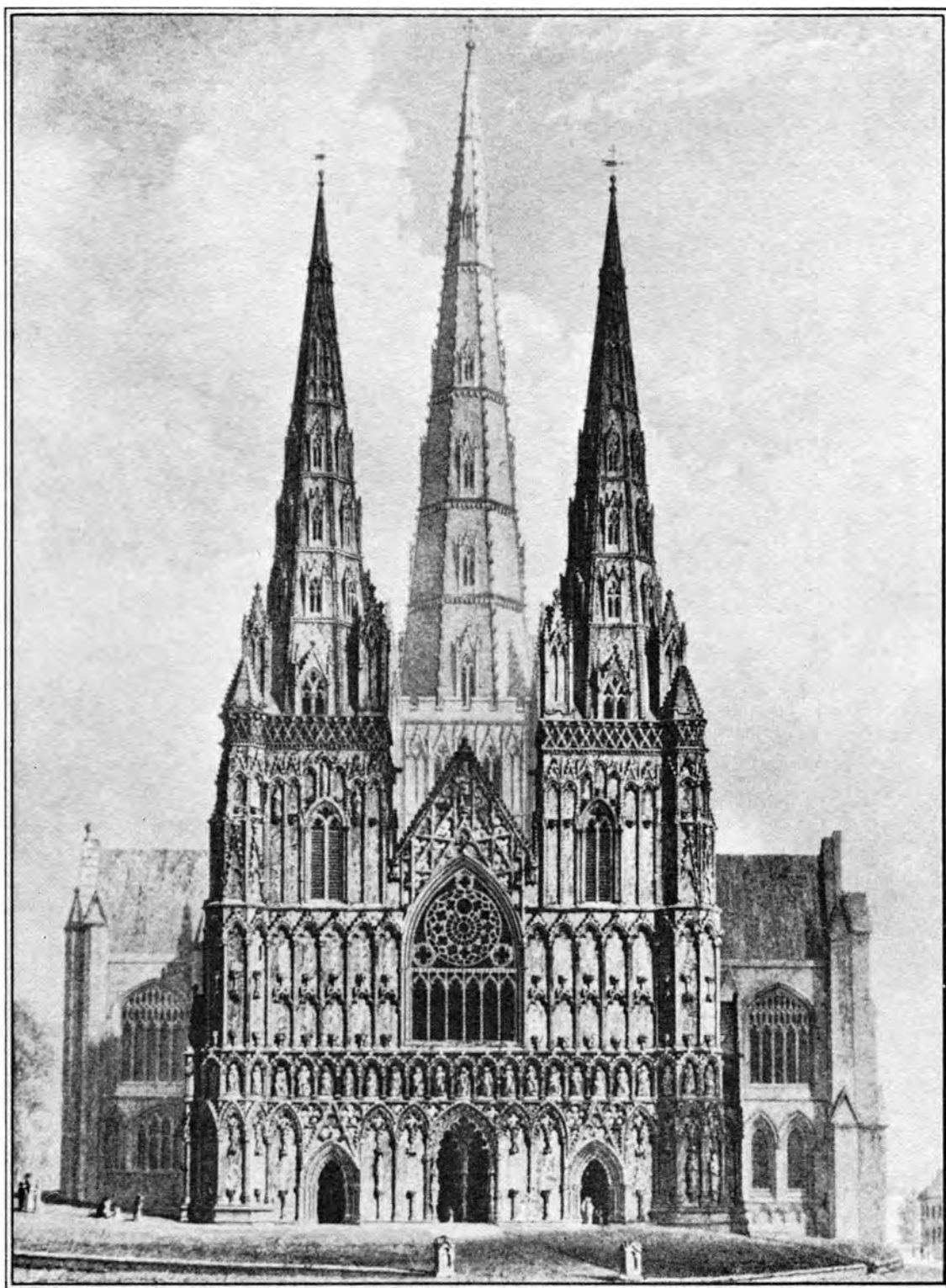




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EARLY MEDIEVAL LICHFIELD: A REASSESSMENT

ANDREW SARGENT

INTRODUCTION

From November 2005 to January 2006 an excavation at the site of Cross Keys car park in Lichfield revealed evidence for several phases of early medieval buildings, of great importance both in their own right and in terms of Lichfield's early history. This paper aims to provide a detailed summary of the results of the excavation, which has not yet been published, and also to take the opportunity offered by these discoveries to reassess the origins and early development of Lichfield more broadly. It therefore begins with an analysis of the current state of knowledge, as evolved by several scholars over the past sixty years, in order to provide a context for the excavation summary that follows; both sections subsequently inform the concluding discussion, in which the significance of the early medieval structures is evaluated, a revised vision of Lichfield's origins is proposed, and new questions requiring further investigation are highlighted.

It is difficult to separate the origins of Lichfield from the history of the cathedral, founded by St Chad in 669 when he settled the Mercian see there during the reign of King Wulfhere, as described by the 8th-century authors Bede of Jarrow and Stephen of Ripon (respectively *HE* iv. 3 and *VW* 15). Nevertheless, Lichfield is a polyfocal settlement of which the cathedral forms only one part. A short topographical text dating to the 13th century, presumably written by a scribe at the cathedral, describes two religious houses (*monasteria*) at Lichfield, the cathedral to the west and the 'House of St Chad' (*statio Sancti Ceddae*) to the east at Stowe, where St Chad apparently preached to the people (Dugdale 1846, VI (3), 1242). Three centuries later, John Leland divided Lichfield into two parts, the cathedral to the north and the 'mayne towne' to the south, separated by three pools strung along the Curborough brook: two smaller ones to the west (of which only Minster Pool now survives) and a larger one downstream to the east (the present Stowe Pool). In the main town Leland located the three churches of St Mary in the Market Place, St Michael on Greenhill, and St Chad at Stowe, associating the last with St Chad's Well, a spring with a stone in the bottom, which 'some say that Cedde was wont nakyd to stond on in the water, and pray', and where 'Cedd had his oratorie in the tyme of Wulphere Kyng of the Merchis' (Toulmin Smith 1906–10, II, 99–102). These texts essentially identify the distinct parts of the historic town, whose separate origins and relation to one another have formed the basis of interpretations of Lichfield's history over the last sixty years.

Much of the research to date has had a topographical flavour. In the early 1950s Harry Thorpe investigated Lichfield's geomorphology, undertaking several bore-holing operations around the pools, and distinguished the dry, elevated location of the cathedral, productive of good sandstone providing solid foundations and building material, from the valley of the Curborough brook below (Thorpe 1950/1, 149). Later, in 1969, Christopher Taylor undertook an analysis of the street plan and identified the main town at Lichfield, south of Minster Pool, as a planned foundation, articulated around a rectilinear street grid with regular tenement plots, and probably initiated by Bishop Roger de Clinton a short time before the middle of the 12th century (Taylor 1969, 43–49). Like Thorpe, Taylor sought a topographical logic to the settlement, and was puzzled by its location on low-lying, potentially marshy ground; he tentatively connected this situation with Lichfield's pre-Conquest topography, proposing a loose cluster of smaller settlements, the first at Gaia, immediately north-west of the cathedral close, and the second on Greenhill, both higher, drier, sandstone-based sites, joined by a third at Sandford, on the evidence of the potentially early place-name, with the later planned town located in the space between them (Taylor 1969, 49). Jim Gould later added a fourth putative settlement at Stowe, around St Chad's church, where Thorpe had identified a safe crossing of the Curborough brook (Gould 1976, 8; Thorpe 1950/1, 147).

In 1982 Steven Bassett undertook a detailed topographical analysis of the morphology of Lichfield's streets and tenement plots and of the field boundaries of the surrounding township, reconstructing an original town plan based upon patterns existing at the time or observed on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, then explaining deviations from this original as the results of a rather complex sequence of subsequent developments. A few years later, Terry Slater criticised Bassett's model, noting the important effects of pre-existing settlements and roads on any newly-established town plans, and the small probability of substantial changes to a town plan once established, given the tenurial logistics involved (Slater 1986). Slater presented an alternative model of the town's evolution, based upon

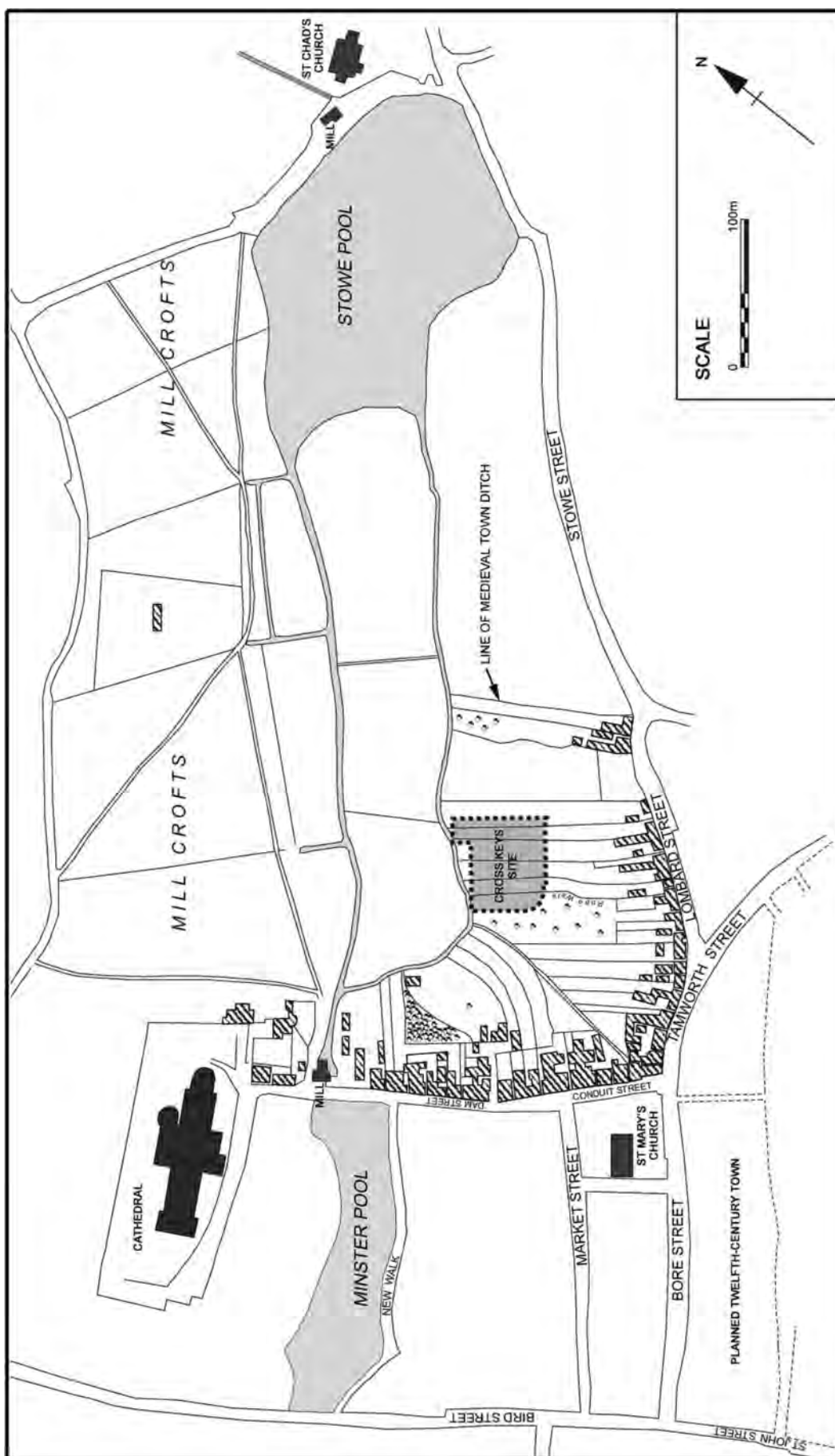


Fig. 1 Site location superimposed on selected topographical features as depicted on John Snape's *Map of Lichfield, 1781* (adapted from Tavener 2010, fig. 2)

M. R. G. Conzen's concept of town plan-units, 'areas of a town whose combination of streets, plots and buildings have a measure of morphological unity which make them separate and distinct from neighbouring plan-units', enabling the elucidation of a sequence of development for the settlement as a whole (Slater 1986, 12). In addition to his identification of many of the principles by which the 12th-century town was laid out, Slater revisited Taylor's pre-Conquest settlement nuclei, both supporting early settlements in the plan-units of Gaia and Stowe and, more tentatively, approving the possibility of early settlement in the Greenhill plan-unit; furthermore, he proposed additional early settlement along Stowe Street and around the pool-side parts of Dam Street and Bird Street, also airing the possibility of early plots along Beacon Street (Slater 1986, 24–26, 35).

Slater's model has not subsequently been challenged, and represents the current orthodoxy concerning Lichfield's development. The early chronology of this development, and in particular the origins of the various early medieval settlement nuclei, are less well established. The account of St Chad presented by Bede distinguishes between Chad's church of St Mary and the later church of St Peter into which Chad's bones were translated, and describes a 'more retired dwelling-place (*mansio*) not far from the church'; also referred to as an oratory (*oratorius*), the latter was large enough to contain seven or eight brothers reading and praying together, and it was there that Chad received divine foreknowledge of his death from the soul of his dead brother Cedd. Thorpe asserted, apparently justified by 'tradition', that Stowe represents the site of Chad's original church, with the cathedral marking the site of the later St Peter's (Thorpe 1950/1, 147); this claim was subsequently repeated by several of the authors discussed above. In fact, the tradition probably comprises no more than the texts referred to at the beginning of this paper, perhaps with the addition of the 13th- or 14th-century *Life of Saints Wulfhad and Ruffin*, which features the 'Spring of St Chad' (*fons Sancti Ceddae*) located outside the saint's hermitage, plausibly understood as a reference to the site at Stowe (Mellows 1949, 140–159; Rumble 1997). These texts more convincingly associate Stowe with the oratory described by Bede, supported by the common association of holy wells dedicated to native saints with sites of ascetic retreat (Harte 2008, I, 58). Both St Mary's and St Peter's were almost certainly located on the site of the present cathedral.

Much speculation has also focused on the possibility that an earlier Christian community existed at Lichfield prior to Chad's arrival. An Old Welsh poem known as *Marwnad Cynddylan* is implicated in much of this, as it relates a raid on *Caer Luitcoed* in the mid 7th century. Henry Bradley (1886) first proposed the connection between *Luitcoed* and the first element of the place-name Lichfield (Old English **Lyccid*), both being reflexes of the Brittonic district name **Letocaiton*, meaning 'grey wood', and his equation of the two has since been universally accepted. The location of the *caer* is less certain; the term simply denotes a city, but whether this city was the Roman site of *Letocetum* at Wall or a settlement at Lichfield is debated (Gould 1993). In the poem, a rather elliptical passage probably describes a bishop and monks as impotent to prevent the slaughter that accompanied the raid, although this translation has also been debated, and is reckoned simply as the most likely meaning by the poem's most recent editor, Jenny Rowland (1990, 174–189). Rowland has also raised the possibility that, rather than being resident at the site, the religious personnel were part of the train of an invading Northumbrian army, although her argument proceeds from an assumption that the events described by the poem can be meaningfully contextualised by what little we know of the politics of the time, which mostly derives from Bede (Rowland 1990, 133–135).

Whatever the intended situation, it is also important to note that the poem itself cannot be closely dated: Rowland (1990, 181), following Ifor Williams, favours a date soon after the events it describes, whilst David Dumville (1988, 12) has suggested a date no earlier than the 9th century; whatever the pros and cons of the respective arguments, neither scholar can point to unambiguous linguistic criteria to support their cases. Even assuming that a resident community at Lichfield was intended by the poem, if it cannot be closely dated, then it is impossible to decide between the possibilities that the poem either describes historical events and so accurately refers to a Christian community at Lichfield (complete with bishop) before the time of Chad, or inaccurately employs an anachronistic reference to the later bishops of Lichfield at a time when the raid was part of local folklore, with its historicity incapable of proof.

Thorpe (1950/1, 147) combined the testimony of the poem with later medieval speculations on the place-name to suggest that Chad was attracted to the site by traditions of a massacre of Christians in the region. The 13th-century topographer referred to earlier had suggested that Lichfield was so called because of the corpses left there after an unidentified battle (from Old English *lic*, 'a cadaver'), and this theory was subsequently attached to the St Albans legend of St Amphibalus by

the 13th-century monk Matthew Paris, a native of the abbey there (Johnson 1988, 4–7). However, arguing from the currently accepted chronology of sound changes in Primitive Welsh, Margaret Gelling (1978, 100) has proposed that Old English speakers borrowed the element **Lyccid* from indigenous Welsh speakers around the mid 7th century; local people of Chad's day are thus likely to have known that the place-name incorporated a Welsh word, and speculation as to an Old English meaning almost certainly must have occurred much later.

Meanwhile, following up the possibility of an early Christian community at Lichfield, Gould (1976, 8) suggested that Bede's silence regarding the origins of Chad's first church implied its earlier existence, supported by an enigmatic comment in Stephen of Ripon's account in which Stephen suggests that Lichfield was eminently suitable for a bishop's see. In fact, Stephen's comment follows on his relation of Bishop Wilfrid's acquisition of several estates in Mercia, given to him by King Wulfhere in return for various episcopal duties that Wilfrid had carried out there; one of these estates was Lichfield, subsequently given to Chad, and the site's suitability might just as well have been due to a church established by Wilfrid as by an earlier community. Whether Wilfrid's church, if it existed, was based on an earlier structure, cannot be answered from the text.

Finally, Steven Bassett (1992, 29–35) has suggested that St Michael's church at Lichfield might have enjoyed an earlier existence as a Brittonic church before Chad's arrival. His argument is based on a comparison of St Michael's parish with those of St Chad's, St Mary's, and the cathedral; he emphasises the considerably greater size of St Michael's parish and notes the way it interlocks with the others, indicating that they were carved out of it. However, this parochial geography emerged only during the 16th and 17th centuries; beforehand, St Michael's, St Mary's, and St Chad's had acted as chapels within the parish of the cathedral, collectively served by five chaplains on rotation, whose parishioners were allocated by the geography of the prebends that supported them (Johnson 1990, 136). The later parishes therefore tell us nothing about early medieval arrangements, and St Michael's later dominance probably derives from its situation within the primary graveyard of the region. H. P. R. Finberg (1971) suggested that St Michael's church might represent the site of St Chad's oratory; however, as discussed earlier, St Chad's at Stowe appears far more likely to represent the site of this structure. No traditions of early importance were attached to St Michael's church until 1569, when William Whitlock, a canon of the cathedral, suggested that the church's graveyard numbered alongside those of Avalon, Canterbury, York, and Lindisfarne as one of the few large cemeteries of the early English church, and that it had been consecrated by St Augustine himself; in 1575, an anonymous author extended the history of the graveyard into the Roman period by associating it with the followers of St Amphibalus (Savage 1914). More recently, Jim and Dorothy Gould (1976) have speculated that the graveyard might date back to the 5th or 6th centuries. All these conjectures are inspired by the size of the graveyard, which doubtless has early medieval origins, but need not pre-date Chad's establishment, whilst St Michael, as a guardian of souls, is a suitable dedication for a cemetery church.

So far the present discussion has sought to demonstrate that, whilst there might well have been an earlier settlement at Lichfield before Chad's time, none of the evidence thus far considered necessitates that there was, and much that has been thought to do so is less suggestive than might be hoped. Certainly, none of the early medieval settlement nuclei identified by Taylor and Slater need pre-date Chad and, other than the cathedral and almost certainly Stowe, their pre-Conquest pedigree has been assumed rather than proved. In order to move this situation forward, archaeological evidence must now be considered.

Before the Cross Keys project, archaeological excavation within the town had begun to address some of the questions raised by the studies discussed above, in particular the origin of the pools. Thorpe, whilst demonstrating that the pools were once larger than at present, was unable to ascertain dates for the alluvial layers revealed by his bore-holing project, although he suggested that during the early medieval period the valley of the Curborough brook 'was marshy and may well have contained vestiges of natural pools which formed a more or less continuous sheet of water during periods of flood' (Thorpe 1950/1, 142–144). An excavation undertaken by Martin Carver on the northern edge of Minster Pool, within the cathedral close, revealed evidence for ground-raising by the dumping of soil and sand over an earlier gradually-sloping ground surface, and for the creation of a pronounced bank top, undertaken in two phases marked by the presence of pottery dateable to a period from the 11th to the 13th centuries; he suggested that this was associated with the creation of Minster Pool by construction of a dam beneath Dam Street, and that this should dated to Bishop Roger de Clinton's creation of the town in the mid 12th century (Carver 1982b, 37–38, Trench F,

event 6). In contrast, Slater (1986, 15) suggested that the two mills recorded in the Domesday Book entry for the bishop's demesne at Lichfield be equated with the medieval mills at Dam Street and Stowe, and therefore that the pools, in their function as mill ponds, must predate 1086, although he conceded that they may have been enlarged in the 12th century.

Excavations undertaken in 1989 and 1990 by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit to the east of Carver's excavations confirmed the presence of a two-phased medieval bank construction, dated to the 12th to 14th centuries, overlying an earlier ground surface, whilst water-lain silt deposits against this bank deriving from Minster Pool contained pottery dated to a period from the 13th to the 14th centuries (Jones 1990, 3). On the opposite side of Minster Pool, at its south-west corner, excavations undertaken by Marches Archaeology in advance of the new Lichfield Arts Centre revealed a sequence of water-lain and waterlogged silts pertaining to Minster Pool, one of the earliest of which contained pottery dated to a period from the 13th to the 14th centuries; below these silts a relict ground surface was discovered, which was marked by a potsherd dated to the 12th century (Stone 1999a). Thus, to date, excavations at the northern and southern edges of Minster Pool have supported Thorpe's findings, demonstrating that it was once larger than it is now, and have bracketed a fairly precise date for its creation in the 12th century; if the pool existed before this date, it must have been considerably smaller in extent, although we should not rule out the presence of a smaller mill pond feeding the mill on Dam Street, if this was a pre-Conquest creation. Before the Cross Keys excavation, there was no corresponding information concerning Stowe Pool.

Likewise before the Cross Keys investigation, the only archaeological evidence for pre-Conquest occupation at Lichfield was revealed during Carver's excavation in the cathedral close, affirming its importance as a focus for early medieval activity. Here, evidence for a phase of timber structures followed by an inhumation cemetery was revealed, although the narrow confines of the trench rendered understanding the features difficult; Carver suggested that the cemetery might date to the 10th and 11th centuries on the basis of pottery within the cultivation soil that succeeded the cemetery, but this remains to be confirmed (Carver 1982b, 37–38). Elsewhere in the town, residual Early to Mid Saxon pottery sherds (approximately 5th to 9th centuries) found during excavation of a site to the north of Sandford Street may indicate early medieval activity in the vicinity, supporting Slater's suggestion of early medieval occupation around the northern end of Bird Street (Nichol and Ratkai 2002, 14), whilst residual sherds of 10th- or 11th-century Stafford Ware have been found on a nearby excavation to the west of Bird Street, just south of the medieval pool bank (McAree 2009, 31), and also in an excavation further to the south-east on Wade Street (Hummler 1982). Other residual finds dating to the pre-Conquest period are focused on the cathedral (Carver 1982a, 6).

Recent excavation on the southern side of Sandford Street located a ditch, parallel to the realigned south-west–north-east course of Friar's Alley, but which contained no pottery dated later than the Roman period (Tavener 2001). The ditch was approximately 2m wide and 2m deep, had been re-cut once, before silting up, and its upper fill was cut by a pit containing pottery dated to the 12th century; the excavator thus suggested that the ditch dated to some time between the Roman period and the 12th century, before the establishment of the planned town, and that it was probably too large for a simple field boundary and so may have been a territorial boundary or a large-scale drainage ditch. Unfortunately, an evaluation at the western end of Sandford Street failed to locate a continuation of the ditch, despite the positioning of a trench across its extrapolated alignment, although the excavator admitted that the small scale of the evaluation was not sufficient to rule out the presence of the ditch elsewhere on the site (Ramsey 2002). Neither of these excavations recovered evidence for early medieval occupation, *in situ* or residual, thus offering no support to Taylor's suggestion that Sandford also formed an early nucleus of settlement. Similarly, recent excavations on the north-west side of Greenhill did not recover any evidence for occupation earlier than the 12th century (Stone 1999b; Tavener and Stone 2001). Of course, such evidence may be discovered in the course of future archaeological work; nevertheless, to date the only evidence for early medieval occupation clusters close to the cathedral. The site at Cross Keys is no exception, and to this we now turn.

CROSS KEYS: THE EXCAVATION

The following summary is based on the site report written by Nick Tavener (2010). The Cross Keys site is located just beyond the south-west corner of Stowe Pool, approximately 100m north-west of the Lombard Street frontage (see Figure 1); excavation was undertaken in late 2005 and early 2006 by Marches Archaeology, during groundworks to create a sunken car park on the site (Tavener 2010,

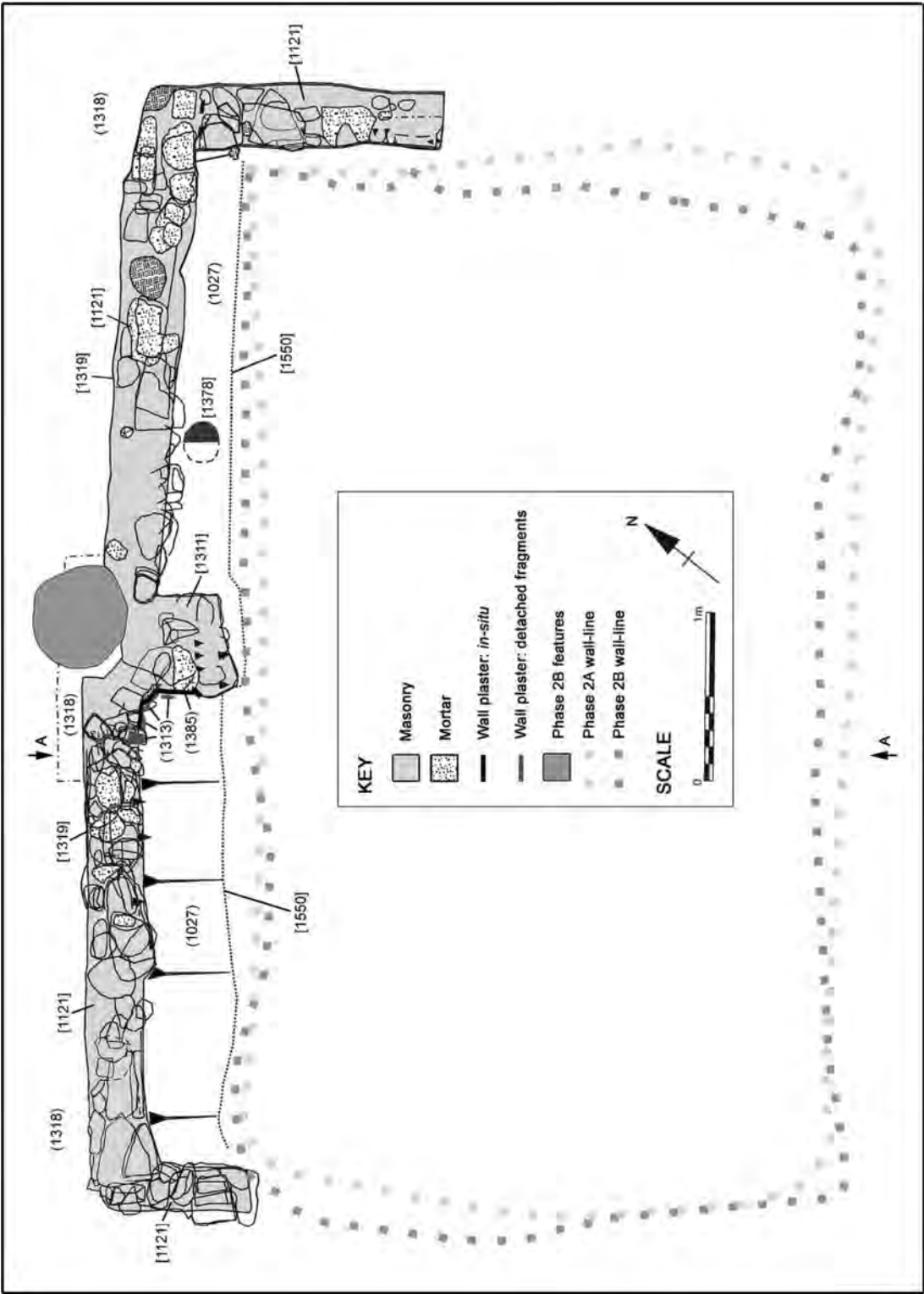
Despite the tight scheduling of the ground works, the excavation was largely successful, very little of the site escaping archaeological monitoring of some form.

The sandstone bedrock (1595) underlying the site was overlaid by a sequence of glacially-deposited layers, approximately 0.5 to 0.6m thick, comprising clay (1594), sand (1593), and silty sands (1027), the latter forming the natural subsoil horizon across the site (Tavener 2010, 7–8). The subsoil merged into the overlying topsoil via a natural transition layer (1318), whilst Tavener divided the topsoil itself into two layers, (1001) and (1008), the former containing pottery of the mid 13th to later 14th centuries, the latter the same with the addition of early post-medieval material; Tavener considered that the top of (1008) represented the medieval ground surface (*ibid.* 8). The medieval topsoil was overlaid by two further topsoil layers, (1006) and (1007), containing material dated respectively to the later 17th and early 18th centuries, and the late 18th century onwards, which may represent soils formed through use of the site as an orchard followed by a commercial nursery, shown on maps of the 18th to 20th centuries (*ibid.* 6–8). This sequence varied across the north-western part of the site due to a series of water-lain deposits relating to the edge of Stowe Pool at its larger medieval extent, overlying the subsoil as it dipped towards the former course of the Curborough brook. The excavated area was machine-stripped to the top of the subsoil, then individual features cut into it were excavated by hand. Tavener (2010, 9–10) has divided the archaeological sequence into eight phases; six of these are summarised below, with particular emphasis on the early medieval phases.

Phase 1: Fifth to Seventh Centuries

Phase 1 is concerned entirely with a structure located in the south-central region of the excavation area, seemingly isolated from any contemporary archaeological features around it (*ibid.* 10–15, 57–8; see Figures 2, 3, and 6). Only the north-western part of the building survived, having been truncated to the south-east by a sunken-featured building, to be discussed below. The remaining part of the structure comprised a stone wall footing [1121], approximately 6.7m long, aligned north-east–south-west, with returns at either end and the stub of an additional cross wall footing protruding from the interior face about half way along; the latter was given a separate context number, [1311], although it appears to have been of one build with the rest of the structure. Whilst the south-western end wall and the cross wall had been drastically truncated, the north-eastern wall extended for just under 2m, and its end was fairly evenly formed, suggesting to Tavener that it had not been truncated but formed one side of a doorway into the structure, perhaps supported by the presence of the doorway into the later sunken-featured building in the same location (2010, 10). The building had been constructed within a rectilinear pit [1319], its base 0.35m below the top of the subsoil transition layer (1318), with the walls built up against its sides, essentially forming a lining. The walls were formed from lumps of masonry bonded with boulder clay; the masonry itself was of Roman origin, comprising unshaped pieces of red sandstone bonded with a hard pale yellowish mortar, from which a twig was radiocarbon dated, calibrated to give AD 89–334 at 95.4% confidence (*ibid.* 11).

Whilst the external wall footings of the structure were between 0.3 and 0.4m thick, the central cross wall was 0.6m thick. The base of the pit sloped gradually downwards away from the edges, and this contour was followed by the base of the cross wall, but at a slightly higher level, indicating that it was partly an original feature of the cut, and partly produced by subsequent wear; however, given the softness of the natural sand into which the pit was cut, such modest wear implies minimal activity. Originally, the building cannot have been wider than the later sunken-featured building that truncated its south-eastern part, and given the survival of the north-eastern wall just beyond the end of the later structure, it is unlikely that the far side of the putative doorway comprised anything more than the eastern corner of the building, demolished along with its south-eastern side. It can therefore be plausibly conjectured that the two compartments into which the interior of the building was divided were originally roughly square, giving an approximate overall width of 3.5m. Indeed, the double thickness of the cross wall suggests that the structure was envisaged as a pair of abutting square chambers rather than a single subdivided rectangular room; this is also supported by a slight kink halfway along the north-west wall, further distinguishing the north-eastern chamber, which appears slightly tapered, from the south-western chamber. The original depth of the pit can be conjectured only by estimating the depth of the early medieval topsoil, but allowing a modest 0.1m would give a total depth of 0.45m, with an early medieval ground surface at about 78.55m OD; the door at the north-eastern end, if it existed, may have been accessed by a small external ramp, an earlier incarnation of that providing access to the later sunken-featured building.



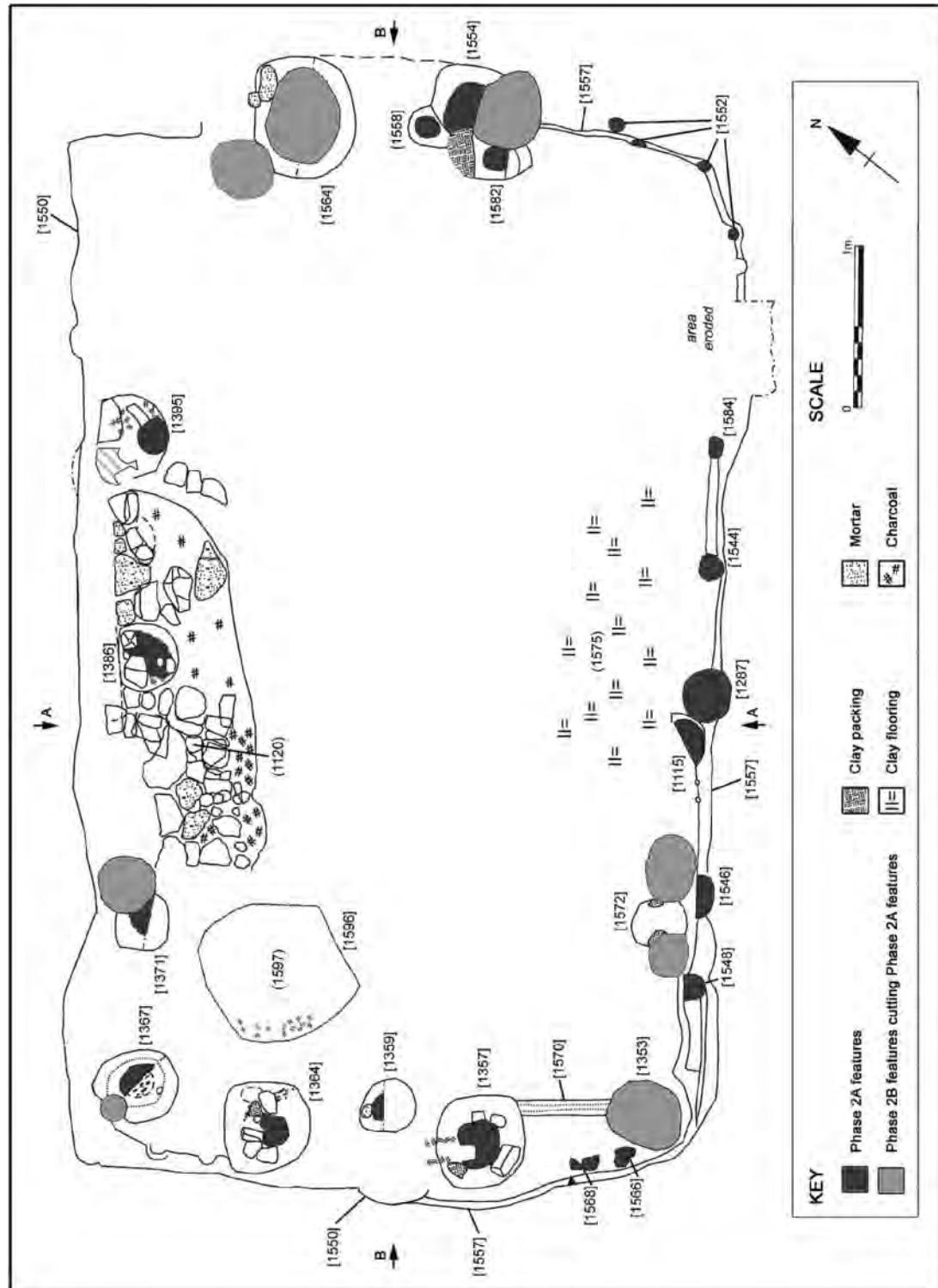


Fig. 4 Phase 2A structure (adapted from Tavener 2010, fig. 5)

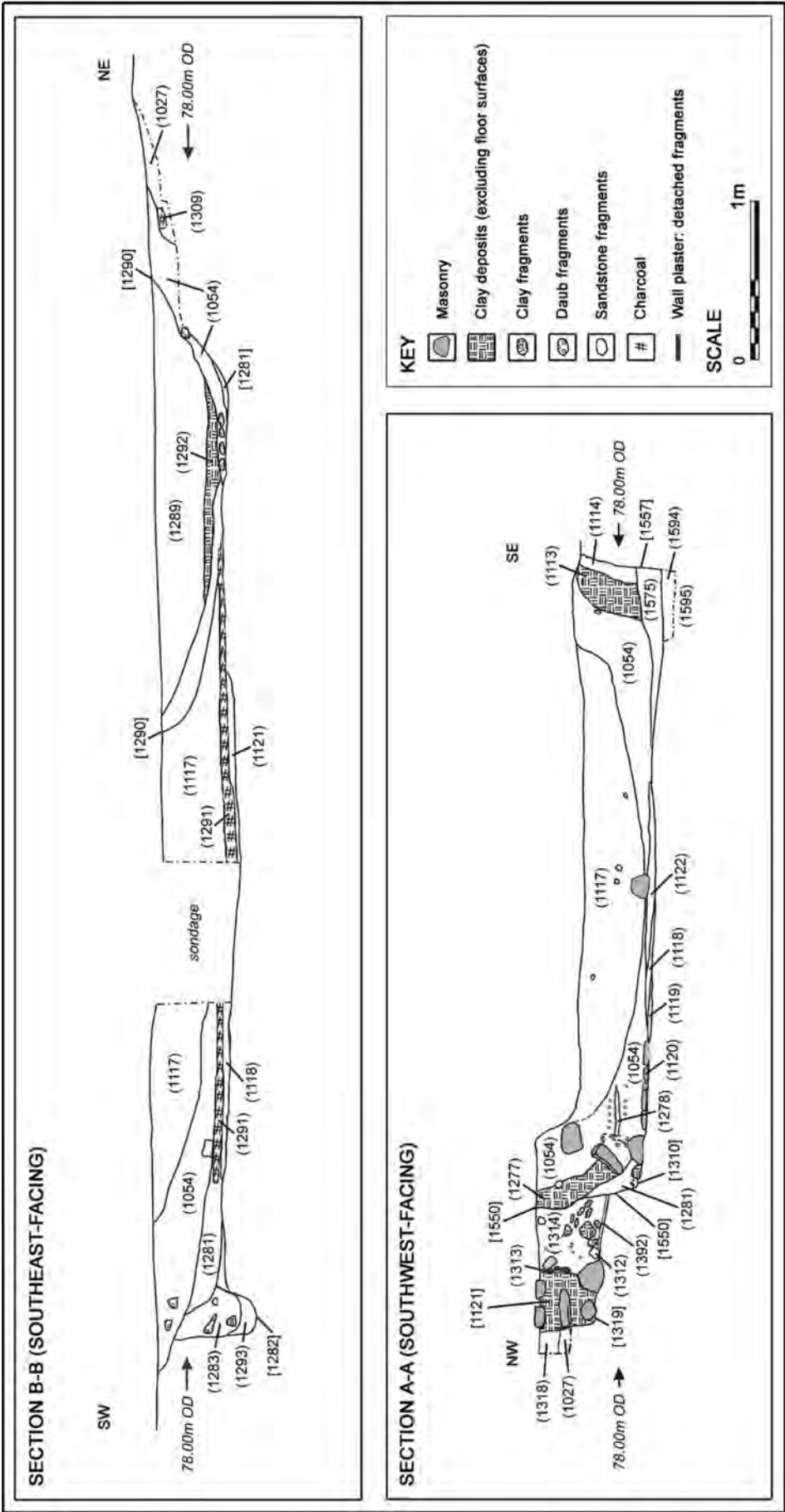


Fig. 6 Sections across Phases 1 and 2 structures (adapted from Tavener 2010, figs 8 and 10)

The interior wall faces in the northern corner of the south-western chamber were rendered with a mud plaster (1385) extending almost to the base of the pit, at least 10mm thick with a fairly smooth skimmed surface and finished with a wet brush, evidenced by vertical brush marks (*ibid.* 12). The plaster had been fired hard by the fire that destroyed the structure (see below), and additional detached fragments (1313) were found lying against the wall face, having fallen from further up; although no more such plaster was found *in situ*, the presence of considerable amounts of burnt daub in the collapsed remains of the building's superstructure in both chambers may indicate that all the internal wall faces were originally plastered (*ibid.* 13). The only feature found within the building was a single posthole [1378] in the floor of the north-eastern chamber, close to the north-west wall; given that the majority of the floor in both chambers had been truncated, other such postholes may once have existed, and no conjecture concerning purpose can be offered on the basis of the single survivor (*ibid.* 12). A thin dusting of loamy sand (1398) was found beneath the wall footing [1121] when it was removed, which Tavener (*ibid.* 12) associated with dust from the pit base that had worked its way in; on the floor surface itself a thin layer of loam had accumulated, probably during the last years of the building's life. Samples from this deposit and the overlying destruction deposit (see below) were analysed for palaeo-environmental evidence, and were found to contain primarily charred rye and free-threshing wheat grain, with small traces of hulled wheat and hulled barley, and plentiful quantities of weeds of cultivation, along with residual amounts of small mammal and fish bones (*ibid.* 58); the assemblage is indicative of the storage of crops prior to threshing. Moreover, a small twig was recovered and radiocarbon dated to give a calibrated date of AD 436–636 at 95.4% confidence (*ibid.* 13). Although wide, the date range firmly locates the initial construction and use of the building after the Roman period and before Chad's establishment of the Mercian bishopric at Lichfield.

The small amount of surviving floor space within the building was covered with a considerable amount of collapsed material resulting from its destruction by fire and subsequent disintegration; the sequence of these deposits enables something to be said about the superstructure of the building. In the south-western chamber the sequence began with flat chunks of charcoal, representing burnt timbers, in a sooty loam matrix (1392), overlain by a layer of sandstone fragments in a silty loam (1312), on top of which plaster (1313) had fallen, overlain in turn by a layer of clay containing copious amounts of burnt daub and charcoal (1314); a similar sequence in the north-eastern chamber began with a silty clay containing lumps of charcoal (1315), overlaid by a layer of silty clay containing small fragments of sandstone, burnt daub, and charcoal (1294). Finally, both sequences were sealed by a large layer of masonry fragments and clay with some small daub fragments but little burnt material (1277), representing the major part of the collapsed walls (*ibid.* 13). In both chambers, the burnt wood may represent the remains of the roof structure, whilst Tavener has suggested that sandstone fragments beneath the clayey layers represent the crumbling of the tops of the walls, now exposed to the weather, implying that the walls were composed entirely of masonry and did not simply foot a timber-framed superstructure; the overlying clay and burnt daub probably derive from the disintegration of the wall plaster, followed by the collapse of the walls themselves. Tavener estimated that the quantity of fallen plaster (1313) would have covered a wall face at least 0.3m taller than the surviving footings; likewise, he considered the amount of masonry in the tumble to indicate stone walls at least twice as high as the surviving footings. This would give a total height of at least 0.7m, although given the estimated depth of the pit, only around 0.25m of this need have projected above early medieval ground level. However, it is entirely plausible to envision that much additional tumble was cleared from the remains of the structure before the construction of the sunken-featured building. Radiocarbon dating applied to a sample of the burnt wood provided a calibrated date of AD 604–683 at 95.4% confidence, indicating that a final repair or renewal of the roof structure should be dated to the 7th century, possibly extending the life of the building past the beginnings of the Mercian bishopric (*ibid.* 13).

Phase 2A: Seventh to Eighth Centuries

The construction of a sunken-featured building (hereafter SFB) across much of the footprint of the earlier stone-walled structure is particularly fascinating, because it would have been far easier to construct it almost anywhere else on the excavated site: rather than simply excavating a new pit through the soft sandy soil for the SFB, its builders had to clear away much of the collapsed tumble of the earlier structure, and grub out its south-eastern footings, before substantially enlarging the earlier pit (see Figures 4 and 6). Tavener (2010, 18) suggests that the north-west wall of the Phase

1 structure was deliberately utilised as a 'prop' for the north-west wall of the SFB; however, such a prop would have been better fashioned from the south-east wall of the structure, enabling the builders of the SFB to excavate a pit in the clear space beside the remains of the earlier building. Instead, it must be recognised that the superimposition of the SFB on top of the earlier structure appears to have formed an important part of the builder's intent. Moreover, the surviving material represents that part of the collapsed Phase 1 structure below early medieval ground level, and it is impossible to ascertain whether any of it was retained above ground when the SFB was constructed. It is equally possible that, having cleared and grubbed out the south-east parts of the building, the later builders decided that enough was enough and left the north-west wall *in situ*.

The base of the new pit, a sub-rectangular cut [1557] measuring about 6.7m by 3.8m, was approximately 0.4m below the top of the subsoil layer (1027), and thus was perhaps about 0.6m below the early medieval ground level. This pit was partially truncated by a re-cutting related to the second phase of the SFB, but its edges survived to the south and east, and its associated postholes allow a credible reconstruction of its line elsewhere. The pit edge was near-vertical, and featured a narrow ledge or step, approximately 0.05 to 0.1m above its base, at the level of the hard pink glacial clay (1594), suggesting to Tavenor (2010, 17) that the builders had deliberately sought a firmer base for the structure than would have been provided by the overlying natural sands.

It is possible that the earliest SFB to be erected was supported on two posts, represented by postholes [1359] and [1558] positioned on the centreline at each end, perhaps also to be associated with a narrow gully [1354] located at the south-west end, which might represent the line of an earlier wall panel and was cut by posts belonging to the Phase 2A SFB (*ibid.* 27). However, the earliest definite pit cut, [1557], certainly belonged to the Phase 2A structure, as the wall-line supported on its ledge clearly related to the Phase 2A postholes. The main postholes of this building were distinguished from the second phase of the structure by their greater depth, penetrating the thickness of natural clay (1594) to touch the sandstone bedrock beneath (*ibid.* 16). Of primary structural importance was a pair of postholes at each end of the building, either side of the centre line, [1357] and [1364] at the south-west end and [1554] and [1564] at the north-east end, all of which were cut just within or on the edge of the pit. These probably supported the main load-bearing elements of the superstructure, as they were the largest of the building's postholes, and the remaining postholes were not evenly distributed around the structure but notably concentrated towards its south-western end. These included two corner posts at the south-western end ([1353] and [1367]), a line of three fairly evenly spaced along the north-western side ([1371], [1386], and [1395]), and two on the south-eastern side opposite the western two of the north-western side ([1572] and [1115]). Tavenor suggested that a northern corner post at the north-east end belonging to the second phase of the structure might have replaced and destroyed all trace of an earlier posthole here, but whilst this is possible the unambiguous absence of such a posthole at the eastern corner of the building renders it unnecessary.

The ledge running along the base of the pit sides appears to have provided a support for the studs of the structure's wall panelling, probably some form of wattle and daub arrangement attached to the outer faces of the structural posts. This walling material may be evidenced by a humic, charcoal-flecked soil (1114) found lying up against the surviving pit sides, perhaps representing its decayed remains, although a lack of daub within this material suggested to Tavenor that mud might have been used instead; alternatively, given the location of this material below ground level, essentially forming a lining for the pit, it is possible that the application of daub only commenced above ground level (*ibid.* 20, 22). A twig from (1114), possibly the remains of a wattle, was radiocarbon dated and produced a calibrated date range of AD 688–868 at 95.4% confidence, suggesting that the building, or at least this part of its wall, was constructed within a century or so of the establishment of the Mercian bishopric. In contrast to the postholes, the wall studs were set in shallow sockets, penetrating around 0.05m into the ledge and hard up against the pit side, and although not evenly spaced they were found all along the surviving lengths of the ledge on the south-east side ([1548], [1546], [1287], [1544], and [1584]) and near the southern ([1566] and [1568]) and eastern corners ([1552]).

The only exception to the near-vertical sides of the pit was found between the pair of structural posts at the north-eastern end of the building, where the evenly sloping surface of the natural sands indicated the presence of the entrance, probably the same position as the doorway to the Phase 1 structure, as mentioned earlier. A further posthole [1582] immediately adjacent to the inner face of the southern door post might represent the subsequent buttressing of a weak point. Within the building, the floor surface may simply have been provided by the natural clay, although a layer of

this material (1575), itself subsequently worn down, had certainly been redeposited in the south-eastern part of the building during its lifetime, as it sealed the backfill of postholes [1353], [1572], and [1115], but was cut by postholes belonging to the building's second phase (ibid. 17–19). On the north-western side of the floor space the clay flooring appears to have been worn through to a lens of natural sand overlying the bedrock, and was patched with pieces of sandstone and mortar (1120) salvaged from the Phase 1 structure, subsequently well-trampled; the straight north-western edge of this deposit probably followed the line of the inner wall face of the building (ibid. 18, 33). In the northern corner of the structure a patch of clay flooring belonging to the second phase covered a thin layer of loam flecked with charcoal (1399), which Tavener (ibid. 19–20) considered to be occupation debris from the first phase of the building; palaeo-environmental samples from this deposit displayed a similar composition of plant seeds to those from the Phase 1 structure, but with a greater variety of weed seeds, which can again be taken to suggest that the building was used to store crops (ibid. 59). Another patch of clay from the second phase, located in the western corner, sealed a scoop [1596] within the upper layers of the bedrock filled with a burnt loam heavily flecked with charcoal (1597); as the sandstone at the base of the scoop appeared to be heat-affected, Tavener (ibid. 20) proposed that this represents a hearth.

Phase 2B: Eighth to Tenth Centuries

The SFB was subsequently completely rebuilt, retaining only the pit, although this was extended to the north-west as cut [1550], further truncating the remains of the Phase 1 structure and destroying the north-western edge of the Phase 2A structure; rather than making the building wider, this cut formed part of a shift in the footprint of the entire building approximately 0.25m to the north-west (see Figures 5 and 6). There was probably very little, if any, time between the demolition of the Phase 2A structure and the construction of its replacement, as the surviving edges of the earlier pit, despite being formed from soft natural sand, were not eroded (ibid. 60). The structural morphology of this second phase was quite different to that of the earlier phase. The pair of substantial posts either side of the centreline of the building at its north-eastern end was retained, [1322] exactly overlying its predecessor on the northern side of the doorway, and [1328] cut slightly south of its predecessor on the southern side. However, the north-eastern wall of the new structure was positioned slightly west of these positions, and thus two more posts, [1325] and [1389], were set adjacent to those just described; Tavener suggested that together the four posts may have formed a shallow porch around the doorway (ibid. 36). Posts [1325] and [1389] were connected at the base by a burnt plank (1309), set a short distance above the base of the pit, which may have acted as a step down to the floor of the structure, perhaps the last of several (ibid. 32). At the south-west end of the building the pair of posts that characterised the Phase 2A structure was not renewed; instead, a single posthole [1282] was positioned on the centreline, presumably acting as a ridge post, its considerable depth indicating an important structural role (ibid. 34).

Unlike the preceding phase, this structure featured posts at all four corners ([1383], [1284], [1353], and [1334]), although their structural importance is ambiguous, as those at the south-western end were particularly shallow, that at the southern corner having simply been scooped out of the backfill of Phase 2A posthole [1353]. The distribution of postholes along the sides was variable: two larger postholes were spaced fairly evenly along the north-west side of the building ([1376] and [1380]), whilst three smaller ones clustered along the western half of the south-east side ([1346], [1348], and [1343]). Almost certainly of greater importance were two substantial postholes, [1276] and [1317], set one each side of the structure, about halfway along its length, at a slight distance from the external wall faces. That to the north-west, [1317], was located on the far side of the surviving wall of the Phase 1 structure, slightly cut into its outer face, about 0.8m from the Phase 2B north-west wall line, whilst that to the south-east, [1276], was about 0.6m from the south-east wall line. As Tavener noted (ibid. 14–15), although stratigraphically unrelated to the Phase 2B structure, the postholes most plausibly belong to it, as they would be rather unevenly placed in relation to the Phase 2A building. Exactly how these posts were tied into the structure is a matter for conjecture, although they can perhaps be considered with the outer door posts and the south-western ridge post to have had priority over the corner and side posts, all of which are perhaps best considered as supports for the wall panels rather than important structural elements.

The wattle and daub panelling of the Phase 2B structure survived as a substantial deposit of burnt collapsed material resulting from the final destruction of the building (see below). Additionally, some of the lower panelling survived almost *in situ*, albeit largely burnt, in particular around the northern

and southern corners of the structure and along its north-west side. At the western end of the south-east wall, the burnt wall panel (1304) included the remains of three vertical studs unevenly spaced along about 1.5m of its length ((1305), (1306), and (1307)), whilst the lower portion of the southern corner post also survived as a charcoal lump (1299); immediately north of the corner post a further wall panel (1303) survived, and included the remains of two more vertical studs, (1300) and (1308) (*ibid.* 30). The lower reaches of the eastern half of the north-west wall and the northernmost part of the north-east wall, jointly numbered (1295), also survived, in the form of a dark humic loam containing a large amount of burnt wattling; the remains of three vertical studs were distributed unevenly along about 1.2m of the north-west wall panel ((1296), (1297), and (1298); *ibid.* 31). The collapsed remnant of the western end of the north-west wall (1278) was also recorded, lying at an angle across its original position, whilst the western corner post, like the southern, survived as a carbonised lump (1285). Generally, the wall panelling was approximately 0.15m thick, comprising wattles between 12 and 17mm in diameter, closely woven between wall studs, none more than about 0.1m in diameter, and daubed with clay mixed with reeds or rushes; from the larger surviving fragments, it appears that the internal surface was smoothed and wet-brushed in a herring-bone pattern, whilst the above-ground outer wall faces (remaining as lumps amongst the later tumble) had been white-washed, presumably as a waterproofing device (*ibid.* 29). Two samples of the wattle provided calibrated C14 date ranges of AD 779–971 and AD 684–965 at 95.4% confidence, suggesting that the structure was constructed and perhaps repaired at some time within or perhaps throughout the 8th or 9th centuries (*ibid.* 61–62).

A linear groove [1310] in the base of the pit appeared to mark the position of the north-west wall line, although the destruction and subsequent settling of the structural remains had shifted the surviving wall panelling slightly out of alignment with it; its depth had been exaggerated in places by the laying of clay flooring up to the internal wall face within the structure (see below). Likewise, similar grooves were recorded elsewhere in the structure: [1579] and [1580] along the south-western wall line; and [1574] and [1336] along the south-eastern wall line. The burnt studs surviving within the panelling presumably sat within these grooves, as none could be matched to stake holes. Nevertheless, such stake holes were also recorded, although they were distributed unevenly along the wall lines and many may have been secondary. Towards the eastern end of the north-west wall four stake holes, grouped collectively as [1591], were set as two pairs, one each side of the wall panel, suggesting to Tavener a later repair or bracing (2010, 33). Likewise, in the vicinity of the western corner post, five stake holes ([1368], [1369], [1576], [1577], and [1578]) were cut through another patch of clay flooring, and were thus presumably also secondary, perhaps supporting the rather unimpressive corner post (*ibid.* 33–34). The two stake-holes labelled [1337] may also have acted as braces, as they appear to have lain outside the wall-line as represented by [1336]. Other stake holes appear to have located some of the primary wall panel studs, such as [1351] at the western end of the south-east wall, [1339] and [1340] at its eastern end, and [1332] at the southern end of the north-east wall. Stake holes [1329] and [1330] were located in the centre of the doorway in the north-east wall, and may therefore have had some temporary purpose, otherwise their stakes would have disrupted access to the building.

The movement of the footprint of the Phase 2B building to the north-west when compared to its predecessor created a gap between the south-east edge of the earlier pit and the later wall line. This was filled with a wedge of clay (1113), extending all along the south-east side of the building and around the southern corner to run along the south-west side, sealing many of the postholes of the Phase 2A structure in the process; the material was probably natural clay similar to (1594), although the presence of pockets of loam and heavy charcoal flecking caused Tavener (2010, 29) to suggest that it might have been salvaged daub from the wall panelling of the Phase 2A building. In the region of the southern corner a burnt plank was set on edge behind corner posts (1299) and stud (1305) at the western end of the south-east wall, and one more bridged the gap between (1299) and the wall stud (1300) in the south-west wall, with perhaps two more connecting wall studs (1300) and (1308); these may have acted as a revetment for the packing clay (*ibid.* 30, 34–5), suggesting either that it was deposited before the wall panelling was put in (but after the studs had been positioned), or that the builders feared the clay would exert undue pressure on the wattle.

Within the building, continual wearing of the floor required the laying of further patches of clay, (1286) in the western corner and (1397) in the northern corner, sealing the backfills of postholes [1376] and [1383] respectively, and completely sealing several postholes of the Phase 2A structure; the stone patching (1120) from the Phase 2A structure was retained between these two deposits

(ibid. 28). In the middle of the building an area of clay flooring had been fired hard by the inferno that destroyed the structure, recorded as two concentric zones, (1122) in the centre and (1118) surrounding it. Due to this firing, this clay layer could not be assigned with certainty to Phase 2A or 2B, although given the wear evident at the edges of the floor, its extent in the centre of the room must have been even greater, and the clay is thus more likely to have been laid during the second phase; at any rate, it is unlikely to have been laid at the beginning of Phase 2A, as a thin layer of silty soil (1119) beneath the clay probably represents debris from occupation predating it (ibid. 28, 36). A set of three postholes ([1350], [1361], and [1373]) in a north-west–south-east line across the floor probably represent a partition separating the south-west quarter of the building from the rest of the structure (ibid. 33, 35). Palaeo-environmental samples taken from postholes, destruction layers and wattle and daub fragments from this phase demonstrated a collection of plant remains almost indistinguishable from the samples belonging to Phase 2A, although they also included occasional fragments of charred textile fibre; again, crop storage can be inferred (ibid. 59).

The middle of the floor was covered in a thin layer of ash overlain by a layer of charcoal (1291) that probably derived from the roof structure of the building; overlying this was an extensive deposit of small lumps of half-baked clay in a muddy soil matrix (1054), amounting to several tons of material which represented the collapsed remains of the building's superstructure (ibid. 36). Taverer (2010, 37) suggested that, as there was very little well-fired daub amongst these remains, the initial inferno was largely confined to the roofing material, perhaps thatch, which fell into the building, firing the clay floor; the rest of the building, now fire-damaged and its structural integrity destroyed, subsequently collapsed, the process being gradual enough to allow the exposed or disturbed edges of the pit to weather, depositing modest sandy erosion layers such as (1281) along the edges of its base. The building was apparently allowed to decay naturally, and a soil (1117) gradually began to accumulate over the remains of the superstructure. Later still, a broad shallow scoop [1290] was cut into the hollow representing the site of the structure, and subsequently backfilled. These events remain undated, although the lack of Stafford Ware pottery associated with the structure might suggest that it was derelict by the early 10th century.

Phase 3: Tenth to Twelfth Centuries

North-west of the SFB, beyond the bank-top where the early medieval ground surface began to drop towards the Curborough brook, another early medieval structure was found, the north-western half of which continued beyond the limit of excavation (see Figure 7). Unfortunately, this part of the site was only monitored as a watching brief covering the last stages of the ground works; consequently the upper layers along the north-west edge of the area were machined away before the contractors agreed to allow salvage recording (ibid. 38). The structure comprised a series of trenches approximately 0.4m deep and 0.4m wide ([1483], [1502], [1505], [1507], and [1517]), cut into the local early medieval topsoil (1512), each of which carried a series of earth-fast posts evidenced by sockets in its base, a walling technique known as 'post-in-trench' construction. The building comprised two rooms: a larger eastern space, approximately 11m long, with a wide doorway at the eastern end of its south-east wall, and a smaller western room, approximately 7m long; the width of both rooms can only be determined by further excavation beyond the north-west edge of the car park, although the increasingly steeply sloped ground surface on which the building was constructed suggests that the building cannot have been too much wider. The eastern room appears to have been constructed before the western, as the south-east wall trench of the former, [1502], was cut by the eastern end of the south-east wall trench of the latter, [1507] (ibid. 39); whether these were successive phases of a single construction programme or more widely spaced events is a moot point.

Only trench [1502], the south-east wall of the eastern room, was entirely excavated. Its base contained eight post sockets, fairly evenly spaced for the most part: from south-west to north-east [1531], [1540], [1529], [1523], [1525], [1527], [1519], and [1521]. That part of the trench containing the easternmost two posts was slightly deeper, and was backfilled with a different material, suggesting to Taverer (ibid. 40) that it had been re-cut; the dating of this renovation was indicated by pottery from the fill (1501), which was dated to the 12th century. To the west, a single, small sherd of Stafford Ware (dated to the 10th to mid 11th centuries) was recovered from posthole [1523], providing a *terminus post quem* for the building's construction, whilst pottery dated to the 12th or early 13th century was recovered from the weathering cones of post settings in both old and new sections of the trench (postholes [1531] and [1519]), giving an indication of the period in which it was demolished. The degraded remains of squared wooden posts were found in postholes [1529]

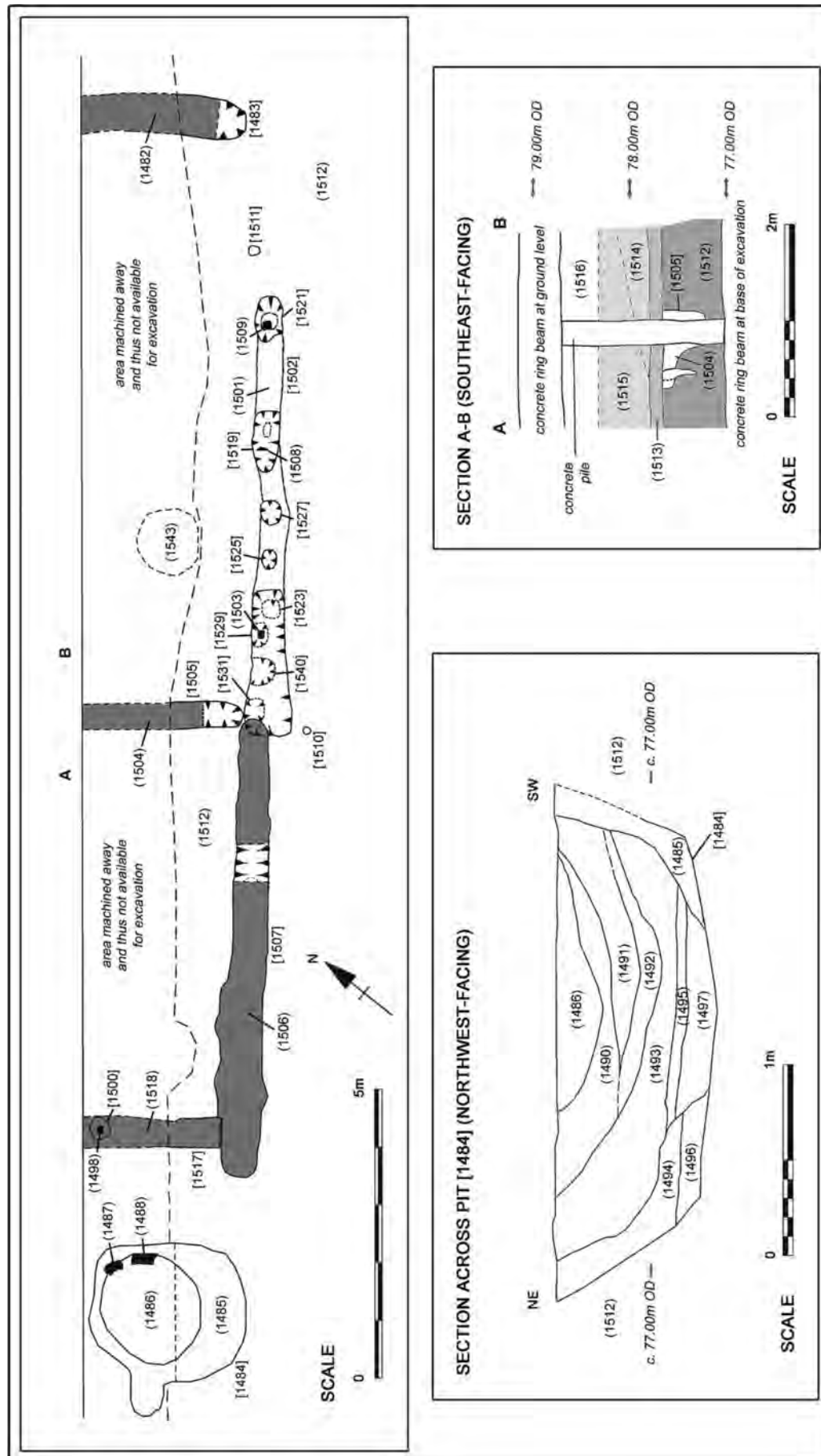


Fig. 7 Phase 3 structure (adapted from Tavener 2010, figs 15, 16, and 17)

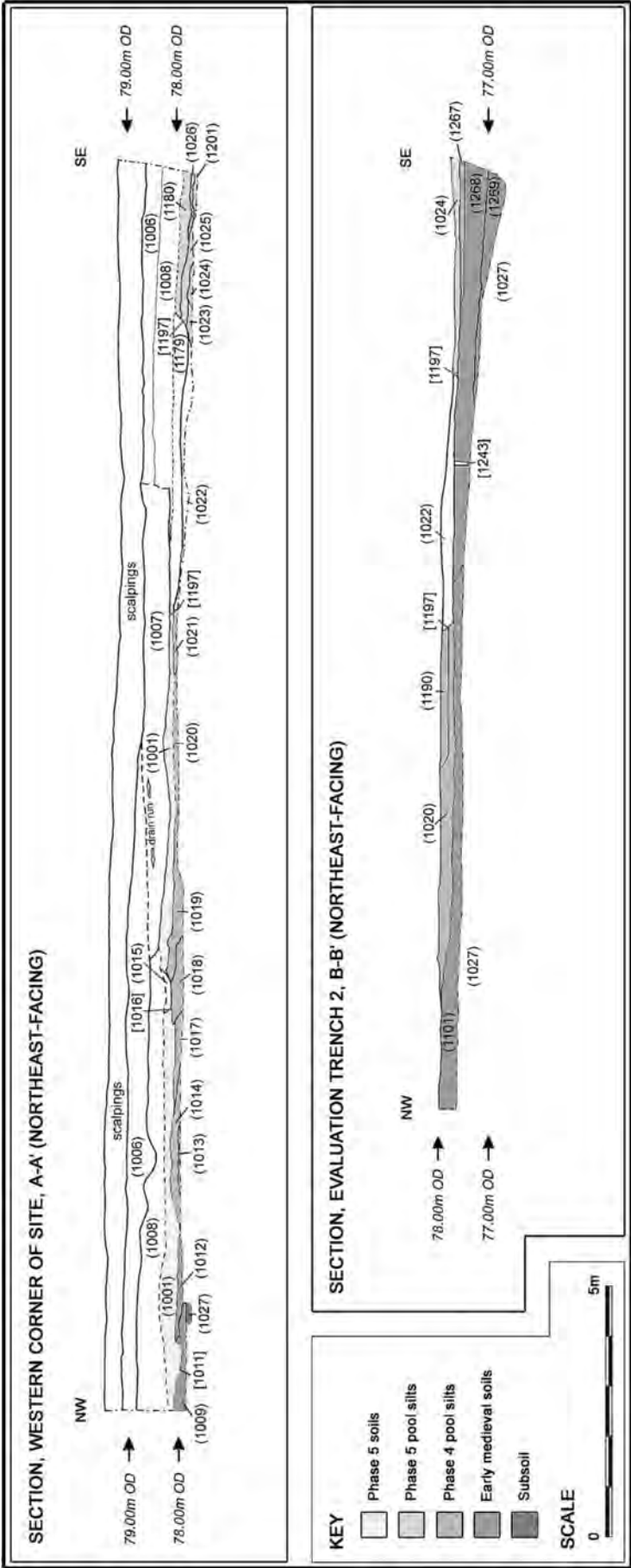


Fig. 8 Sections in western part of site (adapted from Tavener 2010, figs 28 and 29)

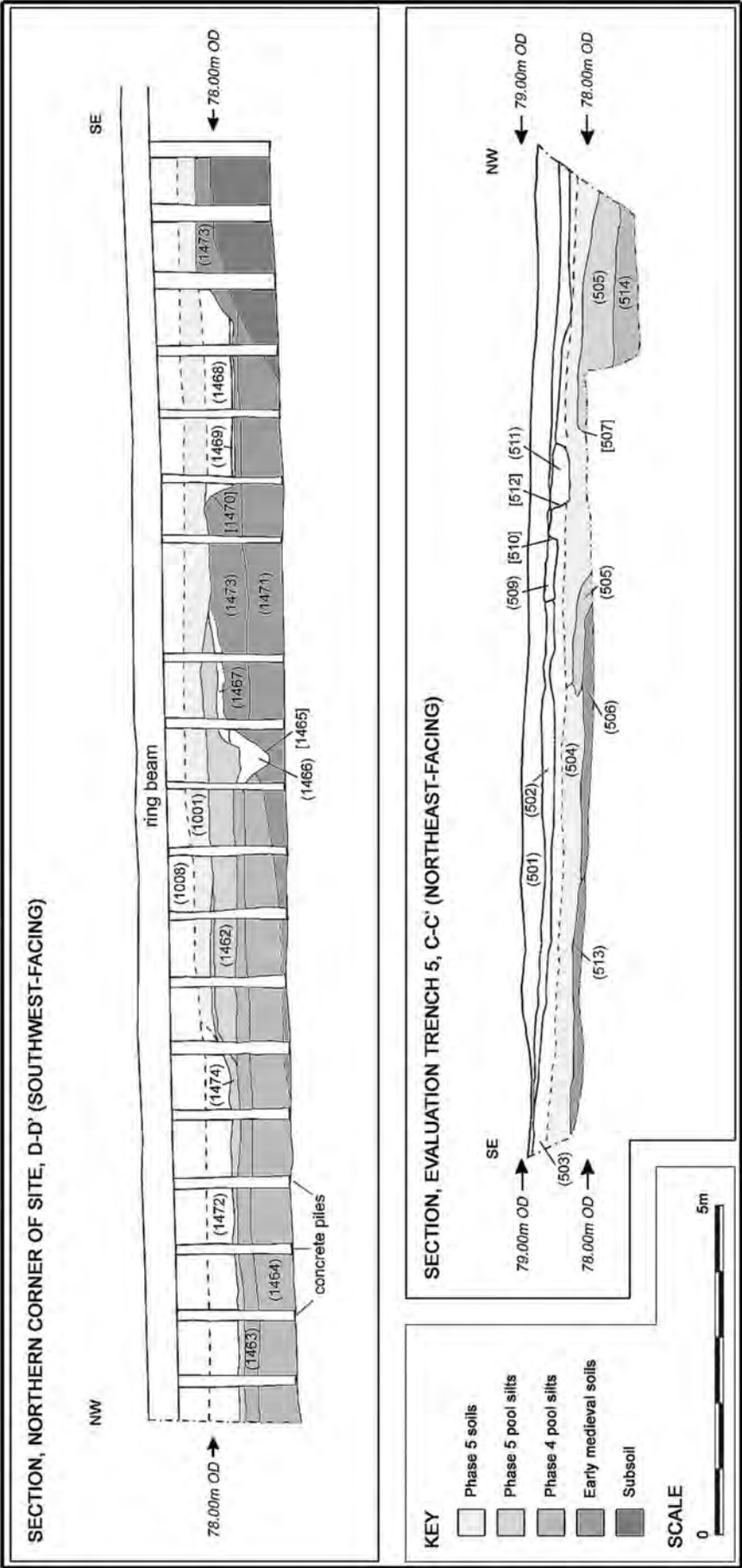


Fig. 9 Sections in northern part of site (adapted from Tavener 2010, figs 24 and 32)

(post (1503)), [1519] (post (1508)) and [1521] (post (1509)). A similar post, (1498) in posthole [1500], was observed in the fill (1518) of trench [1517], the south-west wall of the western room. A slot excavated across this room's southeast wall, [1507], recovered two substantial sherds of an 11th- or 12th-century cooking pot from the weathering cone of a post pipe, again indicating the period in which it was demolished (*ibid.* 39). The fill of the trench contained a small amount of metal-working debris, perhaps grouping it with the middle trench [1505]: although only the south-east end of the latter was excavated, over 1kg of metal-working debris, comprising the remains of five smithing hearth bottoms, was found in its base (*ibid.* 39–40). Palaeo-environmental samples from the fills of some of these trenches found evidence for smaller quantities of the same charred plant remains identified in the samples from Phases 1 and 2, but also included woodland or hedgerow species, such as bramble, elderberry, and sloe (*ibid.* 41).

A large pit [1484], approximately 2m in diameter, was found about 2m west of the building, and was stratigraphically contemporary with it. It appears to have contained vertical timbers, of which two, (1487) and (1488), survived; these may have formed part of a barrel placed in the pit and packed on its outside edge with backfill (1485). Within this container, the lower fills comprised layers of clean silty sands (1491), (1493), and (1497), alternating with layers of compacted dark organic material (1492) and (1495), probably composed of lenses of rotted wood and straw; the pit also contained a sizeable quantity of metal-working waste. On the basis of palaeo-environmental analysis of samples from (1495), which was interpreted as the waste of flax retting or linseed oil extraction processes, Tavener (*ibid.* 42–43) conjectured that the pit may have been used for retting or tanning. The upper fills of the pit, (1489) and (1490), presumably relate to a period post-dating the use of the pit, and contained 13th-century pottery, perhaps intruded from the overlying pool silt (1486). In his analysis of the iron-working waste from both building and pit, Phil Clogg suggests that only a small amount of smelting and some intermittent smithing occurred in the vicinity; Tavener drew attention to a large circle of burnt soil (1543) observed in the eastern room but machined away before recording could take place, which may have been a hearth, possibly associated with metal-working (*ibid.* 63, 68–69). Nevertheless, the modest scale of this periodic iron-working indicates that the structure was not a dedicated blacksmith's workshop, and the close proximity of the retting or tanning pit, suggests a more generally utilitarian use for the structure and its immediate environs.

Phase 4: Twelfth to Thirteenth Centuries

This phase is concerned with the creation of Stowe Pool, either *de novo* or as the substantial enlargement of a pre-existing pool located beyond the north-western boundary of the site. The silts associated with the presence of the pool were confined to the northern and western third of the site, their extent defined by the contours of the underlying soil profile as it dropped towards the Curborough brook (see Figures 2, 8, and 9). Importantly, these contours did not run parallel to the presumed south-west–north-east course of the Curborough brook, but arced gradually southwards across the site, leading Tavener (*ibid.* 2) to posit the course of a small stream just west of the western limit of the site, running northwards from the area of the Market Place, later fossilised in the irregular joint between the rear plot boundaries of properties fronting Tamworth Street and Conduit Street (see Figure 10). Such a stream may have been canalised to form the open sewer running from St John Street, via Bore Street and the Market Place, to Dam Street, first recorded in the 18th century (Greenslade 1990, 99). The creation of Stowe Pool inundated both the main Curborough brook valley and the hollow formed by this stream, and the associated silts were largely recorded in early evaluation trenches and in various watching briefs undertaken at the northern and western fringes of the site; it was thus not possible directly to equate many of the deposits recorded at different points across the site, although qualitatively and stratigraphically they must belong to the same large-scale episodes of deposition. The following summary attempts to emphasise the build up of similar sequences across the site rather than focusing on single locations.

In the southern corner of the site, the local early medieval topsoil was probably cultivated to some degree and developed into topsoil (1089), which contained pottery dated to the late 12th or early 13th centuries; at the very edge of the stream hollow, this was overlain by a thin layer of pale grey silt (112), probably deposited at the margins of the newly-formed pool (Tavener 2010, 48–49). Further north-west, in the western corner of the excavation area and in Evaluation Trench 2, the early medieval bank sloping towards the Curborough brook and its small tributary was located (see Figure 8). At the top of the bank the local early medieval topsoil was probably represented by layers (1009) and (1101), the latter containing a sherd of Stamford Ware (dated from the mid 9th to

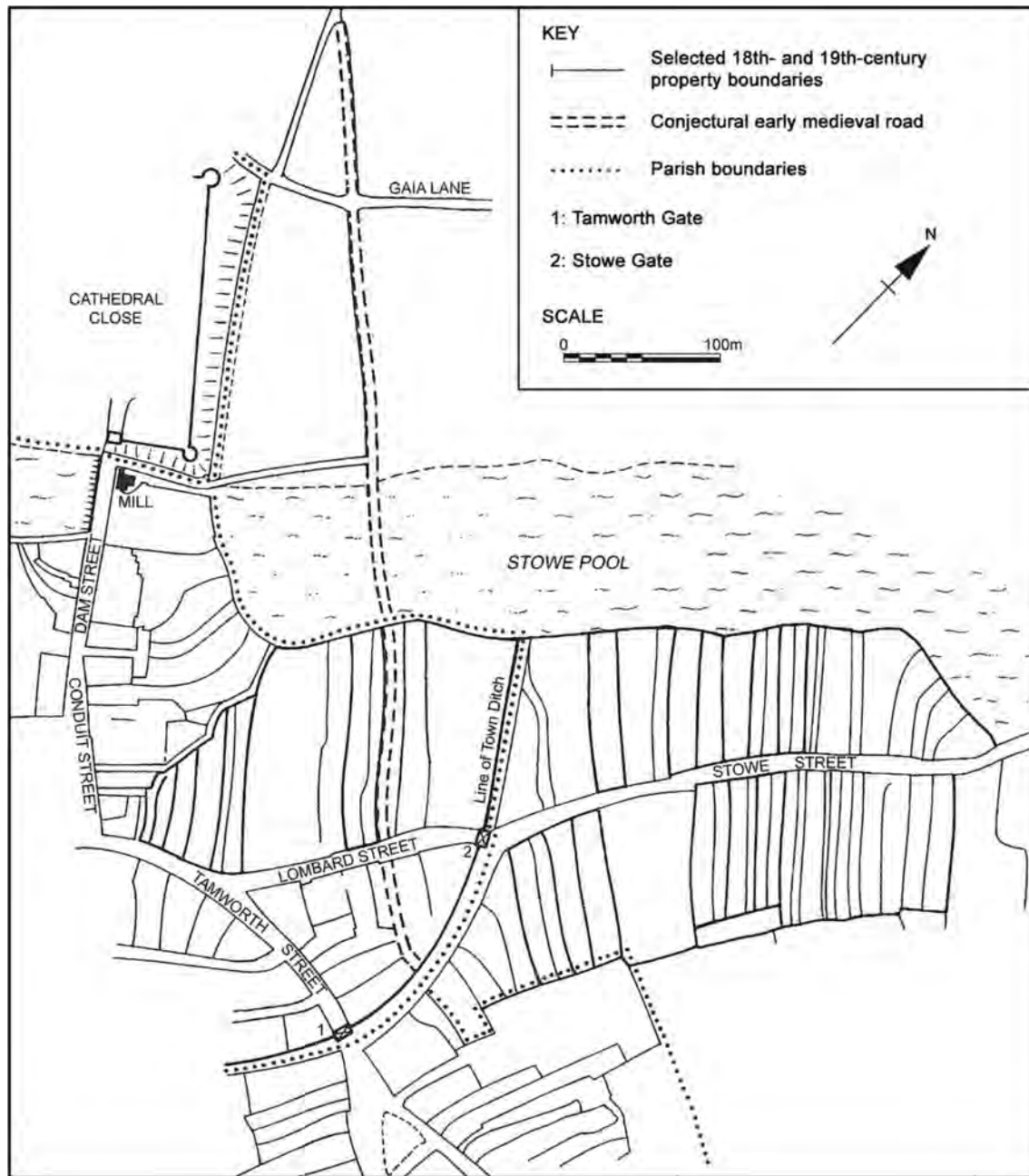


Fig. 10 Stowe Street plan-unit (adapted from Slater 1986, fig. 3)

the early 13th centuries; *ibid.* 75). As the slope began gradually to increase, (1101) became (1268), which itself overlay (1269), the two layers together representing a gradual thickening of the soil above the sloping glacial subsoil, which dropped away more steeply. As with the area further south, the creation of the pool appears to have encouraged the formation of thin silts at its edges, here represented by several sequences, given here from lowest to highest in each case: (1014), (1017), (1018), which contained a small amount of Whiteware and can perhaps be dated to the mid 13th century, and (1019) (*ibid.* 76); (1020), overlaid in different places by (1021) and (1190), both containing pottery dated to the 12th or 13th centuries (*ibid.* 43); and (1267).

To the north, the early medieval topsoil (1512), into which the Phase 3 structure had been cut, was sealed by the thin pale grey silt (1513). South-east of this, a little further up the bank, a sequence of four early silts was recorded, successively deposited at the edge of the pool: (1405), (1402), (1405), which contained 13th-century pottery, and (1400). Further to the northeast, in Evaluation Trench 5, the top of the early medieval bank was located, and again demonstrated successive layering of soil deposits, (506) overlying (513); the bank was overlain by silt (514), which was laid down at the

edge of the pool, and contained large quantities of fragmentary freshwater bivalve molluscs (*ibid.* 53; see Figure 9). North-west of this location, further out into the Curborough brook valley, a sequence of early silts was recorded at a lower level: (1538) overlain by (1537), in turn overlain by (1536); the latter two deposits contained pottery dated to the 12th to 13th centuries (*ibid.* 54). Finally, in the northern corner of the site, the early medieval bank was again located, yet again displaying successive soil layers, here (1471) overlain by (1473), sloping downwards more gradually than the glacial subsoil beneath (see Figure 9). The earliest silt observed in this location was a mid-brown sandy layer (1464), overlain further out into the valley by a thin silty sand (1479), overlain in turn by a thin grey silt (1478).

Several points emerge from this brief tour of the valley fringe. First, the early medieval bank was consistently recorded as a distinct yet gradual slope formed from successive soil layers overlying the glacial subsoil, perhaps formed by a combination of colluvial and alluvial processes, the former washing topsoil down the bank, the latter resulting from the periodic flooding of the Curborough brook; the top of the bank, mapped in Figure 2, was recorded at about 78.2m OD across the site, which compliments the 78.55m OD ground level earlier estimated for area around the SFB, further away from the edge of the valley. Secondly, where pottery was recovered from the earlier silts, it has consistently been dated to the 12th or 13th centuries, indicating that the large body of water now known as Stowe Pool was created in the 12th century, probably as part of the massive modification of the landscape involved in the creation of the planned town. Finally, the early medieval bank beneath the early silts was recorded at a minimum of 76.8m OD in the northern corner of the site, indicating that, if an earlier incarnation of Stowe Pool existed, its water level was almost certainly below this height.

Phase 5: Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries

This phase represents the majority of the remaining cut features (see Figure 2). Of these, the site was dominated by three fence lines aligned north-west–south-east; each fence comprised a series of postholes, none penetrating more than about 0.3m into the glacial subsoil. Fence-line 2 was the longest, extending from the south-eastern edge of the site and terminating in the vicinity of the pool edge, and is most convincingly interpreted as a property boundary; Fence-line 3 also finished next to the pool, but extended only about 15m to the southeast; Fence-line 1 comprised three post-holes recorded towards the eastern corner of the site, and may once have extended further, but all archaeological deposits immediately to the north-west were destroyed during early ground works (*ibid.* 43–46). Many of the postholes contained pottery sherds, and in her analysis Stephanie Rátkai has proposed that the small size of most of these indicates that they found their way into the postholes from the surrounding topsoil deposits after the removal of the posts; moreover, from an analysis of the relative proportions of Whiteware, a fabric predominantly in use from the mid 13th to the end of the 14th centuries, Rátkai has suggested that Fence-lines 2 and 3 may have been removed towards the end of the 13th century, whilst Fence-line 1, which also contained pottery dated to the 15th and 16th centuries, may have been in use for longer, or even have been a later feature (*ibid.* 77). It is more difficult to establish when the fence-lines were put in, although given the relationship of the northwest ends of Fence-lines 2 and 3 to the edge of the pool, they are unlikely to predate the mid 12th century.

Rátkai has applied a similar spatial analysis to the other cut features of this phase, with illuminating results. Two clusters of features can be identified that comprised both features containing no Whiteware and features with a very little amount of the fabric among the sherds recovered from their fills; the association of the latter with the former in both cases suggests that the features may have been contemporary, their backfilling dating to around the mid 13th century (*ibid.* 77–78). The first cluster was located north and west of the north-western end of Fence-line 3, notably just below the top of the early medieval bank, and comprised pits [1182], [1184], [1186], [1188], and [1204]; pit [1204] may have begun as a tanning or retting pit; it had been cut through some of the silts deposited in Phase 4, although subsequent re-cuts might suggest that its pool-edge location exposed it to periodic inundation (*ibid.* 50). This cluster was also associated with a host of wooden stakes driven into the shallows at the pool edge, perhaps part of an attempt to reclaim extra land here; the remains of one were radiocarbon dated and provided a date of *c.* 1200 (*ibid.* 51). The second cluster of features was located towards the southern corner of the site, beyond the south-eastern end of Fence-line 3, and comprised pits [1091], [1095], [1097], [1104], [1106], and [1108], and sunken hearth or oven (1157), with an outlier to the north in the form of cess pit [1072]; lime lenses in the

fill of pit [1095] suggest it may have been used in the tanning process (ibid. 49–50, 77). Clearly both clusters represent small-scale industry, broadly dateable to the first half of the 13th century, all notably clustered in the south-western part of the site around Fence-line 3, which probably formed an integral part of this complex. Only the rectangular pit [1178], also dateable to this period by its pottery assemblage, was located further north-east, at a distance from both clusters.

Rátkai identifies a later area of activity to the east of Fence-line 2, characterised by features containing a greater proportion of Whiteware, and thus probably backfilled in the late 13th or 14th centuries. These comprise pit [507] towards the northern corner of the site, again notably positioned just below the top of the early medieval bank, pits [1124] and [1138] towards the eastern corner of the site, and beam-slot [1031] about halfway between the two corners. Pits [1124] and [1138] are of uncertain purpose, but were probably associated in their use with pit [1132] and Fence-line 1. Pit [507] featured lenses of lime amongst its fills, and was thus probably associated with tanning (ibid. 77). The treatment of cow hides along the edge of the pool during the 13th and 14th centuries corresponds with the presence of horn cores in many of the water-lain pool silts, such as (1514) on the north-western edge of the site, and (1474) and (1476) in the northern corner. These overlay some of the Phase 4 deposits mentioned earlier, and it is evident that pool silts continued to accumulate during the later 13th and 14th centuries; several, again overlying those discussed earlier, can be explicitly dated to the period by the presence of Whitewares within them, for example: (1270) in the southern corner of the site, (1514) towards the western corner, (1514) along the north-western edge, and (505) towards the northern corner (see Figures 8 and 9).

Phase 6: Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries

This phase witnessed continued activity to the east of Fence-line 2, where pits [1029] and [1132] were excavated. As mentioned earlier, the fence posts of Fence-line 2 were probably no longer in place at this time, and indeed, pit [1140], which contained sherds of Cistercian Ware and Midlands Purple Ware dated to the 15th and 16th centuries, was excavated directly across its line. The earliest cultivation soil to seal the pool silts around the northern and western fringes of the site, (1101), contained pottery sherds of the 13th and 14th centuries, although many of these may have been residual, as silts were still accumulating during that period, as discussed above. However, by Phase 6, the pool silts appear to have been drying out, and it is probably during this period that cultivation was extended onto the former pool edge to any great extent. It is possible that property boundaries across the site were marked by hedges at this time, as no trace of fence-lines postdating those of the earlier phases was found.

DISCUSSION

The excavation at Cross Keys is extremely important for several reasons. First, the 5th- or 6th-century structure is *unique* in Britain, and is thus of national importance. Second, the remains of the SFB are of outstanding quality, providing evidence that can usefully contribute to the study of these structures at a national and, indeed, international level. Third, understanding both structures is fundamentally important to understanding the early medieval history of Lichfield at local, regional, and national scales. The following discussion attempts to tackle all three issues, offering some tentative interpretations, and promoting their continued study.

The Fifth- or Sixth-Century Structure

This structure is of such singular distinctiveness that it is difficult to know how to begin to interpret it. It appears to have stood in isolation, although the south-eastern boundary of the site was only about 10m away; nevertheless, its lack of association with other structures or features close by is striking. Its masonry construction is very unusual for this period, although there is nothing locally or regionally to which it can be closely compared. Its plan, although hypothetical, can plausibly be reconstructed as two roughly square chambers arranged side by side, to the extent that, although the structure was of one build, the dividing wall was twice as thick as the external walls, giving the impression of two separate chambers abutting one another. The construction material, the plastered internal walls, and the fact that Lichfield subsequently became an episcopal settlement, combine at first impression to suggest that the building may have had an ecclesiastical purpose of some kind.

The quintessential ecclesiastical building is, of course, the church. Excavated churches dated to the 5th and 6th centuries in Britain are rare, and all that have been so identified were constructed

from timber. In England, post-Roman timber churches have been proposed at St Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln, and St Mary de Lode, Gloucester, although the dating evidence is not secure for either building (Steane 2005; Bryant and Heighway 2003); whilst, at Wroxeter it has been suggested that the Roman stone-built *frigidarium* was used as a church attached to the timber villa built across the baths basilica in the 6th century, although this is a case of re-use rather than construction *de novo* (White and Barker 1998). In a recent synthesis of the evidence for stone churches in Wales, Aimee Pritchard (2009) emphasises the present lack of evidence for either stone or timber churches, and argues that the current orthodoxy – that ecclesiastical stone architecture was introduced into Wales in the 12th century with the Norman Romanesque style – should be broadened to allow the possibility of earlier stone churches; however, she also suggests that these were probably more likely to appear from the 9th century, in the context of contacts with the church-building traditions of Anglo-Saxon England, and points to Bede's association of stone architecture with connections to the contemporary Roman church, and his explicit statements concerning the timber churches of the Irish and the Britons. In another recent synthesis, Conleth Manning (2009) has shown that in Ireland stone churches were exceptional in the 8th and 9th centuries, and began to appear in any numbers only from the 10th century; the same appears to apply to early medieval Scotland (Yeoman 2009). Furthermore, the few early timber churches excavated in western Britain typically comprise a single rectangular chamber; and subsequent eastern 'chancels', usually a much later phenomenon, are also typically narrower than the western 'nave'. At Cross Keys, however, the eastern chamber is the same width as the western chamber, albeit slightly tapered. Moreover the structure's putative eastern doorway is inappropriate for a church, and whilst the presence of this feature is not beyond dispute, the sunken floor would be highly irregular.

The plan and sunken floor can more easily be compared with late-Roman and early medieval mausolea. These are rare in Britain, although several were included in the large late-Roman cemetery at Poundbury in Dorset (Spary-Green 1982). However, the Cross Keys building compares particularly well with the 7th- or 8th-century sunken mausoleum or *hypogeum* at nearby Repton (Derbyshire), which in turn compares constructively with a Continental example, the 7th-century Hypogée des Dunes in Poitiers. Both examples are at the later end of the funerary tradition that began with semi- or fully-sunken Roman burial chambers (Crook 2000, 62), and are strikingly similar in plan to the Cross Keys building, although again the putative eastern door in the latter does not correspond with the eastern focus of the later buildings. Nevertheless, the chambers of the Cross Keys example are about 2.5m long internally, and thus both could easily host burials aligned east–west. The major obstacle to interpreting the Cross Keys building as a funerary structure, however, is its complete lack of association with human remains, whether primary or secondary: if it was built as a mausoleum, it appears not to have been used as one.

Remaining, for the moment, with an ecclesiastical interpretation, it is possible that the Cross Keys structure represents some kind of monastic cell, although again it is easier to find later Anglo-Saxon referents for its stone-built rectilinear form than contemporary or earlier Brittonic examples. For example, excavations undertaken at Whitby in the 1920s revealed several modest rectangular stone buildings close to the church divided into living and sleeping areas (Cramp 1976, 227); at Jarrow, Rosemary Cramp excavated a rectangular room, attached to the end of a larger hall and divided into two small chambers (a small oratory and a living room), which she interpreted as a cell, analogous to that employed by Cuthbert on Farne as described in his *Lives* (ibid. 239); and of particular relevance to Cross Keys, Philip Rahtz excavated a sunken-floored building in the Anglo-Saxon monastic settlement on Glastonbury Tor, which he interpreted as a cell (Rahtz 1970, 24–26, 31–32). Implicit in these comparisons is the importance of the monastic culture of Rome and Gaul, focused at monasteries such as Lérins, which the founders of Anglo-Saxon minsters, such as Benedict Biscop of Wearmouth-Jarrow, sought to imitate. If any of these comparisons are valid, then earlier connections between western Britain and western Gaul may offer an avenue of further investigation.

Yet the structure need not have been associated with an ecclesiastical settlement; it might equally have provided accommodation for lay people. Setting aside its masonry construction, the sunken form of the building is, of course, frequently encountered within Anglo-Saxon settlements primarily located in the central, southern, and eastern regions of Britain and in the settlement archaeology of northern Germany and southern Scandinavia (see below). However, it is important to note that western Britain has also produced evidence for an architectural form based around a sunken pit. This was first observed in the settlement constructed over the late-Roman cemetery at Poundbury, outside the walls of Dorchester, Dorset, and broadly dated to the 5th and 6th centuries, which featured a

group of small houses comprising wattle superstructures erected over pits (Sparey-Green 1996); Christopher Sparey-Green has recently proposed that these were part of a monastic settlement due to their association with the cemetery (Sparey-Green 2004). Subsequently, James Gerrard has noted other examples of this building form in Dorset, all associated with a form of pottery produced in the late-Roman and possibly early post-Roman periods (Gerrard 2010), whilst Ewan Campbell and Alan Lane have pointed to another possible example of the type in a 6th- to 7th-century settlement in Penally, Pembrokeshire (Campbell and Lane 1994). None of these examples was of masonry construction, but they serve to broaden the possible sources of influence for the sunken form of the Cross Keys structure.

Unfortunately, the negligible wearing of the building's soft sandy floor, and the complete lack of small finds found within, appears to rule out intensive occupation such as might be expected in a living space, whether lay or ecclesiastical. It is possible that the structure featured a suspended floor, but no evidence for this was found, unless the burnt timbers within its demolition deposit, interpreted earlier as roof timbers, should instead be understood as floor timbers; however, such a floor would not correspond with the putative door at the eastern end of the building, although, as mentioned above, the presence of this latter feature can be disputed. Nevertheless, it is worth considering another option. As described earlier, palaeo-environmental analysis of a thin occupation layer on the floor of the structure, presumably from late in its life, revealed a collection of plant remains commensurate with the close proximity, perhaps storage, of unprocessed cereal crops. Similar signatures were found in the samples taken from the later SFB (the sunken-featured building), suggesting similar usage, and it is possible that the Mercian episcopal community constructed the SFB on the site of the stone structure because they had already begun to use the earlier building for this purpose; the radiocarbon dates certainly allow the stone building to have continued in use throughout the 7th century and perhaps into the 8th. In this case, the sample is not representative of the earlier, pre-Mercian use of the structure, although the possibility cannot be ruled out that the structure had a more utilitarian purpose from the beginning.

The Sunken-Featured Building

Unlike the stone structure, the sunken-featured building fits readily into an architectural tradition commonly associated with Anglo-Saxon settlement (Hamerow 2002, 31–35; Tipper 2004). As mentioned above, the palaeo-environmental evidence recovered from samples taken from both phases of the SFB indicates that crop storage may have been an important part of their purpose, although the small hearth (if that is what it was) in the western corner of the first phase structure suggests that this building also fulfilled a different role at some point, however briefly. In a synthesis of the evidence for such structures in England and across the North Sea in northern Germany and southern Scandinavia, Helena Hamerow (2002, 32–33) notes the general, although not exclusive, position of these structures as subsidiary buildings, frequently acting as weaving sheds or storage houses, and associated with larger ground-level houses; given the lack of evidence for domestic occupation in the Cross Keys structure, such must have been the case here, and the presence of the Curborough brook and its small tributary to the north and west suggests that the associated dwelling was situated beyond the edge of the site to the south or east.

The Cross Keys structures are exceptional for the amount of detail preserved in their remains, and as such can contribute to the regional and national study of these buildings. It has been suggested, chiefly on the basis of evidence excavated at West Stow in Suffolk, that some examples featured suspended timber floors over the pit. Both phases of the Cross Keys building appear not to have contained such a feature, as the floor surfaces associated with them demonstrated continual wear, necessitating several patching operations, and the doorway at the north-eastern end possessed a ramp up from the base of the pit to the outside, the second phase featuring what may have been the lowest of several wooden steps or duckboards at the base of this ramp; moreover, given the extent of preservation of burnt wattle and daub within the destruction deposits, especially towards the bases of the walls, it is inconceivable that something of such a floor would not have survived as carbonised planks towards the bottom of these deposits. The Cross Keys SFB was thus typical of what may have been the great majority of these structures, in which the base of the pit formed the floor surface (Hamerow 2002, 31).

The Cross Keys building can also be compared to the early medieval settlement excavated nearby at Catholme, about 10km to the north-east (Losco-Bradley and Kinsley 2002). The Cross Keys structure was larger than any of the SFBs at Catholme, and its superstructure appears to have been

more complex in both phases. At Catholme the SFBs belonged to a common type in which the pit features had a single posthole at each gable end, presumably supporting some form of ridge pole; variations on this form recorded at other sites tend to involve the replacement of the two gable posts with four corner posts, or the use of gable posts and corner posts together (Hamerow 2002, 31). In contrast, the Cross Keys SFB featured unique arrangements in both phases, apparently supported in the first phase on two pairs of posts positioned either side of the centre line at each end, and in the second phase on a similar pair at the north-east end, a gable post at the south-west end, and two lateral posts halfway along the sides; these arrangements would certainly repay informed conjecture on the part of historic buildings specialists. Despite these unusual features, the Cross Keys structure may also illuminate an aspect of the Catholme structures previously obscure: eight out of the thirteen SFBs excavated there possessed rings of stake holes or postholes around the edges of the pit bases, interpreted as settings for revetments around the pit sides, whilst it was considered that there was 'no direct evidence for the walls' (ibid. 88, 99). The evidence from Cross Keys suggests that the walls were formed around stakes and small posts positioned around the edge of the pit, and thus the Catholme stake holes should probably be understood to have performed a similar function and so provide direct evidence for the wall structure. Applying such a principle more widely may indicate why the pit sides of so many SFBs escaped the effects of erosion and retained their near-vertical profile for so long: they were effectively retained by the walls, which, contrary to some reconstructions, were set within the edge of the pit rather than around its top.

Early Medieval Lichfield

Finally, the fundamental effect of the Cross Keys excavation on our understanding of early medieval Lichfield must be evaluated. It is prudent to begin with Slater's assertion of the antiquity of the Stowe Street plan-unit, where, he claims, 'the main focus of Lichfield lay before c. 1150' (Slater 1986, 18–22; see Figure 10). Slater's argument depends on three factors: the regularity of the Stowe Street plot series, suggestive of deliberate planning; the manner in which the line of the mid 12th-century town ditch appears to cut across this plot series on the north-west side of Stowe Street, indicating that the plot series predated the ditch; and the manner in which the rear boundary of the plots fronting Tamworth Street joins irregularly with the rear boundary of the plots fronting Conduit Street, indicating that the latter, when created with the main town in the mid 12th century, were forced to integrate with the pre-existing Stowe Street plan-unit, of which Tamworth Street formed the south-western end.

Slater's theory prompted the need for archaeological evaluation at Cross Keys, and it is thus ironic that the results of the excavation cast doubt on two of his assertions. First, as discussed earlier, the irregular joint between the plots fronting Tamworth Street and Conduit Street was almost certainly due to the presence of a hollow, probably created by a small stream flowing from the vicinity of the Market Place; the joint was probably created only in the 15th or 16th centuries, when the accumulated silts of Stowe Pool, which had flooded the hollow, had dried out sufficiently to enable reclamation of the land. Second, the earliest evidence for the division of the land at Cross Keys into plots comprises the fence-lines assigned to Phase 5, which were set up no earlier than the mid 12th century, as they appear to respect the edge of Stowe Pool, which was created around that time; even then, only Fence-line 2 can unambiguously be interpreted as a property boundary extending from the pool to Lombard Street. It may be that the boundaries between the burgrave plots were earlier marked by hedges, but there is little compelling reason to assume this, as it is quite possible that the plot series post-dates the foundation of the planned town. Slater's final point, concerning the town ditch, applies particularly to the plots on its eastern, outer side; however, he states elsewhere that 'the area immediately outside the line of the town ditch and Tamworth Gate ... was once probably clear of buildings for some 250ft', and connects this observation with the requirements of defence, suggesting that the area was soon in-filled with less regular plots once such requirements were superseded (ibid. 18). Applying the same reasoning to the Stowe Gate, the plots immediately beyond it were not cut through, but instead represent similar later in-filling, awkwardly inserted into the slightly trapezoidal space between the ditch and the closest plot boundary beyond it (see Figure 10); it is perhaps now more plausible to suggest that Stowe Street and Lombard Street were lined with burgrave plots after the establishment of the planned town, either in the second half of the 12th century, or even later during the 13th century, as the population of the town expanded.

If Slater's arguments for the antiquity of the Stowe Street plan-unit can be questioned, the Cross Keys excavation has demonstrated that the south-west end of its area hosted the earliest settlement

so far discovered at Lichfield. However, if it was not associated with the Stowe Street plan-unit, how did this early occupation fit into the overall settlement morphology? Slater's assertion of the antiquity of the line of Stowe Street and its continuation along Lombard Street remains convincing, and it appears quite probable that further settlement associated with the SFB, and perhaps with the earlier stone structure, was located closer to Lombard Street. A further possibility is offered by the conjectural line of a road proposed by both Bassett (1982, 96) and Slater (1986, 14, 16, 20), which crossed the Curborough brook north-east of the current crossing at Dam Street, and can be extrapolated from a footpath and field boundaries north of the cathedral close, possibly connecting with the roads meeting at Tamworth Gate. Slater argued that this was redirected through the Market Place and via the line of Dam Street when the planned town was created in the mid 12th century, the earlier route having been inundated by the creation of Stowe Pool. Another achievement of the Cross Keys excavation is confirmation that the pool was indeed created, at least at its enlarged medieval extent, around the mid 12th century. This conjectural road is aligned with the north-east edge of the Cross Keys excavation and, together with Lombard Street to the south-east, and the valleys of the Curborough brook and its small tributary to the north and west, creates a well-defined plot in which the early structures were located. Archaeological evidence for the existence of this road is greatly to be desired, and may exist where it crossed the Curborough brook, in the form of a causeway or paved ford, now located beneath reclaimed land at the south-west end of Stowe Pool.

Figure 11 illustrates these possibilities, also incorporating Slater's conclusions concerning the other parts of the town in order to present a conjectural plan of early medieval Lichfield. It is notable that most evidence for early medieval settlement, whether direct as in the cathedral close and at Cross Keys, or indirect as with the residual pottery found at the eastern end of Sandford Street, clusters on the cathedral and around the edge of the Curborough brook valley at the places where it is crossed by roads coming from the south-east. Bassett (1982) argued for the antiquity of many of the roads and field boundaries in the wider area surrounding Lichfield on the basis that they formed a coherent co-axial system. Whilst their origin in the prehistoric period remains to be demonstrated, the extent to which many of these features provided a framework for later developments is impressive. In particular, the planned town appears to have been influenced by a pre-existing field boundary on its south-east edge, as the streets of the grid plan here are not parallel, having been forced to converge slightly. The line of this boundary appears to be continued by the rear boundary of the plots on the southern side of Stowe Street, and the whole appears to follow the contours of the natural topography, perhaps separating cultivated land on the flatter ground to the north-west from the higher ground to the south-east, which runs from Borrowcop Hill, through Greenhill to Stowe Hill. The lines of Stowe Street, Lombard Street, and Market Street may have demarcated the other side of this area, beyond which lay the Curborough brook valley, with early medieval settlement clusters sandwiched in between; this second boundary might provide a context for the ditch discovered to the north of Sandford Street, as it appears to have been aligned with the southern side of Market Street.

Despite their largely co-axial form, many of the roads in the vicinity of the town appear to focus on the site of the cathedral enclosure and the area immediately surrounding it. They may nevertheless have pre-Mercian origins, as the Cross Keys excavation has demonstrated beyond a doubt that there was some form of settlement at Lichfield before the mid 7th century. Unfortunately, the nature of this settlement is difficult to characterise, as the stone building that currently forms its sole representative is frustratingly difficult to interpret. As described in the introduction to this paper, previous speculation concerning Lichfield's origins has focused on the possibilities of an earlier Brittonic monastery or bishopric. It is certainly possible that such a site was appropriated and developed by the Mercian episcopal community; something similar may well have happened at Eccleshall, held by the bishop of Lichfield in 1066, where the place-name uses an Old English loan word *eccles*, which probably entered the language in the 7th century from Primitive Welsh **egles* ('church') and was used to describe Brittonic churches (Cameron 1968; Sharpe 2002, 147).

However, it is just as possible that the earlier settlement at Lichfield was of a more secular character. It is now accepted that the place-name Lichfield applied to a district or territory in the 7th century, as well as the focal settlement within that territory (Horovitz 2005), and Chris Lewis (2007, 137–140) has suggested that the suffix *-feld* was sometimes used by Old English speakers specifically to label Brittonic territories, as observed elsewhere in Archenfield (the territory of Ergyng) and Englefield (the territory of Tegeingl). The earliest use of the Brittonic name **Letocaiton* to label both a territory and its focal settlement occurred during the Roman period, when the station at Wall was named *Letocetum*, and it is certainly possible that the pre-Mercian settlement on the site of Lichfield

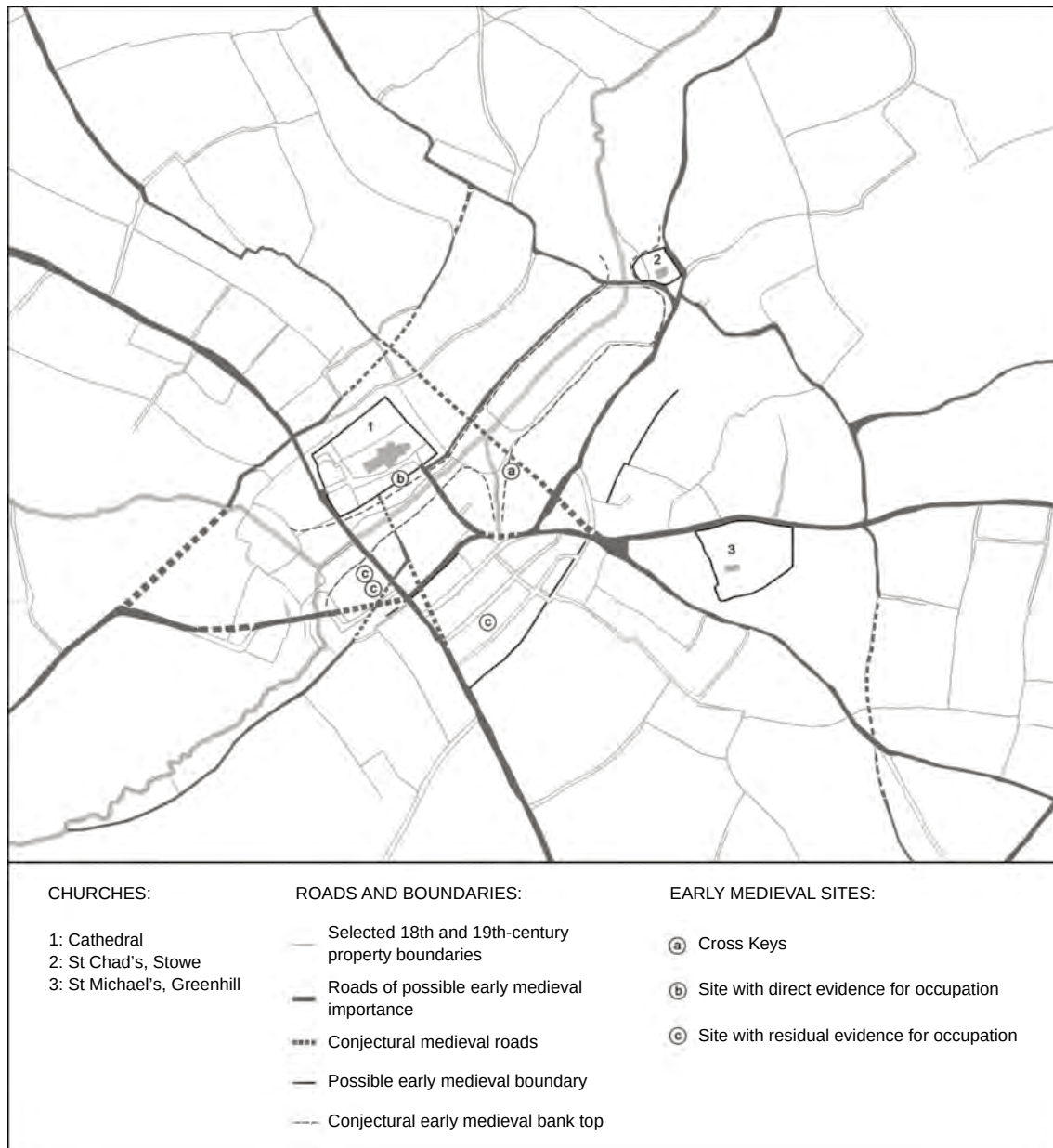


Fig. 11 Early medieval Lichfield

continued this practice. Lichfield thus needs to be seen in the broader context of Mercian settlements founded at earlier territorial centres, be these ecclesiastical or secular in character; as such it needs to be placed alongside the Anglo-Saxon churches founded elsewhere in the diocese at Wroxeter and Chester, both of which appear to have hosted earlier Brittonic settlements, and also the royal estate centre established at Penkridge, which may, in a process similar to that at Lichfield, have inherited its name from a Brittonic settlement that itself succeeded the Roman station at *Pennocrucium*. Both Wroxeter and Penkridge appear to have acted as territorial centres for early Anglo-Saxon peoples, the *Wrocensæte* and *Pencersæte* respectively (Hooke 2001).

The early episcopal settlement at Lichfield also needs to be understood in the context of other 7th- and 8th-century minster foundations in Britain. The association of a core area of settlement around the cathedral with outlying foci, in particular the retreat at Stowe and the probable burial ground at Greenhill, can be observed elsewhere: for example, at Ripon, one of Bishop Wilfrid's foundations, a similarly expansive early medieval landscape appears to focus on the cathedral and nearby churches, with several cemeteries identified in the surrounding area (Hall and Whyman 1996). Meanwhile, the Cross Keys SFB and perhaps also the 10th- or 11th-century structure on the pool

edge, whilst of utilitarian character, can be understood in terms of the industrial and agricultural service areas that have been discovered at the edges of monastic settlements such as Portmahomack in Scotland (Carver 2008). Indeed, at a time when most settlement was dispersed across the landscape, the concentration of population at a minster, or important secular site, must have relied on similarly concentrated supplies of food, implicit in the terminology of ‘lord’-ship, derived from Old English *hlāford*, ‘loaf guardian’, and may go some way to explaining the substantial size of the SFB, and perhaps also the quality of its stone-built predecessor. It is therefore important also to seek to understand Lichfield not simply in terms of the settlement, but also in terms of its territory and its relationship with outlying settlements, such as those that formed the bishop’s vast Lichfield estate in 1086. The discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard within this hinterland suggests that the early medieval history of Lichfield, both as a settlement and as a territory, will continue to contribute to local, regional, and national research for many years to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

HE	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> [referenced by Book and Chapter numbers] C. Plummer (ed.), <i>Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica</i> (Clarendon, Oxford, 1896); Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds), <i>Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969).
SHC	<i>Collections for a History of Staffordshire</i> (Staffordshire Record Society) [referenced by volume].
VW	Stephen of Ripon, <i>Vita Wilfridi</i> [referenced by Chapter numbers] Bertram Colgrave, <i>The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus. Text, Translation, and Notes</i> (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1927).

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KNAVES CASTLE: A LOST MONUMENT ON OGLEY HAY NEAR THE SITE OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE HOARD

WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NAME OGLEY HAY

DAVID HOROVITZ

In July 2009 the great Anglo-Saxon treasure known as the Staffordshire Hoard¹ was brought to light, with other associated artefacts found nearby in November 2012. The finds were made some 4½ miles south-west of Lichfield in a field at Ogley Hay and close to Watling Street, which bisects the county horizontally. A little over ¾ of a mile to the west of the site, on the south side of Watling Street, lay an enigmatic earthwork, sometimes described as a tumulus, long known as ‘Knaves Castle’.² Valuable overviews of the historic landscape of the Ogley Hay area published in 2010 and 2011 (including a paper in these *Transactions*) record that when road-widening was carried out in 1971 no sign of any barrow or ditch was found at Knaves Castle, and it had then been concluded that the feature was probably natural.³ In addition, in a paper presented to a symposium on the Staffordshire Hoard at the British Museum in March 2010 it was claimed: ‘that Knaves Castle really existed is likely, but what it actually was remains unknown’.⁴

In fact, much has been recorded about the feature, even if some of the evidence is equivocal, and its enigmatic but distinctive characteristics are deserving of close investigation in their own right. The feature has special significance, however, in the light of its proximity to the Hoard find-spot, self-evidently a site of the greatest archaeological importance. This paper collates such information as is presently available on the now-destroyed feature known as Knaves Castle and its vicinity, including nearby Watling Street; considers and suggests what type(s) of monument could have been represented by the feature in the light of that evidence; and examines the rôle that may have been played by the feature in the Anglo-Saxon period.⁵ The paper concludes with a consideration of some local place-names which seem to point towards the existence of a prominent personality in this area during the Anglo-Saxon period.

KNAVES CASTLE AND THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Almost 3½ miles west of the Roman settlement at Wall (*Letocetum*), the site of Knaves Castle is on high ground, formerly a great heath, noted for its commanding views:⁶ in 1823 it was included in a list of only ten eminences and views in the whole of Staffordshire published by *The Gentleman’s Magazine*,⁷ and in 1752 it was even said of the site that ‘[t]he prospect from it is perhaps as beautiful as from any part of England. Here we view great part of Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and several counties in Wales. In short, there is an open and delightful prospect to every point of the compass’.⁸ Even allowing for hyperbole (it remains unclear how the different counties could possibly have been identified by the author), it is evident that the site enjoyed noteworthy views.

1 The suggestion in Leahy et al 2011, 201–20 that the hoard be known formally as the ‘Staffordshire (Ogley Hay) Hoard’ has not been taken up by the owners of the hoard, Birmingham City Museum and Stoke-on-Trent Museum.

2 At NGR SK04960646; latitude 52.65588°, longitude -1.92826°.

3 Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 150; see also Leahy et al 2011, 207; Hooke 2011a, 9.

4 Jacobsson 2010.

5 I welcome the opportunity to record my indebtedness to Dr Andrew Breeze, Dr Keith Briggs, Professor Richard Coates, Graham Evans, Dr Paul Garwood, Dr Della Hooke, Dr Kevin Leahy, and (especially) both Professor Nicholas Higham and Professor Howard Williams for their comments on an early draft of this paper, or advice on specific points that have arisen. My thanks are also due to the anonymous referee for constructive observations, and to Dr Nigel Tringham for his editorial care in reshaping the paper for publication. Responsibility for all errors, omissions, hypotheses, speculation and conclusions is mine alone.

6 The feature is listed in Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record, site 2664, where it is tentatively identified as a possible Bronze Age barrow, Iron Age fortification, post-Conquest forest lodge, or medieval motte and bailey castle.

7 *GM*, XCIII (Part 2), 25. The 1:10,560 OS map of 1887–8 shows a Bench Mark labelled ‘Knaves Castle’ to the west of the monument and a spot height of 496.3 feet.

8 Shaw 1798–1801 I, 11, citing Richard Wilkes.

The first known reference to the place is found in a deed of c. 1308 which mentions ‘... a place called Cnaven castle ...’.⁹ Before the Conquest a ‘knafe’ (from Old English *cnafa*¹⁰) was a youth or servant, although by the thirteenth century the term had also come to mean a person of lowly position or doubtful honesty, and in due course the meaning ‘rogue’ came to prevail.¹¹ The epithet *castel*, a post-Conquest introduction of Norman-French origin, was often used for earthworks and ancient remains: notably the Iron-Age hillfort at Maiden Castle in Dorset, but also more locally Castle Ring hillfort at Cannock Wood (4 miles north of Knaves Castle),¹² Castle Old Fort hillfort (just over 2 miles to the south-east of Knaves Castle),¹³ and Castle Croft Roman site near Chesterfield (2 miles east of Knaves Castle).¹⁴ Otherwise, it is often found in a mocking or ironical sense for ancient fortifications in names such as Sparrow Castle, Spider’s Castle, and Owl’s Castle.¹⁵ Indeed, the expression ‘Knaves Castle’ (found scattered throughout many parts of England, but mainly in the central area¹⁶) is doubtless an ironical appellation which seems to have been applied in central and western England from at least the latter part of the thirteenth century to small-scale (immature or inferior) earthworks and structures.¹⁷

The next reference to Staffordshire’s Knaves Castle is found in the 1649 ‘Oliverian’ Survey of the Estates of Lichfield Cathedral (following Parliamentary confiscation).¹⁸ Under the heading for Freeford prebend, it records that in the hamlet of ‘Hameridge’ (Hammerwich¹⁹) the owner of the prebend had the tithes growing on ‘the heath from Norton Way to Watling Street and so up to Knaves Castle Cross standing on the heath’.²⁰ From this we might suppose that there was at that time, or had been within memory, a cross close to or at Knaves Castle, and as we shall see Knaves Castle indeed stood on the east side of the junction of two roads to the north and one to the south of Watling Street (all since obliterated), and if not at Knaves Castle itself the cross may have marked that junction.

The first description of Knaves Castle is found in the manuscript version of *Monumenta Britannica* compiled by the antiquary John Aubrey (1626–97), which records that:

Within a myle & halfe of Wall westwards within 20 or 30 yards of Watling Street upon a large Comon is a place called Knaves Castle itt is Circular & hath some three ditches about it I believe the Diameter of it is

9 Shaw 1798–1801, II, 58. The deed remains untraced. Shaw is known to have been a reliable transcriber, but we may suppose that the original word was *castel*, since ‘castle’ would not be expected in the early 14th century: *OED* Vol. I, ‘C’, 162. The place was one of the boundary markers of an area of land and heath bordered by Watling Street, Crane Brook (which crosses Watling Street from the north-west a little over a mile east of Knaves Castle), and a field called Starehurst, probably from Middle English *stare* ‘starling’ and Middle English *hurst* ‘copse, wooded hill’, and so ‘the wooded hill with the starlings’. Starehurst remains unlocated: Strerrecrofte Lane (now Hammerwich Road on the north side of Hammerwich) is mentioned in 1453 (*VCH* XIV, 259 fn95), but that name is probably from the Sterre family, who lived in the area c. 1400 (*VCH* XIV, 265), and in any event the area of land is said to have lain in Norton manor: Shaw 1798–1801, II, 58.

10 Clark Hall 1960, 71.

11 *OED* Vol. I, ‘C’, 725, although *cnave* is defined only as ‘boy, servant’ in Stratmann 1891, 125. As Thomas Blount noted in 1656: ‘Knafe ... was not of old used as a name of disgrace; or contempt (as now it is) but as the name of some kind of Servant or Laquay’: T.B. 1656 (unpaginated). The suggestion (Duignan 1905, 97) that *Cnafa* was an Old English personal name is unfounded: it is unrecorded in the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* website [accessed 7 October 2011].

12 Horovitz 2005, 179.

13 *Ibid.*, 178.

14 *Ibid.*, 178.

15 Parsons and Styles 2000, 146.

16 In SHROPSHIRE: ‘a planted tubular eminence ... (Knafe’s castle)’: Scott 1832, 307. This is Neves Castle, *Knaves Castle* 1710 (PN Shropshire, VI, 162) near the south-west end of the Wrekin (NGR SJ614071), a slight roughly oval-shaped earthwork, possibly of Iron Age or Romano-British date; *Knaves Castle* at Forton Heath near Montford Bridge, said to have been a circular building (*TWAS*, 5 (1967), 158); *Knaves Castle Meadow* in Shawbury, the location of a small building in 1900: PN Shropshire, 5, 212. In DERBYSHIRE: *Le knaue castel* recorded in 1296: PN Derbyshire III 523. In HEREFORDSHIRE: *Knaves Castle* north of Presteigne: Hartshorne 1841, 268. In GLOUCESTERSHIRE: *le Knaves Castle* in Lower Slaughter, recorded c. 1603: PN Gloucestershire IV, 59; Yeates 2008, ix, 76; and another *Knaue Castle* recorded in 1392: *ibid.* I, 208. In BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: *Knaves Castle* recorded in Newport Pagnall: RB, Vol. 6, 131. In DEVON: *Knaven Castle* in Plympton St Mary, recorded in 1807: PWDRO, 81/A/55. Information on these places is scanty, but where available suggests that most were probably diminutive. It would seem that the expression ‘Knaves Castle’ was widely recognised from at least the 13th century.

17 It is worth recording that the word ‘knaves’ has not been identified with any other term for a structure or earthwork in early records.

18 Lichfield Record Office (Church Commissioners’ deposit). Neither John Leland (1502–1552) nor William Camden (1551–1623), the well-travelled antiquaries and topographical historians, mention Knaves Castle in their respective works: *Itinerary*, published in 1549, and *Britannia*, which first came out in 1586.

19 For a possible connection between the name Hammerwich and the Staffordshire Hoard, see Parsons 2010. The present author is not persuaded that there is any likelihood of such link.

20 Cited in the *General Report to the King in Council from the Honourable Board of Commissioners on the Public Records* (1837), 396, 402.

not above 20 yards at most the midst of it is not above 2 or 3 yards Square, and hath a breastwork about it in the nature of a keep. One gate, or entrance South.²¹

Aubrey's original manuscript, which remained unpublished until 1980, had been completed by April 1690, but we know that by 1670 he had amassed much of the material included within it, and so the account may pre-date that year.²² However, the description of the monument is not based on his own examination but is found on an interpolated sheet which had been sent to him by one of his many correspondents, John Stansby, an astrological enthusiast and antiquary. Aubrey records in a headnote to the sheet that 'This paper I received from my obliging friend Mr John Stansby a clerk of the Chancery of St Clements Inn, London. He was a Derbyshire man by birth'.²³ Stansby himself, about whom little is known,²⁴ tells us that his grandfather had held land two miles south-east of Knaves Castle, and it is possible that he or his family may have retained connections with the area.²⁵

Stansby's brief account is frustratingly puzzling. In particular, the nature of the central feature is uncertain. The reference to 'not above 2 or 3 yards Square' may be intended to suggest that it was not more than two or three square yards in area, but seems more likely to refer to a feature that was square in plan, with sides of two or three yards. A 'breastwork' was a military term for a defensive fieldwork thrown up breast-high, and a 'keep' the innermost and strongest structure or central tower of a medieval castle, usually of stone.²⁶ The description seems to tell us that a central feature was square, with sides of two or three yards, surrounded by a low breastwork or bank, presumably also square, set within triple circular ditches with a diameter (internal?) of some sixty feet and an entrance to the south.

In 1686 the indefatigable polymath Dr Robert Plot (1640–1696) stated in his great *The Natural History of Staffordshire*:

I could no where meet with [the origin] of that treble entrenchment on the South side of the Watlingstreet, near Frogg-Homer, call'd Knaves-Castle, which yet is not all above 40 yards diameter, or 50 at most: in the



Fig. 1 Robert Plot, *Map of Staffordshire*, 1682 (1684). Extract (not to scale). This is the first map to show Knaves Castle, which is marked by a pennant denoting an 'Ancient Fortification'.

21 Fowles 1980, I, 388–9. The cited extract is transcribed from the facsimile manuscript, and differs slightly from the published transcription where spelling and punctuation are modernised.

22 Tylden-Wright 1991, 165.

23 Fowles 1980, I, 386–8. From its position in the manuscript, we may perhaps suppose that Aubrey incorporated Stansby's paper (which is in earlier handwriting than Aubrey's) into his manuscript in the 1670s.

24 John Stansby (or Stainesby) was a friend of Elias Ashmole, who described him as 'an ingenious enquirer after things worthy of memorial'. He was born in 1629 and seems to have died either in 1680 or on some date after April 1684: *The Reliquary & Illustrated Archaeologist*, vol. 8 (1868), 192; *PSANHS*, vol. 26–27 (1881), 101; Josten and Hennings 1967, 1047–8; Fowles 1980 I, 392–3; II, 1137.

25 Fowles 1980, I 386. Stansby's account also includes descriptions of the Roman town of *Letocetum* (Wall), Ryknild Street in Sutton Coldfield, Castle Old Fort near Aldridge (on land which had once been held by his grandfather), Kings Standing mound (to the south-west of Sutton Park, some 6 miles south-east of Knaves Castle), and Stratford House at Camp Hill (Birmingham): Fowles 1980, I, 386–9.

26 *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd edition, 1973).

middle whereof there is a round hill, now excavated, which for what use it has been (being so very small) I cannot imagin. The tradition is, that this heath being formerly all wood, and much infested with robberies, here was a watch set to guard strangers over it, for which the passengers allowed some small gratuity. Others say that the Robbers themselves harbour'd here, and that therefore it was call'd Knaves-Castle.²⁷

On this occasion, although the rather vague diameter he provides suggests that the feature was not actually measured, we can be certain (for reasons explained below) that Plot was not relying on a third-party account but saw the monument himself.²⁸

William Stukeley (1687–1765), the antiquary and scholar of sacred and cabalistic science, is recognised as one of the founders of field archaeology, best known for his investigations into Stonehenge and Avebury. Every year from the age of 23 he made a summer expedition around the British countryside seeking out and recording ancient monuments, and it was evidently one of these journeys that took him along Watling Street, for in his volume on Avebury, published in 1743, he left an uncharacteristically vague reference to Knaves Castle. With frustrating brevity he writes:

I doubt not that there are more such temples [to a winged deity] in the Britannick isles, called Knaves-Castle or the like. One I remember to have seen, on a great heathy common, by the Roman Watling-Street in Staffordshire.²⁹

However, the second edition of his *Itinerarium Curiosum*, which came out posthumously in 1776, describes

Knaves-castle, near the Watling-street, probably a guard upon the road: it is a circle of twenty yards diameter, with a square in the middle, three or four yards broad, with a breast-work about it: the whole is inclosed with three ditches: it stands in a large common.³⁰

Stukeley also records the following brief note on the monument, a description much cited by other authors in subsequent publications:

Two miles beyond Etocetum, on the top of a hill, is Knaves castle, on the south side of Watling-street; a small tumulus, inclosed within three ditches; an entrance on the south side. It has been hollowed on the top. This is a vast moor or common, full of heath, as the nature of the soil is all the way.³¹

Much fuller, however, is the 1752 account of the eminent Staffordshire historian Richard Wilkes (1691–1760), a physician from Willenhall, seven miles south-west of Knaves Castle:

About two or three hundred yards towards the South [of earthworks on Druid's Heath, Aldridge] is a hill exactly round, encompassed with a single ditch, and rising from the level of the ground adjoining about 7 or 8 feet. The diameter is about ... [sic] yards. It has never been ploughed; but what the use of it may have been is not in my power at present (1752) to determine.³² This, I apprehend, was the summer seat of the arch-druid ... and about two miles to the North of it, adjoining the old Roman road called Streetway [Watling Street], is another area [Knaves Castle] much of the same size encompassed likewise with a treble ditch. Here the situation is drier and more lofty, so that he might possibly make this his place of residence in the winter. It is now called Knave's-castle, as if some robber had here secured himself, to plunder travellers, since the times of the Britons.³³

27 Plot 1686, 448.

28 In 1707 Richard Bolton, a little-known Staffordshire historian, set down in *A View of Staffordshire* a Tutbury tradition about an entrenchment on Watling Street known as Knaves Castle, which had once had a 'round hill (but which is now excavated)' in the centre, and was supposedly used by a watchman to whom travellers contributed payments for safe passage, the area being infested by robbers, but in another version 'the robbers themselves harboured here and therefore it was called Knaves-castle': Woolf 2003, 338, citing Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Top. Staffs. e.2. The account is clearly based on Plot's description and explanation of the name.

29 Stukeley 1743, 96. This might suggest that Stukeley had heard of other monuments called Knaves Castle.

30 Stukeley 1776, I, 61. Though Stukeley had evidently visited Knaves Castle (see his passing reference to the monument in *Abury*, 1743), this account is clearly based on Stansby's description in Aubrey's manuscript preserved in the Bodleian Library; he certainly made use of Aubrey's work on Avebury: Parry 1995, 300.

31 Stukeley 1776, II, 21–3. This account is repeated (without acknowledgement) in numerous later publications.

32 This is evidently not the 'hill of some magnitude' said to cover three acres and to be 15' high surrounded by a ditch, when recorded in Hutton 1795, 457 (who believed it to be natural), since the latter was significantly larger than Knaves Castle, but Wilkes' hill may be the roughly circular mound of uncertain origin some 150' in diameter and c. 6' high at Aldridge Cricket Ground (SK06140101), some 280 yards north-east of Aldridge church and about a mile south-west of Druid's Heath Farm: see Holland and Saunders 2003. A round hill, 8' high, and surrounded by a single ditch, said to be 300 yards from Knaves Castle, as recorded in 1834 (White 1834, 23), but that mention is evidently a confused reference to the mound said to be 200 or 300 yards south of Druid's Heath, Aldridge, described in 1810 (Anonymous 1810, 34) as 'a hill exactly round, encompassed with a single ditch, and rising from the level ground about 7 or 8 feet: the diameter is about 6 yards. It has never been ploughed'.

33 Shaw 1798–1801, I, 11.

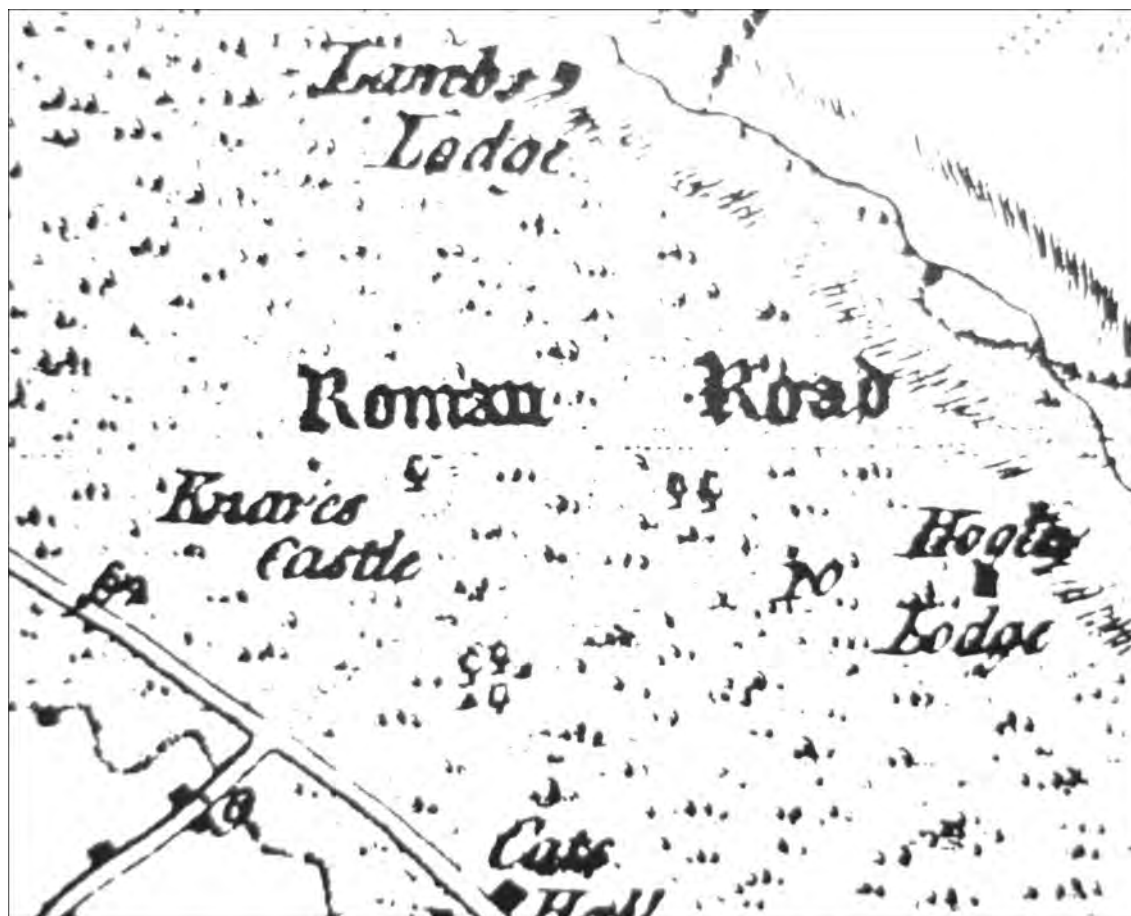


Fig. 2 William Yates, *Map of Staffordshire* (1775; from triangulated surveys begun in 1769). Extract (not to scale). This shows Knaves Castle with Watling Street as an unfenced trackway across heathland.

Another valuable, if perplexing, description of the monument is found in *The History and Antiquities of Shenstone*. Written by Henry Sanders, another local man, for thirteen years curate of Shenstone, a village some three miles south-east of Knaves Castle, the work was compiled before 1769, but published only posthumously in 1794.³⁴ In it Sanders records:

On the borders of Shenstone on the Cannoc [*sic*], adjoining to the Watling Street, is a rise or swell of land, with three trenches; the circuit of this rise is nearly eighty three yards [i.e. a diameter of almost 80 feet]; it hath the appearance of a barrow, and, having a fir tree growing on the center [*sic*],³⁵ serves as a guide or landmark to strangers over a wild and desolate heath. The nearest trench is five or six yards deep, reckoning its gradual descent from the plain ground; the second is nearly the same; the third is full six yards; though greatly below the Castles and Shire Oak hills,³⁶ it affords no despicable view of the adjoining county. ... Though there remain no signs of a fort, it seems very likely to have been one to guard strangers passing over so wild and dreary a country as Cannoc wood is at present; much more was it so formerly, when full of woods and thickets.³⁷

Other references include that in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a long-lived publication with a wide circulation amongst antiquaries, which mentions Knaves Castle in 1785 as 'supposed to be a

³⁴ The work was published by Sanders' son, the Revd John Butler Sanders: Greenslade 1982, 128.

³⁵ Cf. the symbol of a tree within a circle which features on William Yates' map of 1775.

³⁶ Probably the hill (NGR SK033063) on which stands Castle Old Fort, mentioned previously (see Plot 1686, 396; Fowles 1980, I, 386; VCH I, 340 which gives a plan), and nearby Shire Oak Hill (NGR SK039057) on the south side of the junction of Lichfield Road and Chester Road, south of Brownhills. Castle Old Fort is named *Castle old field* in the account given by John Stansby, whose grandfather had once held the land on which it lay, in the later 17th century: Fowles 1980, I, 386. Sanders gives details of landowners and occupiers in the area, but no Stansby or similar surname is mentioned: Sanders 1794, 201, 205. The name Castle Old Fort may be associated with *Aldeport* or *Oldeport* recorded in the 13th century: Birrell 1999, 36, 85, 166, 174, 176.

³⁷ Sanders 1794, 202–3.

Roman intrenchment',³⁸ whilst some eighty years later a usefully detailed description was supplied by William Scott, an assiduous recorder of topographical and archaeological information in the region. In 1832 he recorded:

... the tumulus of Knave's Castle. This vestige of antiquity, about 162 feet in width, contains a treble vallum and foss, it is still rendered distantly conspicuous by an hillock in its centre, resembling a prætorium, and three trees wave their foliage over its rude and perishable undulation. ... A gravel pit, adjacent, is not only extending over the moor, but threatens to obliterate the few remaining traces of antiquity, still faintly discernible.³⁹

In another note, Scott observed that: 'Like Knaves Castle, the site of King's Standing is marked by a circular clump of trees at a short distance ...'.⁴⁰ Six years later in 1838 the Ogley Hay Supplementary Enclosure Award mentions a wealth of landmarks in the area, but is disappointingly brief in its reference to Knaves Castle, describing it tersely as a 'mound or spot',⁴¹ though the feature is recorded on associated plans which are discussed in more detail below.

Many non-antiquarian sources thereafter make reference to Knaves Castle. The 1851 edition of William White's *Directory of Staffordshire*, for example, observed that 'On an eminence near Watling Street, was a Roman encampment, called Knaves Castle, encompassed by three ditches, but the enclosure has swept away all traces of it'; in 1874 Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire* mentions a 'work, known as Knaves Castle, among coal pits 1m N of [Brownhills Station], consisting of a tumulus surrounded by three ditches, with an entrance on the S. It was probably a castrum æstivum [summer camp]';⁴² and in 1884 the earthwork was described as '... a tumulus beside Watling Street, upon a natural eminence on lofty table land, formerly a desolate and bleak part of Cannock Chase and a prominent object in the locality'.⁴³ But only three years later, in 1887, Frederick Willmore, a Walsall historian, could report that the Knaves Castle mound and ditch had disappeared, leaving only a slight unevenness of the ground, while its bastions (?) were then formed by hayricks.⁴⁴

Moving into the 20th century, when the site of Knaves Castle, with a frontage of 62 yards to Watling Street and including gardens, orchard and buildings, was sold by auction in 1901, the local newspaper noted that 'there is a valuable bed of sand under this lot, and it is said to be the site of the old Knaves Castle ... very defaced. It is also a burial mound'.⁴⁵ The following year the Walsall solicitor and antiquary W. H. Duignan recorded that what he described as a small tumulus known as Knaves Castle was then almost obliterated and enclosed in a garden, but that sixty years earlier it had been very plain.⁴⁶ Six years later the first volume of the *Victoria History of the County of Stafford* (VCH) noted that the remains were 'very slight',⁴⁷ and in 1929 it was reported that the supposed tumulus had entirely disappeared.⁴⁸ No traces could be detected of any part of the feature in 1961.⁴⁹ We should not be particularly surprised, therefore, that no sign of any barrow ditch or burial could be identified when a segment of natural hillock close to the site was cut through during road widening in August 1971.⁵⁰ Today, a handful of houses and bungalows⁵¹ with associated garden structures exist on the site, with access via a hard-surfaced curving entrance way which rises from Watling Street, since the 1960s a busy dual carriageway.⁵²

38 GM, vol. 55, part II, 195.

39 Scott 1832, 310–11. It is assumed that the 'remaining traces of antiquity' refer to Knaves Castle itself, but the expression may refer to other ancient features which were then identifiable near the site.

40 Scott 1832, 312.

41 SRO, Q/RDc/90.

42 Murray 1874, 152.

43 Duignan 1884, 170.

44 Willmore 1887, 11. He also mentions 'an old way ... through Aldridge; thence it may be followed to Knaves Castle, and on to the camp at Beaudesert': Willmore 1887, 18.

45 *Lichfield Mercury*, 10 May 1901.

46 Duignan 1902, 88.

47 VCH I, 346.

48 *Notes & Queries*, 156 (1929), 216.

49 NSJFS V (1965), 45.

50 Comments recorded by J. T. Gould in English Heritage record. It is doubtful whether the road widening would have impinged on any part of the earthwork.

51 According to Gerald Reece, numbers 23, 25, 25a, 27, and 29 Knave's Castle: Reece 1996.

52 Some of the eastern part of the surrounding earthworks at least would appear to have lain within what are now garden areas, and from what has been recorded about the depth of the ditches, the lower parts in those areas – as well as traces of post-holes and stone foundations if any ancient central structure had been of stone – might remain undisturbed below ground and perhaps detectable by non-destructive geophysics.

No excavations are known to have taken place at Knaves Castle; there is no record of any archaeological material of any kind recovered from or close to the site; and not untypically, notwithstanding its fame and antiquity, not a single photograph or illustration of the monument or its site, or any early aerial photograph, has been traced.

KNAVES CASTLE ON MAPS

The earliest map to show Knaves Castle is that of Staffordshire dated 1682 (though actually published in 1684), which was included in Robert Plot's *The Natural History of Staffordshire* in 1686.⁵³ The work of Gregory King (who as a youth was clerk to Sir William Dugdale, the Warwickshire antiquary), the map gives the name Knaves Castle below a small circle within a larger circle, topped by what appears to be a pole flying a long triangular pennant, which the key shows to be the symbol for a fortification. The same symbol and the name Knaves Castle also appear on Robert Morden's Staffordshire map of 1695, published in Edmund Gibson's edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, and on Herman Moll's map of 1724, which included illustrations of 'antiquities' copied from Plot's volume.

Useful information is also provided by a manuscript map purporting in its title to be an 'Exact plan of waste lands in the liberty of Hammerwich', probably dating from the mid 18th century, which delineates a large area to the north of Watling Street at a scale of 10 chains to an inch. The map marks the name *Knaves Castle on Street Way* (the usual name for Watling Street in Staffordshire at that time) but without giving any details of the monument itself.⁵⁴ Puzzlingly, the plan shows *Stafford Road*, a straight road untraced on other maps and not known today, running north-west from Knaves Castle and perhaps following the northern part of what is now the parish boundary; if so Knaves Castle must have been the name of the area, for the road would seem to have joined Watling Street close to Ogley Hay Road to the east.⁵⁵

A manuscript plan of the boundary of Norton Canes parish said to be of c. 1760, which includes the site of the future Chasewater reservoir, shows at Knaves Castle a single tree in profile on what appears to be rough but flat ground.⁵⁶ A road running north from Watling Street, a short distance to the west of Knaves Castle, is labelled *Ironstone Road*, and another road leading north-west from the same place is labelled *Coventry Road* (evidently the same road as *Stafford Road* mentioned above, and possibly also known as *Blakes Road*) and passes *Tomkinson's House*.⁵⁷ Another (un-named) road runs south from the same junction. More impressive is William Yates' detailed map of Staffordshire, based on surveys carried out from 1769 and published in 1775, which shows the name Knaves Castle alongside a sub-circular feature with a tree in the centre on the south side of Watling Street. The Roman road is shown as a faint trackway, but appears far more prominently on his revised edition of 1798 (surveyed in 1793), although neither the name Knaves Castle nor the earthworks are marked.⁵⁸

Moving on to the 19th century, a manuscript map of Lichfield and the surrounding area produced in 1815 by the Ordnance Survey surveyor Robert K. Dawson to a scale of 2" to the mile shows the name Knaves Castle at what seems to be a circular earthwork enclosing what may be a central mound,⁵⁹ whilst the First Edition One inch to the Mile Ordnance Survey Map of 1834 also shows Knaves Castle represented by a similar symbol. Next, Ogley Hay was surveyed by Joseph Maden as part of the process for the Enclosure of Ogley Hay under a Private Act of 1838.⁶⁰ Two plans, similar but not identical, were produced: one for the Award made on 15 January 1839, the other for a Supplementary Award made the following day. The Supplementary Award describes Knaves Castle

53 Plot 1686; *SHC* 4th series XI, 56–7, 70. King is known to have been working on the map in 1679: *ibid*.

54 SRO, D.683/H/3/8.

55 Presumably the *Stafford Road* mentioned in Sanders 1794, 337. *Short Heathy Bank* is named on both maps, and helps to confirm that the two names relate to the same road. F. W. Willmore mentions 'an old way ... through Aldridge; thence it may be followed to Knaves Castle, and on to the camp [Castle Ring] at Beaudesert': Willmore 1887, 18.

56 Evans n/d. Enquiries have failed to trace the present whereabouts of the plan.

57 Which appears as *Tomkinson* on Yates' map of 1798.

58 Yates's map, the first triangulated survey of Staffordshire, used as triangulation stations in this part of the county Lichfield Cathedral, Stile Cop, Hilton Park Stand, Stafford Castle, Chartley Park Clump, Wrottesley Hall, and Barr Beacon, but not Knaves Castle: Phillips 1984, vi–x.

59 British Library, OSD 258/24.

60 1 & 2 Victoria I, c.1. See Brown 1994, 105–27.



Fig. 3 William Yates, *Map of Staffordshire* (revised 1798; from surveys begun in 1793). Extract (not to scale). This shows Watling Street far more prominently than in the first edition of the map (see Fig. 2) but with Knaves Castle unmarked.

as ‘a certain mound or spot’, suggesting that it was a distinctive landscape feature.⁶¹ The plans, with south to the top, are at a scale of four chains (264 feet) to the inch, and provide interesting but cryptic evidence for the feature. They show a field boundary running south from Watling Street, cutting through the west edge of a sub-rectangular feature, almost square on the plan attached to the first Award, but trapezoidal on the plan attached to the Supplementary Award, each enclosing a slightly smaller area of the same shape; both areas are delineated by dotted lines, in each case with the northernmost side parallel with Watling Street, and with both features labelled Knave’s Castle.⁶²

Both the size and shape of the feature differ markedly on Maden’s two plans. On the Award the external boundary scales off at roughly 130 feet west to east, and 100 feet north to south, with the internal feature some 65 feet square, but on the Supplementary Award the external boundary of the feature scales off at roughly 100 feet west to east, and 65 feet north to south, with the internal area some 45 feet square. Three trees are also shown on each map,⁶³ all apparently in the dead ground between the inner and outer quadrangles. These trees are presumably the three mentioned by William

61 The Award gives the following description of the first part of the Ogley Hay boundary: ‘Beginning at the Centre of a certain Front of Old Road near Muckley Corner house in the Lichfield and Walsall Turnpike road formerly leading from the said Turnpike road across the waste lands to Bull moor lane but now closed in requirement of being interrupted by the Wyrley and Essington Canal which said Front is now seen by two Mounds from this described point starting in the westerly direction along the ancient Watling Street way (a distance of about two miles) to a certain bridge called Ogley Bridge not far from a certain mound or spot on the said Way called Knaves Castle and at a less distance from the turnpike house called Ogley which said bridge is at the junction of the Manors of Norton and Cannock from there turning in a southerly direction across the road or Bridge and along a Gutter or Ancient work across the open common of Ogley Hay and Norton Manor commonly called Brownhills Common now worked with Horses and in some places by large stones ...’. The Award also mentions Lime Kilns on Ogley Hay.

62 SRO, Q/RDc/90.

63 That of the Award showing a coniferous tree at the north-west corner, another at the south-east corner, and a deciduous tree at the north-east corner; that of the Supplementary Award showing a deciduous tree the north-west corner, another at the south-east corner, and a coniferous tree at the north-east corner.



Fig. 4 John Cary, *Map of Staffordshire* (1806). From William Salt Library, Stafford, S.1909/3 (reproduced by permission of the Trustees). Extract (not to scale). Knaves Castle is unmarked but three roads, obliterated in the 19th century, are shown converging on the area.

Scott six years earlier, a reference which, with the precise measurements he gives, reinforces the likelihood that he visited the site, a presumption that cannot be applied to all early writers who mention the place. In addition, Maden's plans provides other, less equivocal, evidence, for they show that by 1838 the area around Knaves Castle had been divided by straight boundaries, with the areas containing Knaves Castle owned (like much of Ogley Hay) by Charles Foster Cotterill,⁶⁴ and the western part of the earthworks (assuming that they were then still visible) extending into an area owned by the Trustees of Hammerwich Chapel, the chapel lying on the north side of Watling Street almost opposite Knaves Castle.

The Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map of 1884 shows the earthwork at Knaves Castle as the eastern arc of a single bank with a small, but seemingly pronounced, circular mound a little to the south of what would seem to have been the exact centre. Inset into the south-west corner of the mound is a small square box, perhaps a structure of some kind, but too small to be a house. The southern end of the curved surrounding bank may mark the eastern side of the supposed entrance mentioned by earlier writers. Various trees are marked to the west of the mound, but it is difficult to say whether they might include the three marked on the 1838 Enclosure Award. A sunken road or trackway curving south-west from Watling Street had by then been constructed through the north-west section of the earthwork, leading to a house called Knave's Castle.

By 1902 the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map shows only the semi-circular bank and no central mound or associated structure; and only one tree to the west of the mound, although others

⁶⁴ Cotterill was the principal encloser who received 85% of the Hay's 1000 acres, 433 acres of which were subject to common rights. An entrepreneur, Cotterill built lime kilns and a steam flour mill by the Wyrley & Essington Canal, and let large areas for arable farming, market gardens, plantations and housing, but when the farms proved unsuccessful he converted the mill to a steam engine factory, using casting sand from a nearby quarry; Ogley Hay was famed in the 19th century for its casting sand: Howell 1859, 36. Cotterill was forced to sell his land when declared bankrupt in 1847: Brown 1994, 107, 121.

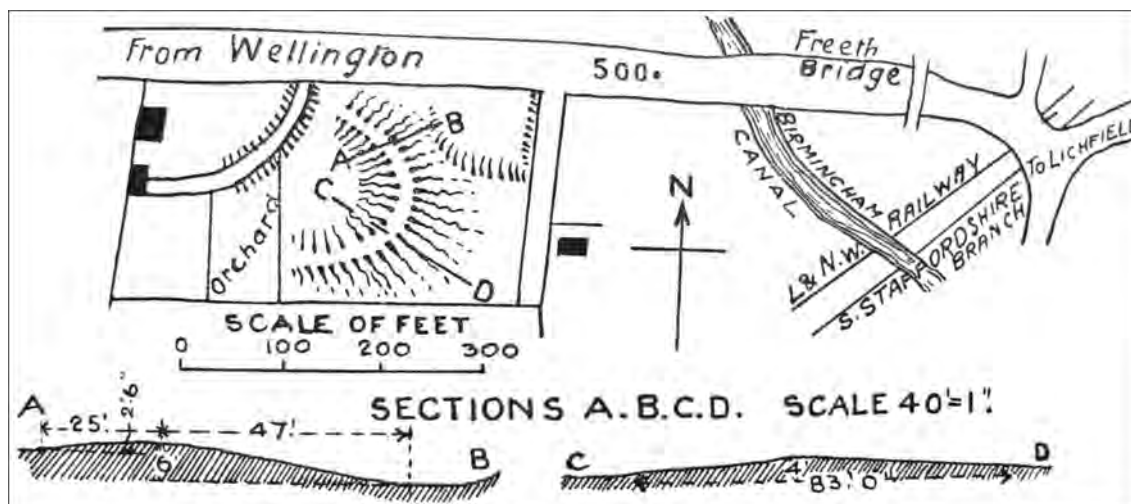


Fig. 5 Plan and cross-sections of the faint traces of Knaves Castle. From *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, I (1908), p. 345.

stand in garden of the house known as Knaves Castle.⁶⁵ A similar plan, with two useful measured profiles, and of particular value as the only known survey of the monument, is found in Volume I of the Staffordshire VCH (1908). At that date the feature appears to have taken the form of a simple earthwork reduced to a single bank some 70 to 80 feet in width, of debased semi-circular plan, with an original external diameter of perhaps two to three hundred feet, adjoining an orchard on the west. No central feature is shown, and the north-east part of the site, outside the low bank, appears to have been excavated, doubtless the gravel pit noted by William Scott in 1832.⁶⁶ This depiction contrasts with the early reports of a triple banked and ditched earthwork: by the later 19th century the monument had evidently been largely denuded (it is unclear whether the site was ever ploughed, but it seems unlikely⁶⁷) to the point where the ditches (and any banks) had been reduced to a wide but faint single bank. From the VCH plan it is difficult to calculate precisely the internal diameter of the surrounding earthwork, since it is not shown as a true semi-circle, and in any event the earthworks were indistinct. In 1919 there was seemingly no visible trace of any earthworks, for the 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map records simply 'Knaves Castle (Site Of)', with a cross marking what would have been the centre of the mound, and the 1938 edition of the map shows that a house had been built on that same area.

WATLING STREET NEAR KNAVES CASTLE

Given the proximity of Knaves Castle to Watling Street, we might usefully consider the evidence, albeit scanty, for that section of the Roman road, usually held to have continued in use from Roman times to the present day as a major east-west route across the central Midlands, since those who laid the Staffordshire Hoard at its place of discovery, whatever the circumstances of its deposition, must almost certainly have approached the site, whether from east or west, along that road.

The importance of Watling Street as a major arterial highway in the Roman period is self-evident, and its status as one of the four *via regalia* or royal roads (with Ermine Street, the Fosse Way, and Ryknild Street) in the 11th century was emphasised by the protection afforded to it by the laws of William the Conqueror.⁶⁸ It seems reasonable to assume that it remained in use during the Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest period, most importantly by military forces during those unsettled times. Its status is reflected in the 1308 deed in which Knaves Castle is first recorded, which describes it

⁶⁵ It has been stated that the site of Knaves Castle earthworks was sold in 1902 and traces of the monument levelled: Reece 1996.

⁶⁶ VCH I, 345–6.

⁶⁷ Though some parts of Ogley Hay seem to have been put under the plough in the early 18th century: an Agreement of 1709 relating to a field and warren refers to enclosure, ploughing and planting: SRO, D. 546/3/5/4–5.

⁶⁸ 'De quatre chemins, ces est a saueir Watlinge strete, Erminge strete, Fosse, Hykenild; ki en aucun de ces quatre chemins ocist aucun ki seit errant per le pais u asaut, si enfreint la pais le rei': Anonymous 1840 I, 478.

as ‘the king’s highway’.⁶⁹ It is not safe to assume that because some Roman roads are still in use today, their use has been unbroken, and whether Watling Street west of Wall retained its importance throughout the medieval period is uncertain. It is not shown as a principal highway on the map of 1250 created by Matthew Paris, or the well-known Gough Map, which has been dated to c. 1370, with amendments and additions dating from the early 15th century,⁷⁰ but that absence cannot be taken as confirmation that the road was not then in use. On the other hand, there is little to show that the Knaves Castle section of Watling Street was heavily used in the post-medieval period, since the main routes through the county were those linking London with Chester, Shrewsbury, Holyhead, and Carlisle, the first two being important military bases during the Welsh wars of the Middle Ages, and Holyhead replacing Chester as the embarkation port for Ireland after the Dee estuary finally silted up in the 18th century. Ogilby’s road books of the later 18th century show that the Chester and Holyhead route entered Staffordshire at Bassett’s Pole and ran from Lichfield via Rugeley to Stone; in the 13th and 14th centuries it had continued north via Newcastle-under-Lyme to Nantwich, but by the 1570s it had swung west to cross the Trent at Darlaston (north of Stone) and thence to Nantwich via Woore.⁷¹ But the fact that alternative routes were preferred by travellers does not mean that Watling Street through Ogley Hay fell out of use: it is unmentioned by John Leland (c. 1506–52), but c. 1586 the great antiquary and topographer William Camden, excited at having located *Etocetum* by ‘stumbling upon’ the village of Wall with its Roman remains, described ‘the military-way running from hence, with a fair bold and uninterrupted ridge, till it comes to the river Penck [south of Penkridge]’.⁷² That line would have passed Knaves Castle, and if Camden had followed its course it is a matter of particular regret that he failed to notice the earthwork, or omitted to record it.

By the early 17th century an alternative route from Coleshill (Warwickshire) via Sutton Heath, Ogley Hay, and Brownhills was becoming more popular, with traffic turning north-west at the Shropshire border to pass through Newport and Whitchurch to Chester. The route was described in 1623 as ‘a great travelled way especially for wains, carriages, carts, and droves’, and it became known as the Old Chester Road.⁷³ Although it ran through Ogley Hay, the new route avoided the Knaves Castle stretch of Watling Street, and we might suppose that from Wall to Brownhills the Roman road then saw relatively light traffic, partly perhaps as a result of the imagined or real threat from highwaymen on what was a desolate heathland.

The earliest writer to have left a detailed account of Staffordshire’s principal Roman roads is Robert Plot, who says of Watling Street and Ryknild Street (the only two roads to appear on his map) that they were:

yet remaining high and lofty, being but little decay’d, or any way interrupted either by time or the plow: ... they seem not to have used the same Method prescribed by Statius, i.e. first digging a deep trench till they come to a good bottom, and then raising a high ridg upon a firm foundation of other material than what they found upon the place: these seeming only to be made of gravel dugg all along the sides of each way, as may be seen upon Watlingstreet, as you pass between Wall and Frog-Homer, Occamsley pitts near Knaves-Castle seeming to have been made upon this account only.⁷⁴

Half a century later in 1727, the antiquary William Stukeley, having noted Knaves Castle, observed that the road is ‘in a vast moor or common, full of heath, as the nature of the soil is all the way. The Watling street is very fair and strait, and in many places the ridge is perfect for a great length’.⁷⁵ Indeed, the raised causeway of the road from Wall to the Shropshire border to the west is said to have been so clearly visible that he forbade his companions from riding upon it ‘to save it as much as possible from being worn out’, though the precise point at which the instruction was given is unrecorded.⁷⁶

Some slight indirect evidence for the state of Watling Street in the second half of the 18th century is provided by John Stansby who says of Ryknild Street where it crosses Sutton Park that ‘... it is more plain than any part of Watling Street (that I ever saw)’,⁷⁷ whilst a petition presented to Parliament in 1765 by a number of gentlemen, freeholders and traders of Walsall and Lichfield

69 Shaw 1798–1801, II, 58.

70 Hindle 1982, 41–4.

71 VCH II, 275–7.

72 Gough 1806, II, 496.

73 VCH II, 277.

74 Plot 1686, 399–400.

75 Gough 1806, II, 505.

76 Cited in Gough 1806, II, 505; see also VCH II, 275.

77 Fowles 1980, I, 386.

complained that certain roads, including that from Muckley Corner over a common called Ogley Hay or Lichfield Heath (i.e. past Knaves Castle), had become very narrow, ruinous and dangerous for travellers.⁷⁸ It is clear that the account of Watling Street in this area given in Sanders' *History of Shenstone* (written before 1769) is simply a reworked version of Plot's observation, for Sanders observes that the road remains 'generally speaking, high and good, being very little decayed or injured, either by time or the plough',⁷⁹ and he describes the area around Knaves Castle as a wild, dreary and desolate heath.⁸⁰

A description published in 1785 is more informative:

... Watling Street, leading from Lichfield, near a place on Cannock Heath which goes by the name Knaves Castle (supposed to be a Roman intrenchment). Here the old road may be traced for a length of three miles, with this further remark, that it is raised much higher than our modern method, and being done over on dry gravelly common, shows it was an invariable rule with them without regard of circumstance.⁸¹

Returning from a tour to North Wales in August 1793, the Hon. John Byng spent two nights confined by heavy rain at the Fleur-de-Lis ('a capital inn ... a clean good ale house') at Norton Canes – where he was astonished at the meagre bill for his food and stabling – before resuming his journey along Watling Street ('quite deserted') to 'Cank Heath, by the coal-pitts, a black boggy heath, –over which, the road of three miles, is stoney, and disagreeable. –I quitted it at the hamlet of Wall ...'.⁸² Byng may have been distracted by the state of Watling Street, for he does not mention Knaves Castle, which he must have ridden past. It is difficult to reconcile his observations with the next reference to this part of Watling Street, given by Thomas Reynolds, a topographical historian with much experience of investigating and examining Roman roads, who provides the following description of Watling Street across Ogley Hay in 1799:

... this old highway [Watling Street] has been in no part more difficult to trace than in its course over Cannock Heath, where a deep sandy soil, cut in all directions by the different roads over it, has obliterated all marks of the rampart [of the Roman road], and the distinguishing peculiarities of such roads. A very excellent new road now leads across the heath from Wall to Norton [i.e. Norton Canes, passing Knaves Castle], but this is an improvement of very modern date, being executed within the last ten years. The line of the road was before so obscure, that a stranger was directed from Wall to a single tree, which grew upon the heath at a considerable distance, as a guide to keep the road. In the infancy of this kind of knowledge therefore a mistake might easily be made in this part of the road ⁸³

The 'single tree' seems unlikely to have been the fir tree at the centre of Knaves Castle mentioned by Sanders as a waymark some thirty years earlier, since Knaves Castle was not visible from Wall, but Reynolds' account emphasises the treeless, barren and featureless character of the heathland around Knaves Castle.⁸⁴ What the author fails to mention is that the 'very excellent new road' to which he refers was the result of the turnpiking begun in 1789 of the length of road from Muckley Corner to the Chester Road at Brownhills,⁸⁵ perhaps unfinished when Byng recorded his observations in 1793. That may explain why the section of Watling Street from Brownhills to Weeford is not shown at all on J. Cary's map of Staffordshire of 1787, or on that of C. S. Smith, published in 1801, but it does appear on Cary's edition of 1806. The road is also shown on Robert Dawson's manuscript survey for the Ordnance Survey in 1815, and on the first edition one-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1834 but as an unfenced road or trackway with no buildings between Brownhills Common to the west of Knaves Castle until a handful of houses on the north side of Watling Street half a mile or so from Muckley Corner.

Perhaps the greatest change to the local road network near Knaves Castle occurred when Ogley Hay was enclosed in 1839 and a number of roads, paths, and tracks were stopped up, fenced off or dug up soon after the Act came into force.⁸⁶ Similarly, new roads were laid out when the heathland

78 *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 30, 185, 509, 709. The resulting Act of 1766 to widen and repair those roads did not include that across Ogley Hay.

79 Sanders 1794, 345. This part of the work was probably contributed by Samuel Pipe Wolferstan or Stebbing Shaw c. 1774.

80 Sanders 1794, 202–3.

81 *GM*, vol. 55, part II, 195.

82 Bruyn Andrews 1936, 305–7.

83 Reynolds 1799, 210–11. It is curious that the author, who appears to write from personal observation, makes no mention of Knaves Castle.

84 The waymark tree is more likely to have stood on the high ground a short distance to the east of Knaves Castle.

85 *VCH XIV*, 261. In his detailed survey of Britain's Roman Roads, Ivan D. Margary observed in 1957 that Watling Street between Wall and Brownhills is generally raised 1–2 feet: Margary 1957, 25–6.

86 It is said that the closures led to rioting locally: Hooke 2011a, 11.

in the western part of Hammerwich parish was enclosed in 1856 under an Act of 1853. That explains why roads such as *Stafford Road/Coventry Road*, recorded c. 1750, and *Iron Stone Road* (presumably from its metalling, or the fact that it carried ironstone), mentioned c. 1760,⁸⁷ can no longer be traced.

What is evident is that as late as the 1860s the section of Watling Street adjoining Knaves Castle was omitted from some county maps, including that of Thomas Moule, published in 1836, which shows that the route between Muckley Corner and Brownhills did not take the direct line of Watling Street, but followed the Walsall road south-west to Shire Oak crossroads before turning north-west along Chester Road to Brownhills Common, a not inconsiderable detour which must have been made for good reason. The explanation may perhaps be the industrial activities connected with coal mining at Norton Canes. Coal was plentiful in the area, and was being extracted from bell-pits at Brownhills from the early 1700s. A pumping engine had been installed by 1774, by which time there were probably more than fifty shafts spread across the area.⁸⁸ The problem of transportation was addressed by the construction between 1794 and 1797 of a canal from Wyrley to Wolverhampton, which incorporated eight locks. However, 25,000 gallons of water were lost via the locks each time a barge traversed the canal, which was forced to close soon after through lack of water. A new feeder reservoir, which became known as Chasewater, was constructed on 156 acres of waste land and bog at Norton, fed by the dammed and diverted Crane Brook, but in 1799 the dam failed, causing extensive damage over a considerable area, washing away roads and a bridge seven miles away, and depositing up to twelve inches of gravel over parts of Hammerwich.⁸⁹ The breached dam was replaced by a strengthened structure finished in 1800.⁹⁰



Fig. 6 Thomas Moule, *Map of Staffordshire* (1836). Extract (not to scale). This shows the section of Watling Street from Muckley Corner to Brownhills as unmarked.

87 There is no connection between the road recorded c. 1760 and Ironstone Road in Chase Terrace, Burntwood.

88 See copy will of Phineas Hussey of Little Wyrley dated 1774: SRO, D. 5827/1/1/139.

89 *GM*, vol. 69 part II, 616.

90 Hume 2005, 89–91.

There was clearly considerable industrial activity to the north-west of Knaves Castle from the late 18th century, and some idea of the landscape may be captured in an account of Watling Street at Brownhills published in 1902, an account that would probably have been broadly accurate a century or so earlier:

Watling Street reaches the outskirts of Hammerwich ... at that nail-making and coal-mining place ... it has reached a very high-lying tract, that abomination of desolation called Brownhills. Words are ineffectually employed to describe the hateful, blighted scene; but imagine a wide and dreary stretch of common land surrounded by the scattered, dirty and decrepit cottages of a semi-savage population of nail-makers and pitmen, with here and there a school, a woe-begone brick chapel, a tin tabernacle, and a plentiful sprinkling of public houses. Further, imagine the grass of this wide spreading common to be as brown, wiry, and innutritious as it is possible for grass to be, and with an extra-ordinary wealth of scrap iron, tin clippings, broken glass and brick-bats deposited over every square yard, and all around the ghastly refuse heaps of long abandoned mines.⁹¹

Evidently this was not an especially attractive area to pass through, and the various activities associated with mining, quarrying, ironworking, lime burning, and the construction of the reservoir and canal, together with the other changes which took place as a result of the enclosure of Ogley Hay and part of Hammerwich, seem to have persuaded travellers to take a circuitous route to avoid it, but the long haul to the summit of the hill on which Knaves Castle stood may also have deterred cart, carriage and wagon drivers.

KNAVES CASTLE AS AN EARTHWORK: ANALYSIS OF THE EVIDENCE

From the early accounts of Knaves Castle, John Stansby with his local associations had clearly visited the monument, and since his descriptions of other surviving archaeological features in the area are reasonably accurate, we might be safe to rely on his short description. This may also be the case with Dr Plot who evidently visited the site himself in or before 1682.⁹² He also mentions ‘Occamsley Pits’, a series of about sixteen pits now vanished and unlocated,⁹³ but said to have lain between Knaves Castle and ‘Frogg-Homer’.⁹⁴ Plot tells us that all of the pits were water-filled except one which remained unaccountably dry, even after the heaviest rain, and that he and his horse left no impression on its dry bed.⁹⁵ In addition he tells us that the central mound of Knaves Castle ‘is now excavated’. There is no mention of any excavation in the otherwise detailed account of John Stansby written perhaps in the 1660s or 1670s, of which Plot was evidently unaware, but what Plot identified as an excavation was almost certainly the hollow within the ‘breastwork’ mentioned by Stansby.⁹⁶ Plot’s observation that locals believed that Knaves Castle had been a guardhouse or base for robbers is interesting folklore, but probably of little value in helping to unravel the history of the feature.

91 Harper 1902, I, 219–20, who includes on page 219 a drawing of Watling Street near Hammerwich as a narrow lane.

92 The date of the map in *The Natural History of Staffordshire*.

93 Sanders 1794, 203–4 says the pits lay half a mile from Knaves Castle. The pits are listed in Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record, site 2624.

94 Evidently the same place as Frog Hall, which Plot’s map has on the north side of Watling Street to the west of Knaves Castle: Sanders 1794, 345. Curiously, Sanders implies that travelling west along Watling Street from Shenstone one comes to ‘Frog hall by Occamsley pits to Knaves Castle’, i.e. that Frog Hall and Occamsley Pits lay to the east of Knaves Castle; but there is no doubt that they lay to the west: Frog Hall is shown on Emanuel Bowen’s map of 1749 on the east side of a road leading north-west from the junction of the Old Chester Road and Watling Street, and Plot states that Catshill lay midway between Shire Oak and Frog Hall: Plot 1686, 403. Duignan says that Frog Hall lay on Cannock Chase, near the junction of the Old Chester Road and Watling Street at Brownhills: Duignan 1884, 123. The Frog Hall Estate in Norton Canes is recorded in 1849: SRO, D. 3697/4/18–21. ‘Frogg-Homer’ (found recorded elsewhere only in Sanders 1794, 203–4, evidently from Plot 1686, 112–3) is perhaps to be associated with a field labelled *Homer’s Field* on the north side of Watling Street north-west of Knaves Castle shown on the c. 1760 map of the boundary of Norton Canes, and as *Homars Field* on an 1818 map of the reservoir and feeder on Cannock Chase, suggesting that Homer was a local surname and that Frog Hall may in Plot’s time have been occupied by a Homer.

95 Plot 1686, 112–3. The one pit that remained water-free (which implies that the others were water-filled) was said to have been 90 yards in circuit and seems to have been dug into the fine pebble-free sand, much valued for casting, for which Ogley Hay was famed in the nineteenth century: Sanders 1794, 204; Howell 1859, 36. The origin of Occamsley Pits is uncertain, but they may well have been created by the extraction of gravel to raise the level of Watling Street during its original construction, as suggested in Plot 1686, 399; Cox *et al* 1808, V, 26: similar pits are not uncommonly found alongside Roman roads, such as those adjacent to Icknield Street where it passes through Sutton Park a little over 5 miles to the south-east (as noted in Plot 1686, 399; see also Hodder 2004, 61), and William Scott mentions the encroachment of gravel workings at Knaves Castle: Scott 1832, 310.

96 One possibility is that the hollow or excavation recorded in the central mound marked the position of a former stone or timber cross, or a waymark (cf. Bassett’s Pole, 4 miles south-west of Tamworth, a tall pole which existed in the 17th century to guide travellers on a vast heath: Horovitz 2005, 105), or even a structure such as a medieval beacon or gibbet.

Table 1 Analysis of early descriptions of Knaves Castle

	Three circular ditches	Circumference	Diameter	Central feature	Southern entrance
Stansby c. 1665	✓	–	–	Square 3–4 yards broad with breastwork	✓
Plot 1686	✓	–	40–50 yards (overall)	Excavated	–
Wilkes 1752	✓	–	–	–	–
Sanders c. 1769	✓	80 yards	–	Fir tree	–
Stukeley 1776	✓	–	20 yards	Square 3–4 yards broad with breastwork. Hollowed.	✓
Scott 1832	✓	–	162' (overall?)	“Praetorium”	–
Enclosure Award 1838/9	–	–	–	“Mound”; quadrilateral feature on plan.	–

What is particularly noticeable about Wilkes' account in 1752 is that he fails, whether accidentally or deliberately, to mention any feature mentioned by Plot and other writers in the centre of the mound, and Sanders, writing c. 1769 in an otherwise detailed description, mentions only a lone fir tree on the middle of the mound. Stukeley's brief 1776 account of Knaves Castle is more tantalizing, for it seems to be based on Stansby's description, though (like Wilkes, Sanders, and Scott) it does not mention any southern entrance.⁹⁷ The central feature mentioned by Stansby and copied by Stukeley is not mentioned by Wilkes and Sanders, and the 'hillock ... resembling a *praetorium*' mentioned by Scott may be Scott's interpretation of what Stansby describes as a central breastwork: the Latin term is variously defined as 'a general's tent, a king's pavilion, a judgment-hall, a nobleman's seat or manor house in the country, a palace or court',⁹⁸ but was often fancifully applied by 18th century antiquaries to enigmatic earthworks (though usually circular), a habit seemingly adopted by Scott, a well-read antiquary most unlikely to have used the term for a mere mound.⁹⁹ It would be unsafe to rely on Stukeley's description as evidence for what was to be seen at Knaves Castle in 1776, and his version must therefore be discounted.

Set down before 1769, Sanders' account is of great interest, for the precise measurements and incidental detail show that it was based on a personal examination (and, presumably, pacing) of the site, and that the diameter of the central circular feature was almost exactly 80 feet with the appearance of a tumulus.¹⁰⁰ However, his statement that the surrounding ditches were five or six yards deep, presumably measured from bank top to ditch bottom – i.e. deep enough to conceal three tall men standing one atop another – seems completely implausible, since ditches of that size would have been at least 40 to 50 feet wide, even with particularly steep sides, and certainly far wider than the dimensions recorded by other commentators. Indeed, Sanders' dimensions greatly exceed even the great ditch at Avebury.¹⁰¹ It is possible that he mistakenly recorded yards for feet, or, more likely perhaps, by 'deep' meant 'wide', but whatever the explanation, one is left with the impression that the monument must have been particularly striking when first constructed, for even after several centuries or more of weathering, when any concentric banks (or at least the ground between the ditches) will have eroded into the ditches, it was evidently still a very prominent and substantial feature in 1769. Sanders provides compelling, if equivocal, evidence to explain why the monument was deemed worthy of note by earlier antiquaries.

In his account of the Knaves Castle stretch of Watling Street in 1799, presumably based on a personal inspection, Thomas Reynolds fails to mention Knaves Castle itself, even though it was evidently a conspicuous feature in the 1760s when recorded by Sanders. Furthermore, although it

97 The second description supposedly made by Stukeley, which mentions a southern entrance, is not included in this analysis since it has not been authenticated as his words.

98 Ainsworth 1794, 427.

99 The word is not used elsewhere in his book, which mentions a large number of archaeological features within a wide radius of Stourbridge.

100 The volume was compiled in 1769 and published posthumously, the author having died in 1785: Sanders 1794, 3. A manuscript label within a copy of the work in the Bodleian Library mentions publication in 1769.

101 The present width of the weathered ditch at Avebury is recorded as 23 yards, the depth as 4 yards; the original width may have been 10–11 yards, and the depth 7½–11 yards: Gillings and Pollard 2004, 9 (dimensions converted from metric).

appears on William Yates' map of 1775, it was excluded from his second edition of 1798, surveyed in 1793. That may be seen as strong evidence that the prominence of Knaves Castle was greatly reduced between 1775 and 1793. We might reasonably surmise that the explanation was the turnpiking of Watling Street alongside the monument in 1789,¹⁰² during which the road would have been improved, probably by raising its level and metalling the surface, with the formation or improvement of side ditches and associated drainage. William Scott mentions a gravel quarry adjoining Knaves Castle in 1832, and it is very possible that the mound itself was formed out of or created upon a natural sand and gravel deposit: the 1901 sale of the site mentions a valuable bed of sand.¹⁰³ It is not difficult to imagine that the central mound (and the baulks or banks between the ditches) of Knaves Castle were seen as a convenient source of fill to raise the new carriageway, a not uncommon fate for many earthworks lying near roads. Occamsley Pits nearby to the west may also have been filled. That would explain the virtual disappearance of Knaves Castle (and Occamsley Pits), which had been a significant landscape feature, and why William Scott in 1832 gives only the width of the feature which he says was 'still faintly discernible' (though with the hillock at its centre still 'distantly conspicuous'), showing the extent to which the ditches had been reduced since the 1760s. It is noteworthy that of all the authorities who describe Knaves Castle, Scott alone mentions surrounding banks as well as ditches, but it is clear that only slight traces of the monument then remained, and that the ditches had been all but levelled by the end of the 18th century.

The Enclosure Awards and associated plans of 1838–9 provide valuable, if perplexing, evidence. The description of Knaves Castle as 'a mound' is clear enough, but the cartographic evidence is less clear. We cannot be certain what the sub-square feature denoted with broken lines is intended to represent: it may simply mark a double fence or hedge, though that seems unlikely, especially since it is crossed by a property boundary, and why there might be a double fence is difficult to explain. Although it has been described by recent commentators as 'a square moated feature' (a dry or water-filled ditch?), no evidence has been traced to support that identification, and a moat would in any event seem improbable in such an elevated position.¹⁰⁴ Superimposing the 1838 map over the 1884 Ordnance Survey map shows that the square feature is centred more or less over the central mound of Knaves Castle, and probably lay within what remained to be seen of any surrounding perimeter ditches. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that the quadrangular feature is to be associated with the keep-like breastwork recorded in the second half of the 17th century. We may perhaps need to imagine a mound surmounted or surrounded by or incorporating traces of a low quadrangular bank,¹⁰⁵ with the 1838 maps possibly reflecting remaining traces of that bank.¹⁰⁶ Somewhat perversely, the fact that the quadrangular areas have differing shapes and dimensions on the maps is of considerable evidential value, for it serves to show that neither plan can be relied upon to indicate the size of the feature depicted, which had almost certainly not been measured. Had only one plan survived, undue weight would inevitably attach to the scaled dimensions. However, the rôle of the Enclosure Award surveyor was essentially to delineate boundaries, and it would not be surprising if he chose to show the quadrangular feature, perhaps faintly discernible rather than well defined, rather than an indeterminate central mound and the incomplete and degraded traces of concentric surrounding ditches. It is very possible that the quadrangular feature was very much smaller than might be suggested by its differing representations on the two maps.

From the available evidence we might reasonably conclude, therefore, that:

- i The earthwork lay on a natural eminence, perhaps a glacial gravel/sand deposit, on a bleak heathland at a height of about 500 feet with an exceptional view shed.
- ii It stood some 60' to 80' from, and on the south side of, Watling Street, a major Roman road, here running east–west across Central Staffordshire.
- iii It was in existence c. 1308 (presumably as the feature later recorded on the site), when it was known as 'Cnaven Castle', by which date the area in which it lay was a Hay or enclosure within Cannock Forest.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Under *A Road Act from Burton on Trent by Knave's Castle to the parish of Norton under Cannock*, 29 Geo. III c. 83.

¹⁰³ *Lichfield Mercury*, 10 May 1901.

¹⁰⁴ Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 150.

¹⁰⁵ A curious notch in the curved trackway from Watling Street which appears on the 1884 1:2,500 OS map may have marked the north-west corner of the quadrangular area.

¹⁰⁶ The Enclosure Award plans show no break in the southern side of the feature to tie in with the entrance through the concentric ditches, but it is so aligned that a southern entrance would lie in the centre of the southern side.

¹⁰⁷ Ogley Hay had been taken into the forest by 1231: *VCH* II, 338.



Fig. 7 Ordnance Survey, first edition 1" to the mile edition (1834). Extract (not to scale). Knave's Castle is clearly marked in Gothic script to represent an antiquity and shown as a circle within a circle, which was not a standard Ordnance Survey symbol.

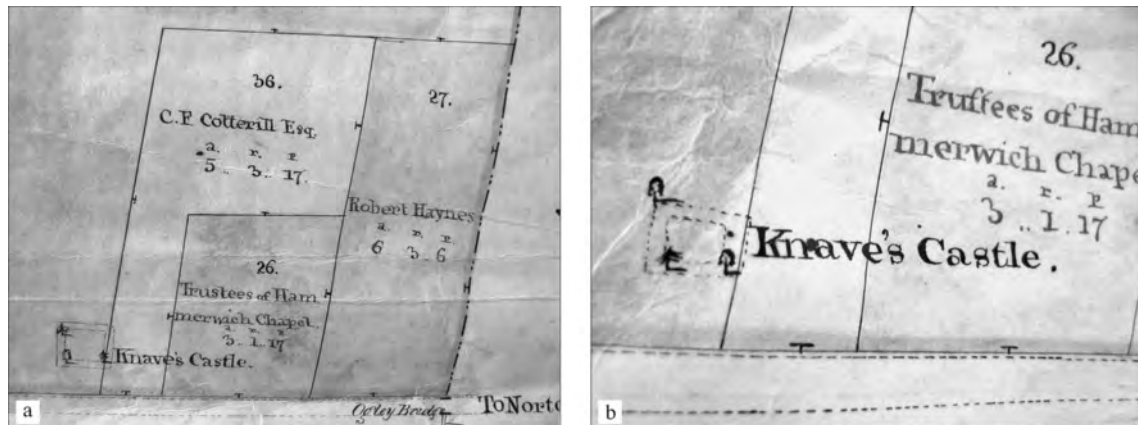


Fig. 8 Ogley Hay enclosure award map (a) and supplemental award map (b) of 1838/9. Both from Staffordshire Record Office, Q/RDc/90 (original drawn at a scale of four chains to an inch). Extracts (not to scale). NB: South is at the top.

- iv It took the form of a rounded mound perhaps 7'–8' in height and some 60 to 80 feet in diameter,¹⁰⁸ surrounded by three concentric circular ditches (which Sanders says were 15'–18' deep), and perhaps banks, with an entrance, doubtless a simple causeway, on the south.
- v A reference to Knave's Castle Cross in 1649 suggests that a cross then existed at or close to the feature, or that the name had survived after the cross had disappeared.
- vi In the second half of the 17th century a square feature in the centre of the mound at Knave's Castle is recorded with sides of some 6' to 9' (which may be associated with the reference

¹⁰⁸ A diameter of 18 paces and a height of 2½ feet are given in Gunstone 1965, 45.

- to an excavated hollow in the central mound recorded in 1686), surrounded by a keep-like breastwork.¹⁰⁹
- vii By the later 18th century the monument lay in treeless heathland, with a pine tree forming a waymark in the middle of the central mound.
 - viii The surrounding banks of the monument (or the material between the ditches) may have served as a convenient source of material to improve Watling Street when it was turnpiked in 1789, since they seem to have been almost levelled between 1775 and 1793.
 - ix In 1832 the ditches of the monument could be made out but were said to be only ‘faintly discernible’.
 - x In 1838–9 the feature was described as a mound, and shown on plans as a hollow quadrangle, perhaps representing traces of the square feature recorded in the 17th century.
 - xi By 1884 a tumulus is recorded, and a curving trackway had been constructed through the north-western part of the feature to give access from Watling Street to a house known as Knaves Castle.
 - xii By 1887 all traces of the mound and ditches are said to have been swept away; in 1901 the feature was described as ‘very defaced’; and in 1908 it was reported that evidence of the feature was still visible as the eastern arc of a single low bank some 80’ wide, between 2’ 6” and 4’ in height, with traces of an outer ditch, although the remains were very slight.
 - xiii All traces of the feature had vanished by the early decades of the 20th century.¹¹⁰ Since c. 1938 bungalows have been built across the site.

In summary, the monument may have taken the form of a mound some 60 to 80 feet in diameter and several feet high, with a central square hollow feature some 6 to 9 feet across enclosed by a square-plan keep-like breastwork, all surrounded by three deep concentric ditches with an overall diameter c. 160 feet and an entrance on the south.

DISCUSSION

The reported nature of the feature at Knaves Castle is strikingly unusual in the West Midlands, and possibly unique. The earthworks could have dated from any period from prehistoric times to the early 14th century: not a single archaeological find of any period has been recorded from the site or its immediate vicinity. The elevated location would have proved attractive to prehistoric man, though the description of the earthworks does not suggest an unaltered multi-banked single-entrance bowl-barrow, bell barrow, or disc barrow of Bronze-Age date,¹¹¹ even though some parallels for monuments of this configuration are known,¹¹² and other tumuli are believed to have existed in the area.¹¹³ But though the ditches at Knaves Castle, if we can rely on the various reports, seem to have

109 Possibly the site of the cross remembered in 1649, although a site further west on the Norton Canes boundary seems more likely. Many, if not most, barrows have shallow depressions on their tops which will normally mark ancient or more recent excavations, but in some cases may represent the collapse of some internal structure, or the position of some monument set into the top of the mound: see footnote 151.

110 That did not deter later writers from recording long after that the monument remained visible: see, for example, *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1968, 220; Hadfield 1970, 646.

111 J. T. Gould, an experienced local archaeologist, held that Knaves Castle was ‘a tumulus or burial mound, unexcavated, but believed to be Bronze Age’: Gould 1983, 14.

112 For example, a multi-banked circular ring barrow, some 70 feet in diameter, with a single entrance on the east, at Llech Llïa, Maescar (Powys), NGR SN92321896. Of 162 barrows included in a survey of the Welsh Marches in Stoertz 2004, just over half were on raised ground, and 11 had two or three ditches. For Bronze Age funerary monuments in the region see especially Paul Garwood, ‘Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Funerary Monuments and Burial Traditions in the West Midlands’, in Garwood 2006. A triple-ditched Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age barrow lies amongst other prehistoric monuments identified beneath the deserted medieval village of East Cotton, Raunds (Northamptonshire).

113 As noted later in this paper, we can assume from place-name evidence the probable existence of a tumulus at Muckley (Corner), some two miles to the east of Knaves Castle (Horovitz 2005, 402), and there is evidence of at least one burial mound at Catshill, one mile south of Knaves Castle: a single barrow is mentioned in Plot 1686, 403; Cox *et al* 1738, 14; and a mound (recorded as *Cattelowe* in 1300: SHC V (1), 177; *Cattel Low alias Cattel Hill* in 1576: VCH XVII, 278 fn. 30) is described as a single bank or barrow in Sanders 1794, 3–4; two barrows are mentioned in Harwood 1820, 228; and Catshill is described as a tumulus in Garner 1844, 68. The construction of the Wyrley and Essington Canal c. 1797 is said to have bisected one or possibly two barrows at Catshill: NSJFS V (1965), 46. Duignan mentions in 1902 a single tumulus (which he says formed the boundary of Walsall, Ogley Hay and Little Wyrley) at Catshill on the south side of Chester road which was cut through by the canal, with part of the spoil placed against and defacing the tumulus (Duignan 1902, 34), in which case the mound(s) will not have been on the highest ground in this area, for the land rises to the north and south: see also Staffordshire Historic Environment Records 2612 and 4012. It may be noted that no burial mounds are mentioned in this area in the 996 boundary clause of Ogley Hay: Hooke 1983, 77–9, but that various mounds are recorded in the Ogley Hay Enclosure Award of 1838/9. It is unclear whether *Lowe field lying next to the highway which leads from Great*

been massively defensive in scale, and far more substantial than would be expected for a Bronze Age burial mound, it is very possible, from the commanding height at which Knaves Castle stands, that a Bronze Age barrow formed the core of the site and was incorporated into a subsequent monument.

Given its proximity to the Hoard site it is appropriate to consider whether Knaves Castle may have been a ritual site of some kind. Ritual buildings or temples have recently been identified in Northern Europe dating from the 3rd century AD to c. 800 AD, near which votive objects (some of gold, with deliberately damaged bronze weapons) were deposited on the surface,¹¹⁴ and one suggestion to explain the deposition of the Staffordshire Hoard (which may have been unburied, or concealed within some sort of organic container laid in a pit or shallow cut, since destroyed by the plough¹¹⁵) is that it may have been a votive deposit associated with a ritual building.¹¹⁶ Indeed, a recent study has identified possible pre-Christian 6th century shrines with cultic significance occupying dramatic topographies, seemingly associated with long-term use from prehistory into the early Middle Ages.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, another study has concluded that prehistoric mounds were sometimes altered and enlarged in the Anglo-Saxon period, and that large wooden posts or mortuary structures were erected in the centre, a practice that 'could be more common than has been supposed'.¹¹⁸ Although, as we have seen, the central feature at Knaves Castle may have been a timber, or possibly stone, structure, for the moment any idea that the site may have had a ritual or cultic purpose (an idea that it may be fair to say has not necessarily been accepted enthusiastically by all archaeologists), must remain no more than a possibility given the relative rarity of such sites and the absence of further evidence.¹¹⁹

From the 'Castle' element in the name we must consider whether the earthwork could have represented some sort of post-Conquest monument, perhaps with military connections. Norman motte and bailey castles are relatively uncommon in the West Midlands, with the greatest concentration in the southern part of the Welsh Marches,¹²⁰ and mottes generally survive to steeper profile and to a good height unless deliberately mutilated or destroyed, certainly higher and better defined than the early descriptions of Knaves Castle would lead us to believe: the ditches seem to have surrounded a central rounded area, but of much less height and size than a motte. Three ditches would be very unusual, if not unique, in a motte and bailey castle, and no bailey is recorded at the site, although it is true that they are often difficult to detect. There are also parallels for Norman mounds without baileys, and evidence that Norman timber towers could be relatively modest in size: for example Abinger castle (a conventional motte and bailey site) had a timber tower c. 1100 which was replaced by another in the 12th century which was about 12' square.¹²¹ But no reference (other than the cryptic

Wyrley towards Lichfield recorded in 1370 (SRO, D. 30/10/1/206), or *le Lowe*, recorded in Little Wyrley in 1370 and 1412 (SRO, D. 593/B/1/27/4/3; D. 593/B/1/27/4/2), is to be associated with Catshill. A low mound, once possibly ditched, on the summit of Grove Hill, south of Stonnall, is mentioned elsewhere in this paper. In 1824 a grave cut into the underlying sandstone with human bones and a hoard of 21 Late Bronze Age bronze implements nearby was found at Greensborough Farm (now Gainsborough Hill Farm) at Lower Stonnall, 2½ miles south-east of Knaves Castle near the junction of Chester Road and Gravelly Lane, which may perhaps have been covered originally by a mound: *VCH* I, 178–9, 181; Chitty and Coombs 1968, 1–16. Three mounds are said to have surrounded the earthwork enclosures (now ploughed out), probably of Iron Age date, known as Loaches Banks, a mile or so south-east of Aldridge, the largest, on the east, some 72' across, twice the size of the next largest: Hutton 1795, 478; Shaw 1798–1801, I, 10–11. Knaves Castle lies some 4½ miles west of the ancient Hundred meeting place of Offlow, a now-vanished tumulus about which little is known, but which was said to be '... the most eminent barrow in those parts ...' in 1738 (Cox *et al* 1738, 24), was described as 'an exploratory mount, about forty feet in diameter called Offlo' in 1811 (Pennant 1811, 158), and which was readily discernible in the early nineteenth century when it was about 40' in diameter (Jackson 1805, 236), and indistinct but traceable in the early twentieth century (Duignan 1902, 110; *VCH* I, 377). In 1972 the feature could only be detected as a crop-mark of the circular ditch of a ploughed-out bowl barrow: *TSAHS* XIII (1972), 7. It is recorded in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record under reference 01093, NGR SK122059.

114 Larsson 2006; Carver *et al* 2010, 11–14; Carver 2011, 231.

115 Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 144; Jones 2010. The Hoard has been estimated to have been buried at a depth of 12" below the present ground level: Carver 2011, 231.

116 Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 144; Périn 2011, 225–6; Carver 2011, 231; Webster *et al* 2011, 225–8. One such building at Uppåkra, southern Sweden, rebuilt seven times over many centuries, was sited at the edge of a plateau and had a typically Scandinavian rectangular plan with slightly convex walls and straight gable ends, some 13.5 metres long and 6 metres wide, with four large central posts placed in pairs to support the roof. There were three entrances, one facing north and two south: Larsson 2006, 22.

117 Semple 2007, 364–85. The study was related to place-names incorporating Old English *hearg* ('temple, altar, sanctuary, idol'), but the conclusions might also apply to other places.

118 Williams 1998, 102; Williams 1999, 63. Anglo-Saxon timber pagan shrines of square plan may have been erected on Bronze-Age funerary monuments, but tended to have sides of at least several yards: Blair 1995, 1–28.

119 It may, of course, be argued that the existence of a great hoard nearby constitutes possible evidence.

120 See Renn 1973, 16.

121 Renn 1973, 86: I am grateful to Professor Howard Williams for drawing this site to my attention.

name *Cnaven Castle*, which provides few clues, recorded c. 1308) has been traced to any fortification in this area, which would be unusual in the case of a castle, however temporary: certainly the word ‘castle’ provides no toponymic evidence for the nature of the feature, and the tenurial history of the place makes the existence of an early medieval castle most improbable.

Other possibilities to explain Knaves Castle include an assembly site and mustering point for troops, an execution site, or a pre-Christian sanctuary, but a more prosaic origin cannot of course be overlooked: the triple ditches may have been associated in some way with the creation of ‘Occamsley Pits’, or with the multifarious activities undertaken in the post-Conquest royal forest in which the place lay.¹²² Rabbit warrens and associated warrener’s lodges are frequently found on marginal uplands, and are known to have long existed on Ogley Hay,¹²³ but the features of Knaves Castle are untypical of earthworks associated with warrens.¹²⁴ Knaves Castle lay in a central position above the Cannock Chase Coalfield, and coal mining is recorded in the area from the late 13th century, as in the bishop’s manor of Cannock in 1298.¹²⁵ But it was almost certainly confined to outcrops, and we can safely discount the possibility that the earthworks at Knaves Castle could have marked the remains of a medieval bell-pit, complete with central square shaft head and surrounding waste banks. Robert Plot’s ‘local tradition’ that the feature was associated with robbers or was a security post cannot be ruled out completely, especially since lawlessness is recorded in the area from an early date,¹²⁶ but there are no obvious parallels for such a feature, and the nature and scale of the earthwork seem to make that idea and a medieval date unlikely.

From its proximity to a major Roman road, a Roman origin for the Knaves Castle earthworks must be the most obvious possibility,¹²⁷ and given the far-reaching views from the site we must consider whether it could have been a monument such as a barrow or temple.¹²⁸ Although uncommon in the West Midlands, Roman barrows, which were often (though not always) of considerable size and alongside roads, typically had steep sides, sometimes with flat tops, the latter perhaps to take a memorial stone or post, and were not generally on high places with far-reaching views, or heavily ditched.¹²⁹ That does not fit the topography of Knaves Castle, although the possibility cannot be dismissed. Furthermore, Roman temples seem to have been of square plan within a square enclosure, a configuration inconsistent with the nature of the surrounding earthworks of Knaves

122 We might note that a windmill may once have stood on the mound near Aldridge church: Holland and Saunders 2003. For details of activities undertaken in the medieval forest, including Cannock Forest, see Birrell 1969. It should be remembered that there are two references to features described as *suinsete* (swine-fold) in the spurious charter of Wulfrun to the church of Wolverhampton c. 996, one named as a boundary mark of Ogley Hay (S.1380; Hooke 1983 40, 78–81), the other in the boundary clause of Bilston and Wednesfield in the same charter (Hooke 1983, 40, 72–5). Knaves Castle was clearly far too massively constructed to have been a mere animal pen. It should be added that a less than exhaustive search of printed sources relating to Cannock Forest has failed to trace any reference to Knaves Castle, or to any feature that may represent the earthworks, which is perhaps surprising given their apparent prominence as a local landmark. It may also be noted that a boat-shaped earthwork, with an external ditch and internal bank more obvious at the west end (NGR SJ 978153), all now destroyed by quarrying, on a hilltop near Badger Slade (¼ mile west of Cannock Thorn, a boundary mark on the west side of the ancient Cannock Forest), has been tentatively identified as an enclosure or corral for the herding of animals: Staffordshire Historic Environment Record 40326.

123 Hooke 2010.

124 Artificial warrens were circular or cigar-shaped mounds up to 120’ long, formerly known as ‘buries’, now frequently termed pillow-mounds, where rabbits could establish a network of underground tunnels and chambers on a dry site not at risk of flooding: Simpson 1893, 81–5.

125 See *VCH* II, 69, 72, 78.

126 A View of the Forest conducted in 1235 found ‘the wood of Ogley well kept in respect of oak, in which ... 6 oaks were recently felled, as to which the foresters said that the king gave 4 oaks from it to the works of the church of Lichfield, and that they were compelled to fell the rest of the oaks ?on account of the number of outlaws so ... the said outlaws cannot enter’: Birrell 1999, 21. There were certainly highwaymen operating in the area in 1703, when the Shrewsbury stagecoach was robbed near Brownhills by a 9-strong gang who 10 days later killed one drover and seriously injured another, and who two days afterwards attacked and robbed the sheriff of Staffordshire, cutting off the hand of a servant. They were apprehended and 3 of the gang were found to be wearing women’s clothing: Harper 1902, I, 5.

127 One commentator in 1859 confidently identified the feature as a Roman guard house protecting the intersection of Watling Street and the Chester Road: *Notes & Queries* 59, 343. CBA appears to assume, though without explanation, a Roman origin for Knaves Castle, noting that ‘Brownhills had first been mentioned in the 18th century, having come into existence as a result of the expansion of coal mining. Romano-British activity may have occurred in the area, as evidenced by the proximity of Watling Street and Knaves Castle’.

128 OS Field Investigator’s notes (F1 VJB, dated 19 May 1958) indicate that in 1958 no certain trace of the feature could be detected, but it was felt that its situation at the side of Watling Street on slightly raised ground suggested that it may have been: (a) a Roman barrow, based on its appearance on the O.S. 6” map of 1887, a mound with an outer bank circa 130’ in diameter; (b) a Roman signal station; or (c) a medieval castle, as suggested by its name, although it did not look like one on the 1887 map.

129 Wood 1963, 163.

Castle, although it is of course possible that Knaves Castle could have been a composite site with features of different periods. However, we might usefully consider whether the feature could have been a Roman signal tower or watchtower.¹³⁰

Twenty Roman signal towers or watchtowers are listed in the Fourth Edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain, published in 1978, but many more have been identified since, often from aerial photographs.¹³¹ (see APPENDIX) From the excavated evidence and also from sculptural representations from Trajan's Column and the column of Marcus Aurelius it is possible to reconstruct the design of such towers. Generally found near Roman roads, their design seems to have varied slightly, but they typically take the form of a central square-plan timber tower (or on the North Yorkshire coast, Hadrian's Wall, and the Saxon Shore a square stone tower), two or more floors high, some 10' or more across, set on four heavy posts. Access was probably by internal ladders. The topmost storey would have had a wooden viewing gallery accessed by a single door and windows which could be closed with covers. A wooden arm extending diagonally upwards from the top storey is shown on the Trajan's Column sculpture. This is the swinging arm about 12' long, described by the Late Roman military authority Vegetius, which was attached to a fulcrum and could be moved vertically through 180° to transmit signals. The roof is pyramid shaped and tiled. A large, carefully stacked pile of timber and two tall piles of straw adjoin one of the towers shown on Trajan's Column, evidently fuel for signalling by smoke or (in darkness) flame. Towers were generally enclosed within a low turf rampart (perhaps with a palisade, as shown on Trajan's Column) or breastwork wall, surrounded by one or more penannular ditches and banks formed from upcast material.¹³² There was usually a single entranceway in the breastwork and surrounding ditches, generally facing a road.¹³³

The Knaves Castle earthwork seems to have incorporated almost exactly the various elements of this type of monument, although at Knaves Castle there were three ditches, whereas the great majority of known Roman towers have a single bank and ditch. That at Greenloaning, Perthshire, however, had two, perhaps surrounded by an upcast bank. In the light of the evidence from other Roman tower sites, John Stansby's otherwise perplexing description that: 'the midst of it is not above 2 or 3 yards Square, and hath a breastwork about it in the nature of a keep' becomes readily intelligible, and the reported scale of the surrounding ditches would be entirely consistent with a Roman origin. That the entrance faced away from the adjoining Watling Street is admittedly unexplained, but perhaps suggests that another Roman road or site may have lain to the south. The triple rather than single or double enclosing ditches, and their supposed size, might point towards construction during a particularly troubled and unstable period, even perhaps before the precise line of Watling Street had been finally established.¹³⁴

From the available documentary accounts of its nature and scale, therefore, and given its far-reaching views, by far the most plausible explanation for the earthwork at Knaves Castle seems to be as a Roman watchtower or signal station, possibly constructed over and incorporating a Bronze Age tumulus: given the number of barrows in the area, it would perhaps be surprising if a tumulus had not been placed on this particularly prominent site, which was probably several feet or more higher until largely levelled at the end of the 18th century. The tower presumably took the usual form of a slender square-plan structure, two or more storeys in height, probably of timber but possibly with the lowest part, or even the whole tower, of stone (both abundant locally), within a low square wall of turf (perhaps palisaded) or stone, with the site enclosed within three concentric circular ditches having a causewayed entrance to the south.¹³⁵ A tower would have provided an extensive view-field: certainly more far-reaching than the views for which it was famed in the 18th century, for a tower of even modest height might greatly increase the line of sight to and from the topmost level. We

130 Writing c. 731, Bede refers to the construction of various works by the Romans in Britain, including *farus*, translated in contemporary Old English as *torras*, which might refer to lighthouses or possibly signal towers: see Miller 1890, I, 44–5; Whitelock 1979, 642.

131 A valuable analysis of Roman tower sites in Scotland may be found in Hanson and Friell 1995.

132 Jones and Mattingly 1990, 107–8, 137. One recently identified at Longy Bay in Alderney, in the Channel Islands, is 130' square in plan with walls 9' thick and over 15' high, a semi-circular bastion at each corner, and a central stone tower 58' square: CA 261, 28–33.

133 See especially Jones and Mattingly 1990, 107–8, 137; de la Bédoyère 2001, 84–5; Fields 2005, 22–3. Some stone signal towers had no entrance at ground level: Steer and Feacham 1951–2, 205.

134 Little dating material has been recovered from known signal station sites, but the Scottish sites are generally thought to be late first century in date.

135 A signal station at Garnhall, Cumbernauld (Strathclyde), on the line of the Antonine Wall (NGR NS 780779), was apparently constructed on a slightly raised rectangular clay and gravel platform: Wooliscroft 2008.

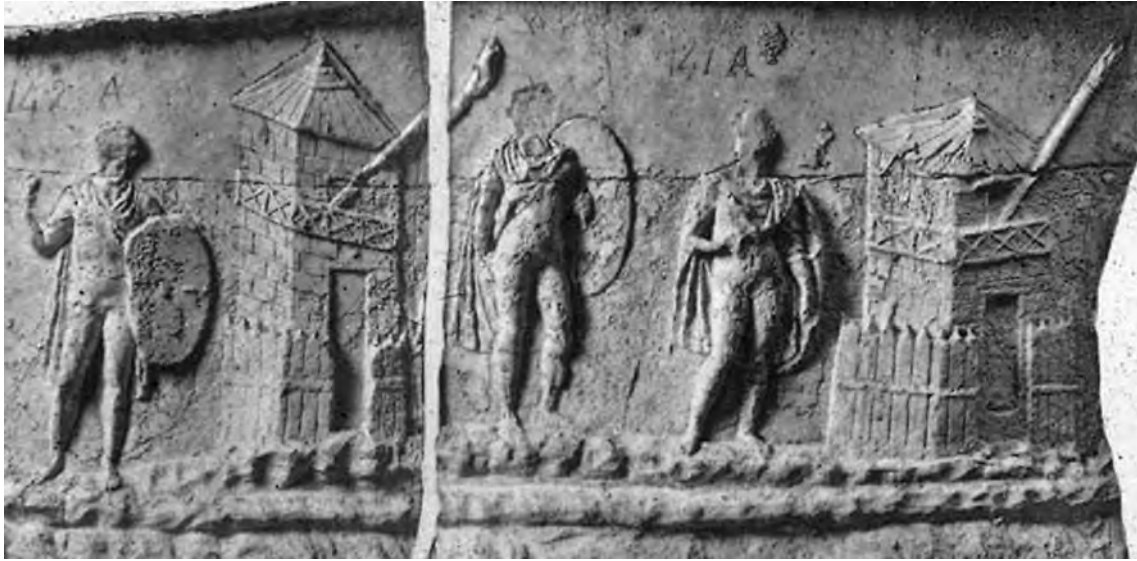


Fig. 9 Roman signal towers as depicted on Trajan's Column.

might assume that the tower would have been associated with the important Roman military staging post and posting station established c. 50AD at *Letocetum*, 3½ miles to the east.¹³⁶

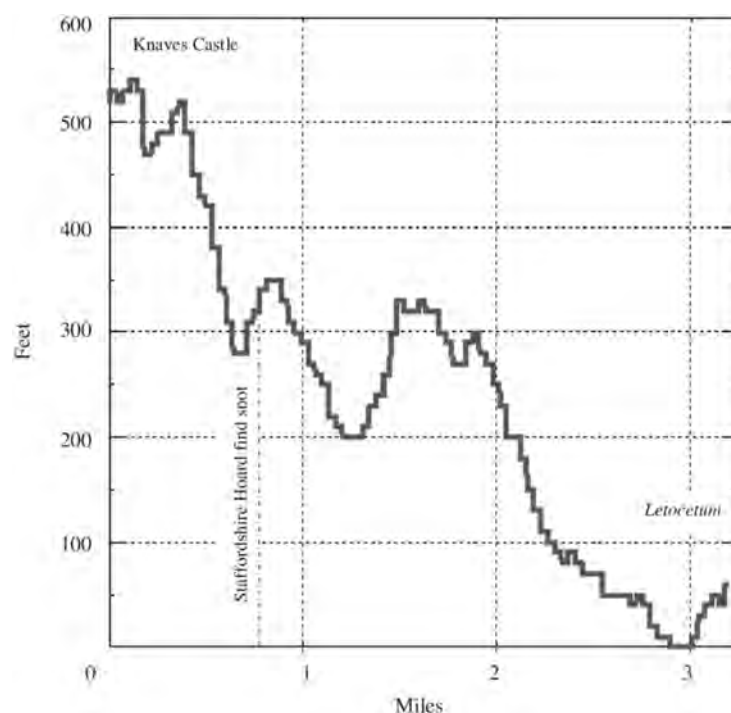
Roman tower sites are very rare (or, perhaps more accurately, rarely recognised) in the Midlands and south of England – only three examples appear on the Southern Sheet of the Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain, which covers the area from Cumbria to Cornwall¹³⁷ – but it would be very surprising if more sites had not existed in those areas, and Knaves Castle may have been one of a network of towers, some intervisible, that stood on high (though not necessarily the highest) ground along or close to Watling Street and doubtless other Roman roads and on other intermediate view points. Indeed, from its reported size and triple ditches it could have been one of the most substantial Roman tower sites in Britain, perhaps (like other known examples) erected sometime during the 1st century, and possibly used as a beacon site even after the Roman period.¹³⁸

136 The Roman town of *Letocetum* is centred on a defended area of some 5 acres astride Watling Street enclosed by a 4th-century wall 9' thick fronted by three ditches and backed by a turf rampart: Gould 1993, 2. Remains of the various Roman sites at *Letocetum* were visible until the late 18th century, including walls over 12' high, and will have been far more extensive in the Anglo-Saxon period: in Nennius's *Historia Brittonum*, c. 829–30, the place is listed as one of the 28 cities of Britain: Morris 1980, 80; Gould 1998. It might be surprising if they had not been utilised as part of the late 9th- and early 10th-century strategic defences of English Mercia by King Alfred's son-in-law Æthelred and his wife, Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd, against Danish attack (or, indeed, used by the Danes themselves), given their crucial strategic position at the junction of Watling Street and Ryknild Street, and proximity to Lichfield, Tamworth and Repton, all important Anglo-Saxon centres (as well as the site of the great victory over the Danes at Tettenhall/Wednesfield in 910): Æthelred and Æthelflæd are known to have restored other Roman defences, e.g. at Gloucester and Chester. The site at Wall may even represent the mysterious *Scergeat*, a fortification made by Æthelflæd in 912 (Swanton 1996, 96): a restored Roman fort astride Watling Street could properly be termed a *geat* (gate).

137 Those are at Scarborough and Filey in North Yorkshire, and Hirfynydd in Glynneath parish, West Glamorgan on Sarn Helen Roman road, where two towers have been identified. OS map of Roman Britain (Southern Sheet), 4th edition 1978.

138 No evidence has been traced of any beacon at Knaves Castle in more recent centuries, but for speculation about a possible beacon site at Noddy Field on the south-west of Cannock Wood see Horovitz 2005, 411. For beacons and signalling in later Anglo-Saxon England see Lavelle 2010, 217–25, and Jake Shemming and Keith Briggs, *Anglo-Saxon Communication Networks*, a paper that maps Anglo-Saxon beacon sites in Hampshire and Dorset, as well as Roman sites in Yorkshire, and computes their intervisibility using the SRTM shuttle elevation data: keithbriggs.info/AS_networks.html website [accessed 4 October 2012]. The possibility that lost earthworks in the wider area hitherto identified from aerial photographs as tumuli or ring ditches, especially if a central sunken area is detected, might in reality be Roman tower sites should not be overlooked, particularly where they lie on high ground near Roman roads. In that respect it may be noted that on the summit of Grove Hill, to the west of St Peter's church, Stonnall, a little over 2 miles south-east of Knaves Castle, is a low mound with faint traces of what could have been a surrounding ditch: Staffordshire Historic Environment Record 01283, NGR SK071031. The site gives a wide panorama, including Knaves Castle, though Castle Old Fort, ½ mile to the west, is on higher land, and Grove Hill (which seems to be marked with a ring of trees on the summit on the First Edition OS map of 1834) is unrecorded in Sanders 1794. It may also be noted that the 1839 Supplementary Enclosure Award of Ogley Hay mentions 'a certain place formerly a mound commonly called by the name of Tat Bank or Gospel Bank at the termination of Walsall Wood Common and enclosures in the parish of Shenstone': SRO, Q/RDc/90. The word *tat* is likely to be the local variant of Old English *tot*, meaning a look-out point: Horovitz 2005, 47–8.

Roman towers have commonly been interpreted as signal towers, but research into the Gask network, where the towers are generally not sited on natural high points, has suggested that they served principally as look-out points for nearby forts, or posts intended to act as an early warning system and signal link. An analysis of 17 tower sites showed that each lay between c. 866 and c. 4550 yards from a fort or fortlet. Most have a close lateral visibility rather than, or as well as, their potential for long-range surveillance and signalling, and it is this factor that seems to define their role.¹³⁹ If Knaves Castle was of Roman origin, its elevated position suggests that it could have served as both signal station and watchtower. The Roman site at *Letocetum* (which perhaps included a signal station within a ½ acre enclosure¹⁴⁰) lies on a sandstone ridge some 4760 yards to the east, so we might be seeking a lost fort or fortlet rather closer to Knaves Castle.¹⁴¹ Interestingly, notwithstanding the relatively short distance between Knaves Castle and *Letocetum*, a 20' tower on a 10' mound at Knaves Castle would not have been visible from *Letocetum* (nor, incidentally, from the site of the Staffordshire Hoard), being obscured by high ground to the east of Knaves Castle, which might suggest that Knaves Castle served as a relay station.¹⁴²



Graph Schematic diagram illustrating the profile of the ground between Knaves Castle (increased by 30' to represent the notional height of a Roman signal station) and *Letocetum*, showing that any tower would not have been visible from *Letocetum* or from the site the Staffordshire Hoard. Reproduced by kind permission of Dr Keith Briggs.

139 Hanson and Friell 1995. The arrangement seems to have parallels with the system on the Domitianic frontier in Germany beyond the Rhine in the Taunus and Wetterau region, which consisted of a road with a series of timber watchtowers at intervals of 540–1080 yards, interspersed between closely spaced forts and fortlets. A similar arrangement may have existed at the Stanegate frontier across the Tyne/Solway isthmus, which has a series of closely spaced forts and fortlets: *ibid.*

140 Webster 1975, 89.

141 In that respect we might note the southern entrance to the Knaves Castle earthwork. It should be noted that a fort of only half an acre in area at *Letocetum* held into the early 2nd century has been interpreted as a signal post or guard station: Webster 1975, 89.

142 From data made available by Dr Keith Briggs, which have also demonstrated that the exceptionally commanding views enjoyed by the Roman site at *Vxacona* (Redhill, to the east of Telford: the Roman name means 'high place': Rivet and Smith 1981, 482), over 20 miles from Knaves Castle, would not reach any watchtower at Knaves Castle, being interrupted by high ground to the north of Wyrley Common only 1½ miles west of Knaves Castle (and an obvious place for a relay station: field boundaries suggest that Watling Street may originally have extended west at the point where it now bends to the north-west), and in any event whether any fire or smoke signals could have been detected over such a distance must be very doubtful: chains of known signal stations consist of sites which are very much closer together, often less than a mile apart.

Whatever its origin, it is evident that in its elevated position in an area of bleak wooded heathland the conspicuous central mound and massive surrounding triple ditches of Knaves Castle were not of natural origin, but were artificially constructed on a particularly prominent site, probably already ancient when first recorded in the early 14th century. They appear to have escaped damage and obliteration caused elsewhere by cultivation, development and deliberate pillaging until well into recent centuries. If it was indeed a Roman tower site, John Stansby's invaluable 17th century account tells us that it was then still remarkably well preserved – perhaps reinforcing the possibility that the breastwork, and even the tower, had been of stone – and we might suppose that substantial fragments of the tower itself, albeit derelict and decayed, were still visible in the 7th century when the Staffordshire Hoard was probably deposited.

The existence or memory in 1649 of a cross at or near Knaves Castle adds another dimension to an already intriguing scenario.¹⁴³ We have no information of any kind about the size, shape, material, age or origin of the cross, or even where precisely it stood. Knaves Castle may have been the name attached to the immediate area – it will be remembered that the earliest reference in 1308 is to 'the place called Cnaven castle' – as well as to the earthwork (since no other conspicuous features appear to have lain in this area), in which case the cross might have been a marker at the point where the boundaries of Norton, Hammerwich, and Ogley Hay met, some 850 feet to the west of Knaves Castle, or where trackways, now lost, converged at Knaves Castle. It is probably unwise to speculate on the nature of any such cross, or the date it may have been erected (and removed or destroyed), and whether it was contemporary with the other features described by antiquaries, but we should remember that some crosses had a very ancient history and a few were of pre-Conquest date.

Although there is no reason to imagine that the Knaves Castle cross was of any great age when recorded in 1649, since no other references have been found to it and if ancient it might perhaps have been expected to give rise to a place-name on this otherwise bleak heathland, that does not rule out the possibility of a much longer history.¹⁴⁴

In that respect tentative and fragmentary evidence which might help illuminate the history of this area in the 7th and 8th centuries has, inevitably, been subjected to intense scrutiny and re-examination for clues which might explain the deposition of the Staffordshire Hoard. Very little material is available to help throw light on this period – for example, no early Mercian chronicles survive – but one literary source has been, and will continue to be, the subject of academic debate: the Welsh poem known as *Marwnad Cynddylan* ('The Cynddylan Elegy'). The elegy mentions a great Welsh victory sometime around the mid 7th century at *Caer Luydd coed* (named twice), probably *Letocetum* but possibly Lichfield, where it is said that 'book-clutching monks' failed to prevent the capture of cattle and horses by Morfael.¹⁴⁵ Scholars have variously interpreted the episode as Morfael, a British overlord from Powys, attacking *Caer Luydd coed* with his kinsman Cynddylan in retaliation for Morfael's expulsion from the place by the Mercians; or as the culmination of a campaign by the great Mercian king Penda, in alliance with Welsh forces, to counter a Northumbrian incursion into Mercia; or as some confused remembrance of a local conflict at some date before the battle of *Winwæd* in 655, when Penda, supported by a Welsh contingent, was defeated and decapitated after invading Northumbria.¹⁴⁶ The poem, which survives only in an 18th-century copy of a copy, has been given an early date on linguistic grounds, but was evidently set down long after, probably between the late 9th and end of the 10th century: the reference to what seems to be an archbishop (*pen escob*, 'chief bishop') suggests that it may post-date the creation of the Lichfield archdiocese in 787; the reference to 'book-clutching monks' may derive more from Bede's account, written in 731, of the battle of Chester in 616 than some unknown battle at Wall or Lichfield;¹⁴⁷ some of the place-names seem to be authentically Welsh, others English; and the author seems to contradict other sources

143 There is an intriguing but ambiguous reference to Richard son of the hermit of Ogley c. 1273 (Birrell, 1999, 133), though whether it was Richard or the hermit (or both) who were of Ogley, and how a celibate hermit came to have a son, is unclear.

144 It is perhaps worth noting that the supposed Anglo-Saxon cross-shaft in St Peter's churchyard, Wolverhampton (which may be a reworked Roman column) is unrecorded until the mid 18th century, a century after the Knaves Castle cross is mentioned: Horovitz 2005, 334–42.

145 Rowland 1990, 176–7; Gelling 1992, 73, Gould 1993, 6; but see also Horovitz 2005, 20. Rowland identifies *Caer luydd coed* (*Caer Luitcoed*) as Lichfield, evidently in error for *Letocetum*, some 2 miles south-west, since she refers to a possible continuing Romano-British presence there: Rowland 1990, 133–4, 176–7.

146 Gelling 1992, 72–3; Hooke 2011a, 4–5. The name of the hero in *Marwnad Cynddylan*, *Moriael* (Morfael), is recorded, as *Mormayl*, in association with *Loytcoyt* in Harleian MS 3859, perhaps compiled in the late 10th century: Bartrum 1966, 12.

147 Cynddylan was one of numerous children of Cyndrwyn; another son Gwiawn is mentioned in a triad which might refer to the battle of Chester: Bromwich 2006, 171–3.

and to have known little about the period apart from events mentioned in the *Historia Brittonum* ('History of the Britons'), a work written in Gwynedd c. 829–30.¹⁴⁸ Although the interpretation of sources such as *Marwnad Cynddylan* must necessarily rest with specialists in early Welsh literature and history, we should be cautious about the use of such material as evidence for events in the area in the mid 7th century.¹⁴⁹ Even if the elegy might commemorate a significant military action in the Lichfield/Wall area,¹⁵⁰ there is little reason to suppose that a cross at or close to Knaves Castle could have been erected to mark those hostilities or any other significant event, although pre-Conquest memorial crosses are not unknown.¹⁵¹

It is probably therefore more constructive to consider the historic landscape at the time when the Staffordshire Hoard was laid on or into the ground on the crest (but, perhaps significantly, not the summit) of a natural ridge on the south side of a major Roman road.¹⁵² That might help us to understand how and when and why it was deposited where it was. In that respect we can turn to important papers published in the late 1990s by Professor Howard Williams, who analysed the evidence for the commonplace re-use of long-abandoned prehistoric and Roman monuments as places of burial by the Anglo-Saxons before, during, and after the Christianisation of England.¹⁵³ He was able to show that almost a fifth of Anglo-Saxon burial sites in England were re-used Roman structures, and that prehistoric round barrows account for some 60% of all known cases of re-use of earlier monuments for early Anglo-Saxon burials, a practice that was common in almost all Anglo-Saxon England during the late 5th and 6th centuries, and into the 7th century.¹⁵⁴ It should be noted, however, that for reasons that are not entirely clear, the West Midlands is the only area without any firm examples of monument re-use, although there are some possible cases.¹⁵⁵

The vast majority of early Anglo-Saxon burial sites in the Upper Thames Valley are found on valley floors, terraces, and hillsides, rather than on ridge tops and hill summits, but in the 7th century burial practices seem to have changed for high-status burials, with prehistoric and Roman monuments specially selected for single burials of the Anglo-Saxon élite, accompanied by their grave goods.¹⁵⁶ Ancient monuments re-used by the Anglo-Saxons in the 7th century include a high-status burial on the summit of Lowbury Hill, one of the highest points on the Berkshire Downs with an all-round view-shed on the Oxford–Berkshire border close to the Ridgeway. The burial was covered by a primary barrow adjacent to the entrance of a probable Romano-British temple which in the 7th century is likely to have been a prominent landscape feature.¹⁵⁷ In the Thames Valley, Taplow barrow, with its extraordinarily wealthy early 7th-century male burial, had been placed within a prehistoric earthwork adjacent to and intervisible with the River Thames.¹⁵⁸ A high status burial, probably also of the early 7th century and at Cuddesdon in the Thames Valley, was made on the highest point of a prominent hilltop close to the site of a Roman villa with distant views in most directions.¹⁵⁹ In Wessex, an extremely wealthy female bed burial on Swallowcliffe Down was inserted into a large

148 See for example Higham 2002, 178–9.

149 The editor of the definitive edition of the poem has warned of the difficulties and dangers in using it as evidence for the history of the period: Rowlands 1990, 120–173.

150 Any such conflict could have been associated, for example, with the battle of *Meigen* (probably near the river Severn north-east of Welshpool) c. 630; with Oswiu of Northumbria's incursion 'with an army' to recover his brother Oswald's head and arms which had been displayed as trophies after the battle of *Maserfelth* (almost certainly Oswestry: Stancliffe 1996) at which Cynddylan was present in 642; or with *Winwæd* (655); or with Northumbrian rule over Mercia between 655–8 when Oswiu is said to have taken spoil; or with some incident after 658: Rowland 1990, 127–41. Cynddylan is said to have been slain with his brothers by the English when defending *Tren*, and *Pengwern* was destroyed: Rowland 1990, 487, 493, 572–4, 576. Both *Tren* and *Pengwern* remain unlocated, though the latter is sometimes identified, probably incorrectly, as Shrewsbury: PN Shropshire, I, 270.

151 The most notable example being the Eliseg pillar, near Valle Crucis Abbey (Powys), an inscribed memorial cross dating from the first half of the 9th-century erected on a Bronze Age tumulus (in which secondary cist burials have been discovered) by Concenn (Cyngen), king of Powys, who died c. 854, to commemorate his grandfather Elise who had expelled the Anglo-Saxons from Powys: Edwards 2009.

152 Leahy *et al* 2011, 211.

153 Williams 1997; Williams 1998; Williams 1999. Some of the richest known female burials from the Anglo-Saxon period have been found in prehistoric tumuli, including a wealthy female burial inserted into a Bronze Age tumulus at Swallowcliffe Down in Wiltshire: Williams 1997, 24; Williams 1998.

154 Williams 1998, 92, 95.

155 Williams 1997, 19. The secondary cist burials excavated in 2012 within the prehistoric tumulus on which the Eliseg pillar was erected (see footnote 151) have not yet been dated, but would seem to be early medieval.

156 Williams 1998, 95; Williams 1999, 97.

157 *Ibid.*, 62–3.

158 *Ibid.*, 78.

159 *Ibid.*, 78.

Bronze Age barrow on a high point on the downs with extensive views in every direction and close to a hundred boundary, perhaps an earlier territorial division.¹⁶⁰ At Maiden Bradley a wealthy late 7th-century grave on the summit of the hill at Rodmead Down may have been a secondary burial set into a prehistoric barrow, close to an early medieval boundary.¹⁶¹

In the light of this and other evidence, Professor Williams has concluded that during the 7th century (the likely date for the deposition of the Hoard), the common practice of re-using earlier monuments for burials in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period was changed, with high-status graves deliberately placed in the landscape according to specific and widely understood criteria. These location criteria seem to be a general trend not found among many other early medieval burial sites. In particular, isolated high-status 7th century graves are marked by the extravagant resources used to create dramatically theatrical funerary displays: placing artefacts with the body and other ceremonies associated with the interment may have been intended to bestow the dead with a new status and identity with links to a fabled past.¹⁶²

Professor Williams has identified four criteria in the choice of sites for high-status burials in the 7th century:¹⁶³

- 1 within or close to prehistoric and Roman monuments
- 2 on a high point with far-reaching views in most directions
- 3 close to major land and/or water routeways
- 4 near significant boundaries but away from population centres

Assuming that Knaves Castle was indeed a Roman (and perhaps prehistoric) monument, every one of those criteria could apply to the site: it is on high ground with outstanding views in many directions; it lay alongside Watling Street, a major Roman road which formed a pre-Conquest boundary between local estates and perhaps between earlier regional territories; and (as far as we know) it lay in an area away from sizeable settlements and centres of power.¹⁶⁴ We can conclude from this that although such deposits have not yet been found in the West Midlands, it would not be especially surprising for a Middle Saxon high-status deposit, perhaps with an interment, to have been buried within the central mound at Knaves Castle, and the finding of the Hoard nearby should not blind us to the possibility, however unlikely, that other Anglo-Saxon treasure may have been laid within the mound.¹⁶⁵ Such high status deposits call to mind the Old English poem *Beowulf*, possibly composed in an Anglian kingdom in the 8th or 9th century, which tells how treasure stolen from a barrow and so bulky that it had to be transported by wagon was buried with *Beowulf* at his death: ‘rings and brooches, all such trappings as men disposed to strife had earlier taken from the hoard; they let the earth keep the warriors’ treasure, gold in the dust, where it remains now ...’. Indeed, one theme of the poem is the superstitious impulse to rebury looted treasure.¹⁶⁶

However, the Hoard was not of course found at Knaves Castle, but some distance to the east, and is any event an unparalleled trophy hoard of military and martially-religious items, with many objects unique, rather than the type of material to be expected in a funerary deposit, even of the highest status. The reasons for and the circumstances of (and possibly even the date of) its assembly were, perhaps, unconnected with its deposition, and it is difficult to know whether it was placed where it was temporarily or permanently, having been shallowly buried, perhaps in some haste, or at least without particular ceremony, in or after the 7th century.¹⁶⁷ It may have been concealed at a

160 Williams 1997, 24; Williams 1999, 78.

161 Williams 1999, 78.

162 *Ibid.*, 80.

163 *Ibid.*, 59. Such sites were not associated only with burials: earlier monuments may have been used for the deposition of artefacts in the later Anglo-Saxon period, as suggested by the possible late 9th- or 10th-century hoard at Lilla Howe in North Yorkshire.

164 Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 148–51.

165 There are parallels for Roman signal stations being used for Anglo-Saxon burials. One is the square earthwork dating from c. 43–c. 61 AD at Thornham in Norfolk, an acre in extent and surrounded by a massive ditch, believed to have been a signal tower site, with uninterrupted views across The Wash to the Lincolnshire coast, which incorporated several shallow burials from the Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon period: Gregory 1986; Bruce-Mitford and Raven 2005. Another is the church and cemetery, probably of 9th- and 10th-century date, built on the former Roman signal station at Scarborough: Hadley 2006, 247.

166 See Hooke 2011a, 147; Hill 1996, 260: ‘gold has positive valence when appropriated for social purposes, negative when hoarded’: Hill 1996, 260.

167 The objects in the Hoard have not been dated with certainty, but from the latest research appear to fall within a date range from the mid 6th century to the 7th century. A semi-circular fragment of a copper-alloy disc brooch with four quadrants

spot that could, it was thought, be precisely located at some later date, presumably by reference to particular landscape features, temporary or permanent,¹⁶⁸ and the observation that ‘no archaeological feature explains the choice of this particular spot [for the burial of the Hoard]’¹⁶⁹ may require reassessment if the identification of Knaves Castle as a Roman watchtower is accepted. A Roman tower so close to *Letocetum* is unlikely to have stood in lonely isolation – the southern entrance, for example, suggests a Roman road or structures to the south – and further research may help to determine whether it or other related features now lost could have been associated in some way with the deposition of the great treasure about which so much remains to be learned.¹⁷⁰ Certainly opportunities remain, albeit limited by overlying modern development, to conduct concentrated archaeological investigations within parts of the area formerly covered by Knaves Castle which may throw further light on the hypotheses set out in this paper (though archaeological finds from known watchtowers are notoriously meagre), but for the moment we can say that the available evidence indicates that the feature is very unlikely to have been natural, and in the 7th century may well have been an ancient, imposing and significant monument. And of one thing we can be reasonably certain: those who laid the Staffordshire Hoard into the soil could hardly have been unaware of the brooding presence of Knaves Castle nearby.

THE PLACE-NAME ‘OGLEY HAY’

Given the importance of the area to Staffordshire Hoard studies, it is appropriate to analyse in some detail the names associated with Ogley, one of the principal identifiable names in the immediate area likely to have been in use in the late 10th century and perhaps much earlier, and to examine any evidence that might be gleaned thereby, with the caveat that such analyses are rarely straightforward and frequently give rise to disagreement amongst place-name scholars.

Knaves Castle lay within an area known after the Conquest as Ogley, a name first recorded in the 12th century¹⁷¹ and assumed to have taken its name from ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune’ in the spurious (almost certainly post-Conquest) charter purporting to grant various estates by the Mercian noblewoman Wulfrun to the church of Wolverhampton c. 996.¹⁷² The name ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune’ is otherwise unrecorded, suggesting that the spellings may have been based on the Domesday Book form ‘Hocintvne’ (which, as often the case with Domesday Book, could well be corrupt): the boundary clauses of the estates appear in the charter in the same order as they are listed in Domesday Book, which evidently influenced the charter’s compilation.¹⁷³ No other spellings ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’ or similar have been traced in other sources. The northern boundary of ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune’ was probably delineated by Watling Street. Domesday Book tellingly describes its one hide as waste,¹⁷⁴ and the estate (if indeed it was the same place as Ogley) seems to have changed

of interweave decoration surrounding a central blue stone, found c. 330’ from the Hoard, seems to have typological similarities with a find from Mound 2 at Sutton Hoo, perhaps of early 7th-century date, and with a find from a high status Anglo-Saxon burial at Caenby, Lincolnshire: I am grateful to Dr K. Leahy for this information.

168 It should not be overlooked that the Hoard was found just outside and to the west of what may have been the ditch of a former oval earthwork mound, approximately 162’ x 61’, apparently levelled by machine c. 1970, which had its long axis almost parallel to Watling Street, suggesting a possible Roman or post-Roman origin, although no suggestions have been advanced as to the nature of the feature: Jones 2011, 209–11.

169 Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 147.

170 It is worth recording that an unlocated field-name *Gooldburynes* is recorded in 1453 in the Staffordshire parish of Brewwood, which abuts the south side of Watling Street some 12 miles to the west of Knaves Castle. The name means ‘the burial place where gold was found’. The only known tumuli in the parish were on Calf Heath (NGR SJ91860915), though there is no evidence to connect the two places: Oakden 1984, 47; Horovitz 1992, 20; Horovitz 2005, 65; Horovitz 2010, 170. Could we have here a reference to the site of an earlier Staffordshire Hoard?

171 As *Hogeley*: Horovitz 2005, 418.

172 Hooke 1983, 67, 76–9; Hooke 2011, 205–8; Hooke 2011a, 9. The charter doubtless incorporated genuine Old English boundary clauses: Hooke 1983, 28. The estate was not included in the grant of land to Wulfrun by King Æthelred in 985 (S.860; Hooke 1983, 63–5), and details of its descent to Wulfrun are unknown.

173 The form *Hocinture* which appears in Williams and Martin 2002, 677, is erroneous. Examples of corrupt spellings of Staffordshire place-names from Domesday Book include *Cetquille* (Chatcull), *Ceruernest* (Charnes), *Estendone* (Huntingdon), and *Lvfamesles* (Painsley): Horovitz 2005, 53.

174 VCH IV, 45. In 1286 an Inquisition concluded that the township of Shenstone and all the other townships within the metes of Cannock Forest were accustomed by right and entitled to continue to enjoy common pasture for all their animals except goats in Ogley and in the waste of Ogley all year round, except six weeks at pannage time within the covert and four weeks at fawning time: Birrell 1999, 147. In 1310/11 there is an interesting Inquisition which found that Roger de Bures, lord of Chartley and and steward of Cannock until 1306, had been prevented from enclosing and cultivating the 756 acres of waste in Oggele and Prestwode rented to him in 1304, because as it lay between the chases of Cannock and Sutton (the latter comprising an area of some 80 square miles between Bourne Brook and the Tame, taken from Cannock Forest and

its name to become 'Hogeley' and later 'Oggele', before spellings were regularised as Ogley.¹⁷⁵ After 1231 Ogley became one of the seven hays (divisions or bailiwicks) of Cannock Forest, and remained extra-parochial until the 19th century.¹⁷⁶

One possible derivation of the place-names 'Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne' and Ogley is from an Old Welsh stream-name Og, meaning 'sharp, keen fast, lively', or 'burrow, rut' (found in Ogwen, Caernarvonshire, and perhaps Ogmores-by-Sea, Glamorgan).¹⁷⁷ If so, it was perhaps attached to the stream that crossed Watling Street at the later Ogley Bridge at the Norton Canes boundary to the west of Knaves Castle, or the stream to the east of Knaves Castle on the later line of the Wyrley & Essington Canal, or to Crane Brook further east.¹⁷⁸ Assuming that the spellings 'Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne' are authentic, to the first element was added *-ingtūn*, an element about which scholars are not wholly agreed, but which seems to have served as a genitival function without necessarily implying possession, which would give here 'the farmstead or estate or enclosure at the stream called Og';¹⁷⁹ the *-ingtūn* element might point towards secondary Anglian colonisation of the area in the 8th and 9th centuries.¹⁸⁰ The name Ogley evidently has as its second element Old English *lēah*, 'a wood, woodland clearing, woodland pasture', and so meaning 'the wood or woodland pasture at the stream called Og', a topographical name which does not necessarily denote habitation.¹⁸¹ The survival of place-names commemorating pre-English river and stream names in Staffordshire is well evidenced: examples include Crockington (Domesday *Cocortune*, *Cocretone*), near Trysull, which incorporates the stream-name Cocker;¹⁸² Cocking Farm, near Caverswall, which derives from a different stream of the same name; Kiddemore Green at Brewood, which commemorates the stream-name Kyre; and Saverley Green near Draycott in the Moors, which incorporates the stream-name Severn.¹⁸³ Other examples of place-names elsewhere incorporating river-names linked to *ingtūn* include Cockerington (Lancashire), again from a river Cocker; Leamington (Warwickshire), from the river Leam; Semington (Wiltshire), from the river Semnit; and Sinnington (North Yorkshire), from the river Seven.¹⁸⁴

However, an alternative root of the place-name Ogley, generally preferred by place-name scholars,¹⁸⁵ is the Old English personal name Hocca, Occa, or Ocga, names which were possibly originally distinct but which became confused at an early date.¹⁸⁶ Ocga was perhaps the hypocoristic or so-called pet-name (i.e. a diminutive colloquial form) of the Old English personal name Ogeman,¹⁸⁷ meaning 'the big one, the formidable one',¹⁸⁸ and when attached to Old English *lēah* would give 'the woodland pasture associated with the man called Ocga (or similar)'.¹⁸⁹ The name

granted to the Earl of Warwick as a free chase in 1125: Cantor 1968, 44) it was much used by deer moving from both chases into Cannock Forest, so that the place remained uncultivated and unenclosed by hedge or ditch to the great damage and detriment of the forest: Cal. Pat. Rolls; SHC 1911, 307; Birrell 1999, 182. In about 1769 the area around Knaves Castle was described as a wild, dreary and desolate heath (Sanders 1794, 202–3), and when enclosed in 1839 was still described as waste.

175 Horovitz 2005, 418.

176 VCH II, 338. It may have been around that date that the dean of Wolverhampton, Giles de Erdington, granted some part of Ogley Hay, described as the wood called Hogeley and its appurtenances, to William Rous, lord of Walsall: WA I, 296–7. The bounds of the area are given thus: '... Chyancland' descendendo usque ad Cauceiam de Ecclford [or Etteford] et Ita de Cauceia ascendendo le Wite sioc usque in Watlingstrete et Ita de via illa usque Claneland' ... '... Chyancland descending as far as the causeway of Ecclford/Etteford and thus from the causeway ascending the Wite [sic?] as far as Watling Street and so from that road to Claneland': WA I, 296–7. Other than Watling Street, the bounds have not been identified, but Chyancland and Claneland are evidently the same place, possibly from Old English *clæne*, usually combined with words for 'hill' or 'land', so perhaps 'the land which was free from shrubs and bushes': Smith 1956, I, 97.

177 Wyn Owen and Morgan 2007, 354.

178 The very significant changes made to the landscape to the north of Watling Street near Knaves Castle in the 18th and 19th century make it almost impossible to postulate with any precision the pre-Conquest watercourses in the area.

179 Watts 2004, xlv–xlvi, but see also Cox 1980, 12–66; Gelling 1997, 177–82; Fellows-Jensen 1995, 57–76.

180 Fellows-Jensen 1995, 57–76.

181 Place-names that incorporate a river-name + *lēah* include Camley (Somerset) and Semley (Wiltshire): Smith 1956, II, 22; Watts 2004, 537.

182 Horovitz 2005, 15–17, 199–200; Phillips and Phillips 2011, 28–9.

183 Horovitz 2005, 15–17, 199–200; Phillips and Phillips 2011, 28–9.

184 Smith 1956, I, 296; Watts 2004, 147, 365, 537, 551.

185 e.g. Duignan 1902, 110–11; Ekwall 1960, 349.

186 Redin 1919, 103, who notes that the personal name Ocga might be Celtic in origin. I am grateful to Dr Andrew Breeze for confirming that the name cannot be Celtic, and must be English. One spelling for Ogley in 1293, *Uggheley* (SHC (New Series) X (1), 204), has a parallel in the Domesday Book entry for Ugley in Essex, *Uggheleam*, 'Ucga's wood or clearing': Watts 2004, 635.

187 Redin 1919, 103 footnote 7; von Feilitzen and Blunt 1971, 202.

188 Zachrisson 1932, 36. The name may imply that the bearer was the offspring of a powerful and illustrious family.

189 Horovitz 2005, 418.

‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’ could incorporate the same root, but with *-ingtūn*, and so perhaps meaning ‘the farmstead or estate or enclosure associated with the man called Ocga (or similar)’.

If there was a pre-Conquest habitation site within the area which became known as Ogley Hay (and which Domesday Book, as noted above, simply records as one hide of waste), it remains unlocated. It is probably safe to see the name ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’ as a habitative name, as it incorporates the Old English element *tūn*, although that element had a range of meanings, including ‘enclosure, field, yard’, as well as ‘farm, manor, homestead dwelling, village, town’,¹⁹⁰ and so cannot necessarily be seen as firm evidence of habitation, especially when incorporated into *-ingtūn*.¹⁹¹ And as we have seen, the name Ogley incorporates Old English *lēah*, a topographical term, which may or may not have applied to a habitation site. There is, however, a small scrap of further evidence which may prove of value or might simply muddy the waters further. An inquisition relating to Cannock forest in 1372 records that the jury found that a certain Thomas May had the previous year felled four saplings worth six shilling in Hopwas Hay within the forest [of Cannock].¹⁹² What is of particular interest is that Thomas is said to have been of ‘Ogygynton’, which we might reasonably assume to have been the same place as ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’. If so, it would be evidence that some insignificant place of that name had survived into the late 14th century. We might perhaps infer from the fact that the inquisition found it unnecessary to explain where ‘Ogygynton’ lay that its location was then well known,¹⁹³ which with other slight evidence perhaps supports the possibility that the idiosyncratic spelling is simply a clerical error for Wiggington, two miles east of Hopwas: an initial *W* was occasionally recorded as *O* or *U* and sometimes (for *Wh-*) as *Q* in medieval records,¹⁹⁴ although we might have expected a professional scribe to have used a better form for Wiggington.¹⁹⁵

We have seen that Robert Plot mentioned ‘Occamsley Pits’ on Watling Street close to Knaves Castle in 1686.¹⁹⁶ First recorded as ‘Occumesleye’ in 1300,¹⁹⁷ the name is of uncertain derivation but given the genitival *-s-* the first element is likely to be a personal name. From the post-Conquest period locative surnames (i.e. from the name of the bearer’s town or village, such as John de Ockham or similar, who might have taken his name from Oakham in Leicestershire or one of the other places of that name in England¹⁹⁸), became increasingly common, but such an appellative would not be expected to form the first element of a topographical place-name elsewhere such as ‘Occumesleye’. Rather, we should seek a personal name which might give rise to ‘Occum’ or similar. Possible candidates are very few, but we have seen that Ocga was perhaps the pet-name of the Old English personal name Ogeman, and it is not inconceivable that ‘Occumesleye’ incorporates that name: a place known as Ogeman’s *lēah* might not unexpectedly evolve into ‘Occumesleye’.¹⁹⁹ In other words, we could have evidence, admittedly very tenuous, for a local individual named Ogeman hereabouts.

What is particularly noteworthy is that the place-names ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’, Ogley and (possibly) ‘Occumesleye’ may all incorporate in one form or another the rare Old English

190 Watts 2004, xlviii.

191 An inquisition held at Oggeleie in 1310 before the justice of the king’s forests on the west side of the Trent and the steward, the rider of the forest, 2 foresters, 2 walking foresters, up to 4 verderers, 12 regarders, and 24 free-men (SHC VII (2), 27–8; Birrell 1999, 5–6), which might imply the existence of a structure of some size at Ogley in the early 14th century, although such assemblies may have taken place outdoors or under temporary shelters.

192 Birrell 1999, 218, who tentatively identifies the place as ‘?Ogley’. Hopwas Hay lay 2 miles north-west of Tamworth and a little over 8 miles east of Knaves Castle.

193 Henry Ogynton of Abbot’s Bromley (some 12 miles north of Knaves Castle) is recorded in 1402: SHC [2nd series] XI (1908), 215. His surname may have derived from ‘Hocintvne’.

194 See e.g. Watts 2004, *sub nomine* The Wirral (Cheshire), Wotherton (Shropshire), Whitton (Cleveland), Whittonstall (Northumberland). The phenomenon is especially noticeable in Domesday Book.

195 The foreign woods of Hopwas belonged to Wiggington (Birrell 1999, 97, 180–181), and Henry le May is recorded in Wiggington in 1327: SHC VII (1), 225.

196 Plot 1686, 112–3. Sanders, citing Plot, gives the spellings Occamsley and Occamly: Sanders 1794, 203, 345. The name is otherwise untraced.

197 In a perambulation of the bounds of Ogley and Prestwode, the latter place (also recorded in 1263: Birrell 1999, 97) now unmarked on maps but from 19th-century field-names evidently lying to the south of Watling Street at the eastern end of Ogley Hay. It was evidently ‘the wood of the priests (of Wolverhampton)’ who were granted the estate by Wulfrun c. 996: SHC V (1), 177.

198 Watts 2004, 447.

199 The name Ogeman is said to be from the Old English Ocgemann or Occemann, incorporating respectively the names Ocga and Occa: von Feilitzen and Blunt 1971, 202. The name Ocgemann is found in some early and probably fictitious royal genealogies, and individuals of that name are recorded in Southwick, Northamptonshire and Mildenhall, Suffolk: Clemoes and Hughes 1971, 202, fn.5.

personal names Ocgā.²⁰⁰ So uncommon, indeed, is the name that no certain examples of place-names incorporating it have been identified elsewhere in Staffordshire, nor in the surrounding counties of Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, or Worcestershire, and only once (in the name Hockley Heath) in Warwickshire.²⁰¹ And the name Ogeman is even more uncommon, recorded only a handful of times before the Conquest.²⁰²

To complicate matters further, it may be noted that the element *-ley* in some West Midlands place-names sometimes originated as *-low*, deriving from Old English *hlāw*, meaning ‘an artificial mound, a burial mound’, and, perhaps most interestingly in light of the discovery nearby of the Staffordshire Hoard, ‘mound in which treasure is hidden’.²⁰³ Examples of names where *-low* has become *-ley* include two places that lie on or close to Watling Street: Rowley Hill, south of Penkridge, some 8 miles west of Knaves Castle, and (probably) Muckley Corner, 2 miles east of Knaves Castle. Another example, though not on a known Roman road, is Moxley, a mile or so west of Wednesbury and a little over 8 miles south-west of Knaves Castle.²⁰⁴ Other examples may remain unidentified in the absence of early spellings. Although, therefore, Old English *lēah* is the type of element which might reasonably be expected in what is perceived to have been the pre-Conquest wooded landscape of the Ogley Hay area,²⁰⁵ it is not impossible (though there is, it must be emphasised, not a shred of direct evidence) that the name Ogley derives from Ocgā’s *hlāw*, although if so the change to *-ley* would have taken place unusually, and perhaps improbably, early. If such change did occur, however, the name Hockley Heath (mentioned above), ten miles south-east of Birmingham, is of particular interest: not only does it have a *-ley* name derived from *hlāw*, but also incorporates the personal name Hocca.²⁰⁶ The name Ocgā’s *hlāw* is not without an exact parallel: *Occan slāw*, ‘Ocgā’s *hlāw*’, is recorded in the bounds of Witney in Oxfordshire in a charter dated 969AD.²⁰⁷ The above hypothesis might lead us to wonder also whether ‘Occumesleye’, which we know lay close to Knaves Castle – perhaps the closest place-name we can now identify, and thus of particular significance to this paper – may have derived from an earlier name, Ogeman’s *hlāw*, though again any change must have taken place unusually early.

From all this we might surmise, assuming that there was no river Og in the area, that Ocgā (whose name was perhaps a colloquial form of Ogeman) was a prominent Anglo-Saxon who in or before the 10th century gave his name to ‘Ocgintun/Ogintune/Hocintvne’, as well as Ogley (a related name but not necessarily the same place), and perhaps also ‘Occumesleye’. The name Knaves Castle must be post-Conquest, and we have no knowledge of any earlier name for the earthwork which seems to have existed in the Anglo-Saxon period, but we might risk heaping speculation upon hypothesis to wonder whether Ocgā may have been associated in some way with that feature. It would not be atypical if the bleak waste of Ogley Hay had been so-named after both a notable Anglo-Saxon and an unusually distinctive landscape feature – an artificial earthwork with a prominent central mound which the Anglo-Saxons might well have described in their vocabulary as a *hlāw*, a word

200 See Redin 1919, 103. *The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* website [accessed 24 March 2011], gives two men named Ocgā (one the son of King Ida of Bernicia, who ruled 547–68), two named Ogga, and two named Hocca, recorded between the 6th and 10th centuries, none of whom is likely to have been associated with this place; see also Searle 1897, 361.

201 PN Warwickshire 294; Watts 2004, 308. See Oakden 1984, Watts 2004, and Horovitz 2005 for Staffordshire names, and PN volumes for the other counties. Place-names elsewhere which incorporate the (anonymous) personal names include Ockley and Ockham, Surrey; Ockbrook, Derbyshire; and Ogbourne, Wiltshire (*Occa*); Ogle, Northumberland, and Oxshott, Surrey (*Ocgā*); and Oakington, Cambridgeshire (*Hocca*): Watts 2004 447, 448–9, 458.

202 Ogeman is recorded as a moneyer in the reign of Edgar (957–75): von Feilitzen and Blunt 1971, 202, 207. There is evidence that surnames such as Oggeman, recorded in Yorkshire in 1277, are probably an occupational surname Hogman, of which numerous examples have been recorded: see Thureson 1950, 67.

203 Smith 1956, I, 248–9. When the element *hlāw* in a place-name is combined with a personal name, the place-name may denote the burial place of the person so named, with the majority of such place-names belonging to the heathen period when this method of disposing of the dead was practised: Smith 1956, I, 249. The proximity of Knaves Castle to Offlow, a *low* place-name which refers to a great mound which may have marked the Anglian burial of a prominent individual named Offa (but not the great Mercian king of that name, who flourished later than the pagan period), some 4½ miles to the east (see Horovitz 2005, 417, 48), should not be overlooked.

204 Horovitz 2005, 63–4, 401, 466. Other examples in Staffordshire are Rowley at Stafford (*contra* PN Staffordshire, I, 76), Stanley, and Swainsley (Horovitz 2005, 466, 507–8, 524); in Shropshire, Rowley and Shackerley (PN Shropshire, VI, 31–2, 79); in Warwickshire, Rowley and Foxley (PN Warwickshire, 147, 241); and in Worcestershire, Kidley’s Farm and Hawkesley Hall (PN Worcestershire, 27, 353).

205 See Dean, Hooke and Jones 2010, 148–51; Hooke 2011a.

206 PN Warwickshire 294; Watts 2004, 308. Given the relative proximity of Hockley Heath to Ogley (21 miles), and the rarity of the name Ocgā, it is not inconceivable that the man of that name commemorated in the name Hockley Heath could have been the person from whom Ocgintun/Ogley were named.

207 S.771; Searle 1897, 361.

coincidentally resonant with connections to treasure. Of one thing at least we can be reasonably confident: we shall never know whether there could be any connection between the obscure Oega, the monument known as Knaves Castle, and the Staffordshire Hoard.

APPENDIX

ROMAN SIGNAL TOWERS / WATCHTOWERS

Most Roman towers so far identified are in the north of England and Scotland, including those on Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall, in Scotland,²⁰⁸ in the North Pennines,²⁰⁹ the North Yorkshire coast,²¹⁰ and in Western Wales, though some are known from the Saxon Shore of south-east England.²¹¹ The following list is far from exhaustive,²¹² and is intended to identify the characteristics of a typical tower:

Roundlaw, Gask Ridge, between Perth and Stirling: one of a closely-spaced sequence of at least 18 Roman tower sites along Gask Ridge, probably dating from c. 80–90AD, consisting of a circular ditch some 48' in diameter and of Punic profile, i.e. an almost vertical drop on the outer side with the inner scarp sloping gently upwards from a narrow, flat bottom. The ditch was cut into solid rock to a depth of 4' with an opening to the south 7' wide. Off-centre within the feature were four rock-cut post-holes showing that the tower was 10' wide from east to west and up to 14' wide from north to south. There was no evidence to show the width of the encircling bank.²¹³

Parkneuk Tower, Gask Ridge: a sub- rectangular platform c. 22' from east to west and c. 18' from north to south, enclosed by a ditch 12' wide, probably 3'–4' deep, with a causeway on the north c. 7' wide facing a Roman road, and an internal bank c. 9' wide. Three out of four central post-holes showed that the tower was 10' from east to west, and 11' from north to south.²¹⁴

Greenloaning, Gask Ridge: on a site with good views in all directions, with two ditches c. 80' in diameter, possibly with an upcast bank which would increase the diameter to c. 162'. The entrance faced north towards the distant Ardoch Roman road. The tower base had been reconstructed, but seems to have been particularly large at c. 17' x c.13', and, oddly, of parallelogram plan rather than rectangular.²¹⁵

Eldon Hill North, south of Melrose in Roxboroughshire: a site with outstanding views, circular in shape with an internal diameter of 35', surrounded by a rock-cut ditch 7' wide but only 10"–16" deep, with a paved causeway on the north 13' 6" wide. Six post holes indicated a timber structure, probably two stories high, 11' 4" long and 10' 6" wide with a central post in the two longer sides and roofed with tiles.²¹⁶

Blackhouse Moor, Ayrshire coast: a mound some 70' in diameter within a surrounding low bank of turf with a depression near its centre some 19' by 15'.²¹⁷

White Type Hil, Moffat, Dumfries and Galloway: a central circular platform some 26' across and 18" high bounded by a shallow ditch c. 6' wide with a low outer bank some 6' broad, broken by a causeway some 6' 6" wide facing a Roman road 100' to the east. The site has extensive views along the Roman road in both directions.²¹⁸

208 A sequence of ten such towers, averaging less than a mile apart, has been traced along 8 miles of road from Perth to Strangeath: de la Bédoyère 2001, 84.

209 See especially Higham and Jones 1985, 44–51, with excellent aerial photographs.

210 Such as Carr Naze (Filey), Goldsborough, Ravenscar, and Scarborough.

211 In the south of England, a signal station has been identified on the summit of Stoke Hill, north of Exeter: Fox and Ravenhill 1959, 71–80.

212 The Ordnance Survey single sheet Historical Map of Roman Britain, 6th edition, 2011, marks signal stations/watchtowers but incorporates no listing.

213 NGR SN958188; RCAHMS Record NN91NE 2; Robertson and Mackenzie 1974; Jones and Mattingly 1990, 107, 108, 137.

214 NGR NN916184; RCAHMS Record 26042; Robertson and Mackenzie 1974.

215 NGR NN831072; Woolliscroft and Hoffman n.d.

216 NGR NT554328; RCAHMS Record 55630; Steer and Feachem 1951–2, 202–5.

217 NGR NS213643; RCAHMS Record NS26SW9; Cottrell 1966, 319.

218 NGR NT 05571192; RCAHMS Record NT01SE 2.

Beattock Summit, Crawford, South Lanarkshire: a wooden tower raised on 4 posts c. 11' square enclosed within a circular ditch some 23' in diameter about 5' wide broken by an entrance c. 5' wide on the south-west facing a Roman road some 90' away.²¹⁹

Augill Bridge in the Eden Valley, Cumbria (formerly Westmoreland): one of a series of probable Roman tower sites, perhaps forming part of a chain between Brough and Bowes, the tower site c. 81' in diameter, and consisting of a high circular mound of imported clay c. 26' in diameter within which one of the four square post holes of the tower, which showed evidence of reconstruction, was located. The central wooden platform was c. 11' square. The mound is surrounded by a ditch, bank, another ditch and outer bank, all in concentric circles centred on the mound, with an entrance on the south-west.²²⁰

Punchbowl Inn, Eden Valley: less than a mile to the east of Augill Bridge and forming part of the same chain on the summit of a natural hill, a particularly well preserved unexcavated earthwork of similar design. The mutilated sub-circular mound is c. 26' in diameter and 20" high, surrounded by a pronounced ditch averaging 13' in width and 3' deep, with a causewayed southern entrance. The earthwork has an overall diameter of c. 71'.²²¹



Fig. 10 Aerial photograph showing the typical Roman signal station at The Punchbowl Inn, Stainmore, with a south-facing entrance. Reproduced by permission from Higham and Jones 1985.

Johnsons Plain, Eden Valley: a circular monument c.28' in diameter, with twin ring ditches both c. 6' 6" wide and 3' deep with an entrance causeway, and evidence for two timber palisades outside the outer ditch. Central postholes indicated a timber tower c. 14' square.²²²

219 NGR NS 99901532; RCAHMS Record NS91NE 11.

220 NGR NY819147; EHNMR 15925; Higham and Jones 1985, 47–50; Railton 2009, 13.

221 NGR SJ829829; EHNMR 15925; Higham and Jones 1985, 47.

222 NGR NY844149; EHNMR 1031457; Higham and Jones 1985, 46–7. It should be noted, however, that some doubt has been expressed about the exact purpose of the Stainmore signal stations; for example, where the teams of signallers may have been accommodated: Bibby 2011, 167. What was thought to be a Roman signal tower at Brackenber, near Appleby-in-Westmoreland, forming part of the North Pennine chain, was excavated under the supervision of North Pennines Archaeology Limited in 2011 and found to be an embanked Bronze Age cremation cemetery with no evidence of Roman occupation.

Pike Hill, Waterhead, Cumbria: a tower on Stanegate later incorporated into Hadrian's Wall. The tower was 20' square and constructed from squared stones, standing on a platform of mortared rubble and deep foundations, which indicate an upper structure of some height.²²³

Holyhead Mountain, Anglesey: a square site, incorporating a stone tower base almost 18' across.²²⁴

Hirfynydd in Glynneath parish, West Glamorgan: an unexcavated rectangular earthwork on Sarn Helen some 63' by 60' with rounded corners, external ditch and an entrance in the middle of the south-east side.²²⁵

Rheola Forest in Glynneath parish, West Glamorgan: a small, square, damaged and partly excavated tower on Sarn Helen.²²⁶

Careg y Bwci, between Pumsaint and Llanio, Camarthenshire: within 60 feet of a Roman road, a circular enclosure some 71' in diameter defined by a bank 11' wide and 2' high with a rock-cut ditch almost 8' wide and some 18" deep, enclosing an area some 29' in diameter with an entrance causeway on the south-west, on a site with panoramic views.²²⁷

ABBREVIATIONS

CA	<i>Current Archaeology</i>
CBA	<i>A Gazetteer of Archaeological Investigations in England</i> , Council for British Archaeology: Archaeological Investigations Project, vol. 8, 186 (London: English Heritage)
GM	<i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i>
EHNMR	English Heritage National Monuments Record
NGR	National Grid Reference
NPRN	Monument Record, National Monuments Record of Wales
NSJFS	<i>North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies</i>
OED	<i>The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971)
OS	Ordnance Survey
PG	<i>Parliamentary Gazetteer of England and Wales</i> , 4 vols (London: A. Fullarton & Co. 1840)
PN	County volume of the English Place-Name Society
PSANHS	<i>Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society</i>
RB	<i>Records of Buckinghamshire</i>
PWDRO	Plymouth & West Devon Record Office
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
S.	Anglo-Saxon charter number as listed in Sawyer 1968
SHC	<i>Staffordshire Historical Collections</i> (Staffordshire Record Society), 1st Series (unless otherwise stated)
SRO	Staffordshire Record Office
TCWAAS	<i>Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society</i>
TSAHS	<i>Transactions of Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society</i> , formerly <i>The South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society</i>

223 NGR NY56SE; NPRN Record 12700; TCWAAS, 33 (1933), 271–2.

224 NGR SH 218829; NPRN Record 308080: Burnham and Davies 2010, 300–301. The other site is at Llety Canol, near Llanfachreth in Gwynedd, a square platform some 30' across with a rock-cut ditch some 3' wide and a foot deep on a ridge summit with extensive views to the south, 100 yards or so from a Roman road: NGR SH787187; NPRN Record 54526: Burnham and Davies 2010, 300–301.

225 NGR SN828067; OS map of Roman Britain (Southern Sheet), 4th edition 1978; *A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*, 2003.

226 NGR SN812040; OS map of Roman Britain (Southern Sheet), 4th edition 1978; *A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*, 2003.

227 NGR SN6457; NPRN Record 303905: Burnham and Davies 2010, 300–301. No Roman material was recovered from the site: *ibid.*

TWAS	<i>Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society</i>
TWHS	<i>Transactions of Worcestershire Historical Society</i>
VCH	<i>Victoria History of the County of Stafford</i>
WA	G. P. Mander, <i>The Wolverhampton Antiquary</i> , vol. I, 1915–32 (published 1933)

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THE 1655 PETITION AGAINST THE INCLOSURE OF NEEDWOOD FOREST

NIGEL J. TRINGHAM

A few months after Charles I's execution in 1649 an Act was passed to authorise the sale of Crown lands, including Needwood forest on the east side of the county held by the late king as duke of Lancaster.¹ An attempt to inclose the forest as a preliminary to its sale was begun in 1654 and met with strong local resistance,² first signalled to the government by a petition presented to Oliver Cromwell himself early in 1655. The purpose of this article is to provide an edition of that petition (see the Appendix) and the names of its signatories, together with a discussion of how those names were displayed.³

Although in preparation for inclosure Needwood forest was surveyed in May 1650 (along with its constituent parks in the preceding months), it was exempted from immediate sale (along with other former royal forests), and when a subsequent Act was passed in November 1653 to authorise disafforestation and sale of forest lands, Needwood was again exempted (along with six other forests) in order to provide security for unpaid army wages. An Ordinance of August 1654, however, added Needwood to the general sale.⁴ The decision caused an immediate outcry from the justices of the peace and the Grand Jury meeting at the Michaelmas quarter sessions in Stafford, where the decision was evidently made to prepare a case for saving the forest. The consequent petition presented to Cromwell early in 1655 was in the name of the principal landowners and other inhabitants of over twenty villages and townships around Needwood, who claimed ancient rights of common in the forest, often dating back to the 13th century when it was owned by the Ferrers family: the 1650 survey included translations of medieval charters by which such rights had been granted.⁵ The nine surviving membranes attached to the 1655 petition contain the subscriptions of over 850 people: about two-thirds of the names were those who had common rights in respect of their landholdings, but of particular interest are the two membranes which list the names, authenticated by marks, of some 200 poor people in townships on the north side of the forest, Marchington and Marchington Woodlands.⁶

These *poor* were evidently 'new' cottagers (in contrast to those who occupied long-established or 'ancient' sites as landholders) and perhaps also some landless squatters. Not being landholders in their townships, they were not strictly commoners, although it was the custom that they took wood for fuel and could pasture their cows in the forest.⁷ It has been argued that their presence amongst the petitioners indicates a strong sense of cohesion within the forest communities,⁸ but it is uncertain whether they came forward to add their names of their own volition or were coerced (or at least organised) into doing so. The physical appearance of the poor's names on the membranes suggests the latter, and so may reflect the true commoners' concern to persuade Cromwell that all elements of society were united in opposition to inclosure.

1 For a history of the forest see N. J. Tringham, 'Needwood Forest', in *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, X (2007), 32–76.

2 For an account of the abortive inclosure process (together with editions of surveys of both the forest and its constituent parks that preceded it) see the present writer's article, 'Needwood forest surveys of 1649–50 and attempted inclosure', *Transactions of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, XLIV (2010), 28–70. A more wide-ranging discussion of the reasons behind the opposition and the strategies employed to prevent inclosure is reserved for treatment elsewhere.

3 The National Archives [TNA], SP 18/94, mm. 122–31. The edition and also the images of the original membranes are published here with the permission of The National Archives.

4 S. J. Madge, *Domesday of Crown Lands* (1938), 111–20; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1654*, 341–2.

5 For the common rights see Tringham, 'Needwood Forest', in *VCH Staffs*, X, 38–9.

6 Such a large number of names provides evidence for calculating the area's population, which from using the usual ecclesiastical and other official records alone would be much under-estimated. For a relevant study relating to Duffield Frith (Derbs.), see H. Falvey, 'Searching for the population in an early-modern forest', *Local Population Studies*, 81 (Autumn, 2008), 37–57.

7 As stated in a list of objections to inclosure drawn up in 1658: Staffordshire Record Office [SRO], D. (W.) 1721/3/256, p. 147 (item 4).

8 J. Thirsk, 'Horn and thorn in Staffordshire: the economy of a pastoral county', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 9 (1969), 4.

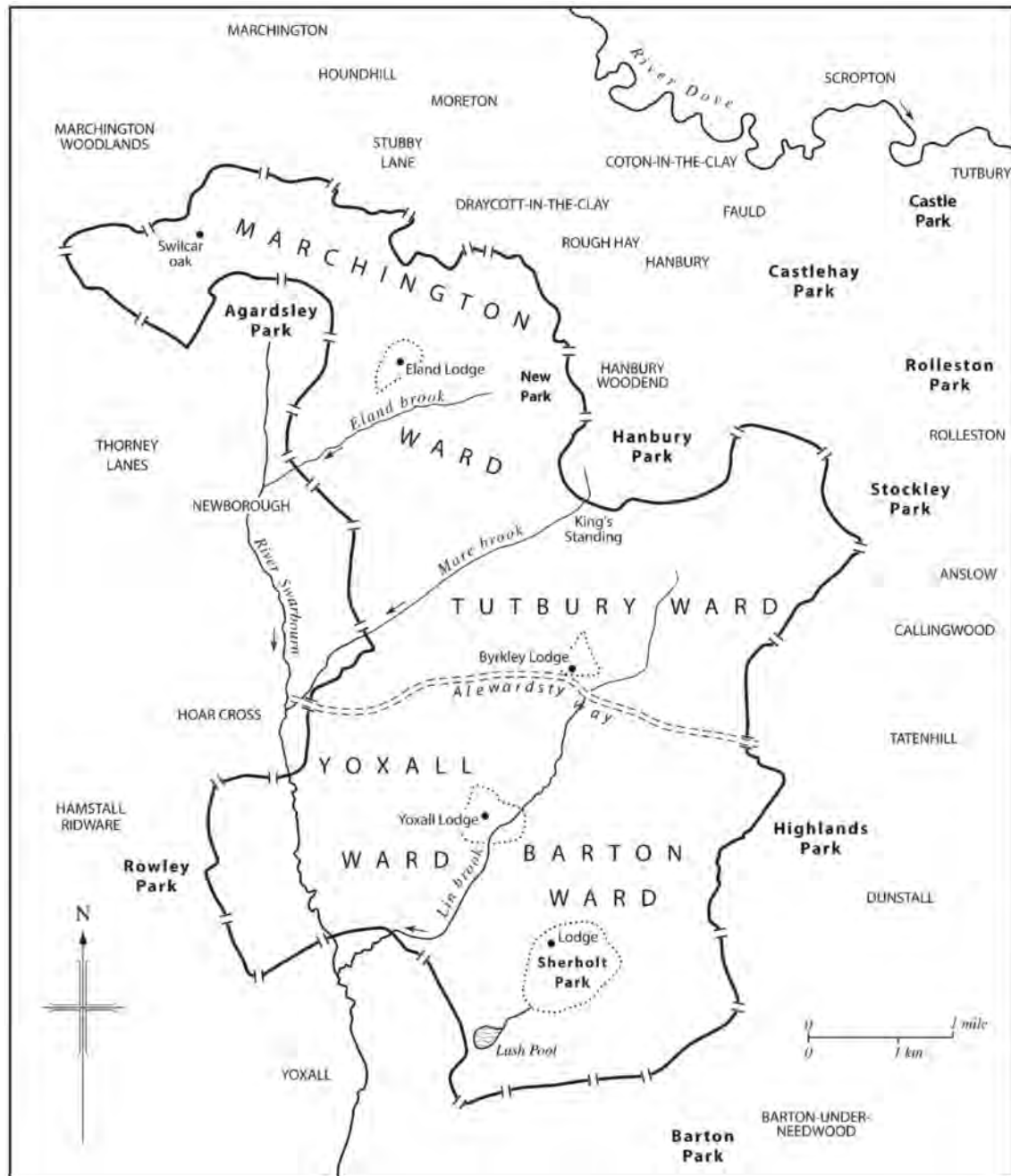


Fig. 1 Needwood Forest wards and parks, with surrounding home parishes and townships (in capital letters) of the petitioners

SOURCE: *VCH Staffordshire*, X, 35

THE PETITION

Preparation

Responsibility for drawing up the case against inclosure and probably the wording of the petition fell to Zachary Babington of Curborough (north of Lichfield), deputy clerk to the justices of the peace and himself a justice since 1653.⁹ He also lobbied members of Parliament at Westminster and was present when the petition was presented to Cromwell. An autograph account of the proceedings

⁹ The grandson of the diocesan chancellor Zachary Babington (d. 1613), the younger Zachary (who was in his early 40s in 1654) was trained as a lawyer at the Inner Temple: H. S. Grazebrook, 'Visitations of Staffordshire in 1614 and 1663-4', in *Staffordshire Historical Collections* [1st series], V (2) (1884), 24; *SHC* 1912, 336; *VCH Staffs.* XIV (1990), 233.

survives in the William Salt Library in Stafford,¹⁰ from which a copy made in the 18th century survives in the Bagot family papers in the Staffordshire Record Office;¹¹ another account in Babington's name also survives in an 18th-century copy that differs slightly from the autograph version and may have been a re-working.¹² The latter's full title is: 'A Relacion of the proceedings & transaccions in the business of the Forrest or Chase of Needwood in the County of Stafford in my personall attendance of it Six weekes in the time of Parliament and Foure weekes since before the Lord Protector & Councell and many moneths more by Agents in London deputed in my absence to prevent a greater charge to the Countrey by my attendance there'. Its opening paragraph notes how troublesome it would have been to communicate with every individual concerned in the matter, and Babington hoped that those townships which got the Relation would themselves copy it (ideally through their ministers and teachers), send it on to others, and then return to him.

According to the Relation, Babington entered into the business on 20 October 1654, and promptly set himself the task of researching the history of Needwood forest and how it came into the hands of the duchy of Lancaster. Having consulted duchy records, including William Humberston's forest survey of 1559,¹³ and also the medieval charters (evidently as manuscripts in local hands) granting rights of common, it became apparent that Needwood was in fact a chase (and not technically a forest because not owned by the Crown *per se*) and so (it was argued) could not be inclosed, on the analogy that a lord of the manor could not inclose manorial waste. Babington then consulted 'an incomparable man for learning in this case', a Mr Finch, who advised him to pursue the 'chase' argument: accordingly, Babington then set about further research in the Exchequer archives, in the 'Treasury (Mr Squire's office)' where he found evidence for a late 13th-century case brought against men for hunting deer in the 'chase of Needwood'. As a result, the wording of a petition that had already been partly drawn up was altered so as to refer to Needwood as a chase and not a forest.

Presentation to Oliver Cromwell

The petition, together with some 100 pages of associated 'Reasons' (presumably Babington's notes from his researches in the archives, but no longer extant), were entrusted to one of the county's MPs, Sir Charles Wolseley, Bt, a Councillor of State,¹⁴ so that he could present it to Parliament whenever the Bill for the sale of the forests came up for debate. Meanwhile, Babington and his agent attended Westminster sittings of the Grand Committee and sub-committee that were deliberating the sale, their particular concern being to answer all objections of 'the Soldiery (who indeed were ingenious and civil therein and tender in taking away anyone's undoubted right)'.

Parliament was dissolved, however, on 22 January 1655 [modern style], and the Army immediately set about implementing the August 1654 Ordinance and so forced Babington to make a direct appeal to Oliver Cromwell. With Wolseley's help Babington presented the petition personally to the Lord Protector on Monday 5 February, in the presence of Wolseley and his (until recently) two fellow county MPs, Colonel Thomas Crompton and Thomas Whitgreve,¹⁵ as well as Colonel Rugeley (Simon Rugeley of Callingwood, in Tatenhill),¹⁶ John Bromfield, lord of Barton-under-Needwood manor,¹⁷ and Daniel Watson of Burton-upon-Trent, a barrister.¹⁸ Also in attendance were a Captain Bowes and Thomas Minors, the latter MP for Lichfield in the recently dissolved Parliament and a member of the Grand Committee which had dealt with the sale of forests; it seems that Bowes and Minors had tried to present the petition a few days earlier on the Saturday. Babington in particular singled out Minors for his help, together with Rugeley (with whom he had had 'some wearisome waitings' on behalf of claimants)¹⁹ and Watson (and Watson's clerk, a Mr Leigh).

10 William Salt Library [WSL], Stafford, S. MS. 243/iii/4. It comprises a quire of 8 pages, the last of which ends with the word 'Finis', but as the original is not paginated it is impossible to know how many earlier quires might be missing. The first (and now missing) part of the manuscript evidently covered matters relating to the history of Needwood and evidences to be used in the argument against inclosure.

11 SRO, D. (W.) 1721/3/256, pp. 92–104 (even-numbered pages only).

12 WSL, S. MS. 243/ii/6/ii. Another 18th-century copy survives as SRO, D. (W.) 1721/3/256.

13 TNA, DL 42/109, ff. 1–23.

14 J. C. Wedgwood, *Staffordshire Parliamentary History*, II (part 1) (being *SHC*, 1920), 96. The autograph account refers to him as a 'patriot for his Country'.

15 *Ibid.*

16 For him see *VCH Staffs.* X, 223.

17 *Ibid.* 237.

18 *VCH Staffs.* IX (2003), 47, 83.

19 This may relate to the inspection of the claimants' original charters in their own homes in Staffordshire.

Having received the petition, along with petitions drawn up by the JPs and Grand Jury at the 1654 Michaelmas sessions at Stafford, Cromwell (according to Babington) read them himself, and ‘presently turning with much respect towards us’²⁰ promised that no man’s right in the forest should be prejudiced or taken away by the Ordinance, whose exact substance was ‘not now fresh in his memory’ but which he believed was agreeable to honour and justice. Cromwell then referred the matter to the Council of State, which Babington and his colleagues (Rugeley, Bromfield, Watson, and also Henry Vernon²¹ and a Mr ‘Villers’²²) attended in a room adjoining the council chamber. Through Wolseley the Council pronounced that it was unable to repeal or alter the Ordinance, but it would ensure that the commissioners appointed to undertake the sale would be ‘gentlemen of the country’ near to the forest. Once the commissioners had adjudicated on all the claims made by the interested parties, they would then decide what part should remain with the State in order to meet the costs of the arrears of Army pay (so leaving the rest to be assigned to the claimants), and if (after this division) no spare land was found to remain in the forest, then none would indeed be sold.

Epilogue

Babington, therefore, came away from the meeting with Cromwell in the hope that, subject to the need to raise money for the Army, no part of the forest would be sold for general profit but all of what remained would be allocated to those whose claims had been recorded in the 1650 survey. Following the Council’s decision, Babington’s involvement in ‘the business of Needwood’ ended ‘for the moment’, although he was concerned that some people had not yet made a claim as regards their rights in the forest: he intended to put in order and ‘methodize’ those charters that he had already received and any others that might be brought to him. More than that he could not do, and so he proposed to submit his financial account as soon as possible and discharge himself from further work in the matter. Having protested that he had done his best ‘whatever others may falsely censure’, he ended his account of proceedings with a condemnation of those persons and townships who had refused to contribute to the costs of the defence of their claims, castigating them as the ‘most unChristian, uncharitable, unneighbourly, covetous, and unworthy sort of self-ended people that deserve not the least drop of their neighbours water to quench their own houses when they are on fire’.

Babington’s autograph account (but not the 18th-century Relation) also includes his text of the petition and the 13 ‘other reasons’ to be advanced against inclosure.²³ He then finished with a paragraph recording the hope that his record would be of benefit to those concerned and, prophetically, ‘that it may be of more use hereafter than can now be imagined, and passing through many hands it may happily prove as long lived as History in the Register of some’. He himself proposed to write ‘a larger and more exact discourse’ but only if ‘God permit health and leisure from other employment’.

THE SIGNATORIES

The petition was supported by a total of 858 names arranged by the home parish or township of those claiming common rights (Table 1). This total was nearly double the number of the commoners (434) recorded as claimants in the 1650 forest survey, partly because of discrepancy between the two documents, with many listed in the former not appearing in the latter and vice versa perhaps because of changes of ownership (despite the short time interval). Some 200 new names, however, were those of the ‘poor’ of Marchington and Marchington Woodlands townships (mm. 124–5).²⁴ Perhaps because mostly illiterate these poor people authenticated their names with marks written into a space left by the scribe between the first and second name.²⁵ Names with marks also occur in the lists of freeholders and tenants, but here usually after the name and perhaps added by the person as a further sign of agreement (and so not necessarily an indication of being unable to write). Most of these lists were drawn up in a single hand, perhaps that of the minister who had offered, or been asked by Babington, to collect names. In the 1640s parish clergy had been active across the country

20 The 18th-century Relation has ‘partly’ but Babington’s original text has ‘presently’.

21 Probably the eldest son of Sir Edward Vernon, lord of Houndhill in Marchington; he appears to subscribe his name with other Marchington gentlemen on membrane 123 (top of fourth column).

22 Probably Edward Villiers, lessee of the Hanbury rectory estate; he headed the list of Hanbury subscribers on membrane 126.

23 The petition and reasons also survive in an 18th-century copy: WSL, S. MS. 243/iii/6/i.

24 It is difficult to know whether these two membranes were unique or there were others (now lost) that listed the poor of other townships in the same manner.

25 For the significance of one autograph signature see below (signatures and marks).

TABLE 1 Summary totals of signatories to 1655 petition (with, for comparison, numbers of commoners claiming forest rights in respect of landholdings as given in 1650 survey).

PARISH / TOWNSHIP	Number of names (of which * indicates those with marks)		Number of names of commoners in 1650 survey
HAMSTALL RIDWARE		[Total 21]	31
Hamstall Ridware	15	(*4)	
Nether Town	6	(*2)	
HANBURY		[Total 533]	153
Coton	11	(*2)	
Draycott	44	(*9)	
Fauld	16	(*5)	
Hanbury	24	(*9)	
Hanbury Woodend	35	(*5)	
Marchington	32	(*8)	
Marchington poor	126	(*125)	
Marchington Woodlands	32	(*10)	
Marchington Woodlands poor	75	(*75)	
Newborough	102		
Stubby Lane	36	(*6)	
ROLLESTON		[Total 50]	75
Anslow	20		
Rolleston	30		
SCROPTON	17		8
TATENHILL		[Total 86]	94
Barton-under-Needwood	45		
Callingwood	10		
Dunstall	19	(*2)	
Tatenhill	12		
TUTBURY	23		20
YOXALL		[Total 119]	53
Hoar Cross	50		
Morrey	9		
Yoxall	47		
Yoxall Woodhouses	13		
TOTAL	849		434

NOTE: The total of 849 omits the nine names, not assigned to particular townships, given in columns one and four of the first membrane [m. 123].

in ‘getting hands’ to subscribe to petitions in defence of the Established Church,²⁶ and the occasion of divine service would have been a convenient time to compile such lists, with the opportunity for those present to sign or add a mark (if their name had been written out for them). Not that a name need guarantee presence at a meeting or indeed knowledge of its addition to a list, as names may well have been added on others’ recommendation.

The Marchington and Marchington Woodlands poor lists are also notable for comprising what seem to be family groups. Whereas in other lists the names are almost entirely male, with only an occasional woman (usually a widow) who was evidently the head of her own household, at both Marchington and Marchington Woodlands wives are given as a rule, along with sons and even daughters. Some of the younger petitioners may, indeed, have been too young even to be asked to attempt to make a mark: no marks accompany the names of Ann Holmes the younger, Elizabeth Lumas the younger, and Richard Lumas the younger (all m. 124, third column), perhaps because they were still only children.

Principal names

The first membrane of signatories (m. 123) relates to Marchington and Marchington Woodlands, with most of the petitioners’ names listed in two columns, but on either side a few names of leading landowners in the Needwood area, some written in their own hands and perhaps a later addition. In the top left-hand corner are the names of the manorial lords of Barton-under-Needwood and Hamstall

26 J. Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (1998), 93–8.

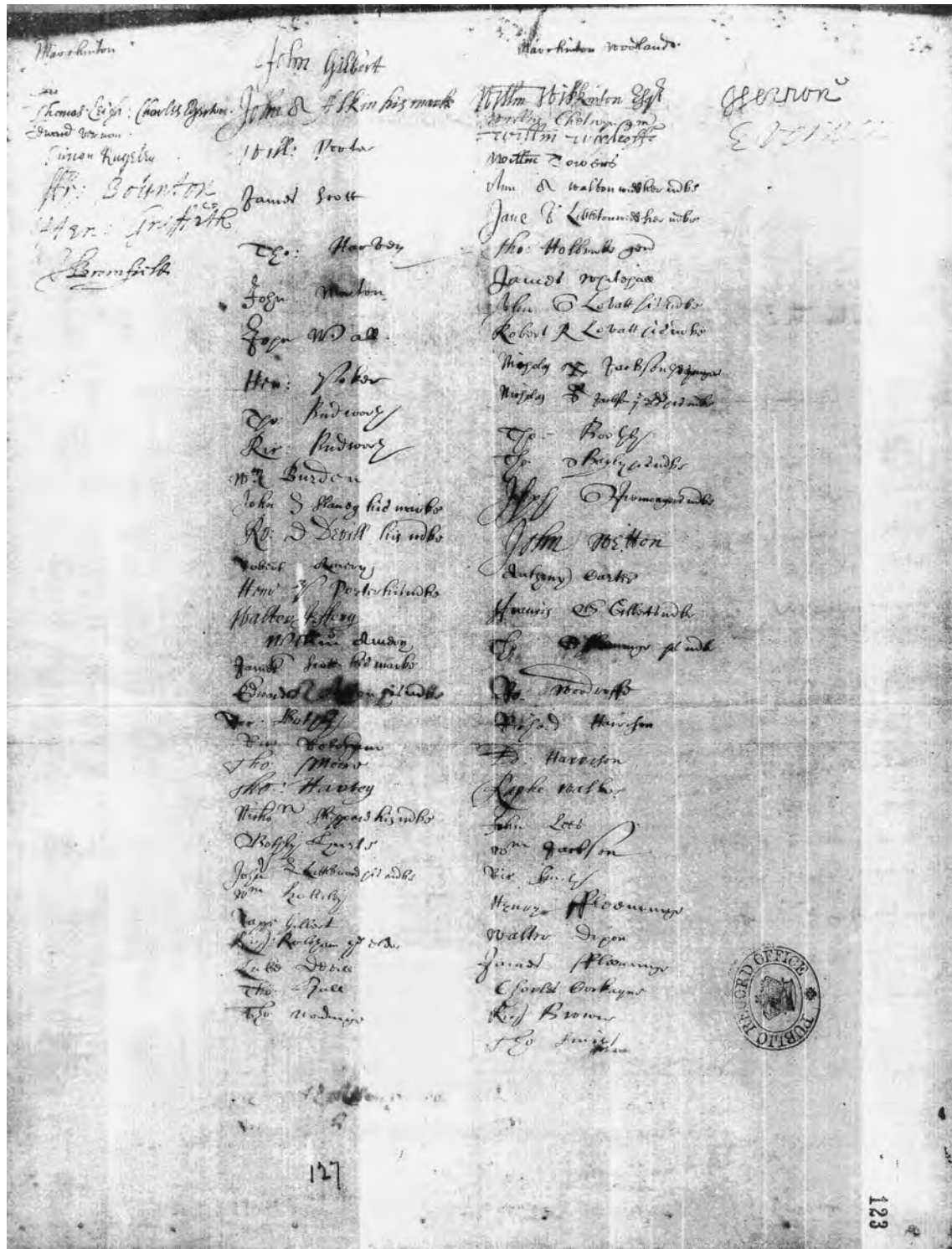


Fig. 2 Marchington and Marchington Woodlands names in second and third columns, and additional names to right and left [m. 123] © Crown Copyright (reproduced with permission)

Ridware, and also of Wychnor and his nephew and successor in 1656 (even though Wychnor township, in Tatenhill parish, had no rights in the forest). Also listed here are Sir Charles Egerton of Newborough and Col. Simon Rugeley of Callingwood (one of Babington's helpers when the petition was presented to Cromwell), together with Sir Edward Vernon of Sudbury, the lord of Houndhill in Marchington. Sir Edward's sons Henry (probably) and Col. Edward, the latter a Royalist who

Yoxall petitioners may have been the lord of Madeley in North Staffordshire: his interest in the Needwood area is indicated by his widow Mary acquiring the Wychnor estate after his death in 1658.³³ Some Anglican ministers also subscribed: the rectors of Rolleston (formerly an Anabaptist in Uttoxeter)³⁴ and of Tatenhill, and Francis Birch, the minister at Barton-under-Needwood who had been appointed master of the grammar school there in 1649.³⁵

Noticeable omissions in the petition were William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire, as owner of the Tutbury priory estate, and Sir Edward Mosley, lord of Rolleston, even though the former had submitted a charter (or had it submitted on his behalf) for inspection when the forest was surveyed in 1650 and the latter was to do so when the inclosure commissioners were at work in 1658.³⁶ Cavendish, however, was somewhat reclusive during the Interregnum and was not active in the North Midlands,³⁷ and Sir Edward may have retired to his Lancashire estate where he died in 1657.³⁸ Another omission was Sir William Powell of Rolleston Park.³⁹

Signatures and marks

Autograph signatures are not common, and most lists were written in a single hand, as at Rolleston where the list was headed by the rector Joseph Heming, but whether it was written in his hand or another's is uncertain.⁴⁰ Greater variation in handwriting (and so evidence for autograph signatures) occurs in the lists for Barton-under-Needwood (especially), Tutbury, and Yoxall, although even at those places a run of names (sometimes comprising a family group) is sometimes given in a single hand. As already noted, on occasion a person added a mark after their name, presumably to signify personal consent (and perhaps presence at a meeting when the list may have been drawn up). Such marks are found most often in the lists for Marchington and Marchington Woodlands (m. 123) and for places in Hanbury parish (m. 126), and are usually in the form of the first letter of the surname (and less often the Christian name), although symbols or other designs are also used.

The most striking use of marks occurs in the lists specifically for the poor of Marchington and Marchington Woodlands (mm. 124–5), where a single scribe (the same for both places) has neatly arranged the petitioners in family groups with a space between the first name and surname into which a mark could be inserted.⁴¹ These two membranes, however, cannot have been prepared in advance, as in that for Marchington there appears part-way down the second column (on m. 124) a true signature, that of Thomas Boulton in the middle of his family group. It seems, therefore, that the names were written down in the presence of the people concerned, perhaps at a special meeting, and that as their turn came the scribe wrote down a name and invited the person to make a mark; only in Boulton's case he actually signed.

As first sight the poor's marks show a great deal of variation, which would suggest that each person had their own distinctive mark, but on closer scrutiny it is apparent that in most cases each person had used a mark that reflects the first letter of their Christian name: the reason why marks based on the same letter do not always look the same is probably because each person making a mark was so unskilled in handling a pen that the result is usually only a barely recognisable approximation of the intended letter-form.⁴² One Katherine, for example, might produce a 'K' albeit in a shaky hand, but another would be completely defeated by the task and manage only to reproduce the three necessary lines in a disjointed manner. Other marks are not obviously the relevant letter because they have been written in reverse form (i.e. a mirror image), or side-on to the name, or even upside-down (perhaps because the scribe has pushed the membrane across the other side of a table without bothering to turn it round).

33 Ibid. 274.

34 Ibid. 207.

35 Ibid. 246.

36 SRO, D. (W.) 1721/3/256, p. 101.

37 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (William Cavendish) [online version].

38 *VCH Staffs.* X, 199.

39 Ibid. 55.

40 The parish register for Rolleston lacks entries for the 1650s, and so no example of Heming's signature occurs there.

41 In three instances, however, a mark was not entered.

42 Matthew Blake of the Staffordshire Record Office is thanked for his comments on the marks.

APPENDIX NEEDWOOD FOREST PETITION OF FEBRUARY 1654/5

(The National Archives, SP 18/94, mm. 122–31)

The text of the petition is found on m. 122 (the numeration is that stamped in the bottom right-hand corner of each membrane), followed by lists of signatories according to their home parish or township:

Marchington	(m. 123)	Nether Town (in	
Marchington		Hamstall Ridware)	(m. 128)
Woodlands	(m. 123)	Dunstall	(m. 128)
Marchington poor	(m. 124)	Tutbury	(m. 128)
Marchington		Rolleston	(m. 129)
Woodlands poor	(m. 125)	Tatenhill	(m. 129)
Coton	(m. 126)	Barton-under-Needwood	(m. 129)
Fauld	(m. 126)	Scropton	(m. 130)
Hanbury	(m. 126)	Yoxall	(m. 130)
Hanbury Woodend	(m. 126)	Morrey (in Yoxall)	(m. 131)
Draycott-in-the-Clay	(m. 126)	Yoxall Woodhouse	(m. 131)
Stubby Lane	(m. 126)	Callingwood (in Tatenhill)	(m. 131)
Hoar Cross	(m. 127)	Anslow (in Rolleston)	(m. 131)
Newborough	(m. 127 and dorse)	Hamstall Ridware	(m. 128)

Abbreviated first names of petitioners (such as Eliza:, Hen:, Ric:, and Thos:) have been extended, but variant spellings of first names given in full are retained. The following editorial conventions have been used:

- (a) names with a cross + denote those people listed as commoners in the 1650 survey of the forest, usually under the same place as they subscribed as petitioners; the spelling of surnames often varies between the two lists and so identification may not be certain in all cases
- (b) names with an asterisk * are those accompanied in the original with a mark, either between the first and last name or placed after the last name to one side
- (c) where a name is clearly or most probably a signature, that is indicated by a note in square brackets; other names, either the entire list for a particular place or just two or three as a group, are written in the same hand on behalf of the petitioner

[m. 122]

To his Highnes Oliver Lord Protector of the [Commonwealth]
of England, Scotland and Ireland &c¹
The humble Peticion of the Knights, Gentleman and other the Inhabitants [of One and]
Twenty Villadges and Townships adioyning to Needwood in the County [of Stafford]

Sheweth:

That whereas by an Ordinance of your Highnes made by and with the advice of your Councill the Chase or Forest of Needwood in the County of Stafford is amongst other Forests exposed to Sale for the Satisfaction of the Soldiery, which Ordinance being under the Consideration of the late Parliament your petitioners made their addresses thither, but it being dissolved before any thing was done therein your petitioners do m[ost] humbly addres themselves to your Highnes.

Wherein they pray with all submission, That seeing there hath been formerly taken out of the said Chase and improved by for[mer] kings Tenn several Parkes and seing the wholle Survey at present amounts to lesse than Five thousand Six hundred Acres, and those by experience not worth Five Shillings an Acre upon the best improvement can be made, And seing the Sale of the said Chase

¹ Where the manuscript on m. 122 has holes in it, the text of the petition in square brackets has been supplied from the version in Zachary Babington's autograph account: WSL, S. MS. 243/iii/4.

tends only to the incloseing of the residue of the same and disposing of the Woods and Herbage thereof, wherein divers of your Petitioners have great Right and Interest, some by Charters dated long before the Dutchie of Lancaster (whereof this Chase is parcell) was annexed to the Crowne, some others by Charters which entitle them to Common of Estovers in grosse and Common of pasture in grosse, against which last kinde of Common (as your petitioners by their Councell are informed) there cannot by the Lawes of this Nacion any improvement be made of the Soyle, so that if the said Chase should be enclosed your Petitioners must either suffer in their iust Rights by a Lawe new made, of it a full recommence should be allotted to the multitude of their severall lawfull Claymes, the [Rema]inder of the said Chase would be little or noe benefit to the Soldiery. And for as much also as there be [a great nu]mber of ancient Cottagers who without any cleere prooffe of Right of Common doe yet sustayne [themselves and] their [poor] Families by the Relief of the said Chase and would, if turned [out need the Relief of their several parishes, to the insupportable burden of the same and the exceeding great charge of the whole County in generall].

May it therefore please your Highnes the premises considered that the said Chase may not be sold, or els in case the same shall be put to sale there may be provision made

That all your Petitioners whose Rights and Titles shall be questioned, and not allowed, may be left to their course at lawe for maintenance of the same

And that where the Titles are allowed the Recompence which shalbe allotted for the same may be ascertayned and apporcioned by the High Ordinance and not left Arbitrary to the Commissioners, And in the Allotment of the said Recompence Consideracion may be likewise had of those who clayme Common of Estovers as well as of those who clayme Common of pasture, as alsoe of the Right of the Keepers who clayme their Offices by Patent.

And all this the rather

Because the County of Stafford (whereof your Petitioners are noe small part) hath (besides the ordinary Contribucion) paid neere Eight Thousand pounds to the Soldiery upon the disbanding which the State stands yet engaged to repay;

All which, togeather with the Reasons hereunto annexed your Petitioners humbly leave to your Highnes grave Consideration.

And your petitioners shall pray &c

(A note is written on the left-hand side of the membrane in a space opposite the second half of the text) His Highnes is pleased to referre this petition with the annexed papers to the Consideration of the Counsell for their advise what is sett to be done thereupon. 5 Feb. 1654 Jo: Thurloe.

[m. 123]

[NOTE: Although the heading 'Marchin[g]ton' occurs in the top left-hand corner, the names under it in the first of the four columns are in fact those of leading landowners in the Needwood area and not of Marchington itself. The same is the case with the two names in the fourth column. The specifically Marchington and Marchington Woodlands names, therefore, are those in columns two and three.]

(first column)

Marchin[g]ton

+ Thomas Leigh²

Charles Edgerton³

Edward Vernon⁴

Simon Rugeley⁵

[these four names above seem to be written in the same hand]

Fr[ancis] Boynton⁶

Henry Griffith⁷

[these two names above are in the same hand]

J[ohn] Bromfield⁸

[signature]

(second column)

+ John Gilbert

*John Alkin

[these two names above are probably in the same hand]

2 Sir Thomas Leigh, lord of Hamstall Ridware.

3 Sir Charles Egerton of Newborough: *VCH Staffs.* X, 186

4 Probably Sir Edward Vernon of Sudbury, lord of Houndhill, in Marchington: *VCH Staffs.* X, 162. The 'E Vernon' who appears in the fourth column on this membrane would, therefore, be his second son, Edward Vernon (see below).

5 Col. Simon Rugeley of Callingwood: *VCH Staffs.* X, 223.

6 Sir Francis Boynton, from 1656 lord of Wychnor, in Tatenhill: *VCH Staffs.* X, 274.

7 Sir Henry Griffith (d. 1656), lord of Wychnor, in Tatenhill: *VCH Staffs.* X, 274.

8 Lord of Barton-under-Needwood manor: *VCH Staffs.* X, 237.

+ William Porter

[? signature]

James Scott⁹

[the same hand seems to have written Scott's name and all those in the rest of this column; in the next six names (Harvey to Budworth) and in some later places a space has been left between the first and second name for the addition of a mark not in fact written in, as was done in other instances]

Thomas Harvey

John Morton

John Wall

Henry Poker

+ Thomas Budworth

Richard Budworth

+ William Burden

+ *John Slaney¹⁰

*Robert Devill¹¹

Robert Amery

*Henry Porter

Walter Jeffery

William Amery

*James Scott¹²

*Edward Aston

+ Richard Bothby

Richard Robotham¹³

+ Thomas Moore

Thomas ?Hanley

*Nicholas Sheppard

Bothby Hurte

*John Littlewood

+ William Holliley

Raphe Gilbert

+ Richard Robotham the elder

Luke Devill

+ Thomas Hall

Thomas Wodinge

(third column)

Marchin[g]ton Woodlands

William Wilkinson esquire¹⁴

William Chetwyn gen[tleman]¹⁵

+ William Woodroffe¹⁶

[these three names above are in the same hand, probably that responsible for the first two names in column two]

+ William Towers¹⁷

[Towers' name and all those in the rest of this column are written in the same hand as that responsible for most of column two]

+ *Ann Walton widdow

+ *Jane Littleton widdow¹⁸

Thomas Holbrooke gen[tleman]

+ James Whitehall

+ *John Lovatt¹⁹

+ *Robert Lovatt

*Nicholas Jackson the younger

+ *Nicholas Jackson the elder

Thomas Boothby²⁰

*Thomas Bayly²¹

*Joseph Iremonger

+ John Wetton²²

+ Anthony Carter

+ *Francis Gilbert

*Thomas Fle[e]mings

Robert Woodroffe

Richard Harrison²³

Edward Harrison²⁴

Raphe Walker

John Lees

+ William Jackson²⁵

Richard Smith²⁶

Henry Fleemings

Walter Dixon

James Fleemings

Charles Cockayne

Richard Browne²⁷

9 Same name occurs again further down the column.

10 Same name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 2), but with a different mark.

11 Same name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 3), but with a different mark.

12 Same name occurs earlier in the column; a space for a mark (not in fact made) is left here between the first and last names.

13 Presumably the younger as Robotham 'the elder' occurs below in the list.

14 Same name occurs in the Rolleston list, but without the ascription 'esquire'. This William Wilkinson is presumably the man to whom Simon Rugeley had in 1629 mortgaged the Smallwood estate in Marchington Woodlands: *VCH Staffs.* X, 75.

15 Possibly William Chetwynd of Rugeley, an ironmaster who became MP for Stafford in 1661: *SHC* 1920 and 1923, 123.

16 Husband of Dorothy Coke whose brother Thomas (d. 1648) bequeathed to her the timber-framed house in Marchington Woodlands now known as Woodroffe's: LRO, B/C/11, Thos. Coke (1648); *VCH Staffs.* X, 179.

17 Of Knyppersley, in Marchington Woodlands: *VCH Staffs.* X, 174.

18 A member of the Littleton family of Pillaton, in Penkridge, some of whom were then living at Houndhill, in Marchington: *VCH Staffs.* X, 162.

19 Similar name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 4), but with a different mark.

20 Space between the first and second part of the name, but no mark entered.

21 Thomas 'Baylie' occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 2), but with a different mark.

22 Same name occurs in the Newborough list.

23 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 4), where a mark is made.

24 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 4), where a mark is made.

25 Same name occurs in both the Hoar Cross and Newborough lists.

26 Same name occurs in both the Hanbury and Anslow lists.

27 Similar name occurs in the Scropton list.

Thomas Smith²⁸

(fourth column)

Hernon [i.e. ? H[enry] Vernon]²⁹

E Vernon³⁰

[these two names above are probably signatures]

[m. 124]

(first column)

The Subscriptions of the [*struck through*: Poore]
Inhabitants of Marchin[g]ton

*Edward Hlshed

*Ann Halshed

*John Halsehed

*Thomas Halshed

*James Halsehed

*William Tatum

*Margerie Tatum

*Dorithie Rawlins

*Elizabeth Blackberd

*George Blackberd

*Luck [i.e. ? Luke] Blackberd

*Franke Blackberd

*Sara Blackberd

*John Marchsall

*Edward Barlett [*recte* Bartlett]

*Dorothie Bartlett

*Raphe Bartlett

*Ann Barlett [*recte* Bartlett]

*Thomas Hollelie

*Margrett Hollelie

*John Hollelie

*Richard Hollelie

*Thomas Hollelie

*Roger Headson

*Thomas Headson

*Mary Headson

*Ann Headson

(second column)

*Elizabeth Slaney widow

*William Slaney

*Richard Slaney

*John Slaney³¹

*William Boulton

*Richard Boulton

*Mawde Boulton

*Elizabeth Boulton

Thomas Boulton

[signature]

*Elinor Boulton

*Marg[r]ett Boulton

*John Boulton

*Thomas Sutton³²

*John Sutton

*Thomas Sutton junior

*Als [i.e. Alice] Sutton

*Ann Sutton

*Dorothie Sutton

*Margerie Sutton

*William Sutton

*John Robothom

*Margerie Robothom

*William Baylie

*Als [i.e. Alice] Baylie

*Joane Melborne

*Joane Melborne junior

*Henry Charlington

*Ann Charlington

*John Charlington

*Francis Davie

*Katharine Davie

*Elizabeth Davie

(third column)

*Elizabeth Dav[i]e³³

*Richard Myners

*Joayce Myners

*Samuella Myners

*Joane Myners

*Kather[i]ne Myners

*Richard Lum[m]as

*Elizabeth Lummas

*Elizabeth Lumas the younger³⁴

*Richard Lumas the younger³⁵

*William Aston³⁶

*Elizabeth Aston

*Richard Aston

28 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 2), where a mark is made.

29 Probably Henry Vernon, eldest son of Sir Edward Vernon of Sudbury, lord of Houndhill in Marchington: Derbyshire Record Office, D. 410 M/2/271. The following entry, therefore, would be his younger brother Edward. The father (whose name appears in the first column on this membrane) was apparently a moderate Royalist and Edward a much more committed one; Henry, however, was a Parliamentarian: I. Carr and I. Atherton (eds), *The Civil War in Staffordshire in the Spring of 1646: Sir William Brereton's Letter Book, April–May 1646* (being Staffordshire Record Society, 4th series, XXI, 2007), 95 note.

30 Probably Colonel Edward Vernon, the younger son of Sir Edward Vernon who appears in the first column on this membrane: *VCH Staffs.* X, 46.

31 Same name occurs in the first Marchington list (col. 2), but with a different mark.

32 Evidently the elder as Thomas Sutton 'junior' appears below. The same name also occurs in the Rolleston list.

33 Evidently another woman from that listed at the end of the second column and not a repetition in error, as the marks are different.

34 Space for a mark (not in fact made) is left between the first and last names.

35 Space for a mark (not in fact made) is left between the first and last names.

36 Similar name occurs in the Newborough list, but without a mark.

*John Aston
 *Ales [i.e. Alice] Aston
 *Robertt Devill³⁷
 *Elizabeth Devill
 *Dorothie Devill
 *Thomas Holmes
 *Ann Holmes
 *Mary Holmes
 *Ann Holmes the younger³⁸
 *William Baxter
 *Ellin Baxter
 *Raphe Baxter
 *Robert Baxter
 *Marg[r]ett Baxter
 *Felix Baxter [*female*]
 *William Smith
 *Anthonie Shore
 *Margrett Heatherle
 *William Heatherly
 *Elizabeth Hetherle
 *Margerie Heatherlie
 *Dorothie Tople

(fourth column)

*?Christopher Grimes
 *Margerie Grimes
 *George Grimes
 *William Grimes
 *John Grimes
 *Richard Faulkner
 *George Faulkner
 *Ann Faulkner
 *Jane Falkner
 *Mary Sleagh
 *Mathew Sleagh
 *Ann Baylei³⁹
 *Jo[hn] Lovett⁴⁰
 *Isabell Lovett
 *Margrett White
 *Ann White
 *James Robotham
 *Dorothie Robotham
 *Arthur Harison
 *Ann Harison⁴¹
 *John Cresswell
 *Thomas Devill
 *Ann Devill
 *Thomas Devill [the] younger

*Rose Devill
 *Richard Spencer
 *Ann Spencer
 *Raphe Spencer
 *Thomas Spencer
 *John Spencer
 *George Robotham
 *Thomas Robotham⁴²

[NOTE: The number '126' which appears under the last name in the fourth column is probably in the same hand as the list, and is the correct total number of names.]

[m. 125]

(first column)

The Subscriptions of the poore inhabitants of Marchington Woodland

*Ann Mosse
 *John Mosse
 *Elizabeth Mosse
 *Jane Mosse
 *Robert Mosse
 *James Fleminge
 *Elizabeth Fleminge
 *Thomas Fleminge
 *Ann Fleminge
 *Jane Fleminge
 *John Fleminge
 *James Hawkins
 *Ellin Hawkins

(second column)

*John Cole
 *Ann Cole
 *Thomas Baylie⁴³
 *Ann Baylie⁴⁴
 *Richard Baylie
 *John Baylie
 *Francis Baylie
 *John Taylor⁴⁵
 *Ann Taylor
 *Richard Taylor
 *Roger Taylor
 *Houmfre [i.e. Humphrey] Wo[o]lley
 *Ann Woolley
 *Richard Woolley
 *Jane Wolley
 *John Wooley
 *Francis Woolley

37 Same name occurs in the Marchington list, but with a different mark.

38 Space for a mark (not in fact made) is left between the first and last names.

39 Similar name occurs in a family group in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 2), but with a different mark.

40 Similar name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, but with a different mark.

41 Similar name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 4), but with a different mark.

42 Same name occurs in the Hanbury Woodend list, but without a mark.

43 Thomas 'Bayly' occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, but with a different mark.

44 Similar name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 4), but with a different mark.

45 Similar name occurs in the Rolleston list.

*Elizabeth Smith⁴⁶
 *Ann Smith
 *Jacob Smith
 *Thomas Smith⁴⁷

(third column)

*John Rawlins
 *Ann Rawlins
 *Elizabeth Rawlins
 *Jane Rawlins
 *Margrett Rawlins
 *John Bartrum⁴⁸
 *Elizabeth Bartrum
 *George Bartrum
 *Richard Bartrum
 *John Bartrum
 *Edward Bartrum
 *Robert Bartrum
 *Edward Read
 *Ann Read
 *Thomas Payrepynt
 *Jane Parepynt
 *Paule Parepynt
 *John Parepynt
 *Robert Mason
 *Jane Mason
 *Katharine Mason

(fourth column)

*Thomas Wilson
 *William Wilson
 *John Wilson
 *Katharine Wilson
 *Jane Wilson
 *Ann Wilson
 *Robert Carter
 *Elizabeth Carter
 *Robert Carter [the] younger
 *Ann Carter
 *Ellin Carter
 *Thomas Carter
 *Margrett Carter
 *John Harrison⁴⁹
 *Ann Harrison⁵⁰

*Edward Harrison⁵¹
 *Thomas Harrison
 *Richard Harrison⁵²
 *Dorothie Harrison
 *Arthur Mosse

[NOTE: The number '75' which appears under the last name in the fourth column is written in the same hand as the list, and is the correct total number of names.]

[m. 126]

[NOTE: Most of the names on this membrane appear to have been written in the same hand.]

(first column)

Cotton [*modern* Coton]
 William Dale
 *Nicholas Boyer⁵³
 John Harrison⁵⁴
 *Humphry Gelly
 Thomas Allcocke⁵⁵
 John Hinckley
 + Thomas Creswell
 George Baggaley
 John Smith⁵⁶
 Thomas Doughtey
 Edward Rosbey

Faulde [*modern* Fauld]

+ Thomas Astle⁵⁷
 Mr Willinton
 + *William Walker⁵⁸
 Edward Hunt
 + *Richard Hardin
 Robert Dale
 *Henery Daken
 George Cosin
 Ralph Greene
 Richard Greene⁵⁹
 Thomas Allcocke⁶⁰
 Thomas White
 Richard Greene the elder
 *John Swenson
 Thomas Dakin
 *Richard Burton

46 Same name (with variant) occurs in the Stubby Lane and Newborough lists.

47 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, but without a mark.

48 Presumably the elder as a man of the same name occurs later in the family group.

49 Same name occurs in the Coton list.

50 Similar name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 4), but with a different mark.

51 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, but without a mark.

52 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, but without a mark.

53 Same name occurs in the Draycott list.

54 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 4).

55 Same name (and variants) occurs in the lists for Fauld, Hanbury Woodend, and Tutbury.

56 Same name occurs in the Draycott list.

57 Lord of Fauld manor (d. 1657): *VCH Staffs.* X, 129.

58 Same name occurs in the Stubby Lane list, but without a mark.

59 Presumably the younger as Green 'the elder' occurs below in the list.

60 Same name (with variants) occurs in the lists for Coton, Hanbury Woodend, and Tutbury.



Fig. 5 Hanbury townships names (Coton, Fauld, Hanbury, Hanbury Woodend, Draycott, and Stubby Lane) [m. 126] © Crown Copyright (reproduced with permission)

Hanbury
 Edward Villiers⁶¹
 [signature]
 Thomas Sheale
 + *Thomas Painter
 + *Egerton Allcocke
 *Henry Shortehose
 Christopher Allcocke
 Richard Heanes
 *Martin Swenson
 *Richard Smith⁶²
 *William Whiteall
 *Thomas Hynde
 *Frauncis Walker
 John Heane

(second column)
 Everatt Hinckley
 Anthony Ouldham
 *Ann Swenson
 John Launder
 Raphe Kertland
 Thomas Braddocke
 John Spensor
 John Killingley
 Jacob Perkins
 + George Henley
 John Mason⁶³

Woodend [modern Hanbury Woodend]
 + Sara Leigh
 + Mr John Henton
 Mrs Ann Daintrey⁶⁴
 + Richard Tunckes
 + *John Hodgson the elder⁶⁵
 Thomas Rowath
 + John Hodgson the younger
 Thomas Dixon
 John Toone
 Lawrence Pattricke
 Thomas Robotham⁶⁶
 Robert Case

John Hanley
 *Thomas Allcock⁶⁷
 George Plimer
 + *Thomas Coton
 William Blakley
 Richard Blakley
 + Edward Yate⁶⁸
 John Yate
 John Hason
 Humfry Banks
 Emott Day
 Nicholas Saulte
 Thomas Slater
 Anthony Hodgson
 James Jackson
 Thomas Kirke
 John Addams
 *Thomas Addams
 Alice Allcocke
 Thomas Henley
 Ann Auld
 John Lane
 *Walter Harrison

(third column)
 Draycott [modern Draycott-in-the-Clay]
 + George Haynnes⁶⁹
 [signature]
 + William Hill
 + William Allin⁷⁰
 George Clarke
 Robart Thorley
 + George Allcocke⁷¹
 *Elizabeth Meacock
 James Tavener
 *Alice Robinson
 + *William Smith⁷²
 *Francis Smith
 *John Pratt
 *William Hetherley⁷³
 John Hill⁷⁴
 + Clement Power⁷⁵

61 Lessee of Hanbury rectory estate: *VCH Staffs.* X, 130.

62 Same name occurs in both the Marchington Woodlands and Anslow lists.

63 Same name occurs in the Tutbury list.

64 Probably the widow of Roland Dayntry, gentleman, who occurs in the 1650 forest survey as a commoner.

65 Beside Hodgson the younger later in the list, the same name (with variant) also occurs in the lists for Dunstall, Tutbury, and Anslow.

66 Same name occurs in the Marchington poor list, with a mark.

67 Similar name occurs in the lists for Coton, Fauld, and Tutbury.

68 Same name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

69 Presumably the G. Heayne who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

70 Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

71 Similar name occurs in the Newborough list. Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

72 Same name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 3), but with a mark.

73 Similar name occurs in the Marchington poor list (col. 3), but with a different mark.

74 Same name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

75 Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

+ Zacharias Power⁷⁶
 + John Lorte
 + Thomas Allen⁷⁷
 William Phillip
 William Goodale
 John Evans
 + William Roe⁷⁸
 *Robert Cliffe
 Roger Cliffe
 *William Mallaber
 Richard Cope
 James Dicksun
 Robertt Heatherley
 John Meacocke
 Henery Waren
 George Foster
 John Smith⁷⁹
[space for mark between first and second name]
 Thomas Rooe
 George Pibus
 Robertt Malleber
 *Mathew Ford
 Foster Chell
 Thomas Barton
 Thomas Allin⁸⁰
 Walter Dunston
 John Strickland
 Mary Greene
 Nicholas Boyer⁸¹
 John Allcocke

(fourth column)
 Stubbilane *[modern Stubby Lane]*
 + Robert Smith
 + William Walker⁸²
 *Walter Roe
 + Robert Robotham
 + John Clarke
 Susan Woolley
 + Christopher Walker
 John Coaton
 Elizabeth Upton
 Elizabeth Smith⁸³
 Isabell Austen
 + Margery Phillip
 *Ellen Bomford

Margarett Roe
 William Bartram
 William Starky
 Richard Burch the elder
 Richard Burch the younger
 *William Scott
 *John Riddoll
 John Hemings
 *Thomas Onion
 Arthur Foorde
 Elizabeth Tuncks
 *William Upton
 + Robert Walker
 Henry Tuncks
 + John Carter
 Anthony Morton
 John Dunston
 John Upton the elder
 John Upton the younger
 Anthony Cooper
 Christofer Walter
 William Power
 Walter Meacock
*[the last four names (Cooper to Meacock) are written
 in a different hand from the rest of the names on this
 membrane, evidently as a later addition]*

[m. 127]

[NOTE: Nearly all the names on this membrane, and also on the dorse, appear to have been written in the same hand.]

(first column)
 Horecrosse *[modern Hoar Cross]*
 Thomas Wellys⁸⁴
 Thomas Whitehead
 Abraham Aberley⁸⁵
 George Hall⁸⁶
 William Byrd
 Robert Batkin
 Humpfray Foord
 Ellen Robinson
 John Hill⁸⁷
 John Lowe
 Matthew Bomforde
 John Quinton
 ?-eweis Robinson

76 Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

77 Same name occurs in the Scropton list, as well as a variant (Allin) later in the Draycott list. Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

78 Presumably the man who occurs as a commoner in the Marchington entry in the 1650 forest survey.

79 Same name occurs in the Coton list.

80 Similar name occurs earlier in this list and also in the list for Scropton.

81 Same name occurs in the Coton list, but with a mark.

82 Same name occurs in the Fauld list.

83 Same name (with variant) occurs in the lists for Marchington Woodlands poor list (col. 2) and Newborough.

84 Lord of Hoar Cross manor: *VCH Staffs. X*, 309.

85 One of the leading agitators against inclosure.

86 Same name occurs in the Yoxall list.

87 Same name occurs in the Draycott list.

William Walesbury
 Marke Lowde
 Thomas Stocken
 Anthony Press
 James Bankes
 Peter Richman
 Elizabeth Pott
 Wil[l]iam Bickley
 William Somers
 Humphrey Analey
 Henry Willott
 John Willott
 John Plant
 Nicholas Millinton⁸⁸
 James Steane
 James Shelly⁸⁹
 William Irton
 Richard Averill⁹⁰
 Robert Arnold
 Edward Clarke
 Edward Yate⁹¹
 Richard Tomson⁹²
 Mary Wotten
 Robert Nixon
 Ellen Allen

(second column)

George Averell
 Ellen Dolphin
 Robert Webbe
 Hugh Roberts
 Thomas Whitemore
 John Lester⁹³
 Edward Lester
 John Badkins
 Thomas Dun⁹⁴
 William Jackson⁹⁵
 John Dichfield
 Nicholas Cossall

Newborrow [*modern Newborough*]

[*five line space*]

German Pole senior⁹⁶
 William Catton

Robert Greaves
 Roger Spencer
 James Badkins
 Francis Allen
 William Fenton
 Robert Fenton
 + Thomas Taylor⁹⁷
 Robert Barker
 + Richard Dunne
 John Goodman⁹⁸
 Francis Parker
 Thomas Edward
 Nicholas Millinton⁹⁹

(third column)

John Roberts
 Robert Ford
 Christopher Ellerby
 Joane Allen
 Humphry Allen
 John Boden
 William Cottone
 Thomas Johnson
 Richard Sherwood
 Thomas Mancefield¹⁰⁰
 John Langly
 Thomas Hunt
 Thomas Northwood
 John Tompson
 + Matthew Clarke
 Michael Hall
 Thomas Ashen
 + Rowland Lont
 + John Oake
 William Taylor¹⁰¹
 + James Hemings senior
 Alice Cooke
 + John Barker
 John Ossope
 William Taylor
 John Hall¹⁰²
 Thomas Hyblin
 John Jackson
 Thomas Phillips

88 Same name (with variant) occurs in both the Newborough and Yoxall lists.

89 Similar name occurs in the Yoxall list.

90 Same name occurs in the Morrey list.

91 Same name occurs in the Hanbury Woodend list.

92 Same name occurs in the Yoxall list.

93 Similar name occurs in the Yoxall Woodhouses list.

94 Similar name occurs in the Yoxall Woodhouses list.

95 Same name occurs in both the Marchington Woodlands and Newborough lists.

96 The Pole family owned the Moat Hall estate in Newborough: *VCH Staffs.* X, 186.

97 Same name occurs in the Yoxall list.

98 Same name occurs in the Barton list.

99 Same name (with variant) occurs in both the Hoar Cross and Yoxall lists.

100 Possibly the elder or younger as the same name occurs later in the list (on dorse of membrane).

101 Possibly the elder or younger as the same name occurs further down the list.

102 Same name occurs in the Rolleston list.

Francis Bond
 William Hinkly
 Thomas Batkin
 + Elizabeth Wright

(fourth column)

+ Thomas Westbrocke
 Elizabeth Ossope
 + Joseph Moore
 Richard Hewson
 William Phillips
 Anne Agard
 John Phillips
 Thomas Stanely
 Thomas Tutman
 William Butler
 + Francis Sherwood
 Henry Ford
 Nicholas Arnold
 Richard Arnold
 William Astone¹⁰³
 Lucy Tutman
 John Fenton
 William Jackson¹⁰⁴
 Joane Arnold
 John Cotone
 John Wright
 William Lyme
 + John Wetton¹⁰⁵
 Margery Short
 Walter Fox
 Arthur Hinckly
 Henry Astone
 Robert Chambers
 James Dowler
 + George Wetton

[The last two names in this column are written in different hands from the previous names, and so are evidently signatures added later.]

Humphry Merry
 Humfry Becke

[m. 127 dorse]

William Bonde
 Ellen Hinkly
 Thomas Mancefield¹⁰⁶
 George Mallinder
 Edward Bayly
 Peter Ossope

William Mancefield
 John Walker¹⁰⁷
 Thomas Willott
 Elizabeth Towers
 Dorothy Becke
 Denys Milnehouse
 William Wetton
 Robert Wetton
 Nicholas Mously
 George Alcocke¹⁰⁸
 Henry Baxter
 Ellen Hunt
 Humphry Watson
 Elizabeth Smyth¹⁰⁹
 Robert Davys
 William Tingle

[m. 128]

[NOTE: The names on this membrane appear to have been written in the same hand.]

(first column)

Hamstall Ridware
 + *John Knoales
 *William Twamloe
 Thomas Arnowle
 *John Hauckesworth
 + Nicolas Bothom
 William Bothom
 Thomas Pegg
 Thomas Alsopp
 + Michael Salt
 *Thomas Bankes
 + Richard Alsopp
 Richard Cockes
 Robert Sherwood
 + Hewgh Boley¹¹⁰
 William Maskery

Nether Towne [modern Nethertown]

+ Francis Scragge
 *Thomas Tooth
 + *Francis Maskeyry
 + Thomas Salt
 + William Somner
 Mat[h]ew Couper

(second column)

Dunstall
 Mrs Anne Bott widow¹¹¹

103 Similar name occurs in the Marchington poor list.

104 Same name occurs in both the Marchington Woodlands and Hoar Cross lists.

105 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list.

106 Same name occurs earlier in the Newborough list, possibly the elder or younger.

107 Same name occurs in the Yoxall list.

108 Similar name occurs in the Draycott list.

109 Similar name occurs in both the Marchington Woodlands poor and Stubby Lane lists.

110 The name occurs as 'Bayly' in the 1650 forest survey.

111 The widow of Thomas Bott (d. 1652), the owner of the Dunstall Hall estate: *VCH Staffs.* X, 265.

Joseph Heacocke
 + John Bust¹¹²
 + James Whiting
 + John Godwin¹¹³
 + William Godwin
 Jos[e]ph Fletcher
 William Toogood¹¹⁴
 + *George Yate
 + *Richard Fletcher
 Richard Clarke¹¹⁵
 William (? Lu)mes
 + Thomas Lee
 John Hodgson¹¹⁶
 + Edward Hollis
 Humfrie Lees
 Edward Terrey
 Thomas Riley
 + Rowland Hollis

(third column)

Tutbury
 Thomas Alcock¹¹⁷
 + Henry Greaves
 + Joseph Wakefeild
 + Thomas Palfryman
 + Thomas Midlam
 Thomas Gretton
 George Repton
 + Francis Chamberline
 Thomas Barnes
 Richard Rowe
 John Mason¹¹⁸
 Hump[hry] Scattergood
 Thomas Joyner
 Thomas Smethwick
 John Hodgson¹¹⁹
 William Narwood
 James Whytall
 Thomas Foord
 Thomas Genings
 Richard Tagg
 Michael Walker
 Richard Turner
 William Mason

[m. 129]

[NOTE: The names in the Rolleston list appear to have been written in the same hand, as are most of those in the Tatenhill list, but there is more variation with the Barton-under-Needwood names.]

(first column)

Roulston [*modern Rolleston*]

+ Mr Joseph Heming rector¹²⁰
 + Mr William Caldwell¹²¹
 + John Hingly¹²²
 William Wilkinson¹²³
 William Oxford
 + Richard Hallam
 + Robert Moore
 Elizabeth Henson
 John Bond
 George Goodwin
 William Hyblin
 + John Woodfield
 Richard Harlow
 Alice Caldwell
 + Mrs Katherin Brogram
 + Humfry Carter
 + Abraham Shapton
 + Mr William Gould
 + John Tayler¹²⁴
 + Thomas Bucknall
 + Thomas Bond
 + Samuel Tayler
 + Thomas Hingly
 + Thomas Sutton¹²⁵
 William Presbury
 + George Daune

(on right-hand side of column)

George Hill
 + Thomas Keeling
 + John Hallam
 John Hall¹²⁶

(second column)

Tattenhill [*modern Tatenhill*]

(six line space)

+ Henry Burford rector of Tatenhill
 William Salt

112 Similar name occurs in the Anslow list.

113 Same name occurs in the Callingwood list.

114 Same name occurs in the Barton list.

115 Same name occurs in the Yoxall list.

116 Same name (with variant) occurs in the lists for Hanbury Woodend (twice), Tutbury, and Anslow.

117 Similar name occurs in the lists for Coton, Fauld, and Hanbury Woodend.

118 Same name occurs in the Hanbury list.

119 Same name (with variant) occurs in the lists for Hanbury Woodend (twice), Dunstall, and Anslow.

120 Rector since 1654, having possibly been previously the Anabaptist curate at Uttoxeter: *VCH Staffs.* X, 207.

121 A charitable benefactor to Rolleston poor: *VCH Staffs.* X, 204.

122 Same name occurs in the Anslow list.

123 Same name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list, with the ascription 'esquire'.

124 Similar name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands poor list, where a mark is made.

125 Same name occurs (twice) in the Marchington poor list, where a mark is made.

126 Same name occurs in the Newborough list.

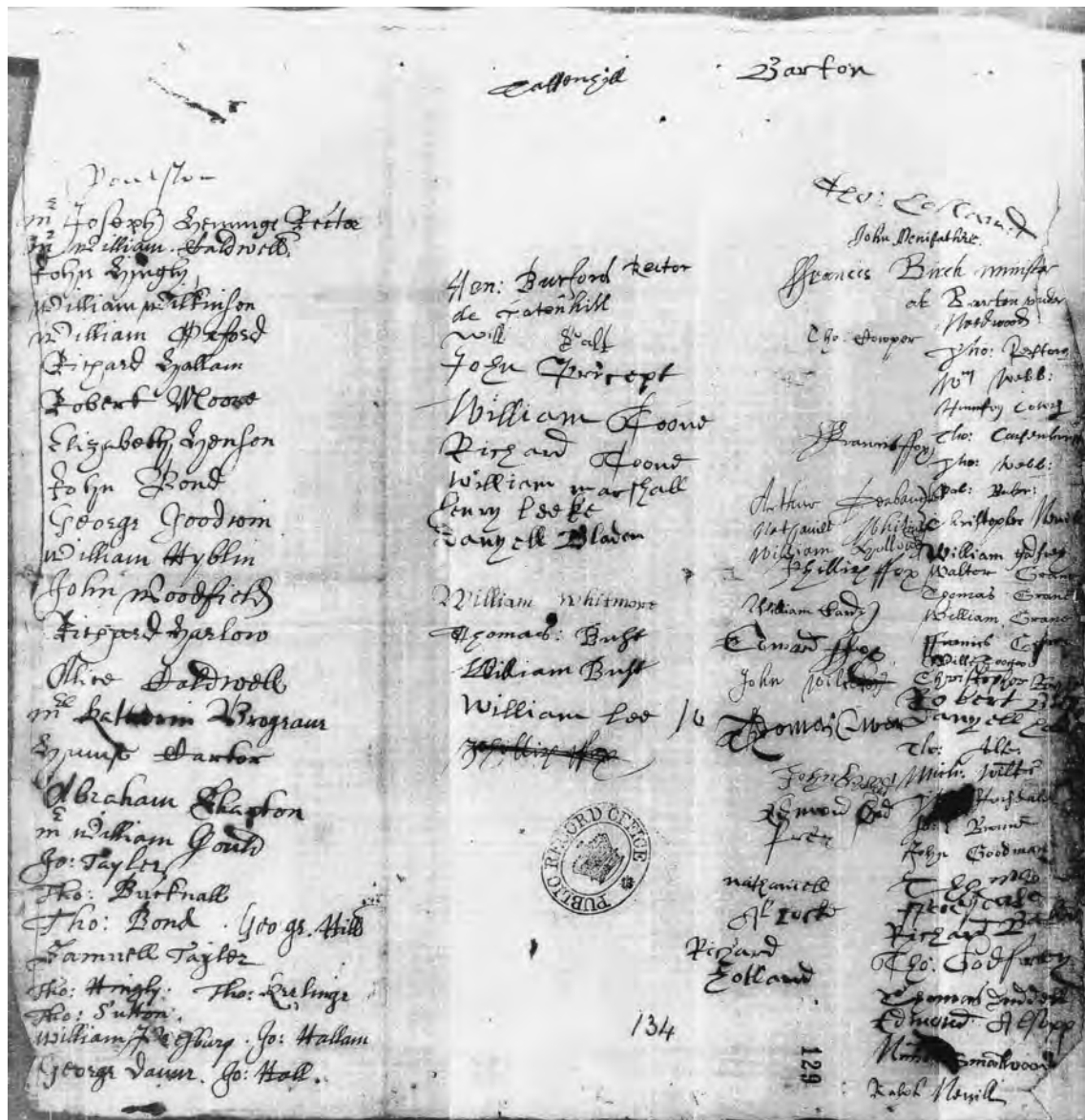


Fig. 6 Rolleston, Tatenhill, and Barton-under-Needwood names [m. 129] © Crown Copyright (reproduced with permission)

+ John Pri[n]cept
 William Toone
 Richard Toone
 + William Marshall
 + Henry Leeke
 + Danyell Bladon
 William Whitmore
 + Thomas Bust
 William Bust
 + William Lee¹²⁷
 (struck through: Phillip Fox)¹²⁸

(third column)
 Barton [modern Barton-under-Needwood]
 (four line space)
 Thomas Holland
 + John Penifather
 Francis Birch minister of Barton under
 Needwood¹²⁹
 (on left-hand side of column)
 + Thomas Cowper
 + Francis Fox
 + Arthur Deabancke
 + Nathaniell Whiting
 William Hollonde

127 Same name occurs (twice) in the Callingwood list.

128 The name is entered in the Barton list.

129 Appointed master of Barton grammar school in 1649, and presumably an assistant curate at the church: VCH Staffs. X, 246.

+ Phillip Fox¹³⁰
 + William Cardy
 + Edward Fox
 John Wilcockes
 + Thomas Owen
 John Holland
 Edmond Godfrey¹³¹
 Nathaniell Alcocke
 + Richard Holland
(on right-hand side of column)
 + Thomas Repton
 + William Webb
 Humfry Cowp[er]
 Thomas Capenhurst
 + Thomas Webb
 Robert Baker¹³²
 + Christopher Nevill
 William Godfrey
 + Walter Grane
 + Thomas Grane
 + William Grane
 Francis Grane
 William Toogood¹³³
 + Christopher Royle
 Robert Ba(?ker)
 Danyell H(?all)
 Thomas Alte
 + Michael Wilkes
 Thomas F[ew]sdale¹³⁴
 John Broune
 + John Goodman¹³⁵
 + Thomas Fewsdale
 Richard Baker
 Thomas Godfrey
 Thomas Duddell
 Edmond Alsopp
 Nicholas Smalwood
 Ralph Nevill

[*m. 130*]

[NOTE: The names in the Scropton list are all in the same hand, but there is more variation in the other two lists.]

(*first column*)

Scropton
 + Thomas Rossington
 + Thomas Eld
 + William Mountgomery
 William Moore
 Thomas Allen¹³⁶
 Richard Stubbings
 John Pounall
 Thomas Barlow
 John Eld
 John Arther
 + Thomas Twig
 Richard Hodgkinson
 Richard Brow[n]¹³⁷
 + William Barlow
 John Ward
 George Trig
 Richard Bakwel

(*second column*)

Yoxall
 Henry Arden esquire¹³⁸
[signature]
 + Nicholas Millington¹³⁹
 Bartholomew Webster
 + Ralphe Wright
 Thomas Taylor¹⁴⁰
 + John Rooe
 Richard Austin
[signature]
 Richard Fra[–]man
 Richard Huntley
 John Towers
 William Carleton
 Richard Heatley
 Richard Carter
 George Page
 Thomas Onaley
 + John Walker¹⁴¹
 + Richard Clarke¹⁴²

130 Fox was underkeeper of Barton ward in 1658, living at the lodge: Tringham, 'Needwood Forest Surveys 1649–50', 52.

131 Probably the man (d. 1656) who endowed a charity for the poor in Barton: *VCH Staffs. X*, 249.

132 Same name occurs in the Newborough list, and possibly further down the Barton list.

133 Same name occurs in the Dunstall list.

134 Probably a version of 'Fewsdale', which occurs further down the list, and if so then presumably Thomas the elder or younger.

135 Same name occurs in the Newborough list.

136 Same name occurs twice (one a variant spelling) in the Draycott list.

137 Similar name occurs in the Marchington Woodlands list.

138 Owner of the Longcroft Hall estate in Yoxall: *VCH Staffs. X*, 288.

139 Similar name occurs in both the Hoar Cross and Newborough lists. Nicholas Millington (d. 1657) of Woodside in Yoxall endowed a charity for the poor in his parish: *VCH Staffs. X*, 295.

140 Same name occurs in the Newborough list.

141 Same name occurs in the Newborough list.

142 Same name occurs in the Dunstall list.



Fig. 7 Scropton and Yoxall names [m. 130] © Crown Copyright (reproduced with permission)

+ George Hall¹⁴³
 Thomas Salloway
 + Humfrey Onneley
 Francis Millington
 + John Hancox [the elder]
 + John Hancox
 Humfrye Deakin
 Francis Wheatley
 Samson Vount
 + Thomas Blith

(to the left of the column at the top)

John Offley esquire¹⁴⁴
 + Walter Ferrers¹⁴⁵
 Francis Biddulph

(third column)

Yoxall
 + William Bell
 + Richard Tomson¹⁴⁶
 John Kent
 Thomas Stockley

143 Same name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

144 Possibly John Offley of Madeley (d. 1658), whose widow Mary bought Wychnor manor in 1663, or their son John: VCH Staffs. X, 274.

145 Styled a gentleman in the 1650 forest survey.

146 Same name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

Henry Arnold
 + Humfrey Taylor
 William Swanson
 + Richard Banister
 + Thomas Whatley
 Thomas Bladon
 Thomas Wright
 Richard Orton
 William Orton
 James Shelley¹⁴⁷
 + Henry Kinersley
 James Strand
 Humfrie Meeke

[*m. 131*]

[NOTE: Two or three hands appear to have written names in the Morrey, Yoxall Woodhouses, and Callingwood lists, but all the names in the Anslow list as in the same hand.]

(*first column*)

Morrey (in Yoxall)
 Francis Averill
 Thomas Biddulph
 Keytherine Slany spinster
 Roger Collins
 Richard Averill¹⁴⁸
 John Lakin
 + William Kendricke
 James Right
 + Richard Brookes

Yoxall Woodhouses

Thomas Cope
 Richard Marshall
 + Jhon [sic] Alderet
 + William Robotham
 + Thomas Ilsley¹⁴⁹
 + John Ilsley
 George Sallowey
 William Auldrit
 Thomas Ilsley
 Godfrey Heathcott

+ Roger Averill
 + John Leister¹⁵⁰
 Thomas Dunn¹⁵¹

(*second column*)

Yoxall [sic]
 Cal[l]ingwood
 John Lee
 William Lee¹⁵²
 John Newbolt
 William Greeves
 James Milnhouse
 Richard Whitmore
 John Brunt
 Henry Whittinge
 William Lee
 John Godwin¹⁵³

(*third column*)

Anslowe [*modern Anslow*]
 + John Thormon
 + George Sanders
 + William Stathame
 William Bragshawe
 Francis Atkine
 John Archer
 + Richard Smith¹⁵⁴
 + John Coclofe
 + John Sanders
 Francis Astell
 Richard Barnes
 + John Buste¹⁵⁵
 John Astell
 John Pickeringe
 Edward Masone
 + Henry Byolstone
 John Hodgson¹⁵⁶
 + John Hingly¹⁵⁷
 Thomas Bellgreve
 Thomas Fearn

147 Similar name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

148 Same name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

149 Presumably the elder or younger as the same name occurs later in the list. The Illesly family owned the High-Hall-Hill estate in Yoxall: *VCH Staffs.* X, 288.

150 Similar name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

151 Similar name occurs in the Hoar Cross list.

152 Presumably the elder or younger as the same name occurs later in the list, and also in the Tatenhill list.

153 Same name occurs in the Dunstall list.

154 Same name occurs in both the Marchington Woodlands and Hanbury lists.

155 Similar name occurs in the Dunstall list.

156 Same name occurs in the lists for Hanbury Woodend (twice), Dunstall, and Tutbury.

157 Same name occurs in the Rolleston list.

REVIEWS

Martin Carver, *The Birth of a Borough. An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford* (The Boydell Press, 2010), pp. xv + 176. £60.00. ISBN 9780851156231.

Between 1975 and 1985 the county town of Stafford was the subject of an extensive campaign of excavations, unprecedented in its history, as redevelopment made large areas of the town archaeologically accessible to area excavations. To these Professor Martin Carver has added a consideration of excavations before and since, drawing on some fifty-five archaeological interventions to tell the story of early medieval Stafford, ‘an attempt to use archaeology to write history’ (p. xi). Carver declares in the preface that he is not offering a conventional archaeological report aimed only at other archaeologists and in this aim he has surely been successful. The content of the volume is readily intelligible, indeed eloquent, if a little repetitive. The specialist reader will find what they need, supported by excellent drawings, plans and photographs and a full archive available digitally through the Archaeological Data Service. For the non-archaeologist, Carver has taken great care to explain the implications of archaeological method, of the stratigraphy encountered and its interpretations, and the ways in which ceramic evidence may be used to map out ‘cultural markers’ (eg Chapter 5). While not disregarding documentary research, his focus is firmly on the archaeology of Stafford, within which the author has some challenging things to say not only on Stafford, but also on burhs and early medieval towns more broadly; his avowed intention is to re-open discourse on the Anglo-Saxon town, and consequently this is a book of much more than local relevance.

The volume is well designed. The six chapters begin by setting the scene on burhs and Anglo-Saxon towns, and posing key questions that reflect the fact that the programme in Stafford was undertaken against the background of a wider enquiry looking at the origins of places that became burhs. Stafford was one of the places established as a burh (in 913) by Æthelflaed, ‘Lady of the Mercians’, as part of the conquest of those parts of England under Danish control. There follows a discussion of the project design and context and of the ‘seven windows’ on early Stafford – six excavations and a pollen sequence from King’s Pool. Thus informed, the reader is then taken through three key themes: firstly, the character of Æthelflaed’s burh, discussing its form and the activities found within it; Chapter 5 turns to examine the Norman and Medieval town; while the final chapter returns to a discussion of Anglo-Saxon Stafford and Carver’s perspective on how Stafford informs a wider debate.

Stafford burh is perceived as a military base with an authoritarian feel to it. The defences of Stafford have so far proven elusive but Carver argues for a small rectilinear fort to the west of Greengate Street, at the centre of the peninsula on which Stafford stands. This contained a new minster church and grain-processing area, while east of the axial street was a pot-making suburb. From Clarke Street came the best assemblages of animal bone, suggesting a 10th-century community heavily dependant upon cattle processed centrally. This was a place where provisioning rather than trade was the purpose, a closed military system that lacked the material clutter of town life and was not integrated with existing economic networks. Carver sees Æthelflaed’s Stafford as a military depot supplying Mercian forces campaigning against the Danes and linking into a series of fortifications, but failing to mature into a thriving urban place.

Carver challenges the prevailing view that the choice of burh sites related to what was there before, whether that be the ‘royal hypothesis’ supposing some prior administrative or seigneurial centre, or the ‘minster hypothesis’ which supposes the use of an ecclesiastical centre. Although unpersuaded by either model the author notes the interest of the Mercian rulers in subsequent royal free chapels, which might reflect areas under the control of royal centres and therefore lend some weight to the ‘royal hypothesis’ in the case of the west midland burhs.

However, the archaeology of Stafford offers no evidence to suggest, as yet, activity between the Roman period and the 10th century: the impact of the Late Saxon development was ‘sudden, planned and ubiquitous’ (p. 56). Looking beyond Stafford Carver is unconvinced by Bassett’s confirmation of pre-burh defences on some sites, and argues (p. 132) that while we do have pre-9th century power centres and minsters, they have not been found in direct relationship to later burhs. He suggests that burh sites were chosen for their strategic location and defensive capabilities: that they were an innovation of the later 9th century, created *de novo* in pursuance of a particular ideal rather than developing from pre-existing centres.

The ideal that Carver postulates is in imitation of Rome. The model envisaged for Stafford burh is of a Roman-type fort laid out on one side of the previous Roman road, with a Roman-type 'vicus' on the other side, east of the axial street. He suggests that there are likely to be other instances of rectilinear forts modelled on the Roman fort, dismissing the possibility that rectilinear defended enclosures and street grids might simply be a logical consequence of form rather than conscious imitation. Furthermore, he suggests that the pottery made in the burhs deliberately resembled Roman pottery previously made in the same region – here Stafford Ware taking as its model Severn Valley Ware. Noting West Saxon associations with Rome, and an English landscape that would have been full of Roman buildings offering inspiration, Carver suggests that Æthelflaed and the late Saxon aristocracy was consciously modelling its campaign of conquest and control on Roman ways, as the heirs of Rome (pp. 93, 101). Rome provided an image of triumph.

Carver's portrayal of post-Conquest Stafford is no less controversial, as a place in need of continual resuscitation, requiring successive surges of external investment, 'a place unenthused by the urban project' (p. 8). For instance, he argues that a consequence of the Norman Conquest was the abandonment of the east side of the peninsula and the installation of a new regime to the west: 'Stafford in the Norman period appears from its archaeology as a bleak place'; and the 'fury of William I had left its mark'. One feels that Carver is sometimes prone to assumptions when aligning the story of a site to a wider historical narrative. By 1086 life in Stafford had become 'too miserable' and the Norman 'headquarters' had shifted definitively to the castle to the west (p. 107). Here, however, Carver's account seems particularly strained. Accepting at face value the cessation of a town castle site by 1086, he overlooks the continued activity of the royal castle site in Stafford, while the notion that Norman 'headquarters' (whatever they might be?) had shifted to the castle to the west is simplistic, misleading and confuses the nature of the authority involved. Furthermore, Domesday Book confirms that life was still active in the town.

Carver suggests that the late 12th century brought revival, but not a gradual revival, rather 'another jump start with a central investment and a controlling design' (p.108), a characterisation that seems rather improbable to this reviewer. In his discussion of mid 14th-century decline and an urban downturn, Carver himself admits that the picture is uneven (p. 122), leaving the reader to wonder if the case is not overstated. It does not seem to differ greatly from many other places.

Recent years have seen the west midlands well served in publications pertaining to the themes in this volume, among them Steven Bassett's articles on midland burhs; a review of Stafford's archaeology through the Broadeye excavations; and the recently published, 'The Archaeology of the West Midlands'. This latter volume called for long-awaited publication of some key archaeological projects and here Professor Carver has responded to that plea in challenging fashion! Thanks are warranted to the author not only for his perseverance in bringing this major project to publication, but also for doing so in such a stimulating manner. This book will prompt debate, just as the author intended!

University of Birmingham

JOHN HUNT

John Martin Robinson, *James Wyatt, architect to George III* (Yale University Press, 2012) 370 pp + 150 colour illustrations, 170 in black and white. Hardback £50. ISBN 978-0-300-17690-2.

In a dip, on the noisy A38 just before it meets the M6 toll road, and less than a mile west from tiny Weeford in south Staffordshire, is a Georgian farmhouse with a handsome façade. Behind it are outbuildings that hint of commercial activity. There is a car park. A gigantic sign proclaims that this is the Blackbrook Antiques Centre, and indeed garden antiques, statuary, and bird baths can be glimpsed between the buildings. Should curiosity tempt you to park your car with the other vehicles you will find barns crammed to the rafters with genuine antiques and obvious reproductions. Outside, beside the fast flowing Black brook, the garden antiques are revealed as real Georgian and Victorian statuary in stone, composition, and terracotta which stand cheek-by-jowl with grotesque gnomes and other fantastical creatures in cement and resin that look as if they have just been levered out of their moulds.

Should you return to the barn, you will find an eager figure at reception who seems keen to help. This is the owner of the whole operation and should you ask he will confirm that the handsome Georgian farmhouse is the birthplace of James Wyatt, one of England's greatest, and most controversial architects. If you show further interest he will point you in the direction of the farmhouse,

which he is restoring to its former glory as a museum to the Wyatt family. It turns out that Benjamin Wyatt, a jobbing builder, timber merchant, and architect, built it just before the birth of his son James in 1746 and it stayed within the family after his death in 1772. Of James's five brothers three worked as partners with their father. Somehow it is fitting that this former farmyard and birthplace of an architect, who some accuse of being over fond of mouldings made out of stucco, should now be a repository of such similar decorative items. But of course Wyatt is much more than this, and this latest, very handsome, survey by the greatest authority on his work, is a long overdue tribute to his achievement and influence.

The Wyatts were a well-established Midland family of yeomen who could trace their association with Weeford back to at least 1562. The family had branches at Burton-upon-Trent, Sutton Coldfield, and Tamworth, as well as Lichfield. Among them were craftsmen, surveyors, and land agents and when James showed an interest in architectural drawing at an early age he was encouraged to develop his talent. Through his father's commercial connection with a powerful local landowner, Lord Bagot of Blithfield, he was introduced to a kinsman, Richard Bagot, who took him to Italy when aged 16. Wyatt spent two years in Venice, probably lodging with the eminent British consul and art connoisseur Joseph Smith, while he studied with the architect Visentini, whose promotion of the fashionable Palladianism rubbed off on his pupil, who also emulated his master's drawing style. It was in Venice too that the impressionable student met the influential Richard Dalton, who combined his official position as Librarian to George III with the life of a dealer in books and antiquities.

From Venice Wyatt moved on to Rome for an intensive study of the city's ancient monuments. In his four years there he came under the influence of many collectors and architects, and was able, like any other Grand Tourist, to amass a collection of mainly architectural antiquities which he took home with him to England. When at last he left Italy the ambitious Wyatt, still only 20, had, through his charm and undoubted talent, made enough contacts with people of influence to ensure his success in England. In fact, he had already been commissioned to design The Pantheon in Oxford Street, a restrained neo-classical building, which when eventually built in 1770, was acclaimed by such a connoisseur as Horace Walpole as 'the most beautiful edifice in England'.

After this brilliant early success Wyatt's career seemed assured. Charming, sweet-tempered, hard working, and accommodating, and with friends at court like Dalton, he could hardly fail. Commissions rapidly followed. In 1772 was begun Heaton Hall, which Pevsner has praised as 'the greatest house of its period in Lancashire'. Wyatt even designed the furniture, as he was to do in future projects. In 1775 Lord Holroyd, the eminent agronomist, soldier, and friend of Edward Gibbon, commissioned him to remodel his Sussex property, Sheffield Park, in the Gothic taste. These two undertakings were extraordinarily ambitious for one so young, but Wyatt took on many minor commissions too — in Dorset, Ireland, and in Liverpool and Manchester. But throughout his career he seems to have earned most of his money in London itself — mainly repairs and interiors, but also significant Gothic stucco work for Westminster Abbey. In 1786 was completed Wyatt's masterpiece, a neo-classical Mausoleum, complete with a striking pyramidal roof, for the parkland of Lord Darnley's Cobham Hall, near Rochester, a crowning tribute to Wyatt's long-standing association with the Darnleys. From 1796 Wyatt was similarly engaged with William Beckford on the Gothic fantasy that was Fonthill Abbey. In marked contrast, he even managed to squeeze in an act of family piety by providing, in 1803, his native village of Weeford with a new church. Robinson does not say what happened to the old one, but he does tell us that Wyatt charged £2,000 for the original plan — which seems even today decidedly excessive, and not entirely suggestive of filial gratitude — and he was obliged to make alterations to reduce the cost. Towards the end of his life came one of his most ambitious commissions. In 1805 a new seat for the wealthy 7th earl of Bridgewater at Ashridge rose up among trees in extensive parkland high up on the Hertfordshire Chilterns. Innovative and daring, it was made especially memorable by the sculpture of Richard Westmacott.

Few could dispute Wyatt's originality as an interpreter of neo-classicism. It was when he turned his attention to the restoration of medieval architecture that Wyatt came unstuck. What appeared to some antiquaries as an arrogant insensitivity to ancient fabric tainted his reputation in some quarters. In his home county of Staffordshire, for instance, his name will be forever linked to his controversial alterations to Lichfield cathedral, for which many antiquaries at the time and afterwards nicknamed him 'The Destroyer'. Initially, according to Robinson, Wyatt was consulted in 1787 simply to 'improve' the choir by making the space more comfortable for the choristers. However, while this basic cosmetic work was being done alarming structural problems were uncovered in the nave and transepts and Wyatt recommended the taking down of the 'dangerous' stone vaults and replacing

them with equivalents in plaster. Robinson argues that Wyatt took seriously his responsibilities as a practitioner of the true Gothic style based on medieval models, but there must be a question as to whether his vaulting in stucco, however expertly executed by the master stuccoist Bernasconi, ended up looking more Strawberry Hill Gothick than genuinely medieval. Many of his critics rightly challenged the motives of a man with a large practice to maintain and a reputation to enhance.

In the briefest glance through the excellent catalogue supplied by Robinson we can contemplate the full horror of Wyatt's proposed or actually executed 'improvements' to our medieval heritage. At Durham, for instance, he suggested the demolition of the Norman Galilee Chapel and the Chapter House, and was prevented from carrying out his plans only by the intervention of the antiquary John Carter, who attacked the architect for his 'depridations on Gothic architecture'. At Salisbury cathedral, however, Wyatt got his way and demolished the Hungerford and Beauchamp chantries, and also rearranged the interior in line with his neo-classical principles. Poor Hereford cathedral, though doubtless in a poor state when Wyatt arrived, ended up with a whole new and possibly unnecessary west front. Moreover, the fact that Wyatt was prevented from lengthening the choir is testament to the good sense of the Hereford dean and chapter, who unlike their architect were not prepared to question the wisdom of the medieval masons in building it to a certain length. Robinson doesn't say whether the masons who worked for Wyatt ever made the best use of the original medieval facing stone when they planned their reconstructions, but I would guess that like most builders, they preferred to 'make it new'. What we can say is that for all his pride in copying medieval decorative models, often from other buildings, Wyatt's neo-classical lack of understanding of the medieval spirit made him a wholly unsuitable person to be let loose on some of England's finest cathedrals. Carter wasn't his only critic. Pugin doubtless had him in mind when he published his imprecations on classicism in *Contrasts* and other polemical works.

In the realm of domestic and commercial architecture, however, Wyatt's originality has earned him a high place in the Pantheon of British architects, though whether, as Robinson implies, he deserves to rank along with Wren, Vanbrugh, and John Soane, is open to debate. Most of his best work can still be admired, although alterations have inevitably made their mark over the centuries. Unfortunately, a few good buildings have been demolished and others are in danger. One of his earliest commissions in Staffordshire — the large-scale improvements to Beaudesert in 1771, which were destroyed in 1936. Wyatt's Gothic tower at Fonthill Abbey, of course, fell down in 1825, but parts of the house remain, whilst Badger Hall was lost in 1952 although the temple survived. Recently, the magazine *Private Eye* bemoaned the present poor state of Heaton Hall, and it would be a scandal if this truly imaginative building, with its superb interior, was allowed to decay.

Altogether John Martin Robinson must be congratulated on producing a scholarly balanced and sumptuously illustrated account of Wyatt's extraordinary career, which for all its low points, must be seen as arguably the most influential in the Georgian era.

R. M. HEALEY

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