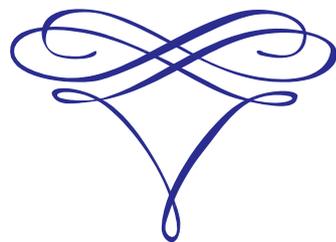


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**Supplement 1: Christopher Train Prize Essays**  
*Published under separate cover*

# Editorial

Each successive edition of the Journal brings forth different aspects of 'times past' in the rich tapestry of our South-West corner of Shropshire. For Journal 22 2011 there is the Chris Train Essay Prize Supplement which contains essays from all classes: once again *Dr. Nicholas Harding* together with two new young entrants *David Franklin* and *Emily Williams*. These prize-winning essays demonstrate that, at all stages of life, there is a significant desire to investigate the past and record those findings for the future.

The articles for this publication include an essay concerning the first members of parliament for Bishop's Castle drawn from the interesting political researches of *Peter Hutton*. The timber-framed building called 8 - 10 Church Street caught the intellectual eye and imagination of *Madge Moran* in November 2010. By March 2011 the measurements, dendrochronology, drawings and social history had been completed. It was a fascinating project with which to be involved and a pleasure to publish the results in our Journal.

This year the book reviews connect topics below ground, on the ground and in the belfry. An update on local research in progress demonstrates some of the varied work being conducted in our area. Among the reports this year is the two-day exhibition *Just Up Your Street* - a triumph of collaboration between SWSHAS and Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre. In addition an account of the past season's events demonstrates the continued activity of our Society.

I am indebted to the authors, reviewers and contributors without whom the Journal would not exist. Finally my thanks to *Janet Preshous* for proof reading the final text and to *Sarah Ellison* at Enterprise House who has produced Journal 22 in its present form.

Patricia Theobald

## From the Chairman

Five years ago when I retired from medical practice in Bishop's Castle I was repeatedly asked what I would do in my retirement. I had plenty of plans but interestingly they didn't include being Chairman of SWSHAS.

My interest in local history and landscape archaeology has developed over the last five years and I was greatly honoured and not a little intimidated when I was elected chairman at the AGM last Christmas. Following in the great footsteps of David Preshous, Chris Train and Maurice Young I was wondering what I could offer the Society. I hope that I have enthusiasm and energy and I know that I have a very active and hard working committee behind me.

This last year has been another strong one for the Society with the only hiccup being the need to have an Extraordinary General Meeting to approve the rise in subscriptions for the year 2011/12. This was proposed after a great deal of careful thought by the committee. The main reason for this increase was that the Society accounts showed that we had been running at a loss for the last few years and, although our reserves could cover this, it was obvious that this situation was untenable in the long run. The costs of hiring the lecture venues together with the fees and expenses of the lecturers and publishing the Journal have been rising yearly without a corresponding increase in income.

This last season's lectures have, I feel, been up to the usual high standard with a wide variety of topics from lead and barytes mines to Thomas Telford, sin eaters and Napoleonic parole towns, with an excellent Ritherdon Lecture by Richard Morriss on Hopton Castle. My thanks go to the programme committee for putting together this diverse list of events. I must also thank again David and Janet Preshous and their stalwart helpers for their part in three wonderful exhibitions of photographs: firstly at the Michaelmas Fair weekend (*Happy and Glorious*), in March in Lydham (*Three Border Villages*), then in April (*Just Up Your Street*) in association with the Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre. I'm sure that this year's Michaelmas exhibition, entitled *Valleys of Springs and Rivers - a Portrait of Life beside the East and West Onny* will be as interesting and absorbing as ever.

This season's outing to Chirk Castle and the Llangollen Aqueduct proved to be a wonderful trip and thanks go to Mike and Teri Greene for organising it. The lecture earlier in the year by Nicholas Byrne on Chirk Castle had, I know, whetted many appetites for a closer look at the castle.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Celia Hooper. She had been on the committee for many years and was a great servant of the Society who had a wide interest in local history. We send our condolences to her husband Lionel and their children. Heather Williams and Cecily Tilley left the committee this year and I must thank them both; they filled the onerous jobs of Membership Secretary and Outings Organiser respectively, tasks they carried out with great efficiency. We have however, enlisted two new committee members, Nick Harding and Gavin Watson, and I know they will prove able replacements.

I hope that the Society will continue to thrive over the coming years and with the help of the committee - especially Joye Minshall, Secretary; Nick Downes, Treasurer; Peter Hutton, Membership Secretary and Patricia Theobald, Journal Editor - I know that it will. My earnest hope is that we can attract some younger members to carry the Society on through the next decade.

Nick Howell

This year's  
SWSHAS Exhibition at  
Bishop's Castle Michaelmas Fair  
in the Cadet Hall on  
**17 & 18 September 2011**  
will be  
**VALLEYS OF SPRINGS  
AND RIVERS – a portrait of  
life beside the  
East and West Onny**



**If you have any pictures or memories of this area please contact  
David & Janet Preshous at The Paddock, Lydham,  
SY9 5HB Tel: 01588 638 363**

# SWSHAS Events:

## September 2010 – June 2011.

**Sept. 2010:** The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual SWSHAS Exhibition, ‘Happy And Glorious’ – S.W. Shropshire in the Victorian and Edwardian Era’ at Bishop’s Castle Michaelmas Fair attracted 500 visitors over two days. The displays featured alterations in church architecture, developments in agriculture, education and transport, the impact of photography and celebrations such as jubilees and coronations.

**Oct. 2010:** The speaker was Michael Shaw, author of the recent comprehensive book, *The Lead, Copper and Barytes Mines of Shropshire*, who gave a brief general introduction to the mines and their importance and productivity. He concentrated on the lesser-known achievements of the Barytes mines – Shropshire was a very important source of barium compounds, especially at Huglith Mine.

**Nov. 2010:** At the **AGM** Maurice Young retired as Chairman, and Dr.N.C.B.Howell was elected in his place. Cecily Tilley and Heather Williams retired from the Committee and were thanked. Three short talks followed: Judith Payne on ‘**The African’s Grave**’ in Bishop’s Castle Churchyard, Ian Langford on ‘**The Sin-Eaters Grave**’ in Ratlinghope Churchyard; and Nick Howell and Graham Medlicott on the history of an **early formal garden discovered at Walcot Hall**.

**Dec. 2010: Chairman’s Evening.** Maurice Young, recently retired as Chairman, gave an illustrated talk on **Trinity Hospital, Clun**, founded in 1607 by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton. He outlined the main phases of its history up to the present day and described some of the more colourful almsmen.

**Jan. 2011:** Tony Crowe’s talk on ‘**Thomas Telford – Churches, Bridges, Canals and Roads in Shropshire**’ described, with a fine selection of slides, the life and many impressive engineering and architectural projects Telford had masterminded in and around Shropshire.

**Feb. 2011:** Nicholas Byrne, a National Trust volunteer guide, gave a most entertaining and informative talk about the 700-year history of **Chirk Castle** and described with style and humour the castle’s many extensions and changes of decoration, especially during the Gothick Revival. The Society looked forward to a visit there in June.

**March 2011:** A large audience enjoyed a lecture by Richard Rose on **'Napoleonic Prisoners of War, and Parole Towns'**, adding a great deal of information to the local research on parole prisoners from the parish registers and other local evidence. It appears there was a network of parole towns to which French officers were sent, and more than 50 may have been lodged in Bishop's Castle.

**April 2011:** Mrs. Sheila Train presented the **Christopher Train Memorial Shields** to Nicholas Harding for his essay on *'Cwm Iago and Green Farm'*, and the junior ones to Daniel Franklin (aged 14) for *'A History of Bishop's Castle'* and Emily Williams (aged 7) for *'Lower Down'*.

**The Eleventh Ritherdon Lecture** was given by archaeological consultant Richard K. Morris on the **Restoration of Hopton Castle**. The Hopton Castle Trust have succeeded in acquiring permission and funding to preserve the building (famous for the tragic massacre of the garrison in the Civil War) and a recent Time Team visit revealed many interesting domestic details.

**June 2011: The Society's Summer Outing to Chirk Castle and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.**

A heavy rain-storm on the outward journey to Chirk gave way to dry and bright conditions, enabling the group to enjoy both the guided tour of the castle (a fascinating conversion of a military building to domestic use) and a look round the lovely gardens. A short journey to Froncysyllte was followed by a two-hour boat trip on the Llangollen Canal, which included the crossing of Telford's amazing 1805 aqueduct and a gentle passage to Llangollen Wharf through woodland and hillside landscapes.

During March and April, SWSHAS members were involved in two exhibitions. The first was held in Lydham Village Hall **'Three Border Villages, Lydham, More and Snead'**. 250 people visited over two days and £1200 was raised for Lydham and the other churches. The second was **'Just Up Your Street'**, a free exhibition in the Public Hall. It was mounted in association with Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre House History Group. (see report below, Ed.)

*Both exhibitions were supported with funding by 'Sacred Spaces'.*

# Just Up Your Street: 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011



This 2-day event was organised by SWSHAS and Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre (BCHRC). The aim was to promote research on properties in Church Street and High Street Bishop's Castle by the House History Group at BCHRC.

The exhibition featured a display of photographic and textual information on every property in these two streets which has been acquired by the two organisations. A continuous slide show and a talk by David Preshous were presented on both days along with electronic information on the 1910 land tax for each property. High quality digital photography and copying of original documents demonstrated the technical capabilities

of the Resource Centre, and visitors were invited to bring more documents to BCHRC for digitisation.

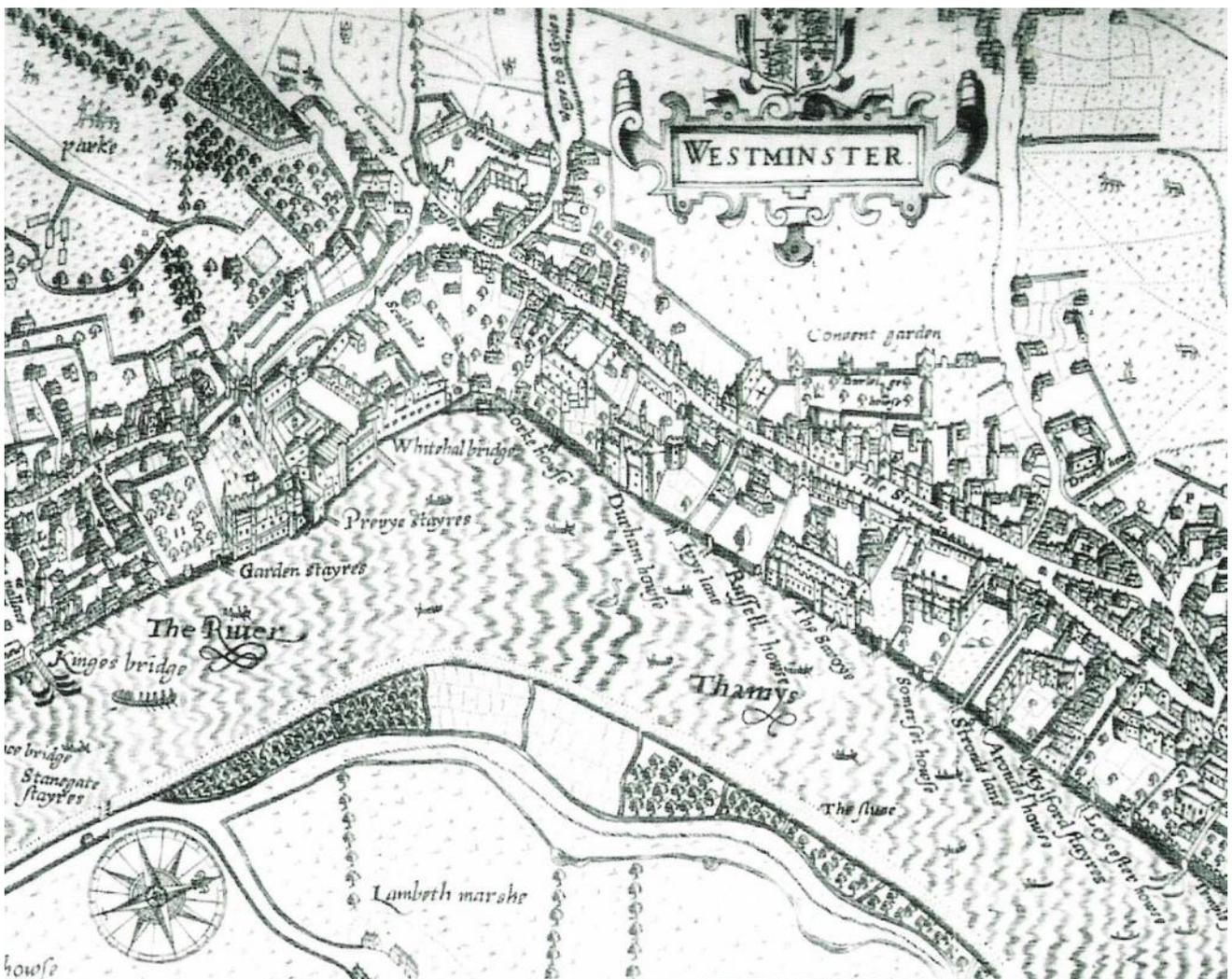
Over the two days more than 300 visitors came to the exhibition and many shared information, or learned new facts, about the history of their properties. There was a real 'buzz' in the air with visitors and volunteers discussing the history of Bishop's Castle. The event was further enhanced by excellent refreshments, a raffle and an opportunity to linger in the past. Thanks are due to the 30 volunteers who collected and assembled the material, set up the displays and demonstrations, stewarded the event and dismantled the displays at the end of the weekend. This event demonstrated the good working partnership between the two sponsoring organisations. Some follow-up events are being planned at BCHRC.

*Ed.*

# The First Members of Parliament for Bishop's Castle

## Introduction

Parliament in England is the highest legislative body consisting of the Sovereign, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The modern structure of the English governmental system was developed during the Tudor monarchy and the 'ideal' of government reached its peak during the reign of Elizabeth I. At that time the central organ of administration was the privy council, responsible only to the sovereign, whilst parliament enjoyed restricted activity, with limited influence over both the council and control over Parliamentary elections. Bishop's Castle received its royal charter from Queen Elizabeth I in 1573, when fifteen capital burgesses were created with privileges and local powers.



*Fig. 1 Westminster in 1593*

## The Start

On the 23 November 1584 two young men, Thomas Jukes and John Cole arrived in Westminster to take the oath in Saint Stephen's Chapel, enabling them to be Burgess members of the House of Commons, representing the Borough of Bishop's Castle. There were over four hundred other members signing on that day and the whole process had not been finished by the time they were all called to the Lords to listen to the Queen.

*But before such time as these four right honourable Personages, deputed by the Earl of Leicester as aforesaid, had administred the said Oath to all such of their fellow Members of the House of Commons as were present, although the greatest part of them had taken it, they had notice about two of the Clock in the Afternoon, that her Majesty, with divers of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, were then already set in the Upper House and there expected them; who thereupon all of them together repaired thither, and as many as conveniently could being let in,*

Journal of the House of Commons: 23 November 1584',

Even though it was all a bit of a scramble Thomas Jukes and John Cole must have been let into the House. As members of the House of Commons they were entitled to two shillings salary a day. Since the House sat from 23rd November to 21st December 1584 and then from 16th February to 27th March 1585, this was a total of seventy three days so they were due seven pounds three shillings each. This sum was due to be paid to them by the Borough of Bishop's Castle. From then onwards, Bishop's Castle had the right to send two men living within the Borough to represent the town in the House of Commons for the next two hundred and forty eight years.

Thomas Jukes and John Cole were both educated at Shrewsbury School. There is a date for Thomas Jukes at the school in 1562. The Jukes family was from Buttington. His father was Roger Jukes and his mother, Alice, was his father's second wife and daughter of Sir Thomas Leighton. John Cole's family came from Shrewsbury. His father was Robert Cole and his mother was a daughter of Evan Lloyd Vaughan. The one thing that connected them to Bishop's Castle was that they both married daughters of Richard and Margaret Sandford, then living at Plowden Hall. John Cole married Alice Sandford and Thomas Jukes married Dorothy Sandford. Their mother-in-law Margaret Sandford was a younger sister to Edmund Plowden.

## The Background

In 1573 Bishop's Castle was granted a Charter by Queen Elizabeth. The charter created fifteen capital burgesses who could vote for one among them to become bailiff. The Charter was granted on the 15 July 1573. This charter was to replace the charter granted by the Bishops of Hereford who had granted charters to Lydbury North and Bishop's Castle in 1249. The 1249 charter became void as Queen Elizabeth annexed the Bishop's lands in 1560. The first bailiff of Bishop's Castle was Robert Mason. The bailiff and the capital burgesses could instate ordinary burgesses who had the right to vote. Some boroughs made a charge for this; Shrewsbury made a charge of five pounds for the privilege. The burgesses of Bishop's Castle had certain privileges: they could make local bye-laws, retain any fines up to the value of ten pounds, hold fairs and markets, be responsible for correct weights and measures, to appoint a recorder, and hold courts every other Saturday. They could also use the roads free of tolls except those in the Capital. For these and other privileges they paid forty shillings a year on Saint Michael's day. They owed allegiance to the Court of the Council of the Marches of Wales and supported any other court of the Kingdom. However, nowhere in the 1573 Charter did it state that the Borough of Bishop's Castle had any right to send two burgess members to the House of Commons. Yet in 1584, the first time Parliament was summoned by the Queen, Bishop's Castle sent two men to become Members of Parliament.



PRESENTATION OF THE SPEAKER 1584

*Fig. 2. Presentation of the Speaker 1584*

The previous Parliament had sat between 1572 and 1581 in three different sessions. In 1571 there was a debate in the House of Commons on whether burgesses representing a borough in parliament should be resident in that borough. Thomas Norton presented a bill to Parliament to remove that restriction. A member from Hereford observed that it might enable patrons to more easily place their followers in Parliament. This did not deter the mass of the House still supporting the Bill. At this point an unnamed member spoke at great

length about liberty. All burgess members should be the representatives from their own area. Robert Bell proposed that should a nobleman represent a borough a penalty of forty pounds be levied on that borough. Francis Alford suggested that an age limit of being at least thirty years old should be enforced. Neither John Cole nor Thomas Jukes were burgesses of Bishop's Castle. Thomas was made a Burgess in 1586. There follows an extract from the House of Commons Journal:

*Mr Norton first made Explanation of the meaning of the Bill, to be (he said) to shame the imperfection of Choice, which is too often seen, by sending of unfit men; and lest happily any thing might be objected to the imperfection of the Parliament, which may seem to be scant sufficient by reason of the choice made by Boroughs, for the most part of Strangers (whereas by the positive Law no man ought to be Chosen Burgess for any Borough, but only Resiants and Inhabitants) He said further, that the choice should be of such as were able, and fit for so great a place and employment, without respect of priviledge of place or degree; for that, by reason of his being a Burgess, it might not be intended or thought he was any thing the wiser; withal he argued, that the whole Body of the Realm, and the good Service of the same, was rather to be respected, than the private regard of Place, Priviledge, or Degree of any Person.*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: April 1571'

Among the Burgesses of Bishop's Castle in 1584 were Edmund Plowden, Charles Walcott and Andrew Blunden. The Bailiff was Robert Mason who could have been related to the Robert Mason who served as Member of Parliament for Ludlow in 1559, 1571 and 1572.

**Edmund Plowden** was appointed one of the Council of the Marches (of Wales), upon the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary, In 1553, he was elected Member of Parliament for Wallingford (then in Berkshire now in Oxfordshire) followed, the next year, by the same office for both Reading, Berkshire and Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire. He lived mostly at Shiplake Court in Oxfordshire and Wokefield Park in Berkshire. The unusual breadth of his religious views were shown early in his career when he withdrew from the House, on 12 January 1555, because he disapproved of its proceedings.

**Charles Walcot** was a minor when he succeeded his father and his lands were held in the wardship of Sir Philip Sidney. He was made a capital burgess of Bishop's Castle when the borough received the Charter in 1573. He represented Bishop's Castle as a member of the House of Commons during the Parliaments of 1586 and 1589. **Andrew Blunden** was married to the daughter of Lewis Jones, one time Constable of Bishop's Castle, and a relative of the Sandfords. He was a fellow lawyer and great friend of Edmund Plowden. A letter in Shropshire Archives from Andrew Blunden extols the

virtues of Edmund Plowden and the high standing of the Plowden family. It is my conjecture that there was plenty of local knowledge of how Parliament worked which enabled John Cole and Thomas Jukes to be briefed about taking the oath in the House of Commons on 23 November 1584. There were over four hundred members taking the oath this day and three hundred were new to the House of Commons. From the records it can be seen that the Chief Clerk, Fulk Onslow, was not as efficient as he might have been:

*Upon a motion for reading of the Bill of Tythes, Mr Speaker shewed forth the Bill brought into the House in so many several pieces, some written on both sides of the paper and so sowed one upon another in the midst of some of the leaves that it cannot be read or known how to be read, or taken in the right places for the reading. Whereupon it was again to be better written, and ordered that every part thereof should be rightly placed by the Committees*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: February 1585'

*Here it seemeth Mr Fulk Onslow at this time Clerk of the House of Commons, intending to supply the residue of this said Speech and of other Arguments and Disputations had and passed in this matter, did leave a blank of near upon a side and a half; but whether through negligence or forgetfulness this (as divers other places) was never perfected.*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: 18 February 1585'

From these two extracts it does seem that the Clerk of the House was a little careless. With the great crush of members at the oath taking on the first day of the 1584 session and the possible tardiness of the Chief Clerk the two new members for Bishop's Castle were able to become members of the House of Commons without being subject of too much scrutiny. It is also possible that Edmund Plowden used his knowledge to coach the two candidates in what to expect and how to avoid undue attention. For much of the Tudor monarchy Catholics had been persecuted, imprisoned and executed. As a member of a Catholic family, Plowden would have been practised in the virtues of maintaining a low public profile in certain circumstances. However, there may also have been another agenda for the two representatives of Bishop's Castle, in view of the business to be brought before the House during the session, to monitor parliamentary reaction to Bills concerning Catholics, Jesuits and seminary priests.

The following are a few examples of the business discussed in the commons during this session. The first is about a certain Doctor Parry. He was a very ardent Catholic and in the debate against Jesuits and seminary priests he spoke out against the will of the House. On the 17th December, in this session of Parliament, much was made of Jesuits and seminary Priests and actions taken



Fig. 3. Members of Parliament in the Marches 1584. Each circle represents one member

against them. During the reading of the Bill Doctor Parry stood up and spoke against the Bill in very violent terms. He was summoned before the House and kneeling on his knees was committed to the sergeants ward. The next day he was brought back to the bar of the House and again kneeling on his knees did seek a pardon which was granted due to the intervention of Her Majesty the Queen. Dr. Parry did not mend his ways and on Tuesday 16th February he was in the Tower and on Tuesday 23rd February he was executed and below is an extract from the House of Commons Journal listing his crimes.

*That the said Parrey in the Year 1580. having been Pardoned by the Queen after a Capital offence committed by him, departed with Licence into France, where being reconciled to the Roman Church he travelled to Venice, and there having been diversly and severally instructed and encouraged by Benedict Pulmes a Jesuit, by Campegio the Popes Nuntio there; and lastly again afterwards at Paris in France, by one Morgan an Agent of the Queen of Scots; here upon the Encouragement of Cardinal Como and the Pope himself, he returned into England with a mind full of Treason and Disloyalty, with divers other things in the like purpose, which are at large set down in Annal. Regin. Eliz. Conscript. d Guiliel. Cambden Edit. Latine Lugd. Bat. Anno Domini 1625. d pag. 391. ad pag. 395*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: 24 February 1585'.

Also in this session was a Bill for the 'better and more reverent observing of the Sabbath day'; one of the sponsors of the Bill was Francis Drake. This Bill took up a lot of time and it was not until the following March that a much altered Bill was passed. A private members Bill also going through Parliament this session included one to allow Walter Raleigh land in Virginia in North America. At the beginning of this Parliament a stranger was discovered in the Palace. Because the members were disturbed by his presence he was apprehended.

*One being no Member of this House, being found to have sit here this present day by the space of two hours, during the whole time of the Speeches delivered by Mr Chancellor and Mr Vicechamberlain, as aforesaid, did upon Examination confess his name to be Richard Robinson, and that he was by occupation a Skinner, and dwelt at the Harts Horns in Gracious-Street London, the house of one Mark Fryer a Skinner also his Father-in-law: Whereupon himself having been stripped to his shirt, and his pockets all searched, the Custody and further Examination of him was by this House referred to Mr Recorder of London, Mr Topclisse, Mr Beale, and another.*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: Saturday 28 November 1584'.

*On Monday the 30th day of November Mr Recorder of London shewed to the House, that he and Mr Topclisse had taken the Examination of Richard Robinson found to be sitting there on Saturday last, although he were no Member of it, the taking whereof had been then also referred unto them, and thereupon he delivered the same in writing; which having been read by the Clerk of the Parliament, the said Robinson was brought to the Bar, and was there censured by the House, having taken the Oath (as it should seem of Allegiance and Supremacy) to suffer Imprisonment in the Serjeants Ward until Saturday next, and then having swore to keep secret what he had heard, to be released without further moving the House. Vide touching this business in fine diei praecedentis.*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: Monday 30 November 1584'.

This narrative shows a little of why those burgesses of Bishop's Castle, who were of Roman Catholic persuasion, had such an interest of the business of Parliament. Since Edmund Plowden died in London on the 6 February 1585, it is likely he was in London during this Parliamentary session. The session ended with the following proclamation extracted from Sir Simon d'Elwes Journal:

*Her Majesty with divers of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal being set in the Upper House about ..... of the Clock this Afternoon; the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons had notice thereof, and thereupon repaired thither with John Puckering Serjeant at Law their Speaker, who being placed at the Rail or Bar at the lower end of the said Upper House, did according to the usual form humbly crave her Majesties most Royal Assent to such good Laws as had passed the two Houses. Whereupon her Majesty having by her Assent given Life to thirty publick Acts and nineteen private, the Parliament was Prorogued unto the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May next ensuing, and at last after five other Prorogations it was Dissolved upon Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> day of September Anno 28 Regin Eliz Anno Domini 1586.*

From: 'Journal of the House of Commons: 29 March 1584'

My suggestion is that the Burgesses of Bishop's Castle, with the guidance of Edmund Plowden, wished to know the feelings of Parliament especially as regards the future treatment of Roman Catholics and could only do this by having members inside the House of Commons. I have found no record of either Cole or Jukes speaking in the House or putting their names to any Bill. Edmund Plowden was in London during the parliamentary session and could have advised the Bishop's Castle representatives before he died there on 6 February 1585. John Cole and Thomas Jukes were never again members of parliament for Bishop's Castle after that session.

In subsequent years John Cole appeared to fall on hard times. A letter exists written to Humpfrey Sandford dated 11 May 1610 'On this day we had your friend John Cole committed to Fleet prison on commiseration of rebellion'. His imprisonment was stayed to allow him to compound for his contempts. He died on 28 January 1615.

Thomas Jukes fared much better. He was High Sheriff for Montgomeryshire in 1580. He was a Member of Parliament for the Borough of Montgomery 1597-1598 and became Chief Steward of the Lordship of Powis to William Earl of Pembroke. Jukes was also Lord of the Manor of Ratlinghope when he asked Queen Elizabeth permission to sell it in 1590. He died in 1603.

As a consequence of Cole and Jukes entering parliament as members of the House, Bishop's Castle assumed the right to send two members of Parliament to Westminster until the Reform Act of 1832. Over these years the burgesses who had the vote did not always exercise honesty in furthering their responsibilities. The following is an explanation of how Bishop's Castle acquired two Members of Parliament:

*Our account of Bishop's Castle's earliest parliamentary representation says that 'The royal charter granted in 1574 named a bailiff and 14 head burgesses, among them Edmund Plowden, Charles Walcot, Matthew Lloyd and Plowden's kinsman Andrew Blunden. The head burgesses were given power to chose a recorder, town clerk and minor officials. No mention was made in the charter of the right to send burgesses to Parliament, though this it did on the first possible occasion after the grant of the charter, no doubt through the influence of Plowden and Walcot, who had their principal seats close to the borough and a friend at court in Sir Henry Sidney. The first MPs were not challenged by the House. The electorate consisted of the bailiffs, head burgesses and resident burgesses - about 40 in number. The 'foreign' or non-resident burgesses were excluded from elections. One of the first Members, Thomas Jukes, was sworn a burgess of the town nine months after his election to Parliament'.*

Paul Seaward, Director, History of Parliament.

## Conclusion

That Cole and Jukes were enrolled as members of the House of Commons was illegal, especially since they were not elected and sworn burgesses of Bishop's Castle. There does not appear to be provision in the Elizabethan Charter for representation in Parliament and this would have been understood by the Bailiff and capital burgesses. Plowden and others would have knowledge of the conventions of the House of Commons. The subterfuge involved indicates that two non-elected burgesses were deliberately sent to represent Bishop's Castle in London for the dual purpose of gaining first hand information regarding the political status of Catholics and to ensure that Bishop's Castle would set a precedent for its future representation in the House of Commons.

Peter Hutton

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. Roger Plowden for correcting the Cole and Jukes lineage.

## Sources

The information in this article has come from the following:

Sir Simons d'Elwes Journals of the Houses of Parliament [first published in 1682 and available on the web site <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43704>.

[The first hand reports of this period were destroyed in the fire of Parliament on 16 October 1834.]

*The Visitation of Shropshire* (published by the Harleian Society, vol. xxviii), pp. 126-7, 433.

Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society (series 2), vol. x; H Owen and J. Blakeway, Shrewsbury, ii, 467, 469, 471 (all for Cole);

Montgomery Collections, iv, 392-6, xlviii. 213.

Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society (series 2) X, 35-6 (for Jukes).

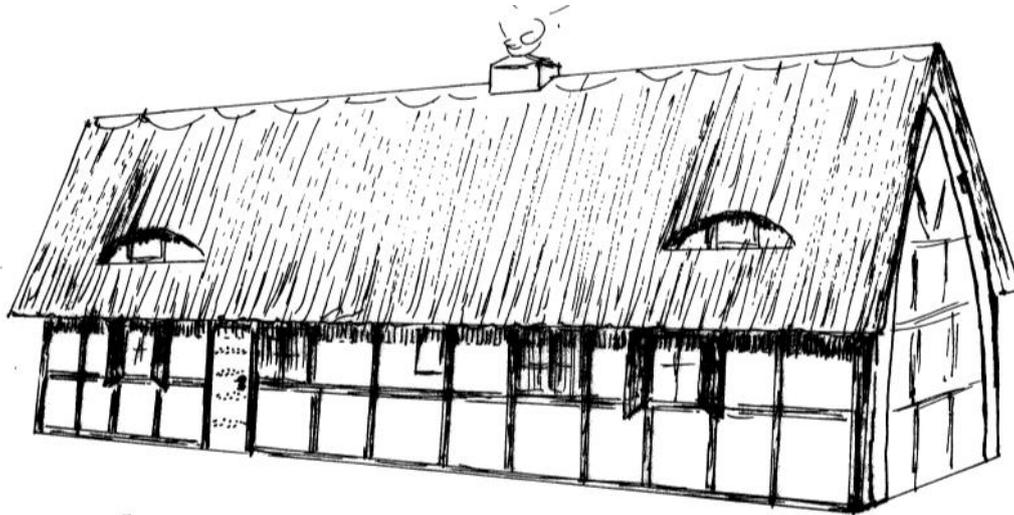
*Further references may be obtained from the Author*

# 8-10, Church Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire

SO 324885

In Bishop's Castle the High Street and Church Street form a continuous thoroughfare leading from the castle at the top of the hill to the parish church at the foot. As such it is an archetypal planned town of the middle ages, this example being laid out by the Bishop of Hereford in the parish of Lydbury North in the late 12th century. <sup>1</sup>

8-10 Church Street is sited on the eastern side of the street, not far from the church itself. It is a timber-framed property, originally one house but at some time divided into two cottages, now, happily, restored to a single dwelling. Basically the house is cruck-built and had an open hall of two bays, flanked by a storied service bay to the north and, presumably, a storied solar bay to the south. At present, the solar bay and the upper bay of the hall appear to be a replacement in box-framing, perhaps following the Civil War of the 17th century, when Bishop's Castle and Clun reputedly had over 1,000 men in arms and the church suffered great damage.<sup>2</sup>



## **Reconstruction of original (part conjectural)**

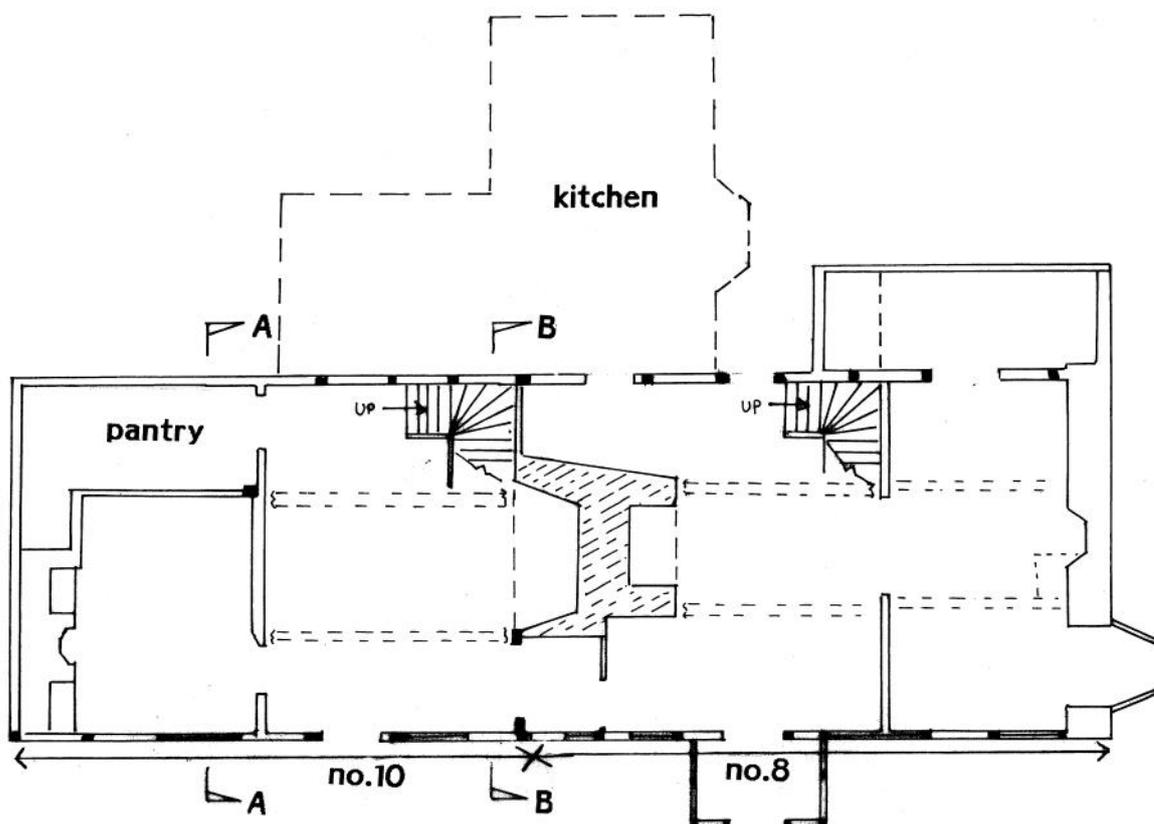
Viewed from Church Street, the house presents a square-framed block of one-and-a-half storeys, four-bayed and with a single-storied porch to the door of no. 8, now the main entrance door. There are three brick chimney-stacks, one at either end and one centrally placed. Four dormer windows, each of the gabled variety, penetrate the roof and are evenly spaced. The main roof and those of the dormers are covered with Welsh slates, and the windows have distinctive iron framing which probably came from one of the Coalbrookdale factories. Similar ones are known in the area.



**WEST ELEVATION**

While much of the square framing is actually painted on, that on no. 8 seems to be genuine 17th century work, probably dating from when that end of the building was replaced.

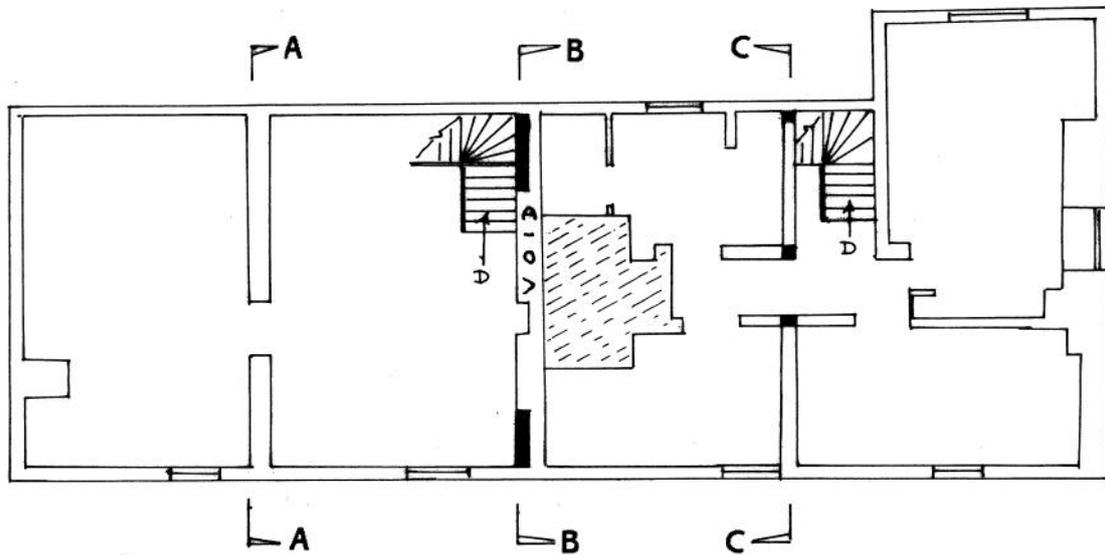
No crucks are visible from the outside, but internally three cruck trusses remain, that with the most remaining evidence, fortunately, being the open central truss of the two-bay hall.



**GROUND PLAN**

## The Plan

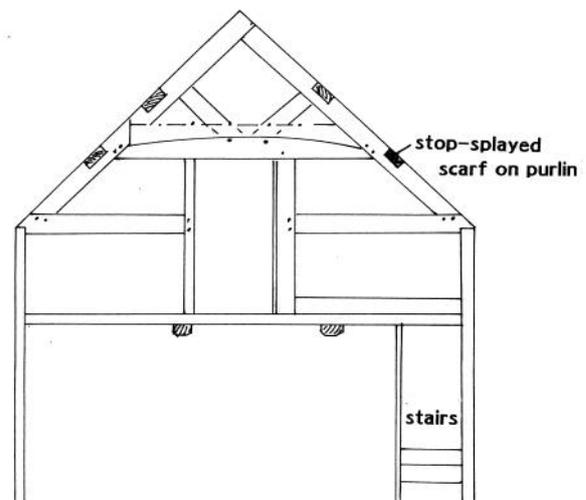
The three-part medieval lay-out is depicted in the ground-floor plan. There is no evidence of a spere-truss or of a cross-passage, and it is assumed, therefore, that entrance was directly into the lower bay of the hall, as was sometimes the case. It would seem that the doorway into no. 10, which is no longer in use, perpetuates the original entrance. Access is currently into no. 8 from the added porch. As mentioned above, the two bays at the southern end probably represent a 17th century rebuilding of the upper bay of the hall and of the solar bay, but seemingly the overall length of the house is preserved. A modern extension to the east has been added to the end bay which also has an added canted bay window to the ground floor.



1st FLOOR PLAN

The first-floor plan is probably a truer reflection of the bay disposition, section C - C now having nothing to show at ground-floor level.

An inserted chimney-stack against the central truss of the hall takes up a great deal of room in the house. The main fireplace is described below.

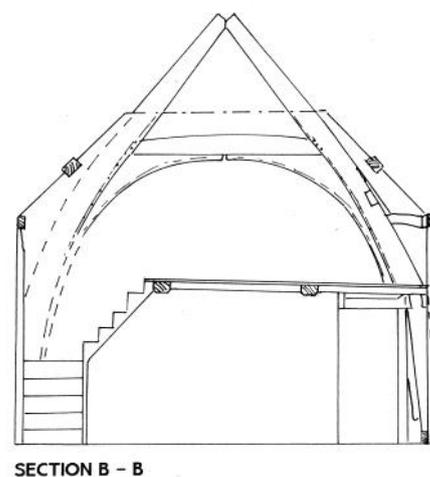


SECTION C - C

## The Central Truss

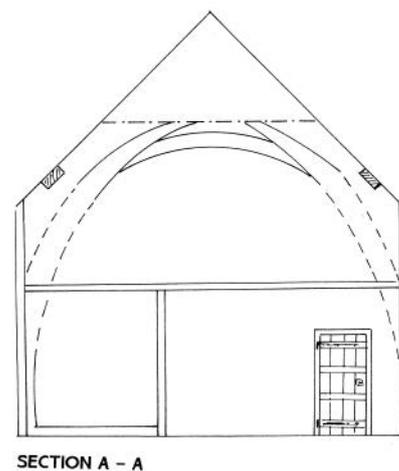
As shown on section B - B the central truss of the hall is virtually intact. At one time it was used as the division between nos. 8 and 10, and this accounts for the void space shown on the first-floor plan, but the truss is being gradually uncovered to show its features. The void is now accessible in parts and from there it can be seen that the crucks are 7ins. (0.18m.) thick and are chamfered on either side. They have a type B apex, the blades meeting on a straight line before dividing to house the ridge purlin.<sup>3</sup> There is a cambered collar-beam and this has chamfered arch-braces which swing low, seeming to pass the level of the original wall-plate, but unfortunately it is not possible to see where they joined the crucks as all evidence on the eastern side has gone and that on the western side is largely obscured by later timbering. If the line of the arch-brace on the western side is followed, it would seem to join the cruck almost at ground level. This cannot be the case, and so its level is, at present, conjectural. The blade continues to the base where it is tenoned into the sill-beam. The whole truss is smoke-blackened, indicating that an open hearth was located in the vicinity.

The style and quality of the central truss suggest that, when built, this was a house of quality. There was no unnecessary decoration or superfluous bracing, but good, basic carpentry throughout.



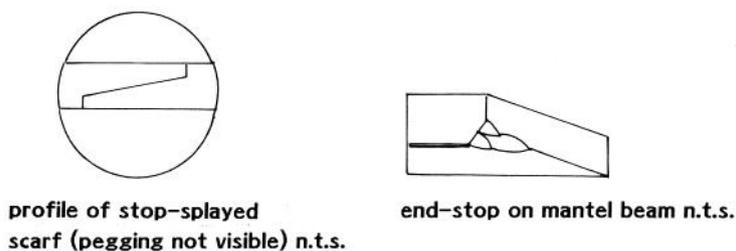
## The Other Trusses

Including the central truss (above), there are three cruck trusses and one box-framed truss. The northern end truss is of cruck but is only partially visible from the upper room. The next one along is drawn out as section A - A, and this has a little more evidence showing. It seems to represent the lower end wall of the hall but, as mentioned above, there is no evidence that it functioned as a sere-truss and no defined cross-passage is present. It has a cambered collar-beam, but most of the features are obscured.



Section C - C, as drawn out, is box-framed and is clearly of a later date than the cruck trusses. It is suggested that it represents the re-building of the solar end of the house, probably following damage during the Civil War. Above the inserted ceiling there are V-struts which appear to be older than some of the timbers of

the truss, although two rather elusive peg-holes on the collar-beam below indicate where the connection was probably made. This truss functions as the division between the upper end of the hall and what would have been the solar bay, and the purlin on the eastern side has an interesting scarf joint on the division. Known as a stop-splayed scarf joint, it has its origins in medieval times, although it is still used when renovating historic buildings today.<sup>4</sup> It has many variations, but, in this example, it cannot be seen how it is pegged together.



### The Hall Fireplace

In many Shropshire houses when the time came to abandon the open hearth and install a chimneystack to draw the smoke, the fireplace perpetuated the site of the open hearth, and this seems to have been the case in no. 10, Church Street. The fireplace still contains a brick hearth, backed by a fireback, and with a hood and fire-dogs. A built-in bread oven, now disused, is fitted into one side of the fireplace. The mantel-beam has many marks, but none of them of historic significance. However, the beam is chamfered and is stopped at either end in a purposeful way, combining a lamb's tongue stop with two triangles as shown on the drawings. There is a similar, though more elaborate, stop at Hall Farm, Loxley, Warwickshire, located at about four miles south-east of Stratford-on-Avon.

### The Roof

At some time the roof-line of the property has been raised. It is possible that the aperture shown below the lower inserted floor on the eastern side of Section B - B housed the original wall-plate on which the feet of the rafters would rest. The apex is still visible where the crucks meet on the same section. The present apex is somewhat higher and the angle is changed, enabling the outer walls to be raised and thus obtain a floored hall.

In the roof space, although the box-framed truss shown in Section C - C is drawn out as seen, there is another single roof frame to the north of it which has no connecting truss lower down. It is thought that this must relate to the refurbishment of the 17th century and put in to strengthen the roof.

No windbraces, the braces which tie the principal rafters or crucks to the purlins, were found. Some of the present purlins are replacements, but there is some evidence on the central truss that windbraces did exist. The felling date was obtained from an original smoke-blackened purlin in no. 10.

### **Dating**

In January 2011 dendrochronological sampling and analysis was carried out at 8-10, Church Street and the felling date of 1507 was obtained. This is towards the end of the date-range for Shropshire crucks, the latest known one being 1551-2 (Manor Cottage, Prees). Most of the crucks in Shropshire date from the 15th century so, perhaps in the 1507 example which still has the full medieval plan, the theory that Bishop's Castle was something of a back-water, unwilling to embrace forward thinking, is borne out. But this is precisely what gives the town charm and interest to modern historians.

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank the owners of the house, Nigel and Michelle Gaspar, for their kindness in allowing protracted visits and for their hospitality, friendship and co-operation. Tony and Patricia Theobald helped with the measuring and Patricia undertook the historical research. Jean North and Maude Gould also measured and Jean did the presentation measured drawings and the conjectural original appearance. Dr. Daniel Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory carried out the dendrochronology and Henry Hand also helped with the final assessment.

Madge Moran

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## **GLOSSARY** (Editor)

*Arch brace:* a curving, upright timber brace used in roof construction, found in pairs, forming an arch.

*Box-framed truss:* a complete cross-frame from ground level to ridge in a box-framed building.

*Collar beam* a transverse timber connecting rafters or cruck blades at a point below the apex and above the tie beam.

*Cross-passage:* entry and exit through opposed doorways and with a wall or partition on the hall side, sometimes 'through passage'.

*Cruck:* a pair of inclined timbers, usually wrought from a single tree, forming an arch. The roof is supported on the back of the cruck blades and the walls are independent.

*Lamb's tongue stop:* the stops worked on the end of chamfered beams resembling a lamb's tongue; also called cyma, ogee, or scroll.

*Purlin:* a lateral roof timber supporting the rafters; there are many types.

*Sill-beam:* a horizontal timber positioned at the bottom of a framed wall into which posts and studs are tenoned.

*Solar:* a first-floor chamber, often serving as a parlour, bedchamber or private room, in a medieval house. Also a loft, rood-loft or garret.

*Spere-truss:* a screen, with a wide central opening, or multiple narrower openings, spanning the lower end of a medieval hall, screening the cross entry and defining the screen, or cross passage.

*Wall-plate:* the horizontal timber at the wall head to which the roof trusses and rafters are fixed.

*Windbrace:* a diagonal or arched member placed across rafters to stiffen and support a roof structure.

# Some Social History connected with 8-10 Church Street, Bishop's Castle

## Introduction

Bishop's Castle was a planned mediaeval town which grew up under the lordship of the Bishops of Hereford until the mid-sixteenth century. The property concerned, with its timber-felling date of 1507, was constructed on a plot of land at the bottom of the town near to the church during the bishopric of Richard Mayew [1]. The building and its inhabitants would have formed part of a community already accustomed to markets, fairs and other activities from the thirteenth century. But seven more bishops were lords of the manor before the town passed to the Crown, in 1559, when John Scory was Bishop of Hereford [2]. A royal charter, granted in 1573 by Queen Elizabeth I, incorporated the town as a borough but the fair and market remained in the ownership of the lord of the manor. The formal activity of the borough was recorded from 1561 [3]. From circa 1609 until 1671 the lordship of Bishop's Castle was bound up with the Earls of Northampton and other members of the Howard family [4]. It was during this period that the Bishop's Castle market hall was built in 1618 [5], on the steep slopes of the main thoroughfare, at the top of the town with the church situated at the bottom. Before the use of clocks became widespread church bells provided a means of telling the time. The inhabitants of our building would have heard the several *'Bysop Castel'* church bells ringing during the sixteenth century; notably the Town Bell, which belonged to the Corporation and was rung daily at 4 a.m. and 7 p.m. for fifteen minutes [6]. When the new town hall was built in the 1760s, the town of Bishop's Castle acquired a new clock tower and a dynasty of clock makers regularly to maintain the timepiece.



*Fig. 1. 8-10 Church Street in 2011*

## Civil War

During the Civil War Bishop's Castle appeared to have neutral inclinations, perhaps because its two parliamentary representatives were on opposing sides; Sir Robert Howard was a Royalist and Robert More supported the Parliamentarians. The town also found itself in the middle of the warring factions based at Shrewsbury and Ludlow. In 1642 the Corporation ordered that '*all householders shall at their own cost provide a good and sufficient weapon for the safeguard of their own person*' [7]. However, the summoning of all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60, together with horses and weapons was met with a poor response. Whilst the town was largely unaffected by the war, the activity of the local 'clubmen' - a body of men and women concerned to defend their property from both sides - having grievances with the local royalist garrisons led them to be considered as Parliamentary sympathisers.

In March 1644 the Corporation ordered that '*all inhabitants of the town upon hearing of a musket or other public notice, shall repair to the aid of any particular house or village with their best arms, for the defence of the same from plundering or any other violent or wilful breach of His Majesty's peace*' [8]. Yet the normal life of the town continued despite the war. In the summer of the same year, after heavy rain, our householder, together with all other inhabitants, was required to contribute £5 for the repair of the Church Bridge and the Town Conduit. However, by 1645 all inhabitants over the age of eleven were ordered to form a night guard to watch for looting soldiers. It was on the 25th August that a battle took place, about a mile from the town, at the foot of the present day Stank Lane. The Royalists were defeated and some of the townsfolk apparently assisted the Parliamentary forces. Because of this defeat, the Royalist commander Sir William Vaughan caused part of the town, including the church, to be burned. Our building, with its exposed position at the bottom of the town, would almost certainly have been damaged during the fighting and its inhabitants in fear for their lives. It would have taken the town several years to repair or rebuild properties. Repairs to the church during this period are recorded on a painted panel, dated 1720, which is housed in the ringing chamber: '*This church being burned in y civil war Walt Waring Esq of Owlbury gave y timber y rebuilt it & the rest of the charge, was defray'd, by contributions, of the parishioners.*'

## Hearth Tax

A national Hearth Tax was introduced in 1662 during the reign of Charles II. The tax imposed a levy of two shillings *per annum* for each hearth, payable at Michaelmas and Lady-day. From the surviving Shropshire Hearth Tax Roll of 1672 [9], the qualifying hearths of Bishop's Castle are revealed together with each householder's name. The number of hearths listed range from 1 to 10, with 1, 2 and 3 being the most frequently recorded and showing only one example each of 5,6,7,9 and 10 hearths. Our building has two hearths, but whether it was divided into two properties at this date is currently uncertain. There are seventeen

householders (14 male and 3 female) with two hearths, each paying four shillings in tax. Those with one hearth total twenty-two of which 18 are male and 4 are female. It is possible that the householder of our property is amongst the thirty-nine names listed. This tax was abolished in 1689 and replaced by the window tax.

## Window Tax

A national window tax was introduced in 1696 and finally abolished in 1851. One assessment for Bishop's Castle Borough, dated 1735, has survived. This tax was collected by Samuel Griffiths and John Tanner. *'Barges of B'pps Castle in the County of Salop' 'An assessment made on houses and Lights for this said Town and Burg for the year 1735' Ratifyd and Confirmed by us two of his Majesty's Justices of the board for this Town and Burg aforesaid. John Bright.'* [10] There are 89 names of which nine are female and, whilst the first three names recorded paid £1.00 each, most householders paid two shillings.

Windows are the most vulnerable part of any building and at first glance 8-10 Church Street appears to have fenestration which has been in place for centuries. Pevsner describes our dwelling as *'two-storeyed, timber-framed, lying a little back and completely villagey'* [11]. He makes no comment on the windows. Cast iron was an ideal material for use in the complex production of revivalist and romantic style cottage lights and there are surprisingly innovative local variations across the country [12]. The metal window frames of our property have a lozenge pattern which is repeated on each floor of the front elevation; these may have been produced in Coalbrookdale at the end of the eighteenth century. Comparison of a photograph of the front elevation, taken perhaps in the early years of the twentieth century, with one taken in 2010 revealed two windows without ornamentation in the earlier image which now have matching lights (see figs. 1 and 6.) One speculation suggests that these window frames were removed when an extension was built and then reinstated at a later date. Such decorative window frames are unusual in Bishop's Castle and across the street at the Old Brick Guest House, the restrained metal window frames are more representative of this town. One cottage, on the edge of the town on the Woodbatch lane, does have some ornate metal windows but these have a different pattern. The nearby Welsh town of Montgomery also has examples of decorative metal windows, but again with little resemblance to our building. In Worcestershire, the Vernon Arms at Woolmere Green has very similar ornate windows in part of its reputedly C17th coaching inn. Whilst in



Fig.2. Windows of cottages at Leighton



*Fig. 3. Windows of the Feathers Hotel,  
Ludlow*

Shropshire at the village of Leighton, near to Ironbridge, there is a pair of cottages with windows which share some similarities with our Bishop's Castle property. However, in Ludlow, at the Feathers Hotel, all of the windows in the front elevation have ornate metal frames which may be favourably compared with the design of those of 8-10 Church Street Bishop's Castle. But the two buildings are of a different social status.

From the time when the Bishops of Hereford were lords of the manor of Bishop's Castle, properties in the town would have been part of large estates.

In the eighteenth century political influence could be acquired through the sale and purchase of land. Robert Clive was one such aspiring local landowner and politician whose expenditure on the purchase of some small local properties in 1769 alone exceeded £30,000 [13]. Archdeacon Plymley's Visitation to Bishop's Castle in 1793 [14] records 191 houses in the town. In this survey Lord Clive's property interest in the parish (including the borough) was estimated at £700 a year. From this period the borough was dominated by the Clives. By 1809 Clive's descendant, the Earl of Powis, had commissioned a survey of his property in the town of Bishop's Castle [15]. On the original plan our property is marked clearly in pink and

labelled d2 (see Fig. 4, arrowed), denoting ownership by the Earl of Powis. For the first time a tenant or occupier is named in the survey Particular accompanying the plan - John Sayce [16].



*Fig. 4: Part of  
Town Plan 1809*

Church seating plans frequently include named houses and occupants. However, the Bishop's Castle church seating plan of 1809 [17] lists neither our property or John Sayce. Similarly in 1848, a large sale in the town did not include the Church Street building because it was not for sale [18]. However, the plot and buildings are clearly defined on the second edition of the 1901 Ordnance Survey map of the area [19].

### **The Nineteenth Century Census**

A population census of England and Wales has been taken every decade since the early nineteenth century. There are, however, difficulties in positive repopulation of our property before 1891 when the occupant of No. 8 Church Street East is established as 48 year old Robert Weaver, a wheelwright with a wife and children; this locally born family was captured in the photograph mentioned above. He can also be located on the 1871 census at a different address and on the west side of Church Street, but in 1881 there is no trace of him in Church Street. Interestingly, by 1901 he can be found living with his family at the top of the town between Old Bank House and the Castle Hotel. However, he was listed as a wheelwright at Bishop's Castle in Kelly's Directory from 1895 until 1913.

Meanwhile, in 1901 the occupants of 8 Church Street are Richard Owen a 42-year old policeman and his wife Mary aged 45 years. 10 Church Street is occupied by a 72-year old blacksmith and farrier called William Robinson and his unmarried daughter Elizabeth, who at 55 years of age is employed as a dressmaker.

### **Land Tax**

Land tax was a national tax on the value of land which began in the late 17th century and continued into the twentieth century. A new land tax was introduced in 1910 by the government in response to the need for extra revenue to combat overcrowding and poverty. This resulted in an Edwardian land survey known informally as the 'Little Domesday.' At this point our property and its inhabitants can at last be captured. The dimensions of these cottages were combined to record the following measurements for the buildings alone: frontage 60 feet; depth 18 feet; height 16 feet and cubic content 17,280 feet. The dimensions for the workshop behind number 10 were given as: frontage 48 feet, depth 18 feet, height 14 feet with a cubic content of 12,096 square feet. The workshop may have been photographed around the time of the survey.

### **Rates and Electoral Registers**

From the mid-Victorian period onwards in England and Wales the revenue required to support the poor and maintain district amenities was recorded in the local authority rate books. Owners and occupiers were assessed for rates proportional to the valuation of the property. Searching for Robert Weaver in the



*Fig. 5. Photograph of Weaver family, circa. 1910*

surviving Bishop's Castle rate books between 1886 and 1918 [20] produced nine entries with his name as occupier of a house in Church Street. Interestingly, it was possible in some years to locate the building by the size of the plot together with names of adjacent occupiers or owners.

Electoral registers for Bishop's Castle have survived from 1846 and list those owners and occupants eligible for voting in parliamentary and local elections. However, this source provided varying information on our property. For the early years, 1846-1887, those premises in Church Street described as houses, with gardens etc., were isolated. The numbers rose from five in 1846 to fifty five in 1885/1887 period, which works out at about twenty properties per year, but it was not possible to pinpoint accurately the two dwellings during the period. Fortunately, in 1914 Robert Weaver, occupier, is found at number 8 Church Street whilst Thomas James lives at number 10. Benjamin Bowen is the landlord, who lives 'next



*Fig. 6. Photograph of front elevation of 8 Church Street, circa 1910.*

door' at The Limes. From this point it is possible to repopulate these two dwellings.

### Table of Occupants: 8 - 10 Church Street

Year	Address	Name
1914	8 Church Street	Robert Weaver
1914	10 Church Street	Thomas James
1918 - 1919	8 Church Street	Stephen Davies and Ada Davies
1920 - 1921	8 Church Street	Charlie Bason and Mary Bason
1920 - 1921	10 Church Street	Wm. Haynes and Mary Haynes
1924	8 Church Street	Charlie, Mary and Frank Bason
1924	10 Church Street	John Powell and Martha Powell
1925	10 Church Street	John and Martha Powell & Samuel Haynes
1926	8 Church Street	Evan Price
1926	10 Church Street	Robert Owen John and Martha Powell
1927	10 Church Street	Samuel Haynes Robert Owen John and Martha Powell Edward Powell
1927	8 Church Street	Evan Price and George Reynolds
1928	8 Church Street	Evan Price and James Bradley
1928	10 Church Street	Robert Owen, John and Martha Powell, Edward Powell
1929-1930	8 Church Street	Evan Price, Sarah Price, James and Caroline Bradeley
1930-1939	10 Church Street	John and Martha Powell, Edward Powell
1932- 1935	8 Church Street	James and Caroline Bradeley with Jane Bradeley in 1934 and 1935
1945	10 Church Street	John and Martha Powell, Samuel Haynes
1945- 1956	White Gates (8/10 Church St)	Kathleen Bowen & Eveline Bowen
1957 - 1962	10 Church Street	Mary Malthouse
1964	10 Church Street	William and Olive Davies
1964	White Gates	Evelyn and Kathleen Bowen

Using the occupation table for 8-10 Church Street, compiled from electoral registers 1914 to 1964 [21], it was possible to trace some continuity of residence and qualification to vote in national and local elections, although there is no consistent representation for either property. Throughout the period there is evidence of married couples living in both the properties for a number of consecutive years. There is also substantial evidence of single occupiers, which may indicate that part of the property was let as rooms.

Benjamin Bowen owned properties in Bishop's Castle from the end of the nineteenth century until 1935, when his executors offered part of his estate for sale. Number 8 Church Street consisted of a sitting room, kitchen, scullery,

washhouse and w.c., 2 pantries, with 2 bedrooms over , coal house, main water and drainage with good gardens, at a tenancy of £13 per annum plus rates. Number 10 had similar, but smaller accommodation at £10.00 per annum plus rates. Our property is still remembered as ‘White Gates’ by some inhabitants of the town. The Misses Bowen - Eveline and Kathleen - lived there during the period after the Second World War and were recorded on the electoral roll intermittently at this address until at least 1964. The County School of Cookery occupied 26 Church Street (Harp House) from 1918 and lessons were still provided there in the 1940s by Kathleen Bowen. *‘The older Miss Bowen [Eveline] would not let you in [to White Gates]. She would fetch Kathy or you had to wait outside til she came.’....‘They both had quiet gentle voices....‘Cookery classes at the primary school once a week...By the 1960s the adjacent property, The Limes, was in use as a nursing home.’* In the twenty-first century our property, 8-10 Church Street, is no longer known as ‘White Gates’ and has returned to being one residence as it was when first built in the early sixteenth century.

Patricia Theobald

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Joanna Heathorn for confirming the census entries for the Weaver family, Janet Preshous for loaning photograph copies of the Weaver family at 8-10 Church Street, and Graham Walden for providing the 1910 Land Survey information for these properties.

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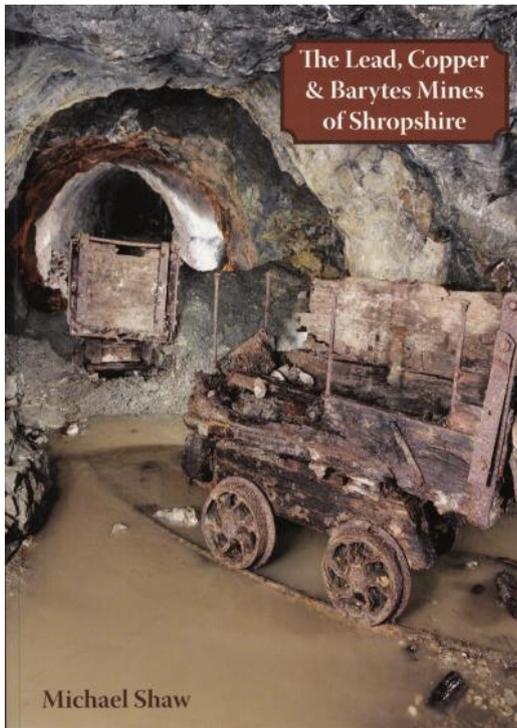
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# Book Reviews

## Hope and Optimism

*Michael Shaw: The Lead, Copper & Barytes Mines of Shropshire. Logaston Press, Herefordshire, 2009. 310pp, fully illustrated. £12.95. ISBN 978 1906663 09 4*



*May Trade and Commerce firmly stand,  
And Bromlow Works have full Demand;  
May each Advent'rer in this Concern  
Find ten-fold Profits in return:  
Then, at our Meetings, loud we'll sing,  
Long Life and Health to George our King.*

It is very doubtful that the Bromlow Mine, in the hills to the West of the Hope Valley, gave its optimistic promoters much cause for singing. It yielded lead ore in the mid-eighteenth century, but the cost-book company, which heralded its meetings by circulating this regrettable doggerel, struggled from 1801 until about 1815 without recording any worth-while return.

An attempt to revive it in 1845 failed to raise enough capital to re-start operations. A handful of Shropshire mines were successful: four or five pigs (cast blocks) of lead inscribed IMP.HADRIANI.AVG have been found in the county, attesting to Roman workings, and in the eleventh century a mine at Carreghofa, near Llanynymech, contributed silver to Richard Lionheart's ransom. In the 1880s the county's share of national lead production rose to 12%, over half of which came from rich deposits at Snailbeach.

Such flashes of success encouraged adventurers to seek their fortune from Shropshire's metal ores, and the observant eye can today still see the scratchings and pock marks scarring the ice-smoothed slopes of our hills. Too many, however, were merely holes in the ground into which optimists poured money, and in which poor men sometimes died. Nevertheless, mining had broader effects on the people, the buildings, the economy, and even the language of the county. In 1653 the Mores of Linley brought miners from Derbyshire to work mines on their estate and the nineteenth century saw a significant influx of Cornishmen. Miners' "squatter" cottages have shaped the character of many of the smaller villages of South Shropshire, and though most of them have been rebuilt and enlarged beyond the imagining of the men who built them, a very few

survive in original form. Women and children, too, did filthy back-breaking work on the surface, “dressing” the ore their menfolk had dug.

Michael Shaw’s book offers a comprehensive overview of Shropshire metal mining, from Bronze Age times to the last one-man-and-a-wheelbarrow operation of the 1960s. He discusses the nature and uses of the metals, explains the processes of separating and converting the earthy ore, and provides a thorough glossary of mining terms. His gazetteer is invaluable, and his accounts of each site range from full histories and descriptions of the major standing remains at places like Snailbeach, Stiperstones, Shelve and the Hope Valley, to brief indications of trial diggings wherever they occur. He puts this activity in its social and historical context, and supports the story with full references to the written sources. The photographs of then and now are a revelation.

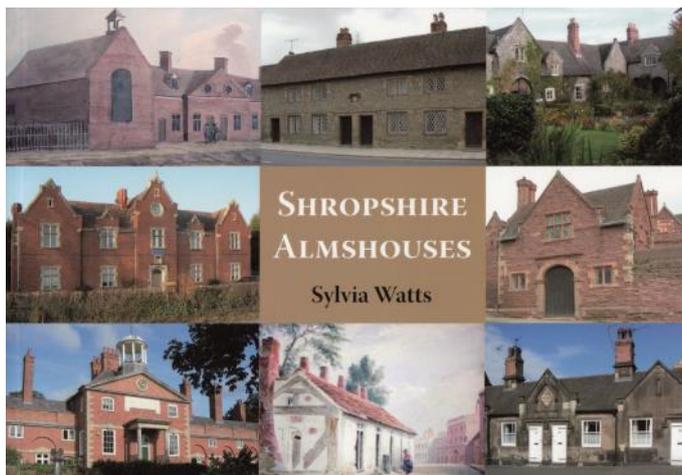
Altogether, the book is a model of its type, and, at £12.95 remarkably good value for such a well-produced, well-illustrated, sensibly indexed volume. It will change your way of looking at the landscape around you, and deepen your understanding of its human history.

GW

## Shropshire Almshouses

*Sylvia Watts. 144pp. with 50 colour photographs. 2010 Logaston Press £12.95  
ISBN 978 1906663 31 5*

When compared with counties such as Kent and Surrey, Shropshire is not well endowed with almshouses either in numbers or in cash. According to the findings of a select commission during the 1830s, our county lies in the lower ranks. Nevertheless, over 30 almshouses of different styles and ages exist within our borders and in this publication the author has given brief, but detailed descriptions of them all.



In an introductory essay the development and administration of Shropshire almshouses is surveyed; the reasons for their foundation by wealthy benefactors, their funding and regulation being explored and compared with those in other districts. Various conditions for entry were imposed by the benefactors and these

include education, moral character and religious beliefs. Usually a warden was appointed to supervise their behaviour and a chaplain for their spiritual needs. In all this is a useful and highly interesting summary for the casual reader or indeed anyone contemplating a study of these charities.

The main body of the work comprises descriptive monographs of the 31 or so main almshouses extant in the county, some 8 of which are situated in our district. Besides Ludlow with its 4 almshouses, there are foundations in Cleeton St Mary, Ludford, Rushbury and, notably, Trinity Hospital in Clun. Each entry provides a succinct account of the buildings, their history, endowment, pensioners, and their present status or condition. The illustrations accompanying the accounts are well chosen to complement the descriptions.

The author is a well-known writer on Shropshire's history and this small book highlights an intriguing part of the county's history. It is highly recommended as a quick and easy reference on this aspect of our heritage.

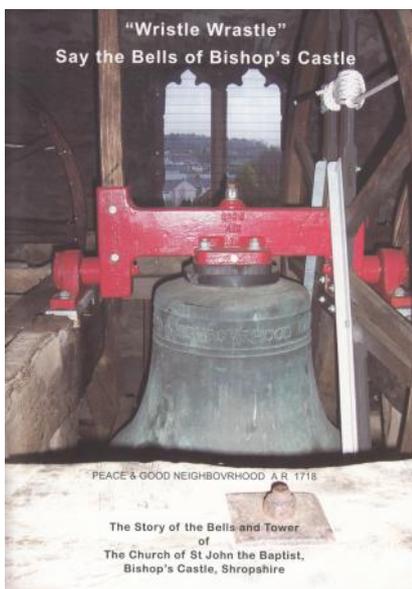
AT

*The author studied History at Oxford before entering on a career in teaching. In 1995 she gained a doctorate from Wolverhampton University. An expert in medieval Latin and sixteenth-century documents, she leads the Ordericus Vitalis group of transcribers, and has published articles in Local Population Studies, Midland History and the Transactions of the Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society.*

Editor

## **'Wristle Wrastle' Say the Bells of Bishop's Castle**

*The story of the Bells and Tower of The Church of St. John the Baptist  
Bishop's Castle Shropshire.*



This informative booklet was produced as part of the Bishop's Castle Bells Project in 2009. Between 2005 and 2006 the Church Tower underwent major restoration and subsequently the bells and benefactions tables were also restored. A brief yet fascinating history of the church tower and the bells is given together with a description of the works carried out during this project. There are many photographs to accompany the text, which is now available on-line at

[www.castlecampanologists.org.uk](http://www.castlecampanologists.org.uk)

Editor

## Research in Progress 2011

### Thomas Owens of Bishop's Castle: a musical mystery from 1816

Shropshire Archives holds a manuscript music book with the title ' *The Shropshire Harmony*' containing choral music for church use and some instrumental pieces. There is no information as to where the book came from except that it was part of the Local Studies Library in Shrewsbury. The compositions seem to date from the early years of the nineteenth century but, apart from that, the work and its author are a complete mystery.

The investigation of that mystery is shedding new light on the local history of South Shropshire and on the musical history of country churches during that period. The research being carried out involves detailed examination of the musicology of ' *The Shropshire Harmony*'. Attempts are also being made to discover the man, his family background and life. A considerable amount of material has been gathered to date. The results of this research will be published in this Journal.

Robert Bunting

*If anyone is interested in contributing to this research please contact the editor.*

### Social History through Local Samplers

The earliest known dated traditional sampler which is part of the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection is from Shropshire. This sampler was worked in 1598 by Jane Bostocke for her young relative Alice Lee. Jane and Alice were both descendents of Robert Corbet and Elizabeth Vernon of Moreton Corbet in Shropshire. In Clun Museum there is a fine collection of twelve local samplers, worked in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were conserved and reframed in 2010. The House on Crutches Museum in Bishop's Castle proudly displays a town sampler, worked in 1804 which, on reframing in the 1990s revealed some interesting information. There is still much to discover about these and a few other local samplers. The results of this research will be published in this Journal .

Patricia Theobald

*If anyone would like to contribute to this research please contact the editor.*

# SWSHAS Research Group

This report has to begin sadly by recording the death of Miss Olwen Pinches, one of the Research Group's staunchest members over many years. During last winter snow, ice and bad weather prevented the Group from meeting in December and January, as had been planned, but since then the Group has met more often so that the frequency of its 11 monthly meetings per year (no meeting in August) has been restored. Almost all the work this year has been on the register of Lydbury North parish, and that is now well advanced towards completion. The outstanding period, for which no bishop's transcripts survive, covers the years 1563–1660, and work on that period will have to be carried out at Shropshire Archives. Otherwise the bishop's transcripts survive from 1660 until the 1840s. It is intended to take the group's work on the register down to the year 1841, so as to coincide with the first Census to mention individuals' names and four years after the beginning (in 1837) of the state's registration of births, marriages, and deaths.

It is a pleasure to record the Group's thanks to the Herefordshire Record Office, and in particular to Mrs. Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, the archivist. Without their co-operation in the loan of microfilms the Group's work would be much more difficult to organise. Finally, it is hoped soon to devise a publication method for the registers which the Group has worked on since I took over from Marion Roberts.

George Baugh

## Lydbury Field Group: Community Archaeology

The Lydbury Field Group is a community archaeology group based in south west Shropshire which was formed in 2003 by a group of local residents who wanted to explore the archaeology of the area through practical fieldwork. The Group carries out investigations into the development of the archaeological landscape in south-west Shropshire. Activities include documentary research, map analysis, fieldwalking, finds recording, site surveying, and excavation. As a result of the research, with Heritage Lottery Funding, the Group has published a research report '*The Making of the Lydbury Landscape*' (2009) and a summary publication '*Lydbury, The Making of a Landscape*' (2010). Regular monthly meetings are also held for talks or guided walks and visits to places of archaeological interest. These are usually open sites or free through English Heritage as educational visits. We

also publish a monthly newsletter. The purpose of them is to engage members in the local and regional archaeology as a part of the continuing educational function of the Group. We welcome all with an interest in archaeology and the historic environment, regardless of experience.

The cost of annual membership, which allows us to cover the insurance:  
Couples £18.00, Adults £10.00

The **Lydbury Young Archaeologists Group**, formed in March 2009, seeks to engage and encourage the children in practical field archaeology and archaeological techniques. We meet at Lydbury North village hall on the fourth Saturday of each month from 10 am until 12 noon. If the weather is unsettled we have archaeological games, slide shows and activities including finds processing. The activities of the children and their findings actually contribute to the continuing research project.

*The annual cost of membership per child is: £5.00*

Contact Mike Greene (Chair) Email: [greenefate@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:greenefate@hotmail.co.uk)

*(See Supplement to this Journal for Prize Essays from two members of this Group – Ed.).*

## Research Groups at Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre (BCHRC)

The *House History Group* continues to work on the properties in Church Street and High Street Bishop's Castle. More information is steadily being gathered with several small projects, such as the 1910 Land Tax analysis for Bishop's Castle, in progress.

*(see the articles on 8-10 Church Street earlier in this volume – Ed.)*

The *Transcribing Group*, formed at the end of 2010, is working upon the town's first Borough Minute Book spanning the years 1572-1677. This document was digitised at BCHRC last year to minimise handling a fragile and valuable book. There are approximately 280 pages which list bailiffs, town clerks, sergeants at mace, constables and chamberlains together with oaths and the law and order of the Borough. When completed, this transcription will provide another useful reference available at BCHRC for researchers.

The Town Council has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to refurbish the town hall and develop various new facilities in the building. Part of the funding provides for a *Town Hall Research Project* to discover historical information connected with the town hall and the town for the period 1750-1850. This research is being carried out by a small group of volunteers at BCHRC.

The *Local History Centre at BCHRC* was opened on 25th September 2010 by the Shropshire County Archivist, Mary McKenzie. The project, which lasted for over a year, provided an opportunity to work closely with Shropshire Archives in order to establish a local history outpost at Bishop's Castle in association with the county archive. Several of these centres have now been set up in Shropshire and in some cases are owned by Shropshire Council. However, BCHRC - opened in 2004 - is privately owned and run by the House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust with its dedicated volunteers. Data for Bishop's Castle and surrounding parishes which may be inspected includes: parish and census records, maps, electoral registers and transcriptions of some documents, together with relevant estate catalogues for collections held at Shropshire Archives. There is also a local history library and a considerable collection of additional local information. *The Local History Centre* is open at BCHRC on Saturdays from 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. On other days the Centre can be contacted by telephone: 01588 630556 or email: [mail@bchrc.co.uk](mailto:mail@bchrc.co.uk)

Patricia Theobald

# SWSHAS Officers and Committee 2011

President:	David Preshous, OBE
Chairman:	Nick Howell
Hon. Secretary:	Joye Minshall, 47 Alvaston Way, Shrewsbury SY2 5TT
Membership Secretary:	Peter Hutton
Hon. Treasurer:	Nick Downes
Journal Editor:	Patricia Theobald
Committee:	Mike Greene, Nick Harding, Peter Hutton, Graham Medlicott, Norman Morris, Janet Preshous, Gavin Watson, Alan Wilson.
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*Contributions to the Journal are warmly welcomed—please contact the Editor  
Patricia Theobald, at Old School House, Mainstone, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5LQ,  
Tel: 01588 638 555: email panda.theobald@virgin.net*

*BACK-NUMBERS*  
for some years of the  
*JOURNAL*  
are available at 50p each  
from the Editor

# Programme 2011-12

*Meetings take place at the Community College Main Hall and SpArC ,  
Bishop's Castle, and commence at 7.30 p.m.  
Visitors are warmly welcomed*

## 2011

- 17-18 Sept. Saturday-  
Sunday  
Cadet Hall,  
New Street
- SWSHAS EXHIBITION**  
at Bishop's Castle Michaelmas Fair  
**'Valleys of Springs and Rivers'** - A portrait of life beside  
the East & West Onny
- 11 Oct. Tuesday  
Main Hall
- Conserving Traditional Building Skills In Shropshire*  
**Colin Richards**
- 11 Nov. Friday  
SpArC
- A.G.M.** followed by  
*Craven Arms & District Local History Group presentation*  
**Brian Lloyd-James**
- 12 Dec. Monday  
Main Hall
- President's Lecture  
*To Preserve the Memory: the ancient Greek Historians*  
**David Preshous**

## 2012

- 13 Jan. Friday  
SpArC
- Archdeacon Plymley, Son and Servant of Shropshire*  
**Douglas Grounds**
- 14 Feb. Tuesday  
Main Hall
- The Fighting Shrewsburys  
**Gavin Watson**
- 9 March Friday  
SpArC
- A View from Above: Recent Aerial Photos of Shropshire*  
**Andrew Wigley**
- 10 April Tuesday  
Main Hall
- RITHERDON LECTURE**  
TBA  
**John Cherry**, former Deputy Director, British Museum

*Outings for 2012 to be arranged*

