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FURTHER THOUGHTS ON *LETOCETUM*

JIM GOULD, F.S.A.

There are various matters concerning *Letocetum* that are in urgent need of clarification, especially in view of Mr. Round's report in volume xxxii of our *Transactions*. This note is an attempt to deal very briefly with some of them. Where it involves a measure of disagreement with Mr. Round's views, the reasons are given for consideration by the reader. When Sir Mortimer Wheeler was once asked whether archaeology is an art or a science, he replied – 'Neither, it's a vendetta.' It is hoped that this note will not be seen as justifying Sir Mortimer's comment, but I do believe the matters to be of importance and sincerely hope that should Mr. Round wish to reply he will be given space in which to do so.

Firstly, there is the matter of the alleged life-size statue of Minerva and her temple below Wall church. The earliest account I can find of the finding of the statue is in volume iv of the *Transactions* of the Birmingham Archaeological Society (1874), at p. 39. The entry reads as follows:

> The following extract from Mr. Lomax's *Guide to the City of Lichfield etc.* (p. 58) is of interest ... 'Sometime since a man much employed in draining lands in the neighbourhood of Wall was asked if he ever found coins or other curiosities there. He replied that he had often met with pieces of money looking very old, but had given them to his children to play with; 'but once', he said, 'I found a figure of earthenware, as big as a man, but it was not man' (here he described with his hands the shape of a female bust); 'but it was not a woman, for it had a queer dress and a man's cap like a soldier's helmet; and we broke it in pieces to mend the bank of the drain.'

This account has been frequently quoted in other publications which give Lomax as the authority, but often without stating a page number. However, a search of all the copies of Lomax's Guide in the Stafford, Lichfield, and Birmingham libraries has failed to find any trace of the passage. Furthermore, the making of a life-size statue in earthenware would have posed insuperable difficulties for a Roman potter. It could not have been done. The story, then, is from an unknown source, of the finding of an impossible statue, by an un-named man, at an unknown spot and date, and so must be discarded. If the recorded conversation had said 'like a man' instead of 'as big as a man', the reference could have been to a small pipe-clay statuette, such as have been found on a number of Roman sites. I know of no grounds, save the alleged finding of the life-size statue, to suggest a temple to Minerva at *Letocetum*, although in the 18th century some local inhabitants did refer to the remains of the *mansio* as those of a temple.

The carved stones from the *mansio* certainly indicate some form of earlier Romano-Celtic shrine. There is one stone, covered with large chevrons (plate 1), that has not been previously published. It was photographed in 1976 by the present writer, but was not measured or properly recorded, as it was assumed that it would be dealt with in the eventual excavations report. A coloured print of the photograph was sent to the excavations director on 15 December 1987, at his request. The stone is important for it must have been part of a border or frieze, yet only one such stone was observed. It suggests that there may have been many more carved and inscribed stones than are known at present. The foundations in which the stones were found have been largely rebuilt, following the removal of the carved stones and the consolidation measures taken by the Department of the Environment to preserve the foundations. This makes it impossible now to trace the precise spot where the chevron stone was seen. The point also needs to be made that the foundations that held the carved stones seem to have been earlier than the rest of the *mansio*: all the adjoining walls butt on to it and are not bonded in, and in addition the angle of the stone at the south end is peculiar.

The date of the *mansio* is very important. In any discussion of this topic it must be remembered that much was removed by the 1912 excavators. This can best be seen from plate 9 in volume xlvii of the *Journal* of the North Staffordshire Field Club (1913). That photograph appears a little more plainly in the 1912 guide to the site, issued by the excavator, Roger Mott of Wall House. (Spoil, which was dumped on the land immediately surrounding the excavated site, has recently been removed by the Department of the Environment.) The 1912 excavators, despite digging with 'picks and spades', recovered a number of 4th-century coins (*NSFC* xlix (1915), p. 146 f.; l (1916), pp. 120-22), but unfortunately they did not distinguish between those found at the villa (*mansio*) and those found at the adjoining baths. No attempt was made to use the pottery to date the building. The excavators described the stonework which they uncovered as rough foundations, with no trace of upper dressed

Plate I The Chevron stone

stone. In such a situation the recent excavations could have held little hope of determining the date when the *mansio* was destroyed. Nevertheless the recent report (*TSSAHS* xxxii (1992), p. 75) suggests a late Antonine date for its destruction. The source for this date is not clearly given, but it appears to be from household rubbish dumped in an open trench outside a side-door (pp. 14, 74) and from finds in the colonnade (pp. 14, 75). It is difficult to accept the existence of an open robbed-out trench immediately in front of a door whilst the building was occupied. The finds in the colonnade also pose difficulties. In referring to two voids surviving in the top course of the colonnade wall it is said (p. 14) that 'the walls ... were only foundations ... and the voids may have been sealed.' Section 5-T across the colonnade (fig. 4 on p. 8) shows two possible floors from which the dating evidence was secured. Neither reaches from wall to wall, though there are intrusions, and both are indicated in the Section as being well below the level of the top of the foundations of the surviving wall. Such floors cannot be those of the colonnade, and they must relate to an earlier feature. All this means an Antonine or later date for the construction of the mansio, and not for its destruction. The plan (at p. 8) of the heated room (no. 12) and the plan of the same room in *Archaeological Journal* lxxi (1914), p. 361, plainly indicate an inserted corn-dryer. Such are often encountered in buildings of the 3rd and 4th centuries (see S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (1967), p. 278 f.) Moreover, the system of *mansiones* in Britain is believed to have continued virtually unchanged right up to the end of the Roman period.

Finally, one must protest at Mr. Round's dismissal of a Claudian phase at Wall. A granary and a barrack-block have been found outside the area of the three hill-top forts. These were the first buildings on sites K and S (*TSSAHS* v (1964), p. 8). (Coloured slides of these foundation trenches have been deposited in Keele University Library.) As there were foundations only of these first buildings, no pottery could be expected in them, although in actual fact a little stratified pottery was associated with the barrack-block. A number of Claudian sherds – samian and coarse ware – are to be found as residual in other layers and in unstratified deposits. One need only glance the earlier reports on the site at Wall to find plenty of examples. The most significant, however, is the coin-list (*TSSAHS* viii (1968), p. 13), which begins:

CAER LWYTGOED: ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL DOCUMENTS

JIM GOULD, F.S.A.

Lwytgoed has long been recognized as the Welsh name for the Roman settlement known as *Letocetum* (the present Wall, Staffordshire), and that the name means 'grey wood'.[1] Etymologists assign the same meaning to the name *Letocetum*, which is itself the Latinized form of the Celtic *Leitocaiton*.[2] The name is a fitting one, for the area was wooded with plenty of birch, alder, and elm. There are two possible ways by which the name may have been given to the Roman settlement. Firstly, it may have been the Celtic name for extensive woodland before the Roman troops arrived, and some would say that it was perhaps the name of an Iron Age estate. Alternatively, the Romans may have coined the name. Many soldiers came from continental Celtic areas, and Rivet and Smith have pointed out that Roman troops taking over uninhabited places often gave them a Celtic name.[3] As the Celtic language was still unwritten during the Roman period, Celtic place-names had to be made capable of being written in Latin for army reports or other documents. It may be of little moment which explanation is accepted, so long as it is remembered that the name 'grey wood' does not of itself indicate the existence of an Iron Age habitation, and that no trace of one has been revealed by excavation at *Letocetum*. The single Durotrigian coin that has been found at the site was almost certainly brought by a Roman soldier,[4] whilst the Celtic shrine suggested by carved stones discovered in the foundation of the *mansio* can be seen from inscriptions on the stones to be Romano-Celtic and not British-Celtic.[5] There is, however, a hill-fort (now known as Castle-Old-Fort) at Stonnall, 5 km. south-west of *Letocetum* and plainly visible from there.[6] Whether the fort was occupied when the Roman army arrived or not is unknown, as the site has not been excavated. When it was occupied, however, the fort could have dominated the 'grey wood'. Consideration also needs to be given to an unexcavated native-type farm to the east of *Letocetum*, which has been dated only tentatively to the 1st century A.D.

The main concern of this article, however, is not whether the name *Lwytgoed* is pre-Roman or not, but rather what the Welsh name indicates when used in early medieval documents. *Lwytgoed* (in a variety of spellings) is found in a number of documents of that period, including the *Historia Brittonum* usually (but erroneously) attributed to Nennius, genealogical tracts,[8] and Welsh saga poetry such as *Marwnad Cynddylan*. When a translation of these documents is proffered, *Lwytgoed* is usually rendered 'Lichfield'. Where the reference is simply to a vague area this may not matter, but in cases where the writer definitely intended *Letocetum* that fact should be made plain. In cases where *Lwytgoed* is preceded by *Caer* (the Welsh word for fort), a place with defences is meant. Such a description cannot refer to Lichfield before St. Chad, for all the defences there are post-Conquest. Taylor, Bassett, and Slater in their articles on the medieval town suggest that the early civil settlement was a scatter of hamlets.[9] Even the earliest form of the name for Lichfield – *Lyccidfelth* – does not indicate habitation, and etymologists consider that the name originated only about the middle of the 7th century.[10] The situation was very different at *Letocetum* where from the 4th century a 9-ft. thick wall, backed by a turf rampart and fronted by three ditches, enclosed an area of approximately 5 a. astride the Watling Street.[11] At least part of the ditch system was still open in the later middle ages, as a fragment of late medieval pottery has

1 Henry Bradley, 'Etocetum or Letocetum', *Academy*, no. 756 (30 Oct. 1886), 296; 'Etymology of Lichfield', *Academy*, no. 914 (9 Nov. 1889), 545 f. I am indebted to the editor of the transactions for helpful suggestions on the presentation of this paper.
2 A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith, *Place-Names of Roman Britain* (1979), 387.
3 Ibid. 22.
4 M. Archibald, 'The Coins', *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society* [hereafter *TSSAHS*] xxiii (1983), p. 15, no. 8.
5 A. Ross, 'A Pagan Celtic Shrine at Wall, Staffordshire', *TSSAHS* xxi (1980), 3–8.
6 *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, i (1908), 341 f.
7 J. Gould, 'Romano-British farming near Letocetum', *TSSAHS* xiii (1972), 3 f.
8 P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (1966).
9 C. C. Taylor, 'The origins of Lichfield', *TSSAHS* x (1969), 43–52; S. R. Bassett, 'Medieval Lichfield: a topographical review', *TSSAHS* xxii (1982), 93–121; T. R. Slater, 'The topography and planning of medieval Lichfield: a critique', *TSSAHS* xxvi (1986), 11–35.
10 K. H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953), 332–35.
11 J. Gould, 'Excavations at Wall, 1961–63', *TSSAHS* v (1964), 1–50.

been found in the secondary silt of one ditch.[12] Part of the wall itself was still standing in the 18th century.[13] *Caer Lwytgoed*, therefore, should always be taken as indicating *Letocetum*, unless a very good reason can be given for not doing so. This can be of considerable importance for understanding the post-Roman period, and may even affect our understanding of the rise of Mercia.

A case can be made for *Letocetum* having been an important centre of local administration. The *Historia Brittonum* has a list of 28 (or 33, according to the recension used) towns of Roman Britain, which concludes with *Cair Luit Coit*, now generally accepted as indicating *Caer Lwytgoed*. Both Rivet[14] and Bradley[15] have suggested that *Letocetum* may have been one of the small *civitates* that were sometimes detached in the 4th century from larger, tribal areas. Alternatively, it may have been the centre of a *pagus*, a word used to describe a large, rural administrative area. There was also a *mansio* at *Letocetum*, as is shown by the Antonine Itinerary. A *mansio* was an official stopping-place, used in the postal service (*cursus publicus*) and generally in the maintenance of good communications in the Empire. As such, it needed an inn with horses and stabling. Procopius, referring to the Empire in general, wrote that at each *mansio* there had to be as many as 40 horses. This may be an exaggeration, for in 382 A.D. a rule was made that no station was to forward more than 6 horses and one cart (pulled by oxen) in any one day, save for the bearers of warrants endorsed 'urgent'.[16] One needs to remember the importance of Watling Street in linking London to both Chester and Wroxeter. At *Letocetum* the baths, too, had to be managed (they required attendants, fuel etc.), and there must have been a market, for other towns were too distant to have served local farmers. Moreover, if the *annona* (a corn tax for the maintenance of troops) was collected at *mansiones*, the collection and storage of corn from an area of several hundred square miles had to be organized. In the troubled times of the 4th century administrative officials at *Letocetum* must surely have been based within the defended area, even though the baths and the *mansio* lay outside it.

The defended area is sometimes referred to as a burgus, like similar defences at *Tripontium*, *Manduessedum*, and *Pennocrucium*.[17] It was built by high authority, presumably the late-Roman field army: part of the wall was constructed over a deep well,[18] and on its eastern side the ditches cut the stone foundations of a large building where there were a window grille and also window-glass.[19] If the word *burgus* refers simply the defended area astride a road, then *Letocetum* was one, albeit very different from some continental *burgi*, as described by Laur-Belart, which were very much smaller and often included a signal tower.[20] *Letocetum*, however, could not have been used for signalling along the Watling Street because much higher land lies 2 km to the west and 7 km to the east. In the troubled 4th century, when many troops and all the field army were eventually moved to the continent, the defended area at *Letocetum* was probably manned by local men, styled *burgarii*,[21] or just possibly *limitanei*, the name for regular troops who were stationed with their families and who were supposedly not available for posting elsewhere. The defended area could have served as a refuge for people living along the intermittent ribbon that stretched along the road who would otherwise have had no protection in those dangerous times, and it would also deny the use of the road to raiders.

We have little archaeological evidence of activity within the defended area. Only very limited excavation has been allowed within the defended area adjacent to the narrow road that was the A5 prior to the recent construction of the Wall by-pass, and even that has been bedevilled by the removal, probably in the 17th century, of the crest of the Roman road. The date of removal is suggested by the Roman road being partly overlaid by a 17th-century timber-framed house, the back-to-back hearths of which were stupidly interpreted by the excavator (who was misled by the dirt floor) as a foddering crib in a small yard ! In order to avoid having to deal with the very solid metalling within the defended area,

12 Ibid. 3.
13 Ibid. 1.
14 A. L. F. Rivet, 'Some Historical Aspects of the *Civitates* of Roman Britain', in *Civitates Capitals*, ed. J. Wacher (1966), at p. 109.
15 His articles given in note 1.
16 A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (1986 reprint), II, 832.
17 G. Webster, 'Roman System of Fortified Posts along Watling Street, Britain', in *Roman Frontier Studies* (1967), 38–45.
18 J. Gould, 'Excavations at Wall, 1961–63', *TSSAHS* v (1964), 6 f.
19 E. Greenfield, 'Wall', *West Midlands Archaeological News Sheet* vii (1964), 9.
20 R. Laur-Belart, 'Late Limes from Basel to the Lake of Constance', in *Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. E. Birley (1949), 55–98.
21 Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, I, 651; II, 1271 n. 102.

A STAFFORDSHIRE MAN OF AFFAIRS: RALPH OF NEWBOROUGH (d. 1294) AND HIS WILL

NIGEL J. TRINGHAM

The Harpur Crewe collection of documents on deposit in the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock includes the original of one of the earliest surving Staffordshire wills, that made in 1294 by Ralph of Newborough. It contains an impressive range of bequests, befitting his career as a 'man of affairs' in the county. A translation of the text is given below.[1]

Styled Ralph 'de Burgo' in his will, the testator may be identified as in fact coming from Newborough, near Burton-upon- Trent.[2] In 1267 he was recorded as the bailiff of Lichfield, a town under episcopal control.[3] He was again associated with the bishop in 1278, when he witnessed a charter by which the church of Wybunbury (Ches.) was quitclaimed to the bishop,[4] and in 1288 he appeared as the bishop's bailiff before royal justices sitting at Lichfield.[5] By 1275 Ralph was also associated with the Benedictine abbey of Burton, acting that year on the abbey's behalf in the settlement of a dispute relating to one of its estates.[6] In 1280 he was active on the abbey's business at Finderne (Derb.),[7] and in 1284, 1292, and 1293 he witnessed charters involving the abbey.[8] On three other occasions he witnessed undated charters as the abbey's steward.[9] Ralph also appears to have offered his services to the priory of Augustinian canons of St. Thomas near Stafford. In 1281 and on several undated occasions he witnessed charters relating to the priory,[10] and his close personal ties with that house are revealed in his will. Ralph also had a lay clientele: in 1275 and 1276 he acted as an attorney in England for the noble Theobald de Verdun, then in Ireland.[11]

The evidence suggests that Ralph was a skilled administrator, who may have had some legal training. Evidently a man of some importance in the county, he appears to have used his position to his own financial advantage. In 1263 or possibly 1265 he was arrested by the sheriff of Staffordshire, Hamo le Strange, and imprisoned in Stafford gaol for over a month; during custody he suffered 'outrages' at the hands of Hamo's servants.[12] The cause of his arrest is unknown, but it may have been connected with his misuse of authority. In 1269 he paid a fine of 10 marks to the Crown on account of the 'withdrawal of writs' during his term of office as under-sheriff of Staffordshire.[13] In January 1292/3 the royal judges conducting the *Quo Warranto* investigations in the county heard accusations that Ralph, together with several other men, had extracted money from both parties in law-suits and had procured false witnesses; he was fined 40*s*.[14] He was also temporarily imprisoned on a charge of extorting 5 marks from the vill of Wolstanton in north-west Staffordshire.[15] The experience may have been too much for an old man: he died in late January or early February 1293/4.

Ralph's first wife Felice had predeceased him, and it was next to her body that he wished to be buried. He married again, however, and so left a widow, Agnes.[16] His marriage to her may have eased him up the social scale. It had been her second marriage too; her first husband was Roger de Ridware,

1 Derbyshire Record Office, D. 2375M/130/94 (from the Harpur Crewe papers deposited in D.R.O. and reproduced by permission of the National Trust). I am grateful to Robert Swanson and Douglas Johnson for comments on the article in draft.

2 *Staffordshire Historical Collections* (Staffs. Record Society) [hereafter *SHC*], 1937, no. 321 (p. 99), where the witness styled Ralph 'de Novo Burgo' is evidently the same man as the Ralph 'de Burgo' who witnesses other charters in that edition. In two of his own charters Ralph styled himself 'de Nova Villa': *SHC* xvi. 276–7.

3 *SHC* 1924, no. 741 (p. 352).

4 Ibid. no. 541 (p. 258).

5 *SHC* vi (1), 177.

6 *SHC* v (1), 81.

7 Ibid. 82.

8 Ibid. 59; SHC 1937, nos. 249, 263 (pp. 83, 87).

9 *SHC* 1937, nos. 287, 329, 370 (pp. 92, 100, 109).

10 *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1279-88, 134; *SHC* viii (1), 141, 159, 165.

11 *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1272–79, 235; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1272–81, 164.

12 *SHC* v (1), 120. Hamo le Strange was sheriff in August 1263, and possibly again in 1265: *SHC* 1912, 276.

13 *SHC* iv (1), 177.

14 *SHC* vi (1), 281–2.

15 Ibid. 278.

16 In the summer of 1294 she sued William Griffin and his wife Eleanor for her dower in Walton-upon-Trent: *SHC* vii (1), 17.

MASTER JOHN OF BURCESTRE AND THE CASTLES OF STAFFORD AND MAXSTOKE

M. J. B. HISLOP (with A. M. Hislop)

In the sphere of medieval castle design, whilst it may seem axiomatic that both military effectiveness and domestic convenience should have taken precedence over aesthetic considerations, it is nevertheless true that from the later 13th century onwards, the builders of some English castles were very much concerned with symmetry and architectural effect. Few of these castle architects have been studied in depth. Exceptions are Master James of St. George, who superintended Edward I's castle-building programme in Wales,[1] and John Lewyn, master mason to the bishop and priory of Durham during the later 14th century.[2] These studies were facilitated by the fact that documentary references survive in unusually large numbers; more often than not, our glimpse of these men is tantalizingly brief. A case in point is the subject of this paper, the master mason John of Burcestre, whose former existence is known to us from a single reference, but whose work suggests an architect of note, worthy of further consideration.

THE INDENTURE

On 13 January 1348 an indenture was drawn up at Stafford Castle between Master John of Burcestre and Ralph, Lord Stafford, in which the former agreed to build 'a castle on the motte'.[3] It was to have towers, halls, chambers, a chapel, garderobes, chimneys, vices, windows, doors, gates, and vaults, and these items, together with the length, width, and height, were to be built according to the 'device and ordinance' of Lord Stafford. This document, which clearly refers to the great tower known as the 'Keep' on top of the Norman motte, has been described as 'hardly a contract so much as a vague and jejune note',[4] and indeed, few clues as to the nature of the proposed building can be gleaned from it. The only precise specifications are that the towers were to rise 10 ft. above the main building, and that the wall was to be 7 ft. thick at the base. In contrast to the paucity of information about the building, however, the stipulations concerning the rates of payment, and the provision and transport of materials and equipment, are surprisingly detailed. Thus, John of Burcestre was to receive 5 marks for each perch of 24 ft. In addition, Lord Stafford was to provide building materials and equipment, and have them transported to the foot of the motte; he also undertook to supply Burcestre and his men with domestic fuel, as well as hay for Burcestre's horse. John of Burcestre, on the other hand, was to be responsible for transporting the materials and equipment to the building site on top of the motte.

The anomalous treatment of these two aspects of the indenture is explicable if one accepts that the principal purpose of the document was to define the obligations of the two parties insofar as they would have affected the financial side of the undertaking. In this light, the inclusion of the measurements relating to the thickness of the walls and the heights of the towers no longer seems arbitrary. Both items probably relate to cost, and without them the master mason would have been unable to produce an accurate estimate for the job. The stipulated wall- thickness provides additional information about the size of each 24-ft. perch, and the amount by which the towers were to rise above the main building was presumably given to clarify that payment for them was to be included in the general piece-work rate. However, if the intention was that only those specifications which might elucidate the rate of payment were to be included in the indenture, we must account for the omission of the intended height of the building, for without knowing that John of Burcestre would have been very much in the dark as to what he was taking on. We must, therefore, assume that this item, which was

1 A. J. Taylor, 'Master James of St. George', *English Historical Review* lxv (1950), 433–47; idem, 'The Castle of St. Georges-D'Esperanche', *Antiquaries Journal* xxxiii (1953), 33–47.

2 Malcolm J. B. Hislop, 'John Lewyn and the Architecture of the Northern Counties, 1360–1400', unpublished University of Nottingham Ph.D. thesis, 1989.

3 The indenture, which is written in French, survives in the form of a 16th-century copy: Staffordshire Record Office, D. (W.) 1721/1/11, p. 207. For a transcript see L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (1952), 438–9. A translation is provided at the end of this article.

4 Salzman, *Building in England*, 438.

one of those to be determined according to the 'device and ordinance' of Lord Stafford, had already been fixed. It is possible that if the number of storeys had been determined, that would have provided enough information for an experienced master mason to make an accurate estimation of height. As to the absence of further specifications pertaining to the design of the building, the indenture suggests that Lord Stafford was to have determined these, but an examination of the Keep itself leads to a quite different conclusion.

THE DESIGN OF STAFFORD CASTLE KEEP

The tower erected for Ralph, Lord Stafford, under the indenture of 1348 was demolished by Parliamentary order in 1643–4,[5] and although it was partially reconstructed by the Jerningham family in the early 19th century,[6] subsequent neglect led to demolition again in the 1960s and consolidation of the building as a ruin. Fortunately, a plan was made *c.* 1806 prior to the Jerningham restoration,[7] and recent archaeological work has confirmed that substantial amounts of medieval stonework remain *in situ*, so that much of the 14th-century layout at ground level can be reconstructed with accuracy.[8]

The plan shows a rectangular building divided into three rooms by two transverse partition walls. There are octagonal corner towers, and a semi-octagonal tower in the centre of one of the long sides.[9] One is immediately impressed by the regularity of the lay-out, for although dimensions taken from the plan of *c.* 1806, and measurement of the Keep itself, reveal some minor deviations from the symmetry of the building, they do little to detract from the theory advanced in this paper that the Keep was laid out according to a proportional system based on two separate units of measurement.

The Keep is aligned roughly east–west.[10] Including the towers, it has an overall length of 145 ft. The south-east and the south-west towers are each 29 ft. wide. The destruction, above ground level, of the tower that formerly stood in the centre of the south front means that it cannot be measured accurately, but reference to the plan of *c.* 1806 shows that it was virtually equal in width to the other two southern towers, so that the south front must have comprised five equal bays.[11] The north-east tower is 28½ ft. wide, and like the two surviving southern towers was a regular octagon in plan. Only the north- west tower deviates from such regularity: whereas the sides of the other three towers range in length from 11 ft. 10 ins. to 12 ft. ½ in., the north-west side of the north-west tower is 13 ft. 5 ins. long and its north and north-east sides each 12 ft. 3 ins.

Both internal partition walls have been destroyed, but the distance from the east face of the east wall of the main block to the west face of the eastern partition wall appears from the plan to have been approximately 29 ft. The distances from the east face of the eastern towers to the east face of the eastern partition wall, and from the west face of the western towers to the west face of the western partition wall, appear to have been calculated using the proportion of 1 to the square root of 2, a formula widely used in church design during the Middle Ages and based on the relationship of the side of a square to its diagonal.[12] Each of the two measurements seems to have been equal to the diagonal of a 29 ft. square (i.e. 41 ft.).

The other principal measurements, however, were not based on a 29-ft. unit. The overall width of the Keep, including the towers, is 80 ft., and the main block is 112 ft. long and 46½ ft. wide; none of these dimensions bear an obvious relationship to the widths of the towers. This is because a different unit of measurement was used to calculate those distances. According to the plan of *c.* 1806, the width of the

5 *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, v. 85.
6 Ibid. 85–6.
7 Ibid. plate facing p. 86. It is redrawn in this article as fig. 1.
8 Inf. from Stafford Borough Council.
9 There is no good reason to suppose that the central tower is a later addition to the Keep, as suggested by Charles and Merry Hill, *Stafford Castle, the Medieval Keep – a Discussion Paper* (Stafford Borough Council, n.d.). The authors base their theory on the fact that the entrance to the tower was staggered in order to avoid the fireplace in the centre of the south wall of the Keep. Given the vagaries to which medieval architecture was sometimes subject, this is a somewhat puzzling observation to make.
10 The orientation given in *V.C.H. Staffs.* [see n. 7 above] is back to front: 'north' should read 'south', 'west' should read 'east' etc.
11 Excavations have revealed remnants of the foundations of the central tower, but these are fragmentary and offer no greater accuracy than the plan of *c.* 1806 (inf. from Stafford Borough Council).
12 E. Fernie, 'The Ground Plan of Norwich Cathedral and the Square Root of Two', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* cxxix (1976), 75–86.

At Maxstoke, the architect took a balanced approach in which the military and domestic aspects of the castle formed integral parts of a unified composition. Alcock and others have emphasized the very ordered and specific domestic planning,[23] but there can be no doubt that Maxstoke was also intended to fulfil a martial role. It is surrounded by a water-filled moat; meutrières and a portcullis protected the entrance to the gate passage, and the crenellated parapets and projecting towers provided strategic fortified vantage points from which the defenders could direct fusillades against assailants. These aspects, however, are tempered visually by an unusually high level of decoration. The stellar vault over the gate passage incorporates carved bosses at the intersections of the ribs; the castle is liberally provided with cusped ogee-headed windows; and the great six-light window has an up-to-date tracery pattern. Essentially Decorated but showing an awareness of the nascent Perpendicular style. Even the battlemented parapet is given a less bellicose appearance by the moulded parapet band and merlon copings, and by the carved drainage spouts that are found along its length.

All this is in keeping with the aesthetic considerations that influenced the plan, and it is possible that the Stafford Keep had similar detailing. Both buildings were erected with an eye to outward display: prestige was no doubt an important motive in the Age of Chivalry. In their military careers under Edward III, the men who caused Maxstoke and Stafford to be built had both lived up to the spirit of the age; it was appropriate that their houses should live up to their names.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are owed to Stafford Borough Council for providing unpublished material pertaining to their archaeological investigation of the Keep, and for access to those parts of the Keep itself which are not generally open to the public; to Mr. and Mrs. M. Featherstone-Dilke for permission to visit and measure Maxstoke; and to Mrs. P. Thomson of the William Salt Library, Stafford, for her helpful suggestions concerning the documentary sources.

TRANSLATION OF THE INDENTURE

(by A. M. Hislop)

This indenture is made between Monsieur Ralph, baron of Stafford, on the one hand and Master John of Burcestre, mason, on the other. Witness that it is settled between them that the said Master John will build a castle on the motte in the manner (*deinz la maniere*)[24] of length and breadth and height, with towers, halls, chambers, chapel, garderobes, chimneys, vices, windows, doors, and gates, together with vaults, according to the device and ordinance of the said Monsieur Ralph, and that all the towers should be 10 ft. higher than the hall and chambers, and that the base (*comencement*)[25] of the wall should be 7 royal ft. wide without plinths and string-courses, taking 5 marks for each perch of royal feet, and the perch is 24 ft.; and that the vices, vaults, windows, chimneys, and doors should be measured by all the surfaces inside the walls (*totz lours planes de deinz le miure*).[26] And that the said Monsieur Ralph will transport stone, sand, and lime as far as the foot of the motte, and the said Monsieur Ralph will find scaffolding, ladders, hurdles, barrows, buckets, gins, cables, and vessels necessary for the work, fuel for his [Master John's] lodging and that of his people, and hay for his

23 Alcock *et al.*, 'Maxstoke Castle'.

24 Salzman misread this phrase as *deinz la maneire*, from which he derived 'in the manor' and assumed that the additional words *de Stafford* had been omitted in the transcript. A comparable phraseology is used in the contract for Bolton Castle: 'the said John will make the works at Bolton in Wensleydale in the following manner (*en menere quensuit*): Salzman, *Building in England*, 454–6.

25 T. J. de Mazzinghi translated the word *comencement* as 'top (crowning)', having presumably misread it as *couronnement* (i.e. crowning): 'Hist. of the Manor and Parish of Castre' or Castle Church', in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (William Salt Archaeological Society), viii (2), 81. This misreading may be the origin of Salter's belief that the indenture provided for a machicolated parapet: M. Salter, *The Castles and Moated Mansions of Staffordshire and the West Midlands County* (Wolverhampton, 1989), 28.

26 This ambiguous phrase appears to qualify the rate of payment, by recognizing that these items ('all the surfaces inside the walls') are at supplementary cost to the rate mentioned.

horse. And the said Master [John] will transport the stone, sand, and all other things necessary pertaining to the work, from the foot of the motte to the summit at his own cost until the work of the said castle is complete. In witness of which, the aforesaid parties have interchangeably put their seals to these indentures. And because the seal of Monsieur Ralph is not at hand, the seals of Master William of Colton and of John of Pikstoke are affixed. Written at the castle of Stafford on St. Hilary's day 21 Edward III [13 January 1347/8].

POST-MEDIEVAL GLAZED COARSEWARE FROM WEST BROMWICH MANOR HOUSE

M. A HODDER

INTRODUCTION

Post-medieval glazed coarseware is the most common pottery type in the assemblage of objects found in the moat of West Bromwich Manor House (Nat. Grid Ref. SP 005943) during its restoration in the 1950s and 1960s. The assemblage also contains medieval pottery and other post-medieval types, including Blackwares, Yellow Wares, and tin-glazed (Hodder 1990). Most of the pottery and other objects are stored in Wednesbury Art Gallery and Museum; a sample is on display at the Manor House itself.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The fabric is a buff or orange colour and contains a few quartz grains, many small soft red and black inclusions, and some angular large white inclusions. All of the sherds have an exterior and interior maroon slip, and an interior brown or black glaze. Analysis was restricted to sherds which included parts of rims or bases, and to vessels reconstructed by joining sherds. Vessel forms were identified from sherds, the size ranges of each vessel form were measured, and the relative quantities of different form types in the assemblage were assessed by sherd weight and number. Complete or near-complete vessels constructed from joining sherds were not included in the weight or numerical quantification. Table 1 shows that the assemblage consists predominantly of sherds of jars and pancheon-type bowls or dishes. Other forms are represented by a few sherds only.

TABLE 1

Vessel form	*No. of sherds*	*Wt. of sherds (g.)*
Jar	222	50710
Bowl	222	62700
Dish	16	1900
Others	16	1950
	480	117260

JARS (fig. 1, no. 1)

These are thick-walled slightly globular vessels with a carinated neck and expanded rim. Complete vessels are c. 300 mm. high and have a rim diameter of 190 to 220 mm. and a base diameter of 230 to 260 mm. Rim sherds are from vessels 160 to 220 mm. in diameter, and base sherds are mainly from vessels 180 to 220 mm. in diameter, suggesting the presence of smaller vessels of this form.

BOWLS (fig. 1, nos. 2 and 3)

These are pancheon-type bowls with everted rims and flaring sides, occurring in two sizes. The larger vessels (e.g. no. 2) are up to 170 mm. high and have a rim diameter of up to 490 mm. and a base diameter of up to 240 mm. There is a sharp angle between the rim and body on the inside of the vessel, but on the outside the profile is often unbroken. Both complete vessels and rim sherds are often misshapen. The smaller vessels (e.g. no. 3) are about 80 mm. high and have a rim diameter of 310 mm. and a base diameter of 200 mm. There is a horizontal handle on the side of the vessel. The smaller

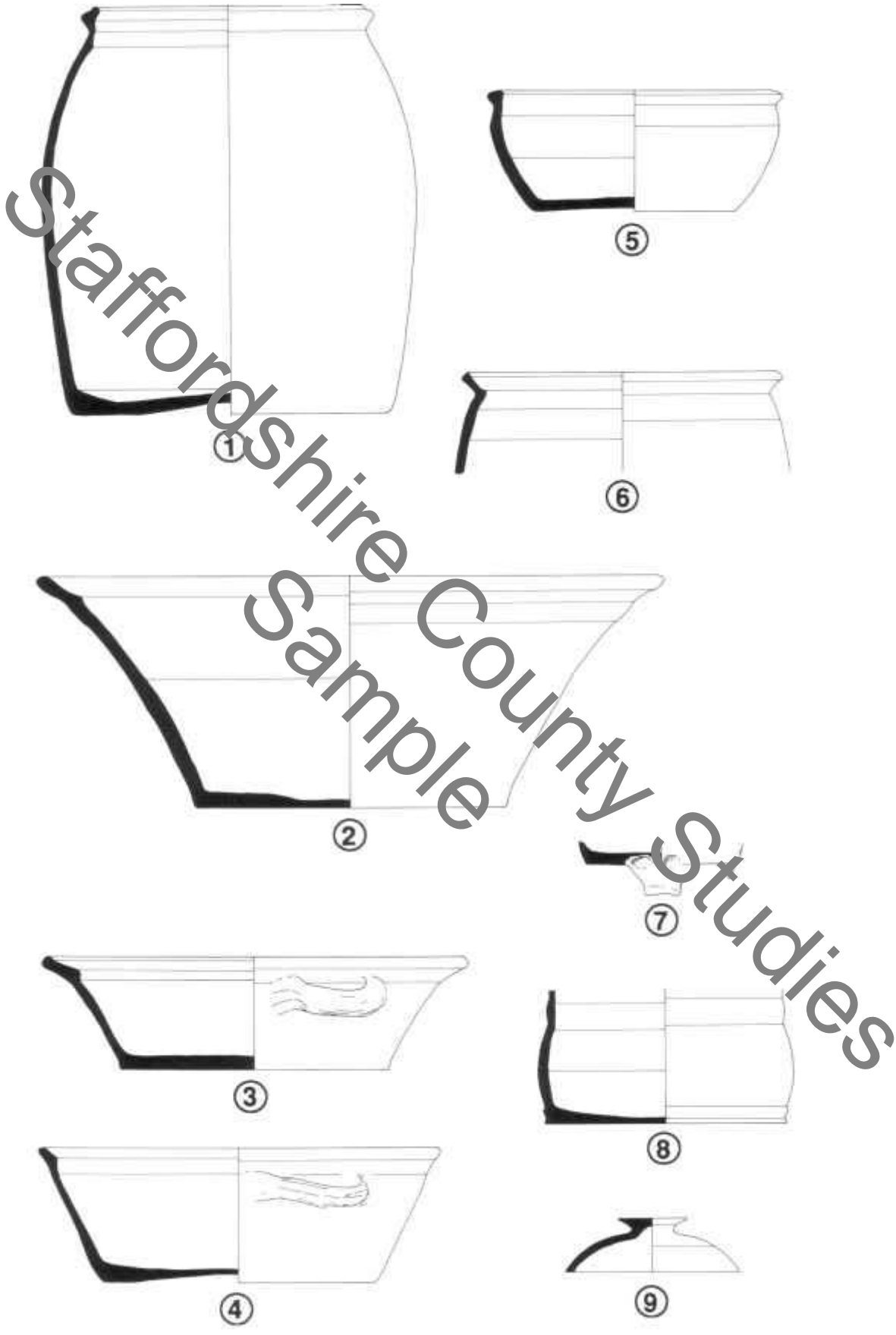

Fig. 1 Post-medieval glazed coarseware from West Bromwich Manor House

Other early wine bottles are more fragmentary. One of the larger pieces, G024, has a squatter neck than the two preceding examples, but it is again distinguished by a cracked off lip and crudely applied trail relatively low down on its neck. The remaining fragments, G020 and G021, display similar characteristics, whilst illustrating variations in the style of the trail. Further variations in the form of the base of these early bottles are illustrated by a small number of base fragments: G006, G007, G008, G009, and G011.

The tapering neck of G016, although still exhibiting a cracked off lip and crudely applied trail, may post-date the earlier examples described above by a couple of decades.

Three bottle seals, G026, G027, and G028, were also recovered (fig. 1). Despite the good preservation of the seals, an insufficient amount of the body was attached to allow an assessment of the shape of the bottle from which they were derived. One of the seals, G026, has a broad arrowhead or harpoon head, which may be a merchant's mark. The other two seals, G027 which has a radiating sun head with the initials 'I H' and the heraldic seal G028, are probably personal seals.

Small bottles (fig. 2)

Small bottles were blown in metals indicative of both the forest glasshouse tradition and the later houses fired by mineral fuels. These vessels are generally poorly preserved, the majority having lost their upper surface through weathering.

The products of the forest glasshouses are represented by a small number of the more robust neck and base fragments. Forms that were recognised included a tall sea green bottle neck, G087, and small fragments with slightly everted rims, none of which are illustrated.

The other group of small bottles are distinguished from the products of the forest glasshouses by their generally darker green colour and short necks with simple flared lips. Within this group four neck types were recognised. The first group has a flared lip and a short tapering neck with rounded shoulders: G030, G032, and G033. The second group has a flared lip with a short straight neck and the indication of rounded shoulders: G029 and G031. The third type is represented by two necks, G033 and G034, which have thickened flared lips and a short straight neck with rounded shoulders. The fourth type, not illustrated, has an applied down-turned lip with a short neck.

The base fragments derived from small bottles are badly smashed with little indication of the shape of the bottle sides. The pushups, G045, G046, and G048, have the shape of a flattened cone with well formed pontil marks. Another form, illustrated by a single example G044, has a flattened dome shaped pushup and a distinct pontil mark. A single bottle, G050, is square in shape.

The fragments described above represent a group of bottles with a variety of body forms (round, square, or hexagonal) that appeared at the end of the 16th century. Bottles with simple (albeit larger) flared necks were recovered from the Woodchester glasshouse (Glos.) and are dated 1590–1615 (Daniels 1950, plate V). Similar forms are also illustrated from Clavells glasshouse at Kimmeridge (Dorset), where they are dated 1618–23 (Crossley 1987, fig. 6). Finds from other excavations, however, suggest that the form was relatively long lived. A group of square bottles with simple flared necks was recovered from the lower fill of a latrine pit dug around 1639 at Waltham Abbey (Charleston 1969, fig. 31). Excavations within Oxford have suggested a date range from *c.* 1600 to 1675 (Haslam 1984, 267). Larger case bottles were represented by a single fragment, G005 (not illustrated), a type that has been shown to have been in circulation from the beginning of the 17th century (Hume 1961, 106).

Phials (fig. 2)

It is difficult to make a strict separation between bottles which may be classified as phials as opposed to the small bottles described above. Four vessels, however, G061, G062, G063, and G064, may be counted as phials on account of their small basal diameters and, in two cases, the occurrence of near vertical sides. Two have flattened dome shaped pushups, and two have a conical shaped pushups. All four bottles are green.

Jar (fig. 3)

A single example of this relatively unusual form was recovered: G041. This example has a short vertical neck with a slightly splayed well-formed V-shaped rim.

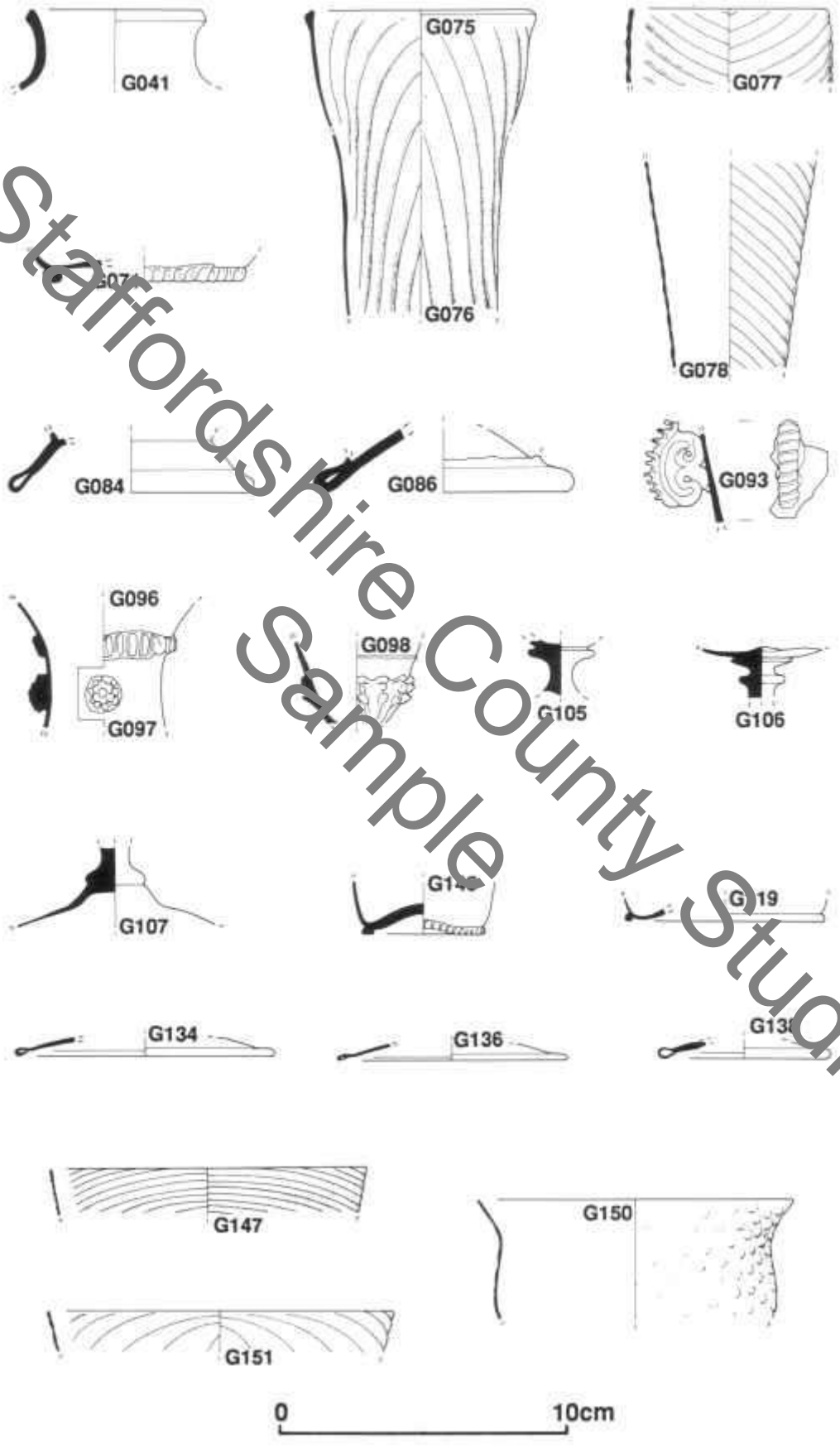

Fig. 3 West Bromwich Manor House: jar and drinking vessels

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CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED GLASS

Each fragment of glass has been identified by a separate number with a prefix 'G', and the number is followed by a brief description.

Wine Bottles (fig. 1)

G006 bottle base, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, green, 317 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 49.2 mm.
indent height: 11.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 36.8 mm.

G007 bottle base in two pieces, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, green flaked surface, 179 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 62.3 mm.
indent height: 8.0 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 29.4 mm.

G008 fragment of base, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, green, 108 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 66.0 mm.
indent height: 12.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 20.6 mm.

G009 fragment of base, rounded profile, iridescent, 68 g. Conjoins to G004. English, mid 17th-cent.

G011 fragment of base, low rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, iridescent, 109 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 56.4 mm.
indent height: 5.1 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 16.5 mm.

G014 reconstructed moulded bottle body with shallow, rounded pushup, green, 393 g. Part of Shaft and Globe bottle, loose fragments conjoin with neck G022. English, mid 17th-cent.
body height: 91.0 mm.
body diameter: 127.0 mm.
rest point diameter: 54.2 mm.
indent height: 5.9 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 17.5 mm.

G016 neck fragment, tapering, rounded trail with flattened bottom, dark green, 29 g. English, ? late 17th-cent.
lip to string rim height: 12.6 mm.
string rim height: 6.8 mm.
finish height: 19.4 mm.
rest point diameter: 79.2 mm.
indent height: 11.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 36.8 mm.

G020 neck, cracked off lip, thin rounded trail with flattened top and bottom, green, 63 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 18.0 mm.
lip to string rim height: 8.0 mm.
string rim height: 4.3 mm.
finish height: 12.3 mm.
neck diameter 1: 28.1 mm.
neck diameter 2: 31.0 mm.
neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
neck height: 96.0 mm.

G021 neck fragment, cracked off lip, thin rounded trail with flattened top and bottom, green, 41 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 19.0 mm.
lip to string rim height: 12.5 mm.
string rim height: 4.5 mm.
finish height: 17.0 mm.
neck diameter 1: 29.0 mm.

G022 neck, tapering towards base, thin rounded trail with cracked off lip, light green, 118 g. Conjoins with loose fragments from body G014. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 19.2 mm.
lip to string rim height: 13.3 mm.
string rim height: 4.5 mm.
finish height: 17.8 mm.

neck diameter 1: 31.3 mm.
neck diameter 2: 33.0 mm.
neck diameter 3: 44.0 mm.
neck height: 100.0 mm.

G023 reconstructed Shaft and Globe bottle (about 60% of body missing), thick rounded trail, flat topped cracked off lip, slightly tapering neck with rounded shoulder and body, shallow rounded pushup with well formed pontil mark, green, 491 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bottle height: 216.0 mm.
bore diameter: 17.8 mm.
lip to string rim height: 9.0 mm.
string rim height: 9.0 mm.
finish height: 18.0 mm.
neck diamater 1: 27.0 mm.
neck diameter 2: 33.3 mm.
neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
neck height: 111.0 mm.
body diameter: 105.0 mm.
body height: 105.0 mm.
rest point diameter: 29.5 mm.
indent height: 10.8 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 29.0 mm.

G024 neck and part of body, thick trail with flattened bottom, flat topped cracked off lip, squat neck, green badly weathered surface, 188 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 18.8 mm.
lip to string rim height: 13.0 mm.
string rim height: 7.5 mm.
finish height: 20.0 mm.
neck diameter 1: 35.2 mm.
neck diameter 2: 37.2 mm.
neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
neck height: 90.0 mm.

Wine Bottle Seals (fig. 1)

G026 complete seal, with central arrow/harpoon head design, dark green, 11 g. Merchant's mark ?
diameter: 28.0 mm.

G027 complete seal, Sun in Splendour with cherubic face surrounded by a wreath, letters 'H' beneath, green, 14 g.
diameter: 29.0 mm.

G028 complete seal, shield with central flaunch with three escallops placed vertically and bordered by seven stars on either side, the shield is surrounded by a cordon, dark green, 21 g.
diameter: 34.0 mm.

Small Bottles (fig. 2)

G029 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, 19 g.
bore diameter: 16.2 mm.
lip diameter: 24.2 mm.
neck diameter: 22.0 mm.
neck height: 25.8 mm.

G030 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, trail of glass added to form lip, 12 g.
bore diameter: 14.2 mm.
lip diameter: 27.5 mm.
neck diameter: 19.8 mm.
neck height: 24.8 mm.

G031 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, trail of glass added to form lip, 20 g.
bore diameter: 14.0 mm.
lip diameter: 24.5 mm.
neck diameter: 20.2 mm.
neck height: 30.0 mm.

G032 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, 33 g.
bore diameter: 18.6 mm.
lip diameter: 34.0 mm.
neck diameter: 26.8 mm.
neck height: 21.8 mm.

G033 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, glass added to form lip, 10 g.
bore diameter: 11.5 mm.
lip diameter: 18.9 mm.
neck diameter: 17.8 mm.
neck height: 17.5 mm.

G034 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, glass added to form lip, 11 g.
bore diameter: 13.8 mm.
lip diameter: 17.3 mm.
neck diameter: 19.0 mm.
neck height: 17.8 mm.

G036 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, heavily weathered, 19 g.
lip diameter: 13.8 mm.
neck diameter: 23.5 mm.
neck height: 21.5 mm.
bore diameter: 22.2 mm.

G044 base fragment, green, shallow rounded pushup, 28 g.
indent height: 10.8 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 13.1 mm.

G045 base fragment, green, conical pushup, 29 g.
indent height: 14.9 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 16.2 mm.

G046 base, green, conical pushup, 61 g.
rest pontil diameter: 83.5 mm.
indent height: 16.1 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 17.2 mm.

G048 base fragment, green, sharp cracked off pontil mark, conical pushup, 49 g.
pontil mark diameter: 21.0 mm.

G050 base of square bottle, green, heavily weathered, shallow pushup with pontil mark, 38 g.
base rest point: 54.0 mm. x 53.0 mm.
indent height: 4.8 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 18.1 mm.

G087 fragment of bottle neck with everted flattened rim, sea green, heavily weathered surface, 3 g.

Phials (fig. 2)

G061 base, green, shallow, pushup, poorly formed cracked off pontil mark, 10 g.
indent height: 3.5 mm.

G062 base, green, shallow rounded pushup, cracked off pontil mark, 10 g.
rest pontil diameter: 38.0 mm.
indent height: 3.5 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 13.0 mm.

G063 base, heavily weathered surface, green, conical pushup, pontil mark unclear due to weathering, 18 g.
rest pontil diameter: 28.7 mm.
indent height: 4.7 mm.
diameter of body: 37.6 mm.

G064 base, green, conical pushup, 10 g.
rest point diameter: 48.00 mm.
indent height: 7.0 mm.

Jar (fig. 3)

G041 neck fragment, green, diameter at lip greater than bore, 11 g. Preserve bottle/jar.

Drinking Vessels (figs. 3 and 4)

G071 fragment of forest glass drinking vessel with notched cordon decoration, 3 g.

G075 fragment of beaker rim with raised rib decoration, dark green, 2 g.
diameter: 82.0 mm.

G076 fragment of beaker body with raised rib decoration, dark green, 3 g. G066 probably part of it.

G077 fragment of beaker rim with wrythen mould blown ribbing, green with encrusted surface, 2 g.
diameter: 70.0 mm.

G078 fragment of wrythen decorated body, probably a beaker, iridescent, 9 g.

G084 fragment of folded foot, iridescent, 8 g.
diameter: 92.0 mm.

G086 fragment of folded foot, type of vessel from which it came not clear, dark green, 11 g.
diameter: 100.0 mm.

G093 handle decoration from goblet, clear, 5 g. Façon de Venise, early 17th-cent.

G096 fragment of Roemer stem with applied milled trail and raspberry prunt, clear crizzled glass, 3 g. ? English, mid 17th-cent. Part of G097.

6, MARKET STREET, TAMWORTH: A TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDING OF 1695 AND ITS CONTEXT

R. A. MEESON AND A. KIRKHAM

The former ironmonger's shop known as 'Colemans', at 6, Market Street, Tamworth, was closed in 1988, bringing to an end a business which had continued on the premises from at least 1834. The building was refurbished in 1992; during the repairs and reconstruction the timber frame was surveyed and a number of the timbers were dendrochronologically dated. The use of the premises by ironmongers is summarised, but this paper concentrates on the structure and date of the building. It is partly timber-framed and partly of brick, constructed in or soon after 1695 and incorporating timbers which had been salvaged from an earlier structure. The late 17th-century building had been assembled during a major phase of reconstruction in the town, and at a time when other new buildings were being constructed in brick.

THE IRONMONGERY

No early deeds to the premises have been traced, so the trade or profession of the early occupants is not known. Trade Directories, however, provide numerous references to the 19th- century business. In 1818 John Butler carried out his trade as an ironmonger and whitesmith in Church Street, but in 1834 he was trading as an ironmonger, brazier, and tinner from premises in Market Street (Parsons and Bradshaw 1818, 244; White 1834, 392). He was still trading there in 1849–50, when he was mayor of Tamworth, but in 1861 the business was run by Mrs. Mary Butler – perhaps his widow (Post Office Directory 1850, 333; Harrison, Harwood, and Co. 1861, 238; T.C.M., list of Tamworth mayors since 1835). By 1892 the proprietor of the ironmongery at 6, Market Street was Miss Harriet Butler (Kelly 1892, 331). Eight years later the business was owned by John Thomas Lee, and his executors were listed as ironmongers at the same address from 1908 until 1924 (Kelly 1900, 375; 1908, 422; 1924, 442). Kelly's Directory for 1928 (at p. 435) lists Coleman Brothers as the owners, and that is the name under which the business traded in Market Street until it closed in 1988 (Tamworth Herald, 29 July 1988).

REBUILDING IN POST-MEDIEVAL TAMWORTH

In some areas of the country the construction of good quality timber-framed buildings continued in the 18th century, as exemplified in a cottage of 1764 at Holmes Chapel, Cheshire (Brunskill 1985, 222). From the late 17th century, however, there was an overall decline in the quality of timber-framed building construction, and this has been attributed to a number of factors. There was competition for timber due to its use for iron-smelting and ship-building, and builders found that they could use smaller and fewer structural timbers (Mercer 1975, 126). Generally, as brick-making became more established in some areas, the economic and practical advantages of brick as a building material began to outweigh those of timber. The price of bricks fell while that of timber rose, and people abandoned timber-framing as the fashion for brick gained momentum (Barley 1986, 179–91; Clifton-Taylor 1972, 210–30).

In Tamworth the swing from timber-framing to brick-building construction gained momentum towards the end of the 17th century, the time when 6, Market Street was constructed. Progressive rebuilding in brick left only a small number of medieval timber- framed buildings to be recorded in the 19th and 20th centuries. The late 14th- or mid 15th-century Paregaric Shop in Church Street was a building of considerable quality, having double jetties and twin gables to the street, and cusped braces on the first floor (Turner and Parker 1859, 235). The former 49, Church Street, at the north end of Middle Entry, had been built at a right-angle to the street, probably in the 15th century. The street façade was double-jettied, and the first and second floor walls had storey-high panels with curved braces; the tiebeam and single collar roof had raked struts and clasped purlins (T.C.M. watercolour by E. A. Phipson, 1903). The timber-framed buildings at 44–46, Church Street were recorded in 1968 prior to redevelopment. Though much altered, parts of nos. 45 and 46 may have survived from a general rebuilding after a fire of 1345, but no. 44 with its small square wall framing was probably of much later construction (Meeson 1971; 1979, 77 ff.). The remains of the rear range of a building in Market Street

stood adjacent to King Street until 1971; they belonged to a structure with storey-high wall panels, curved braces, and a clasped purlin roof of the 15th century (Meeson and Sheridan, 1974, 5–7).

When John Leland visited Tamworth in the 1540s the town was 'all built of timber', but in 1698 Celia Fiennes described it as 'a neat town built of brick and mostly new' (Smith 1908, 104; Morris 1949, 164). Nevertheless, at the end of the 18th century the town had again 'of late years been much improved' (Shaw 1798, 415). Some of the buildings constructed during those times were entirely new, but others were the result of a series of adaptations of timber-framed buildings (Meeson 1979, 83).

The records of Tamworth corporation offer several insights into the transformation of Tamworth from a town of timber-framed buildings to one of brick and tile. A meeting of the Common Hall (the town council) in 1667 agreed to the construction of a malt mill 'contayninge about a bay and a halfe' in Lichfield Street, and this terminology might imply that the structure was intended to be timber-framed (T.B.R. XII-1-70). Furthermore, on the south side of Market Street some timber-framing remains in buildings which were constructed over the 17th-century fill of the Tamworth Castle bailey ditch (Meeson 1979, 87). Nevertheless, the conversion from timber-frame to brick was to gain momentum during the late 17th and early 18th century, apparently encouraged by the corporation. In 1682 William Ashley proposed to 'pull down' his house in Church Street, and was commended for his intention to 'build it with brick, which will be an ornament to the Towne' (T.B.R. XII-34). In 1708 it was agreed that a tenant be admitted to a 'decayed house' on condition that he 'build the house anew [with] brick walls ... also to tile it', and in 1709 land was leased in Church Lane for a house to be built 'with brick and tile' (T.B.R. XII-1-182, 187).

The materials employed in new buildings were not the only consideration made by the corporation. Concern for proper siting and proportions is also expressed in official records. A new house in Lichfield Street for Richard Rushall had to 'come up with' contiguous premises and be built 'full as high ... and as well' as the adjoining houses (T.B.R. XII-1-108), and John Wallis was advised that he should build his new house three storeys high (T.B.R. XII-1-176).

From the 1670s there was a clear preference for brick for the construction of public buildings in the town. The Free Grammar School, built in Lower Gungate in 1677, was of brick, with classical flat pilasters and stone dressings (Hamel 1829). In 1692 Thomas Guy provided for the erection of almshouses, and these were built of brick on land allocated for the purpose by the corporation (T.B.R. XII-1-56). An order was made in 1700 for the old town hall in Market Street to be pulled down 'to make way for a New Hall [provided by] our worthy benefactor Thomas Guy Esq.' (T.B.R. XII-1-106). The building is a Flemish-bonded, chequered brick hall with stone dressings standing over sandstone columns in Tuscan style. A 19th-century view of the hall also includes a number of buildings at the east end of Market Street; it shows that, although a considerable amount of rebuilding had taken place by that period, a number of timber-framed buildings remained, gables to the street sometimes masked by stucco (Hamel 1829).

As will be shown below, no. 6, Market Street was constructed in 1695 or soon after, at a time when the better new buildings were being erected with brick. Either to conform with the growing taste for brick or comply with requirements generally specified by the corporation, it was built with a fashionable brick façade to the street. The other walls, however, were not built to the same standard as those in the front elevation, as the narrower walls to the rear were stiffened by timber frames. In this context 6, Market Street was simultaneously a concession to the growing fashion for brick, while relying for much of its structural stability on a more traditional frame.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING (fig. 1)

The brick façade was probably built near the end of the 17th century, but it now has four sash windows to the first floor and a wooden cornice, and raked dormers project through a tiled roof. The shop front is in late-Victorian style, with panelled and fluted composite pilasters; bracketed end blocks support a canopy with elaborate cast-iron cresting, and the central entrance is recessed, with an overlight above paired glazed doors. A right-end door-frame with overlight belongs to this composition, but the panelled and glazed door is more recent. The doorway gives access to a passage leading from the street to the rear of the front range; the passage probably belongs to the late 17th-century phase of construction discussed below. The ground floor façade has been described as 'a very fine example of a late nineteenth-century shop front' (DoE 1992). The symmetry of the first-floor

suspected construction date, and it also confirmed that the carpenters had used a number of timbers from a much earlier building. Seven timbers were sampled in the front range and nine in the rear range. Table 1, adapted from the Nottingham University report, lists the main dates of timbers which were reliably sampled, but omits the seven samples which failed to provide 'a last measured ring date'. The sample TAM A08, taken from the frame which divides the front and rear ranges, has complete sapwood, so the last measured ring date is the date of felling for that timber. Accordingly, the building was constructed in or shortly after 1695, that being the felling date of the sample TAM A08.

TIMBERS RE-USED FROM AN EARLIER BUILDING

During the survey a number of redundant joints were recorded, suggesting that extensive use had been made of salvaged timber. They comprised two tiebeams, an interrupted tiebeam, a principle, and two purlins, belonging to one or more earlier buildings.

The tiebeam and a raked strut in truss G–G1 had last measured ring dates (LMR) of 1410 and 1425. The core sample from the tiebeam in truss D had a LMR date of 1427; the LMR date of sample A05 from a principle in truss C was 1403. Three of the early tree-ring dates were taken from trusses D–D1 and G–G1, each of which formed a gable to the front range. As has been noted above, both of those trusses have raked struts to principles with halved joints at the apex. The pair of principles from which sample A05 was taken were also halved at the apex. These trusses, which are made of salvaged timbers, have a different form of apex from the others in the building. However, they cannot be remnants *in situ* of a medieval building, as they rely for their support upon the rear wall plate of the front range dated to 1695.

The interrupted tiebeam in truss B–B1 retains a substantial notched dovetail halving. Although this timber is not curved, the angle of the joint would be appropriate as a housing for a tiebeam in a cruck truss. The tiebeam in truss D–C is cranked; it has traces of a lapped halving, perhaps for a collar, and arguably this too might have come from a cruck-framed building. The re-used timbers employed in the 1695 structure could have been retrieved from an earlier building on or near the same site.

CONCLUSION

No. 6, Market Street is a remarkable survival of a structure erected in or soon after 1695 during the last stages of the timber-framed building tradition in Tamworth; moreover, it incorporates re-used timbers from an earlier building (or buildings) of *c.* 1427–30. Although the building presented a fashionable brick façade to the street, many of the walls were timber-framed. The advent of brick did not entirely supercede timber-framed construction; nevertheless, 6, Market Street may have been amongst the last buildings erected in Tamworth by a carpenter who looked back to more traditional forms of roof and wall construction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The building was surveyed for the Director of Planning and Economic Development, Staffordshire County Council. Tree-ring dates were obtained by the Tree-ring Dating Laboratory of Nottingham University, from cores obtained by R. Howard. The tree-ring dating survey was commissioned and funded by Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developments Ltd., and Mr. C. Smith is thanked for his initiative, help, and encouragement. Mr. R. Sulima provided valuable assistance at Tamworth Castle Museum, and Mrs. M. Swift located the article cited from the Tamworth Herald. Alan Taylor and Philip Heath read the first draft of this paper and recommended a number of improvements.

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EXCAVATIONS IN THE WALLED GARDEN, BESCOT HALL, WALSALL

MARTIN LOCOCK

INTRODUCTION

At present, much of the grounds of the now-demolished Bescot Hall form a municipal park, owned by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. As part of a programme of up-grading local parks, it was proposed that the walled kitchen garden area of the hall should be replanted as a Victorian garden. The Walsall Archaeology Society agreed to undertake work to recover the original layout of the garden, and the excavations produced evidence of the garden's structural sequence.

LOCATION AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site (fig. 1) lies on the northern bank of the River Tame, on the SW edge of modern Walsall (Nat. Grid. Ref. SO 997967, SMR 2641). The drift geology of the area is glacial clay deposit overlying limestone and coal measures. The area was known as Bescot by the time of Domesday Book, in which it was described as 'waste' (Wheatley 1971, 202–3). The site was occupied in the late 13th century by William Hillary. A moated manor house was built in the early 14th century and a licence to crenellate was given in 1345. In 1425 the manor became the property of the Mountfort family. The manor house was subsequently enlarged: in the hearth tax returns of 1666 the occupier was assessed on 14 hearths. The Mountfort family was succeeded in 1681 by Thomas Harris, who sold the property to Jonas Slaney in 1725.

The manor house was demolished in 1731 and replaced by Bescot Hall, on a site 100 m. to the north-east. A decorative bridge was also built across the moat. In 1794 Richard Aston, a wealthy coal-mine owner, bought the hall for £4000, extending it and laying out gardens. During the 19th century the hall was occupied by several owners and tenants, and in 1922 it was bought by Pitt Bonarjee for use as a private school. Later damaged by fire, it was demolished in 1929 (VCH Staffs. xvii. 157, 171–3; Willmore 1887, 280–6; McDevitt 1987, 8-11; Pearce 1989, 4, 91–2). The moat was filled in the 1930s and the site is now under grass within the public park. It has been investigated by aerial photography and geophysical survey (Lococ 1989).

The present Pleck Park had originally been laid out as the parkland of Bescot Hall, including the walled garden to the NW of the house. The site of the hall itself lies under the gardens of a 1930s housing estate. The most recent change in the landscape has been the construction of the M6 motorway, which truncated the SW corner of the park. The area of the walled garden is known to have been a kitchen garden in the 1900s, and is shown as such in the sale prospectus of 1922 (McDevitt 1987, 9). From its proximity to the site of the hall, the area is likely to have been a kitchen garden for some time. The northern part of the walled garden was built over in the 1950s, the remaining area being used for storage by gardeners.

THE EXCAVATION

Walsall Archaeology Society started work on the Bescot Hall site in 1989. It was decided to carry out a contour survey of the grassed parts, in order to locate buried features, and to excavate a number of trenches to investigate anomalous aspects of the layout (fig. 2). At the time, there was no trace of the paths which are shown on maps up to 1970, the area having been grassed over. An outline plan was drawn up of the surviving walls and trees, and a site grid set up. This provided the basis for the contour survey, at 1 m. horizontal intervals, and the contours were plotted at 0.05 m. vertical intervals above Site Datum (118.64 m. above Ordnance Datum). Excavation was carried out stratigraphically and was recorded by written, photographic, and drawn archives, which have been deposited in Walsall Art Gallery and Museum.

DESCRIPTION (fig. 3)

Trench A

This EW trench, 3 m. x 1 m., was positioned to investigate the flat area running NS parallel to the

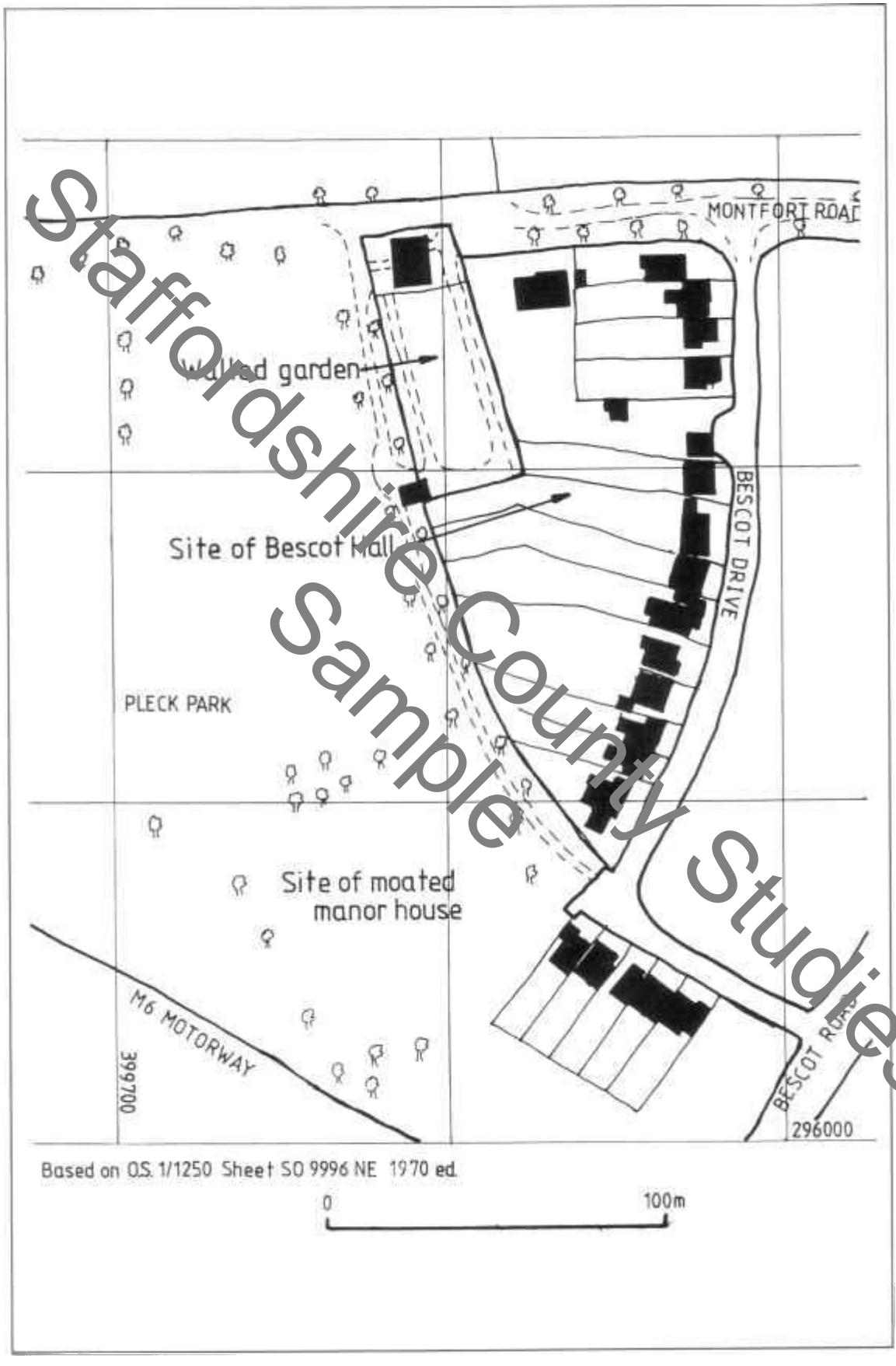

Fig. 1 Bescot Hall: location of site

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NOTICE

The Society very much regrets the tragic death in a road accident in September 1992 of its committee member Mrs. Jane Hampartumian, archivist in charge of the Lichfield Joint Record Office. As Miss Isaac she succeeded Dr. David Robinson as archivist at Lichfield in 1970, having studied history and archaeology at the University of Birmingham and trained as an archivist at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. She soon became involved in the work of the Society, and between 1973 and 1981 was responsible for organising the Lichfield meetings. Her article on two medieval accounts for Lichfield was published in 1977 in volume xviii of our transactions. In 1979 she married Nubar Hampartumian, and they had two daughters, Amy and Sylvia. Her death was a severe blow to her many friends, both personal and professional, and the Society will miss her valuable contribution to its work.

PROGRAMME

1991

4 Oct. Annual General Meeting
Ancient Buildings around the Mediterranean – Dr. Bill Cavanagh
18 Oct. The Wharram Research Project – John Hurst
1 Nov. Excavations at Flag Fen – Janet Neve
15 Nov. The excavations at Rocester – Iain Ferris
13 Dec. Christmas Pastime

1992

7 Feb. The archaeological survey of medieval churches in Staffordshire – Bob Meeson
21 Feb. Swaledale's Ancient Landscape – Andrew Fleming
6 Mar. Architectural aspects of the brewing industry – Sarah Elsom
20 Mar. Civic Evening
Celts and the Classical World – Robin Littens
3 Apr. Excavations of an Iron Age settlement at Gamston, Nottinghamshire – Dr. David Knight