled me to understand how the road across the stream appeared much straighter on the old photograph.

Having looked at the old maps I had always assumed the pool had been hollowed out of the ground .When I started walking along the road alongside of what was originally the pool I realised there was a drop on the other side to the fields below , something in the region of an eight to ten foot down. I was walking along a dike, the pool had been created by damming rather than digging. It was a considerable distance along the dike to where the pool appeared to turn around the end .It was much larger than I had anticipated.

I knew from the early accounts that osier beds had been grown in the pool, for basket making etc. As I walked along the dike and looked over to where the pool had been, I noticed tall cane like plants , presumably the leftovers growing away merrily after all of these years . Upon returning to the bridge I again looked over the parapet, the water could be heard gushing with a fair amount of power behind it, I suddenly realised how much more powerful it would have been if it was still being powered by the pool, giving me insight into the power needed 400 years ago to move the forge hammer, to mould the iron into the shapes required.

Having looked at the site and realised even with modern transport how access was not brilliant, I started to imagine what it would have been like hundreds of years ago, especially in the winter period .Horses and carts struggling in the muddy ruts with loads of iron pressing them down into the quagmire. On the day I visited, the sun was shining and it was so quiet .I thought, how would it have sounded when the forge was beating out its crashing rhythms and the bellows were snorting as they hotted up the charcoal fires. I'm glad I made the visit, it made the reading about the forge doubly interesting and gave me the sights, sounds and atmosphere of the place.

INDUSTRY

Shenstone was and still is primarily an agricultural parish but there have been some industrial enterprises.

Mills

There were several mills in the parish. Domesday records one mill yielding 66d but it is not known where this was. A mill is referred to in 1272 and two mills in 1294 but again their location is unknown. (Wrottesley 1885, 1886) Almost certainly one of the mills would have been at Shenstone village probably on the same site as the large nineteenth century mill on the Blackbrook. Those mills whose locations are known include the following sites;

Little Aston Mill.

This is shown on most maps, including Yates' map of 1774 (Figure 3) and was on Mill Lane Little Aston, on the river Bourne and with a large mill pool. The river Bourne was the boundary between Shenstone and Aldridge here so the mill was only half in Shenstone parish although it was always referred to as Little Aston Mill. It was a corn mill and mill machinery may still be inside the mill house. A lease of the mill in 1830 when it was owned by William Leigh says that the property includes three water corn mills. It was identified as a flour mill on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map.

Shenstone Mill.

This is shown on most maps , including Yates' map of 1774 (Figure 3) east of Shenstone village, close to Shenstone Hall on the Blackbrook with an exceptionally large mill pool . When the main Birmingham to Lichfield road was straightened in the 1830s the new road ran over the middle of the existing mill pool and only remnants of the pool can be seen today. This is probably the location of the mill mentioned in Domesday and again in 1272.

Lower Stonnall

The schedule to the Tithe Map (1838) at B0070 has a steam mill owned and occupied by Samuel Brawn. This is in Lower Stonnall but it is not visibly marked on the tithe map - either it's not there or it was tiny. In the 1841 Samuel was living with other family members at Lynn. Steam mills must have been unusual at this time and it was probably quite new.

There seem to have been no wind mills in the parish, perhaps not surprising as there is little elevated ground.

Forge

Little Aston Forge is shown on most maps, including Yates' map of 1774 and was on Forge Lane on the river Bourne downstream of Little Aston Mill and with a large mill pool. It was originally a forge but in the early nineteenth century was converted to a corn mill and burnt down in 1902. It was identified as a flour mill on the First edition Ordnance Survey Map. There is a lease dated 1600 from Roger Fowke, Lord of the Manor of Little Aston to Thomas Parkes of a 'forge chafferie & hammer mill nowe being verie ruinous and lately decayed'. It can be deduced, from the absence of mention of the Forge in a lease of 1574, that it was constructed after that date but clearly before 1600. By 1669 the forge was rented by Philip Foley, a member of the famous industrialist family, at which time it was producing over a hundred tons of bar iron a year with an annual profit of nearly £180. This was a substantial operation; the raw material, sow iron, came from Halesowen or Coven and most of the finished product, bar iron, was going to the West Bromwich slitting mill. (This implies good road connections to these places)

The process used large quantities of charcoal, (over three tons per ton of bar iron produced), some of which must have been produced locally by burning woodland. The Foleys were buying up land in Little Aston between 1669 and 1673, which may have been for this purpose, in which case there would have been a considerable change to the local landscape through loss of trees. This suggests that there were considerable areas of woodland in this part of the parish in the seventeenth century. There is no independent confirmation of this as the earliest map of the area (the 1769 map of William Tennant's estate) shows very few woodlands, and indeed only one, Biddle's Field Wood, close to the forge. (Remnants of this wood still survive.) Generally there is an assumption that the heathland that once dominated the area to the south and west of the parish (Druid's Heath, Little Aston Common, Sutton, Barr and Aldridge commons; see Yates' 1774 map Figure 3) was denuded of woodland by charcoal burners, hence the name Colefield, but there seems to be little actual evidence for this. When John Wood of Wednesbury rented the forge between 1740 and 1779 he used coal rather than charcoal to fuel the forge, which would have a marked effect on the local atmosphere. (The coal came from Pelsall.)

The forge went out of use after 1779 and when sold to William Tennant in 1802, he converted it into a corn mill. In the nineteenth century the mill pool was also used for osier beds and these are shown on the tithe map. This change of use must have helped greatly to lessen industrial pollution in the area. After a major fire in 1902 the pool was filled in and the buildings demolished. Almost nothing survives above ground now although in 1967 copious quantities of slag could be found on site. Much of the area is now a sewage works which prevents further exploration of the premises. Casual observation of the site at the present time gives no indication that such a large scale industrial works, more typical of South Staffordshire , was once sited here. (Martin and Gould 1967)

At the height of activity in the seventeenth century this was a major industrial

facility , which was profitable to the owners and must have provided employment to a substantial number of local people.

Brickworks

The Enclosure award map 1818 shows a brickworks in Lower Stonnall; nothing remains today except a lumpy field. No records appear to exist which relate to the operation of the works. It was probably a small operation providing brick purely for local use - many of the extensive early nineteenth century farm buildings are built entirely of brick, as are cottages in the villages. As with the forge a casual view of the site gives no indication that such a works ever existed here.

Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights

The tithe map has four blacksmith's shops. One each in Shenstone C0037, Lower Stonnall B0082, Little Aston F0015b and Woodend D0195. This map also lists three Wheelwright's shops. One each in Little Aston F0015b, Shenstone C0039a and Over Stonnall A0290. The blacksmith's shop and the wheelwrights shop were next to each other in Forge Lane Little Aston but are not on the enclosure award map so must have been built between 1818 and 1838.

Minerals

There are no worked deposits of coal or ironstone within the parish ; the nearest coalfield lies some miles to the west in Pelsall and Brownhills. In modern times large quantities of sand and gravel have been extracted from quarries in the far north west of the parish near Shire Oak and there are similar workings near Thickbroome, just outside the Shenstone parish boundary. Nineteenth century maps show a number of smaller marl sand and gravel pits scattered throughout the parish, most of which probably served local needs - they don't seem big enough to allow for much else. However Stebbing Shaw writing just before 1800 says that there was good marl in the mines on the side of Shenstone leading towards Swynfen and adjoining the Pindle fields. There is no trace there now of any marl pits in the area. He also says that there were also mines of stone and clay but no great quantities.(The 1816 map shows two fields named clay pit rough just to the east of Castle Bank.)

The Workhouse

Shenstone Workhouse was just outside Chesterfield, hidden well away from any settlement. There was an adjoining field which is labelled the Poor's Garden on the 1818 map. It was closed when Shenstone joined St Michael's Union in Lichfield in the 1830s and was subsequently demolished. There is a relatively modern house on the site and no visible trace of the workhouse. There appear to be no surviving records so we don't know what it looked like or how many of the poor could be accommodated there. ***Sic transit gloria mundii.***

Roads

Early Roads

Early roadways in the parish are shown in Figure 8 (Hooke 1983)

The Roman Road, Ryknield Street, runs through the parish from the southernmost point at Streetly neatly by passing all the settlements, and leaving the parish a few hundred yards to the east of Wall village. There are no visible remains although there are short stretches of lane which appear to follow the route of the road. These are at Ashcroft Lane, just west of Shenstone village, a short stretch of Forge Lane Little Aston and Roman Road through the modern Little Aston Estate at Streetly.

In the medieval period the Roman road must have been more visible and although not necessarily used as a roadway it was certainly used as a boundary. The Vicars Choral of Lichfield Cathedral owned substantial lands in the parish, mainly at Chesterfield but also further to the south near the Bourne Brook. The volume which describes their properties, written about 1535, frequently uses Ryknield Street (or Yknield Street) to describe the boundaries of their tenant's lands. (LJRO D/30/10/4/1) The earliest parish

map on which it might be expected to be shown , the 1818 enclosure award map, fails to show it at all. The map of the Shenstone/ Barr/Aldridge common dispute LJRO D15/13/9 shows it where it enters the parish from Sutton Park. Some modern Ordnance Survey maps show Ryknield Street running through the parish from Streetly (the boundary with Sutton Park) to a junction with Watling Street south east of Wall - mostly through fields. (However the First edition Ordnance Survey does not show it.) Yates' 1774 map shows it clearly running through the whole parish.

The other Roman Road, Watling Street, ran through the north east of the parish starting at Streetway House which is on the road, now the A5. Watling Street continues in a straight lines through the junction with Ryknield Street to Wall where for a short distance is forms the parish boundary.

The later Anglo- Saxon pathways, which ignored the Roman Roads, are shown in Figure 8. (Hooke 1983)

The Anglo Saxon pathways shown in Figure 8 essentially represent the modern main north-south routes through the parish, the Chester Road through Stonnall in the west and the Sutton Coldfield to Lichfield road in the east, plus Blake Street joining these two in the south. Both main routes were modified by turnpiking in the late eighteenth century, and later kinks in the roads at Shenstone and Stonnall were straightened.

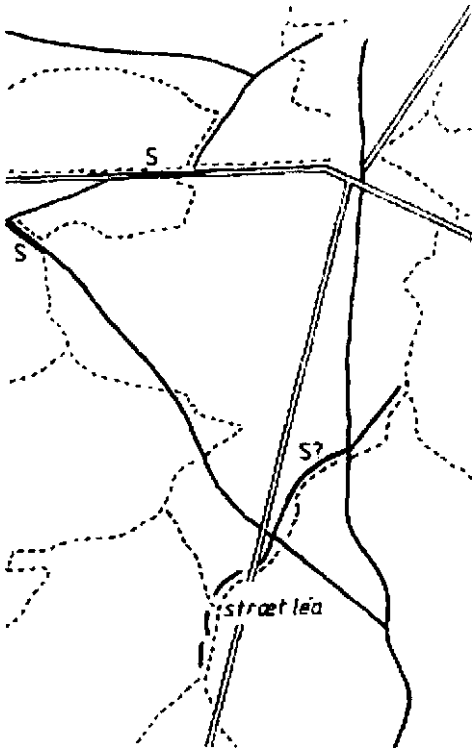


Figure 8 roadways in Shenstone, dotted line parish boundary , single line Anglo Saxon route ways , double line Roman roads. (Hooke 1983)

Yates' map shows these kinks clearly, at the Swan Inn Stonnall and where the road crosses the Black Brook just east of Shenstone village.(Figure 3) This map also shows minor roads and does not discriminate between the main through routes and the smaller lanes. It is the first large scale map of the county that shows these minor lanes clearly. Other early maps show generalized roads and routes through the parish. Only Bowen's map Of 1749 shows a clear east west route through the parish in the form of a road from Tamworth to Wolverhampton. Just where this ran remains something of a mystery.

Eighteenth Century Roads

There are several eighteenth century turnpikes running through the parish. Each was established by Act of Parliament. (Phillips & Turton) (Figure 9)

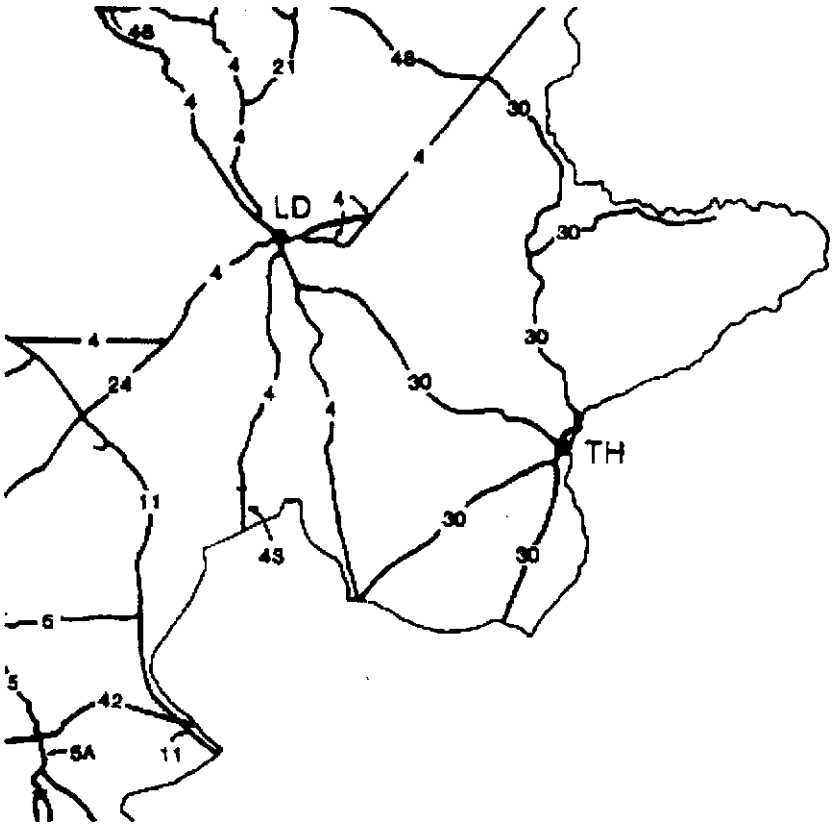


Figure 9 Turnpike Roads South East Staffordshire. LD=Lichfield TH= Tamworth. 4=1729 Turnpike , 11=1760 Turnpike , 5=1748 Turnpike , 24=1766 Turnpike and 43=1807 change to 4 (Phillips and Turton)

1729 Canwell gate to Lichfield plus four roads radiating from Lichfield including ones to Shenstone Wood End and Ogley Hay.
1748 Walsall to Sutton Coldfield, joining the Chester Road at Streetly
1760 Chester to Birmingham, through Weston under Lizard to the Welsh Harp at Stonnall and thence south to Birmingham
1766 Muckley Corner continuing the Ogley Hay road to Rushall and Walsall
1807 Birmingham to Lichfield, realignment of the 1729 turnpike at Shenstone Wood End with the new road further to the west, exiting the parish at Watford Gap

These roads formed the basis of the modern road system in the parish until the advent of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road.

Modern Roads

The main nineteenth century changes to the road system were minor changes to the turnpikes, some straightening of sharp curves and a re-routing of the Lichfield to Birmingham Turnpike between Woodend and Little Hay. There were also changes in the same turnpike north of Shenstone where it crosses Watling Street. Otherwise, until the various works around the junction of the Lichfield Birmingham Road and the A5, which included the construction of the Lichfield Eastern By - Pass and the coming of the Northern Relief Road, there were few changes.

Common Lanes

The Enclosure Award Map shows a number of lanes or tracks as common land. Some of these are marked in green on the map indicating that the land was sold as part of the enclosure of the commons. They seem all to run from areas of inhabitation to the larger areas of common land and must have been used for access to the common lands, possibly for the driving of stock to graze on the commons. In all cases the lanes then effectively disappear and have been integrated into neighbouring fields. The Tithe Map of 1838 shows none of them, and they do not appear on modern maps even as footpaths.

One of them ran from Lower Stonnall, westwards to the common land at Druid's Heath, and was called Lower Lane. It was parallel to and south of Gravelly Lane. It was about a mile long.

Another ran from the toll gate on the Birmingham to Lichfield turnpike at Woodend southwards, and parallel to the turnpike, to Woodend Common. It was purchased by Sir Robert Peel, owner of the lands on either side of the lane. The lane was incorporated into the fields to the east of the lane, with the west boundary of the lane becoming the west boundary of the fields; however the boundary of the Little Hay township continued to be where it was, on the eastern boundary of the lane. Thus the Little Hay boundary is shown on the tithe map as being a few yards from the field boundary. This lane was about a mile long.

A third ran from Little Aston Green southwards to Little Aston Common; this was allocated to William Tennant and was incorporated into his Park - it ran quite close to the pleasure grounds. Others were quite short - a hundred yards or so - but provided access to a common from a road that did not go directly to the common.

Maps of Little Aston Common, made during the great dispute over boundaries between the commoners of Barr, Little Aston and Sutton Coldfield, show a veritable maze of roads. It is difficult to determine which of these were through routes and which were just cart tracks but almost all of them disappeared upon enclosure of the commons, when the area became the private parkland of William Tennant.

Some roads just fell into disuse; the old turnpike from Shenstone Mill to

A Mystery Road

On Bowen's map of Staffordshire, dated 1749 the road from Tamworth to Wolverhampton can be clearly seen cutting across the parish of Shenstone in an East to West direction. The road leaves Tamworth at Coton, then passes Hopwas, travelling North of Weeford where it meets the old Lichfield to London Road.

LICHFIELD
Wigginton
Tamworth
Weford or Weford
Packington
Hopwas
Coton
Pelshall
Walsall
Aldrich
Rushall
Sutton Park
Sutton
Barr magna
Middleton
Drayton Basset
Wincot
Cannall
Hints
Fazeley
Whittington
Fisherwick
Elford
Constantine
Amington
Tame
Anker
Bitterne
Glascot
Doschill
Tame Valley Canal
Stonnall
Shenstone
Chesterfield
Wall Pedershall
Frankwell
Edgeall
Pipe Hill
Hamnorn
Shelfield
Goscote
Walsall wood
Hill Green
Hill Hook
Aston
Balsocks Park
Harding
Hunderfield
Hall Wood end
Pelsall
Stowe
Mattleyford
Tam horne
Berne
Berne Hill
Bonehill
Cannal
Drayton
Bassetts Pole
Hunderfield
Hunderfield
Hunderfield

Lichfield ran by the Leopard Public House, but was little used after the turnpike was straightened. It is now impassable and does not have the status even of a footpath. Others clearly shown on the enclosure and tithe maps have also gone - Twenty Acre Lane for example is now just a track at the side of a field.

Carriage Roads

From time to time carriage roads appear on the various country house estate maps and these were private roads to access the house. They come and go as owners changed and few of them survive today.

AGRICULTURE

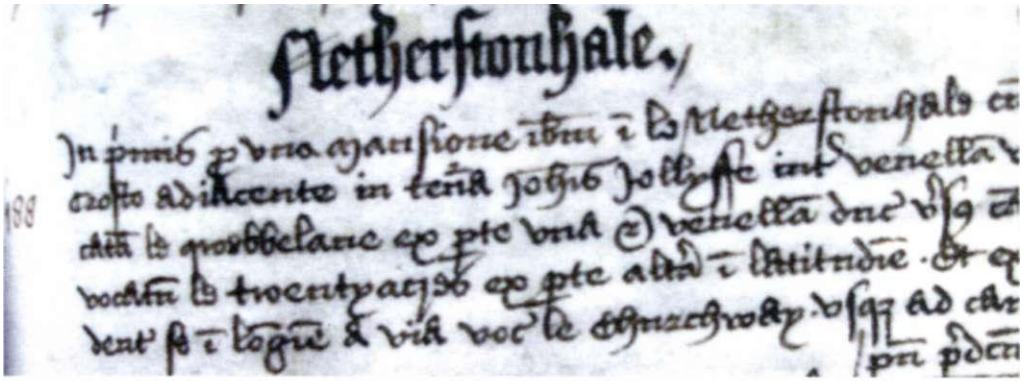
The Manor Land

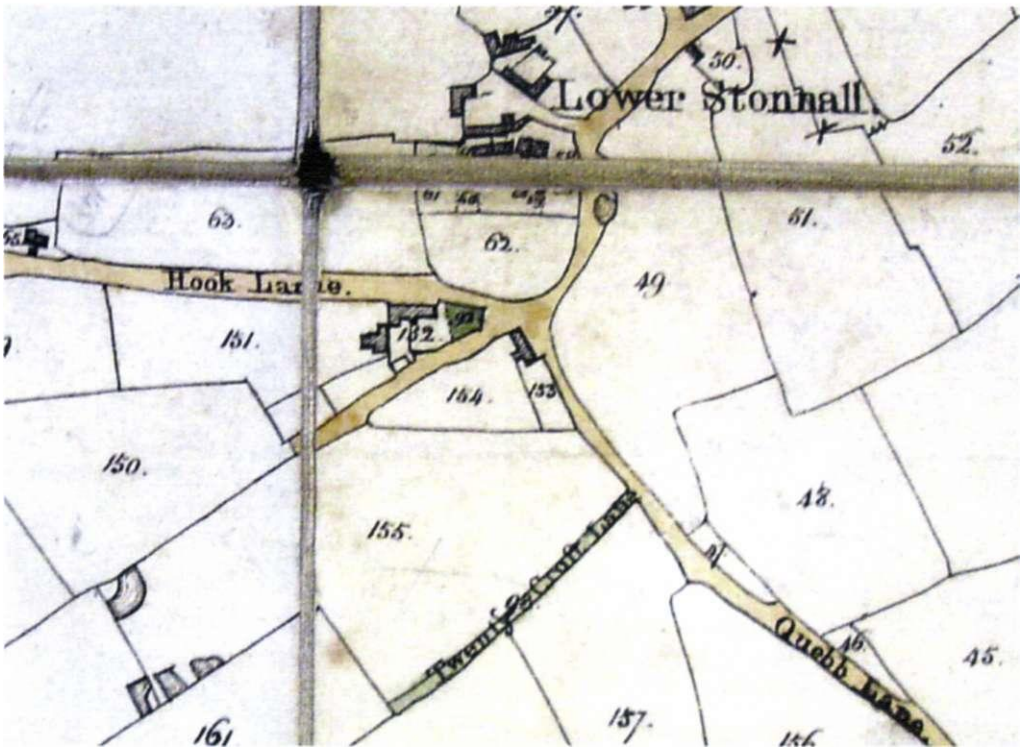
At the time of Domesday, the manorial survey of Shenstone included around 4,536 acres of woodland. An obvious consequence of population growth from around 120 people to about 500 between 1086 and 1332 was the promotion of assarting, cutting into woodland and heath, bringing new areas into cultivation and settlement. This process is readily detected, particularly as Shenstone lay within the Forest of Cannock, and partially within Sutton Chase. In 1235 it was reported that Robert of Grendon was felling oaks so that he might build a stable and enclose his park, having been licensed by the earl of Warwick to empark his wood of Shenstone, as it lay within the bounds of Sutton Chase (Hodder 1988-9 ; Birrell 1999). By 1271 there are numerous references to assarting, both old and new. For example, Robert of Grendon had himself newly assarted four acres in Stonnall and sown it with oats, while Robert of Gresbrok had newly assarted two acres in Stonnall, sowing it once with rye and once with oats. William the reeve of Lynn took half an acre, which was sown with oats. Among the old assarts men such as Elias of Lynn had one and a half acres, in Lynn, sown twice with winter corn and four times with oats, and William at the elm of Stonnall, whose half an acres assart had been sown three times with winter corn, and three times with oats . Similarly, in 1286, several more references occur. Amongst these mention is made of William Athelyn in Little Stonnall for four acres in Shenstone, sown twice with winter corn and three times with spring corn. Walter the forester had two acres, of which one lay fallow while the other had been sown once with winter corn and three times with spring corn. Robert Burnel, bishop of Bath, as custodian, also appears holding Robert of Grendon's four acres, sown twice with winter corn and three times with spring corn. Geoffrey of Thornes appears, alongside others, including the abbot of Oseney, who had enclosed their assarts with ditches and dead hedges . The names recorded on the subsidy lists similarly reflect both assarting (e.g. Ralph atte rudinge) but still more so a population dispersed across a varied manorial landscape, having moved into all types of land. Thus, we find such as William Otheheth (and William del Heeth), John del Hethe, William ad boscum (also William Attewode) and Richard del Haselwode. From those mentioned in the Forest Pleas we may add Geoffrey on the hill and Robert de Rudyng and from the Plea Rolls, names such as Henry, son of Richard de Gorsthull (1278/9),

Ecclesiastical Records

There are a wealth of records from the Diocese of Lichfield which refer to Shenstone

The Vicars Choral of Lichfield Cathedral owned several parcels of land in Shenstone parish , much of it in Chesterfield but also in other parts of the parish . An account was written about 1530 listing in book form the properties of the Vicars Choral including this one in 'Netherstonhale'. The book is written in Latin with many abbreviations but states that this croft was in the tenancy of **Johnannes Jollyffe** and was between a lane (venella) called **quebblane** and another lane called **twentyacres** . This allows us to determine exactly where the property was, as both quebb lane and twenty acres are identified on later maps , such as the Enclosure award map of 1818 (Twentyacres later became twenty crofts .)





John Jelyff 'of Thornes' died in 1546 , and a grant of probate was made to his son in law Edward Frythe for the administration of his estate . Later there was a lawsuit concerning the will in the Consistory Court of the Diocese and Edward Frythe was ordered to distribute a casket of money between John's five daughters , which he had neglected to do. (LJRO D 30/10/4/1)

Geoffrey de Gorsthill (1299/1300) and William atte Rudyng (1335) (Wrottesley 1885, Wrottesley 1886, Wrottesley 1890). All of these names are found alongside others referring to hamlets across the manor, such as Thornes, Stonnall and Chesterfield, which reinforce the impression of settlement extending across the Grendon fee.

The records of the Vicars Choral of Lichfield Cathedral include many gifts of land in the parish of Shenstone to them, for their support, and these provide evidence of the mixed nature of farming in the parish in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Typical is the following deed;

1468 John Teddesley of Chesterfield to Mag Thomas Heywood Dean of Lichfield and Lord William Hukyns chaplain of his messuage in Chesterfield which lies between the messuage of Henry Bylynton and the tenement inhabited by Thomas Coke, 6a arable in Chesterfield field, 17a in Sladefield, 8a in Horseley, 10 butts in Lyndefield called Cronkeley, a parcel of enclosed meadow called Cartlagh, a parcel of enclosed meadow called Brodedole, a parcel of enclosed meadows called Bengore, 3 parcels of meadow in Londesendes, a pasture called Holynhurst, a pasture called Edruddyng, a pasture called Barnewode, and a parcel of land and meadow called Shutfield.

The deed includes the names of the four common fields of Chesterfield ; Chesterfield, Sladefield, Horseley and Lyndefield and also the names of several enclosed meadows and pastures. Numerous other deeds survive mostly concerning properties in the Chesterfield area.

Agriculture in the Sixteenth Century

The wills preserved in the Lichfield Consistory Court records, in abundance from around 1525 onwards are almost always accompanied by an inventory of the moveable goods of the deceased. These inventories offer not only an insight into the goods owned by individuals but also give a picture of the holdings of livestock and the crops grown in the fields. What follows are extracts from a random selection of wills from the 1500s.

Thomas Ruggeley of Shenstone was a wealthy man when he died in 1550. He owned 8 oxen, 14 kine & a bull, 30 steers and heifers plus several weaning calves, a sow and 5 pigs and 13 score sheep as well as cocks hens and capons. Oddly there is no mention of a horse. In the store were ale, malt and 6 cheeses. He had 39 stone of wool, two spinning wheels and 3 pairs of cards (for the wool). He was able to leave a heifer to several individuals. (He is mentioned in the 1532/3/ religious census - see Population.)

John Richards of Aston yeoman was also a wealthy man with goods valued at £150 when he died in 1572. He owed John Potter and his wife for ploughing and other reckonings £8. He was also owed about £80 including £30 for corn and money lent to poor men and women. He owned a lot of timber - 20 score boards and other sawyer's timber worth in all nearly £8.His beehives were valued at 13s 4d and in his store were 14 barrels of honey worth £42 , as well as barley and barley malt, and wool worth £3 10s. He owned five kine two young heifers and a weaning calf, 3 colts and a nagg, 5 swyne & five score sheep . Hay and corn in the barn and corn in the field

were worth £9.

William Southworth of Chesterfield died in 1549. He was less prosperous than either Thomas Ruggeley or John Richards. At his death he owned 2 bullocks, 7 kine and a heifer and two yearling calves. Also two mares, 3 colts, 17 sheep, 7 swine, geese and hens. He also had quantities of corn, hay, flax rye and oats. John Roo or Royle died in 1558 - he was worth £19 and owned 4 oxen, 4 kine, 1 heifer, 4 weaning calves, 4 yearling calves, 34 old sheep 12 lambs, a mare and a colt and a pig. Humphrey Rydding was worth £25 at his death in 1550/1. He owned 6 bullocks, 4 kine and 26 sheep. He also had 5 barrels of honey , corn and hay in the barn and 3 acres of rye in the field. Roger Howntt of Over Stonnall died in 1544; he owned 3 oxen, 15 cattle of various kinds, 40 sheep, 6 swine, a horse and a mare, 12 geese & 4 hens , with corn and hay in the barn; he seems to be the average Shenstone farmer. (Figure 10)

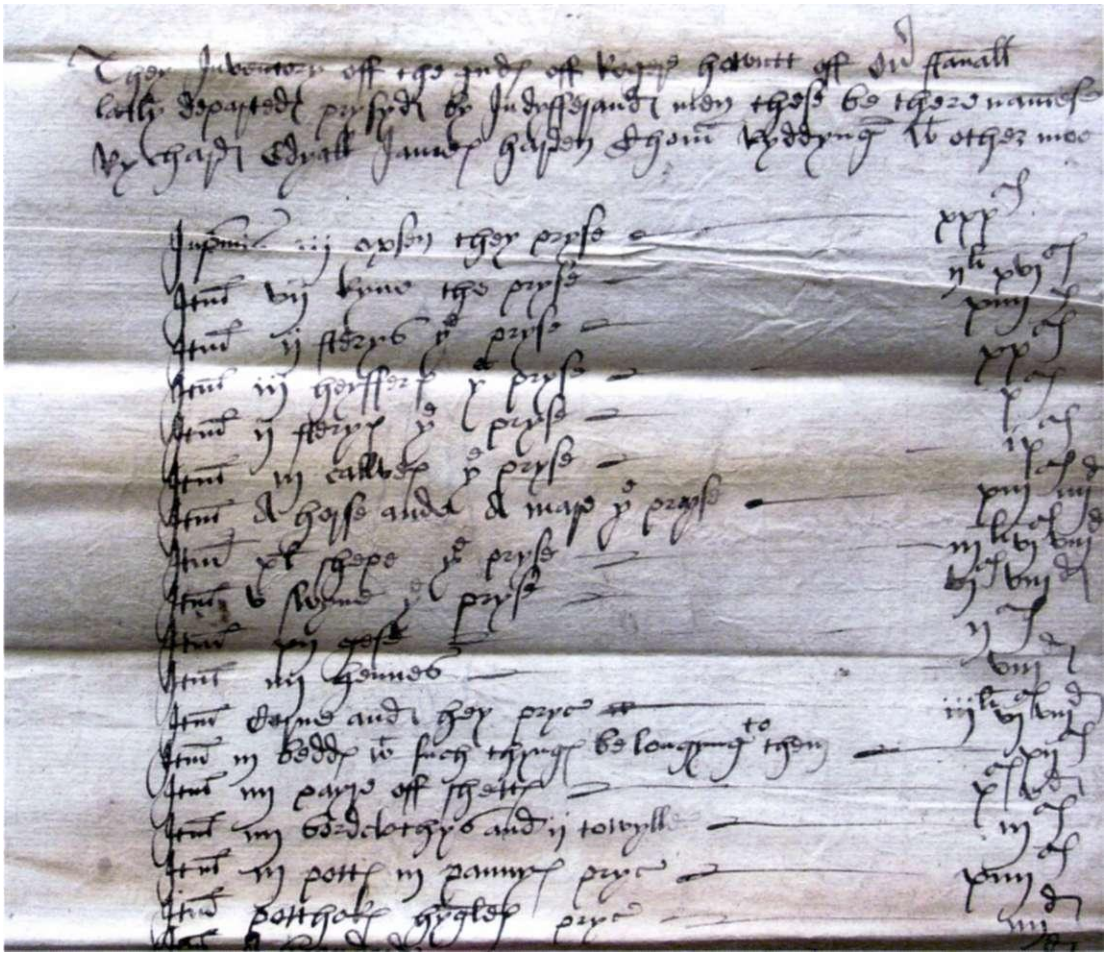


Figure 10 Will of Roger Howntt 1544 , Lichfield Record Office

John Greysbroke of Footherley died in 1541 and was quite poor; he had 2 oxen, a mare, a steer, geese and hens, corn and hay, a sow and four pigs. Thomas Hynce of Little Aston died in 1556 - he was similarly poor but had two kine and a heifer with two calves. Also a mare and a colt with an old nagg and 22 sheep; total value £6 12s. At the very poor level, when John Ryle died

in 1565 his goods were worth just over £4. The most valuable items were pots and pewter dishes although even he owned a few sheep.

There are many other sixteenth century wills from Shenstone , mostly of small farmers. The better off owned oxen, cattle and a small flock (perhaps 30 or 40) of sheep, usually a horse, with various calves lambs and colts. Relatively few owned pigs. Hens and geese are rarely mentioned. The poorer residents had much the same but in smaller numbers but even some quite poor individuals owned oxen. Corn, rye and hay are the crops most often mentioned. Domestic goods show a limited range (although several owned silver spoons) as do implements of husbandry. The few women who left wills at this time had inventories indistinguishable from those of the men of the parish. Clearly this is farming with a mixture of arable crops with cattle and sheep - the latter in considerable numbers - in the pastures, and pigs, geese and hens in the yard.

The Common Fields

Farming in Shenstone prior to the Enclosure Movement has been reviewed by Hebden and much of this brief summary is taken from his paper. However Hebden concentrates on arable farming in the common field system in the various hamlets in the parish. He appears to underestimate the extent to which cattle and in particular sheep were farmed in the manor. Early deeds continually refer to pastures and meadows and sixteenth century will inventories include large numbers of sheep as well as smaller numbers of cattle and occasionally pigs. There are early references to moors and later ones to furze and heathland as well as to marshes.

As well as the permanent common fields there seems to have been a system in place whereby enclosures were made in the waste to be cultivated for a few years and then thrown open again. (Saunders 1794). These enclosures were divided into strips as shown by the seventeenth century court rolls and so the Manor Court would decide the crops within these enclosures. (Figure 11) In Shenstone village farming would appear to be based on two open fields with a number of enclosures beyond them. The two main fields were Church Field and Park Field both of about 50 acres. Park Field was formed out of that part of the medieval deer park closest to the village. Crops grown, as identified by the court rolls were wheat barley and rye and there are references to wheat beer in the court rolls. Most crops were winter sown. Flax and hemp were made for retting and making into cloth (the court rolls include fines for retting in the open streams). Beyond the arable area was the true waste used for free grazing of animals the villagers possessed.

The other main hamlets in the parish, Little Aston, Footherly and Chesterfield had their own open field systems and Lower Stonnall seems to have been the centre of a number of open fields serving the settlements at Thornes, Over Stonnall, Nether Stonnall and Lynn, with it not being possible to determine which field belonged to which settlement as people seems to have owned land in all of them.

The operation of the open fields in the parish has been described in detail , discussing the names , locations and uses of the fields. As can be seen from Figure 11 the common fields occupied but a small part of the land within the parish , and that predominantly the sandstone outcrops. (Hebden 1961/62).

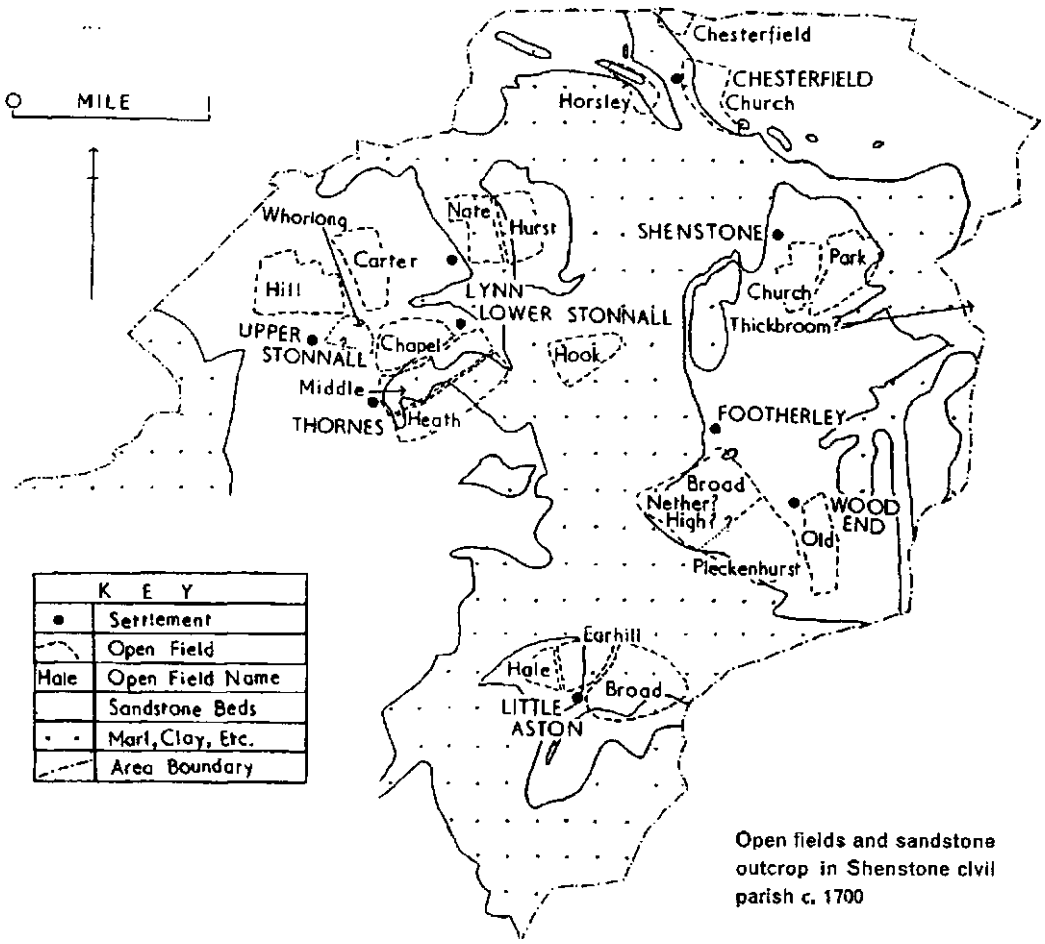


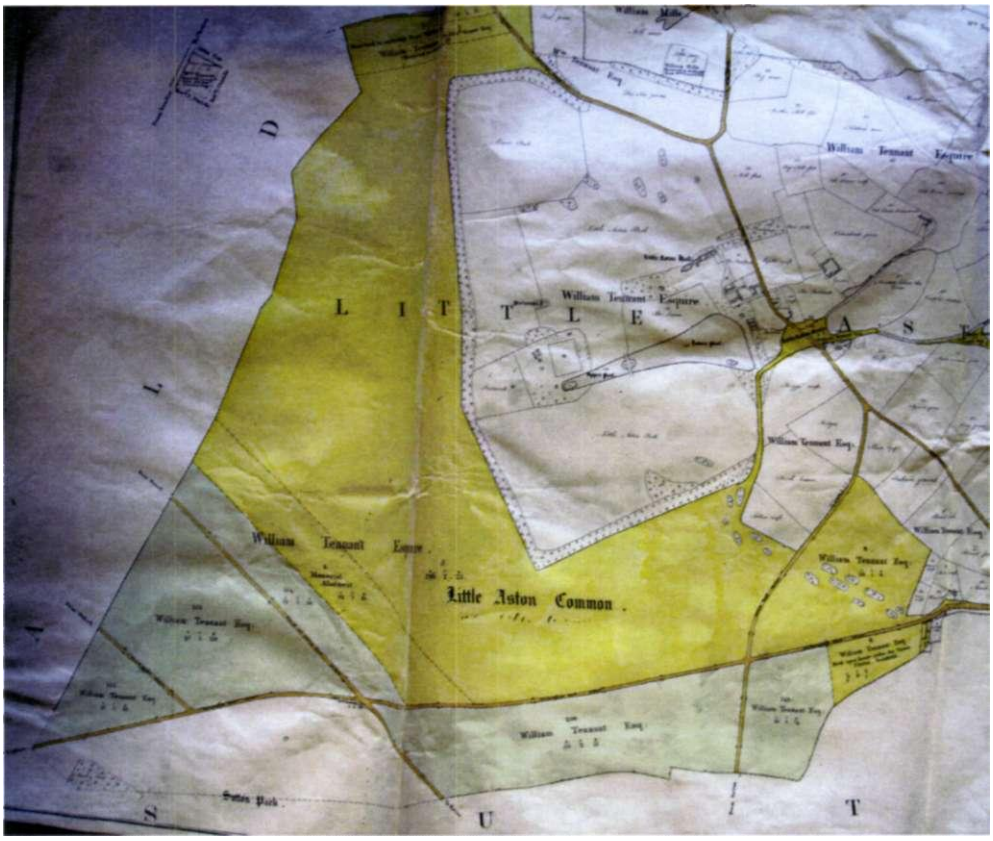
Figure 11 Shenstone Settlements and Common Fields (Hebden)

In addition to these open fields there were substantial areas of pasture , meadow and moorland. A survey of the manor in 1608 lists the holdings of all the tenants of the manor in detail. As well as their holdings in the common fields many tenants held cottages with gardens and orchards, and closes of pasture and meadow. A few held parcels of woodland. Some of the individual holdings were very large. At an inquisition post-mortem for Ralph Ridgeley and his wife Ellen held at Uttoxeter in 1582 the property mentioned included a water mill, 100 acres of land (probably in the common fields) 80 acres of Meadow, 200 acres of pasture and 20 acres of heath. By any standards this is a substantial holding .

Estate maps of the mid to late eighteenth century show no common fields remaining , all have been enclosed to form discrete fields. What is not enclosed, a minority of the land, is waste and heath. By the mid eighteenth

The 1818 Enclosure Act

Little Aston Common



This map is part of the large enclosure award map associated with the 1818 Parliamentary Enclosure Act which extinguished the remaining Common Lands in Shenstone Parish. It shows the extreme south of the parish which formed Little Aston Common , adjoining Sutton Park. The two large areas were those of the common which were assigned to William Tennant, then owner of the Little Aston estate and were used by him to develop an outer parkland ; thus common lands became the private parks of one individual - the acquisition more than doubled the parkland around the mansion at Little Aston. (In the previous century the area had been disputed between the commoners of Barre , Shenstone and Sutton; the arbitration drew a boundary in the middle of the competing claims.)

There is a small area to the north of the mansion (north is to the right) which was Little Aston Green ; this too became the property of William Tennant. If it had remained Common Land the hamlet of Little Aston would now be a delightful village around the village green rather than the now rather indistinctive group of houses along the main road.

First used as parkland the area was later enclosed to form farmland and in the twentieth century further developed to form a golf course and for housing. (SRO Q/Rdc/76)

century there were few large woodlands. The later enclosure and tithe maps show only the occasional fields that might originally have been a strip.

Stebbing Shaw writing just before 1800 says that there were plentiful crops of oats and barley with some wheat, plus some vetches and peas. He adds that in recent years there was cultivation of turnips used to fatten sheep. He also notes the large quantities of lime needed on Shenstone fields and the bringing of dung from Lichfield and Walsall as fertiliser.

Formal Enclosure

Sanders says;

> **Radley Moor is a small hamlet with few houses but containing within it the moor estimated at 340 acres, but both fall under Footherley which they adjoin as they do upon the Aston Road to Wood End. In 1662 John Adams of Footherley and others who had a right of Common in the waste of ground called Radley Moor, entered into an agreement (upon some previously made between them and the Lord of the Manor), to exhibit a bill in the High Court of Chancery to oblige Edward Fryth, Lord of the Manor of Shenstone, to consent to the enclosing of the moor. To this the Court of Chancery assented and a Commission thereon issued, setting out each person a share. Commissioners were deputed for this purpose and conveyances ordered to be drawn. (Sanders 1792)**

Radley Moor was finally enclosed about 1682 - one share out of 18 was allocated to the poor, the remainder to various commoners some of whom promptly sold their allocation for substantial sums of money. This is the first formal legally defined enclosure of lands in the parish that we know about. The parliamentary enclosure of the remaining wastes was in 1818. By this time the common fields had long gone - Sanders writing some forty years earlier had noted that the system was in decline.

What remained were the last common lands in the parish. There were several quite large areas which were enclosed and divided out between the various commoners; advantage being taken of the enclosure by the larger landowners to exchange lands to consolidate holdings. These enclosures which were complete within 20 years would have had a major impact on the landscape. Originally the commons were mostly waste and the nearest area for comparison is the north part of Sutton Park and indeed this merged into Little Aston Common at Streetly. The landscape here is of flat scrub and grassland on a sandy soil grazed intermittently by cattle. After enclosure the commons became formal rectangular fields, fully farmed either arable or pasture.

Some of the commons in Shenstone were small parts of larger commons - Druids Heath in Shenstone was an extension of the much larger common of Aldridge of the same name and Over Stonnall Common in the north-west of the parish bordered on the extensive Ogley Hay waste. The large commons which were spread around the edges of the parish included Little Aston Common, Druids Heath, Over Stonnall Common, Woodend Common (Figure 12) and Broad Heath (in the east of the parish near to Thickbroome).

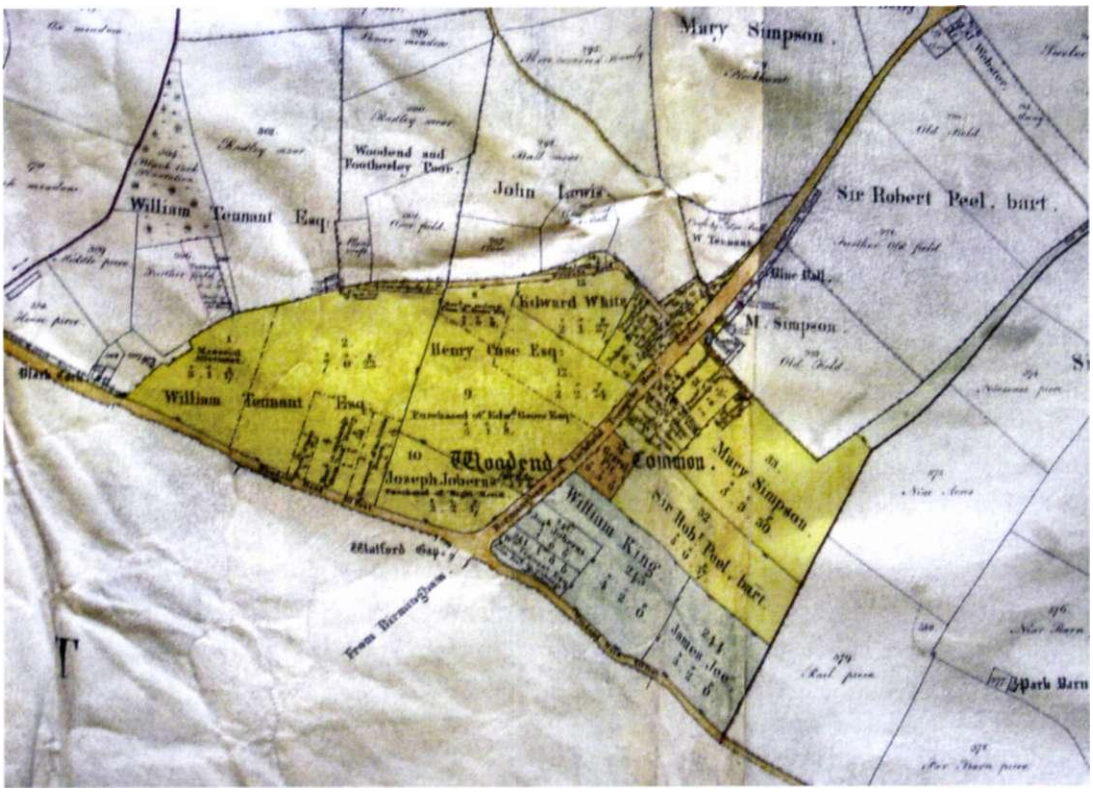


Figure 12 Enclosure of Woodend Common ; the parts shown in yellow are the parts of the common assigned to landowners , the parts in green are the parts of the common which were sold.

Figure 13 Enclosure of Little Hay Green ; the parts shown in yellow are the parts of the common assigned to landowners , the parts in green are the parts of the common which were sold. SRO Q/Rdc/76

Note, near Woodend Common, the green lane to the east (right) which was the old turnpike road, running through the properties of Sir Robert Peel; he bought it.

The land to the south of the apparent T junction at Watford Gap is part of Sutton Coldfield. The road to the left is Blake Street, with the public house the 'Black Cock', now no more, shown. The other public house here the 'Blue Ball' is at the north end of the common. The land that was once Woodend Common can be viewed today from the junction of Birmingham Road and Blake Street at Woodend; it looks like prime arable land and there is no sign that it was ever a waste. As well as the large commons, which were mostly heath and used for livestock grazing, the enclosure mopped up the few remaining village greens - these included Little Aston Green , Little Hay Green (Figure 13) and Chesterfield Lea, thus changing the character of these settlements by removing a central focus. (Oddly there is no evidence of a village green in Shenstone itself.) Also enclosed was an area of common bank below Castle Bank .In addition to these open spaces a number of green lanes were enclosed - see Roads. The commissioners were industrious in identifying common or waste land and included many strips of waste along existing roads, Lynn Lane in particular. The main beneficiary in this was William Tennant, lord of the manors of Shenstone and Little Aston.

Twentyacre Lane Nether Stonnall

Ivy Cottage Lower Stonnall

Case Study : Field Boundaries in Castle Bank and Shire Oak.

In the north-west of the parish of Shenstone the land rises from the Old Chester Turnpike about 120 feet to a low elongated hill which forms Castlebank fort in the south and Shire Oak Hill in the north. These are the highest points in the parish.

Changes in the landscape can be seen on two maps;

The 1759 map of the estate of William Tennant in the manor of Shenstone LJRO D4363/C/9/1 (Figure 14)

The 1846 map prepared for the sale of the lands of William Leigh in Stonnall LJRO D15/13/17 (The field boundaries are the same as the tithe map of 1838 but at more clearly marked.) (Figure 15)

The 1759 map of the area shows Castlebank clearly , as an oval enclosure , with enclosed fields to the north as far as the Lichfield to Walsall road .Amongst the fields to the north Shire Oak Farmhouse is shown but not named. In all 16 small fields are identified around Shire Oak Farm, labelled E to U on the 1759 map (U is separated from the others being on the Stonnall to Aldridge Lane) and another 8 the adjacent area labelled in Roman Numerals, including Castle Bank (Castle Hill) as I , and with two unnumbered enclosures (possibly not part of the Tennant estate). In all 24 enclosed fields are shown , only one of which - the Dingle number II - a small strip to the immediate west of Castle Bank - is wooded. The average size of the fields around Castle Bank was about three acres, the smallest being an acre and a half.

On the 1846 map the same area is shown and many of the field boundaries can be identified in the same places -although there seem to be some additional strips of land - numbers 136 and 138 shaded pink - to the west adjoining Walsall Wood Common (encroachments ?), and there is some uncertainty as to what has happened in a small area of the woodland to the north of Castlebank. However whilst the outline of many fields are the same , there are fewer of them , and a number of boundary hedges have been removed. There has not been a wholesale change in the field pattern as the majority of field boundaries can clearly be seen to be in the same position on the 1846 map as they were on the 1759 map . What has happened is that some hedges have been removed to make fields larger, although one field G has been divided into two. The area in 1846 has 16 separate enclosures as opposed to 24 in 1759. A new area of woodland have been planted to extend considerably to the west the narrow band of woodland shown next to Castlebank in the 1759 map . These are typical of the minor changes in field sizes which were made throughout the parish in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries leading to a more uniform field size, which remained constant for nearly two centuries until the advent of modern farming practices began again the process of increasing field sizes by removing hedge boundaries. On modern maps the area is shown with a housing estate on the westward

parts adjoining Walsall Wood with much ribbon housing development on the roads. Shire Oak Hill was extensively quarried in the 20C and has since become a nature reserve. Castlebank appears to be in private hands; the extensive ramparts can be seen from Castle Hill Lane.

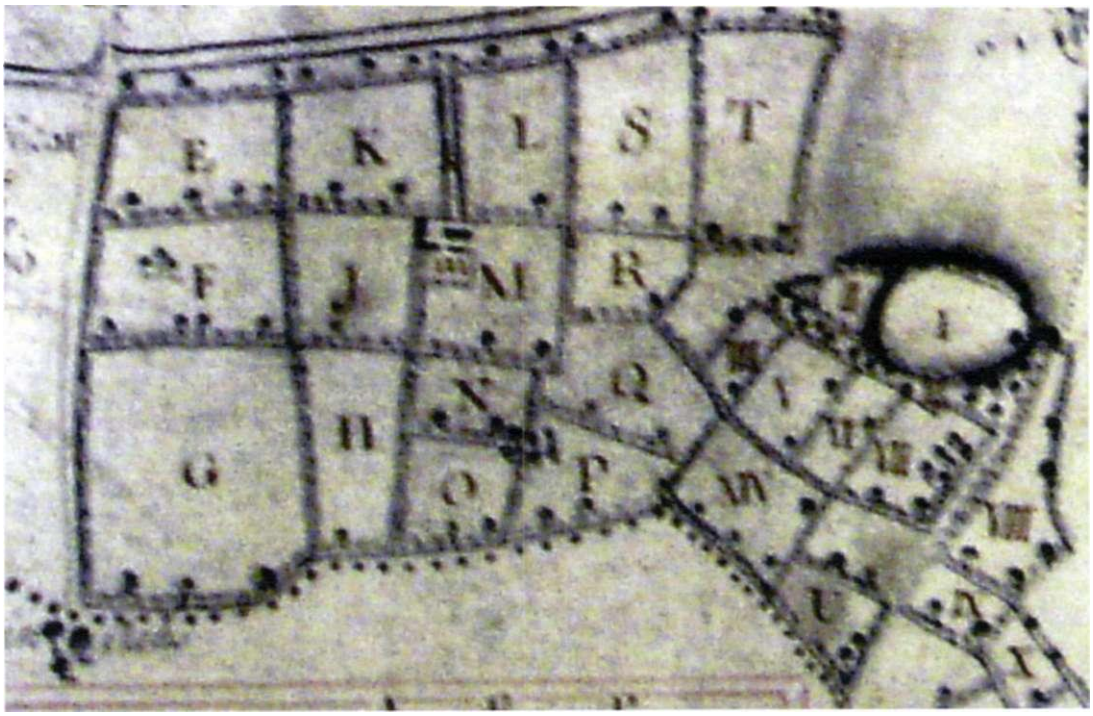


Figure 14 Castlebank and Shire Oak , field boundaries in 1759 . North to the left
The round field numbered I top right is Castlebank. Shire Oak crossroads top left.
Lichfield Joint Record Office D4363/C/9/1

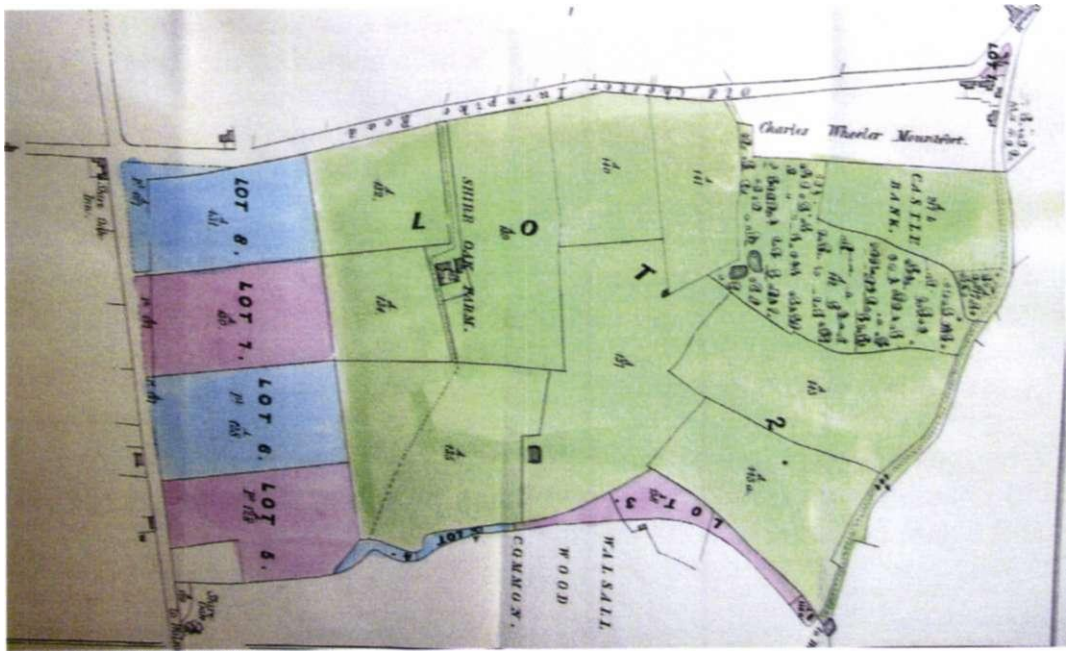


Figure 15 Castle Bank and Shire Oak , field boundaries in 1846 .North is to the left.
Lichfield Joint Record Office D15/13/17

Case Study - Hilton Farm

This farm close to the northern border of the parish at Muckley Corner formed a discrete entity in William Tennant's estate and it is shown on the 1759 map of his estate as an isolated group of 20 fields. The land is flat and the Cranebrook runs through the farm forming part of the southern boundary. In 1759 the farm was of 59 acres, averaging about 3 acres per field. (Figure 16)

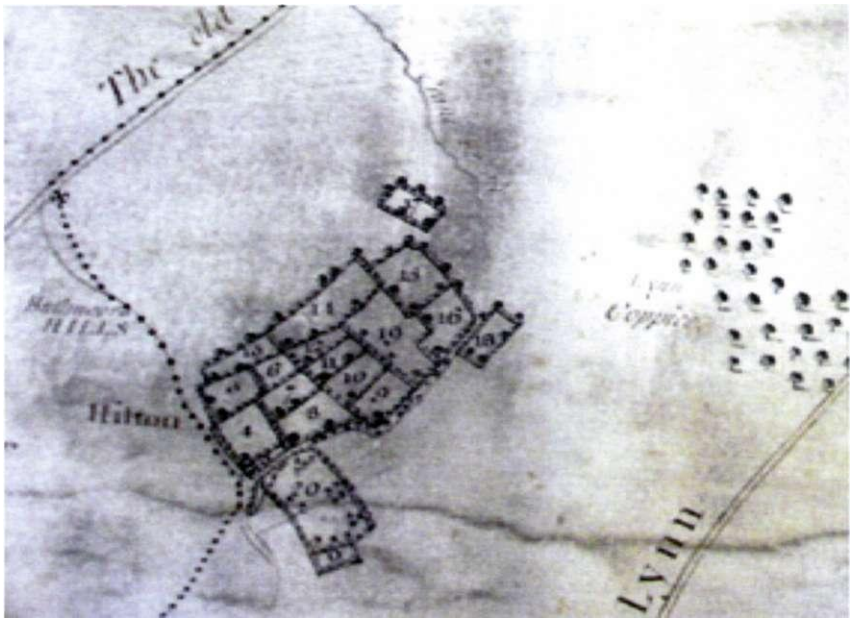


Figure 16 Hilton Farm, field boundaries in 1759. Lichfield Joint Record Office D4363/C/9/1

In 1816 under the provisions of the Shenstone Enclosure act William Tennant exchanged Hilton Farm for the Little Bosses Estate owned by the Vicar of Rugeley. One reason given for recommending the exchange to the Vicar of Rugeley was that this land was more capable of improvement than the Little Bosses land. It's not clear what use the land was put to in 1759 although fields 3,5,7&8 are described as meadows.

On the tithe map of 1838 the boundary of the farm and the field pattern can be recognised; there has been little change. The Vicar of Rugeley was still the owner in 1838 with James Sidgwick as tenant and the boundaries of the holding are shown in blue. (Figure 17)

Some hedges have been removed to enlarge the smallest fields, one large field (10) has been divided into two and boundaries have been straightened giving 19 fields, only one less than eighty years before.

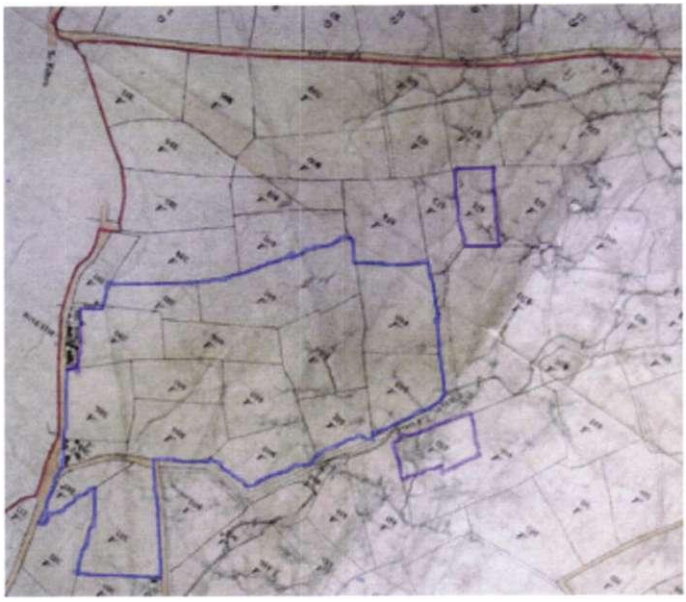


Figure 17 Hilton Farm, field boundaries in 1838. Lichfield Joint Record Office B/A/15

The tithe award map for the first time gives the names of all of the fields in Hilton Farm although some of them are given in the 1759 map. The list below also includes the description of the use of the field and the area, in acres, roods and perches as in the tithe award schedule. (At this time there was no convention for drawing maps with north to the top and the two maps of Hilton Farm have the top of the map in different orientations but they are both shown here with the top approximately to the north for ease of comparison which means that the field numbers appear upside down in Figure 17.)

A380 and A382 are Cranebrook Field and Crane Brook Piece; fields near to the Cranebrook and both arable, areas 1-1-33 and 5-2-32.
A383 is Barn Croft; land close to or containing a barn. Arable , area 3-3-27.
A389 is Hemp Butt; land on which hemp was grown. Hemp was often grown to supply the textile needs of the family although production did decline altogether by the mid nineteenth century. This was probably an old name that persisted from earlier times. Arable, area 0-0-16.
A390 is Clover Piece; land on which clover was grown. Clover was an essential element of the agrarian industry. Arable, area 3-1-5.
A393 and A403 are Over and Long Madge Moor in 1759 Mudge Moor); Madge could be derived from 'Madgore' - meadow land. With the declared use of the land it can be assumed the land was improved waste. Both Meadow. Areas 2-0-0 and 6-0-21.
A404 is Broken Gate Moor; a Moor is barren waste land, probably named after a broken gate. In 1838 arable so an improved waste. Area 3-2-35.
A405 and A406 are Little and Big Meadow. Both Arable, areas 2-2-5 and 3-3-35.
A409 is Oak Tree Meadow; the 1759 map implies trees on the field boundaries so these could give rise to such a name. Arable, area 3-0-29.
A410 is Still Moor and Little Worth; two names for one field would suggest

that originally it was two fields the dividing boundary having been removed at some time. Arable, area 3-2-26.
A411 and A412 are Big Moor and part of Big Moor. Big Moor was one of the largest fields at over five acres and may originally have been bigger before a boundary was placed across it to split of 2 acres to form A412. Again waste land improved to be arable. Areas 5-0-3 and 2-2-10.
A467 Little Moor; detached from the main part and south of the Cranbrook. although described as little it is over 2 acres in extent. Pasture, area 2-2-0.
A468 and A469 Little Sylvester's Moor and Big Sylvester's Moo. Silvester could refer to a previous owner from earlier times and which has been carried on by tradition or it could also relate to the species of wild flowers that grew during the year. (Also referred to as Sylvester's Moor in 1759.).Again waste improved for use as arable land. Areas 3-3-12 and 4-3-14.
A472 Far Moor; land farther away from the main area of land and in this case the field was detached from the main acreage. Pasture, area 2-0-38.
A383A Hilton Piece; a small arable plot next to the House and outbuildings, A384. Area 1-2-6.

Later maps c.a. 1880 show the number of fields has been reduced to 14 increasing the field size to a little over 4 acres on average.

Figure 18 Modern satellite map of Hilton Farm.(Google.co.uk)

However modern satellite imaging of the area shows a much more substantial change in that the main part of the farm comprising 13 fields originally has now been amalgamated to form one large field convenient for modern farming practices for the growing of crops, mostly root vegetables in this area. As can be seen, except for the one detached field, the outlines of the field boundaries defining the extent of the farm shown in the 1759 map remain.

COUNTRY ESTATES

Shenstone Park, Shenstone Old Hall, The Moss, Little Aston Hall

The 1841 tithe map apportionment gives the acreage for the four main country houses in the parish: Little Aston Hall, 770 (the larger estate was 2,590); The Moss (later Shenstone Court), 437; Shenstone Hall 365 and Shenstone Park 358. The presence of a large country house usually meant that the owner had important social and economic influence in the surrounding area. However it was not so marked in Shenstone parish because these four estates changed hands at regular intervals and so there was no continuity of a particular family. This is reflected in the fact that Shenstone Park and Shenstone Court have been demolished, while Little Aston Hall and Shenstone Hall are now no longer family homes.

Shenstone Park (demolished)

Shenstone Park is situated to the south east of the village in what is still open countryside, with just a few isolated buildings. It is a moated site, where a considerable quantity of medieval pottery has been excavated and within the moat is another possible site for the manor house of the de Grendons, who are referred to as being here in a licence of 1235. Stebbing Shaw thought that the original manor or a hunting box had been built by the D'Oyleys soon after the Conquest. In 1235/6 the park was set out by one of the Grendons, who obtained a licence for that purpose from the superior Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Warwick , provided he made a fence round it, so that the forest of Sutton should suffer no detriment from it. (Pitt 1817) At some time the estate went to the Nevil family until Richard Nevil, Earl of Warwick forfeited it to the crown in 1471.

In the sixteenth century Leyland described it as a royal park three miles in circumference well stocked with deer. (Figure 19) (Hodder 1988/89) It is marked on Saxon's map of Staffordshire of 1577 and shown on the Sheldon Tapestry Map of 1588. The boundaries were the Bourne Brook in the north, the lane through Little Hay in the east, Blake Street in the south and the original Lichfield to Birmingham Road (i.e. the road before the 1775 turnpiking) in the west. Boundary banks at Blake Street and Little Hay can still be seen. Along Blake Street the boundary is marked by a bank about 3m. wide and about 1m. high, which has a mixed species hedge along its summit and an internal ditch in places. On the eastern side, south of Little Hay , there is a high bank , and internal ditch about 3m. wide. A continuous north-south field boundary in the southern part of the park, with scots pine along it at intervals, may be the line of the 1640 division mentioned above. Medieval pottery has been found around the moated site in such quantities as to suggest occupation. (Hodder 1988/89) It is suggested that the moated site was a hunting lodge but there is no evidence for this. It may be the site of the medieval hall of the Grendons - the hall and chamber mentioned in Ralph de Grendon's inventory. There are numerous fields named on the tithe map with

the word Park and these cluster in the north west of the park close to Shenstone Village. (Figure 19).

Charles I granted it to a Scotsman, James Elphinston, Lord Balmerino, who sold the park to a Mr Lake (perhaps Edward Lake of Fenton, Staffordshire) and Alexander Ward, an innkeeper in Lichfield. Lake and Ward made a park each two parks from the large park. There were three lodges at this time; the Weeford and Little Hay lodge in the north east, and the others at the gates to Sutton and Wood End. (Hodder 1988/9) Disparking occurred in the reign of Charles II. (Harwood 1828) In 1690 the estate (which included the advowson of the church and tithes) was sold to John Strickson, draper, of London who then sold it in 1717 to the hugely wealthy, but childless, Richard Hill of Hawkstone Park, Shropshire. He purchased it on behalf of a nephew, Samuel Barbour (1690-1758), a London barrister, who changed his surname to Hill. After a brief spell as MP for Lichfield 1715-22, Samuel gave up politics on his marriage to Elizabeth, younger daughter of the Earl of Chesterfield of Bretby, in 1722. This socially important marriage spurred him to immediately rebuild his house in the heavy baroque style of Smith of Warwick, which was much favoured at Lichfield. Sadly, Elizabeth died of small pox in November 1727, aged only twenty-four.

With his great wealth, intelligence, cultured background, (he spoke Greek, Latin, French, German and Italian), and his social connections, Hill must have been a leading figure in the area and indeed beyond. He furnished Shenstone Park (and his London home) with objects bought on his Grand Tour 1728-30, including Canelettos and classical prints and statuary, some of which are now at Tatton Park, Cheshire. Hill also inherited rich furnishing, plate, china etc from his uncle and had a large collection of books and prints, some of which must have been on display in the house. According to Henry Sanders, who knew him well, Hill had 'a courtly and fine manner of address,' but was also 'haughty and reserved,' entertaining 'men of learning and reputation,' but leading a 'retired and domestic life, setting himself to make improvements in his land, which he advanced to a high state of culture'.

Either Samuel Hill, or John Strickson before him, planted a long tree lined avenue to the front of house, with a canal mid-way, leading to a large semi-circular forecourt with lawns, railed off from the park in front. (see the portrait of Samuel Hill reproduced in Mowle and Barre's book which shows the formal gardens in the background) These had gone by the end of the century, swept away when formal gardens went out of fashion. Behind the house was a large walled garden, whose walls still survive. Hill retained the moat as an important feature in his gardens, perhaps keeping or retaining an orchard within it. There was also a Bowling Green with a hedge at the upper end, which was probably sited near the moat. (Mowle and Barre 2009)

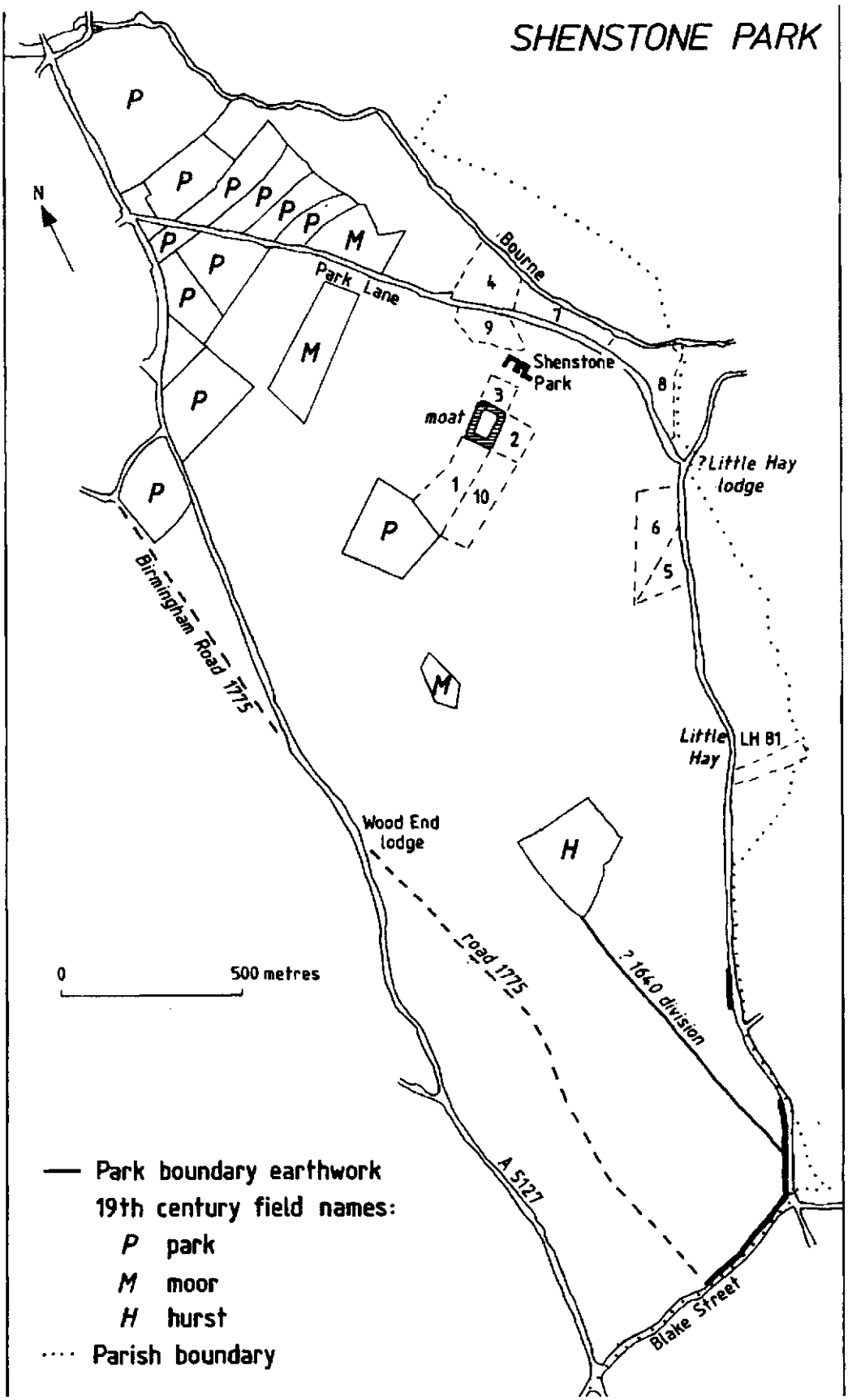


Figure 19 Shenstone Park (Medieval Deer Park) (Hodder)

The 1796 estate map (Figure 20) shows two other ponds by the house, and a narrow canal opposite the entrance front, across the drive. It also indicates two small buildings, each side of the walled garden, which may have been small summerhouses. A Wilderness was mentioned in the sale details of 1758, and this was probably the wooded area at the far end of the garden. Hill would have found it a problematic park to landscape because of the flat nature of the area, with Stebbing Shaw remarking in 1801 that 'it is far from a good site, without any distant view, except a tolerable good one of the church' (Shaw 1801 as shown in plate.VI).

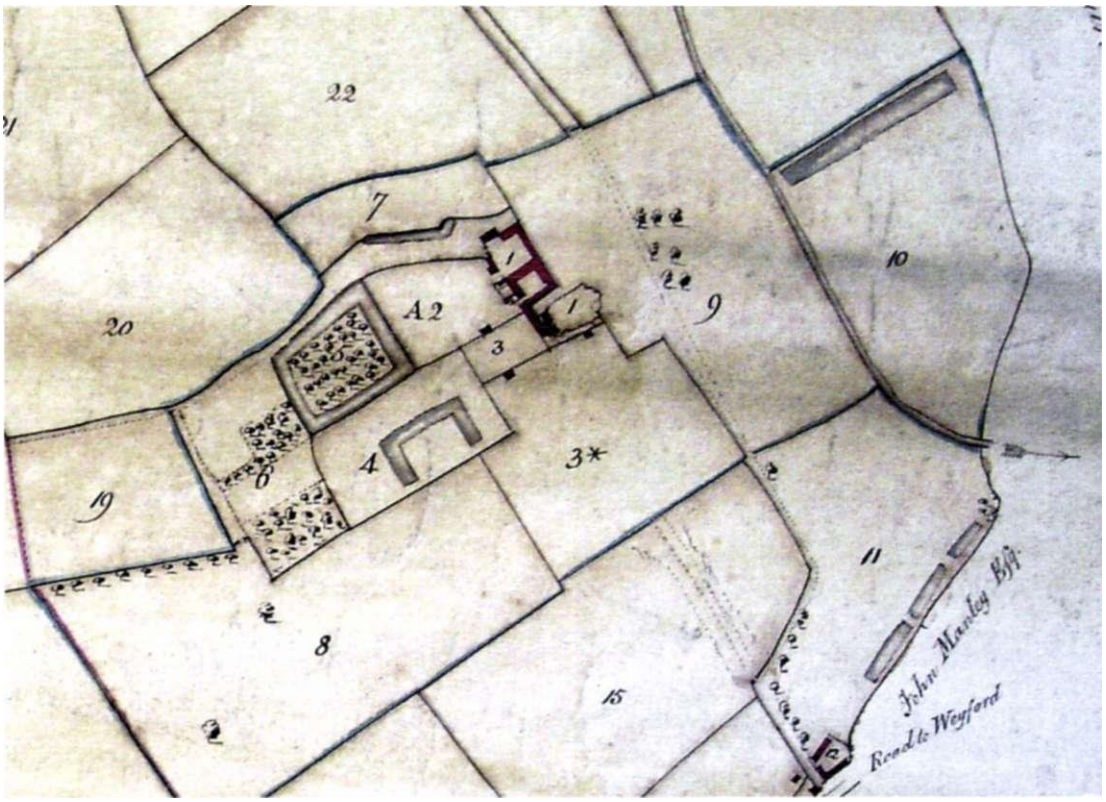


Figure 20 Shenstone Park in 1796 showing the house, the canal across the road and facing the house, and behind the house the moated site, with the island covered in trees. Lichfield Joint Record Office D4363/C/9/3. The avenue of trees shown in Yates' 1774 map has gone.

Samuel Hill had an interest in the poor and employed many on projects. He was responsible for raising many new buildings on farms in the parish. He built the stables and barn at Shenstone Old Hall and at the Vicarage. He was responsible for the new chancel of the Church while his wife donated the church clock. He gave sycamores for the churchyard. However when he died childless in 1758, Shenstone Park and Shenstone Old Hall, together with the advowson of Shenstone church with the tithes went to his cousin Thomas Hill

Shenstone Park - c.a. 1800 by Stebbing Shaw (William Salt Library)

Shenstone Park Farm 2008 ; the farm house is built on the site of the stable of the original mansion

of Tern Hall, Shropshire. At this point both house and land were reported as very neglected.' This was probably due to a combination of Hill's continuous ill health and also his decision to purchase the nearby Fisherwick estate in 1756. He also spent much of time in his London house. Following Hill's death a report was drawn up noting that the ground was naturally barren and therefore expensive for any tenant to maintain. It recommended that the property should be let cheaply, so that a tenant could undertake the expensive maintenance of trenches, drains and manuring. The land was thought to be worth £500per annum , but there was particular worry about the maintenance of the floodgates. It was estimated that repairs would cost £240, plus £238 for floodgates (to the Black Brook) fencing and other essentials. However on the plus side there were good barns, pigeons in the dovecote and 'many fish in the moat.' Yates' map of 1774 (Figure 3) shows a wide avenue with trees on either side running from the man road to the front of the house.

The estate was let out to tenants until 1797 when the owner, Thomas Noel Hill, 2nd Lord Berwick, sold it to Edward Grove, probably to help fund his expensive schemes to rebuild Attingham Park, Shropshire. Thereafter it was again tenanted until the house was demolished in the mid nineteenth- century by John Shawe Manley, who had just (1833) rebuilt Manley/Thickbroome Hall nearby . The present Shenstone Park house is a conversion of the old brewery, but the early eighteenth century stable block survives.

The current landscape is one of general farmland ; one feature of the original park landscape is the unfenced road from Shenstone village towards Little Hay - unusual in this parish where hedges are almost universal. The entire area occupied by the park is devoid of settlement other than the moated site and isolated farms - there are no hamlets or even clusters of cottages in it. The two hamlets in the east of the parish - Little Hay and Wood End have grown up just outside the park boundary. The hamlet of Little Hay is enclosed in an eastwards extension of the parish boundary across the lane from Blake Street to Thickbroome - in the nineteenth century enclosure award and tithe maps all the cottages as well as Little Hay Green are contained in this extension.

Shenstone Hall, (the "Old Hall")

Shenstone Hall is situated on the east side of the Birmingham Road about half a mile from Shenstone village. The original house of the Rugeley family was a timber-framed farm house on the site of the present stables. It passed to the Brandeths in the mid-seventeenth century and Michael Brandeth sold to Samuel Hill, of Shenstone Park, who sub-let it. Then it was sold to Thomas Cook in 1797 at the same time that Shenstone Park was sold.

Stebbing Shaw provided a good description (1801):

The house we now see makes a good appearance, is of brick, edged with stone ...with a large porch of the same materials in fore part, and a handsome court, with a high stone wall around it, adjoining to the great road leading to Lichfield; also two good gardens walled round, and a third for use of the kitchen.. In the best of them, lying to the road, was a noble terras, exceedingly well shaded with much admired elms or sycamores, of large growth...but now cut down. Close to this, on the other side of the wall, was a rookery, but this is also destroyed.

Nearby were outbuildings including stables, a large barn and canals for fish (shown on the 1838 tithe map). Soon after this the house must have been remodelled in the Gothic Style, and perhaps enlarged at the same time. At the time of the 1838 Tithe map the estate belonged to John Gough but let to William Harding and by 1899 it belonged to Foster of Canwell Hall.

The house is a large early seventeenth century brick house, which had by 1958 become a farmhouse. It consists of two main storeys and an attic and is built on a stone plinth. The west front was the original main front. It has a three storied porch, three gables and many stone mullioned windows. The north and south ends of the house each have two large external brick chimney stacks. The east front is now the main front and has been completely rebuilt in stone; it has a porch brought from Fisherwick Hall about 1830. It is the one outstanding house in the parish .

The Moss (C18), later Shenstone Court (demolished)

At the foot of St. John's Hill, a quarter of a mile from the church to the South, and on the right hand side of the public road, stands a neat house called The Moss, from its situation on mossy or marshy land; which site seems to have been chosen for its nearness to the church, and plenty of water, which running from the house spreads itself over a considerable part of the road , and is thence called The Moss Lake. (Sanders 1794)

Henry D'Oyley, High Constable of England, gave Shenstone Moss to the Abbey of Oseney, Oxfordshire. The monks erected a grange here for their residence, and for their bailiffs who collected rents and tithes of the church. At the Dissolution, it was granted to the Thomas Stanley, a farmer of Shenstone and relative of the Stanley Earls of Derby, for 61 years, confirming an earlier grant by the Abbot of Oseney. The manor passed by marriage to the Dolphyn family in the early seventeenth century. John Dolphyn (d.1756), died unmarried and the Moss went to his nephew John, who also bought an estate in Gloucestershire.

The mansion, to which great additions were made by the late John Dolphyn, esq. standing on gradually rising ground, even from the park, makes a pretty appearance. The present owner has fallen three rows of elm- trees which stood in the front, and thereby laid the house open to the view of travellers, which a few years since was so shut up with a court, walls and elm trees, with a walled garden and evergreens, as to wear the aspect of solitude and retirement, and to appear more like a house of religious devotees, rather than the seat of a gentleman. He hath also erected handsome offices and stables, and made other not unpleasing alterations, both in the mansion and the lands about it. From the bottom of St. John's Hill (on the summit of which stands the aforesaid clump of fir-trees, and in an adjoining field a clump

of elms lately planted) are rows of elms, one on each side of the way as far as the Church Piece or Vicarage Flat, which are truly an ornament even in this delightful situation. (Sanders 1794)

The rows of elms are shown on Yates' map of 1774 (Figure 3)

The estate was then purchased by William Turner, who made further alterations and then sold to William Spencer who sold it to William Chichester, younger son of the 1st Marquess of Donegal. (Figure 21) He sold it to Henry Case Esq. 1820. It changed hands yet again in 1889 by which time the house was known as Shenstone Court when purchased by the wealthy Richard Powell Cooper (1847-1913). Cooper was a veterinary surgeon in Lichfield, who had just inherited the successful manufacturing business of his uncle William Cooper. William Cooper (d.1885), a veterinary surgeon in Hertfordshire developed the first really effective sheep dip in 1852, which he sold worldwide from his own factory. Richard Powell Cooper then changed from being a veterinary surgeon to become a highly successful businessman. He expanded his uncle's company until by 1913 he owned 250,000 acres worldwide, including land in New Zealand and Africa. In 1905 Edward VII created him a baronet for his services to agriculture. At some time before 1913 the gardens were landscaped after plans had been drawn up by Thomas Mawson who described the house as 'a large uninspiring house of the early Victorian type, formal and harmless, occupying a favourable site slightly elevated above the surrounding park'. He also described the attempts to introduce his designs for the garden as 'appalling' (Mowle & Barre 2009). The family moved out in 1917 .

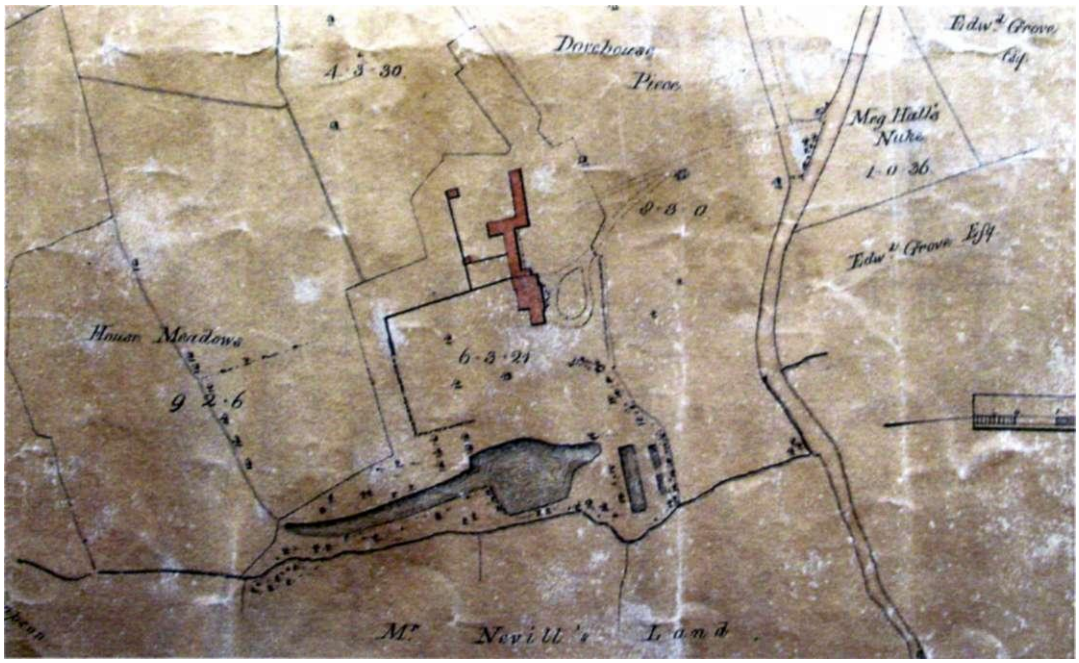


Figure 21 1803 Map of the Moss Estate in the time of William Chichester showing the Lichfield to Birmingham Road running from north to south with the pools to the south of the house Stafford Record Office D (W) 60 The avenues of trees shown in Yates' map of 1774 has gone.

He was succeeded by his son Sir Richard Ashmole Cooper (1874-1946), who ran the company firm and also became an MP (Walsall, 1910-22), co-founding the right wing National Party in 1917. Shenstone Court was put on the market in 1917 and the family moved to their Bedfordshire estate. The sale catalogue of 26 July 1917 (SRO:D1176/B/12/3) notes that the Georgian house had been the 'subject of great expenditure by the late Sir Richard Cooper and the present owner' [Sir R.A.Cooper]. It stood 'in charming grounds and surrounded by well-timbered Park lands, with stabling, garages, Farmery, Two Lodges and Three Cottages, the whole extending to about 104 acres.'

The Gardens and Pleasure Grounds which are attractively arranged, include fine specimens of beech, Weeping Ash and Planes. They comprise winding Shubbery Walks, Charming Rose Garden, Rose Pergolas, Rock Garden, Shady undulating Lawns and Terraces. A special Feature being a Long Grass Walk, with broad Herbaceous Border and with a beautiful background of Flowering Shrubs of great variety, inter-mixed with Hollies, Pines and Cedars.'

Little Aston Hall

The hamlet of Little Aston is some three miles south-west of Shenstone village.

By 1583 the manor belonged to the Fowkes, who also owned other properties in Staffordshire. The estate was then purchased by the Ducies in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, passing by marriage to the Moretons., until purchased by Richard Scott of Birmingham in 1720s. He built a new house c.1730 on a slight rise away from the original house and used part of the old timber framed house as stables. There were four large pools (2 in the deer park, the mill pool and forge pool). Scott also planted what was presumably a formal landscape with high hedges of holly and evergreens.

Scott died in 1734 aged 62 and his wife in 1754, aged 65, leaving a daughter Mary (b1713) who married Andrew Hacket of Moxhull Hall. The couple lived at Moxhull and Little Aston Hall was let to a series of tenants, until in 1765 Humphry Minchin from Reading took a 99 year lease on the house with the manor Little Aston and all its rights.

He [Minchin] began to make improvements, and in the gardens cut down fences and hedges which gave a monastical appearance to the house. He laid out many enclosures in the form of a park for which the land was well adapted. The water in the centre which passes through the park was increased and enlarged. Trees which had been planted irregularly and spoiled the view from the house were felled and replaced by clumps to conceal a barren heath on Cannock Wood. Gardens adjoining it were rooted up and replaced by new ones about a quarter of a mile south from the mansion, thus enhancing a handsome, modern house. Shenstone church to the north and Aldrich to the west can be seen. (Sanders 1794)

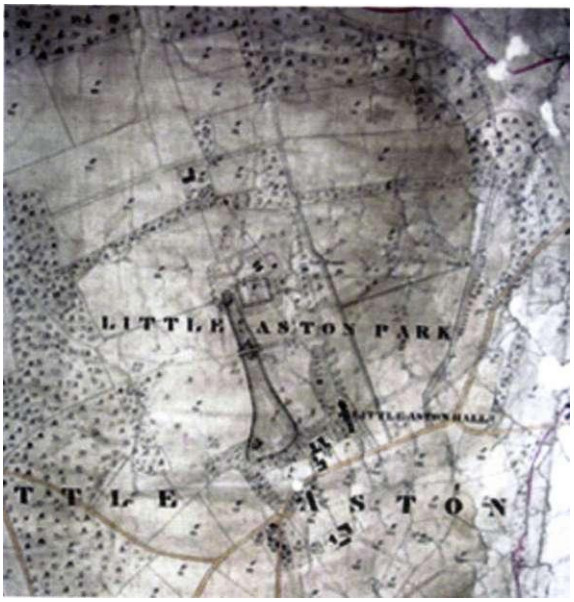
The gardens near the house were removed and new formal gardens put 1/4 mile from the house to the south, close to the upper pool.(Hiscock 1986)

Little Aston Park

Parkland to Fields

There were many changes to the design of the parkland to the east of the house. In the 1828 map of the estate prepared for a sale the land is shown as open parkland . In the 1838 tithe map , only ten years later, the outer park has been enclosed and is shown as discrete fields, indicating that the parkland has been changed for agricultural use by the new owners. To the east of the pool (to the left on the maps) there has been substantial new planting of timber. The outer park was originally common land and had only been enclosed to form the park ten years before the sale.

Little Aston Park , LJRO D4363/C/3/1 1828 (south to top)



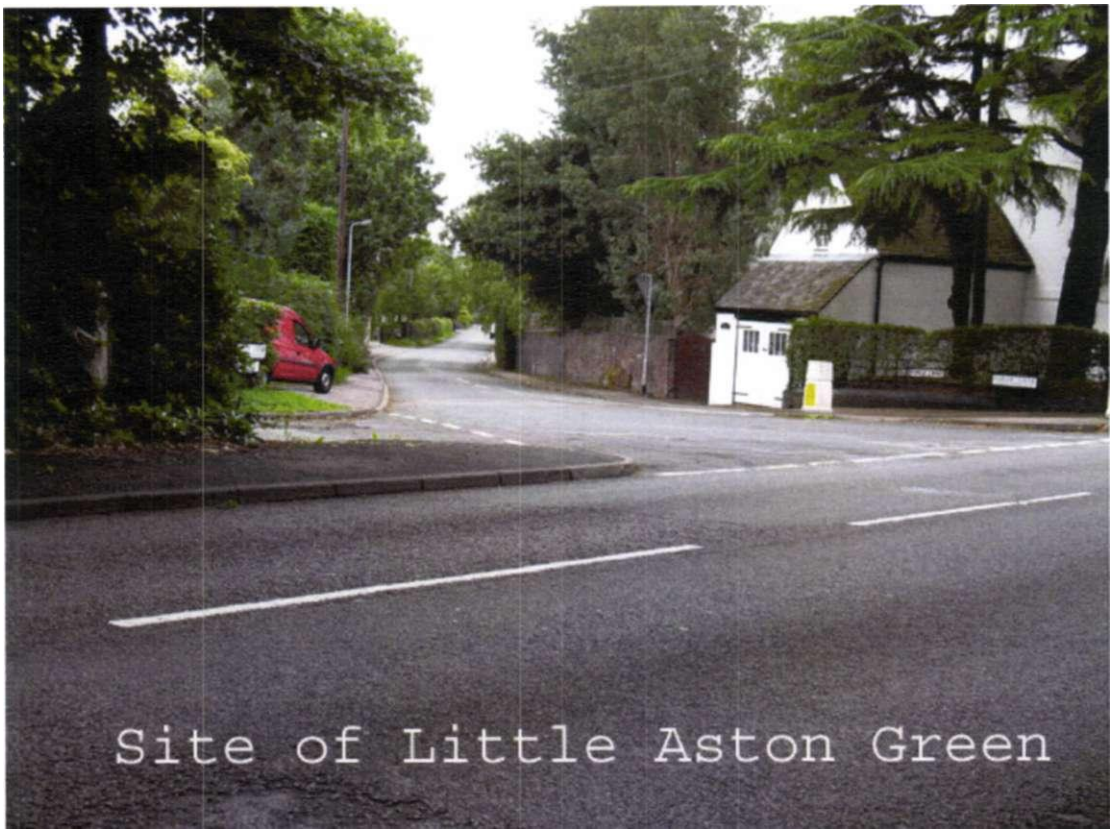
Little Aston Park , LJRO B/A/15 1838 (south to top)

Hiscock says that Minchin had travelled in France, Germany and Italy. (Hiscock 1986)

William Tennant (1753-1804) bought 8,000 acres in the area including Shenstone Hall, The Moss (later Shenstone Court) and Little Aston, and his son William finally bought the freehold of Little Aston (from the remaining part of the 99 year lease to Minchin). The house was restyled by James Wyatt and an orangery built for William Tennant around 1790 and William Ernes is said to have been involved (Hiscock 1986). The new house and orangery is illustrated in Stebbing Shaw, II, pl.VIII-it shows a neat 7 bay house, three storeys high with low two bay flanking wings. The centre three bays have pilasters under a pediment and the house looks out to a lake.

The mansion, which was built by William Tennant Esq., is very elegant and the domain much improved. An extensive lawn surrounds the house, shaded with trees and adorned with a noble lake over which a handsome bridge has been built, opposite to conservatory of hewn stone which adds to the beauty of the scene. (Pitt 1817)

The estate was sold in 1828 to William Leigh who then sold in 1844 to the Hon Edward Swynfen Parker Jervis, son of Edward Jervis Jervis, 2nd Viscount St. Vincent, who enlarged the house at a reputed cost of £35,000 in 1857-9 using the architect Edward Payne. The house was encased in Hollington stone and two wings were added. The hall was frequently let out to tenants.



In the twentieth century the 1,500 acres estate passed from owner to owner. It was purchased by Joseph Bennet Clarke, an eminent Birmingham solicitor, in 1907 for £50,120 and he sold off much of the land and when he sold in 1924 to Harry Scribbens the estate had been reduced to 118 acres. Scribbens modernised the hall and added the round fish-pond with Bloye's extravagant figure of Pan. The garden is said to have been planted with a million daffodil bulbs in honour of his wife's birthday. He died in 1935 leaving £2,475,000 and his wife lived at the hall from 1935-49.

In 1954 the house became the Midlands HQ for Esso, and after 1968 was a residential centre for GKN, with a large new office block built. Then in 1977 Keith Jackson bought the hall and the whole site was redeveloped, the hall converted into 7 apartments, the office blocks removed, new apartment blocks were built in the grounds and then a BUPA Care Home and Hospital were added.

The 1838 Tithe Map shows a large long lake with islands below the house. A golf club destroyed Henry Minchin's walled garden.

Almost all of the original park extending from Little Aston hamlet to Streetly in the far south west corner of the parish is now residential accommodation, the only parts not built up being the golf course.

Epilogue

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Shenstone had a very small human population. Even in the sixteenth century the population was probably less than 500 in an area of nearly 8,500 acres which is a population density of 17 acres per person. Originally the parish was comprised of marshy river valleys with a few dry sandy outcrops, the whole area surrounded by higher ground. There is evidence in the Greensborough Hoard of activity here in the Bronze Age and in the area to the south of Wall evidence of pastoral Romano-British settlements.

The Anglo-Saxons left few physical traces but have bequeathed most of the place names of the parish. Extensive clearing of the surviving forests was underway during the lordship of Robert de Grendon in the thirteenth century.

The medieval landscape of the parish was characterised by a dispersed landscape of scattered settlements, with small nucleations such as Shenstone village itself. The agricultural economy was a mixed one of pasturisation and the production of hardy grains.

By the sixteenth century there was a thriving agricultural population working the common fields, growing wheat and rye , and keeping large flocks of sheep. At this time a major industrial unit at Little Aston Forge was working

profitably at the production of iron. In the eighteenth century the last open common spaces were enclosed and the rural landscape that we see today defined. The new landowning elite had begun to purchase country estates and to build their mansions in pleasantly designed parklands and gardens. The twentieth century brought substantial development for housing in parts of the parish whilst leaving a rural character to other parts. In other words a microcosm of the development of rural England.

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LJRO 1608 Lichfield Joint Record Office , Lichfield ; D3222/93 Survey of the Manor of Shenstone

LJRO 1759 Lichfield Joint Record Office , Lichfield ; D4363/C/9/1 Map of several farms within the Manor of Shenstone the property of William Tennant

LJRO 1796 Lichfield Joint Record Office , Lichfield ; D4363/C/9/3 Map of the estate of Lord Berwick in the parish of Shenstone

LJRO 1838 Lichfield Joint Record Office , Lichfield ; B/A/l 5 Tithe Map Shenstone Parish

LJRO 1828 Lichfield Joint Record Office , Lichfield ; D4363/C/3/1 Map of the Little Aston Estate

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Appendix 1

A List of Shenstone Maps Plans and Surveys, pre 1850

This appendix lists the surviving maps which specifically show all or part of the parish of Shenstone. (Maps of the County of Staffordshire are not listed.) Most are estate maps , showing all or in some cases just a small part of the properties of individual landowners or organisations. The names of the

surveyors , where known , are given.

With Staffordshire Record Office catalogue references

A. Major Maps

1. 1759 Thomas Sherrif 80x90 lin=16ch LJRO D4363/C/9/1

Map of several farms within the Manor of Shenstone with the boundary of the Manor , the property of William Tennant. William Tennant was the lord of the Manor of Shenstone and later lived at Little Aston Hall. Field Names , acreages and occupiers roads and buildings indicated. Covers the whole parish but only the fields belonging to Tennant are shown in detail. Elsewhere major roads , common lands and major settlements only are shown. This is the earliest surviving map of the entire parish. Whilst the actual estate of William Tennant seems to be accurately surveyed the rest of the parish is in outline only, as a representation showing the approximate position of the main features.
The fields owned by Tennant are all very small, generally roughly square shaped . The outlines of the farms owned by Tennant can be followed through the later maps but by the time of the Enclosure award map of 1818 there have been amalgamation of some field by removal of the boundary hedges , i.e. some of the fields have become larger. Approximately 10-15% of the hedges shown on this map have gone by 1818.

2. 1769 John Snape 93x122 lin=4ch LJRO D4363/C/2/1

Plan & survey of the several farms and lands in the Manor of Little Aston in the parishes of Shenstone, Aldridge , Barr and Sutton Coldfield. Field names and acreages , roads . Buildings , canals , pools and woods indicated. Mainly the Little Aston area.

3. 1796 William Hitchcock 100x67 lin=7ch LJRO D4363/C/9/3

Plan of the estate of Lord Berwick in the parish of Shenstone. Field Nos, adjacent owners , roads and buildings indicated. His estate was in three parts ; the north between Shenstone village and Watling Street, the area between Shenstone village and Little Hay and the area between Shenstone village and Shenstone Wood End. (Noel Hill of Tern , Shropshire , was created Lord Berwick in 1784. (Tern later became Attingham Park.); he died in 1784 and in 1795 the estate was owned by his son Thomas Noel Hill the 2nd Lord Berwick. The estate had been in the hands of the Hill family of Tern for several generations. Part photographed. The house , Shenstone Park was also known as the New Hall, as opposed to Shenstone Hall, the Old Hall, which although owned by Noel Hill was leased - in 1774 to Joseph Elder. By 1800 Shenstone Park was in the hands of Edward Grove.

4. 1807 William Allport 65x82 lin=15ch LJRO D4363/C/9/4

Map of the estate of W Tennant in the Manor of Shenstone. This is William Tennant 11, son of the William Tennant mentioned in No 1 who had died in 1803. This map covers the estate of W Tennant and shows his lands throughout the parish , mainly in the south and west, plus a farm at Hilton and a few isolated fields in Chesterfield. Compared to earlier maps it shows that the estate had increased in size , by the addition of small groups of fields that Tennant presumably acquired as they came available. The estate has become more consolidated. The map itself is clear with detail of roads fields woods watercourses and buildings but is faded and in parts faint, although still visible.

5. 1818 John Eagle 61 3/4*in* x 69 1 in=6ch SRO Q/Rdc/76

Unsealed copy of award and plan under the Act for inclosing the commons and waste lands in the townships or hamlets of Over Stonnall and Lyn , Lower Stonnall and Thornes , Shenstone Woodend and Footherley, Little Hay , Chesterfield and Little Aston in the manors of Little Aston and Shenstone in the parish of Shenstone. Fully drawn plan of whole parish which shows roads , buildings , field boundaries , watercourses and has field numbers , field names and owners / tenants names for fields. Also indicates some exchanges of lands that have taken place as a result of the enclosures. Very similar to the 1838 tithe map but there are some differences in detail - for example the new road dunning from Shenstone Mill towards Lichfield is shown in the tithe map but not on the enclosure award map. Very

handy as a working map as the owners names are given for fields (but not for individual houses as there is insufficient room.) The common lands subject to enclosure under this Act are coloured ; these are a very small proportion of the area of the whole parish much of which was already enclosed. In parts very creased which makes it difficult to copy.

6. 1820 Edward Jackson 60x83 lin=12ch LJRO D4363/C/2/2

Map of Little Aston Hall estate in the parishes of Shenstone Aldridge and Sutton Coldfield. Field Nos roads, buildings, canals , pools and woods indicated.

7.1828 35x48 lin=15ch LJRO D15/13/11 &
LRJO D4363/C/3/1

Plan of Little Aston Hall estate in the manors of Shenstone, Moss and Little Aston. As no 6 but field names acreages and occupiers indicated. Taken from the 1828 sale catalogue of the Little Aston Estate. The estate was then some 3,000 acres divided into 13 farms , some smaller tenants and the substantial park around Little Aston Hall. This amounts to nearly a quarter of the parish. The map shows the estate in the south west of the parish only and neither the map nor the sale particulars include the farm at Hilton or the isolated fields at Chesterfield shown on previous maps of this estate. Also sold were the 3 manors or reputed manors of Shenstone, Moss and Little Aston, totalling 8,500 acres , which amounts to the entire parish. The estate passed into the hands of William Leigh and by 1850 to Edward Swynfen Jervis. The map shows Little Aston Park at its greatest extent - by the time of the tithe map ten years later the southern part of the park has been enclosed to form a farm. Very little land in this area was not by now part of the Little Aston Estate - the only area not owned by William Tennant was the small parcel of land owned by the Vicar's Choral described in their 1536 terrier as lying between the river Bourne and Ryknield Street.

8.1836 49x30 lin=6ch LJRO D546/17/3

Plan of property in Shenstone and Wall. Acreages Field names , adjacent owners and roads indicated.

9.1838 c.a. 180x180 lin=6ch LRJOB/A/15

Tithe Map and award Shenstone. Acreages , Field Nos, roads and buildings indicated. With schedule listing owners , tenants and field names. A very good quality map at a large scale , showing much fine detail of properties. Size makes it difficult to handle and copy. In many respects similar to the enclosure map of 1818 No 5 but it is possible to see small changes - mainly additions of properties and some additional roads , e.g. the straightening of the pronounced kink in the Old Chester Turnpike Road at Over Stonnall. Parts photographed. Shows the extensive lands of William Tennant III whose father William Tennant II died in 1835.

10. 1841 178x162.5 lin=6ch LJRO D4901/3/1&2

Tithe rent charge apportionment and map Shenstone. Acreages , Field Nos, roads and buildings indicated ; essentially as 9. This was the copy held in the parish church.

11.1852 c.a. 180x180 (in 2 parts) lin=6ch WSL S.Ms.417/146&7
WSL S.Ms.430/21

Copy Tithe Map and award Shenstone Acreages , Field Nos, roads and buildings indicated
(This is a copy of the original tithe map made for William Salt in 1852). As 9.

12. No date c.a. 180x180 (in 6 parts) lin=6ch LJRO D(W)3222/89

Printed map of Shenstone parish in 6 parts. Apparently a printed copy of the tithe map. Suitable to tracing as being in parts it is easier to handle than the tithe map. As 9

B Minor Maps.

13. 1766 John Snape lin=5ch LJRO D(W)4363/C/1/1

Lease of the manor of Little Aston , with plan covering the immediate surroundings of Little Aston Hall. The holding was in two parts of about equal size - the first around Little Aston Hall and the second a little to the north around Little Aston Forge. Includes part of the Town Field.

14. 1771 John Snape LJRO D(W) 1851/8/73

Map of the Estate in Little Aston belonging to Mr Smallwood. He lived on Little Aston Green and his estate consisted of about two dozen scattered fields around Little Aston. Mr Smallwood is named as a neighbouring landowner on the previous map. Includes a small strip of the Town Field. Has 'purchased of Thomas Cooper Smallwood 1772 ' in handwriting. Interesting example of a small estate - entirely fractured into odd fields here and there , with an average field size of 4 acres.

14. 1795 John Smith 52x147 lin=3ch LJRO D15/13/9&
LJRO D4363/C/9/2

Plan of common land (on Little Aston Common which was partly in Great Barr and partly in Shenstone) in dispute between the freeholders of the manors of Great Barr and Shenstone. Roads , Borne Water and manorial boundaries are shown. These are versions of the same map but with slightly different detail. The (very small) area covered is in the extreme south of the parish , in Streetly between Sutton Park and Hardwicke Field in Great Barr. The arbitrators decision was to divide the disputed lands equally. The first map shows a few more roads whereas the second shows the Mill Pool at Aston , the Bourne stream (which forms the boundary for a short distance) and the position of Ryknield Street as it enters the parish from the south. Shows positions of mere stones and wooden posts , plus cross on oak tree , as boundary markers. The first is a good deal cleaner than the second.

15. 1803 H Jacob 48x59 lin=2'/₂ch SRO D(W)60

Moss estate . Field names , acreages and adjacent landowners indicated. This was a small estate with a limited area of land around the house of Lord Spencer of Chichester at Moss Just south of Shenstone village on the main Birmingham Road. Shows house , lake and eight fields on west side of Birmingham Road and a small field " Meg Hall's Nuke" on the east side of the road.. The property was later renamed Shenstone Court.

16. 1809 W& J Fairbank 40x31 LJRO D103/6/2

Volume of maps of the estate belonging to the Women's Hospital of Lichfield (Dr Milley's). Field names, acreages, adjacent owners , roads and buildings shown. Part 4 Part of the Hill Field situate at Chesterfield in the parish of Shenstone - just the one field in the parish.

17.1810 lin=6ch LJRO D(W) 1851/3/4/7

There are two maps within this bundle.

The first is a map of lands in Shenstone Aldridge and Sutton Coldfield with enlargement of Greenborough Farm buildings and Bosses Farm buildings and other farm buildings. The second is a map of Lower Stonnall & Thornes showing 'new enclosures' and Field Nos. It seems to be an initial version of the Enclosure Ward map but without the names of the tenants or owners inserted. It is probably later than 1810 but before 1818 when the enclosure award map was printed. It is headed No 2 which suggests that there were similar maps of the other townships in the parish, no copies of which appear to have survived.

18.1812 LJRO D(W) 1851/3 /4/4

Good plans of area in dispute concerning the bounds of Shenstone and Sutton Coldfield on Little Aston

Common. Similar in nature to the map showing the disputed commons between Little Aston , Barr and Aldridge this shows the boundary between Little Aston Common and Sutton Coldfield Common from Blake Street to Sutton Park. Shows a maze of roads across the common , various marker stones and posts.

19.1814 36x46 lin=9ch LJRO D126/5/19

Volume of plans of estates held for maintaining the pipes and conduits of the City of Lichfield.
Part 8 , John Smith tenant at Wall in the parishes of Lichfield St Michael and Shenstone. Mostly Wall

but four fields in Shenstone. Of limited interest.

20. 1816 20x31 (4 pieces) 1 in=6ch LJRO D546/16/6

Map of Chesterfield Tithing and the land of Wall and Moat Bank.

Part 4 ; Map of Chesterfield . Field Nos and roads shown but not buildings - similar to the tithe map number 9 but sketched rather than formally drawn.

21. 1840 LJRO D(W)1851/10/1/8

Two parts of an official plan for a proposed railway through the parishes of Shenstone and Aldridge.

22.1821 Jacob & Matthews 79x50 WSL 324/29

Brickley Farm property of James Guest. Field names, acreage and adjacent landowners indicated. Covers this small farm near Lynn, Of limited interest. Probably now called Swan Farm.

23. 1846 LJRO D15/13/17

Two maps prepared as part of the particulars for the sales of parts of the Little Aston Estate of William Leigh in March and June 1846. Shows fields buildings roads woodlands and neighbouring landowners. With schedule listing field names , occupiers etc. The first map shows Stonnall Lynn and Thornes and the second the area around Castle Bank and Shire Oak. Good quality late maps.

Map sizes in centimetres unless otherwise stated

SRO = Stafford Record Office
LJRO = Lichfield Joint Record Office
WSL = William Salt Library

C County Maps

Emmanuel Bowen's Map of Staffordshire appeared in various editions after 1749. It was derived from Jeffrey's survey of 1747 which in turn was based on Plot's map of 1682 which was published in his Natural History of Staffordshire in 1686. Phillips says of Jeffrey's and Bowen's maps 'It is not surprising that the form of the county and the topographical record appears wayward in these maps as they were based on a Staffordshire identified cartographically in a previous century.' (Phillips 1984) Yates' map of 1774 was a major and distinctive advance in eighteenth century Staffordshire cartography. It puts in sight the modern Ordnance Survey maps and was the only map of the county of the eighteenth century to be based on an original survey using a scientific framework of triangulation to provide a greater accuracy. At a scale of one inch to one mile it allowed topographical detail to be recorded in a more complete manner than before. (Phillips 1984)

The Sheldon Tapestry Map is in Warwick Museum ; it is a seventeenth century map of Warwickshire in tapestry and shows a few features outside that county such as the deer park at Shenstone.

Appendix 2

The Inventory of Ralph de Grendon 1331/2 (Latin Text)

Schenston In primis Invent' fuit

In Camera 1 vetus Cortin' cum Rydell' prec' xvj^{d} Item iij veteres trussigcoferes prec' ij^{s} Item ij magn' serin' prec' iiij^{s}

Item ij ciste veteres prec' ij^{s} Item 1 formell' cum banker' ante camyn prec' xiiij^{d} Item 1 vet' sace'eum ?barhund prec' v^{s} Item 1 capet' debil' prec' iiij^{s} Item v quissins prec' x^{d} Item 1 somer sadel prec' ij^{s}

In Aula 1 dosser' vetus prec' iiij^{s} Itemij mens' mobil' cumtrescell' prec' ij^{s} Item 1 ?polum rn h(?b) anerprec' ij^{s}

In Celar' 1 mappa mensalis precii xiiij^{d} Item 1 tuell' (?turnell) prec' vj^{d} Item 1 bredtunne prec' x^{d} Item ij flakes pro vino prec' xij^{d}

In Coquina 1 olla enea prec' v^{s} Item 1 craticula prec' xij^{d} Item 1 frying panne prec' vj^{d} Item bacon prec' xv^{s}

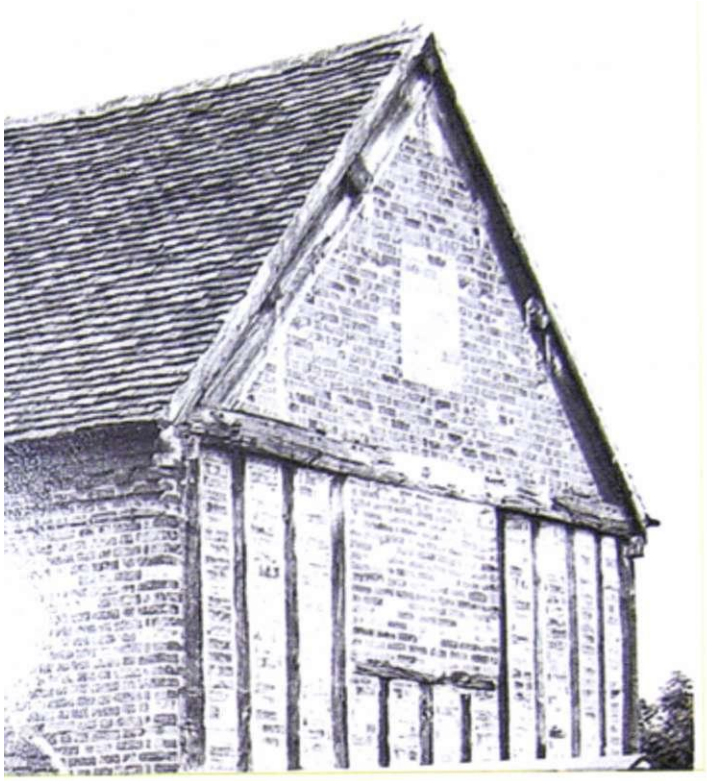
In Pistrina 1 bukeyngwiche prec' iiij^{d} Item ij alvee prec' ij^{s} Item 1 bredingbord prec' viij^{d} Item ij fates iij Cumblyns prec' iiij^{s} Item 1 heyre prec' ij^{s}

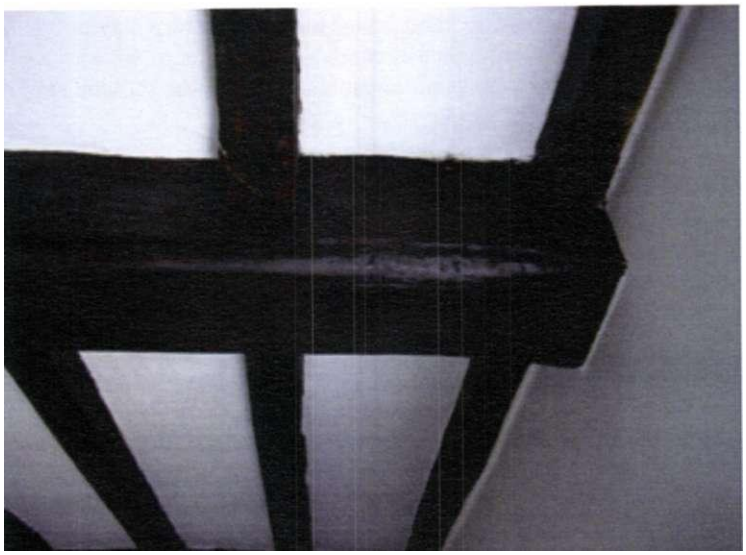
Item viij boves prec' iiij Item ij affr' prec' x^{s} Item ij affr' pro carta prec' xvj^{s} viij^{d} Item ij ??signi prec'[?or«] xiij^{s} iiij^{d} Item 1 carecta vetus prec' iij^{s}iiij^{d} Item 1 hernens' cart' prec' x^{d} Item iij carecte cum ferro ?cum iugo prec' iij^{s} Item ij hert' ferr' prec' xviij^{d} Item ij sacce & 1 Lynchen ventricic' veter' prec' xviij^{d} Item 1 mensur' estr' prec' iiij^{d} Item ij ?vaug' ij tribul'ij furce pro fymis prec' vj^{d}

InGranar' xx quartern Aven' prec' xl^{s} Item fenum prec'xxx^{s} Item forag'prec' x^{s} Item de exitibus novi grani vij$^{?s}$ Item ij quarterii frumenti prec' xxxij^{s} vij^{d} Item vij quartern siligni prec' xxiif Item de Lo thravis straminis predicti bladi iiij^{s}vij^{d}

Appendix 3 5/7 **Pinfold ; Exterior and Interior Beams**

These two photographs show the beams in this pair of cottages in the centre of Shenstone village which are discussed in detail in the section headed Building: above.





Appendix 4 Archaeological Terms

Moated Sites

In addition to the major castles possessing moats there are a whole class of smaller rural defended settlements that archaeologists group together under the general term 'medieval moated site'. It has been known for many years that such sites exist but it was not until the 1960s that archaeologists appreciated that they form a distinct class of field monument. Well over 5,000 have been identified in England. Most fall into the period of the very early thirteenth century to the mid fifteenth century. Whilst found in virtually every part of England they appear to cluster in areas where clay soils provided an effective water sealant. The defensive aspect was probably a minor consideration and it looks as if a moat was for show, a mark of status. Most moats coincide with land that was owned by manorial lords - men who would not have been in the top rank of secular landowners but who instead expressed their aspirations by aping their far wealthier castle building social superiors. Many such sites were occupied , although not always continuously, until well into the seventeenth century.

(www.channel4.co./history/micro sites/T/time team/snapshotmoated.html)

Nucleated and Dispersed Settlements

A nucleated settlement is one clustered around a central point, such as a village green or church. Nucleation may be fostered by defence considerations, localized water supply, the incidence of flooding, or rich soils so that farmers can easily get to their smaller, productive fields while continuing to live in the village. In England, nucleated settlements are often found in the central region where open field farming predominated. In this region, the village was typically surrounded by two (or three) large fields in which villagers had individual strips.Various explanations have been offered as to the reason for this form of settlement including the ethnic origin of Anglo Saxon settlers, density of population and the influence of local lords of the manor. Another explanation is the combination of soil quality and climate which leads to differences in agricultural techniques for exploiting local conditions. Street villages are those that grew along one particular road rather than around a central point; daughter villages were formed when the land surrounding a village became insufficient to support a growing population.

A dispersed settlement pattern is characterized by scattered, isolated dwellings. Highlands, poor soils, and ubiquitous water supply help to create dispersed settlement as do cultural factors; lowland Wales has dispersed settlement whereas lowland England inclines to nuclear villages. The farmsteads which make up the dispersed settlement are often surrounded by small irregularly shaped fields. Traditionally, trees are encouraged to grow at the edges of these fields and in thin strips alongside roads. However, during the 20th century, much of this woodland disappeared, either as a result of disease or modern farming practice. In the woodland landscape that characterised much of the west midlands, including Shenstone, a dispersed settlement pattern predominated. However, the settlement patterns of most areas included both nucleated and dispersed elements.

Appendix 5 Stone Age Finds in Shenstone

Various reports mention evidence for both Palaeolithic (before about 10,000 BC) and Neolithic (before about 4,000 BC) human presence in the parish of Shenstone. In reality this evidence is rather thin. According to the English Heritage NMR Monument Report three , possibly four axes have been found . A Palaeolithic quartzite hand axe , possibly with another, was found on the site of the Roman Villa north of Shenstone village. It was made from a Bunter pebble. Such axes are very rare in the Midlands. (Shotton 1972/3) A Neolithic polished flint axe was found in 1935 at an unknown location near to Shenstone Park and a Neolithic polished stone axe was later found at Owlett's Farm.

Appendix 6

Land use in Shenstone Parish in 1838 , from the tithe award, giving the area in acres for each category of use by township.

	Arable	%	Meadow	Pasture	%	Woodland	%	Other	%
Over Stonnall	**1675**	**71**	**178**	**331**	**22**	**73**	**3**	**81**	**3**
Lower Stonnall	**713**	**72**	**62**	**150**	**21**	**42**	**4**	**18**	**2**
Shenstone	**1009**	**59**	**245**	**380**	**36**	**33**	**2**	**53**	**3**
Woodend	**783**	**58**	**206**	**318**	**39**	**11**	**1**	**33**	**2**
Little Hay	**81**	**60**	**23**	**20**	**32**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**6**
Little Aston	**443**	**34**	**189**	**295**	**37**	**330**	**2**	**51**	**1**
Chesterfield	**246**	**61**	**108**	**38**	**36**	**0**	**0**	**8**	**3**
Total	**4953**	**60**	**1016**	**1534**	**31**	**486**	**6**	**264**	**3**

For comparison the national average for land use was 35% arable , 25% meadow/pasture , 15% woodland and 25% other.

Note the high percentage of arable land in Over and Lower Stonnall, the concentration of woodland in Little Aston , most of which was in Little Aston Park , and the complete absence of woodland in Chesterfield. The low percentage of Other compared to the national average represents the small size of the built up areas and the small remaining areas of common / waste / moorland. The low percentage of woodland is also apparent today.

Over Stonnall included Lynn , Lower Stonnall included Thornes and Woodend included Footherley.

The Society as part of this project has produced a fully searchable transcription of the tithe award; too large to be printed here. Copies are deposited at Lichfield and Shenstone Libraries.

Acknowledgements

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Latin transcription and translation by Nigel Coulton.

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