THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

Edited by
ANNETTE M. BURTON

VOLUME XXI (2005)

ISSN 1359–9062
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Designed and printed by Arrowsmith Limited,
Winterstoke Road, Bristol, BS3 2NT

Front cover: Watercolour of Newport Castle and Bridge by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot, 1795.
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Frontispiece: Watercolour of Newport Castle and Bridge by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot; when she visited Newport in 1795, stone was being collected to build a new bridge.
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VOL. XXI 2005

CONTENTS

		Page
Frontispiece		1
Holocene Floodplain Sediments and Associated Archaeology of the Olway Valley (Gwent, UK): An Excavation Report	Simon K. Haslett	5
Roman and Medieval-Early Modern Building Stones in South East Wales: The Sudbrook Sandstone and Dolomitic Conglomerate (Triassic)	J.R.L. Allen	21
The Roads of Trelech: Investigation of the Development of the Medieval Town	Ray Howell	45
Monmouthshire Journeys: The Visits to Monmouthshire of Sarah Eardley-Wilmot (née Haslam) in 1795 and 1802	Liz Pitman	65
Kingshill, Newport	M.G.R. Morris	85
Short Notes:		103
The Newport Medieval Ship: Historical Background	Bob Trett	
Newport in 1711	David H. Williams	
Excavation of a Prehistoric Enclosure in Trelech	Jonathan Burton, Daryl Williams and Paul Huckfield	
Reviews:		109
The Gwent County History. Volume1. Gwent in Prehistory and Early History	Barry Cunliffe	
From Dawn Till Dusk. Usk: the story of its markets, trades and occupations	Annette M. Burton	
The Book of Llandaf and the Norman Church in Wales	Jeremy K. Knight	
Welsh Military Institutions, 633–1283	Richard Avent	
The Five Wounds of Jesus	Madeleine Gray	
Notes on Contributors		117
Field Excursions and Other Activities, 2004	Gwenllian V. Jones	119
Members of the Association (as at 31 January 2005)		121
Guidelines for Contributors to *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*		127
Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association: President, Officers and Committee		Inside back cover

HOLOCENE FLOODPLAIN SEDIMENTS AND ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OLWAY VALLEY (GWENT, UK): AN EXCAVATION REPORT

By Simon K. Haslett

Summary

An excavation and coring survey to investigate floodplain sediments of the Olway Valley, Gwent, has demonstrated over 3m of Holocene floodplain alluvium overlying bedrock close to the valley side in the parish of Llangeview, near Usk. Archaeology associated with the floodplain alluvium is multi-period and includes: 1) a Roman pot sherd which contributes to the debate regarding the route of the Usk–Monmouth Roman road; 2) an extensive Medieval stone layer, that was constructed (radiocarbon dated to *c.* fifteenth century) from the debris of a thirteenth-century building, perhaps as a way of broadening the resource use of the floodplain; and 3) a mixed nineteenth and twentieth-century artefact assemblage occurring within the plough horizon, with evidence for the local initiation of floodplain drainage. Two Neolithic flint tools were also recovered from a smaller excavation on the valley side *c.*16m from the main excavation. These results contribute to an ongoing project investigating the Holocene development of the Olway Valley and its wider significance.

Introduction

The Olway Brook is a tributary of the River Usk, with the confluence located *c.*3km to the south of the town of Usk in central Gwent. Haslett (2003) investigated the Holocene sedimentary sequence of the Olway Valley, proposing a preliminary model for its postglacial development and briefly exploring its prehistoric archaeological potential. The Holocene history of the valley is considered to be potentially important as a previously neglected example of landscape evolution transitional between the better studied upland regions of mid-Wales and the lowland/coastal areas (*e.g.* Gwent Levels) bordering the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel. A similar context is concurrently being investigated, also by the Quaternary Research Unit at Bath Spa University College, linking the Mendip Hills and the Somerset Levels (*see* Haslett, 2003).

The general lithostratigraphic sequence exposed in the actively eroding banks of the Olway and Pill Brooks (the Pill Brook is a tributary of the Olway Brook) comprises a basal Pleistocene 'head' deposit locally characterised by grey-brown sandy clay or pinkish gravel, overlain by a thin (<0.15m) peaty layer, capped by *c.*3m of reddish-brown sandy to silty alluvium, the Tywi Formation of Bowen (1999). Haslett (2003) obtained radiocarbon dates for the peaty layer at two different locations: 5760±80 BP (Beta-164472) and 4600±80 BP (Beta-169236). The peaty layer represents an important phase in regional landscape evolution as it signifies the rise in the water table, apparently corresponding to postglacial sea-level rise, initiating the onset of flooding of low-lying inland river valleys and the creation of associated floodplains. Prior to this flood initiation, sediment eroded from the upland region would be transported directly to the coast, bypassing the inland river valleys. The amount of sediment reaching the coast, however, would decrease after the inland rivers begin to flood and deposit the sediment within the valleys forming floodplains. Therefore, the function of low-lying inland river valleys, such as the Olway Valley, changes in the mid-Holocene from one of a sediment bypass to that of a sink, consequently influencing changes at the coast.

In order to establish the timing of phases of floodplain development and rates of floodplain sedimentation, and to understand influences on the coastal environment and human activity, it is essential to obtain datable horizons from within the *c*.3m of reddish-brown floodplain alluvium overlying the peaty layer. However, in the mid-valley exposures examined by Haslett (2003) the alluvium lacked any organic horizons datable using the radiocarbon method and was archaeologically sterile, except for surficial disturbance and debris apparently related to the archaeologically recent construction of the Llandenny race course (Bradney, 1923), Usk–Monmouth railway and the later A449 dual carriageway which both run along the valley axis (lengths of the Olway Brook were diverted and/or canalised during the construction of these routeways).

To maximise the potential of recovering datable organic and/or archaeological material from the alluvium it was decided to investigate a site located near a settlement along the valley margin where floodplain sediments were expected to onlap bedrock of the valley side. In such a location, relatively distant from the current position of the river channel, it might be expected that rates of mineral sedimentation would be relatively low, therefore increasing the likelihood of recovering organic horizons and/or archaeological material, either through a higher artefact concentration (less sediment dilution) and/or proximity to human activity (that would perhaps be greater along the drier valley sides). Such a valley margin strategy has proved successful in other settings (*e.g.* Haslett *et al.*, 1998). The aim of this paper is to report and discuss the findings of the excavation only, whilst further analysis of the Holocene development of the Olway Valley, including sedimentation, will be the focus of a future paper.

Excavation details

The general physical setting of the Olway Valley is given in Haslett (2003, Fig. 1). A consequence of the valley margin strategy adopted for this study is the low availability of exposures through the floodplain sediments. Of a small number of natural streams that run off the surrounding hills and enter onto the floodplain, some possess small incised channels but are relatively shallow and usually obscured by vegetation, especially willow (*Salix*) and alder (*Alnus*). Drainage ditches cut into the floodplain sediments are similarly difficult to investigate. Therefore, it was decided to excavate a trench through the sediment at the break of slope between the valley side and the Olway Valley floodplain. A potentially suitable site was located in the grounds of New Inn Cottage (NIC) in the eastern part of Llangeview parish near Usk, central Gwent (National Grid Reference (NGR) SO40510156), (Fig. 1).

The siting of the trench was informed through topographic and sediment coring surveys. The topographic survey was conducted off the valley side perpendicular to the valley axis using a Leica TC400 Total Station. Survey points were taken at at least 4m intervals along a 96m transect and related to Ordnance Datum (OD) Newlyn using an Ordnance Survey Bench Mark at 22.14mOD located on a stone bridge at NGR SO40780195. A Temporary Bench Mark of 21.468mOD was set up on a manhole cover to the rear of New Inn Cottage for local use. Results of the topographic survey are shown in Fig. 2. The highest point (0m along the transect) lies at 21.497mOD, falling by 16m along the transect to the general floodplain level that undulates along the rest of the transect between 20.1 and 20.4mOD.

The initial (pre-excavation) coring survey was undertaken to establish the presence of typical floodplain alluvium at the site and used a manual bayonet-fitted Eijkelkamp gouge capable of coring to 5m depth. Subsequent (post-excavation) coring, however, used a fixed manual 1m Eijkelkamp gouge. The initial core site (NIC/96/1) is located at *c*.40m along the transect and demonstrated 3.03m

deep sequence of alluvium apparently resting on bedrock. The lithostratigraphic details of this core are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Lithostratigraphic description of core NIC/96/1 located c.40m along transect.

Depth interval (m)	Lithostratigraphic description
0–0.9m	Reddish-brown soil/alluvial clay with grey mottling at base.
0.9–0.92m	Layer of angular gravel comprising ORS clasts.
0.92–2.15m	Red micaceous clayey sand.
2.15–2.2m	Red clayey silt.
2.2–3.03m	Red clayey sand with dark organic spots with subrounded gravel at base, apparently resting on bedrock.

Using these data, it was possible to site the trench at the valley side/floodplain junction determined between 16–20m along the transect (Figs. 1 and 2). The trench plan dimensions were 4 x 1m orientated with the long axis perpendicular to the contours. It was excavated manually in July 2002 using spades and trowels with the spoil deposited nearby in depth related heaps so that later, should any artefacts be recovered from them, some depth information could be assigned. The trench was divided into plan sections each of $1m^2$. All archaeological material recovered was categorised, weighed using spring balances, and some were collected and retained for further study in plastic sample bags labelled with section, depth, date, and any other comments. The trench was excavated to surfaces of varying depths (shown in Figs. 3 and 4), being mainly determined by sediment and archaeological layers of interest.

Floodplain sediments and associated archaeology

The general lithostratigraphy of the floodplain sediments observed in the excavation is schematically shown for each of the trench faces in Fig. 5. For ease of discussion, each distinguishable unit has been assigned a context identifier prefixed with the year of excavation (02), with the specific number generally increasing with depth. The contexts are systematically described below, but summary details of archaeological material are given in Table 2 (*see* below). All ceramic and flint artefacts have been deposited in Abergavenny Museum, Monmouthshire (Accession no. A2003.81).

Context 021: this uppermost layer extends from the ground surface to a depth of 0.38m and comprises reddish-brown clayey silt with some dark organic mottles. Textural evidence of disturbance and mixing indicates this layer has been ploughed. Indeed, the current landowners report that the site had been ploughed annually at least between 1981 and 1987, mainly for wheat cultivation, but has since been converted to hay meadow. Archaeological artefacts were searched for in depth intervals 0–0.27m and 0.27–0.54m spanning both context 021 and 022. Artefacts were forthcoming from both sampling intervals. However, field observation suggests that most material is derived from context 021, whilst context 022 appeared to be sterile. A diverse modern artefact assemblage was recovered (*see* Table 2 below) ranging in age from nineteenth-century and later pottery, including five sherds of thick-walled white glazed and four transfer 'willow pattern' sherds, to a twentieth-century plastic item and synthetic bailing twine.

Table 2. Summary of archaeological material recovered from the 2002 Olway Valley floodplain excavation and raspberry trench (RT) at New Inn Cottage, Llangeview, near Usk.

Item	Additional note	Total	Weight	No. per context								
Description		**no.**	**(kg)**	**021**	**022**	**023**	**024**	**025**	**026**	**027**	**028**	**RT**
bailing twine		1	0.095	1								
bone	fowl?	1	0.0435	1								
brick fragment		2	0.129			2						
ceramic	Bristol-type sherds	3	0.0063					3				
ceramic	modern sherds	10	0.0897		10							
ceramic	Roman pot sherd	1	0.0067								1	
ceramic	yellow-green glaze	1	0.0141									1
charcoal		13	0.0107	10								
					3							
clinker		5	0.0065	5								
concretions	Pipe-like	2	0.01					2				
drainage pipe		5	9.2				5					
flint blades	Neolithic	2	0.0047									2
glass (clear) fragment		1	0.0045			1						
horseshoe		1	0.13	1								
limestone	burnt	68	6.318					62	5			
							1					
metal objects	including nut and bolt	4	0.0905	1		3						
ORS clast	black (?burnt)	3	0.0999		2			1				
ORS clast	calcrete	21	2.6945	2		1						
					18							
ORS clast	gritstone	286	60.33	1				241	22		18	
ORS clast	mudstone	5	0.3255	2				2				
					1							
ORS clast	sandstone	789	117.49	58		75	53	385			3	
					193		6		16			
ORS clast	undifferentiated	24	1.1			24						
pale rock clast		14	0.1051	14								
pebble	quartz	4	0.178	3				1				
pebble	sandstone	25	0.8725	4		4		7				
					10							
plastic		1	0.001	1								
red tile fragment		14	0.1443	1		6						
					7							
ridge tile	coarse green glazed	3	0.2538					3				
roof tile	drilled sandstone	1	0.2202					1				
slag	aggregated	1	0.089			1						
slag	brittle	4	5.034				1	3				
slag	bubbly	3	0.1515	2								
					1							
slate fragment		1	0.024			1						
wood	cut	1	0.2250	1								
wood	uncut	1	0.1300	1								
TOTALS		**1321**	**205.62**	**354**		**118**	**66**	**710**	**43**		**22**	**3**
Percentage				**26.8**		**8.9**	**5.0**	**53.8**	**3.3**		**1.7**	**1.5**

Of the pieces of locally-derived Old Red Sandstone (ORS) recovered, 251 clasts were sandstone, with eight calcrete (possibly from the *Psammosteus* Limestone), three Raglan Mudstone, and one gritstone clast (*see* Welch and Trotter, 1961, for discussion of local ORS geology). The presence of clasts in such distal floodplain sediments is either due to incorporation of local bedrock material through natural processes or human activity, but with the thick floodplain sequence and absence of exposed bedrock nearby, the latter explanation is the most probable.

Context 022: this context is lithologically similar to context 021, except that it does not appear to have been disturbed by ploughing. It spans 0.38–0.54m depth, with its upper contact with 021 being slightly uneven. As discussed above, no artefacts appear to derive from this context.

Context 023: This context represents sediment infilling what appears to be a ditch cut into the alluvium in a roughly west–east orientation. The sediment is a light-brown silty clay with stones and so contrasts clearly with the reddish-brown sediments of contexts 021 and 022. However, context 023 can only be clearly recognised below 0.38m (the lower limit of ploughing), and therefore, it is not possible to identify the surface from which it was originally dug, but is probably above 0.38m depth. Therefore, context 021 in section 4 probably yields artefacts from the ditch fill disturbed by ploughing. It is not known when the ditch was infilled. In the South-East Face (Fig. 5) the base of the ditch is seen to bottom out around 0.54m depth. Therefore, in section (*e.g.* North-East Face, Fig. 5) context 023 appears to be a lateral continuation of 022, but separated by a sharp near-vertical junction. The mapped context yielded brick fragments, clear glass, metal objects, 101 ORS clasts (mainly sandstone, but also two calcrete clasts similar to those found in 021), sandstone pebbles, fragments of red drainage tile, aggregated slag, and a piece of slate (Table 2). This assemblage suggests a nineteenth to twentieth-century date for the ditch, which is likely to have been open, rather than a covered field drain, as the stone recovered was scattered rather than concentrated at the base.

Context 024: This context consists of reddish-brown clayey sand spanning 0.54–0.7m depth. The layer is rather sterile, yielding 53 ORS sandstone clasts and one piece of brittle slag. Also, a set of clay drainage pipes had been laid towards the base of this layer in an approximate west–east orientation. The pipes had been machine extruded, but not stamped for exemption from a tax not revoked until 1850, indicating a later nineteenth-century or later date for their manufacture (Allen, 1988). The pipes were all but silted up. Also, the level from which the pipes had been dropped could not be discerned and probably lies in the plough layer (context 021).

Context 025: Between 0.7–0.8m depth the reddish-brown clayey sand of context 024 becomes a matrix to a layer of mainly large angular clasts of ORS laid flat (Fig. 6). A significant amount of soft cores of burnt limestone were encountered in the stone layer (Table 2), along with some brittle slag. A significant proportion of the angular ORS sandstone clasts recovered were flaggy, and a hole had been drilled in one piece, suggesting that they were roof tiles; this is supported by the presence of three pieces of green-glazed ridge tile. In addition, three small pot sherds were recovered exhibiting a Bristol-type mottled green-glaze. This material suggests a thirteenth-century date. Bone fragments (probably fowl) were found associated with the stones close to the surface of the stone layer. One fragment was sent to Beta Analytic Inc. for radiocarbon dating using the Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) method, yielding an intercept age of AD 1470 (*see* Table 3 for full details). It is possible that this context represents debris from a collapsed local building. Indeed, a raspberry trench was excavated by the landowner on the valley side (equivalent to *c.* 0m on the transect) during the

winter of 2002–2003 that revealed stone walls of a possible building, and a single fifteenth-century pot sherd, exhibiting an internal thick yellowish glaze, was unearthed. Two Neolithic worked flint tools, one a complete utilized blade and the other a blade fragment, both lacking patination, were also recovered from the raspberry trench. They show no sign of abrasion and are likely to be *in situ*. It is likely that bedrock lies close to the ground surface here and that a highly condensed sequence exists with a Neolithic surface approximately equivalent to the bedrock surface.

It was considered that the layer of gravel at 0.9–0.92m depth in core NIC/96/1 may be the lateral extension of context 025. This was confirmed by the post-excavation coring survey which traced the context 025 stone layer to 58m along the transect, therefore proving it for at least 42m of the transect (Fig. 2). It is possible that the building debris was spread thinly over the floodplain surface to act as a hard-standing or platform on the probably marshy ground to perform a similar function to elsewhere in the region (Locock, 1998, 2000; Locock and Lawler, 2000). The burnt limestone may have been local, or brought in as waste to add bulk to the platform. It is also possible that the building debris is not immediately local and has been brought to the site to construct a platform. Whatever the geographic origin of the debris, it appears to derive from a thirteenth-century structure/s that collapsed, or was demolished sometime later and spread thinly over the floodplain, a phase to which the fifteenth-century bone material and pot sherd from the raspberry trench very probably relates. The demise of this building may relate to the general rural depopulation of the area due to the plague in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (AD 1349–1413) and/or the sacking of Usk by Owain Glyndwr in AD 1405 (Barrow, 2004).

Table 3. Details of radiocarbon analysis of bone fragment from context 025. Calibration is performed using INTCAL98 (Stuiver et al., 1998).

Sample label	NIC/BONE
Laboratory no.	Beta-169461
Method	AMS with bone collagen extraction
Radiocarbon age	390±50 BP
Calibrated intercept age	AD 1470
Calibrated age range (1σ)	AD1440 to 1520 and AD 1590 to 1620
Calibrated age range (2σ)	AD 1430 to 1640

Context 026: This context is a distinctive compacted yellowish iron-stained rather stoneless sand spanning 0.8–0.88m depth. The combined context 026 and 027 sample yielded some ORS clasts (the majority from context 027) and burnt limestone (most probably reworked downward in the profile from context 025), in which case context 026 could be considered sterile.

Context 027: A layer of reddish sand with black mottling spanning 0.88–0.9m with a discontinuous layer of relatively large ORS clasts apparently laid flat at its base. There are no artefacts associated with this lower stone layer, but it might represent an earlier attempt at constructing a platform on the floodplain, and/or the collapse/demolition of an earlier building/structure nearby.

Context 028: A red gritty sand with occasional stones extends from 0.9m to the floor of the excavation at 1.35m. A single body sherd of an unglazed pot was found in this context, which is considered to be Roman and indicates a date in the mid to late first, to second century AD (*c.*AD 50–200). The sediment below the floor of the excavation was augered to a depth of 2.35m, revealing a similar lithostratigraphy for similar depths as recorded in core NIC/96/1 (Table 1); bedrock was not reached.

Discussion

The clayey sequence spanning 0–0.7m, coarsening with depth, is typical of floodplain sediments in south-west Britain, including the lower Severn Valley, the Somerset Levels, and a number of valleys in South Wales, Devon, and elsewhere in Somerset. In these areas, including the Olway Valley, the sequence is mapped and referred to the Compton Soil Association (Findlay *et al.*, 1984), which is dominated by reddish clayey alluvial gley soils. These soils normally form on Triassic mudstone outcrops, but in the Olway Valley it is the Siluro-Devonian Old Red Sandstone that provides the red parent material (Welch and Trotter, 1961). Under undrained conditions, this soil type suffers severe water-logging, Wetness Class V of Hodgson (1976) where the top 0.4m of the soil is water-logged for more than 180 days in most years. With drainage they may be improved to Wetness Class III where water-logging occurs within the top 0.7m for no more than 180 days in most years. In terms of agriculture, arable crops succeed on this soil type only where good drainage occurs, and in poorer drained areas permanent grassland is maintained, mainly for summer grazing (Findlay *et al.*, 1984).

It is clear from the reports of relatively recent wheat cultivation at the site that the soil is currently well-drained to Wetness Class III or better. Evidence for drainage, the ditch and fill of context 023 and the clay drainage pipes found in context 024, both indicate that drainage improvement occurred in the nineteenth century or later. The practice of ploughing probably only occurred after drainage was emplaced and, therefore, the disturbance of context 021 took place in this period. The mixed assemblage of nineteenth and twentieth-century artefacts suggest a date for this context, but it is not possible on the information currently available to establish the extent of pre-nineteenth-century sediment (if any) present in context 021. Refining the chronology of these upper layers of sediment would be possible, to a degree, through establishing the precise stratigraphic distribution of artefacts in the plough-disturbed and undisturbed contexts of 021 and 022 respectively.

It is probable that prior to drainage in the nineteenth/twentieth century that the soil was of a higher Wetness Class and that grassland cultivation would have been practiced. Support for this view is offered by the paintings of Joshua Gosselin, held in the Monmouth Museum (reproduced as Plates 21–24 in Mitchell, 2003), who depicts the agricultural landscape during July and August 1805 at two locations on the Olway Valley floodplain; at Lower Maerdy Farm and Llandenny Bottom (between Rhyd-y-maen and Llandenny) (*see* Fig. 1). The scene of Llandenny Bottom (July 1805) depicts a long field, probably bounded by the unaltered Olway and Pill Brooks (marked by relatively high trees, probably alders), in which a hay crop is being harvested with more than ten large hay stacks constructed in the field (Plate 22 of Mitchell, 2003). None of the fields on the surrounding valley sides were cropped for hay, and it is likely that these were pasture. The scene of Rhyd-y-maen (Plate 21 of Mitchell, 2003) is on the valley side and shows a cow grazing. In the scenes of Lower Maerdy Farm (August 1805) the hay has been gathered in and stored in ricks close to the farm buildings (Plates 23–24 of Mitchell, 2003). A single pig and horse are also seen grazing close to the farm. New Barn Farm is seen on the valley side in the distance, where in fields below it on the footslope a group of grazing animals are visible, as well as what appear to be extensive orchards on the higher slopes above it. Therefore, from this evidence, it appears that prior to drainage the Olway Valley floodplain soil was of a high Wetness Class and supported hay meadows, probably being too wet even for summer grazing, whilst fields of the surrounding valley sides supported pasture and orchards.

In the excavation, there is no stratigraphic or textural evidence for ploughing, or indeed ridge and furrow, below context 021. It is conceivable that the type of agriculture depicted by Gosselin in

1805, had persisted for centuries before. Deviating from this type of agriculture on soils of a high Wetness Class would perhaps require either drainage, as seen in the nineteenth/twentieth century, or stabilisation of the ground surface by the construction of a stone platform, which may make the land accessible to animals in the drier months of the year. It is possible that the medieval stone layers observed in contexts 025 and 027 represent such attempts to broaden the resource use of the floodplain surface or perhaps as part of a moated enclosure (Aberg, 1978). The construction of the stone layers was either opportunistic, perhaps spreading the debris from a collapsed building near to the site, or planned, either through importation of material or planned demolition of a nearby building. The incorporation of burnt limestone in context 025 was either simply as additional bulk for the platform, or perhaps to alter the soil pH, or both. The nearest documented kiln to the site lies *c*.900m across the valley near Coed-y-brain at SO39700195 (PRN 01895g) indicated on a 1766 map. Stone layers appear to have influenced the topographic development of the floodplain in that a subtle topographic high exists 56m along the transect coincident with the shallowest occurrence of a stone layer proved in the post-excavation core survey (Fig. 2). This relationship is most likely due to sediment compaction, with the stone layer being relatively resistant (Allen, 1999).

The Roman pot sherd recovered from context 028 is an isolated find that is difficult to contextualise. However, it does provide a maximum age for the sediments in which it occurs. The presence of this Roman artefact is not unexpected given the proximity to Usk and its Roman fortress occupied between AD *c*.49–74 (Manning, 1981), although according to the Sites and Monuments Record, other than at Usk, no other Roman artefacts have been found in the Olway Valley. Also, the route of the Roman road between Usk and Monmouth is controversial, with suggestions that it either lay to the north of the Olway Valley running through Gwehelog to Raglan (Margary, 1973), or that it followed the southern flank of the Olway Valley (Manning, 1981), a route to which the excavation reported here probably lies within *c*.25m.

The Neolithic flint tools found are in a similar valley side context to the only other known Neolithic find in the Olway Valley: a Neolithic stone axe recorded during the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Lithics Survey 2000 (PRN 00940g) on the edge of the modern floodplain at the confluence of the Pill Brook and Olway Brook valleys (SO422025; Fig. 1). The new finds further strengthen the view, put forward by Haslett (2003), that the low-lying inland valleys of Gwent have significant potential for prehistoric archaeology. In others areas around the Severn Estuary region, such as the Somerset Levels (Coles and Coles, 1986) and the Gwent Levels (Bell *et al.*, 2003), it has been demonstrated that such wetland environments attracted prehistoric peoples.

Conclusions

1. This study has identified a multi-period site where a number of sediment horizons have been artefactually or radiocarbon dated and may, therefore, contribute to establishing a record of floodplain sedimentation rates through the Holocene.
2. Evidence indicates the changes in historic agricultural practices, from pre-drainage grassland cultivation, to post-drainage ploughing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
3. An extensive medieval stone layer may represent a local attempt to broaden the resource use of the pre-drained floodplain.
4. The occurrence of a mid-first to second century AD pot sherd indicates proximity to Roman activity, such as the Roman fortress at Usk *c*.3km distant, or perhaps a Roman road that has been speculated to pass within *c*. 25m of the excavation site.
5. Two Neolithic blades found at the site further encourage the view that the mid-Holocene wetland environment of the Olway Valley may have been exploited and inhabited by prehistoric peoples in a similar manner to that reconstructed for the Somerset Levels.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been funded by Bath Spa University College. The author is grateful to the landowners for permission to excavate, assistance in surveying, and help with backfilling The archaeological artefacts recovered from the excavation were shown to Peter Webster (Cardiff University), Elizabeth Walker, Mark Redknap, Nigel Blackamore, Evan Chapman (all of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff) and John R.L. Allen (University of Reading), who kindly offered their expert opinion. The author is very grateful for their advice, but stresses that any errors are due entirely to the author. Rachael Rogers (Curator, Abergavenny Museum) is thanked for providing a repository for the archaeological material.

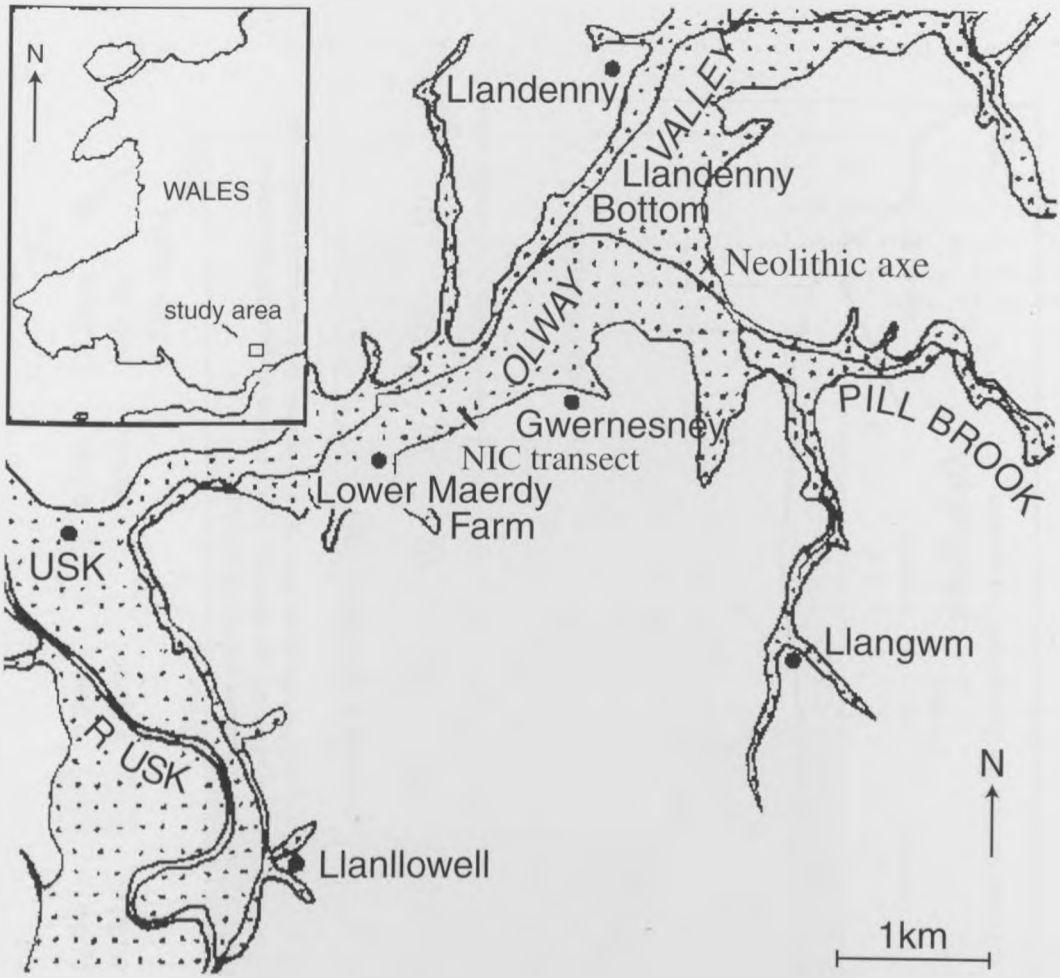

Fig. 1: General location of the Olway Valley and the distribution of floodplain alluvium (stippled). The position of the New Inn Cottage (NIC) transect and the findspot of Neolithic axe (PRN 00940g) are also shown.

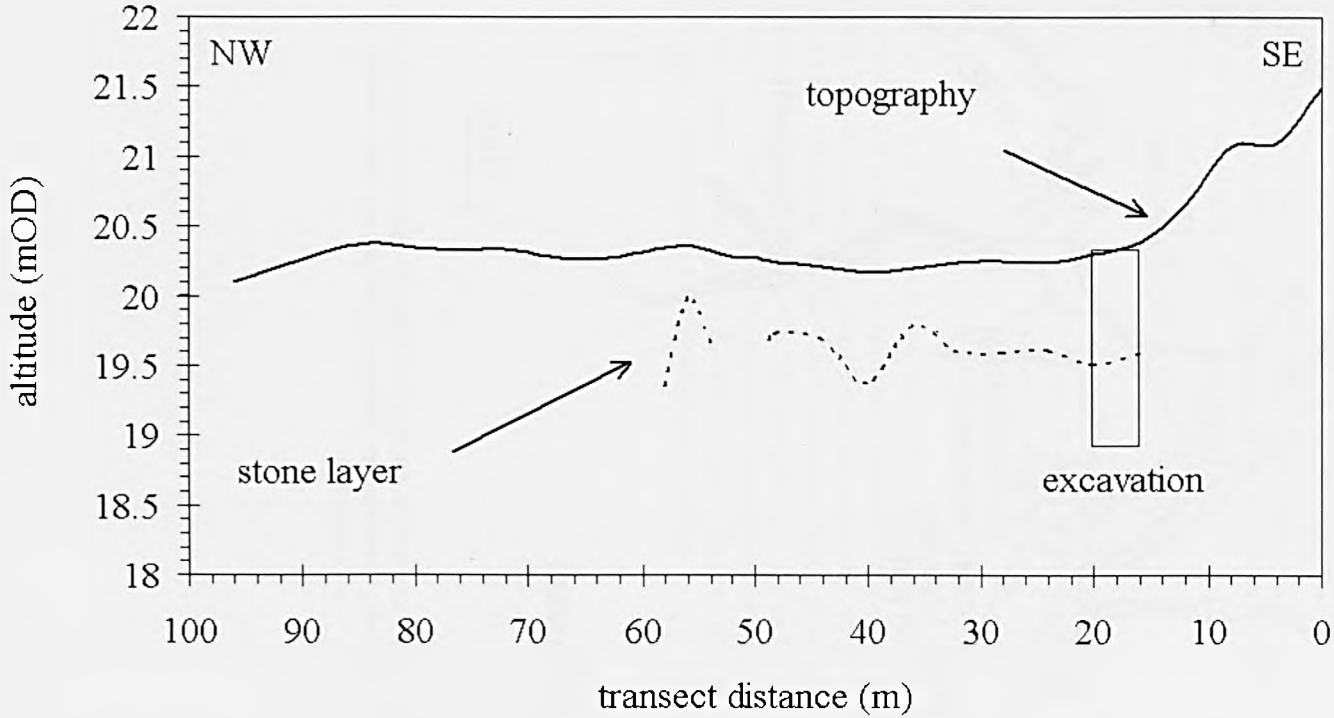

Fig. 2: Topography of the New Inn Cottage (NIC) transect with the position of the excavation trench and the subsurface extent of the medieval stone layer (context 025) proved by excavation and auguring. The raspberry trench is close to 0m along the transect. Altitude is given relative to Ordnance Datum (OD) Newlyn.

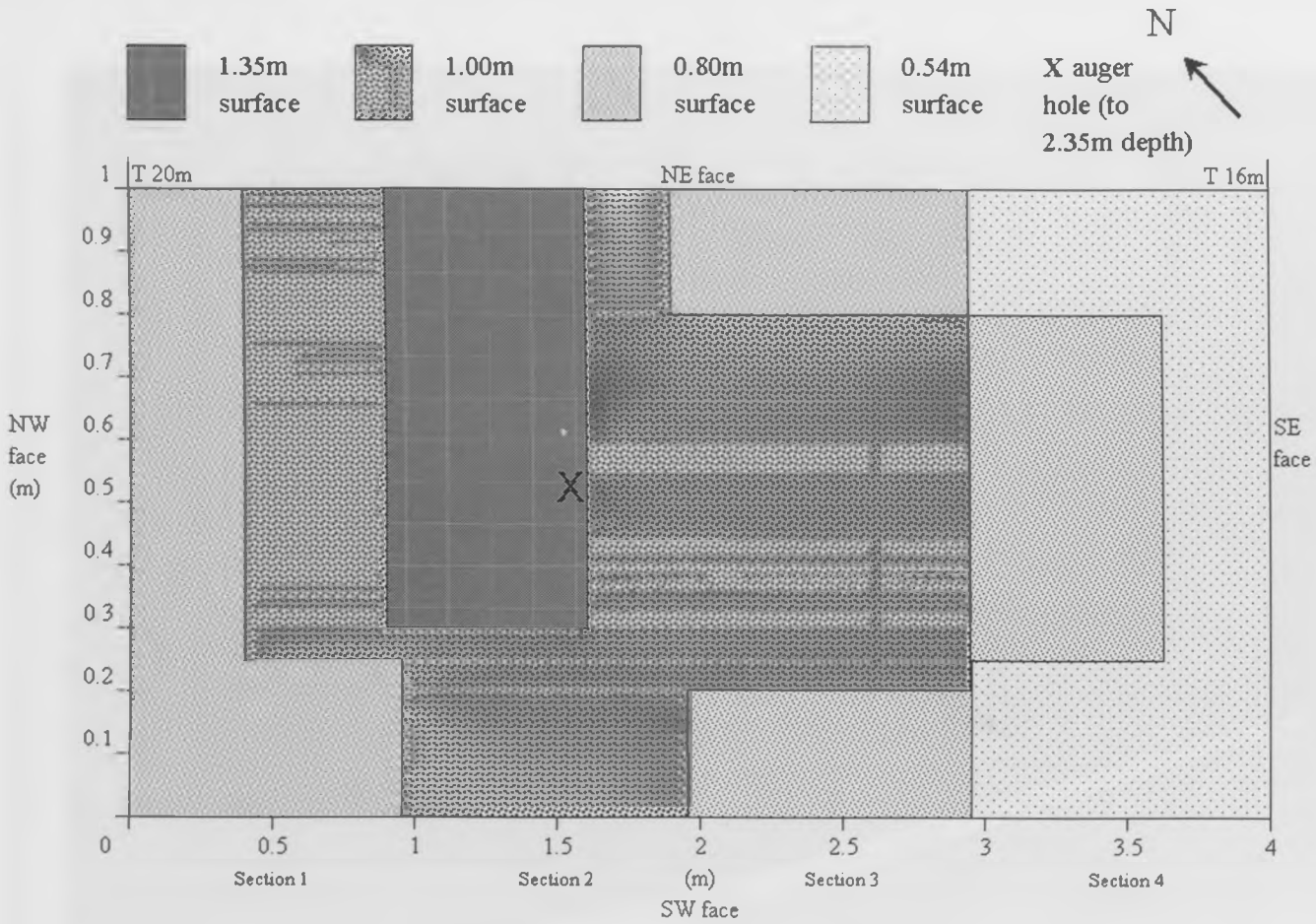

Fig. 3: Plan of the New Inn Cottage (NIC) excavation.

Fig. 4: General view of the New Inn Cottage (NIC) excavation trench from the North-West.

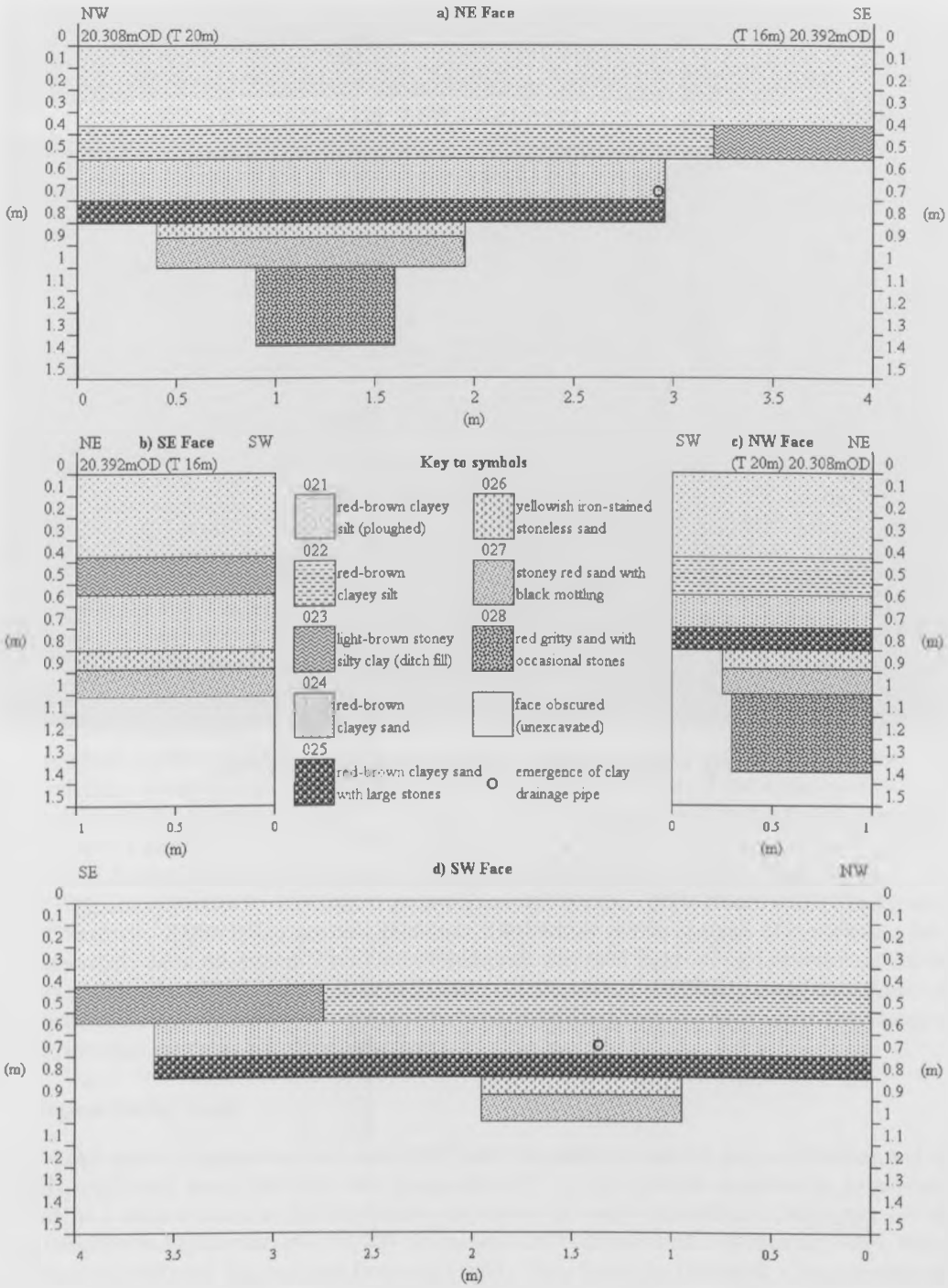

Fig. 5: Lithostratigraphy and archaeological contexts displayed in the trench faces of the New Inn Cottage (NIC) excavation.

Fig. 6: Plan view of the stone layer (context 025) in section.

ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL-EARLY MODERN BUILDING STONES IN SOUTH EAST WALES: THE SUDBROOK SANDSTONE AND DOLOMITIC CONGLOMERATE (TRIASSIC)

By J.R.L. Allen

The dissected and wooded land that falls toward the Severn Estuary between the lower Usk and the lower Wye overlies a wide variety of rocks suitable as building stone (Welch and Trotter, 1961; Squirrell and Downing, 1969). It also abounds in settlements of Roman or Saxon-Norman foundation/expansion (Knight, 1970–71; Williams, 1975), in which these materials were put to extensive use. Because of the way they are bedded and jointed, some of the stone is best suited to general walling, for example, the St Maughan's Group and Brownstones (Lower Devonian), the Carboniferous Limestone, and the Liassic cementstones (Jurassic). The Quartz Conglomerate (Upper Devonian) and higher beds in the Brownstones, on the other hand, are more thickly bedded and coarsely jointed, lending themselves in addition to footings, quoins and buttresses. Rocks from two particular formations in the area – the early Triassic Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone – are especially versatile, and from early times were worked as a freestone to form moulded dressings, as well as for the less demanding purposes already mentioned. Of the two formations, the Sudbrook Sandstone was much the more important as a source of building material. They share a number of visible characteristics, however, occur together in many building fabrics, and can be difficult to distinguish by hand-lens inspection, especially on weathered or encrusted surfaces. In some cases, and where samples are available, microscopic examination in thin-section is necessary.

It is the aim of this paper to review the geological characteristics of the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone, and to establish the distribution and use of these versatile rocks as building materials in the coastal area between the Usk and Wye. The Sudbrook Sandstone was procured for the chief Roman settlements, but not the Dolomitic Conglomerate. Together with the Dolomitic Conglomerate, the sandstone was used again in medieval and early-modern times beginning with the Norman Conquest. The earliest Norman application of the Sudbrook Sandstone, at Chepstow Castle (Turner *et al.*, 2004), appears to have included, if not relied entirely upon, the robbing of Roman buildings. This paper is not the first to record the use of comparatively local, early Triassic sandstones for building in the area (e.g. Ashby *et al.*, 1911; North, 1967; Zienkiewicz, 1986; Newman, 2000), but systematic geological attributions and an analysis of exploitation have not previously been attempted. This kind of approach can shed light on past economies and the changing influence of expediency, taste and fashion on the choice of building materials. Moreover, the successful conservation or restoration of an historic building calls for an accurate knowledge of its construction materials and their provenance.

Geological Background

As the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone share certain lithological features, and are closely associated stratigraphically and geographically, a brief geological review is an essential prelude to a consideration of the distribution and use of the rocks in buildings. Descriptions of the area (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Sheets 249, 250) can be found in Whittard (1949), Welch and Trotter (1961) and Squirrell and Downing (1969). They found the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone to occur low in the Triassic sequence, which accumulated under hot, arid conditions upon older beds that had undergone folding and erosion over many millions of years.

Although deposited in different ways, the Sudbrook Sandstone and Dolomitic Conglomerate partly share the same provenance as sediments.

The Triassic rocks unconformably overlie a range of older, Carboniferous beds and bury a land surface of intricate relief (Fig.1A), to some extent still evident in the topography of the modern countryside. Insofar as the limited outcrops allow reconstruction, the sub-Triassic land surface between the Usk and Wye had a general dip toward the south or south-west and a relief on scales up to some tens of metres (e.g. Welch and Trotter, 1961, 113). The largest topographic feature seems to have been a broad valley, the uneven floor of which ranged between dissected Carboniferous Limestone hills roughly at Undy to St Brides Netherwent in the west (National Grid Reference *c.* ST 4387-4389) and Portskewett to Mounton (*c.* 4988–5193) in the east. Elements of an intermediate scale included a low ridge in the Rogiet to west Caldicot area (*c.* 4688) and a valley associated with the lower Mounton Brook. Whittard (1949, 367–8) and Welch and Trotter (1961, 116–7) describe many lesser topographic features on the sub-Triassic surface.

The Dolomitic Conglomerate is very variable in development with many scattered outcrops (Fig.1B). Typically, it shrouds slopes at a range of altitudes formed of Carboniferous Limestone, and fingers outward, becoming finer grained, into mudrocks (Fig.1A). North-east and east of Sudbrook (Fig.1A), on the inter-tidal reefs known as Black Rock (515881) and Lady Bench (515875), Upper Carboniferous sandstones underlie the beds (Welch and Trotter, 1961, 109). The rocks of the formation vary from unstratified breccio-conglomerates of subangular to subrounded pebbles and small cobbles of locally-derived limestones and dolomites to poorly stratified and thickly-bedded deposits of detrital limestone and fossil fragments of medium to very coarse sand grade. Their colour centres around (Munsell) light grey (5YR 8/1) to pale orange (5YR 8/4) but can range to shades of yellow or pink. Quartz pebbles are conspicuously absent and quartz sand is either lacking or rare. Typically, the limestone and fossil detritus is recrystalized and strongly dolomitized, and firmly cemented with secondary, ferroan dolomite and some calcite. A vuggy texture is not uncommon. Welch and Trotter (1961, 113) interpret the Dolomitic Conglomerate as 'ancient scree and downwash', a view fully supported by the local provenance, the range of altitudes at which the formation occurs on the (undisturbed) sub-Triassic surface, and the generally coarse texture and ill-stratified nature of the sediments. Outside the area shown in Fig.1B, the Dolomitic Conglomerate is next seen around Sully to the south of Cardiff (Waters and Lawrence, 1987), and east of the Severn around Thornbury (Welch and Trotter, 1961).

Welch and Trotter (1961, 117) merely record the presence of a substantial 'sandstone' in close association with the Dolomitic Conglomerate in south-east Wales, without formally naming these beds, although the terms 'Sudbrook sandstone' and 'Sudbrook Sandstone' have long been applied informally by archaeologists and historians to these rocks. Given this usage, the importance of the rock as a building stone (*see* below), and the fact that the beds are mappable (British Geological Survey Sheet 250), it now seems appropriate to recognize the Sudbrook Sandstone as a formal part of the Triassic sequence in the area. An excellent type-section is afforded by the long and readily accessible cliff exposures on the coast between Sudbrook Point (504873) and Black Rock (513882).

In sharp contrast to the Dolomitic Conglomerate, the Sudbrook Sandstone has a compact outcrop, although one that is complicated and partly obscured to the south by the unconformably overlying Holocene estuarine deposit of the Caldicot Level (Fig.1B). The beds range eastward across the broad valley mentioned above (Fig.1A) from Llanfihangel Rogiet (449878) to the western part of the inter-tidal rock-platform known as the English Stones (*c.* 524857). They are underlain by soft red mudrocks with occasional thin sandstones in the west and at many places in

the east, except locally at Portskewett (4988–5088), where the formation either rests directly on the Carboniferous Limestone or immediately succeeds the Dolomitic Conglomerate. At the Rogiet-Caldicot ridge, the Sudbrook Sandstone apparently directly overlies the Carboniferous Limestone (Welch and Trotter, 1961; British Geological Survey Sheet 250). Two kilometres northward, in the Nedern valley south-west of Caerwent (*c.* 460902), quartz pebbles are the main constituent of a down-faulted patch of conglomerate mapped by Welch and Trotter (1961, 117) as Dolomitic Conglomerate. As this component typifies the lower part of the Sudbrook Sandstone, at least as seen on the coast, this particular outcrop is accordingly reassigned.

In further contrast to the Dolomitic Conglomerate, the Sudbrook Sandstone is a sheet-like deposit (Fig.1A) and includes much quartz in its detrital composition. On the coast it is chiefly represented by strongly cross-bedded, pebbly very coarse sandstones that interfinger upward with parallel-laminated and cross-bedded medium to fine sandstones, the whole forming a broadly upward-fining sequence. An occasional parting of red mudrock can be seen. The coarsest beds are sandy granule and fine-pebble grade conglomerates. The coarser rocks are rich in partly dolomitized fossils and fragments of limestone/dolomite, but include conspicuous amounts of quartz granules and pebbles, all set in a matrix of quartz and detrital limestone sand. A little feldpsar, chiefly microcline but occasionally plagioclase, accompanies the quartz. Firmly cementing these components is a mixture of calcite with much secondary ferroan dolomite. The finer rocks are chiefly of well-sorted quartz sand but with large amounts of calcite-ferroan dolomite cement. Typically, colours range from (Munsell) pale yellow (2.5Y 8/3) to yellow (2.5Y 8/6), but pink and yellow-orange (10YR7/4–6) shades are not uncommon, and the finer-grained sandstones are conspicuously black-speckled. The sheet-like and well-stratified character, combined with the range of grades and the widened detrital composition as compared to the Dolomitic Conglomerate, suggest that the Sudbrook Sandstone is a fluvial deposit, perhaps deposited by rapidly shifting, seasonal braided streams that may have reworked the toes of some Dolomite Conglomerate screes. Welch and Trotter (1961, 117) suggest that the quartz pebbles came from Upper Devonian beds (Quartz Conglomerate), outcropping today some 5–10km to the north of the Sudbrook Sandstone outcrop, to which as a source of sand may be added the closely associated Tintern Sandstone Group (Upper Devonian). The latter source is plausible, given that microcline is the chief feldspar accompanying the detrital quartz (Allen, 1965). The upper Brownstones – coarse grained and pebbly – immediately below the Quartz Conglomerate are likely also to have contributed quartz sand and some pebbles.

The Dolomitic Conglomerate, and especially the Sudbrook Sandstone, share a number of properties valued by masons. Although now poorly exposed, the former appears to be thickly-bedded to massive, coarsely jointed and without significant fissility even in the finest-grained parts. As seen on the coast, the Sudbrook Sandstone is thickly bedded and with main joints 2–3m apart, the beds breaking away from the retreating, undermined cliffs (Morgan and Wakeman, 1858, 11, 17–19) to leave on the shore a sloping apron of huge slabs (Fig.2B). The strong calcite-dolomite cementation has destroyed any fissility, despite the fact that the beds are well-stratified and full of sedimentary laminations. Hence both formations can be worked in large masses as freestones, as well as for rubble suitable for general walling and wall-cores. As freestones they are competitive with Jurassic limestones from across the Bristol Channel, although they do not have the same resistance to weathering.

Survey Methods

The Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone were examined at the exposures currently available as well as in hand-specimen and thin-section under the petrographic microscope. Rubble and blocks formed from these beds were assessed in selected buildings using a hand-lens (eye-level and below) or binoculars (higher walls). The buildings selected are the exposed, excavated constructions and defensive walls of the Roman settlements at Caerleon (*Isca Silurum*) and Caerwent (*Venta Silurum*), together with the parish churches and castles of the area between the Usk and Wye. These sites are listed in the Appendix, the system of numbering being used in the text and the maps illustrating this paper.

As in earlier work on a district or regional scale (Allen *et al.*, 2003; Allen, 2004a), a semi-quantitative approach is adopted toward the relative abundance of a particular stone in a building. A type of stone is recorded as *dominant* where it is observed to be overall the most abundant material in the exposed, normally external fabric of the edifice. It is *common* where the total number of observed lumps or blocks is measured in tens to a hundred or so. The stone is *rare* where more than one but less than ten pieces can be counted, and *very rare* where only one block or lump is seen. The entry is *not recorded* where no lumps or blocks can be confidently identified, leaving open, of course, the possibility that pieces are actually present but not detectable. The crosses found in the churchyards at Llanfihangel Rogiet and Portskewett, although important in their own right and accordingly listed separately in the Appendix, are lumped with their respective churches in the mapping of relative abundance.

Dolomitic Conglomerate

Building stone from the Dolomitic Conglomerate is *rare* to *common*, but nowhere *dominant*, at twenty-five of the sites portrayed in Fig.3A (*see* also the Appendix), lying chiefly in the central and western parts of the area. It is absent from an arc of ground chiefly to the west of Chepstow, and is not recorded at three of the four sites just to the west of the Usk (sites *1,2,6*) and at two in the south-west Caldicot Level (*4,7*). Two buildings (*41,43*) in the extreme east have Dolomitic Conglomerate. Conglomerate as a lithology is rarely encountered, and it is mostly the finer-grained, non-pebbly to slightly pebbly facies that are seen. The stone is known from only two structures that can be plausibly dated to earlier than *c.*1300, but the mellow colour and workability caught the attention of many late medieval and early-modern builders.

The stone was used for buttresses and/or quoins at several sites: churches of unknown dedication at Langstone (*9*) and Whitson (*10*); St Mary, Wilcrick (*14*); St Thomas, Redwick (*16*); and St John the Baptist, Penhow (*19*). At Langstone (Newman, 2000, 262), the rock occurs in the westward extension of the nave of 1622. St Mary at Wilcrick was 'virtually reconstructed in 1860' (Newman, 2000, 601), allowing the possibility that here the Dolomitic Conglomerate has been re-used on site. Newman (2000, 463–4) regards the nave at St John the Baptist in Penhow as possibly Norman, but the buttresses need not be of this early date.

The Dolomitic Conglomerate is far more widespread in the form of moulded dressings to doors and windows, occurring at Caerleon Castle (*3*); the churches at Langstone and Whitson (*9*, *10*); Pencoed Castle (*15*); St Thomas, Redwick (*16*); Penhow Castle (*20*); the Procurator's House, Magor (*17B*); St Mary, Undy (*21*); St Dyfrig, Llanvaches (*22*); St Mary, Llanfair Discoed (*23A*); St Mary, Rogiet (*24*); and St Mary, Portskewett (*30A*). Newman (2000, 436–9) records that a Triassic sandstone dresses some windows in the fourteenth-century Newport Castle on the west bank of the Usk (312884), and these seem to be of Dolomitic Conglomerate. Contrary to Newman's

(2000, 142) claim, it is unlikely that the Dolomitic Conglomerate dressing the arrowslits of 1217–19 in the surviving tower at Caerleon Castle came from the Roman town, for the are no overt signs of re-use, and only the Sudbrook Sandstone is known to have been exploited there. The dressings of Pencoed Castle in Dolomitic Conglomerate date at the latest to the fifteenth-sixteenth century, while those at Penhow Castle are of the fourteenth-fifteenth century (Newman, 2000, 325–7, 464–5). St Thomas in Redwick is an excellent and easily accessed illustration of the various applications of the Dolomitic Conglomerate. Exceptionally, the dressings to the south door in the chancel at St Mary in Undy include examples of the conglomeratic facies. At St Mary, Rogiet, the window dressings in Dolomitic Conglomerate clearly date at the latest to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century (Newman, 2000, 518–9). St Mary at Portskewett with Sudbrook (Newman, 2000, 484–5) offers the only plausible Norman use of the stone, although the possibility of a later repair in the material cannot be wholly excluded. It contributes a few blocks to the jambs of the rectangular north door, with its massive Norman lintel of carved Sudbrook Sandstone.

Buildings at a total of thirteen sites include Dolomitic Conglomerate in their walls or sometimes footings, occasionally as rubble but typically as scattered to coursed dressed blocks. At St Mary in Undy (*21*) the porch of 1790 (Newman, 2000, 583) is partly faced with coursed Dolomitic Conglomerate ashlar of high quality. Although Caldicot Castle (*29B*), of the thirteenth-late fourteenth century (Newman, 2000, 154–160), is dominated by Sudbrook Sandstone (*see* below), conglomerate of Dolomitic Conglomerate facies is represented by numerous, scattered blocks in its extensive, coursed walls. The two church buildings in the extreme east with Dolomitic Conglomerate lie at a substantial distance away from other sites with the rock (Fig.3A). The stone is rare at both St Mary and St Peter in Tidenham (*41*) and the Chaplaincy of St John the Evangelist at Aust (*43*), occurring as scattered blocks in the walls.

Sudbrook Sandstone (Roman)

The Sudbrook Sandstone was extensively exploited from soon after the beginning of the Roman period in building the legionary town of Caerleon (*1*) and especially in creating the civil capital at Caerwent (*27*) (Fig.3B; Appendix). It would be surprising if the stone did not occur at other Roman sites in south-east Wales.

Roman Caerleon in the late twelfth century is said by Gerald of Wales (Thorpe, 1978, 114–5) to have displayed 'immense palaces', 'a lofty tower', 'remarkable hot baths', and 'the remains of temples and amphitheatres', all set 'within impressive walls, parts of which still remain standing', together with arrangements for water supply and drainage and under-floor heating. Knight (2003) has summarized the character of Roman Caerleon as it can be experienced today, on the basis of excavations over a long period, many of which are published (*see* also Boon, 1972). Unfortunately, many excavators of the fortress and associated town at Caerleon paid little attention to the character and provenance of the building stone encountered, but it is clear that use was made of the Sudbrook Sandstone.

The fortress wall was originally of earth and timber, but at the beginning of the second century was rebuilt in stone (Knight, 2003, 39). As seen along the southern boundary of the fortress, it is predominantly of Lower Old Red Sandstone (Lower Devonian) lithologies with some (?)Lias limestone, Carboniferous sandstone and assorted cobbles from river gravels. No Sudbrook Sandstone is visible. The defence on the north-east side of the fortress, seen in a limited excavation, was described by Evans and Metcalf (1992, 16) as of 'local Old Red Sandstone'. The material they report as 'Christchurch limestone' is also from the Lower Old Red Sandstone. No lithological information is given by Hawkes (1930) in his account of the south-eastern defences and associated buildings.

There are at least three Roman bath-houses at Caerleon for other than private use, those for the legion in the south-east quadrant of the fortress (330907), a set outside the south-eastern walls by the Norman castle (342905), and an early (pre-amphitheatre) set to the south-west of the amphitheatre and the walls (337903). By far the best known are the legionary fortress baths (Boon, 1972, 77–82; Zienkiewicz, 1986; Knight, 2003, 20–9), begun in *c.* AD 75–7 and kept in use until the mid-third century. Zienkiewicz (1986, 341) recognized that Sudbrook Sandstone had been extensively used from early on in the construction of these baths, wherever large blocks of stone were required (e.g. piers, voussoirs). The extra-mural baths by the castle are of uncertain date and unrecorded materials (Nash-Williams,1930a, 147–9; Boon, 1972, 102–5), but those to the south-west of the amphitheatre can be seen to include arches and voussoirs of Sudbrook Sandstone and a surviving floor of large slabs of a Jurassic shelly, oolitic limestone, with little doubt an import from across the Bristol Channel.

The amphitheatre (Boon, 1972, 89–101; Knight, 2003, 31–7) was erected *c.* AD 90. Oval in shape, and with eight entrances, lettered A-H on Knight's plan (p.33), it was walled predominantly in thinly bedded, richly micaceous sandstones with some cornstone conglomerate and travertine. The sandstones and conglomerate appear to have been procured from the basal measures of the St Maughan's Group (Lower Devonian) nearby, mapped by Squirrell and Downing (1969, 49–52). A post-glacial deposit in the area may be presumed to have afforded the travertine. The footings and quoins of most of the entrances to the amphitheatre are of a Jurassic shelly, oolitic limestone, but at entrances A and C they are joined by massive, dressed blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone.

Like the fortress wall and the amphitheatre, the mid-second century barracks excavated by Nash-Williams (1931, 1932) in the Prysg Field can also be seen to be almost exclusively of micaceous sandstone with a little Carboniferous Limestone and limestone from the Lias or St Maughan's Group. No Sudbrook Sandstone was detectable in the Roman footings visible today. Near these barracks, in the western angle of the fortress, a latrine of *c.* AD 150 was described by Nash-Williams (1931, 133–5). It included a continuous, shallow gutter of rectangular plan that had been cut into joined blocks of freestone. The block at the western corner can be seen to be of Jurassic limestone, but otherwise the gutter was chiselled into Sudbrook Sandstone. The gutter has survived in the limestone, but in the less resistant sandstone has largely succumbed to weathering. It is clearly evident, however, in Nash-Williams' (1931, fig. 31) photograph, dating from the time of excavation (*see* also Boon, 1972, fig. 21). Hawkes (1930, 160–171) gives no information about the building materials encountered in the barracks on the south-eastern side of the fortress. Other buildings excavated within the bounds of the fortress include those in the *scamnum tribunorum*, first of timber then of stone. Zienkiewicz (1993, 50, 59, 65) mentions the use of river cobbles, dressed blocks of 'Old Red Sandstone' (?St Maughan's Group) and of 'tufa' (travertine), but not of Sudbrook Sandstone.

Even less is known of building materials in the settlement that grew up around the fortress. A small group of buildings with foundations of cobbles and dressed stone were excavated to the north-east of the fortress, but no lithological identifications were made (Evans, 1985). Although describing the excavation of many buildings, Evans (2000) refers only to 'sandstone' and timber as construction materials. Parkhouse (2000, 458, pl. XXXIV) attributed to the Sudbrook Sandstone a square block of unstratified stone he thought might be the base for a statue.

Sudbrook Sandstone is much more evident at Roman Caerwent, where it seems to have been procured over almost 400 years of occupation. Brewer (1997) provides a guide to the limited remains that can be seen today but, as at Roman Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) in Hampshire, extensive excavations around the turn of the nineteenth century revealed the general layout and

some of the details of most of the later town especially. The most pertinent accounts are those by Ashby (1906, 1907) and Ashby *et al.* (1902, 1904, 1909, 1910, 1911). Some later excavations have been published (Nash-Williams, 1930b; Casey and Bennett, 1983; Zienkiewicz, 1987; Brewer and Guest, 1992).

The *forum-basilica* (469907), first explored in 1907 and 1909 (Ashby *et al.*, 1909), and re-excavated in recent decades (Zienkiewicz, 1987; Brewer and Guest, 1992), appears to have been erected in the earlier second century (Brewer, 1997, 52). The very many, larger masses of dimensional stone in this building – column bases, steps, some paving, gutters and box-drains – can be seen to be of Sudbrook Sandstone (Fig.4A), reported by Ashby *et al.* (1909, 572) as 'a local yellow sandstone' and identified as such ('Sudbrook sandstone') by Zienkiewicz (1987).

Many houses, some substantial and of courtyard type, and some public buildings (small temple, baths) were encountered by Ashby *et al.* (1902, 1910, 1911) and Nash-Williams (1930b). In these constructions, a sandstone freestone, which Ashby *et al.* (1911, 418) described as 'yellow', was extensively used to make paving, threshold stones, grooved and slotted door jambs and *pilae* for hypocaust floors. The latter (Fig.4B) are massive blocks of sandstone of square section that stand 0.6 – 0.8m tall. Examples of all these usages can seen around Pound Lane (*insulae* I, VII) in the western part of the town (*c.* 467907), including the building identified as a forge.

Apparently the main stone temple in the town lies just to the east of the *forum-basilica* (469905) and dates to the early fourth century (Ashby *et al.*, 1910; Brewer, 1985; 1997, 46–7). The site today reveals the blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone which served as threshold stones and as the bases of a series of external and internal pilasters.

The town wall of the mid-fourth century (Casey and Bennett, 1983), with its gates and towers, can be traced out almost continuously but is greatly denuded over its northern course (Brewer, 1997, 41–7). The southern section displays at many places scattered lumps of Sudbrook Sandstone in the wall core, and dressed blocks of the stone in the surviving facing. The predominant component is Carboniferous Limestone but there is a little Quartz Conglomerate (Upper Devonian) and possibly some Lower Carboniferous sandstones. Casey and Bennett (1983) excavated the north-west corner tower, but the only building material recorded is limestone. Large dressed quoins of Sudbrook Sandstone can be seen at the South Gate, excavated by Ashby (1906, 111–17), and the stone may have formed the voussoirs of an arch detected there. Similar quoins at the North Gate are reported to be of 'sandstone' (Ashby *et al.*, 1904, 4–6).

Sudbrook Sandstone (Medieval and Early-Modern)

There are two geographically distinct distributions of sites with Sudbrook Sandstone (Fig. 3B; Appendix), a western set and a more numerous and extensive eastern group. The western area includes Roman Caerleon (*1*), while Roman Caerwent (*27*) lies in the eastern set, both described above. Between the two distributions is a zone in which the stone is not recorded, although it must be admitted that St Mary at Wilcrick (*14*) was 'virtually reconstructed' in 1860, although Pencoed Castle (*15*) is of late thirteenth-century and Tudor construction (Newman, 2000, 325–7, 601).

Most occurrences of Sudbrook Sandstone in the western distribution are of late medieval or early modern date, the stone being *very rare* to *common*. The earliest application is for quoins in the nave of Holy Trinity, Christchurch (*5*), which if not late Norman, dates to the thirteenth century (Newman, 2000, 189). The rock also contributes to quoins in the late medieval towers of St Cadoc, Caerleon (*2*), St Mary the Virgin, Nash (*4*) and St Mary, Llanwern (*8*). Sudbrook Sandstone is also found in the quoins of the extended nave of 1622 of the church in Langstone (*9*), and as a solitary

block in the late medieval porch. Occasional blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone were seen in the walls of the nave and aisles at St Cadoc, Caerleon (*2*), reconstructed in *c.* 1855 (Newman, 2000, 141), and at St Mary, Llanwern (*8*), St Cadwaladr, Bishton (*11*), and St Martin, Llanmartin (*12*), the body of this church having been rebuilt in 1857–8 (Newman, 2000, 324).

A more complex geographical pattern of building dates is evident in the eastern distribution of constructions with Sudbrook Sandstone (Fig. 3B). A cluster of five buildings that are either wholly Norman or in which there are Norman survivals lies at the centre of the spread (*29A*, *30A*, *30C*, *31*, *33*). Also Norman, but some distance away, are important buildings at Chepstow (*37A*, *37B*). The remaining, further-flung occurrences of Sudbrook Sandstone are chiefly late medieval.

Chepstow has the earliest of the Norman buildings. The Priory Church of St Mary (*37A*) was begun before AD 1075 but today is dominated by post-medieval elements (Newman, 2000, 164–5). The diverse earlier Norman work, in Sudbrook Sandstone, is well-represented in the lower stages of the west front (Fig. 5A) and by neat ashlar low down at the western end of the south wall (Fig. 6A). Chepstow Castle (*37B*) ranges in date from the late eleventh to the eighteenth century and later (Turner, 2002). The oldest part is the Great Tower, probably erected simultaneously with the priory church (Turner, 2002, 5–8). Traditionally regarded as a hall-keep (Knight, 1991, 4), Turner (2002, 8) suggests that it was instead built as a royal audience chamber, albeit one that may never have been used by William I (*see* also Turner *et al.*, 2004). Three aspects of the Great Tower are especially striking. One is that it stands on a massive plinth of monumental blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone (Fig. 7A), as recognized by North (1967) (*see* also Eaton, 2000, 35). Lewis holes, one definite and another possible, each lying horizontally, occur in blocks in the south plinth, where there is also a dowel hole. On the exterior face of the west wall, blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone with horizontal dowel and clamp holes were recorded by Eaton (2000, 36, fig. *18*). Another horizontal Lewis hole can be seen in a small block of Sudbrook Sandstone used to dress a blind arch high up on the internal west wall (Eaton, 2000, fig. *17*). The second striking aspect of the Great Tower is the decorated principal entrance in the eastern wall, with its saltire-patterned lintel and tympanum, well-dressed jambs, and neat ashlar to left and especially right, all in golden-coloured Sudbrook Sandstone (Turner, 2002, 7, 23). The rock also forms quoins and buttresses in the Great Tower, and occasional blocks can be found in the Norman and later walls (*cf.* Eaton, 2000, 35). The third feature of the Great Tower which quickly catches the eye, is the stringcourse of red, probably Roman brick included in the Norman work.

The cluster of Norman sites several kilometres to the south-west of Chepstow comprises five buildings (Fig. 3B). Sudbrook Sandstone is plentiful in the lower stages of the Norman tower (Newman, 2000, 152–3) of St Mary the Virgin in Caldicot (*29A*), occurring in buttresses and throughout the walls. St Mary in Portskewett with Sudbrook (*30A*) is described by Newman (2000, 484) as 'a small Norman church, of local rubble limestone'. The external walls are now completely obscured by cement render, but the rectangular north door can still be inspected. Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone combine to form the jambs, but the massive lintel is a single block of the latter, carved with a Greek cross within an outlined semicircular arch. In Sudbrook nearby to the south-east (*30C*) lies ruinous Holy Trinity (Morgan and Wakeman, 1858, 11–17; Newman, 2000, 486), as illustrated by Nash-Williams (1939, pl. IV.1) and Sell (2001, pl. 1). Standing just outside the Iron Age camp at Sudbrook Point (Nash-Williams, 1939; Sell, 2001), it is composed wholly of the carefully dressed stone, apart from a very little limestone, Old Red Sandstone, and spacers of pale grey, spotted slate in some window dressings. On the floor of the nave lies a small, square stone basin (?font), also of Sudbrook Sandstone. A small excavation in the nave revealed a flagged floor and evidence of the use of ceramic floor tiles. The church is dated

to the early twelfth century and is reported to have displayed a Norman window in the nave as late as 1895. Some fourteenth-century work can be seen in the surviving ruin. Also small and ruinous is St Keyna (*31*) at the deserted village of Runston in the parish of St Pierre (Morgan and Wakeman, 1858, 6–10; Caple *et al.*, 1978; Newman, 2000, 527; Knight, 2002). Dated like St Mary the Virgin and Holy Trinity to the early twelfth century, it is in a pure, simple style with walls of Carboniferous Limestone but quoins (Fig. 5B) and dressings (Fig. 5C) in carefully dressed Sudbrook Sandstone. At St Peter in St Pierre (*33*) the stone was used abundantly for the quoins, buttresses and dressings of the Norman nave (Newman, 2000, 525) and was also scattered in the walls, otherwise of Carboniferous Limestone with some Brownstones and Quartz Conglomerate.

Post-Norman fabrics that include Sudbrook Sandstone occur widely in the eastern spread of sites (Fig. 3B). The stone appears in many churches and in one post-Norman castle.

In church buildings, the stone is used for quoins and in some cases buttresses in work of the thirteenth century and chiefly later, at St Mary, Magor (*17A*); St Bridget in St Brides Netherwent (*18*); St Mary at Undy (*21*); and at Rogiet (*24*); St Michael, Llanfihangel Rogiet (*25A*); St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent (*26*); St Mary the Virgin, Caldicot (*29A*); St Peter in St Pierre (*33*); St Andoenus, Mounton (*35*) and, east of the Severn, St Thomas in Northwick (*42*). Moulded door and especially window dressings involving Sudbrook Sandstone can be seen at St Michael, Llanfihangel Rogiet (*25A*); St Mary, Portskewett with Sudbrook (*30A*); ruinous Holy Trinity at Sudbrook (*30C*); and St Peter in St Pierre (*33*). All the window dressings at St Michael's are of the stone, and the north porch at St Peter's, of the late fourteenth or fifteenth century (Newman, 2000, 525), is especially fine (Fig. 5D). Blocks of the stone, chiefly scattered but sometimes coursed, contribute in varying degrees to many post-Norman walls, at St Bridget, St Brides Netherwent (*18*); St Dyfrig, Llanvaches (*22*); St Mary, Rogiet (*24*); St Michael, Llanfihangel Rogiet (*25A*); St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent (*26*); St Mary the Virgin, Caldicot (*29A*); St Peter, St Pierre (*33*); St Andoenus, Mounton (*35*); and at the Chaplaincy of St John the Evangelist in Aust to the east of the Severn (*43*). Although post-Norman window dressings unquestionably survive at ruinous Holy Trinity, Sudbrook (*30C*), it is uncertain to what extent the surviving walls are of this late date.

Two churches in the eastern spread stand out because their churchyards include a broached cross in Sudbrook Sandstone. These are St Michael at Llanfihangel Rogiet (*25B*), where the base of the cross has three steps, and St Mary at nearby Portskewett (*30B*). The cross at the latter is a considerable affair of five steps composed of massive blocks of the stone in a mainly pebbly facies (Fig. 6B). These crosses are of uncertain date, but may be of the fifteenth century (*see*, for example, Whittle, 1992).

Caldicot Castle (*29B*) is a large, well-preserved courtyard castle built predominantly of Sudbrook Sandstone, as Newman (2000, 154–60) states. It is undoubtedly the finest building in this material of the area. With the exception of a very little work of the late nineteenth century and later, the masonry building visible today can be dated provisionally to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and probably succeeded an earth and timber Norman castle. What characterizes the fabric are the massive ashlar blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone that compose the walls, and the neat though rather decayed window and door dressings of the stone. The oldest part, erected on the conical motte of *c.* 1100, is the round keep of shaped ashlar (Fig. 7B) and probably of the early thirteenth century. Most of the curtain wall and the Bohun Gateway, South-west Tower and South-east Tower are also of this century. The Gatehouse and a section of the curtain wall to the east are of the fourteenth century, but perpetuate the massive ashlar of the earlier work, in the wall partly in a snecked style (Fig. 8A). The latest part of the medieval castle is the Woodstock Tower on the north-west wall, with its fine quoins, ashlar and machicolations of Sudbrook Sandstone, well seen from

the far side of the defensive ditch (Newman, 2000, pl. 28). The view from the Bailey of the ashlar facing and dressed windows and doors appears in Fig. 8B.

Discussion

The Triassic Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone outcropping in the area between the Wye and the Usk are geologically closely allied formations of building-stone quality. Although found together in many fabrics, building stones from the two formations have different but overlapping spatial distributions and ranges in time. The Dolomitic Conglomerate began to be procured for building later than the Sudbrook Sandstone and was used over a shorter period. Both formations were exploited as a freestone – for quoins, buttresses and moulded door and window dressings – as well as in less specialized ways.

The numerous, mainly small outcrops of the Dolomitic Conglomerate scattered over the central and eastern parts of the area (Figs. 1B, 3A) may have provided what has been described as a 'distributed source' of building stone (Allen, 2004a). Today, however, natural exposures, some inter-tidal, are extremely rare. The only quarry exposure of modern times (Welch and Trotter, 1961, 117) is at Penhow (427909) near the church and castle (*19*, *20*). The stone is never more plentiful than *common* but occurs at most sites except chiefly those in an arc around Chepstow. Dolomitic Conglomerate has no known Roman use in the area. With the doubtful exception of St John the Baptist at Penhow (*19*) and the definite case of St Mary in Portskewett (*30A*), the stone is restricted to churches and castles of the thirteenth century and later, and especially to buildings of fourteenth-century to early modern date. The stone is found at sites as much as 8km away from the nearest outcrop of the Dolomitic Conglomerate. Their changing density, and the slight evidence for a westward fall-off in relative abundance (Fig. 3A), suggests that much of the stone was moved westward overland, probably following the line of the Roman road from Chepstow to Caerwent and Caerleon, and the many roughly north–south tracks that led off it. Although the Dolomitic Conglomerate is exposed inter-tidally along the Severn Estuary in the east, the distribution of sites with the stone affords no evidence for significant coastal exploitation and dispersal by sea. The stone recorded at Aust (*43*) could have come either from the nearby inter-tidal exposure or the large outcrop at Thornbury to the east.

In contrast to the Dolomitic Conglomerate, the outcrop of the Sudbrook Sandstone is much more compact (Fig. 1B), and can be regarded as a 'point source' (Allen, 2004a). The material is first known to have been procured in the Roman period (Fig. 3B). It makes something of an appearance at Caerleon (*1*), surviving as was noted in the fortress baths, the amphitheatre and a latrine at the barracks, but in this settlement is swamped by the local Lower Old Red Sandstone. The preferred freestone seems to have been a Jurassic shelly oolitic limestone, a likely import from across the Bristol Channel (at the fortress baths, Zienkiewicz (1986, 342) refers to this as 'Bath stone'). Zienkiewicz (1986, 341) plausibly concludes that Sudbrook Sandstone had been taken to Caerleon by sea and river – a journey of *c*.30km – from the coastal cliffs around Sudbrook in the east. Overland movement is not as likely, for the outcrop of the rock lies well off the main Roman road.

Sudbrook Sandstone is much more plentiful in Roman Caerwent (*27*), where it was used throughout the period of occupation. However, the exact source of this 'local yellow sandstone' of Ashby *et al.* (1909), and the means of its transportation, are uncertain. It is likely to have been procured from the extensive coastal cliffs between Black Rock and Sudbrook Point, where in Roman times any inter-tidal apron of collapsed blocks, similar to that of today (Fig. 2B), would have made easy pickings, at least until this naturally quarried supply was exhausted. Transport from

the cliffs would have involved a journey of *c*.5km, either overland or by boat along the shore and then the Nedern Brook. On the other hand, the stone could have been dug from a nearer part of the outcrop. The only claimed Roman quarry in the Sudbrook Sandstone lies just to the west of the lower Nedern (485876), but it is small and apparently functioned only in the mid and late second century (Meddens, 2001, 5–6).

Procurement of the Sudbrook Sandstone was not resumed until earliest Norman times when, at Chepstow, the Great Tower of the castle and the nearby priory church were erected (*37A*, *37B*). The stone has long been recognized to occur in the Great Tower, along with arguably Roman brick, and to have most probably come from the coastal cliffs *c*.8km to the south-west (North, 1967; Knight, 1991; Shoesmith, 1991; Turner, 2002). A much more indirect, but nonetheless plausible route to Chepstow than the obvious boat journey by sea and estuary, is explored by Eaton (2000, 35–6). Impressed by Roman-looking mechanical features preserved in some blocks and their commonly large size, he proposes that Norman masons may have robbed Roman Caerwent (*27*), where monumental blocks of Sudbrook Sandstone, some with vestiges of Lewis holes (Brewer and Guest, 1992), are plentiful (e.g. *forum-basilica*) and, if Gerald at Caerleon is to be believed (Thorpe, 1978, 114–5), many Roman buildings are likely to have stood above ground level. However, Eaton (2000, 38) finally rejects implicitly the spoliation of Caerwent for the Great Tower when he wrongly opts (Allen, 2004b) for the robbing of Roman Lydney Park upstream on the Severn (Wheeler and Wheeler, 1932; Casey and Hoffmann, 1999). The stone at Lydney Park is overwhelmingly of a type that has no representation at Chepstow and which is metrically substantially different. Robbing of Sudbrook Sandstone and other lithologies at Caerwent is not conclusively demonstrated but nevertheless remains as a possibility. A great variety of stone appears in the Norman Great Tower, suggesting either construction in haste or in the absence of a surviving tradition of stone quarrying and building, enforcing the procurement of any adequate stone wherever it was obvious and easily won. Not only is apparently Roman brick present at the Great Tower, but many of the limestone blocks there closely resemble in lithology, size and proportions Carboniferous stone present in the facing of Caerwent's wall. With regard to the Sudbrook Sandstone, not only do the blocks in the plinth preserve features such as Lewis and dowel holes, but in thickness they are indistinguishable from blocks in, for example, the *forum-baslica* at Caerwent. Was it found more convenient to bring Roman stone from Caerwent to Chepstow by water (Nedern Brook – Wye) than cart it *c*.8km overland?

Although robbing may have occurred at Caerwent, it seems inconceivable that Norman masons could for long have remained ignorant of the Sudbrook Sandstone on the coast, and have failed to exploit the rock there. Coastal exploitation in the twelfth century is clearly indicated by the distribution of later Norman sites (*29A*, *30A*, *30C*, *31*, *33*) in the east (Fig. 3B). Indeed, the likelihood that by this date a westward coastal trade in Sudbrook Sandstone had emerged, repeating the Roman pattern, is suggested by possibly late Norman elements at Holy Trinity, Christchurch (*5*).

The use of Sudbrook Sandstone spread much more widely in late medieval and early-modern times, dividing between the east and the west of the area (Fig. 3B). The stone is least plentiful in the west, and within this spread of buildings there is some evidence of an eastward decline in relative abundance. It would appear that the stone continued to be traded by boat into the Usk estuary. In the east, buildings with Sudbrook Sandstone cluster around the outcrop; some boat trade is suggested by the two minor sites on the east bank of the Severn (*42*, *43*). If there was robbing at Roman Caerwent, it was clearly inadequate to provide the volumes of stone that are evident (e.g. Caldicot Castle, *29B*). A plausible quarry site that could have furnished stone for both dispersions can be seen on the south-west side of Sudbrook Point (Fig. 2A). Instead of the more usual apron of blocks below a sheer,

undermined cliff, the outcrop here is stepped at prominent bedding surfaces suggestive of quarry lifts. The fact that an extensive salt marsh blankets the lower part of this feature today, and even more substantially another possible coastal quarry site at Black Rock to the north-east, does not detract from the possibility that the cliffs were quarried and that some stone was removed by boat. The Severn Estuary is a highly dynamic system, and as recently as 1946, according to RAF air photographs (e.g. RS CPE UK 1828, November 1946, negative 4062), there was only a low-lying mudflat adjoining the cliff at Sudbrook Point, the kind of surface on which flat-bottomed boats could take ground.

The stratigraphical diversity and structural complexity of south-east Wales (Welch and Trotter, 1961; Squirrell and Downing, 1969) ensure that most church and castle buildings have fabrics composed of more than one lithology, offering a measure of competition to the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone. Massive-bedded Brownstones (Lower Old Red Sandstone) is widely evident as quoins and occasionally as door and window dressings. On a more local scale in these roles can be seen material from the Quartz Conglomerate and Tintern Sandstone Group of the Upper Old Red Sandstone. As a walling material, the Carboniferous Limestone occurs almost everywhere and, for example, is especially prominent in Roman Caerwent (*27*). Less widespread in this role are the more thinly bedded sandstones of the Lower Old Red Sandstone and the Quartz Conglomerate and Tintern Sandstone Group of the Upper Old Red Sandstone. Amongst the nineteenth-century churches, St Luke in Tutshill (*38*), is a good example of the (snecked) use of the Upper Old Red Sandstone, while St Peter at Pilning (*39*) exemplifies building in the Upper Carboniferous Pennant sandstone (*see* also the 1995 extension to St Luke). In the south-west of the area, at St Mary the Virgin, Nash (*4*), and St Mary Magadalene, Goldcliff (*7*), Lias cementstone (Lower Jurassic) is conspicuous and may have been imported from cliff outcrops south of Cardiff. Middle Jurassic shelly-oolitic limestones made little headway in the area, except in the later Norman work at the priory church, Chepstow (*37A*), and late medieval St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent (*26*). The stone at the latter is said to have come from Somerset (Newman, 2000, 149).

Other than noting the occurrence of probably Roman brick in association with Sudbrook Sandstone at the Great Tower of Chepstow Castle (*37B*), no attempt has been made to analyse the ecclesiastical and related use of artificial building materials in the area covered by this paper. It is worth noting, however, the unusual occurrence of triangular blocks of cast slag from the post-medieval copper industry (e.g. Allen, 2001) as copings on the church walls at St Thomas, Redwick (*16*), and St Mary, Chepstow (*37A*).

The Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone are versatile building stones of importance only in the restricted area between the Wye and the Usk. They neverthless display unexpectedly complicated patterns of exploitation in both space and time from the Roman occupation to the early modern period.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF SELECTED BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTIONS

1. Roman Caerleon (*Isca Silurum*) (fortress defences, excavated barrack and service blocks, early baths, amphitheatre) (NGR ST 3390) (Newman, 2000, 136–140).
2. St Cadoc, Caerleon (339906) (Newman, 2000, 141).
3. Castle, Caerleon (341903) (Newman, 2000, 142).
4. St Mary the Virgin, Nash (343836) (Newman, 2000, 417).
5. Holy Trinity, Christchurch (346893) (Newman, 2000, 189).
6. St John, Llanhennock (353926) (Newman, 2000, 319).

7. St Mary Magdalene, Goldcliff (365831) (Newman, 2000, 232).
8. St Mary, Llanwern (370878) (Newman, 2000, 369).
9. Church of unknown dedication, Langstone (370898) (Newman, 2000, 262).
10. Church of unknown dedication, Whitson (381834) (Newman, 2000, 600).
11. St Cadwaladr, Bishton (386873) (Newman, 2000, 121).
12. St Martin, Llanmartin (394893) (Newman, 2000, 324).
13. St Peter, Llandevaud (397909) (Newman, 2000, 274).
14. St Mary, Wilcrick (409879) (Newman, 2000, 601).
15. Pencoed Castle, Llanmartin (406894) (Newman, 2000, 325–7).
16. St Thomas, Redwick (412841) (Newman, 2000, 511–2).
17A. St Mary, Magor (425869) (Newman, 2000, 374).
17B. Procurator's House, Magor (425869) (Newman, 2000, 374).
18. St Bridget, St Brides Netherwent (429895) (Newman, 2000, 521).
19. St John the Baptist, Penhow (423908) (Newman, 2000, 463–4).
20. Penhow Castle, Penhow (423908) (Newman, 2000, 464–5).
21. St Mary, Undy (439869) (Newman, 2000, 583).
22. St Dyfrig, Llanvaches (434917) (Newman, 2000, 360).
23A. St Mary, Llanvair Discoed (446923) (Newman, 2000, 361–2).
23B. Castle, Llanvair Discoed (446923) (Newman, 2000, 362).
24. St Mary, Rogiet (456876) (Newman, 2000, 518–9).
25A. St Michael, Llanfihangel Rogiet (451878) (Newman, 2000, 296).
25B. Cross in churchyard, St Michael, Llanfihangel Rogiet (451878) (Newman, 2000, 296).
26. St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent (468904) (Newman, 2000, 149–50).
27. Roman Caerwent (*Venta Silurum*) (defences, shops and houses, Romano-Celtic temple, *forum-basilica*) (4690) (Newman, 2000, 145–9).
28. St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton (478935) (Newman, 2000, 527–8).
29A. St Mary the Virgin, Caldicot (483886) (Newman, 2000, 152–3).
29B. Caldicot Castle, Caldicot (487884) (Newman, 2000, 154–60).
30A. St Mary, Portskewett with Sudbrook (499881) (Newman, 2000, 484–5).
30B. Cross in churchyard, St Mary, Portskewett with Sudbrook (499881) (Newman, 2000, 485).
30C. Holy Trinity (ruinous), Sudbrook (506873) (Newman, 2000, 486).
31. St Keyna (ruinous, Runston deserted village), St Pierre (495916) (Newman, 2000, 527).
32. St Deinol, Itton (493953) (Newman, 2000, 257).
33. St Peter, St Pierre (515905) (Newman, 525–6).
34. St Arvan, St Arvans (517965) (Newman, 2000, 519).
35. St Andoenus, Mounton (512929) (Newman, 2000, 412).
36. St Tewdric, Mathern (523909) (Newman, 2000, 382–3).
37A. St Mary, The Priory, Chepstow (536939) (Newman, 2000, 164–6).
37B. Chepstow Castle (Great Tower only), Chepstow (553941) (Newman, 2000, 172).
38. St Luke, Tutshill (540953) (Verey, 1980, 391–2).
39. St Peter, Pilning, Redwick (557851) (Verey, 1980, 329).
40. St John the Evangelist, Beachley (550912) (Verey, 1980, 98).
41. St Mary and St Peter, Tidenham (556959) (Verey, 1980, 383–4).
42. St Thomas, Northwick (560868) (Verey, 1980, 329).
43. Chaplaincy of St John the Evangelist, Aust (572893) (Verey, 1980, 92).

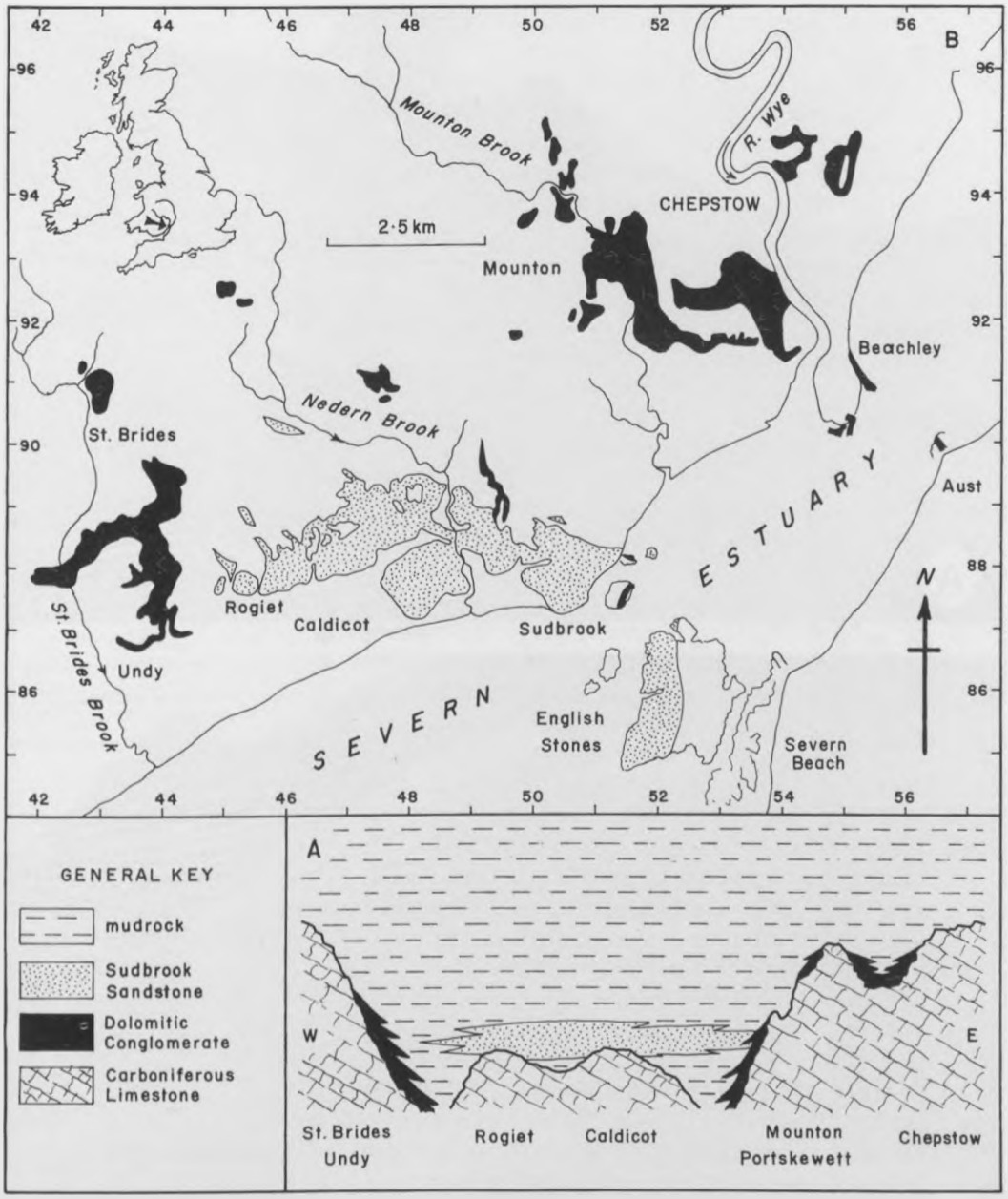

Fig. 1: The Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone in the lowermost Triassic rocks in the area around the Severn Estuary.

A – Schematic east-west reconstruction (not to scale) showing the relationship of the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone to each other and to the sub-Triassic landscape.

B – Outcrops of the Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone (based on British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Sheet 250).

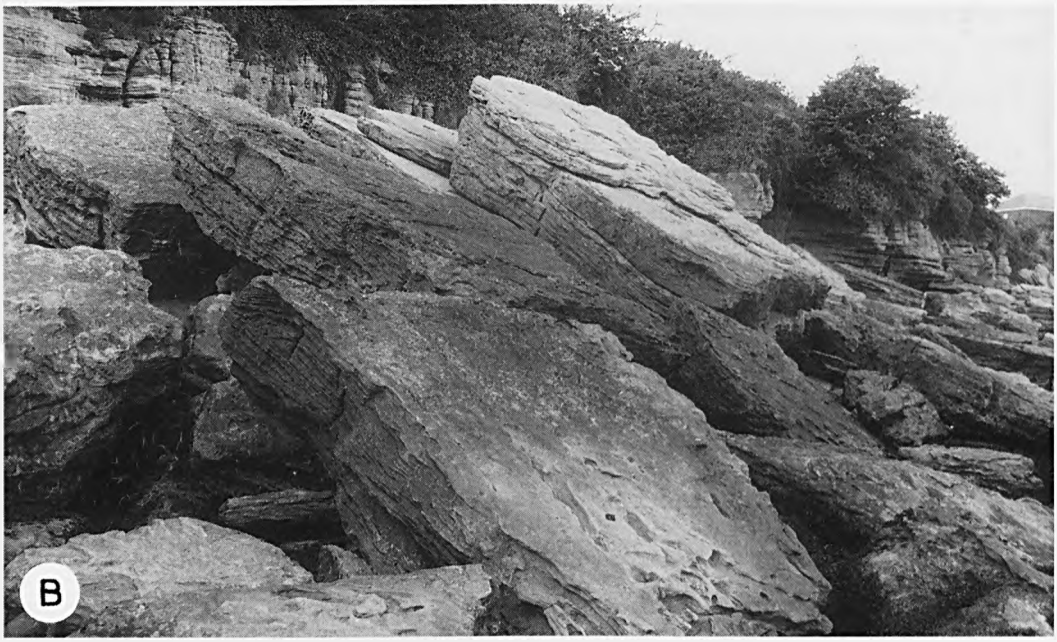

Fig. 2: The Sudbrook Sandstone.
A – Stepped outcrop (?quarry site), south-west side, Sudbrook Point.
B – Apron of monumental slabs, with undermined cliff to rear, south-east side, Sudbrook Point.

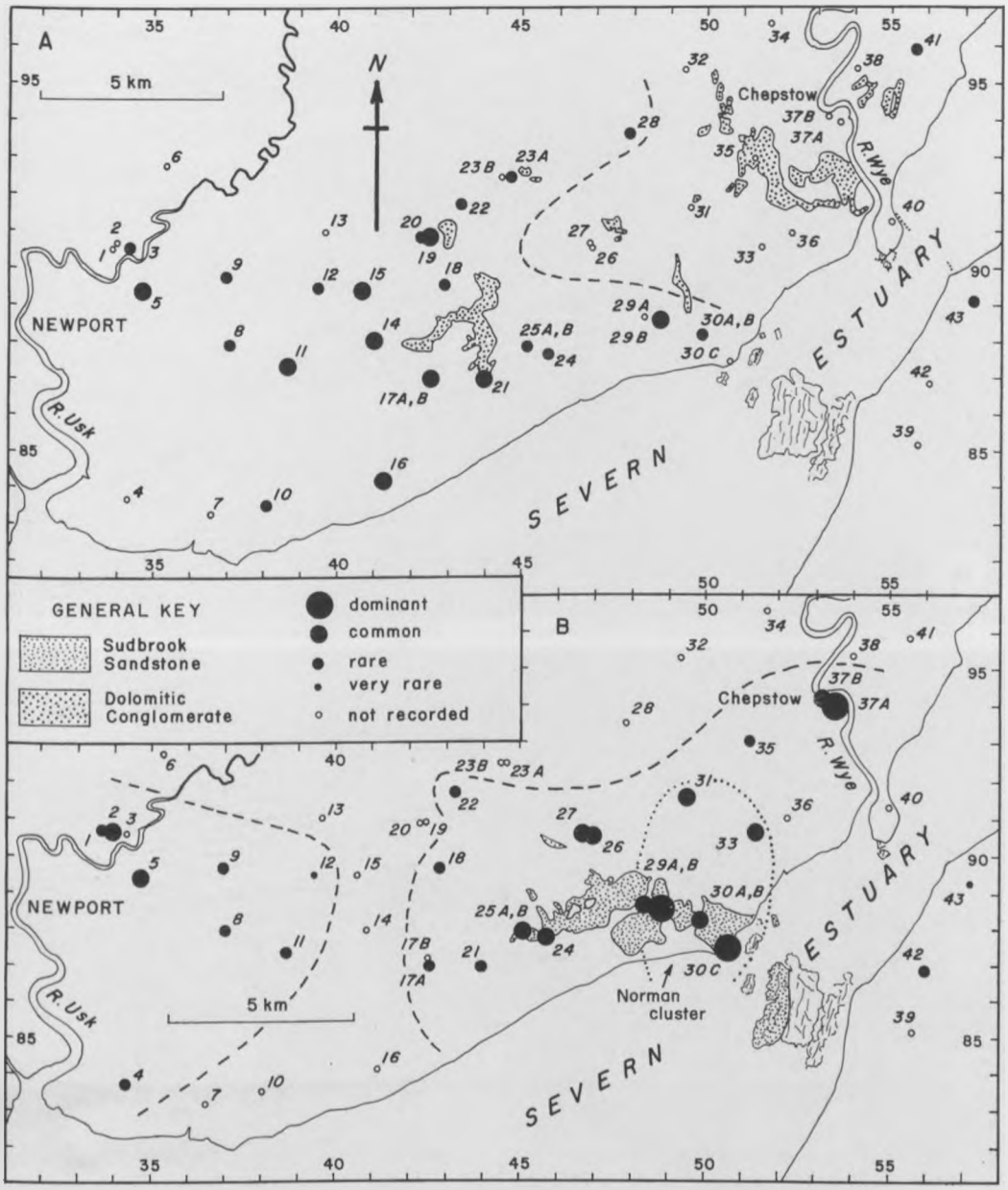

Fig. 3: The Dolomitic Conglomerate and Sudbrook Sandstone in Roman and medieval-early modern buildings in south-east Wales (*see* also Appendix).
A – Sites with Dolomitic Conglomerate.
B – Sites with Sudbrook Sandstone. *See* text for meaning of abundance classes.
Outcrops based on British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Sheet 250.

Fig. 4: Sudbrook Sandstone in Roman Caerwent.
A – Weathered steps and drain, *forum-basilica*.
B – Set of *pilae*, room 14, courtyard house, I.28N.

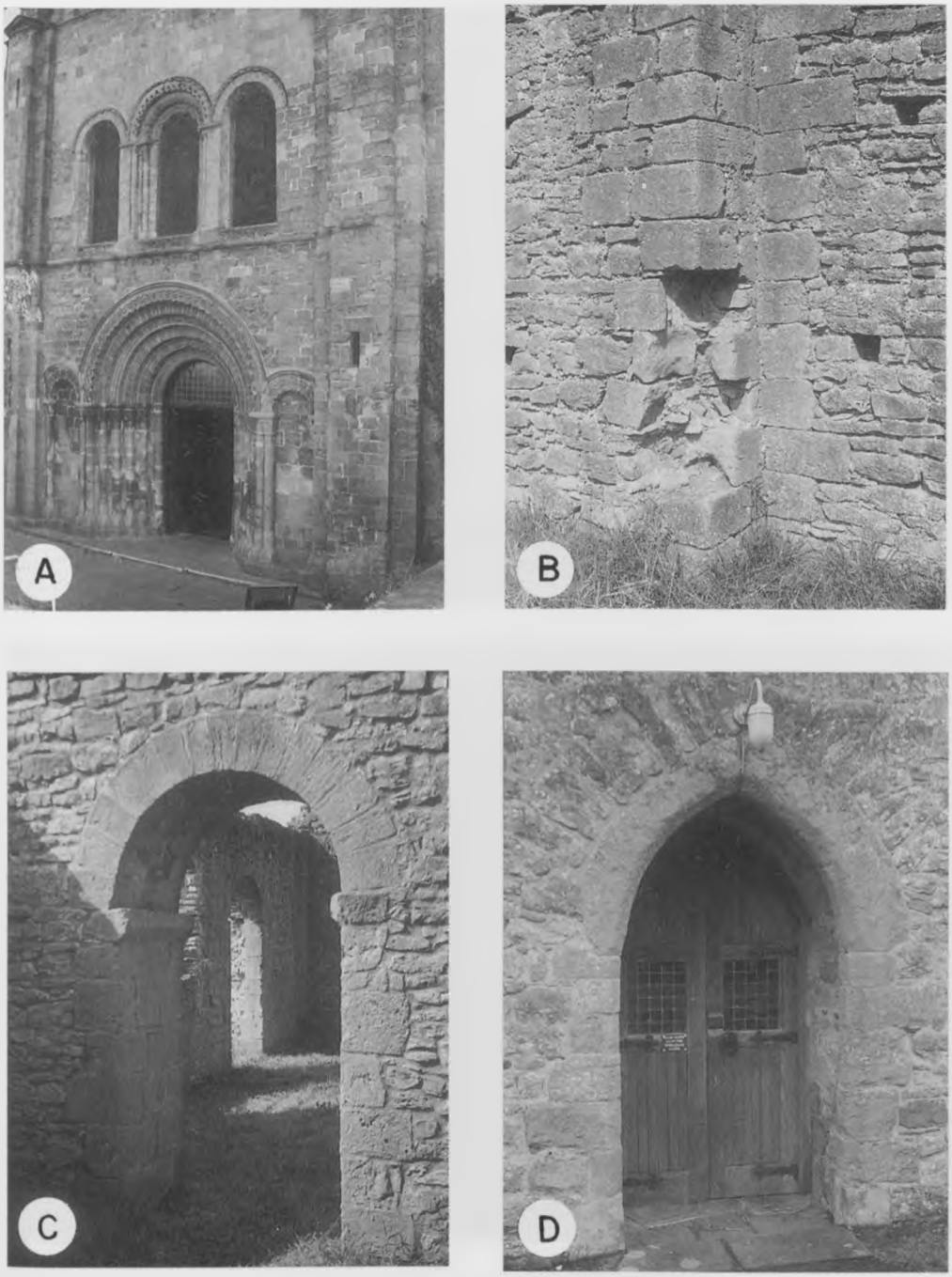

Fig. 5: Sudbrook Sandstone in church buildings.
A – West front, St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow.
B – Quoins, St Keyna, Runston deserted village.
C – Chancel arch, St Keyna, Runston deserted village.
D – Porch entrance, St Peter, St Pierre.

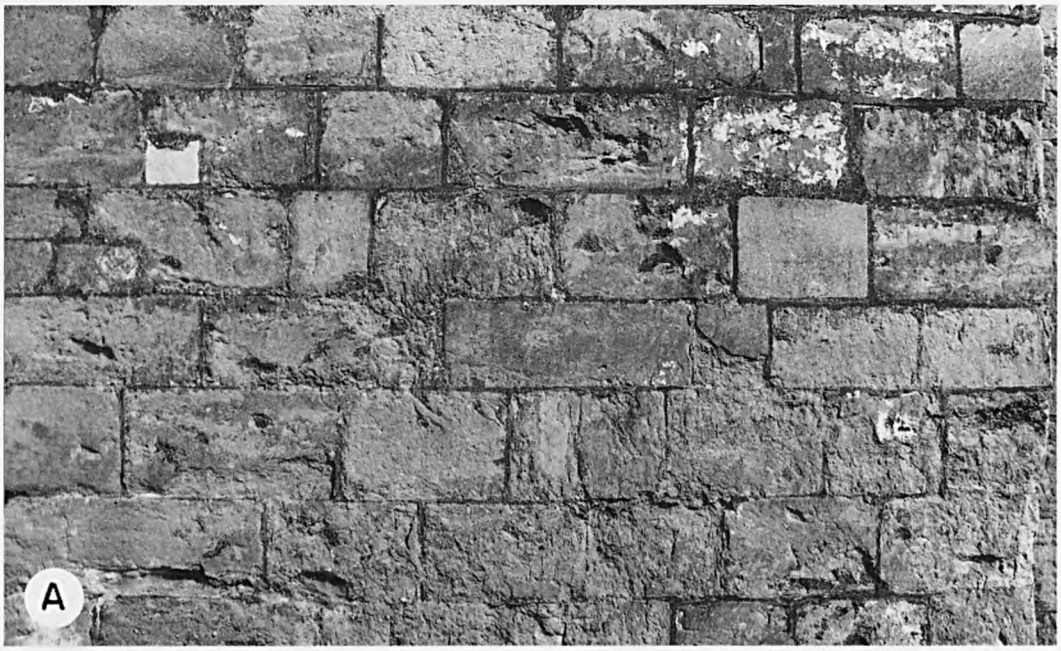

Fig. 6: Constructions in Sudbrook Sandstone.
A – Detail of ashlar, St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow.
B – Cross, St Mary's churchyard, Portskewett.

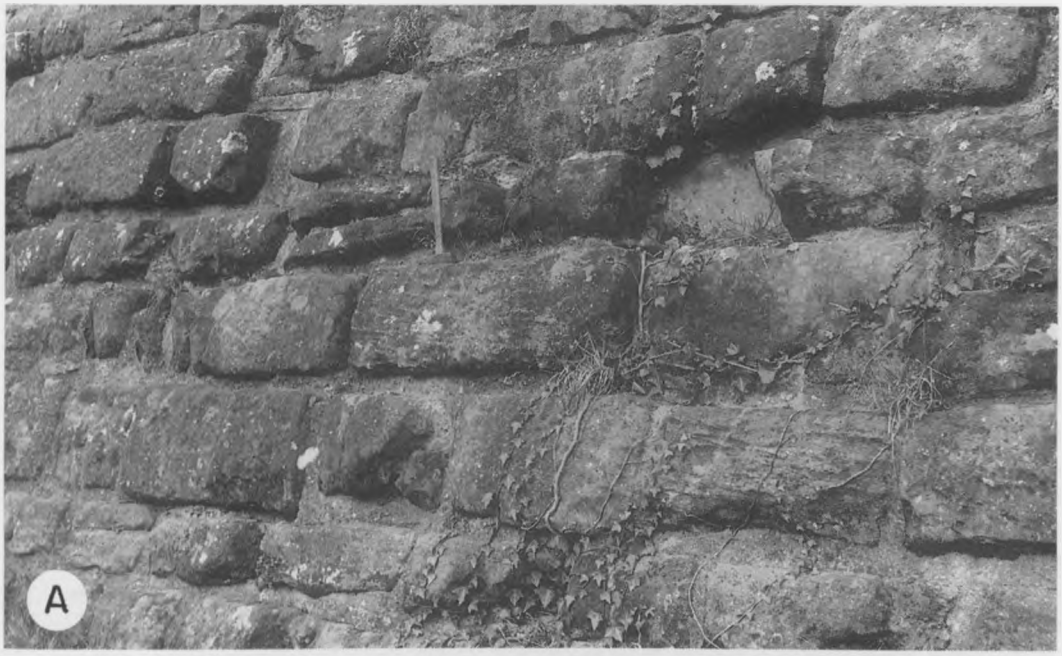

Fig. 7: Sudbrook Sandstone in castles.
A – Plinth, south side, Great Tower, Chepstow Castle.
B – Detail of ashlar and dripmould, Keep, Caldicot Castle.

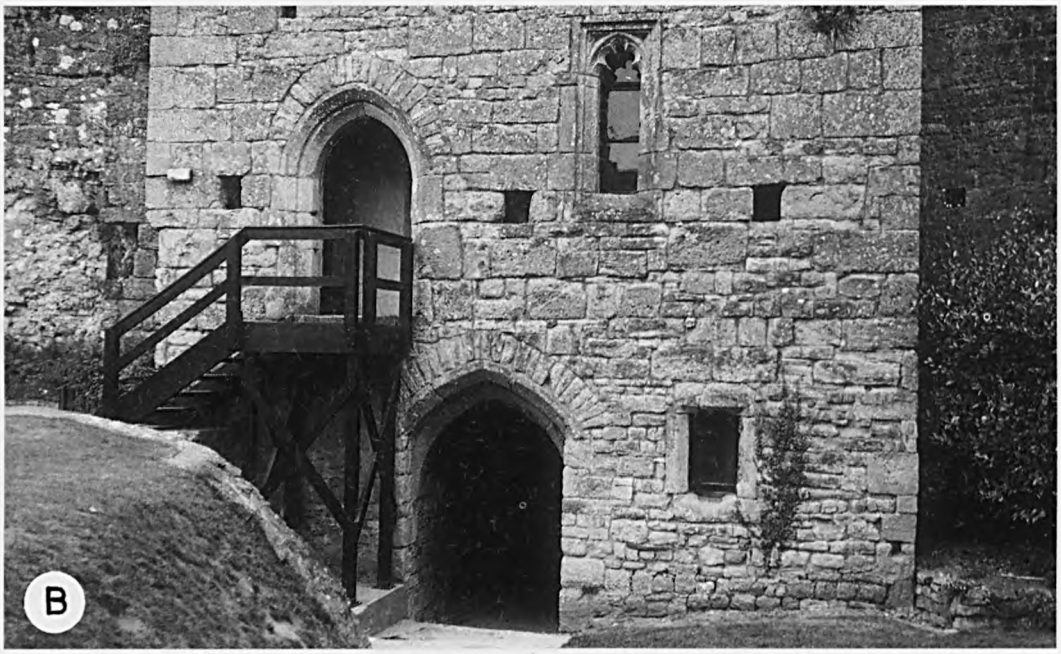

Fig. 8: Sudbrook Sandstone at Caldicot Castle.
A – Ashlar and window dressing, external south-east wall.
B – Internal wall with door and window dressings, Woodstock Tower.

THE ROADS OF TRELECH: INVESTIGATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIEVAL TOWN

By Ray Howell

Recent training excavations undertaken for University of Wales Newport have added considerably to our understanding of the development of medieval Trelech. Particular insights have been gained in recent years with respect to the road pattern associated with Trelech, a decayed urban site which in the late thirteenth century may have been the largest town in Wales. The road system[1] consists of at least three north–south roads with two passing on either side of a central core defined by the church and the motte and bailey castle (*see* Fig. 1). As will be discussed below, recent excavation on the castle site may suggest a sequence of development for both the town and the associated road system.

It is appropriate to describe the roads flanking the church and castle as an inner circuit or grid since it now seems apparent that east–west roads ran north of the church and south of the castle defining a precinct containing both. The roads flanking the church and castle have been shown by a number of early cartographers and reported by later scholars including Bradney (*see* Fig. 2). The earliest relevant cartographic source available is the collection of Ogilby strip maps published as the *Britannia* atlas in 1675. Earlier maps of south–east Wales, notably those by Christopher Saxton in the sixteenth century and by John Speed early in the seventeenth century, show a range of features but not roads. John Ogilby and his agents, however, employed measuring wheels to survey some 40,000 miles of British roads (Bissell, 2001). The results were published as strip maps or itineraries. Particularly important amongst these is the route from London to St Davids running through Trelech (Plate 16, 'The Continuation of the Road from London to St. Davids Commencing at Monmouth and Extending to Burton (*sic*) Ferry'; this map shows the road passing to the west of the church (Road A). The route from Bristol to Ludlow (Plate 56, 'The Road from Bristol ... to West Chester) on the other hand, while showing the beginning of the western road, confirms the road (Road B) through Trelech toward Chepstow to the east of the church (*see* Figs. 3, 4 and 5). Further confirmation of this simple inner grid is provided by later maps including those of W.R. Gardner and C. Smith in 1828, Henry Teesdale in 1829, T.L. Murray in 1830, and William Ebden in 1833 (Michael, 1985). Perhaps the best map of the rectilinear road system, which must indicate the surviving medieval road plan, is the Ordnance Survey map of 1834, Sheet 35 (*see* Fig. 6). Interestingly, the map produced by J. and C. Walker in 1836 shows a single road and this may well demonstrate closure of the western road; such a date would be consistent with the archaeological evidence. It may be the case that Trelech's modern anachronistic road system with its ninety degree bends as the road from Monmouth enters on one medieval road, then dog-legs around the churchyard to join a second, dates from the late 1830s.

Of the two roads defining the central core of Trelech, the eastern road, Road B, is the least well attested archaeologically. The modern road overlying restricts access to and, during construction, may well have damaged or removed evidence of an earlier road surface. Nevertheless, the cartographic evidence is convincing and there is every reason to assume the line of a medieval road here. Indeed, it has even been suggested that medieval Trelech should be seen as a largely linear

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[1] In studies of medieval towns the terms road and street are sometimes used interchangeably. For simplicity, particularly as one of the main routes considered in this paper may have been located outside the original implantation, the term road will be used throughout.

development along this 'main' road (Wilson, 1998). Road A to the west of the church is now fully demonstrated both by geophysical and contour survey (*see* Figs. 7 and 8) as well as excavation. The road has been seen in section or partial section in seven places along some 120m of its extent. The clearest profile of what proved to be two substantial road phases including a late or post-medieval surface overlying a thirteenth-century antecedent was provided during excavations of large stone buildings flanking the road in the field west of the church (Howell, 2003 and 2004). The upper surface, the 'Ogilby road', was flanked by an earth and clay bank on the west. The road itself was made up of small, packed cobbles with well-defined wheel ruts (*see* Fig. 9). A double ditch and bank ran beside the lower medieval road surface which also consisted of stony metalling with rutting set on a base of iron slag and clay slightly over 3.5m in width (*ibid.*). This road must have been an important element in the plan of Trelech over a considerable period of time. An alleyway, *c.*1.1m in width, ran at an approximate right angle from the main road to the west, passing between the largest of the stone structures.[2] Portions of a wider 'side street' ran on a similar line south of the largest building. The layout here clearly suggests burgage occupation with, in the case of the large buildings, construction on doubled plots (*see* Fig. 10).

The east–west roads are inferred from survey and limited excavation. To the north of the church, a road (Road D) ran along the line of the modern road north of the churchyard and continued straight across Church Field West towards Llangofan. This road is suggested by geophysics but is most clearly seen in the contour survey of the field (*see* Fig. 11). Confirmation of this portion of the road is provided by the 1834 map which shows it still in use. As was common with many early roads, Road D seems to have 'migrated' to its present location after 1834, possibly into an already well-defined broad ditch. This migration could have been a consequence of the closure of Road A. To the south, geophysics and subsequent excavation suggest burgage plots aligned along the modern farm road on Court Farm which passes south of the Methodist chapel. The line of the road itself could not be investigated directly since, as with Road B, modern metalling masks and may have damaged/destroyed the earlier surface. Nevertheless, there is a strong case for believing that the modern road was placed on an earlier road line (Road E – *see* Figs. 12 and 13) which may explain the description of the area around Middleton House as 'Middle Town' on the Tithe map apportionment of 1847 (Gwent Record Office, D1579.38).

It seems likely that Road D continued to the east where it met a third major north–south road (Road C). This road was first demonstrated archaeologically in excavations on Trelech Farm (Howell, 1997) in an area which has subsequently been developed as a modern housing estate. A length of approximately 9.5m of the road was excavated with test pitting confirming its continuation to the north. Approximately 3m in width, the road was well-made with small cobbles and deep wheel ruts approximately 1.5m apart (*see* Fig. 14). A highly disturbed but well-defined medieval structure lay to the west with evidence of iron smelting to the east. Subsequent work including geophysical survey in the Middleton House paddock and test pitting suggests that to the south this road ran slightly below the line of the modern metalled track running toward Middleton House forming a five-lane confluence at the modern entrance to Court Farm. It appears that Roads B and C converged with Road E which continued to the east. The now merged B and C continued to the south.

Additional stretches of Road C were revealed in 2004 when excavation was undertaken in the field east of the *Lion* public house. Geophysical survey in this field had been completed in 2002

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[2] The large medieval artefact assemblage associated with the southern building could indicate an inn or tavern. The recovery of a 13th-century *ampulla* or pilgrim's flask nearby might suggest a pilgrim's hospice, a role not inconsistent with that of an inn.

(Hamilton, 2002) indicating the line of the road running through the field. Excavation confirmed that the road surface was well metalled with closely compacted small (generally *c.* 4.5cm) stone cobbles (Figs. 15 and 15a). Subsequent smaller investigations confirmed the road surface north and south of the main excavation. In places the road, like Road A, had been built onto a slag hard-core base approximately 3.5m wide. The metalled road itself was approximately 3m in width with a ditch running parallel to the west and well-defined wheel ruts approximately 1.5m wide marking the surface. These dimensions not surprisingly mirror the findings of the 1997 excavation. This road has now been confirmed by geophysical survey and excavation; it has been surveyed and excavated or partially excavated in eight places along a length of over 250m.

There was evidence of significant medieval activity by the side of Road C as well as in other parts of the field. In the main 2004 excavation, a sequence of stone surfaces with associated thirteenth-century pottery assemblages some 50cm in depth suggests working surfaces. Slots, daub and concentrations of medieval ceramics near the road in the south of the field suggest timber frame construction. Significant medieval activity is clear although the nature of that activity appears to be different from that associated with the very substantial structures which flanked Road A. This difference may relate to other recent findings which have significantly enhanced our understanding of the medieval town.

Particularly important recent discoveries in Trelech have resulted from investigations at the motte and bailey castle (Phillips, 2002 and Phillips, forthcoming). Following geophysical and contour surveys, excavation was undertaken on the assumed bailey bank and associated ditch in 2002 and 2003. Structural finds included large beam slots with an associated post hole confirming the bridge which linked the bailey and the motte. A radiocarbon date for wood recovered from the ditch and associated ceramic finds confirm that the castle predates the earliest surviving historical reference which mentions it as an existing structure in 1231 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1225–32*). The radio carbon date of 1136 +- 70 suggests construction before the early thirteenth century (Waikato, 15230 – Sample 012.1), a conclusion supported by the associated ceramic assemblage. The most important result of these investigations is confirmation that the bailey bridge was on the north side of the motte and consequently that the bailey itself extended north of the motte rather than south on the site of the modern Court Farm complex as has previously been suggested (*see* Phillips, forthcoming). This northern orientation may be particularly important in terms of understanding the early development of the medieval town and the associated road system.

One of several current research priorities in Trelech is to identify the extent of the castle bailey. While a double bailey remains a possibility, there seems little doubt that the main bailey extended north with accommodation to the motte provided by the newly discovered bridge. This bailey could have been a relatively small enclosure encompassing an area which included what is today the *Village Green* public house and the Croft Cottage yard. Alternatively, and possibly more likely, is that the bailey was even larger and that it was related to the still well-defined Town Ditch which runs parallel to the grounds of the primary school extending behind the [now defunct] village post office. It could, of course, have been both, with an extension of the bailey to accommodate urban implantation. If this was the case, the ditch may have continued on the line of the later phase of Road D noted above. This scenario would help to explain the variation in levels in the northern part of the town, a point noted by Phillips (pers. comm.) in his study of earth and timber castles which argues strongly for the larger bailey. If this interpretation is correct, it places both the church and the large buildings revealed in Church Field West within an extended bailey. There are parallels with other medieval sites. (*See* for example Denbigh, Devizes and particularly Cydweli). It would follow that these structures, which appear to date from *c.*1250, were associated with the first phase of implantation.

In this model, it is likely that road C ran outside the bailey precinct accounting for the different nature of associated structure and artefact assemblages. A five-lane confluence at or near the castle gate would have been an ideal location for a market and one which could have encouraged 'ancillary' activity associated with the market. Such an interpretation is inevitably speculative but it would be consistent with the available evidence and with known parallels on other medieval sites. (*See* for comparison Denbigh, Haverfordwest, Hay on Wye, Laugharne, Llantrisant and Neath). It might also account for some areas of apparent vacant possession which have exercised minds in the Monmouth Archaeological Society for several years.[3] The town may have begun as a relatively small central implantation which included the large, regular structures excavated in Church Field West with significant extramural activity associated with market activities and, in particular, important and rapidly expanding iron production activities developing near the Olwy, particularly in the area of the Middleton, or middle town, meadow.

One of the key archaeological findings from nearly two decades of work on the medieval town is confirmation of substantial iron production. Some iron working activity was conducted in the inner core described above (*see* Howell, 2004) and near to Road C (Howell, 1997). Much of what can only be described as iron production on an industrial scale, however, took place south of the town. As early as 1989, smelting was demonstrated near the Virtuous Well (Howell, 1989) and subsequent excavation and survey has confirmed that iron working along the banks of the Olwy was intensive with workings extending from the town core at least as far as the well and probably beyond. (Howell, 2002 and Tuck, pers. comm.). This iron working activity seems to have been well planned and structured with excavation confirming smelting over a wide area overlooking the river[4] and smithing activity focussed nearer the banks of the Olwy (Howell, 2002).

It seems highly likely that this intensive iron production provided the primary underpinning of the economy of medieval Trelech. Moreover, it has been suggested that production may have been stimulated by 'political imperatives' associated with de Clare military/political activity particularly in Glamorgan. Trelech seems to have emerged as an urban industrial centre at roughly the same time that it was acquired by the de Clares in the aftermath of the Marshal partition of 1245/6. The town also seems to have declined after a second partition when the de Clares were eliminated in the male line in 1314 (Howell, 2000). This intensive industrial activity must also have influenced associated domestic occupation south of the town. There is good reason to believe that there was significant suburban development at Trelech. With 378 burgages noted in 1288 (The National Archives/Public Record Office, SC6/1247/21), there was clearly scope for urban overspill on a large scale. An interesting comparison may be provided by Cydweli (Kidwelly) where through partial relocation (Scrase, 2002, 64 and 67) burgage occupation in the original bailey implantation had, by the early seventeenth century, declined to eighteen while suburban development accounted for 171 burgages (Rees, 1953, 175–95). Suburban development in Trelech seems to have occurred in at least two main areas, the first concentrated along Road E past Middleton House and the second along what might best be described as Road G which represents a continuation of the merged roads B and C. The road merger must have been necessitated by a crossing on the Olwy; today the roads south of this point fan

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[3] While there may be examples of vacant possession, possibly related to the siting of the bailey, caution is always prudent in cases of 'negative evidence', particularly if that evidence includes assemblages of 13th/14th-century ceramic material interpreted as re-deposited plough soil on the basis that the material is abraded. That may, of course, be the case but it is dependent on a number of variables and subject to more than one interpretation. Moreover, as was demonstrated by work on Trelech Farm, structural survival in Trelech can sometimes be patchy and unpredictable.

[4] Today the Olwy at Trelech can only be described as a stream but it carried more water in the medieval period and river seems the appropriate description.

out in three directions resulting in Road F which runs past the Virtuous Well, Road G which runs roughly south toward Catbrook and Road H which is now the road to Chepstow passing Trelech's three large prehistoric standing stones. Medieval road surfaces here await confirmation but it seems reasonable to assume, at least with Roads F and G, that medieval roadways were respected by subsequent road construction. Tinker's Lane, now a 'Green Lane' connecting F and G, may also have medieval antecedents. Consequently, it is shown on the plan as Road J.

As has been seen, significant medieval activity has been confirmed archaeologically along the line of Road F. Much of this activity was industrial although some burgage occupation is possible (Tuck, pers. comm.) Similarly, there is evidence of activity along Road G which appears to be largely domestic.[5] Clarke believes that occupation along this road may prove extensive, possibly extending as far as the grange boundary (Clarke, pers. comm.). This is possible as is similarly extensive occupation along Road E near Middleton House. Road F must be regarded with more caution as a medieval feature. Limited excavation of an apparent prehistoric enclosure near the Trelech standing stones suggested by geophysical survey (*see* 'Short Notes') revealed both the enclosure and an overlying medieval horizon. Significantly, however, there was also a substantial soil overburden covering both which would best be explained as upcast from the construction of the present road. It may be the case that in the medieval period, Road E continued from the five-lane confluence noted above west through modern Court Farm, joining the Chepstow road west of Trelech below the line of the modern road. Geophysical survey suggests that this, as well as a measure of associated occupation, is a strong possibility (Hamilton, pers. comm.).

Conclusion

Recent work has dramatically improved our understanding of medieval Trelech. Particularly important recent discoveries have included confirmation of the northerly orientation of the castle and of the exceptionally large and regularly spaced buildings in Church Field West confirming, amongst other things, burgage occupation in the core of medieval Trelech. Our understanding of the road system of the medieval town has also been refined. Final confirmation of Roads A and C is important and the implied confluence of roads near Court Farm may prove particularly significant in informing our understanding of the town.

Given the findings arising from a programme of recent excavation, it is possible to suggest refined models for town development in Trelech. A particularly interesting possibility is that the bailey of the castle was sufficiently large to relate to the still existing Town Ditch placing both the church and the Church Field West buildings in an outer bailey. Such an outer bailey precinct could have been defended or simply defined for the purpose of implantation. If this was the case, it would be reasonable to assume that associated occupation represents the original implantation at Trelech, a conclusion strengthened by the dating evidence from Church Field West.[6] Extra mural activity may have developed rapidly, in the first instance possibly along the focus provided by Roads C and E. Soon intensive industrial activity to the south developed along Road F with what may prove to

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[5] Investigation of footings along this road led to frenetic and ill-considered press reports in the summer of 2004. These included a remarkable account in *The Times* describing discovery of a 'Lost City' replete with 'burbage plots' (*sic*). Trelech, of course, was never a city and, as the map evidence cited above confirms, has never been lost. There are no such things as 'burbage plots'.

[6] An interesting associated finding is evidence of extensive re-use of iron slag in construction at Trelech. As has been noted, in several places road surfaces were underpinned by a slag base and the large buildings in Church Field West were constructed on hard core foundations containing significant quantities of slag. As dating evidence suggests that these constructions were early, it must follow that iron production was not only early but also intensive.

have been sprawling suburban development along Road E toward Middleton House, Road G and possibly the western extension of E beyond the castle precinct. It is likely that all of this development occurred over a relatively short period of time with all three phases suggested above dating between *c.*1250 and *c.*1310, the period in which Trelech can be seen as a de Clare industrial *caput*.

The roads are essential elements both in understanding this implied pattern of development and in informing subsequent research strategies. As a matter of priority, it is important to define the castle precinct as closely as possible, clarifying our understanding of the extent of the bailey. This will help us to understand more fully the road system and associated occupation in extra mural areas. The task will be informed by additional excavation and, arguably even more importantly, survey. In the fullness of time, the suburban zones will also be explored more fully. Such targetted investigation will increasingly allow us to understand the development of a particularly significant urban centre which for a short period in the thirteenth century was an important industrial site which may have been the largest town in Wales.

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Forthcoming

Phillips, N. 'The timber motte and bailey castles of Gwent and Ergyng, AD 1050–1250' (Ph.D.thesis, University of Wales).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the continuing support of the numerous students of University of Wales Newport and other universities who have dug at Trelech over many years and to the residents and land owners who have supported our efforts so fully. I am also grateful for assistance from colleagues including Drs Maddy Gray and Mike Hamilton; Stephen Clarke; Tony Hopkins; Neil Phillips; Felicity Taylor; Martin Tuck; and particularly, illustrator Anne Leaver. The Gwent Record Office kindly gave permission for the reproduction of Ogilby maps in its custody.

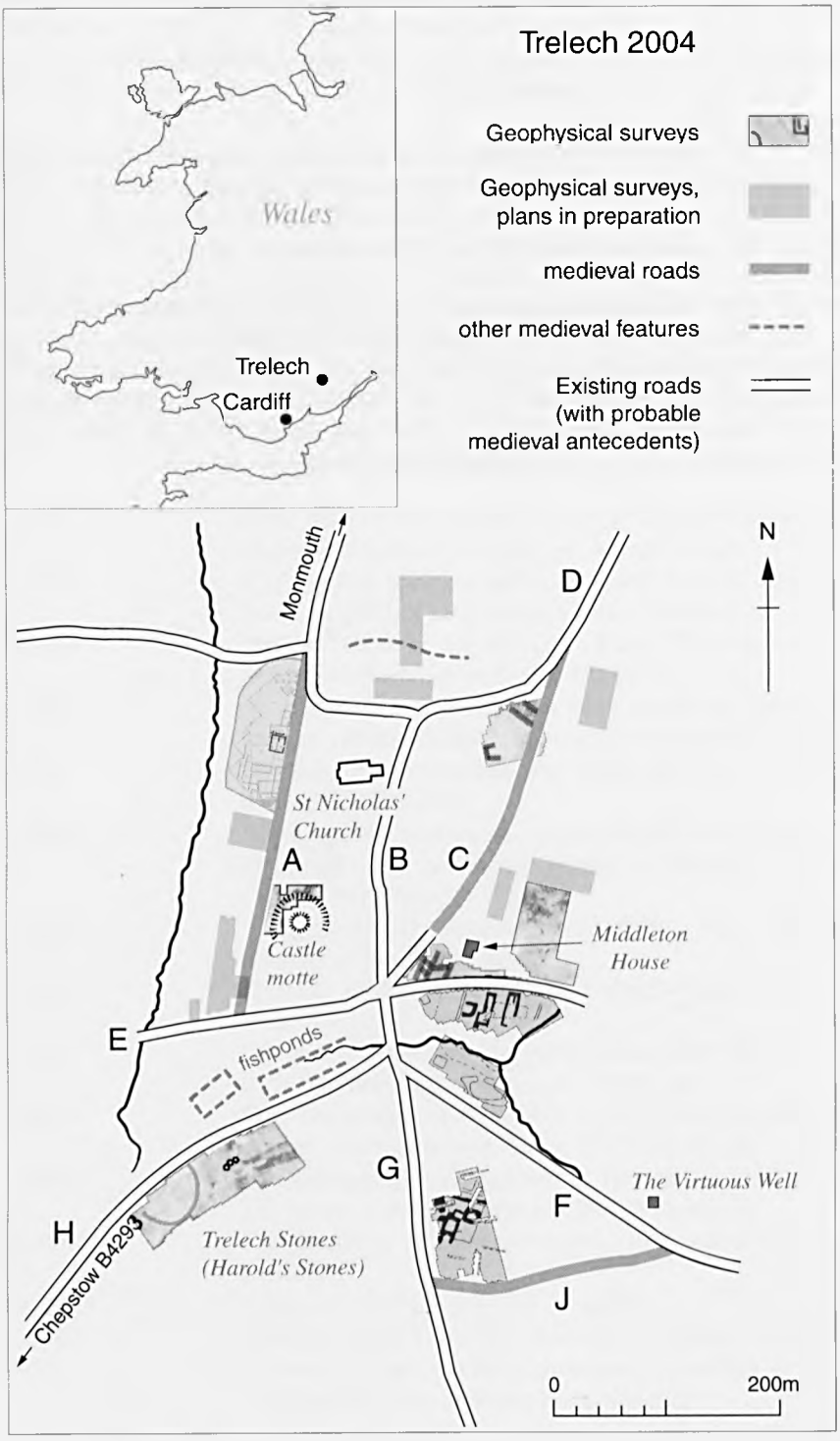
Trelech 2004
Geophysical surveys
Geophysical surveys, plans in preparation
medieval roads
other medieval features
Existing roads (with probable medieval antecedents)
Wales
Trelech
Cardiff
N
Monmouth
D
St Nicholas' Church
A
B
C
Castle motte
Middleton House
E
fishponds
G
The Virtuous Well
F
H
Trelech Stones (Harold's Stones)
Chepstow B4293
J
0
200m

Fig. 1

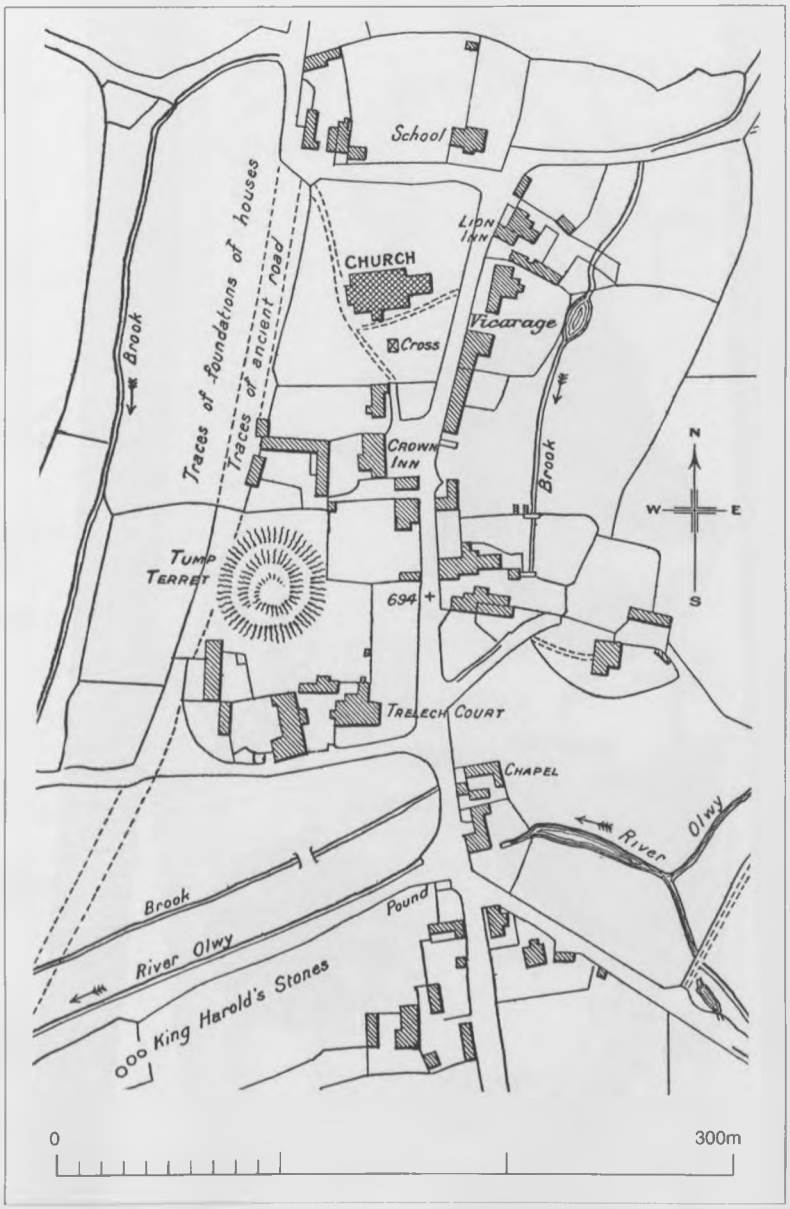

Fig. 2: In his *A History of Monmouthshire*, Sir Joseph Bradney correctly anticipated Road A and the buildings aligned along it. Both the buildings and the road have now been confirmed archaeologically. (Plan after Bradney, 1913. A metric scale has been provided).

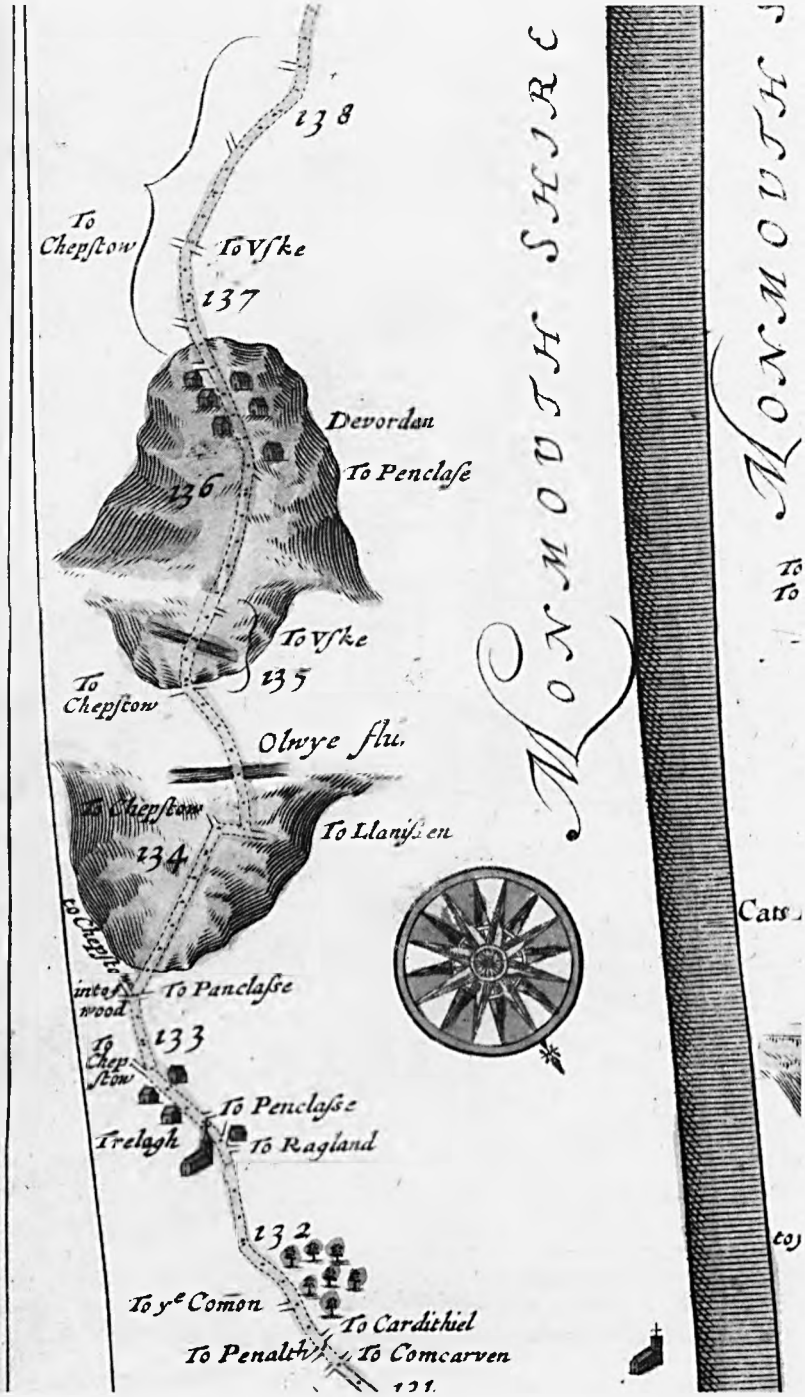

Fig. 3: Ogilby's itinerary (*Britannia*, Plate 16) showing Road A running west of the church. In order to avoid confusion, it is important to note the orientation of the compass rose with north at the bottom of the map.
(Gwent Record Office, General Collections).

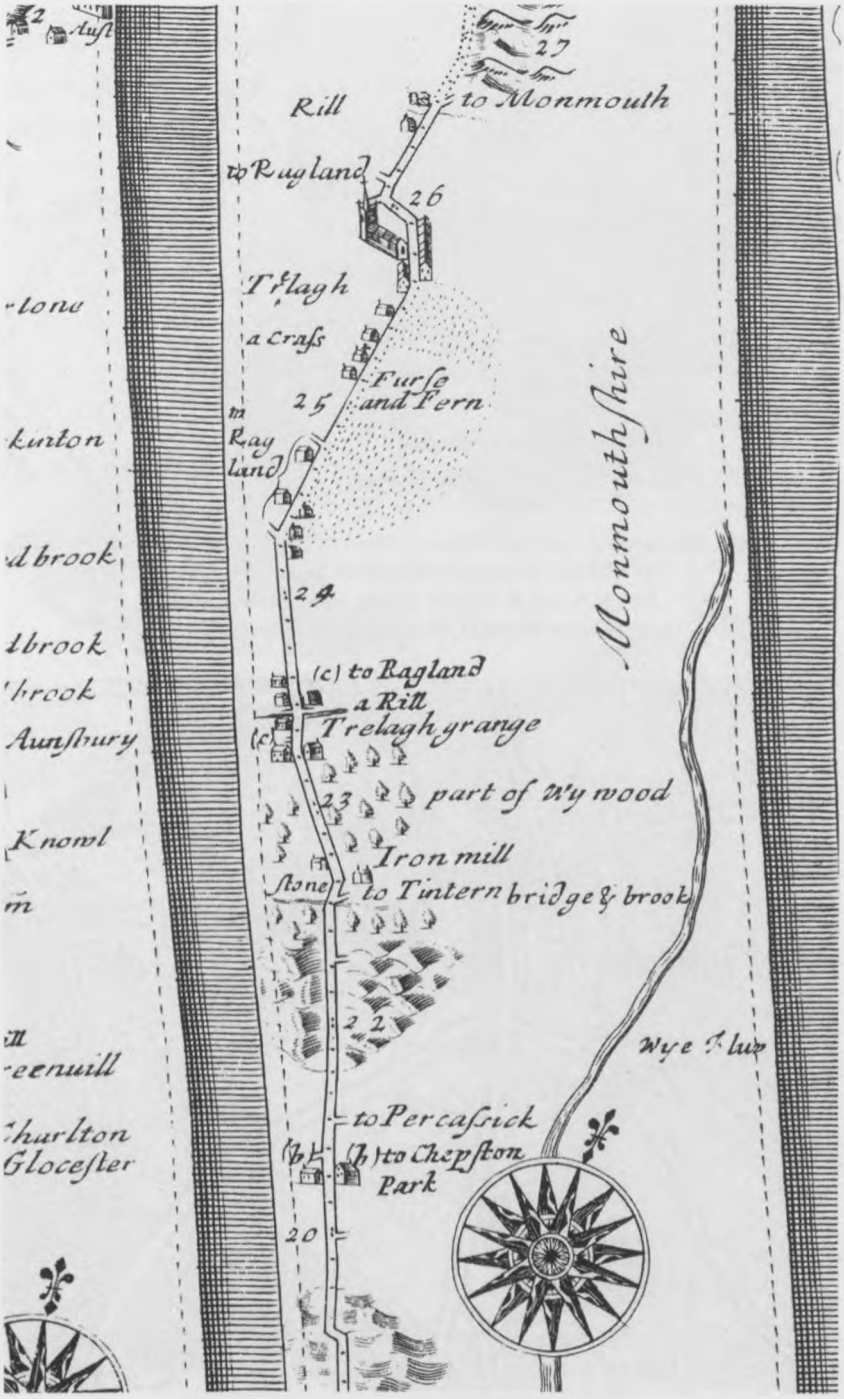

Fig. 4: Road B east of the church is shown on Ogilby's Bristol to Ludlow itinerary (*Britannia*, Plate 56). The compass rose on this map has north at the top. (Gwent Record Office, General Collections).

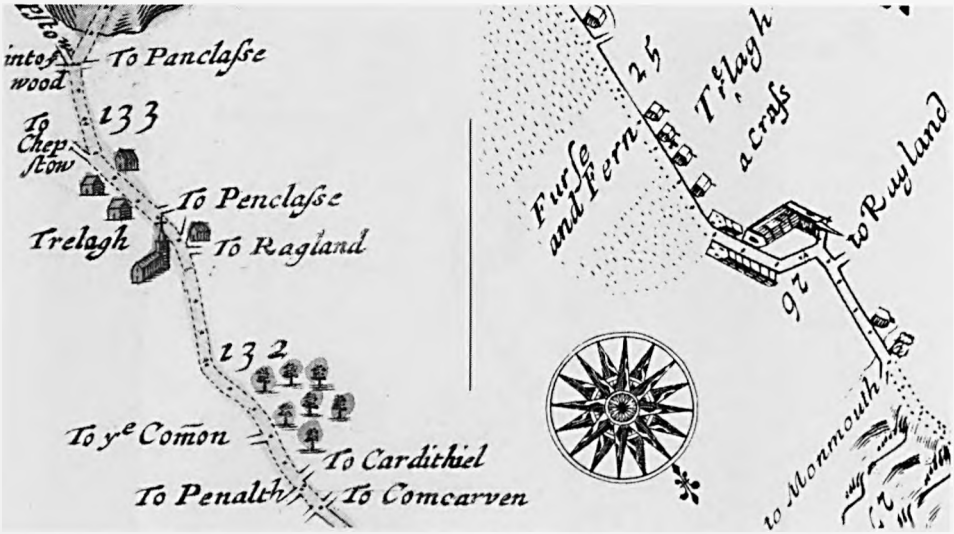

Fig. 5: In this figure, the compass roses have been overlaid so that both maps are on the same orientation. The text has also been adjusted for ease of comparison. Roads A and B are both clearly indicated by Ogilby. (Gwent Record Office, General Collections).

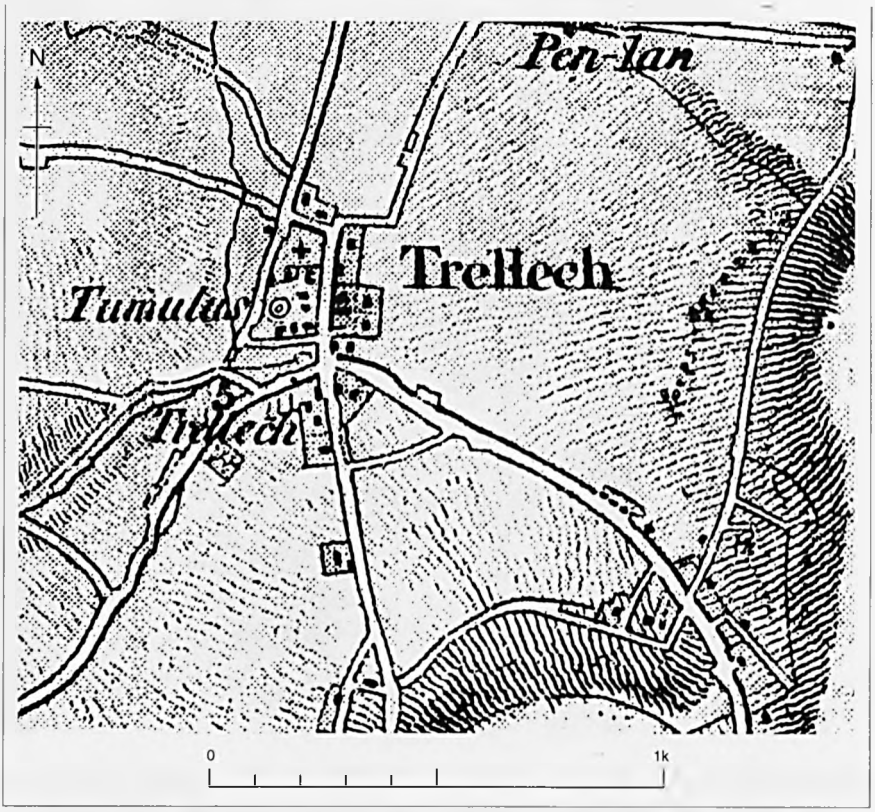

Fig. 6: The Ordnance Survey map of 1834 (1 inch, Old Series) shows Roads A and B still in use. The straight route through Church Field West followed by Road D is also shown.

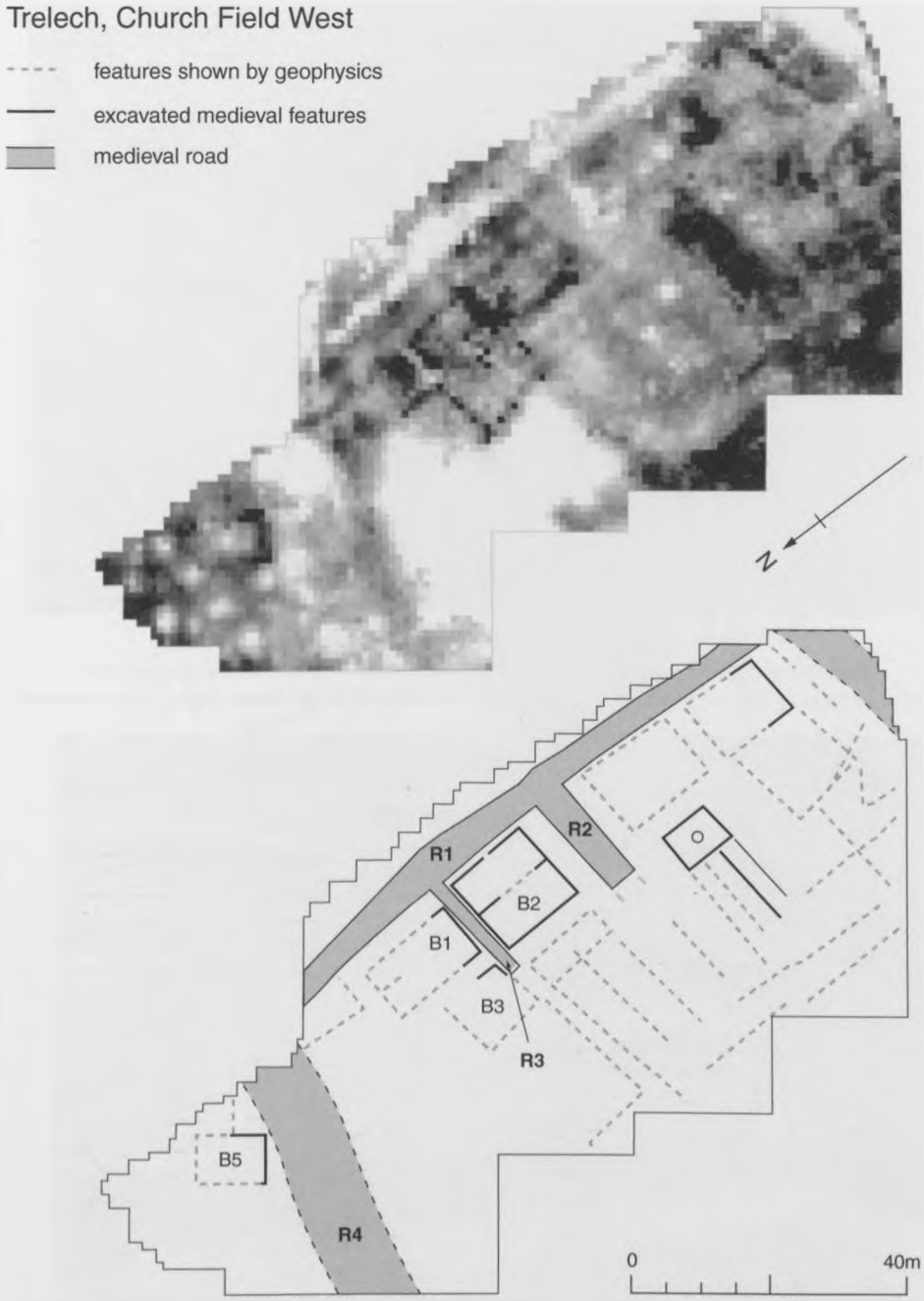

Fig. 7: The printout of the geophysical survey of Church Field West clearly indicates regularly aligned large structures and the major roads. The interpretation of the site has now been clarified by excavation which has also demonstrated side streets/alleys in the field.
On this plan, Road A is noted as R1 and Road D as R4. An alley approximately 1.1m in width, R3, ran between buildings B1 and B2 with a wider side street, R2, south of B2.
(Survey by Mike Hamilton, plan by Anne Leaver).

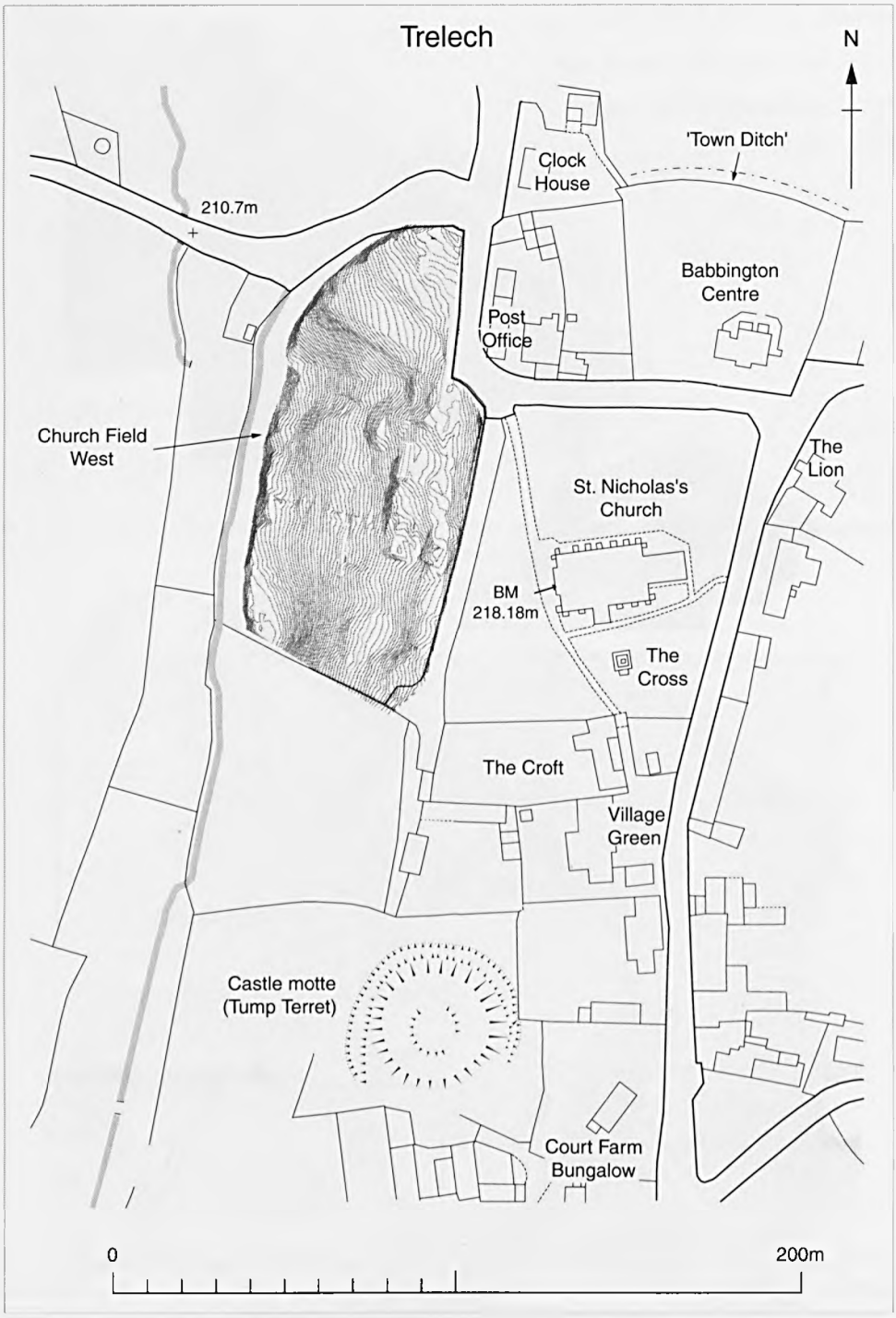

Fig. 8: A contour survey of Church Field West provides further confirmation of Roads A and D. Other landmarks shown, such as the Town Ditch, may relate to an extended northern castle bailey. (Survey by Neil Phillips, plan by Anne Leaver).

Fig. 9: An excavation trench revealing the upper surface of Road A.
This late/post-medieval surface, the Ogilby road, overlaid a 13th-century predecessor.
Numerous deep wheel ruts confirm the distressed state of the road shortly before it went out of use.

Fig. 10: In the foreground, Building 1 in Church Field West is to the north of a narrow alley which joined Road A. To the south, is the huge Building 2 which may, on the basis of the extensive artefact assemblage associated, have been an inn or hospice. The buildings almost certainly occupied doubled burgage plots aligned alongside Road A.

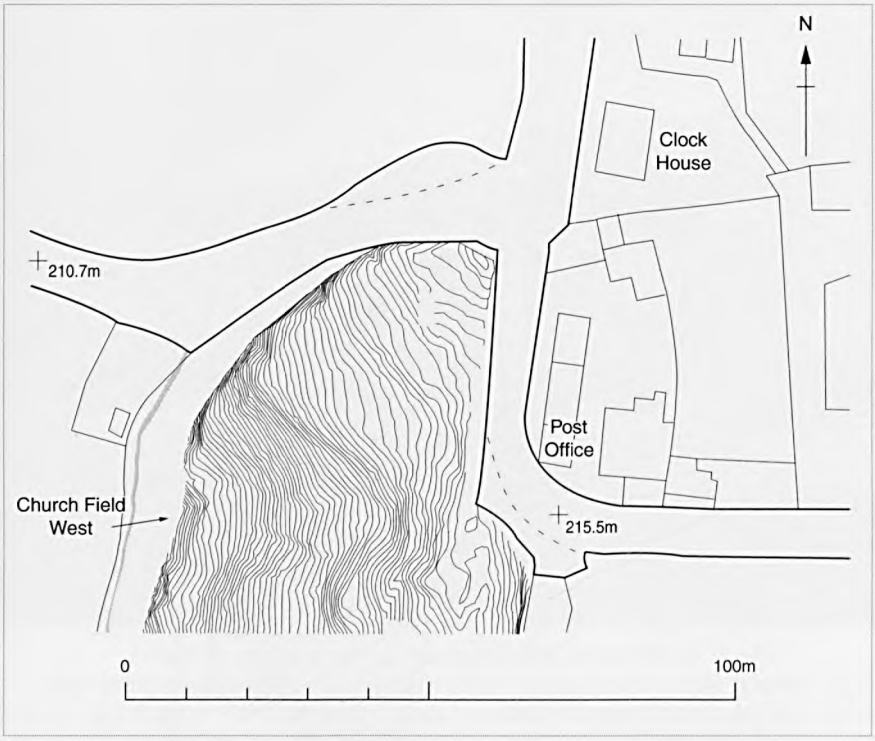

Fig. 11: An enlargement of the contour survey in the north of Church Field West which shows the original line of Road D.
(Survey by Neil Phillips, plan by Anne Leaver).

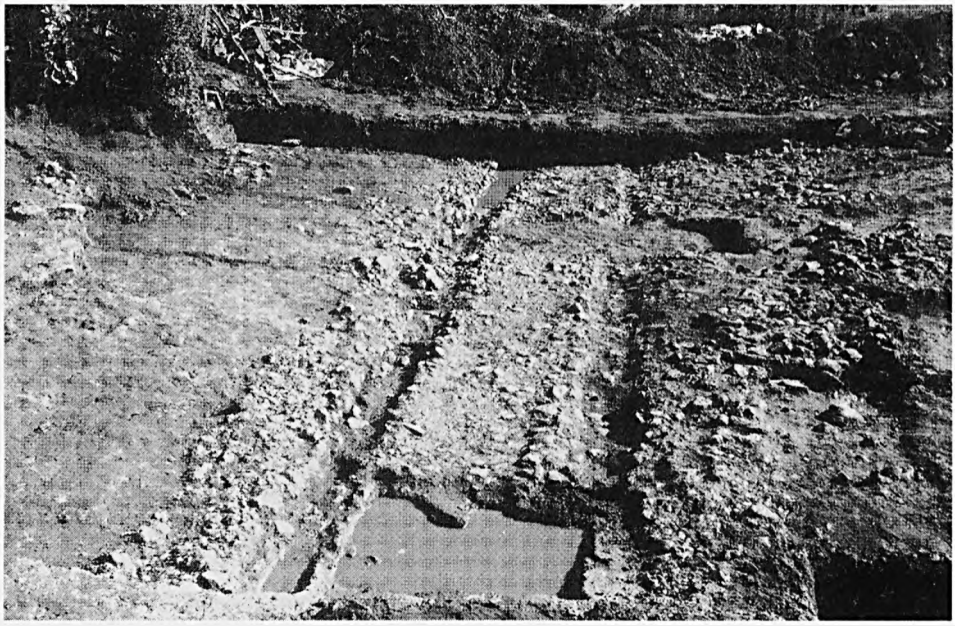

Fig. 14: The deeply rutted surface of Road C was first demonstrated by excavation on Trelech Farm in 1997.

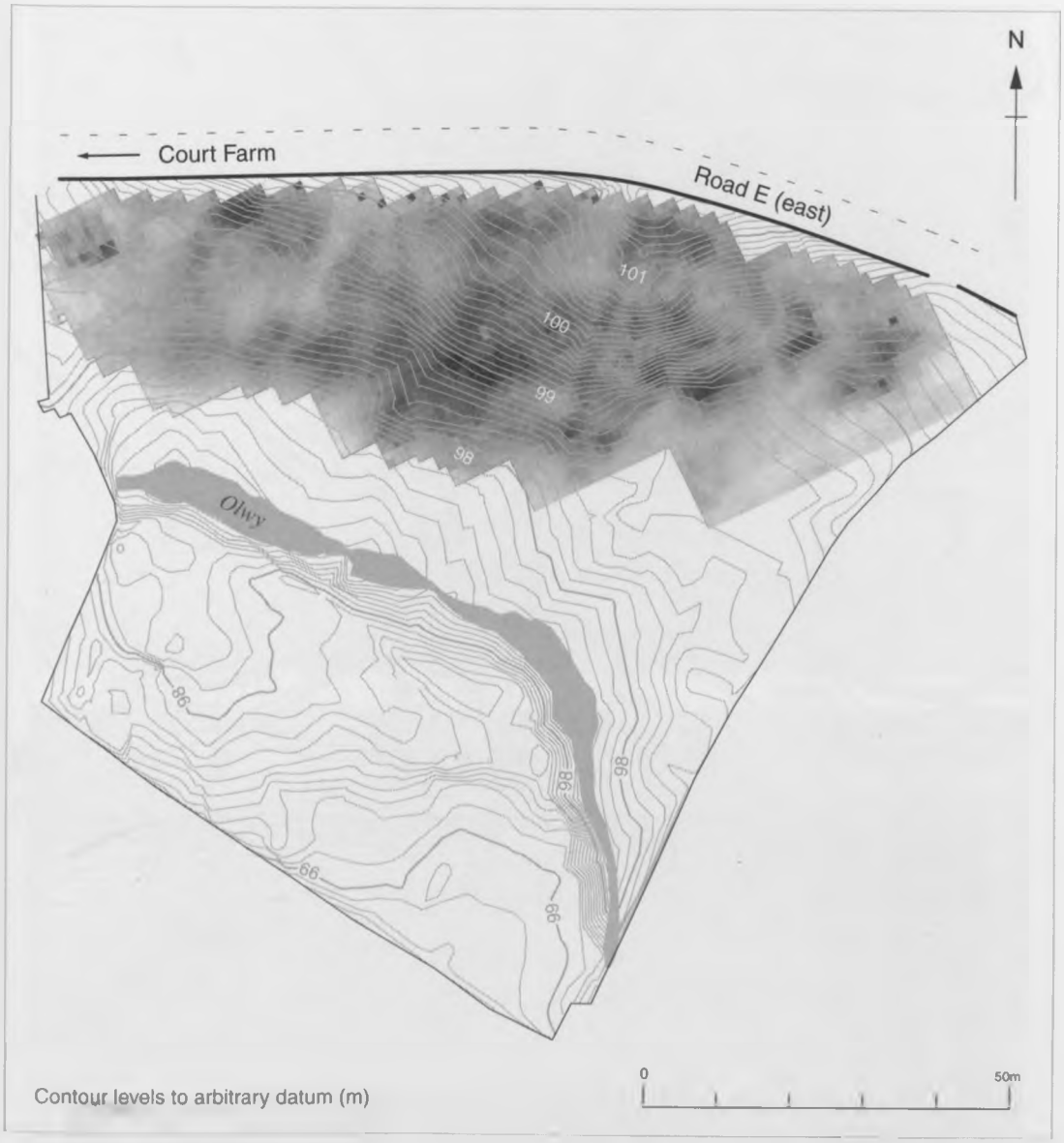

Fig. 12: The printout of a geophysical survey which strongly suggests burgage plots along Road E near Middleton House. This interpretation is strengthened by the results of subsequent excavation. (Geophysical survey by Mike Hamilton, contour survey by Neil Phillips, plan by Anne Leaver).

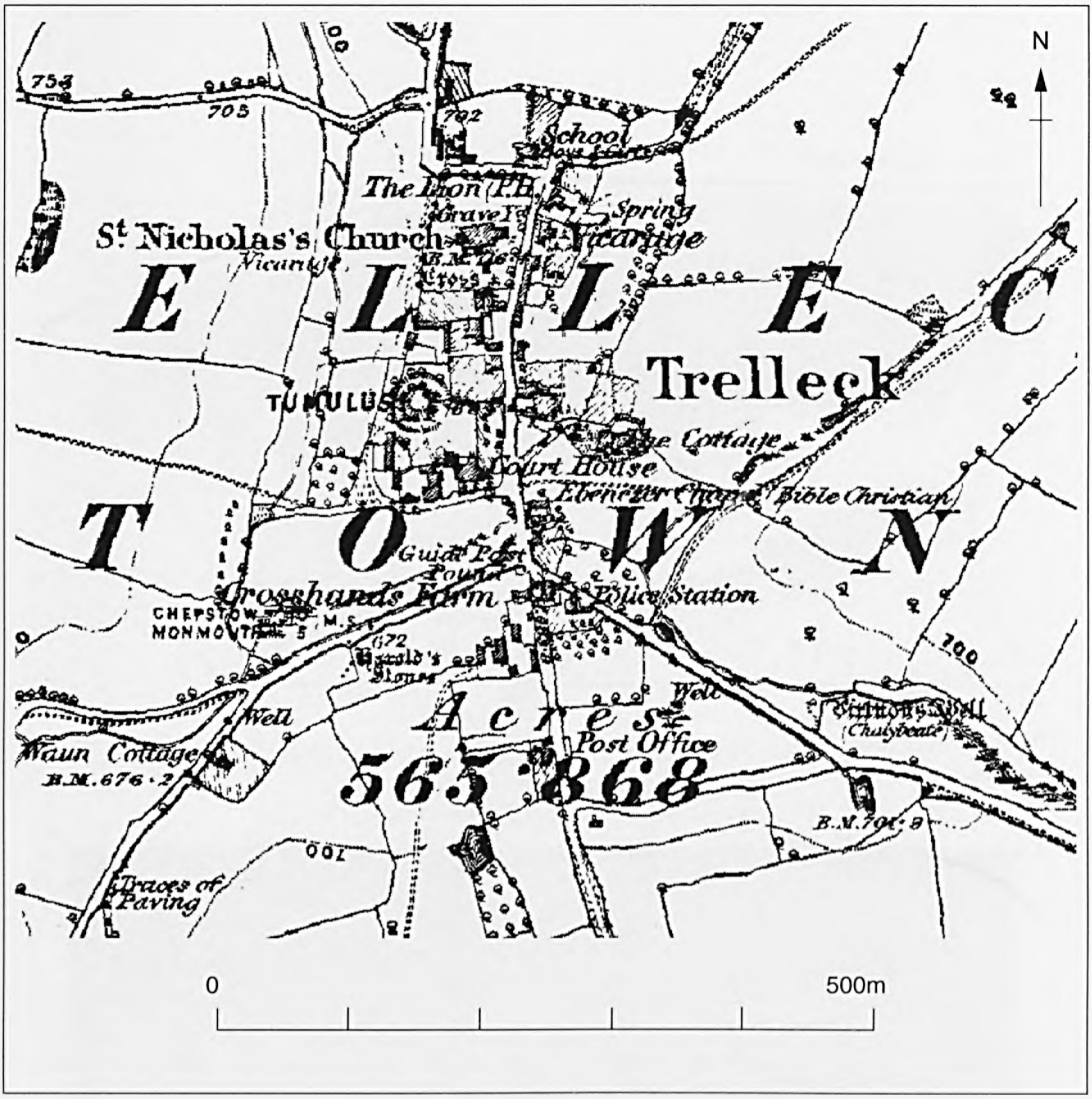

Fig. 13: The Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (25 inch, 1st edition) strongly suggests the earlier road system. Rights of way recall Roads A and E at several points and a double row of trees marks the line of Road C.

Figs. 15 and 15a: Road C was again demonstrated archaeologically by excavation in the field behind *The Lion* public house in 2004. The alignment and dimensions mirror the findings on Trelech Farm and must relate to geophysical and test pit evidence of the same road near the entrance to Court Farm, indicating a five-lane confluence at that point.

MONMOUTHSHIRE JOURNEYS: THE VISITS TO MONMOUTHSHIRE OF SARAH EARDLEY-WILMOT (née HASLAM) IN 1795 AND 1802

By Liz Pitman

> I confess I am malicious enough to desire that the World shou'd see to how much better purpose the Ladys Travel than their Lords, and that whilst it is surfeited with Males Travels, all in the same tone and stuft with the same Trifles, a Lady has the skill to strike out a New Path and to embellish a well worn out Subject with a variety of fresh and elegant Entertainment.
>
> Mary Astell[1]

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were periods when travelling for pleasure amongst the educated gentry of Britain increased enormously. Abroad, the Grand Tour was out of bounds because of the French wars; at home the cult of the 'Picturesque' was at its height, and the wilder parts of Britain were suddenly seen as worth visiting. Wales, along with Scotland and the Lake District, became a 'must see' place to visit. It was a country with wild and sublime 'picturesque' scenery; and it offered the additional excitement of being a foreign land, with inhabitants who had their own history, customs and language. Visitors went to North Wales for its lakes, mountains and wild landscape whilst South Wales was valued for the Wye tour (which admittedly begins in England but ends in Wales) and for its gentler landscape, its antiquities and its burgeoning industry. Mary Eade, writing to her sister at the start of her North Wales tour in 1802, summed up the differences between the two regions when she said:

> I despair indeed of rendering mine [her travel journal] as delightful as I found yours to be, yet it will now fall to my lot to explore the other division of that beautiful principality with which you were so much charmed. I trust you will find some pleasure in contrasting my account of the wild grandeur of its northern mountains with the more softened graces of its southern beauties.[2]

Monmouthshire not only had the southern part of the Wye tour to recommend it, but also, in places such as the Usk valley, these 'softened graces'.

Part of the pleasure of the journey for the traveller was the writing of journals and letters to friends back home and many travellers actually wrote their diaries with a view to publication. However, these published diaries are, with rare exceptions,[3] written by men and most literature on the tourist in Wales is seen as 'being written by *Englishmen* [author's italics] of gentle or noble birth',[3] although Batten refers to the fact that 'even the occasional woman' wrote travel diaries.[5]

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1 Robinson, Jane, *Unsuitable for Ladies: an Anthology of Women Travellers* (Oxford, 1994) xiv, quoting Mary Astell (1666–1731) in her preface to the Embassy Letters, 1724, of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

2 National Library of Wales (NLW) MS 22190B, Journal of Mary Anne Eade, 1802.

3 *See* for example, Twamley, Louisa Anne, *The Annual of British Landscape Scenery. An Autumn Ramble on the Wye* (London, 1839).

4 Kenyon, J. in *The Picturesque Tour through Wales 1675 to 1855* (exhibition catalogue, National Museums & Galleries of Wales, 1988).

5 Batten, Charles L., Jun., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in eighteenth-century travel literature* (Berkeley, 1978).

It was not however just the 'occasional woman'. Many women did indeed write travel as well as personal diaries, but more often they were for their own pleasure, or for that of friends and family, rather than for publication. Most of these diaries have therefore stayed in private hands, but as many gentry families deposit their family documents in record offices, a good number of these unpublished journals have found their way into public archives up and down the country, where they provide a lively and informative insight into the Wales of the period.

In 2001, the National Museums & Galleries of Wales purchased at Sotheby's a very fine illustrated journal, which is now in the library of the National Museum in Cardiff.[6] It describes seven holidays taken by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot and her husband, the politician John Eardley-Wilmot, in England and Wales between 1793 and 1810. Two of these, in 1795 and 1802 respectively, included Monmouthshire as part of their itinerary.[7]

Shortly afterwards, the author of this article discovered amongst the Wigan archives, a small leather-bound, illustrated journal by a Sarah Haslam. Reading this journal gave a sense of *déjà vu*, as much of it echoed that of Sarah Eardley-Wilmot's 1802 journal.[8] The subsequent discovery that Haslam was Sarah's maiden name made it clear that the journal in the Wigan archives was the daily journal that Sarah would have written whilst on her travels, together with the sketches she did on the spot, whilst the Cardiff journal was written up later, possibly on long winter evenings, when some of the 'rough' sketches were worked up into more polished watercolours.[9] This latter journal was no doubt intended for circulation and admiration amongst Sarah's family and friends. Indeed, Sarah, perhaps with tongue in cheek, asks herself the question:

> What is the use of writing Journals? I answer, <u>various</u>: some who have talent write for the vanity that Others may read & commend their cleverness. Others, to prove that they can observe as well as see: Some (of whom I number one) with a view to improvement to mark the degree of happiness each Spot afforded in the society of those who are dear to them; to impress the beauties of Art & Nature more strongly on the memory.[10]

A year later she writes:

> It has often been a subject of regret to me that, by omitting to write down at the moment events, circumstances and remarks that have given me pleasure, either from their beauty, novelty or importance, they have ultimately so completely escaped my memory as to be past my power of recollection. To remedy this evil in future I have determined to keep a sketch of <u>events</u> that arise, of places I may visit, and persons I may have the pleasure to become acquainted with, that by referring at future periods to these mementoes I may recall those pleasing scenes which busy care too easily effaces! [11]

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6 National Museum of Wales MS 179554, Journal of Sarah Wilmot, 1793–1810.

7 I visited the library of the National Museum to view this journal as part of a wider project on unpublished Welsh travel journals written by women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Although a number of these women travellers visited Monmouthshire, this article focusses on the illustrated journals of Sarah Eardley-Wilmot née Haslam, with a view to future publication of the wider project.

8 Wigan Archives Service MS 969 EHC (Edward Hall Collection) 177, Journal of Sarah Haslam, 1802. According to the archivist, Mr Alan Davies, 'this diary measures $8\frac{1}{4}$" by $5\frac{1}{4}$" and appears to be bound with calf backed cardboard. Although in the Edward Hall Collection, there is no information about its provenance'.

9 To avoid unnecessary repetition, MS 179554 will be referred to as the Cardiff journal, whilst MS 969 EHC will be referred to as the Wigan journal.

10 Cardiff journal, 1795.

11 Cardiff journal, 1796.

Such a resolution should have meant that further 'draft' journals could still exist. Unfortunately, they do not appear to be in record offices, and as the family home, Berkswell Hall in Warwickshire, burnt down in the 1800s, any further 'draft' journals of Sarah's travels could well have been lost at this time.[12]

As with so many other female diarists, Sarah remains a shadowy figure, hidden behind her better-known husband. John Eardley-Wilmot (1750–1815) was a lawyer and a Member of Parliament, although more distinguished for his services to American Loyalists and French refugees.[13] Little is known about his domestic life, other than the fact that after the death of his first wife, by whom he had five children, he married, on 29 June 1793, Sarah Haslam, the daughter of a Colonel Anthony Haslam, who served in the American War of Independence. There is something of a mystery about the children of this marriage. All the memoirs of John Eardley-Wilmot and indeed the family tree, say that Sarah and John had two children, Ann and Percival, both of whom died in infancy. However, the *Dictionary of National Biography* says that there were no issue of the marriage.[14] Searches of the registers of births and christenings at that period have so far revealed only one of these two possible children – the Guildhall Library says that the baptism register of the parish of St Andrew Holborn has a christening in April 1797 of 'Percival Eardley son of John Wilmot Esq[uir]e & Susanna Jane, his wife'.[15] Although the date and the names of father and son fit with what is known, it is curious that the wife's name is different – Susanna Jane instead of Sarah. This remains a mystery, perhaps to be pursued at a later date.

The 1795 Journey

On both her Welsh journeys, Sarah entered Wales by boat, as she and her party took the Wye tour, much beloved of eighteenth-century tourists in search of 'picturesque' landscape, as set out by Uvedale Price[16] and William Gilpin.[17] The Eardley-Wilmots seem to have been at the very least admirers and more likely, friends of William Gilpin, as they met him in Hampshire on their 1793 tour and in 1810, John Eardley-Wilmot declined an invitation to help publish and write either a biography of William Gilpin or a collection of his correspondence.[18] Sarah wrote:

> Began at 9 o'clock our delightful tour on the Wye, the peculiar beauties of this river, attracting so many travellers have taught the people of Ross to provide pleasure boats for their accommodation. They are built to hold ten persons commodiously, have an awning to shelter from rain or sun; a table to draw or regale upon; lockers to hold books, or bottles and benches for four or five men to navigate the boat. In one of these we set sail on the sweetest, mildest morning with every disposition in Life to be pleased!

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12 I am most grateful to Sir Michael Wilmot, 6th Bt., a direct descendant of John Eardley-Wilmot, for this information.

13 Weiner, Margery, *The French Exiles, 1789–1815* (London, 1960).

14 Lee, S. (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1900) vol. 62, 69.

15 Guildhall Library, London MS 6667/14.

16 Sir Uvedale Price (1747–1829) developed his views on garden landscape in *An Essay on the Picturesque* (1794), and put these ideas into practice on his estate at Foxley in Herefordshire. *See The Concise Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1992) vol. 3, 2443.

17 William Gilpin (1724–1804) was the author of *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, etc, chiefly relative to Picturesque Beauty* (1782).

18 Beinecke Library, Yale, OSB MSS 54, box 2, letter 43.

They spent their first night in Wales in Monmouth, a 'tolerably good town' although the castle is 'metamorphosed into a pigsty' and the *Beaufort Arms* [now converted into apartments], where they stayed was 'very dirty, but tolerable fare'. She was interested in how the cottagers lived and found, on enquiry:

> that bread was too scarce & too dear for them to buy; bacon was 11d. a pound; & of other meat they never bought any, they liv'd on potatoes & vegetables. Every hut had a small garden enclosed with a mud wall; the grace & beauty of the women & children were remarkable; their features were small & regular, their hair & complexion fair & ruddy.

Sarah no doubt carried with her her leather-bound Gilpin which told her in detail what to admire and how to admire it, but she may well have had other published diaries or guidebooks to refer to, as her comment about the looks of the people occurs time and again in the published diaries of the time. Whilst at Monmouth they made a trip to Raglan Castle (Plate 1), which Sarah criticised as she found its situation 'indifferent as to picturesque beauty, water being wanted to complete the scene'. At Abergavenny (*see* Plates 2 and 3), she noted that:

> it was the custom of cottagers to cut ferns which grows in profusion on the banks & sides of the hills, which they burn to ashes, then wet & mix into paste, then work it in to balls which they sell for washing & whitening blankets & flannel, in spinning & weaving, of which the industrious poor find their principal employment & support.

Stopping at Tintern, Sarah commented ruefully that the visit was 'memorable for a faux pas in the female antiquary mistaking an old barn for the expected abbey, & beginning to make a sketch!'[19] She then walked to the abbey (Plate 4), where she spent four hours, waxing lyrical about it being:

> embosom'd in screens of stately trees, on all sides various & on all sides lovely!! itself most lovely!! Seated on a soft green velvet carpet, surrounded by the gentle Wye, that winds its generous banks in many a curve to view this awful & majestic pile which must be seen to do it justice ... the columns & arches are clothed with the finest ivy which hangs & clings with great luxuriance in graceful drapery or gay festoons & forms a verdant canopy to guard the walls. The roof is entirely gone, but the fine blue sky afforded us a cheering light ...!

She also waxed lyrical in the best 'picturesque' language about the rest of the river trip:

> The scenery continues very grand: large Amphitheatres of perpendicular Rocks (call'd the 12 Apostles) the river wide the reaches long with screens of hanging wood of finest growth & foliage in height 300 yards on either side attended us to Chepstow castle & bridge ... to have seen as we have with such weather, with such a Party! & with such a kind Pilot, guide & Friend, is an advantage & a happiness that few can boast of!!!

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[19] For Tintern and its impact on tourists, see Knight, Jeremy K., 'Tintern Abbey and the Romantic Movement, *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 15 (1999) 56–60.

They visited Piercefield, owned at that time by Colonel Wood, where she commented that the new mansion is 'not strikingly elegant'. Talking about the parkland around it, she echoed Gilpin by writing that 'Nature has done so much as to leave little for Art to improve'. She described a number of the view-points and comments that, although she had raised her expectations to a high degree, 'it very far exceeded them: & on the whole I think it the most complete in situation & ornamental pleasure Ground I have ever seen'. She found Chepstow prettier than either Ross or Monmouth, with its houses being:

> white with parapets & mostly sash'd, the inhabitants look neat & comfortable, here is a dock for ships, on the stocks is pierced for 22 guns. The castle is situated on a perpendicular rock overhanging the river Wye, an interesting and picturesque ruin.

Leaving Chepstow (*see* Plates 5 and 6), Sarah pursued her journey 'with renovated spirits & delight thro' a sweet, cultivated country; in some places haymaking in one meadow, & wheat reaping in the next'. She commented that Caerleon 'presented a pleasing Object, once famous for a Roman Station & City of defence, now a humble village inhabited by labourers and paupers'. Then onto Newport, dismissed in few words as 'a mean dirty town ... the Castle stands on the river edge & has lately been repair'd for a jail. Stone was also preparing to build a new bridge (*see* Frontispiece). The Kings Head Inn kept by a Quaker'. After strolling around and again enquiring the price of provisions, they went to Cardiff past Tredegar 'the Mansion in the old dreary style of building: 11 casements in front the Grounds flat but extensive ... but no ornament in the landscape'. And on this rather tart note, Sarah in her 1795 journey left Monmouthshire behind her and travelled further into South Wales.

The 1802 Journey

This is the journey for which there are two diaries – the 'rough' (Wigan) and the 'fair' (Cardiff) journal. Whilst both diaries are interesting in their own right, they become even more so when comparisons are made between the text done in the immediacy of travel, and those done later and with time for reflection and amendment. The Wigan journal is considerably fuller, although where there are overlaps in the text of the two diaries, the words are usually almost identical. Sarah began her 1802 Wigan journal with the following rather plaintive words, but without giving any explanation for her gloom:[20]

> Aug 20th 1802: There is nothing better calculated to dispel the gloom of care, the anxiety of a Family, & the disappointments of Life than the sweet serenity of the Country, the various beauties of Nature & the contented countenance you generally see in every industrious Individual you meet on the road. With this hope & expectation we set off from John St.[21] under unexpected agitation from the Common Course of casual disappointments & reached the White Horse at Uxbridge by $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 o'clock. Here the power of nature began her soothing operations and in proportion as the atmosphere cleared & rarified & wafted on her "winnowing wings" the healing breeze of harmony & peace our enjoyments encreased (*sic*), & social love & social converse past away both time & space.

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20 The Cardiff journal echoes similar sentiments.

21 Sarah's London home.

As with the 1795 journey, this one also began with the Wye tour, but only the Wigan diary described it in any detail, commenting that although the weather was unpromising and it rained, it held up sufficiently for them to go to Symonds Yat where they saw 'all the charms that Nature can bestow Wood, Rock, Mountains, Plains & Water!' but where Sarah was also distressed by the poverty she saw. She commented:

> A young woman with a lovely infant in her arms & a boy of 4.7m old were our guides they were cloth'd in rags but clean & in the mother's face patient resignation sat personified, she had been married 6.7m[22] & had 3 children living – her husband earn'd 6 shillings a week which was all they could earn, as she had always had Infants to nurse – & they pd. 5s a yr. to Ld. Gage for rent. Luxuries are purchased too dearly when misery like this pays.

After an overnight stop at Monmouth, Sarah and her party went to the Kymin and the Buckstone (Plate 7), escorted by Mr Charles Heath (Plate 8), a local bookseller and publisher[23] who often showed tourists around the area. Indeed, less than a week before, he had escorted Lord Nelson and Sir William and Lady Hamilton on just such a tour of the area, which perhaps explains why the lively pencil sketch of him which is inserted as a loose-leaf addition in the Wigan journal, shows him strutting proudly forward, hat in hand, umbrella under his arm, with his long, beaky nose looking positively luminescent!

Both diaries describe the Buckstone at some length, albeit in slightly different words, and Sarah must have been very struck by it, as she drew two sketches from different viewpoints in her draft journal and a reworked one in the Cardiff journal. In the Wigan journal she comments that they saw:

> all the wonders of the World the scenery is rich beyond description, & by the attention of Mr. Heath we had the advantage of seeing the curiosities of the Country much better than by ourselves – the Buckstone is of this description & displays one of those unanswerable proofs of the Power of the Divine Architect which no human Being can Comprehend or dare to imitate.

The Cardiff journal, however, reads more like that of the serious tourist, who has made detailed notes of what she has seen. The Buckstone, she commented:

> is an immense Rock 38 yards in circumference at top about 30 feet high standing on its own irregular base of 9 feet to the earth – its appearance is so tremendous that a number of the people at Monmouth assembled with 16 horses & strong Iron chains which they fasten'd to the slender base & then by every means urged the horses so attached to throuw (*sic*) it down, but all in vain ... it is said it has the property of a rocking stone & can be <u>moved</u> with hand but that is <u>not true</u>! [24]

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[22] I am assuming that 4.7m and 6.7m means four years seven months and six years seven months respectively.

[23] There are numerous references to Charles Heath in Kissack, K., *Monmouth. The Making of a County Town* (Phillimore, 1975). *See* especially pp. 251–3 for an account of Lord Nelson in Monmouth in 1802, and his visit to Charles Heath's bookshop.

[24] In 1885, it was tipped from its plinth, but such was the outcry that the Crown Authorities repaired it but, alas, it no longer rocks.

Then, having repeated the Wigan journal's comments on the 'Divine Architect', the Cardiff journal leapt straight to Cowbridge without any intervening description. As Sarah had done a lengthy write-up on the whole of her journey through Monmouthshire in her 1795 tour of the Wye, she may well have felt she was in danger of regurgitating familiar, albeit 'picturesque', material. In the Wigan journal, she simply commented that at Tintern:

> it poured with rain however we made a few slight sketches & gladly took shelter at the Anchor on the Ferry where the good woman boil'd us some potatoes made us a good fire & we dry'd our shoes etc. & having eaten our Cold Collation the sun gave us a Cheer.

The party then travelled onto Chepstow:

> in excellent time & Spirits set up our Horses at Mr. George's Beaufort Arms fine hotel & dear souls. 3.6 a Head dinner, 1.6 Breakfast & tea 2s. a Head supper. Visited Persfield (*sic*) just purchased by Mr. Wells a Creole.[25]

Mr Wells was indeed black – the son of a plantation owner on St Kitts and one of his slaves, he had been given his freedom by his father, educated in London, and then had most of his father's considerable estate left to him. He purchased Piercefield in July 1802, and subsequently became what seems to have been the first black sheriff in Britain.[26]

Leaving Chepstow, Sarah's party went on to Newport where Sarah was complimentary about the town, but scathing about the pretentious hotel she found there:

> this place is much improved since our last visit a very handsome Stone Bridge is thrown across the Usk finish'd in 1800 & Sir C. Morgan has built a magnificent Inn much too large for the place as it never will be anything more than a passage to other Ports & the Inn is commodious enough for a hotel it is kept by Mr Morgan an old Tenant of Sir C. & even high charges of 3.6 a Head, 15d for breakfast will not I fear make all ends meet.

Although Sarah talked about this hotel as though it was different from 'The King's Head Inn kept by a Quaker' that she had referred to on her earlier visit, it seems likely that it was in fact the same hotel, though enlarged. The *King's Head* was, and is, the closest large inn to the bridge. A Mr John Morgan was certainly the landlord from 1800 to 1824.[27]

Sarah and her party then travelled further into South Wales but only as far as St Donat's, near Cardiff, returning a few days later to Monmouthshire. At this point, the Cardiff and Wigan diaries begin to overlap again, with similar comments being made in both. They visited Caerleon, a town which, as Sarah commented in both journals had:

> afforded much entertainment to the lovers of Antiquity the inhabitants collect a tolerable addition to their subsistence by pointing out the remains of Roman Splendour or the more pleasing magnificence of Arthur's hospitality – hence a field is shewn in which is traced a hollow space of 70 yds. called Arthur's round Table or a Roman Theatre – many remains of Roman wells, a famous Tile with Roman Letters inscrib'd L C G 2d Augustus – several Coins & various other curious & interesting circumstances give great celebrity to the Town.

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25 Wigan journal.

26 *See* Evans, J.H.A., 'Nathaniel Wells of Piercefield and St Kitts: from slave to sheriff', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 18 (2002) 91–106.

27 Information supplied by Newport Museum and Art Gallery and Newport Reference Library.

They travelled on to Usk past Llangibby Castle and again both diaries comment that 'the seat of Mr Williams which from ill management or neglect loses more than half its beauty & as a residence all its comfort – the ruin is considerable but not picturesque'. At Usk, they stayed at the *Three Salmons*, where they were entertained by the ubiquitous itinerant Welsh harper. In the Wigan dairy nothing is mentioned of this, but the Cardiff diary comments in an amused way that 'Mr. W. generously desir'd he [the harper] would have as much Ale as he liked ... we found when the Acct. was settled next morning our bard [had] invoked his genius & regaled himself with 17 pots or Quarts of ale!'.

Sarah commented in both journals that at Usk (Plate 9) there 'is a unison of many beauties, the river is very fine the Rock & Wood, Castle & Bridge grand Objects & the Sugar Loaf & Skirrid complete the delightful prospect'. She also walked the half-mile to Llanbadoc Church (Plate 10), where she made a sketch of 'this lovely place'.

They then travelled on to Clytha Castle, owned by Mr. Jones where, in the words of both diaries, they:

> took a complete survey of these fine grounds, the united gazebo and mausoleum to his late wife, & were most hospitably entertained with the finest hothouse fruit by the pensive owner! He still mourns his lost companion, & an air of melancholy recollection pervaded the elegance displayed in both house & garden.

This refers to Elizabeth Morgan of Llanarth, who died in 1787. Clytha Castle was erected in 1790 by her husband William Jones 'for the purpose of relieving a Mind Sincerely afflicted, by the loss of a most excellent wife'.[28]

At Abergavenny the party stayed at the *Angel* hotel, the usual stopping place for tourists at that time, none of whom ever had a good word to say for it. Sarah commented in both diaries that there they 'found Angels & ministers of grease, busy & perturbed spirits'. They climbed the Skirrid where they saw:

> all the beauties of the World & all its vanities – Colebrook House the Seat of the Baron Sr. Hanbury Williams[29] with all the appendages of fine Wood fine Pasturage Good Mansion all hastening to decay while the wretched owner is seeking shelter from his creditors so true & yet so strange it is: that they who lean on the World will find a broken reed at best ofttimes a spear to pierce them to the Heart.

They stayed in Abergavenny (Plate 11) for two days, from where they visited Llanthony Priory (Plate 12) and where the Cardiff journal slightly has the edge in detailed, not to say, hyperbolic description!

> As the Vale of Ewias was a great object in our tour we filled a Welsh post chaise, & over 6 miles of the very worst road in the bottom of a ditch we reached in safety Llanthony Abbey. The scenery of this Vale

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[28] Coxe, William, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire with a new introduction by Jeremy K. Knight* (Cardiff, 1995) vol. 1, 158.

[29] For a history of Coldbrook, and the pedigree of the Hanbury-Williams family, *see* Bradney, Sir Joseph, *A History of Monmouthshire ... Volume 1 Part 2a. The Hundred of Abergavenny (Part 1)* (1906, reprinted by Academy Books, London, 1991) 185–7, 190.

> is admirably suited to the seclusion of a monastic life! The mountains which surround rear their russet fronts above the clouds! A few tall pines & firs are thinly scattered on their sides .... Here deep silence reigns & moping melancholy sits enthroned! .... The Ewias alone murmurs as it glides & winds its narrow path, the never failing friend to man; the health preserving gift of God! Here stands the beauteous abbey, magnificent in its ruin ... who could but help lamenting that Col. Wood (who has lately purchased this estate of Lord Oxford)[30] should raze to the ground so magnificent a monument of the piety of our ancestors to build a dwelling house for himself of the materials.

Having eulogised over the beauty of Llanthony, they returned to Abergavenny, and turned their 'delighted eyes to take a last farewell' of Wales, before returning to 'their comfortable Home highly delighted with our Tour, & grateful for the all the blessings & benefits we have enjoy'd for 6 delightful weeks of health, peace and Competence!'

The Paintings

The Cardiff journal has, in total, twenty-three watercolours of Welsh scenes, of which nine are of places in Monmouthshire (this figure includes the Buckstone as it is part of the Wye tour) – the Buckstone; Raglan; Great Skirrid and mountains near Abergavenny; two of Tintern Abbey; Chepstow Castle and river; Llanbadoc; and Llanthony Priory. The Wigan diary has considerably more, including three of places that Sarah doesn't mention in the text – Moynes Court gateway (Plate 13); Mathern Palace (Plate 14); and Caldicot Castle (Plate 15). The other paintings, beginning with the Wye tour are: Ross from Wilton Church; Goodrich; the folly at Courtfield; Mr Heath (an insert); two of the Buckstone; three of Tintern Abbey and village; two of Chepstow Castle and river; Usk Castle; Llanbadoc Church; Raglan Castle; Abergavenny with the Skirrid; the Blorenge; and five of Llanthony and its surrounding scenery.

Whilst the more detailed Cardiff paintings are generally the more competent, the Wigan sketches have a freshness and immediacy that makes them very attractive, although there is frequently a degree of artist's licence. At Tintern, for example, Sarah omitted the hotel alongside the abbey, and included a large rock which is not actually there in reality. Some of the drawings are, however, of particular topographical interest. Visitors to Tintern most frequently drew the abbey itself, but Sarah did one very unusual view, that of the little parish church of St Michael at Tintern Parva (Plate 16). Included in the drawing (again with a good deal of artist's licence!) are houses in Tintern village and the abbot's lodging, no longer there, at the abbey itself.

The classic view of Ross from Wilton Castle[31] has part of the ruined castle on the left, which was not commonly drawn. Caldicot Castle too was not a common subject. The drawing of Courtfield shows the folly standing proudly on the skyline – today it is entirely hidden in trees. In her drawing of Chepstow Castle (*see* Plates 5 and 6), standing high above the river, she included a Wye tour boat on the river, and some salmon netting, whilst her 'Rocks below bridge at Chepstow',

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[30] For a history of Llanthony Priory, including mention of building work done by Col Sir Mark Wood, *see* Newman, John, *The Buildings of Wales. Gwent/Monmouthshire* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth and University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2000) 338–50.

[31] In 1818, a clergyman, Mr Fosbrooke, commented that Ross 'looked better when mellowed by distance for then the disagreeable and commonplace objects of the town could be seen through a pleasing haze which is in excellent taste'.

includes both a house and lime kilns at the foot of the cliffs but above the tide level.[32] In several of her drawings Sarah exaggerates the scene, for example, elevating Usk Castle well above the town and also making the church tower more significant from her Llanbadoc sketch than it actually is.

Sarah visited and painted the area at the same time as James Wathen[33] was dashing off sketches, many of which were published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, whilst others were bought by tourists, rather as we would buy post-cards today – they would either supplement the sketch done by the tourist at the time or be a reminder to the non-sketching tourist. Sarah's work shows some similarity to both Wathen and another contemporary artist Joshua Gosselin (1739–1813), a distinguished member of a Guernsey family, who visited and painted in Monmouthshire in 1784, 1805 and 1808.[34] What has been said about Wathen, could equally well apply to Sarah and Gosselin. Artists, whether professional or amateur, were living through 'a revolution in watercolour painting ... the 1790s...[was] the very dawn of the new movement which placed the watercolour at the centre of English art .... The watercolour became the English medium *par excellence*'.[35]

Conclusion

Although relatively little is known of Sarah, she comes across in the diaries as someone with sensibility and sensitivity towards the landscape she sees; she can also laugh at her own mistakes, as when she mistook a barn for Tintern Abbey. She shows a genuine concern for the poverty she meets as well as anger about the mismanagement and profligacy of local gentry. Finally, a persistent thread in all her journeys is an awareness of the architect of all, her Creator, to whom she expresses gratitude for all she experiences. Thus the diaries give us a glimpse into the attitudes of an educated woman who was a member of the gentry of the period, as well as delightful glimpses into a part of Wales that, for the most part, is relatively little changed, remaining today, as it was then, a primarily rural, agricultural landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks are due to the following institutions and individuals. The Cambrian Archaeological Association and Jane Jenkins both made generous grants towards this research. Alan Davies, archivist, Wigan Archives Service, has been unfailingly helpful, as well as giving permission for the Wigan diary to be quoted and reproduced. John Kenyon, librarian of the National Museums & Galleries of Wales, has been generous with his time and knowledge. He also gave permission for the Cardiff diaries to be quoted, as well as lending slides of watercolours in the Cardiff journal for reproduction. Julian Mitchell made helpful comments on the Wigan sketches. I am also grateful to Ann Rainsbury, curator, Chepstow Museum, for discussion of the Wigan drawings. Last but not least, Sir Michael Wilmot, Bt., gave invaluable help with his family history.

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32 This is an unusual view as it shows the river downstream of the bridge, well below the castle. Although the lime kilns appear in other sketches of the period, they are no longer there.

33 James Wathen, the son of a glover, was born in Hereford in 1751. Although he himself became a glover, his sketches and paintings gained such popularity that he was able to earn his living as an artist.

34 For an account of Gosselin's life and paintings, *see* Mitchell, Julian, 'Joshua Gosselin in Monmouthshire', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 19 (2003) 87–112.

35 Whitehead, David and Shoesmith, Ron, *James Wathen's Herefordshire, 1770–1820: a collection of his sketches and paintings* (Woonton Almeley, 1994).

Plate 1: 'Raglan Castle', visited by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot and her party in 1795 and 1802.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 4: 'Inside Tintern Abbey', visited by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot in 1795 and 1802.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal,1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

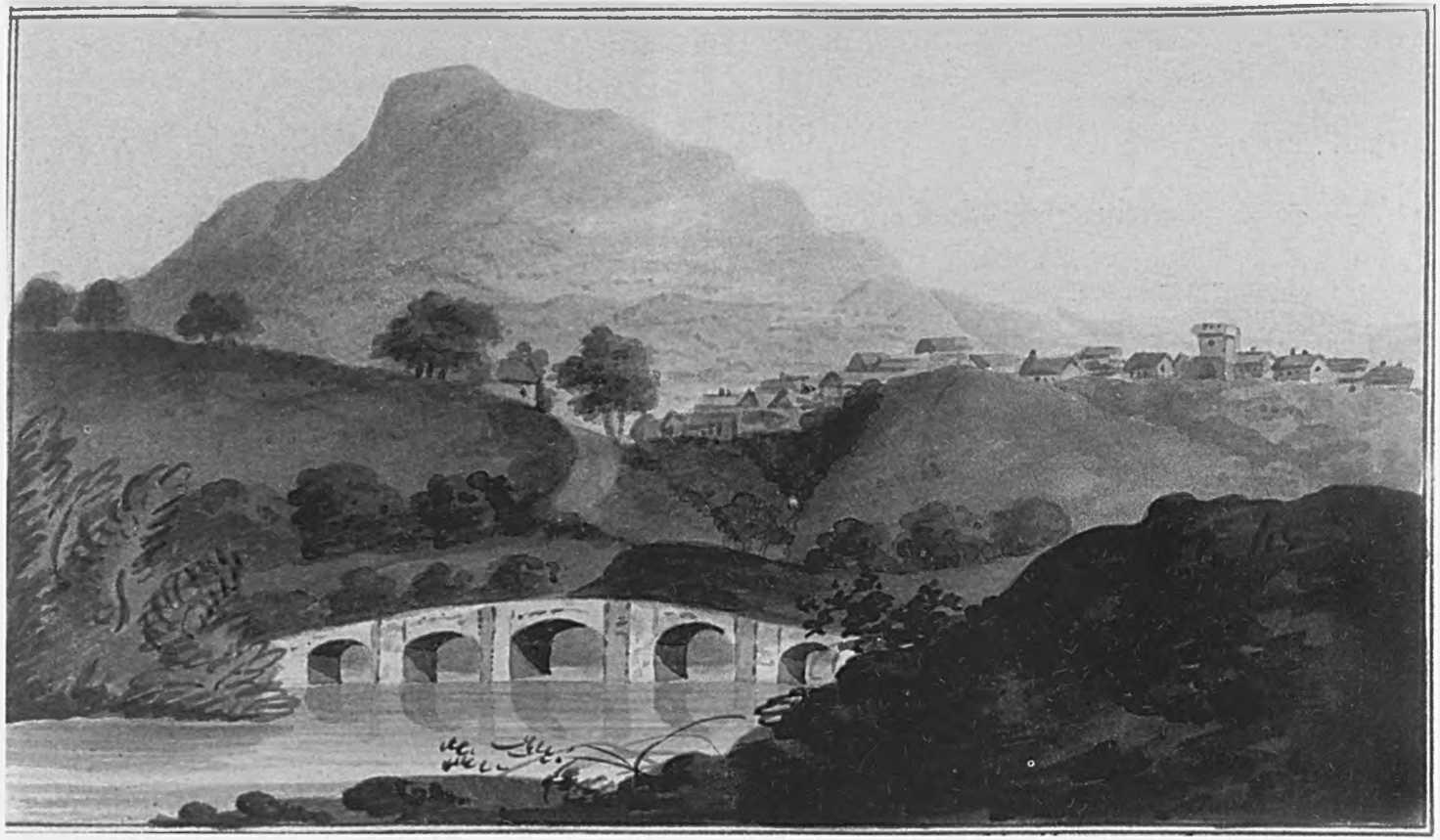

Plate 2: Watercolour of Abergavenny by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot, painted in 1795.
The Skirrid mountain towers over the town, and the bridge at Abergavenny over the River Usk, is in the foreground.
Reproduced from the journal dated 1793–1810 in the National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: National Museums & Galleries of Wales.

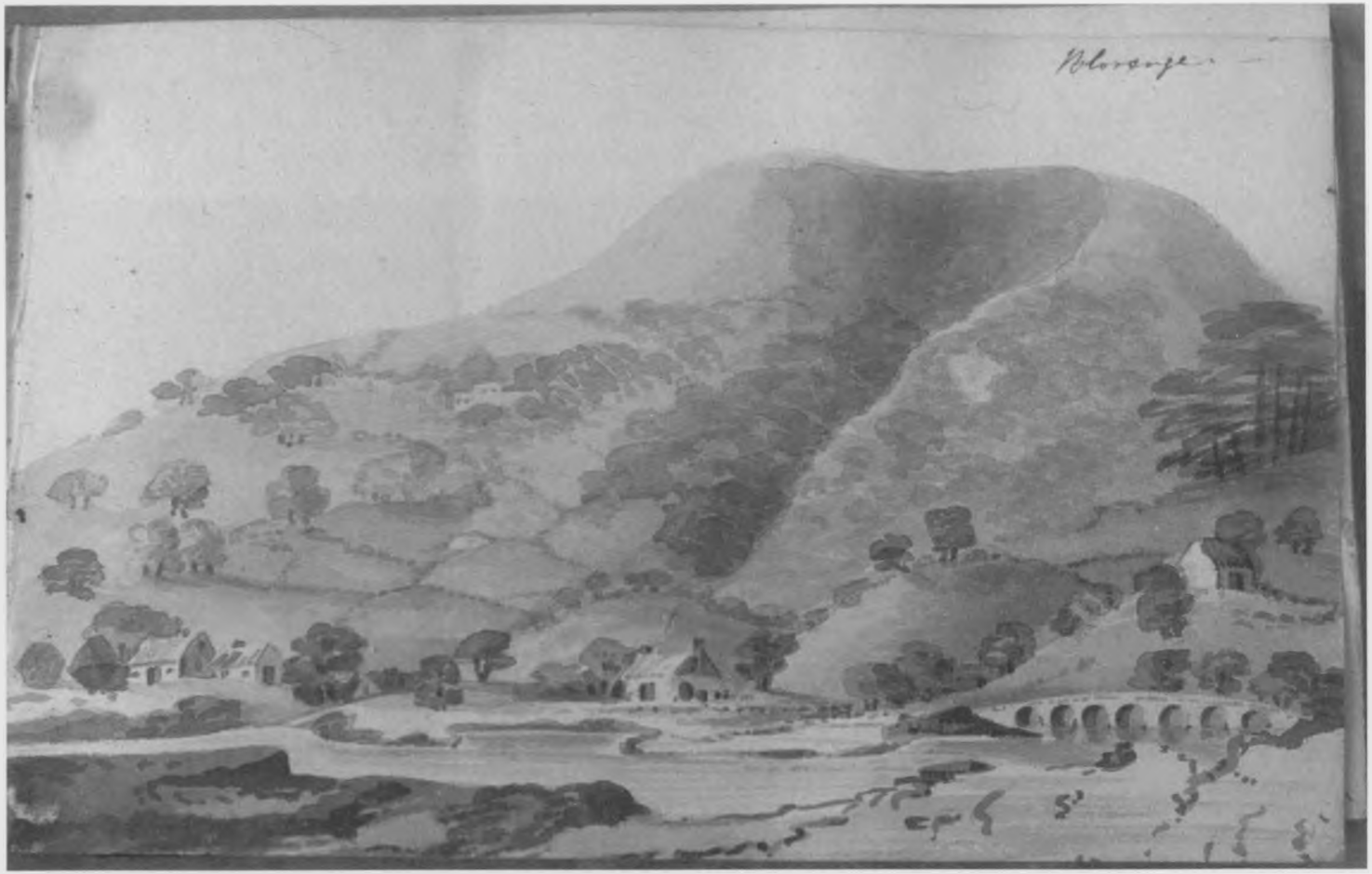

Plate 3: A similar view of Abergavenny (*see* Plate 2), painted in 1802, and included in Sarah Eardley-Wilmot's 'rough' journal. This painting is labelled 'Blorenge'.

Photograph: Liz Pitman.

Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

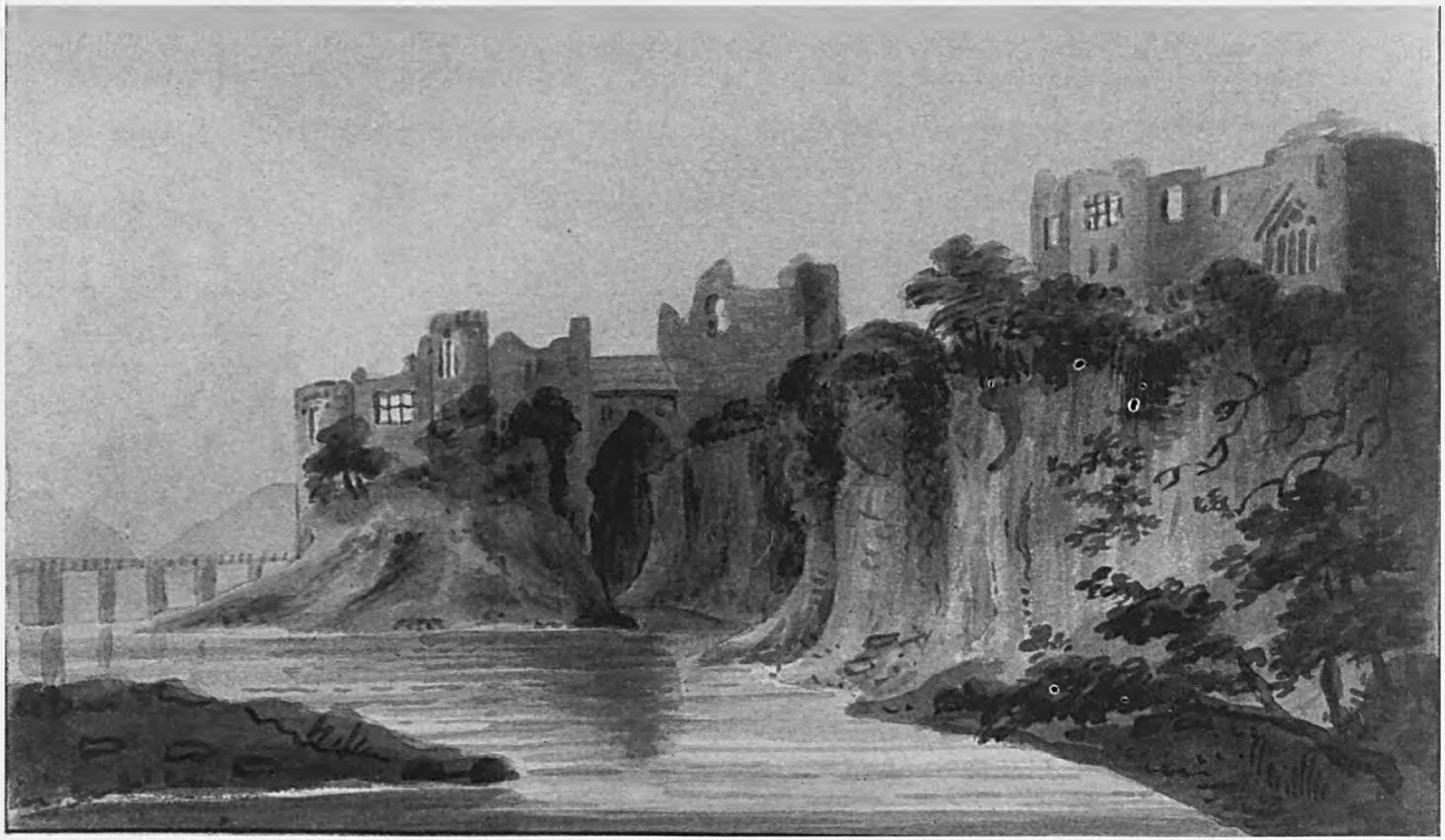

Plate 5: Sarah Eardley-Wilmot's polished watercolour of Chepstow Castle, painted in 1795, with the old bridge at Chepstow in the background.
Copyright: National Museums & Galleries of Wales.

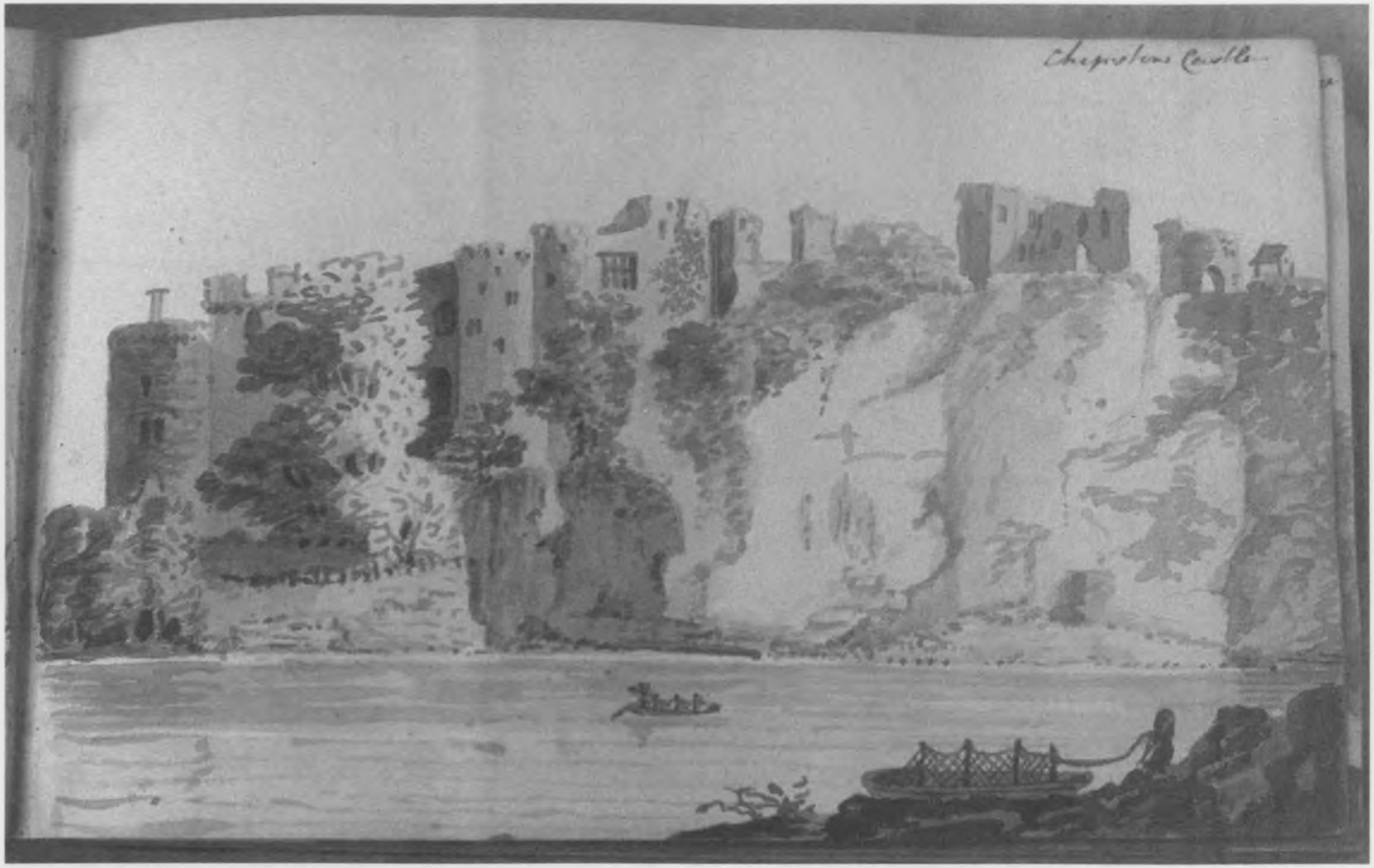

Plate 6: Chepstow Castle as painted rapidly by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot in 1802.
Note the Wye tour boat on the river and the salmon nets in the foreground.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 7: A local curiosity – 'Buckstone Monmouth'.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 8: Sarah Eardley-Wilmot's pencil sketch of Monmouth publisher and bookseller, Charles Heath.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 9: 'Usk Castle', with the bridge over the River Usk in the foreground.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 10: 'Lanbaddoc Church near Usk', depicting also, with a great deal of artistic licence, Usk Castle.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

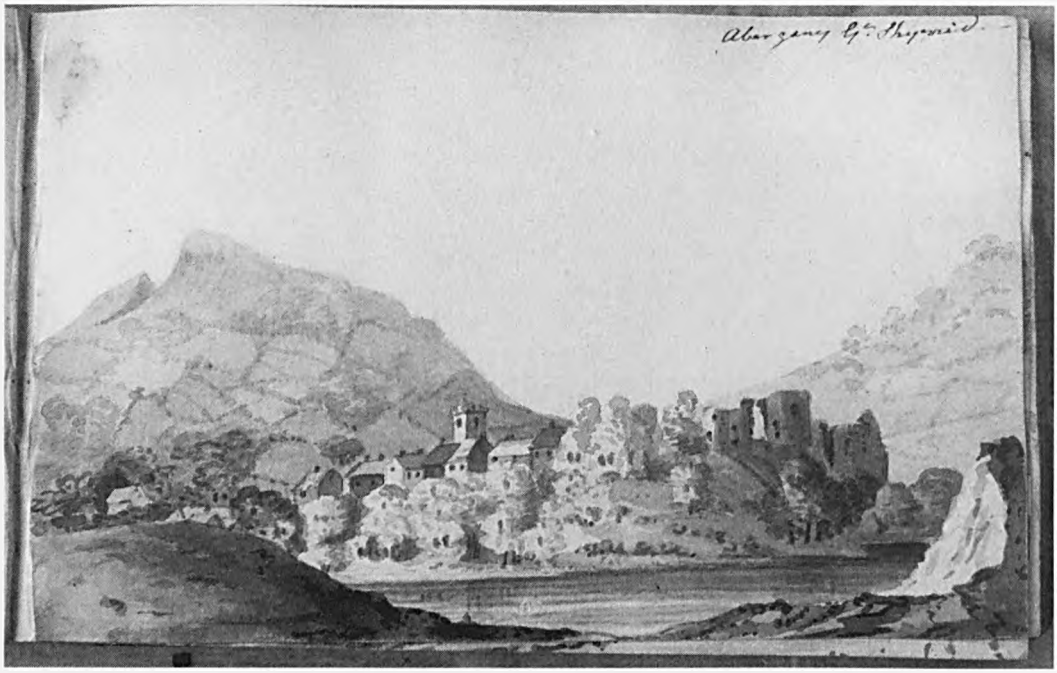

Plate 11: 'Abergany Gt. Skyrrid'. The Eardley-Wilmots visited Abergavenny in both 1795 and 1802.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 12: 'North view of Lanthony'.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 13: The 14th-century gatehouse to Moynes Court, Mathern, also sketched by Sarah Eardley-Wilmot, although she did not describe it in her diary.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 14: 'Episcopal Palace at Mathern', used by the bishops of Llandaff until the early 18th century.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 15: 'Caldicot Castle', with the Norman tower of St Mary's Church, Caldicot, in the distance.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

Plate 16: 'Tintern Village', showing St Michael's Church, Tintern Parva, before restoration in 1889.
Photograph: Liz Pitman.
Reproduced from Sarah Haslam's journal, 1802, by courtesy of Wigan Archives Service.

KINGSHILL, NEWPORT

By M.G.R. Morris

Hidden on the hillside between St Woolos Cathedral and Commercial Street is one of Newport's finest buildings, Kingshill. John Newman's Pevsner Guide, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/ Monmouthshire*, incredibly, does not mention it.[1] Why it is called Kingshill is lost to history; it goes back, in the lovely phrase, time out of mind and before the memory of man. Perhaps the king was Gwynllyw or Woolos, king of Wentllwg; or perhaps a Welsh name has become corrupted into Kingshill.

In 1410, according to Tudor Davies, a local antiquary, the earl of Pembroke gave a school and a house for poor men in the town of Newport, endowing it with his lands called Kingshill. The school was supposed to be at Pembroke House, or the House of Refuge, at the top of Charles Street; the Kingshill lands ran from there across to Commercial Street, past St Paul's, through Clytha Square, up Vicarage Hill and down Stow Hill.[2] However, the earldom of Pembroke was extinct in 1410; not until four years later was it revived in favour of Henry IV's son Humphrey.

We are on safer ground later that century, when 'Croftum vocatum Kyngeshulle' (a field called Kingshill) appears in a survey of the manor of Stowe in 1466, and 'Kinshall' occurs in the borough charter of 1476.[3] A close called 'Kynshell' in 'le stowe in the parish of seynt Wollos' is mentioned in 1499, and 'the Kingeshill' in 1585.[4] 'Later' (we are told) 'it was the property of John Fownes of Bristol grocer who married Anne daughter of John Williams of Newport. His son John sold it in 1628 to Thomas Morgan of Tredegar, since which time it has belonged to that family'.[5] The schedule called them John ffowens (i.e. Fowens), merchant, and Thomas Morgan of Maghen (Machen), esquire; it included parcels of land – but not a messuage or tenement – called 'Kingshill in St Woolloes within the fee of Stowe'. John Fowens may have inherited them from his mother, one of the sisters of the late William Williams, a Newport gentleman.[6]

Having bought the property on 15 January 1628, Morgan promptly let it, or most of it, on 1 February to Walter Jenkins of Newport, yeoman, for eighty years determinable in three lives; another lease in 1634 names the lessees as Walter Jenkins, his wife Cissill and their daughter Johan. Jenkins may have been one of the original aldermen of Newport under James I's new charter.[7] This later lease put 'Kingshilles' at twenty-four and three-quarter acres, which were mortgaged in 1669 for £6,000. Part of it, which in 1628 had comprised four parcels, was then a tenement, garden and

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1 I am grateful to the Revd Canon Andrew Willie for pointing this out.

2 *South Wales Argus*, 20 Jan. 1914. Davies claimed to have found the deed in the Public Record Office. Susan Pugh of Newport Library kindly supplied details from the *Reports of the Commissioners on Charities* (1819–37), which had failed to find such evidence.

3 Bradney, Sir Joseph (Gray, Madeleine, ed.), *A History of Monmouthshire .... Volume 5 The Hundred of Newport* (Cardiff and Aberystwyth, 1993) 6–7, 29. Stowe was a knight's fee in 1314 (p. 1).

4 National Library of Wales (NLW), Tredegar Park MSS and Documents, 82/64, 62/3.

5 Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire ....Volume 5*, 31.

6 NLW, Tredegar Park, 58/51.

7 Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire .... Volume 5*, 30–1. NLW, Tredegar Park, 87/192, is another lease on 'Kinshill' (26 acres) in 1691.

seven acres, called Blethin's land. It is mentioned again in 1714,[8] but its exact location, or who Bleddyn was, is unknown. A lease dated 1722 mentions two dwelling houses, one adjoining the Kingshill and the barn of William Morgan, esquire, and the other 'of John Blethin';[9] but that may be a coincidence.

On a map of 1794 (Fig. 1) the area is labelled 'King's Hill Tredegar Lands' but no house is marked.[10] This survey can be compared with an eighteenth-century plan of Kingshill farm.[11](This may have been 'Molly Rosser's farm', on which, according to Canon Arthur Edwards, the present house was built.[12]) The latter plan – perhaps made much earlier than 1794 – shows eight irregular fields, with a spring between the two south-western ones and a gate sketched in the north-east corner leading into a lane called, rather oddly, Heula Corn. This skirted the south-eastern field, labelled Phillip Laurence, and turned west into Montjoy Lane, which bordered the whole farm to the south. The total area was thirty-five acres, three roods and thirty-nine perches: more than eleven acres bigger than Kingshill and Blethin's land together.

On the 1794 map there is a building called Mountjoy at the south-west corner of what is undoubtedly Kingshill, though the two north-western fields are shown as one and Phillip Laurence's is called 'Cae'r Fitchog'. Heula Corn, therefore, lay roughly on the site of Charles Street.[13] 'Monioy' was a messuage or cowhouse in 1628, with sixteen acres, part of Thomas Morgan's purchase from John Fowens; in 1634 it was called 'the monioye', in 1714 'Monjoy' and in 1745 'Munjoy'.[14] The land tax return for 1802 mentions land belonging to Sir Charles Morgan 'by Montjoy'.[15] The name is preserved in Mountjoy Place.

Mary Jenkins was paying £2 5s. 6d. land tax for 'Kings Hill' in 1804–10 and 8s. 9d. for an unnamed dwelling house, both owned by Sir Charles Morgan and listed together. It seems unlikely that she was a descendant of Walter and Cissill Jenkins of 1628, unless perhaps the lease for three lives had been extended; and there is no way of knowing if the house was even on Kingshill. Mary was still in this house in 1819, but 'Kingshill Land' was listed separately and occupied by John Brewer, as it was in 1824 and 1829.[16] He may have been the son and namesake of a Newport surgeon; if so, he lived at Caerau.[17]

Kingshill was built around this time, but precisely when is still unclear. A plan of the town in 1800[18] does not mark it, though negative evidence is inconclusive. No farm buildings are shown; Kingshill may still have been open fields. An immensely long deed (seventeen pages in the schedule), from 1814, refers to pieces of land called 'Ca Pitchog' (the earlier 'Cae'r Fitchog') and 'Kingshill land in the borough of Newport', with several houses on them called Commercial Street,

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8 NLW, Tredegar Park, 43/1, 62/99, 84/32, 65/23. Tredegar Park, 50 has 'the Bleathins land', a 9-acre close in 1612.

9 Gwent Record Office (GRO), M160 (1414).

10 GRO, Misc MSS 664; reproduced in Matthews, James, *Historic Newport* (Newport, 1910, reprinted 1966) facing p. 29.

11 NLW, Tredegar Park, 64/423.

12 Edwards, Arthur, *Archbishop Green* (Llandysul, 1986) 58. I can find no other mention of her.

13 Too far, I think, from Corn Street, though that is an old name - 'Corneslane' in 1611. *See* Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire .... Volume 5*, 32. It lay roughly along the line of Commercial Street.

14 NLW, Tredegar Park, 58/51, 43/1, 62/99, 65/23; GRO, M160 (1415). It is mentioned earlier, in 1564 and 1595. *See* Tredegar Park, 46, 36.

15 NLW, Tredegar Park, 85/970. This document does not mention Kingshill.

16 GRO, Q/LT 126. The land tax returns are incomplete.

17 Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire .... Volume 5*, 60.

18 Matthews, *Historic Newport* facing p. 81.

Cross Street and Charles Street; but it does not specifically mention Kingshill as a house.[19] Six years later, in 1820, a map does mark a building, 'Kings hill', within the borough boundary (Fig. 2).[20] However, a survey in 1831 omits it, which is hard to explain.[21] Another map, dated 1834,[22] refers to 'The Kensel Lands', a brave stab at Kingshill, again with no building marked; but this was copied from an 'Ancient Map' drawn in about 1750.[23] No buildings appear except on the margins of the property, such as Stow Hill – called Church Street in a town plan fifty years later.[24]

A land surveyor named Thomas Morris mapped Newport in 1829, and 'Kings Hill' is clearly marked beside a square block.[25] That is further evidence that the house was here in the 1820s; but another building, which looks like St Paul's Church, is also marked, which is exceedingly odd since the church was erected in 1836. The date 1829 may not be trustworthy; or possibly this was a later edition. A map of 1847 shows an L-shaped house labelled 'Kingshill', but the census return six years earlier had already proved the house's existence.[26]

The key seems to be the map of 1820. Surely no one would draw a building on it unless one existed. If this evidence is good, the house dates from not long before 1820. This is confirmed by two documents that mention Thomas Hughes, gentleman, of 'King's Hill' in 1821.[27] Since John Brewer still occupied 'Kings hill land' in 1829, it seems likely that part of the old farm was let to him while Hughes lived in the new house. Furthermore, partitions in the wine cellar were made of cast iron bearing the legend 'Tredegar Iron Works, 1822';[28] these could have been fitted into a house built just before 1820. Sir Charles Morgan left no evidence in his estate papers of this fine building, which presumably he paid for. No architectural drawings appear to survive, nor do we know the name of the architect or builder.

Thomas Morris was also responsible for the tithe map, dated 1845 (Fig. 3).[29] The agreement for commutation of tithes was confirmed on 19 August 1841, which suggests that we can safely backdate the cartographical evidence a few years. 'Kings Hill' is clearly marked with its lawn, the line of buildings – cottage, stables and coach house, now partly demolished – below the modern Bishopstow (but with a break near the far end), the two parts of the kitchen garden below, the drive up to Stow Hill with its lodge, pulled down in 1958, and the lower drive curling along the back of what would become Keynsham Avenue to another lodge at the top of Palmyra Place. Including the outlying pastures and plantations, it covered thirteen acres, three roods and seven perches, a good deal less than the original farm.

This idyllic property was, as we have seen, the residence of a gentleman and magistrate named Thomas Hughes, whose mural epitaph is in St Woolos. Mayor of Newport in 1841, five years after John Frost of Chartist fame,[30] he died in 1862 aged eighty-two, and his wife Sarah in

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19 NLW, Tredegar Park, 142/8.

20 NLW, maps, Tredegar 918.

21 Matthews, *Historic Newport* facing p. 93.

22 NLW, maps, Tredegar 1019.

23 GRO, Misc MSS 1699 (copies of two maps dated c.1750 and 1762). I wonder if 'Kensel' was then the local pronunciation.

24 Newport Reference Library. The 'Plan of the Town and Liberties of the Borough of Newport' is from Coxe, Archdeacon William, *An Historical Tour Through Monmouthshire* (London, 1801).

25 Matthews, *Historic Newport* facing p. 160.

26 Matthews, *Historic Newport* facing p. 108.

27 GRO, M160 (700, 702).

28 I am indebted to Mr Martin Culliford for this information.

29 NLW, maps, A/C 187.

30 *History of St. Gwynllyw's Church Newport-on-Usk* (Newport, 1936) 98.

1846. Thomas was only the tenant; he also leased from the Tredegar estate Tivoli House (now the Archdeaconry and previously, from 1911,[31] St Paul's Vicarage), which was occupied by Martin Morrison, a merchant in his thirties.

The 1841 census adds more information. Thomas and Sarah Hughes had just two servants, Mary Powell aged eighteen and Sarah Jones, twelve years older. Also living in the house were William and Mary Williams. He was thirty-four and a banker, no doubt the proprietor of William Williams & Sons, Old Bank, High Street, which was in business at least as early as 1830–31.[32] The 1851 census reveals that Thomas Hughes was his uncle; they were both still living here, but Williams was now head of the household. Mrs Williams employed a Belgian lady's maid, butler, parlourmaid and housemaid. Four visitors were also in residence: a six-year-old with a governess, and two others, one a captain in the Royal Navy.

It looks as if Mr Hughes left Kingshill before he died, since in 1858–59 the occupant was Thomas Gratrex esquire.[33] He too was a banker, from Crickhowell originally, and married to a lady from Bath. They had a nineteen-year-old daughter, born like Mr Hughes in Monmouth, and four servants, two of them just fourteen when the 1861 census was taken.

The twenty-five-inch map,[34] dated 1881 (Fig. 4), shows the acreage of 'Kingshill House' as just under three and three-quarters. The loss of the field behind to Park Square had reduced the acreage by almost four and a half; the loss of the other big field when Keynsham Avenue was built would account for another five or more. Clytha Square appears on the map, and the villas in Park Square. An idea of the sloping hillside can be had from the benchmarks. The tower of St Woolos stands two hundred and four feet above sea level, the top of the drive is about a hundred and sixty-three, and the top of Palmyra Place about fifty-seven. Kingshill itself was roughly on the hundred-foot contour. The main entrance in the nineteenth century was evidently along the drive down to Palmyra Place; that may be why the house was not listed in the 1891 census under Stow Hill (a billposter was at number 91) but with properties to the south like Palmyra House. By then Kingshill had been let to Ebenezer Thomas, an ironworks agent (and possibly manager and part-owner of a tinplate works). Though born in Liverpool he was able to speak Welsh. The staff consisted of a cook and housemaid.

Two watercolours show Kingshill before the hillside was plastered with villas. In both, St Woolos has a parvise over the south porch, so they must have been done before the restoration in 1853. One, depicting a tram road that was never built (Plate 1), also includes St Paul's, so it must be later than 1836.[35]

The other (Plate 2) is badly faded; no name or date is visible, even on the back.[36] The artist seems to have drawn everything with a careful eye for detail, though the cattle in the foreground may be artistic licence. Three differences can be detected in Kingshill itself. On the east side there is no veranda; above this point is an upstairs window, which no longer exists; and the ground-floor windows on either side of the front door and beyond the curved east bay (which are now french

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31 Parry Pryce, T., *One Hundred Years of Evangelical Witness (1836–1936): Being a Brief History of St. Paul's Parish, Newport* (Newport, 1936) 56.

32 *See Pigot & Co.'s Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography.*

33 *Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory of North and South Wales, Monmouthshire, Shropshire, and the Cities of Bristol and Chester* (Manchester, 1858–9) Monmouthshire section, p. 22.

34 NLW, Monmouthshire sheet 33.4.

35 NLW, catalogue in prepartion.

36 Information from Mr Roger Cucksey, Keeper of Art, Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

windows) and in the bay itself are like the others, sash windows with regular glazing bars and high sills. (For a view of the south front *c.*1960, *see* Plate 3 and the east front in 1963, *see* Plate 4.) The two walled kitchen gardens appear, with what may be the end of the former cottage. (Only the west end of this range survives, converted into the bishop's office.) A low building may be the upper lodge. To the left of this is a tall, narrow house with what looks like a projecting staircase wing, utterly unlike the Archdeaconry. A much longer building below St Woolos may be on the site of the Deanery. This also has a small wing projecting, and some of the openings have a distinctly medieval look. The tithe map shows no building here. Apparently what was then known as the Vicarage House was erected in 1842 or soon afterwards,[37] further evidence that the tithe map was earlier than 1845.

Inside, Kingshill has been altered, not least by the Church in 1968, when three rooms on the ground floor, formerly a cloakroom and toilet, were knocked into one to make a kitchen; but the main rooms have probably not changed much, apart from new fireplaces. (For plans of the house as it was in 1954–67, when the author lived there, *see* Figs. 5–7.)

The front door opened into an almost circular lobby, beyond which was the front hall, twenty-three feet by eight, with a curved wall and door at the far end, an elegant stone staircase (Plate 5) and handsome mahogany doors on either side. To the left was the principal reception room (originally the dining room), twenty-six feet by sixteen, divided by a beam supported on polished stone columns; like the other main rooms, it is some eleven feet high, with elaborate plaster cornices and ceiling rose (Plate 6). On the east side was what used to be the drawing room, twenty-three feet by eighteen, with a curved outer wall and floor-to-ceiling sash windows, and a shallow concave recess opposite, crowned with an elegant fan motif. (The wall above, between the landing and bedrooms, does not coincide; many years ago a girder had to be installed in the roof and the wall supported by steel straps.) The main landing (Plate 7) is toplit by a large oval skylight with sloping glazed sides and ornamental plasterwork in the ceiling (Plate 8). Until they were converted to single sashes in 1966, the upstairs windows in the front were double, making it hard to clean or paint between the two leaves. Beneath the former drawing and morning rooms are ample cellars, lit through gratings at the foot of the ground-floor windows.

The diocese of Monmouth came into being in 1920, on St Luke's Day, 18 October. On 26 May 1922, Lord Tredegar conveyed Kingshill, with three acres, one rood and thirty-five perches of land, to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales as a home for the bishop.[38] The Hon. Mrs Charles Green, the first bishop's wife, already owned a mansion, Jesmond, in Stow Park Circus (now Stow Park Circle; the house has been demolished). Green saw no need to move, so it was not until 1928 and the accession of Gilbert Joyce that Kingshill became the bishop's residence.[39] In the meantime, on 9 July 1925, the Representative Body let it for seven years to Rufus Clifford Thomas, a physician and surgeon of 208 Stow Hill, and Miss Kathleen Mary Carmody of 62 Caerau Road, at a yearly rent of £150; it was known as Caerau Nursing Home.

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[37] *History of St.Gwynllyw's Church Newport-on-Usk* 97. In 1762, 'the late ruinate house and garden called Vicarage House' is mentioned in GRO, M160 (649).

[38] According to Bradney (p. 31), Lord Tredegar gave it to the Church in 1921, but I have seen a copy of the conveyance in the Representative Body's archives. In 1914, Lord Tredegar had conveyed the plot (1,425 square yards) on which the modern Bishopstow stands to his tenant, Llewelyn Llewelyn, for £1 10s. a year rent; this was included in the 1922 gift.

[39] Edwards, *Archbishop Green* 46, 71.

Keynsham Avenue seems to have been built between 1923 and 1926, on land that had not been conveyed to the Church.[40] Lord Tredegar may have felt that this would have made the garden too large for a bishop; developing it for private houses would bring in useful cash. Not until 1931 did the estate convey the lower drive to the Representative Body.[41]

After Derrick Childs became bishop, the Church decided to build him a smaller house in the garden; it kept the name Bishopstow. Rougemont School, which had taken over St Joseph's Convent at the top of the drive, bought the old house and two acres in 1984. When the school moved out to Llantarnam Hall, Kingshill became architects' offices. It is now known as Palace House.[42]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr Martin Culliford very kindly drew my attention to a few points from research he did on Kingshill whilst a teacher at Rougemont School, as well as lending slides. I am grateful to Archbishop Rowan Williams for letting me see the watercolour of Kingshill owned by the diocese of Monmouth and take photographs; to Mr Roger Cucksey, Keeper of Art, Newport Museum and Art Gallery, for information and for supplying better photographs; and to Bishop Dominic Walker for permission to reproduce the painting. I am grateful to Mr Chris Samuel and Mr Stephen Leach, who were most helpful in allowing me to examine documents relating to Kingshill in the archives of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales in Cardiff. They also allowed me to copy plans of Kingshill, which I have adapted to show the house as it was when I lived there in 1945–67. Finally, I should like to thank Dr Madeleine Gray and the Revd Dr David H. Williams for their help.

If anyone can correct or add to this article, or furnish an exact date for the building of Kingshill, please write to the author at the Rectory, Lampeter Velfrey, Narberth, SA67 8UH.

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40 Indenture in the Representative Body's archives. *Kelly's Directory of Monmouthshire and South Wales* (London, 1926) 162, listed the unnumbered house between St Joseph's Convent at 87–89 Stow Hill and St Paul's Vicarage at 93 as Caerau Nursing Home, run by its matron, Miss Carmody. In the 1923 *Kelly's Directory*, Caerau Nursing Home was at 62 Caerau Road; in the 1926 edition, there was no number 62 listed.

41 Keynsham Avenue is listed in the 1926 *Kelly's Directory* but not in the 1923 edition.

42 Mr Ian Burge kindly sent me a copy of the conveyance, and of the one in 1984.

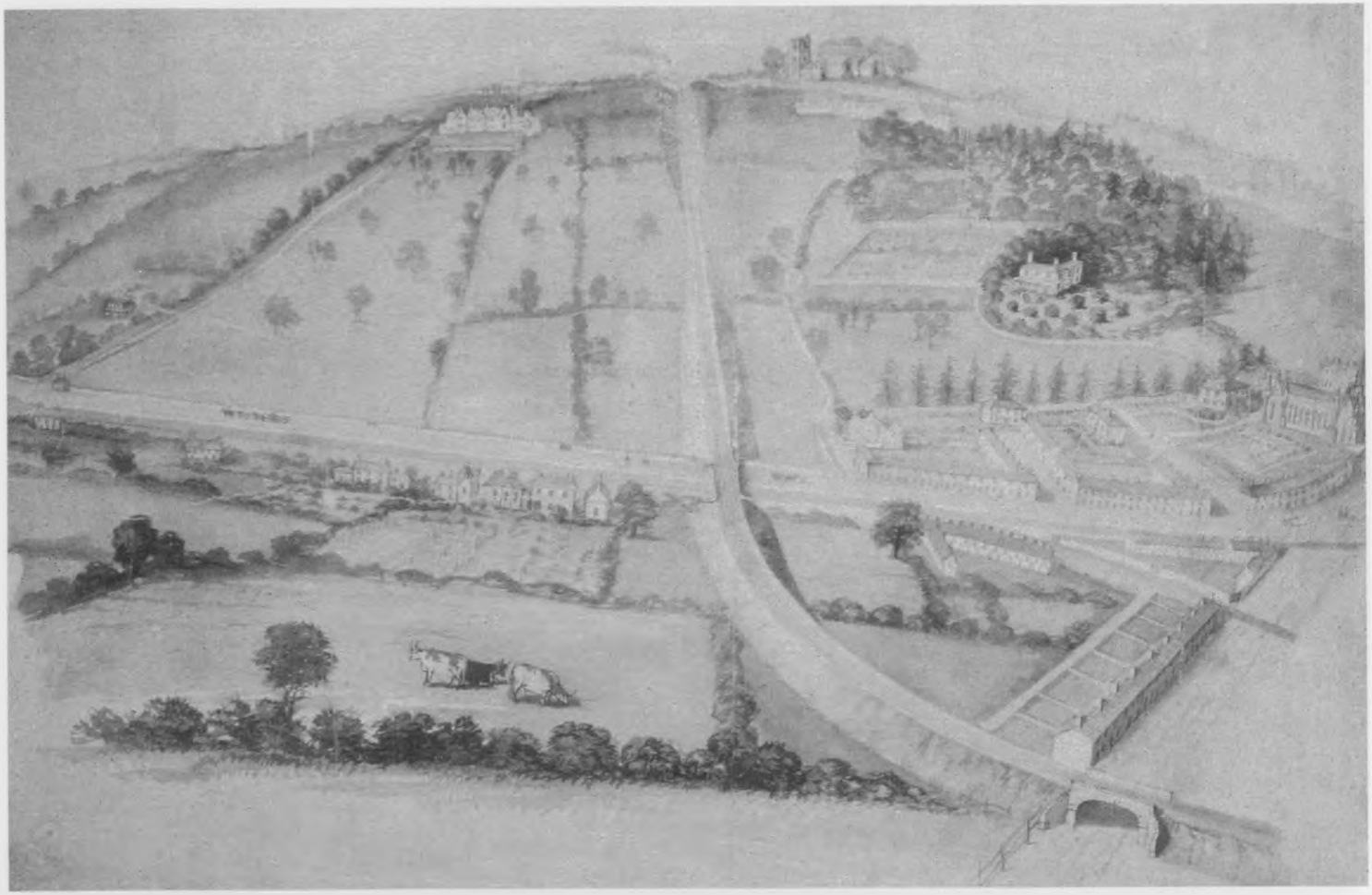

Plate 1: Watercolour showing a proposed development of the Rumney Tram Road from Stow Hill to Cardiff Road, Newport. Kingshill is clearly visible. Undated [*c*.1836–53].

By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

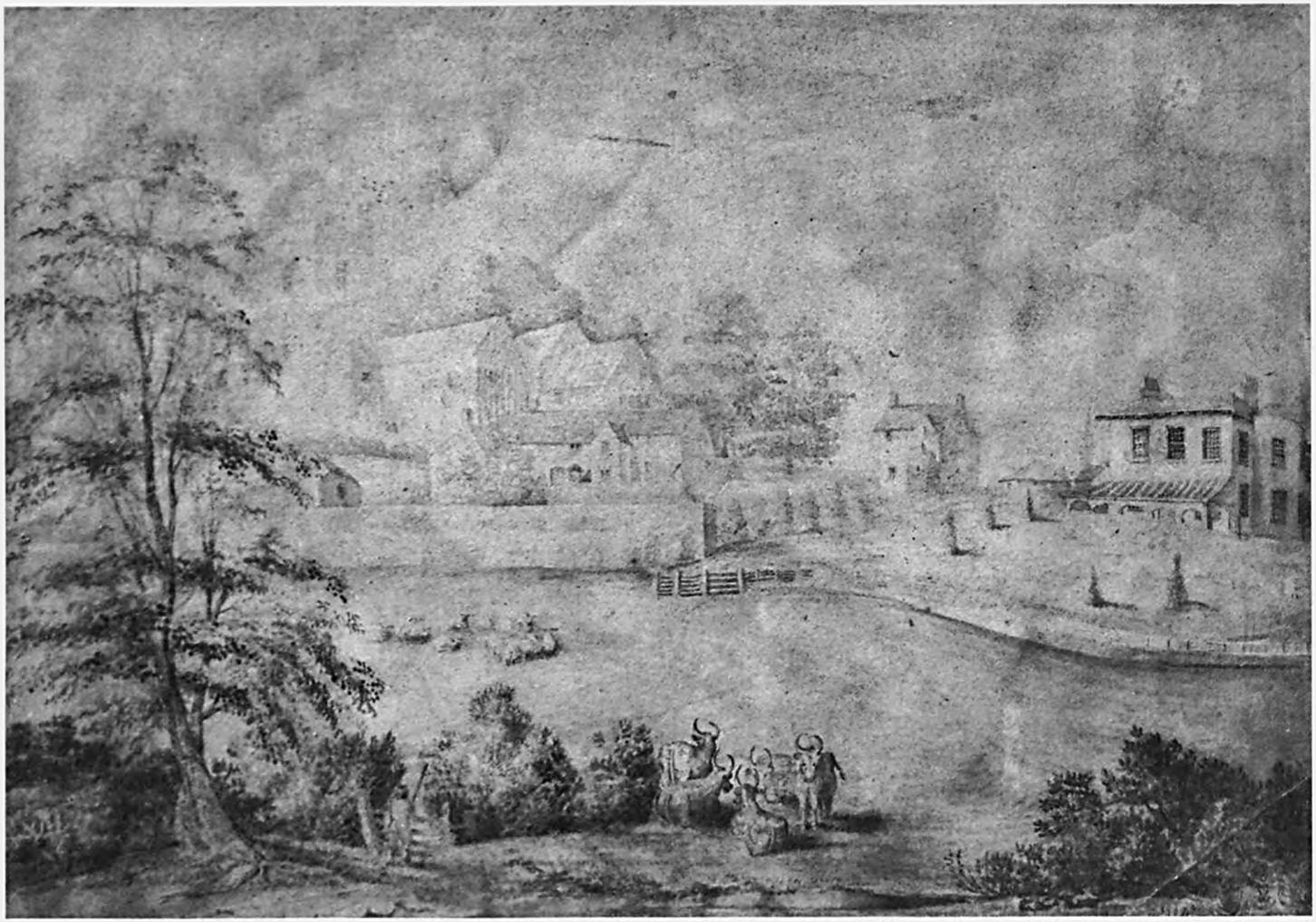

Plate 2: Watercolour of Kingshill, reproduced by kind permission of the Bishop of Monmouth. Undated [*pre* 1853].
Photograph: Newport Museum and Art Gallery.
Copyright: Diocese of Monmouth.

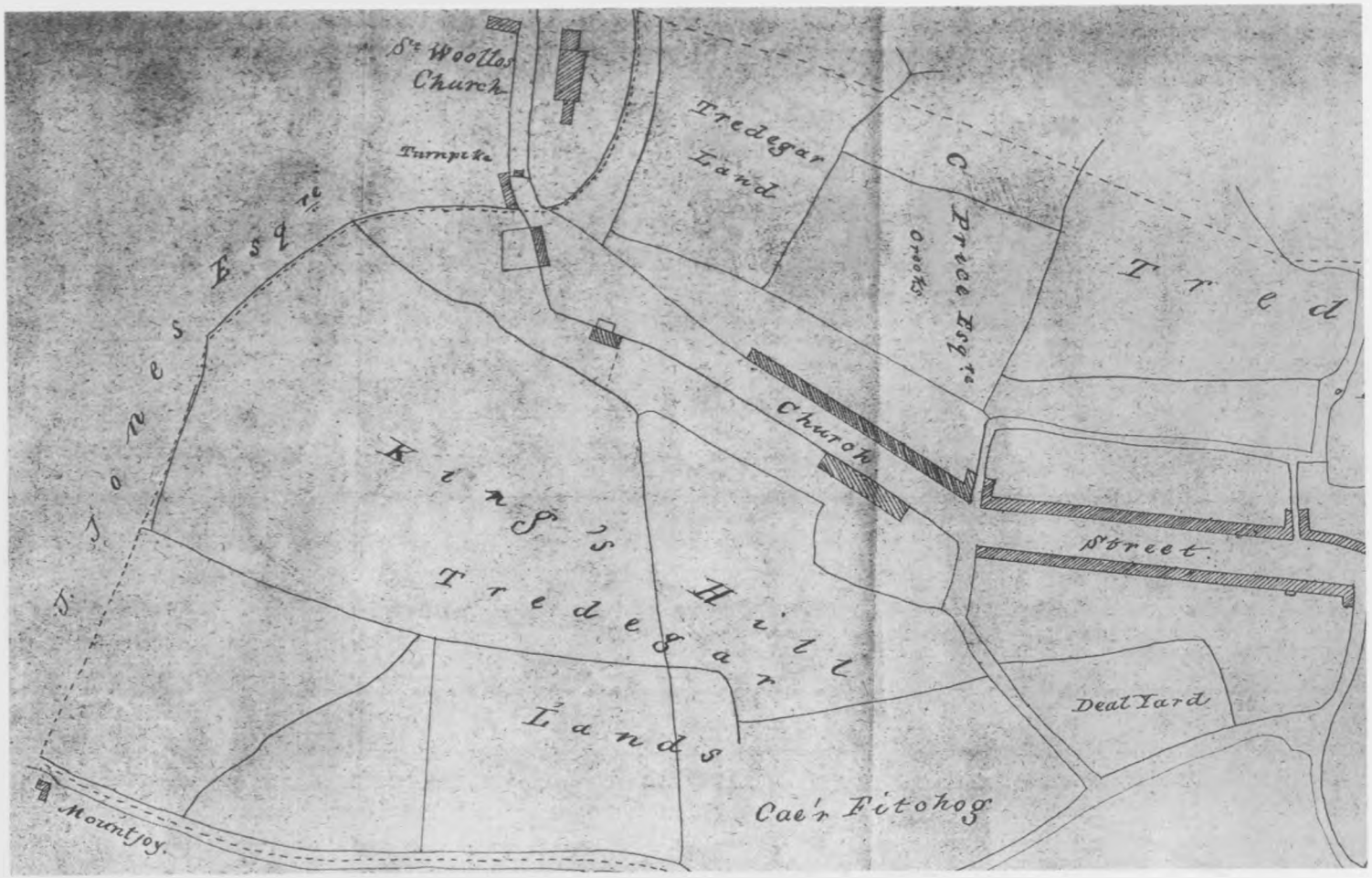

Fig. 1: Plan of Newport, 1794, showing 'King's Hill Tredegar Lands'.
By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

Fig. 2: Plan of Newport, 1820, from the Tredegar Park Manuscripts.
By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

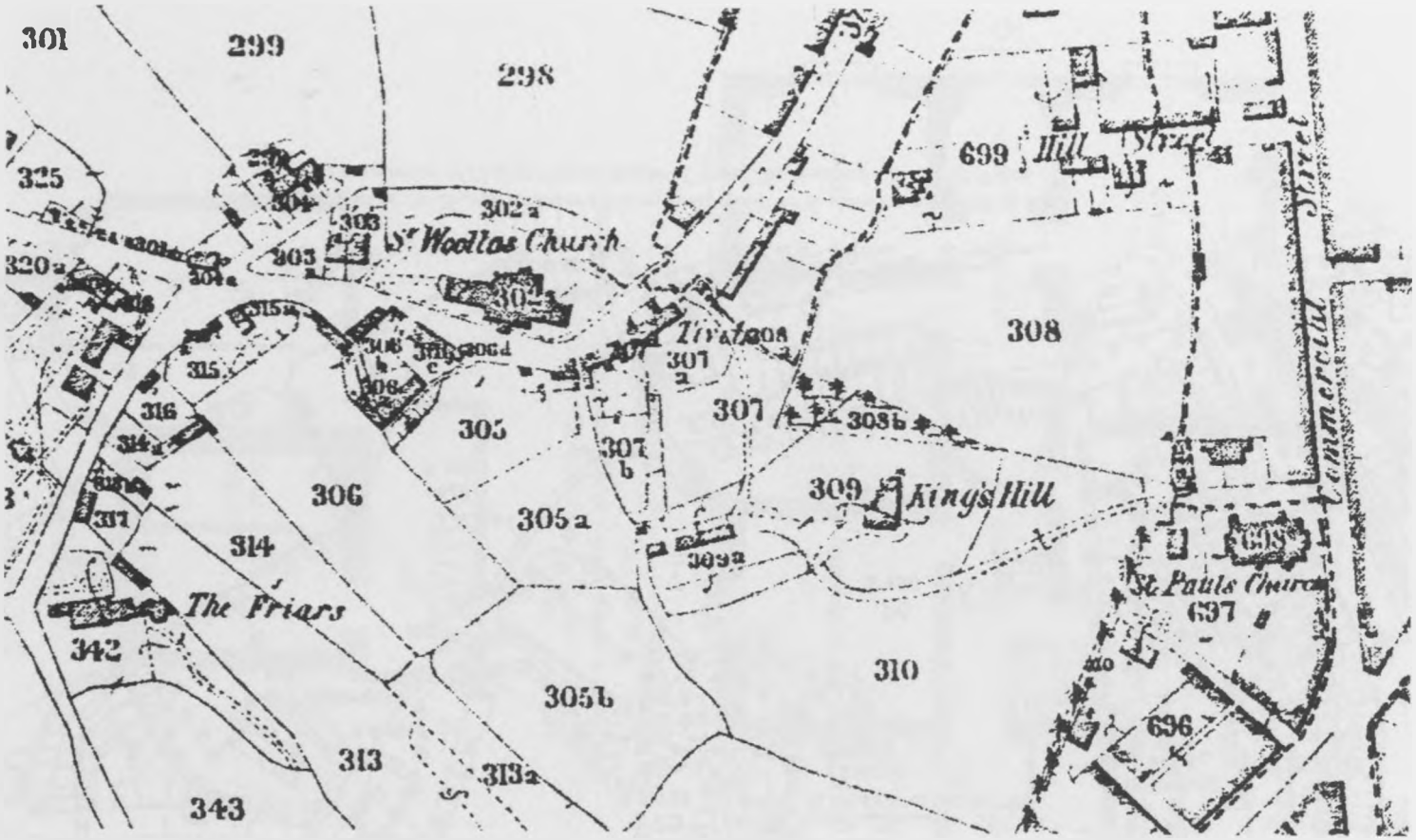

Fig. 3: Part of the Tithe Map of Newport, 1845.
By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

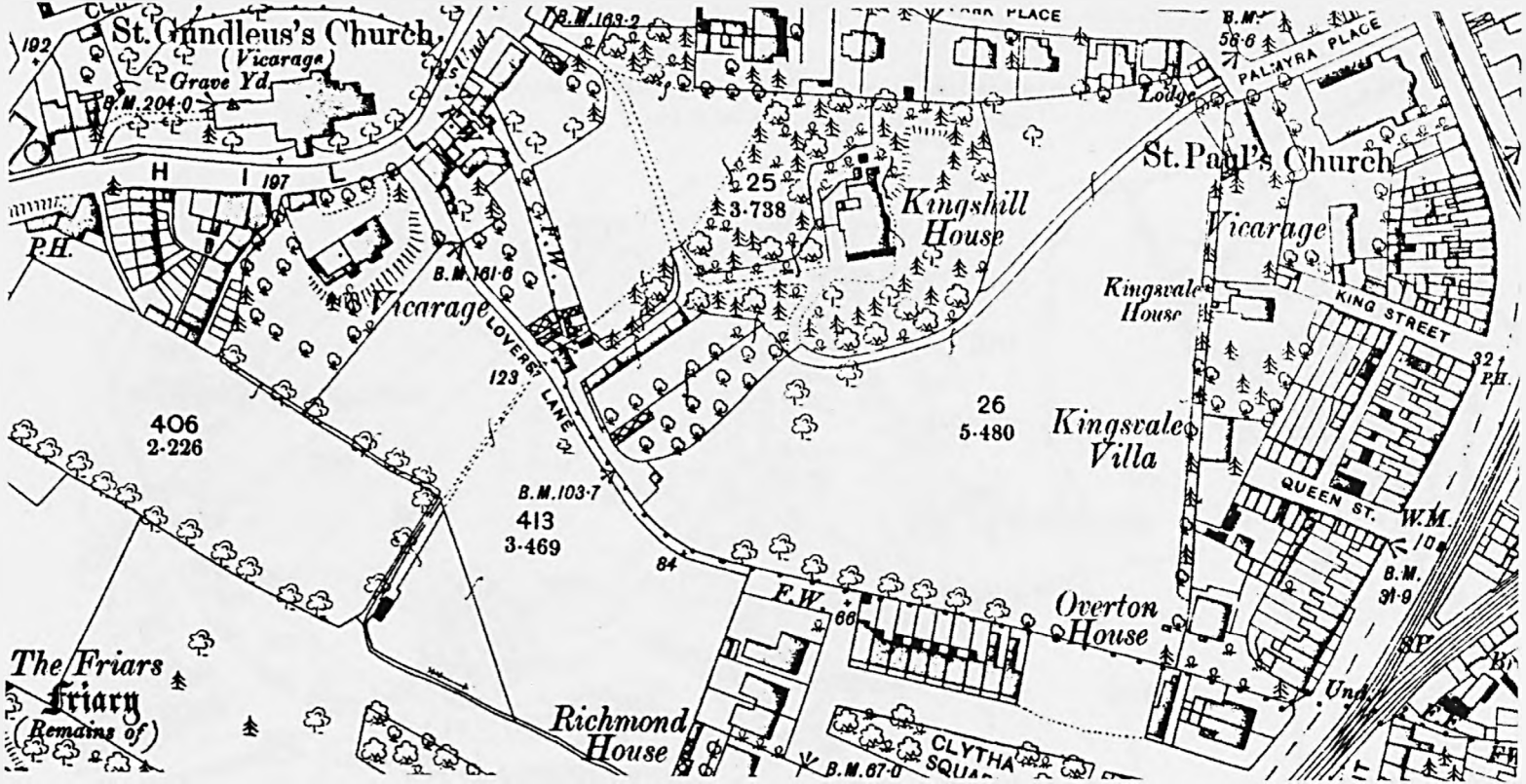

Fig. 4: Part of the 25 inch Ordnance survey map, Sheet 33.4, showing Kingshill in 1881.
By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

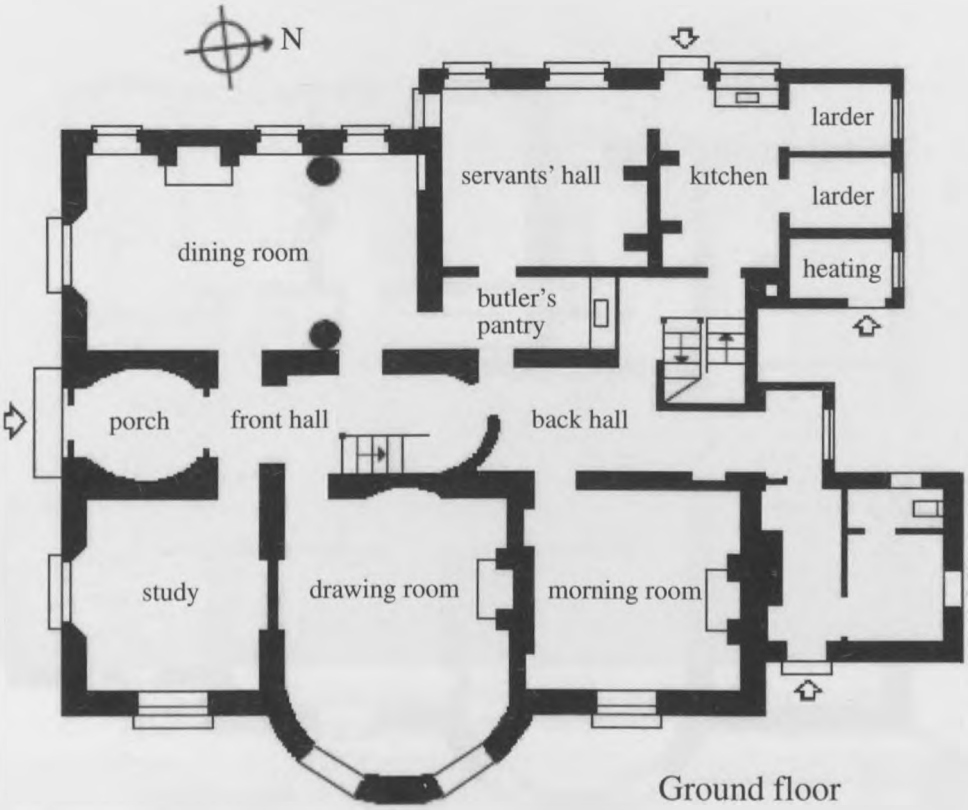

Fig. 5: Plan of the ground floor of Kingshill, as it was, 1945–67.
Source: Representative Body of the Church in Wales.

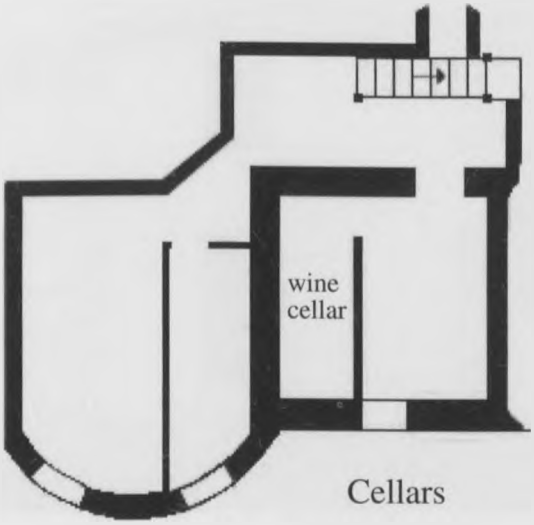

Fig. 6: Plan of the cellars of Kingshill.
Source: Representative Body of the Church in Wales.

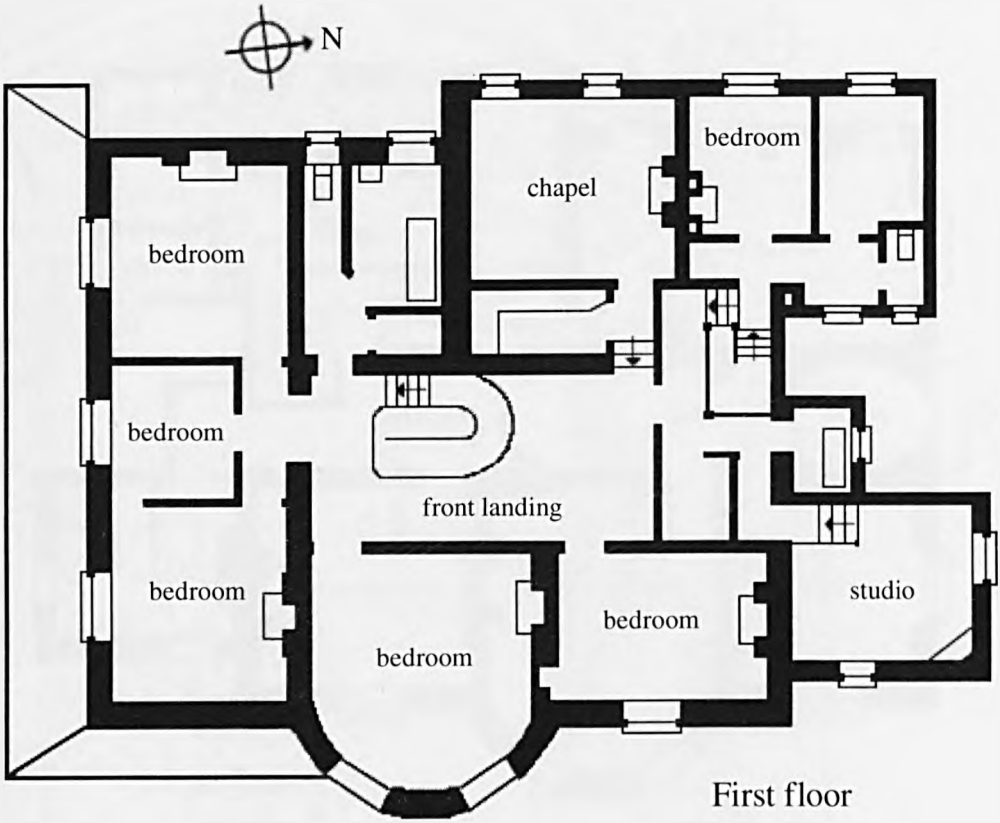

Fig. 7: Plan of the first floor of Kingshill, as it was, 1945–67.
Source: Representative Body of the Church in Wales.

Plate 3: Kingshill, south front, *c.*1960, showing double sash windows upstairs.
Photograph: author.

Plate 4: Kingshill, east front, 1963.
Photograph: author.

Plate 5: Kingshill – part of front stairs.
Photograph: author.

Plate 6: Kingshill – detail of dining room ceiling, with pillar and cornices.
Photograph: author.

Plate 7: Kingshill – the front landing.
Photograph: author.

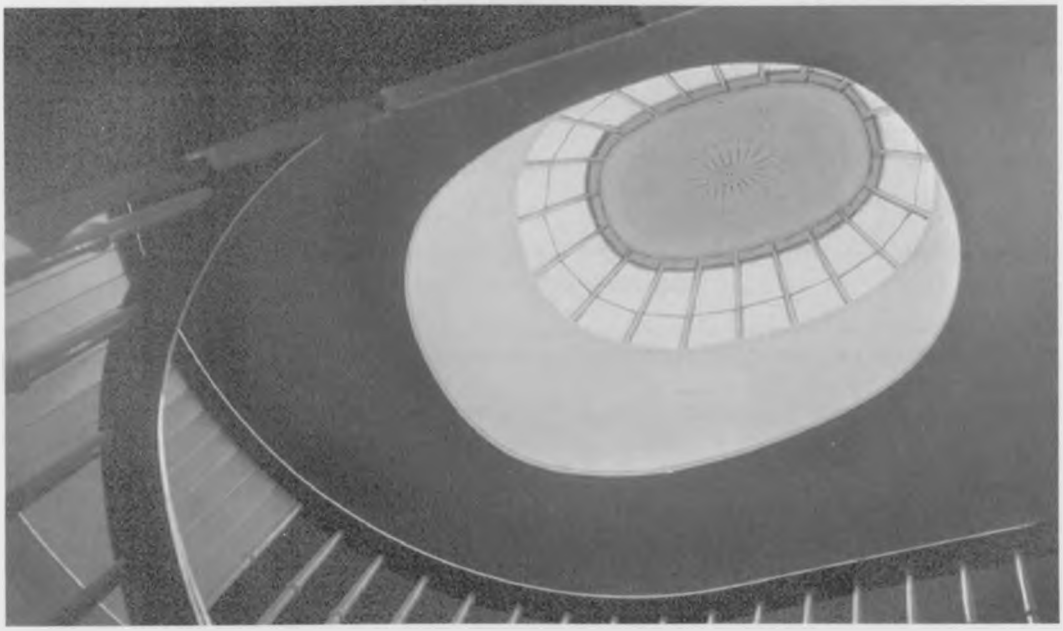

Plate 8: Kingshill – the large oval skylight with sloping glazed sides and ornamental plasterwork.
Photograph: author.

SHORT NOTES

THE NEWPORT MEDIEVAL SHIP: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ship was discovered within the boundaries of the former lordship of Newport which had its administrative centre in Newport Castle.[1] The lordship was one of the possessions of the Staffords, earls of Stafford and later dukes of Buckingham. The wealth and lands of the Staffords were vast, and they were among the most powerful members of the baronage in the later medieval period. The site of the creek or bay where the Newport ship was abandoned appears to be on the boundary of lands belonging to an Austin Friary founded in 1385 by Hugh Stafford, second earl of Stafford, and next to an open area to the south of the Town Pill, the main landing point in the medieval and early post-medieval period. A map of Newport dated 1794[2] shows a projection into the River Usk described as the Moderator Slip. This may be a slipway discovered above the medieval ship during the archaeological excavation.

Other 'ship finds' in the Newport area include part of a vessel discovered in April 1868, during the excavation of a new timber pond at the Newport Alexandra Dock. At the time it was described as a Danish built clinker vessel.[3] This seemed to be confirmed by the radiocarbon dating of a small piece of surviving oak planking, which suggested a date centred on AD 950. However, subsequent investigations indicate that the vessel may not be Danish and that since the sample came from the innermost part of a tree, the date of felling could be much later.[4]

In 1928, fragments of a 'barge', including a 'rudder' and 'Y shaped' piece were recovered during building work for the National Provincial Bank on the corner of Cambrian Road and Bridge Street, Newport. They were found at a depth of ten feet below ground level in association with sherds of *circa* fourteenth century Bristol Redcliffe ware.[5] This indicates that in the medieval period the Town Pill extended into the town centre.

In 1994, the distorted timbers of a boat, dated by dendrochronology to AD 1240, and believed to be a small coastal vessel, were found at Magor Pill near Newport. Magor Pill has been identified as the former site of a medieval landing place known as *Abergwaitha*. The boat timbers were recovered by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and the vessel form was reconstructed by the National Museum of Wales.[6]

A.C. Reeves, in his book *Newport Lordship 1317–1536*, gives an account of Newport in the middle of the fifteenth century. He says:

> Of the Lordship of Newport we have a considerable body of information, even to the point of knowing that a ship called *The Swan* had its home port at Newport in 1440.

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1 For a brief account of the discovery of this unique ship, *see* Nayling, Nigel, 'Newport medieval ship', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 19 (2003) 151–4.

2 *A Plan of the Town and Liberties of the Borough of Newport in the County of Monmouth 1794*, Newport Reference Library, Ref. pqM (912).

3 Morgan, Octavius, 'Ancient Danish Vessel discovered at the mouth of the Usk', *Proceedings at a Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute* (7 June 1878).

4 Hutchinson, Gillian, 'A plank fragment from a boat-find from the River Usk at Newport', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* (1984) 13.1: 27–32. The plank fragment is in the collections of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, Ref. NPTMG:1930.54.

5 Unpublished. The desiccated timbers and pottery are in the collections of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, Ref. NPTMG:1984.34.

6 Nayling, Nigel, *The Magor Pill Medieval Wreck* (1998).

It was Humphrey, later to be created duke of Buckingham, who in 1427 granted a confirmation charter to the borough of Newport. This charter confirmed that:

> all merchants with their merchandise shall not pass elsewhere through our lordships, either by water or by land, than by the royal streets of our town aforesaid for the reason that we or our heirs may at any time lose our toll or other customs due to us.[7]

The Minister Accounts for Newport for 1464–65, indicate that the lordship received revenues from traffic 'under and over the bridge' and to the passage of vessels 'beyond the water' before the making of the bridge.[8] Between 1465 and 1468, during his receivership of Newport, William, Lord Herbert, was able to make a net annual profit of about £358 above the annual farm of £100 a year which he was paying into the Exchequer.[9]

There are further references to ships having Newport as their homeport. The custom accounts for Bristol refer to the *Trinity* of Newport, master John Thloyd, taking cloth from Bristol to Ireland in 1461, and in 1480, to the *Christopher* of Newport, master Morris Hagharn, carrying a cargo of fish, hides and mantles from Ireland.[10]

After the execution of Edward, third duke of Buckingham in 1522, a survey of his estates records:

> The said toune of Newport is a burgh and a p'pur toune and hath a goodly haven commyng unto hit, well occupied with small Crayes whereunto a veray great shippe may resoorte and have good harbour.[11]

On 10 July 1460, Humphrey Stafford, first duke of Buckingham, was killed fighting on the Lancastrian side in the battle of Northampton. His son, Humphrey, Lord Stafford, had died in 1458, and the Stafford inheritance passed to his son, Henry, second duke of Buckingham, at that time still a minor.

After the death of his grandfather, the lands inherited by Henry, second duke of Buckingham, went into wardship. On 4 November 1460, the custody of the lordship of Newport was granted to Richard Neville, earl of Warwick (Warwick the Kingmaker), together with several other Stafford territories. However, on 11 May 1461, King Edward IV placed the custody of Newport in the hands of William Herbert, Baron Herbert of Raglan.

On 2 February 1461, Herbert supported Edward at the battle of Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire. This was a major victory for the Yorkists and Herbert was made chief justice and chamberlain of South Wales. He was created earl of Pembroke in 1468, as a reward for his capture of Harlech Castle, the last Lancastrian stronghold in England and Wales. He was also a ship owner and in 1465, was granted the wreckage of a great ship of his called the *Gabrielle* which had been wrecked off the coast of Ireland.[12]

However, Herbert was defeated and executed by the earl of Warwick after the battle of Edgecote on 6 July 1469. The custody of the lordship of Newport passed back to the earl of Warwick

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7 Translated by William Rees in *The Charters of the Borough of Newport in Gwynllwg* (1951).

8 Gwent Record Office, Ref. MAN/B/90/0004. Information *ex* Tony Hopkins.

9 Rawcliffe, Carole, *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394–1521* (1978).

10 Carus Wilson, E.M. (ed.), 'The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages', *Bristol Record Society*, 7 (1937).

11 Quoted in Dawson, J.W., *Commerce and Customs. A history of the Ports of Newport and Caerleon* (1932) from State Papers Domestic, Henry VIII, Vol. 3, Part 1. A cray was a small trading vessel.

12 *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1467–1477*, 427.

but he again lost custody when his possessions were seized after his flight to France in March 1470. His subsequent return and the deposing of Edward IV in October 1470, allowed him to regain control of Newport[13] until his death at the battle of Barnet on 14 April 1471. Edward then regained his throne and the custody of Newport may have passed to the duke of Gloucester, the future Richard III.[14] Henry, second duke of Buckingham, came into his inheritance in 1473.

Despite his wealth Warwick had at times insufficient resources to support his activities. At times, therefore, he allowed his ships to indulge in piracy to boost his finances as well as capturing 'legitimate' enemy vessels during periods of war, and large numbers of ships including Burgundian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Breton ships were captured.[15] One of the last acts of piracy by his fleet occurred in March 1471, when his ships seized and plundered twelve large Portuguese ships despite the alliance between England and Portugal.[16]

Warwick's private fleet included large ships of up to 500 tons. One of his ships, also called the *Trinity*, was captured by pirates from St Malo in 1465, and was possibly returned on the orders of the French King Louis XI. A *Trinity* that was ceremoniously commissioned on 12 June 1469 at Sandwich, may have been this ship refitted for the earl of Warwick. It cannot be the Newport ship as this was abandoned during refitting.[17]

A letter of authorisation dated 22 November 1469 by the earl of Warwick to Thomas Throkmorton, his receiver of Glamorgan and Morgannwg, authorised the payment to Trahagren ap Merik[18] for payments he had made of £10 to John Colt and of 53s.4d. to Richard Port, purser, for 'the making of the ship at Newport.[19] He also paid 6s.8d. to William Toker, mariner, for the carriage of iron (presumably nails) from Cardiff to Newport for the ship, and £15 2s.6d. to Matthew Jubber in money, iron, salt and other stuff belonging to the ship. However these amounts are too small to cover the cost of even a small ship, and the Newport ship excavated in 2002, was an old ship, partly repaired, but then partly dismantled. It remains to be seen whether John Colt and Richard Port's ship is the excavated Newport ship although if the payments were made for a repair then the costs seem reasonable.[20]

The origins of the Newport ship are still enigmatic. No date has yet been obtained for the hull of the ship, although timbers possibly used in an abortive repair date to 1465–66. The dating of the shores beneath the ship suggest a date of 1468 or soon after for its final resting place in a tidal creek of the River Usk.[21] However the ship itself is likely to be of an earlier date. As it was clinker built

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13 *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1461–1471*, 295. Refers to the commitment to Richard earl of Warwick – by mainprise – of the keeping of the castle and lordship of Newport. Dated 21 Feb. 1471.

14 It is not clear who had custody of Newport after the death of Warwick. However Edward IV had appointed the duke of Gloucester as chief justice for South Wales during the minority of Sir William Herbert, heir of William Herbert, late earl of Pembroke (Calendar of Patent Rolls, 7 Feb.1470).

15 Ross, Charles, *Edward IV* (1974) 161.

16 de Waurin, Jehan, *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne* (HMSO, 1891) 673.

17 Searle, W.G. (ed.), *The Chronicle of John Stone* (1902) and referred to by Hicks, Michael, in *Warwick the Kingmaker* (1998) 250–1.

18 Trahagren ap Merik was receiver at Newport for William, Lord Herbert, 11 May 1461–27 July 1469 and may have been retained by the earl of Warwick. *See* Rawcliffe, Carole, *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394–1521* (1978).

19 Warwick Record Office, Ref. CR 1998/J2/177.

20 The Newport ship was well over 100 tons. A ship at this time cost between £1 and £2 a ton. *See* Scammell, G.V., *Ship Owning in England c.1450–1550* (1961).

21 Nigel Nayling. Personal communication based on dendrochronological dating.

with a curved bow it is probably of North Western European construction, but the ship must have strong Portuguese connections as the coins and pottery found in the bilges are Portuguese, suggesting at one point it had a Portuguese crew and presumably Portuguese owner. The beech keel may suggest that the ship was not British made. One possibility is that the ship was constructed within the Bay of Biscay. Until 1451, the duchy of Aquitaine was an English possession and Bayonne was a centre of shipbuilding.[22]

At the time of writing full recording and further research into the ship has yet to be undertaken. It is not known whether the Newport ship was captured (perhaps by the earl of Warwick) or was coming to Newport for repairs. It was clearly a trading vessel and it is likely that it would have been involved in warfare, particularly in view of possible helmet pieces,[23] cannon balls and an archer's wrist guard found inside the hull.

Bob Trett

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[22] Owain Roberts. Personal communication. *See* also Rose, Susan, 'Bayonne and the King's Ships, 1204–1402', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 86, No.2 (May 2000) 140–7.

[23] The function of the strips found in the Newport ship, and the Biblical significance of the inscriptions on them, are discussed in Redknap, Mark, 'Worship and Devotion in Monmouthshire: Some Late Medieval Metalwork', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 20 (2004) 34–5, 50.

NEWPORT IN 1711

St Woolos' Church held a central place in the religious life of Newport when it was the only major place of worship in the town. This status of what is now the Cathedral was underlined on 26 September 1711 in a series of ordinances approved by the Mayor (Lewis Morgan) and Aldermen for the good government of the Borough of Newport.[1] Ordinance 48, entitled 'Sundays and Holidays', reads:

> We do ordain and agree that any person who now doth or shall inhabit within this Town, being not otherwise exempted nor having any reasonable cause of absenting himself, shall resort every Sunday to divine service to the parish church of St Woolos and the days appointed to be observed in memory of the Deaths and Martyrdoms of the Apostles, and the days appointed in the Church of England in memory of the Nativity,[2] Passion[3] and Ascension of Christ,[4] and coming of the Holy Ghost,[5] Gunpowder Treason day,[6] the Martyrdom of King Charles the first,[7] the restoration of King Charles the second,[8] and the eighth of March – being the day of her Majesty's happy accession to the throne,[9] upon pain to forfeit for each default 1s.,[10] and that every of the persons aforesaid who shall do any manner of work, open shop, or not keep the holy days ... shall forfeit 5s. for every offence, and that the Mayor and Aldermen for the time being, and the Bailiffs and Constables with their Maces and halberds to attend him, shall in their Gowns or cloaks walk to St Woolos Church to hear divine service and sermon, and in decent manner return back to such place as the Mayor shall appoint, and as to such persons who are inhabitants of this Town or may be at any time hereafter, and now are or may be stand *religione capti*,[11] or so unhappy as to dissent from the Church of England, but are exempted from the penalties of the Laws for not coming to Church by the late Statute of Indulgence,[12] every such person must resort to some place allowed by Law for practise of true religious worship, and not stay at home or go to any place not allowed or, being allowed, to hear any teacher but such as is allowed for that place, on payment to forfeit 10s. for every default to the Commonwealth of this Town.

Keeping of the Sabbath was also emphasised by Ordinance 37, regarding 'Travelling on Sundays':

> We do ordain and agree that every person who shall Travel with any pack, Load or Bundle, or drive any Cattle or Carriages, or ride thro' this Town to merrymaking which is usual, or travel with any Vessel in the river within this Boro'; on Sundays, shall forfeit the sum of six shillings & eightpence for such to the use aforesaid.

David H. Williams

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1 National Library of Wales, Badminton Deeds, Group 2, No. 13,044, folios 8–9.
2 Christmas Day, 25 December.
3 Good Friday.
4 Ascension Day: Thursday after the Fifth Sunday after Easter.
5 Whitsunday/Pentecost.
6 5 November.
7 30 January. (A special service was formerly printed in the Prayer Book for these special days).
8 29 May.
9 Accession Day – the anniversary of the Accession of Queen Anne. (The Prayer Book still provides the same forms of service for Accession Day, currently 6 February).
10 1 shilling in 1711 was equivalent in modern values to about £3–50 today.
11 Literally 'seized by religious scruple'.
12 The Fourth Declaration of Indulgence (1687, amended in 1688), allowed regulated freedom of worship.

EXCAVATION OF A PREHISTORIC ENCLOSURE IN TRELECH

A University of Wales Newport geophysical survey undertaken west of the three large standing stones in Trelech (SO499 052) indicated an apparent circular enclosure, approximately 50m in diameter (Hamilton, Davies and Baird, 2002). This feature was subsequently confirmed by targetted excavation in 2003. A large shallow ditch was found and assigned a Neolithic date based on artefactual evidence, the similarity of the ring ditch to other known dated sites and the proximity of the standing stones. Two small flint blades and one flint flake were recovered from the ditch fill. The enclosure's physical appearance would fit well into the morphology of sites like Court Hill in West Sussex or Crofton in Wiltshire and there are possible parallels with sites like Stanton Drew (Grinsell, 1994).

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Hamilton, M., Davies, K. and Baird, N., 2002 — *Report on Geophysical Survey Around Harold's Stones, Trelech (SO499 052) on May 16th and 23rd, 2002*. Scarab Archaeology Report 2 (University of Wales Newport).

Jonathan Burton, Daryl Williams and Paul Huckfield

REVIEWS

Aldhouse-Green, Miranda and Howell, Ray (eds.), Griffiths, Ralph A. (general ed.), *The Gwent County History. Volume 1. Gwent in Prehistory and Early History* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2004); ISBN 0 7083 1826 6; hardback, 190mm x 245mm; 367pp. (including index), 12 figs. (multiple), 7 tables; £45.

The publication of this volume, the first in what promises to be a distinguished series, is a matter for celebration. It has come about as the result of the tireless efforts of the Gwent Local History Council and is a tribute to their dedication and vision. In any series, dealing chronologically with the development of a region, Volume 1 is always the most difficult to structure since it has to cover a vast timespan embracing a variety of disciplinary approaches. To get the register right and to create a continuous (and readable) narrative require compliant contributors and firm editing. The cohesion and sheer attractiveness of this volume amply demonstrate that the present work benefits from both.

Volume 1. Gwent in Prehistory and Early History covers a timespan of about a quarter of a million years, from the Lower Palaeolithic period to the Norman Conquest, in fourteen chapters involving as many authors, some contributing to more than one chapter. The approach is straightforward with most chapters dealing with discrete chronological periods though the Iron Age and the early medieval period are treated thematically, the Iron Age in two chapters and the early medieval period in three chapters. Although the writing styles differ, as befits the subject matter, and there is occasionally some overlap, cross-referencing, especially between the later chapters, makes for cohesion. The result is a book that can be read either as a continuous story or as a series of informative essays.

The nature of the subject matter divides the book into three sections: prehistory up to the end of the Iron Age; the Roman and sub-Roman period to the seventh century AD; and the early medieval period. The authors dealing with the prehistoric period have the most difficult task because of the sparse and fragmentary database available to them. This is particularly so for the Palaeolithic period for which Gwent is largely without known finds, though from all around the record is rich. Stephen Aldhouse-Green takes the sensible course in extending his boundaries to include the whole of South Wales and Somerset, a region which includes many of the key Palaeolithic sites in Britain including the Welsh caves of Paviland, Pontnewydd and Coygan, the Mendip caves and the gravel terraces flanking the Severn. This material, presented against other sequences from southern Britain, enables him to present a succinct overview of the British Palaeolithic period which would be difficult to better. The treatment of the Mesolithic period, by Elizabeth Walker, maintains the same regional perspective but by the later Mesolithic period there is a reasonable body of evidence from Gwent derived principally from fieldwork in the Black Mountains and from a number of key sites on the Severn Estuary Levels including the remarkable human footprints found near Uskmouth Power Station. By the end of the period, around 4000 BC, the hunter-gatherer communities had increased in number, their mobility was decreasing, and new tracts of land were beginning to be exploited. This picture continues into the Neolithic period (described by Rick Peterson and Joshua Pollard) during which food-producing regimes, including grain cultivation and animal husbandry, were being taken up by the local population leading to a greater degree of sedentism. Archaeological evidence is now more plentiful. Much of it is in the form of stray finds of stone axes and flint scatters but there are a few long cairns representing the burial places of the ancestral elite. Settlements are unknown and only one potential enclosure, at Mynydd Llwyd, has been identified. The only stone circle from the county lies within it. This dearth

of social and ritual monuments contrasts with regions to the east and to the west hinting that the communities of Gwent may have developed a distinctive identity by this time.

The Bronze Age is equally enigmatic, as M.A. Hamilton's survey shows. Once again there are plenty of stray finds including flints and metalwork, and a fair density of cairns or barrows have been identified but few have been excavated. Settlements are virtually unknown except on the Gwent Levels. In a separate chapter, Adam Gwilt provides an analysis of the thirteen Late Bronze Age hoards known from the region, most of them found by metal detectorists within the last twenty-five years. The deposition of so much bronze, in the ground or in watery contexts, over a period of a few hundred years or so, is a widespread phenomenon in western Europe implying a significant shift in belief systems which may in some way herald a new emphasis on landholding and the permanency of settlement. This is certainly evident by the Iron Age (described by Ray Howell and Joshua Pollard) when hillforts become a dominant monument type throughout the region.

One recurring theme in these six prehistoric chapters is how comparatively poor the database is. With notable exceptions, like Stephen Aldhouse-Green's excavation of the Pontnewydd cave and Martin Bell's extensive fieldwork on the Severn Estuary Levels, there have been few significant research programmes focussed on prehistoric sites in Gwent and surprisingly few large-scale rescue excavations in advance of development. As several of the authors have rightly emphasized, it is this lack of activity that prevents the full potential of the county's prehistory being realized. A concerted effort by the archaeological community could dramatically change the situation.

Miranda Aldhouse-Green's chapter on Art, Ritual and Society in the Iron Age bridges the gap between prehistory and the Roman period nicely, using belief systems to emphasize the deep-rooted continuity across the divide. Once the Roman army has arrived, about AD 47, the data become more plentiful though still patchy. In his chapter dealing with the conquest and the continuing military presence, Bill Manning presents a detailed and convincing account of the vicissitudes of troop employment drawing on his own large-scale excavations on the fortress at Usk and the many excavations which, over the last eighty years, have gradually revealed something of the complex development of the fortress at Caerleon. What emerges so clearly from his careful sifting of the evidence is just how circumspect we have to be when trying to construct a history of troop deployment from partial archaeological evidence. Although the story of the first hundred years or so of the occupation is now reasonably established, the fourth century remains intriguingly obscure – a challenge for future excavators!

The early military dispositions demonstrate, above all, the crucial position of Gwent in the first stages of the conquest. The territory was a liminal land standing between the easily Romanized core of south-eastern Britain and the more remote west and it was to retain this character of inbetweenness until well after the Norman Conquest. The issue is well brought out by Richard Brewer in his discussion of the settlement and economy of the region during the Roman period, with the overlay of 'Romanness' spreading along the southern edge of the county as reflected in the cantonal capital of *Venta Silurum* and a scatter of modest villas. The communities of the deeper hinterland continued their native ways much as before. This theme is taken up by Ray Howell in his fascinating discussion of the fifth to seventh centuries in which he is able to sketch out the gradual transformation of the region as the superficial trappings of Romanization fell away while many of the underlying rhythms of settlement remained, trade continued, and the Christian traditions and hierarchical systems were gradually transformed. It is in this period that archaeology and the earliest historical traditions combine to provide entirely new insights into this crucial phase of transition.

The remaining four chapters deal with different aspects of the early medieval period: Jeremy Knight gives an account of society and religion, David Longley examines status and lordship,

Juliette Wood explores the narrative tradition, and Michael Davies concludes with an assessment of the early Norman impact. These contributions complement each other to create a vivid account of the rich and complex society which emerged in the aftermath of Rome. The detail which the historical evidence provides of all aspects of society – administrative regions, centres of high status and the differential locations of the cattle ranches, pastures and farms – is the envy of archaeologists who strive to reconstruct such systems in the more distant past from uncompromising scraps. The great value of the *longue durée* approach, implicit in a work of this kind, is that each period enlivens our understanding of the others. What emerges is a clear view that the varied landscape of Gwent has always conditioned human response. Gwent is a palimpsest of sub-regions each with their individual histories.

This volume is a resounding success at many levels. It provides an accessible narrative of Gwent's pre-Norman past, it embodies the most up-to-date interpretations presented by those who are at the forefront of research and it reveals, as the story proceeds, the working methods, aspirations and sometimes the frustrations of scholars as they piece together the story of the long march of the people of Gwent.

Barry Cunliffe

Barrow, Jan, *From Dawn Till Dusk. Usk: the story of its markets, trades and occupations*, with maps and illustrations by John Barrow and others, Jan Barrow, Usk, 2004; no ISBN number; 140mm x 210mm; 8 introductory and 190pp.; £9–50.

This book is a very useful addition to the *corpus* of work on the history of Usk. In its own words, it sets out 'to investigate some of the trades and occupations in the small market town of Usk since it was established by the Normans in the 12th century, until the end of Queen Victoria's reign in 1901'. In that it succeeds and more, taking the reader back to 'the distant past when Usk was an empty floodplain, with perhaps a few itinerant prehistoric traders'.

The book's arrangement is, in fact, chronological. Each section is devoted to a period of time, often with sub-divisions which usually have headings, but may occasionally be indicated by a line of asterisks. From prehistoric times, we proceed to the Romans and from the Romans to the Normans, with a large section devoted to the Norman borough of Usk. The Tudors and Stuarts are followed by 'The Eighteenth Century and the Georgians', with as one would expect, by far the largest section packed with information about the nineteenth century.

Each new section is preceded by a map, so that the reader has a visual impression of the size of Usk at each period. A particularly impressive aspect of Jan Barrow's book is that each section is put into its historical context. The arrival of the Normans and their impact on the 'Border country', particularly their establishment of Marcher lordships where the king's writ did not run, is discussed, as is the Reformation in the sixteenth century (Usk Priory was dissolved), the Civil War between King Charles I and his Parliament (Usk was too close for comfort to the Royalist stronghold of Raglan) and 'the stagnation of the Established Anglican church in Wales' and the rise of Nonconformity.

The local information, especially about the town itself and the trade of the town, is backed up by a mass of well-researched material, from ministers' accounts of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, preserved in the National Archives at Kew, to documents in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, to sources held nearer to home in the Gwent Record Office at Cwmbran. Indeed, as the written sources become more plentiful, so too do the transcripts of documents in the book.

The final sections of *From Dawn Till Dusk* are not chronological – they are subject-based – 'Inns and Alehouses', 'Law and Order for Tradesmen'. There are also useful appendices devoted, for example, to explanations of 'Monies' and 'Measures'.

If I have any quarrel with this book, it is that I find its design a little unsatisfactory. I should have preferred chapter headings to be bolder, so that the distinction between different chapters was more obvious. As an editor, I am on dangerous ground saying this, but proof-reading has let it down in places – see especially 'Acknowledgements and grateful thanks'. I also found the lack of punctuation in footnotes a little disconcerting – although I know that this practice is also found in other publications.

These comments, though, are ungenerous when one considers the amount of work that has gone into producing this book, not only by the author, but also by her husband and all the other people who have helped and advised her. This is a book which any local historian would be proud to have produced. It brings together and assesses so much information, and enriches our knowledge of the history of a small town and the people who worked there from crack of dawn until the end of their long day's work.

Annette M. Burton

Davies, John Reuben, *The Book of Llandaf and the Norman Church in Wales*, Studies in Celtic History XXI, Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2003; ISBN: 1 84383 024 8; hardback, 156mm x 234mm; xii and 244 pp., 5 maps; £50.

The Book of Llandaff, *Liber Llandavensis* (hereafter *LL*), is perhaps our most important source for the early medieval history of Gwent. Its 159 charters, if correctly dated, contain what are by some centuries our earliest references to many familiar Gwent places. In the broader historical field its importance is equally great, as John Reuben Davies shows with great clarity. Views on the charters range from their acceptance as a true record of people and events from the seventh century onwards to blatant forgery in the twelfth, with little or nothing behind them. Davies outlines these views, from Haddan and Stubbs in Victorian times to Professor Wendy Davies and beyond, but the great virtue of this book is that it shifts attention from the charters themselves to the wider contents of the manuscript and its context in twelfth-century ecclesiastical controversy.

Part 1 deals with the creation of the see of Llandaff. This was due to the heroic and prolonged efforts of Urban, bishop of Llandaff (1107–34) to create a new diocese, with fixed boundaries, out of a shadowy former 'bishopric of Glamorgan', possibly based on Llandaff since the time of Bishop Joseph in the early eleventh century. (I have argued elsewhere that the neighbouring ancient church of Llandough was 'asset stripped' to provide resources for Joseph's foundation). Davies shows how Urban pursued his agenda tirelessly, in the Papal *curia* and elsewhere, from the Council of Rheims in 1119 until his death, including a series of visits to Rome.

This agenda brought him into demarcation disputes with his episcopal brothers of Hereford and St Davids over Archenfield to the east, and Gower and Kidwelly to the west. These areas were ultimately lost to his see, but the assured status of Urban's see and of Llandaff, where he began a new cathedral in 1120 and endowed it with the bones of translated saints, were his ultimate legacy. At a more local level, Urban's efforts brought him into conflict with Norman lords over the secularization of former church properties, and into competition with the new houses of monks to which those lords were making generous grants of land; Tintern alone came into possession of seven properties claimed by Llandaff. As Davies puts it, 'The tensions and disputes ... are not so much between the native church and Norman conquerors as between a land-owning bishop and

baronial adversary'. However, *LL* represents not simply a defensive reaction to Anglo-Norman aggrandizement, but a positive response by a new generation of Welsh churchmen to changed circumstances in exploring their own past. The names of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop Urban and Caradoc of Llancarfan show their intellectual calibre. As is often the case, 'History' flourished in a time of change.

The second part of the book is 'The Book of Llandaff and the re-construction of the past'. Like a number of similar manuscripts, *LL* combined Gospel book, cartulary and saints' lives, plus in this case a collection of papal letters and an historical source book. There is even a 'Rough Guide' to Rome, its churches and cardinals. A study of the subsequent fates of estates in the Llandaff charters suggests to Davies that the latter were of limited value as formal legal documents in Urban's cause, and that therefore the idea of wholesale forgery cannot be substantiated.

This widens the field of enquiry into the purpose and authorship of *LL*. He shows that the book has a unity of style suggesting a single author. It has been recognized that the lives of Gwynllyw and Tatheus in the Vespasian A XIV collection of saints' lives were by the same hand.[1] Davies takes this several stages furthur by suggesting that the Vespasian Life of Illtyd was also his work and that the writer can be identified as Caradoc of Llancarfan. Davies suggests that he may also have been the main author of *LL* with Bishop Urban acting as revising editor.

The first chapter 'Bishop Urban's inheritance', contains a few unimportant slips. The Llantrithyd and Wenallt coin hoards contained no coins of William I or of his Rhuddlan and St Davids mints (p. 23). So far as St Davids is concerned, Dorothy Whitlock's identification of Dewstow near Caldicot as a bishopric under Ethelred the Unready was surely a bad guess (p. 13). There is evidence that St Davids had possessions in south-west Herefordshire and this provides a more credible context. *Deowiestow* is probably St Davids itself, like its mint signature on coins of William I – 'DEVITUN'. There is clearly more work to be done on the identification of place names in the Llandaff charters. For example, the church of St Mary at *Lann Meiri penn Ros* (Charter 231) is sometimes identified as Monmouth. Davies says 'unidentified', but it may be Tregaer near Raglan, a Mary dedication next door to Penrhos parish.

This is an important book, fluently written and essential reading for anyone with an interest in South Wales in the early Middle Ages.

Jeremy K. Knight

Davies, Sean, *Welsh Military Institutions, 633–1283*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2004; ISBN 0 7083 1836 3; hardback, 140mm x 225mm; 288 pp.; £30.

The scope of this book, based on Sean Davies's Ph.D. thesis, is ambitious. He starts with the earliest Welsh sources, covering what was then a wider 'British' scene extending beyond Wales to Ireland in the west and Northumbria in the north, and takes us right through to the wars with Edward I. The early sources, often an elusive mix of poetry, saints' lives and myth, need to be used with great care but the *Gododdin* in particular is rich in references to warfare. Later the three versions of the *Brut y Tywysogyon* (*The Chronicle of the Princes*), with their year by year accounts of events in Wales, are of fundamental importance to the subject. *Hanes Gruffudd ap Cynan*, covering the latter part of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, is the only extant biography of a Welsh king and a valuable source for military warfare in this period. However, the most quoted source, and one upon which

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[1] *See* Knight, Jeremy K., 'St. Tatheus of Caerwent', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 3, Pt. 1 (1970–71) 29–36.

commentators have come to rely, is Gerald of Wales's account of Wales, *Descriptio Cambriae*, written a century later. He provides one of the fullest accounts of the Welsh at war but we are left with a picture, perhaps coloured by the need to appeal to an Anglo-Norman audience, of the Welsh as essentially noble savages who found themselves up against the well-organized might of the Anglo-Normans. Davies cautions against too much reliance on this view. Indeed, the message extending throughout his book is that the organization of native Welsh military forces and much of their practice in warfare is comparable to that found elsewhere in Europe.

Davies examines his subject through six related themes, covering the composition and organization of a Welsh lord's military retinue, his *teulu*; the make-up of a Welsh army, the *llu*; strategy and tactics; equipment and tactical dispositions; fortifications and, finally, conduct in warfare. The size of a lord's *teulu* varied according to his status but Davies concludes that around fifty might have been typical although that of the great princes, like Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, could run to several hundred men. This mounted force of freemen were bound to their lord through loyalty but he, for his part, was expected to be a powerful military leader, defending his land, leading his men against his enemies and rewarding them with booty.

Lords and their *teuloedd* might come together, particularly in times of national emergency, to form an army or *llu*. More usually an army was drawn from freemen raised by levy with mercenaries sometimes also being employed. Service was set by Welsh law at forty days although some campaigns could last longer. By the late thirteenth century, the demands for larger armies, particularly in the face of wars with the English king, led to bond tenants being pressed into service sometimes causing resentment and underlining the narrowing gap between the free and the unfree.

In writing of both the Irish and the Welsh, Gerald of Wales stated that neither were able to challenge their enemies in battle. In examining the sources, Davies shows that from the earliest times, the Welsh did become engaged in pitched battles although their preferred strategy was to avoid them in favour of guerrilla warfare, and direct confrontation with the various royal expeditions of Anglo-Norman kings was avoided wherever possible. However, where they did come face to face in the period between 1066 and 1277, Davies calculates the outcome as six Welsh victories, three defeats and one draw. These figures are rather surprising but have almost certainly been overshadowed by the momentous and terminal events which followed Edward I's invasion of Wales in 1277. One point that comes out very clearly is the central role of ravaging an enemy's lands, usually without mercy. There was no feeling of shame attached to waging war on peasants and their land. Rather to do so was an essential part of weakening the power base of the enemy and rewarding the *teulu* with booty.

The chapter dealing with military equipment emphasizes that, as with other societies, the sword held primacy being of high status and expensive to make. It could also be passed down from generation to generation conferring honours on the present owner passed on from heroic owners of the past. Davies challenges Gerald of Wales's view that the men from North Wales were spearmen and those from the south were archers. He suggests that there are plenty of references in the panegyric sources for the use of mixed weapons. There is also an interesting section on the employment of cavalry. Davies demonstrates that cavalry were in use by the Welsh before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans thus rebutting the Gerald of Wales view that the Welsh did not fight on horseback until they learnt the technique from the Anglo-Normans.

In considering the evidence for fortification in the earliest part of his period, Davies turns to the results of archaeological excavations at sites such as Dinas Emrys, Dinas Powys and Llangorse crannog. Following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the Welsh soon adopted some of the new ideas and military techniques, often adapting them to their own particular approach to warfare.

Hence the Welsh adopted the use of the castle in the early twelfth century but only when it suited them and then for a particular purpose. Unlike the Anglo-Normans, castles were not generally held as strongholds of last resort when the surrounding countryside fell into the enemy's hands. In times of trouble, the Welsh much preferred to fight in the open harrying and ambushing their enemies. Davies supports the view that the thirteenth-century princes in Gwynedd and, earlier, Rhys ap Gruffudd in Deheubarth, used castles to control their territorial boundaries and strategic routeways. However, his approach to the subject is very much that of the historian and he could have made more of both the distinctive nature of Welsh stone castle design and of Anglo-Norman stylistic influences, some arising out of marriage alliances.

Davies draws out the references, mainly in the *Brutiau*, to the Welsh use of siege techniques after 1066, particularly the way siege engines were employed. He points out that the Welsh could rarely afford to be drawn into lengthy set-piece sieges, leaving their troops exposed to the superior resources which the Anglo-Normans could muster. Their most successful means of attack were through surprise and cunning; often they succeeded in capturing the castle bailey in this way but failed to take the keep. In the conduct of warfare, the Welsh could be, and often were, merciless whether at war between themselves or against the Anglo-Normans. Only later, in the thirteenth century, did the practice of sparing defeated Anglo-Norman lords and trading them as hostages become more common.

The book concludes with consideration of the role of the Church in military matters. For the Anglo-Normans, the Church in Wales was backward, corrupt and barely Christian and its right to provide sanctuary ignored. By contrast, where a Welsh ruler transgressed against a church or church lands, reparation tended to be paid to the Church.

Sean Davies has produced a well-crafted and thoroughly researched book. He has brought together in one place a wealth of information demonstrating that Welsh military organization was more cohesive than has previously been appreciated. If I have one criticism, and it is a minor one not detracting from the overall quality and value of this excellent study, it is perhaps that Davies at times seems to cast the conduct of the Welsh at war in a somewhat favourable light. Reading the *Brutiau*, it is hard to overlook the sheer quantity of references to the brutality of Welsh warfare and internecine strife; mutilation through amputation of limbs, blinding and castration were the order of the day. Admittedly, the Anglo-Norman lords participated with equal enthusiasm but this was certainly not the age to be a member of the peasantry.

Richard Avent

Williams, David H., *The Five Wounds of Jesus*, Gracewing, Leominster, 2004; ISBN: 0 85244 620 9; paperback, 140mm x 215mm; ix and 83 pp. (including index), 19 photographs and line drawings; £6–99.

In this short study, our Honorary Assistant Editor has assembled photographs of all the surviving Welsh depictions of the Five Wounds and a number of literary and documentary references. Devotion to Christ's wounds was one of the most characteristic forms of late medieval piety, and one of the most difficult for a modern readership to understand. David Williams's book goes some way towards remedying this problem. He sets his account of the medieval cult in context with an introduction on its Biblical and theological background, and the book concludes with a discussion of the devotion and its implications in modern spirituality.

Gwent has two medieval depictions of the Five Wounds, on the carved chest traditionally called the 'bread chest' in the parish church at Bedwellty and a fragmentary plaque in the frieze now

at Cefn Tila, Llandenny. Whatever its other functions, the Bedwellty chest almost certainly served as an Easter sepulchre, the focal point of the Holy Week liturgy. The Cefn Tila frieze has been the subject of a recent reappraisal by John Morgan-Guy, who suggests that it was originally made not for Usk Priory but for Raglan Castle.

As well as photographs of these, David Williams reminds us of the will of Philip ab Hywel of Llan-soe who in 1534, left money for five Masses of the Five Wounds to be said every year on the anniversary of his death. Dr Williams also points out that bequests in fives were themselves a reference to the Wounds. When Gladys verch Jevan of Monmouth died in 1546, she left five bushels of oaten malt for distribution to the poor. I have used this will in seminars for over a decade without realising the immense significance of the number. It may be a coded reference at a time of religious uncertainty or it may simply be that the allusion was considered to be so obvious that it needed no explanation. What it did, though, was to link Christ's suffering in a very explicit and practical way with the duty to relieve poverty.

The appeal which the book makes for Christian unity may seem strange given the hostility of the Protestant church to these depictions. It is linked, however, to one of the greatest paradoxes in Welsh history: the fact that a country so traditionalist in religion in the sixteenth century should by the nineteenth have been dominated by Protestant Nonconformity. But Nonconformity did not really take hold in Wales until the Methodist revival: and as David Williams points out, many of the great Methodist hymns are suffused with the imagery of Christ's wounds. What the medieval Catholic church communicated visually, Methodist writers and preachers expressed in words. It was not until this emotional charge was restored that Wales became a stronghold of Dissent.

Madeleine Gray

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

John Allen trained as a geologist at the University of Sheffield, and has spent the whole of his academic career in the University of Reading in which he is now Professor Emeritus and Visiting Professor in the Department of Archaeology. Up to the early 1980s, his research concentrated on the depositional environments of Old Red Sandstone rocks in South Wales and the Welsh Borders. Then he changed his field of research to estuarine sedimentology and to the archaeology of the geologically dynamic coastal zone, especially that of the Severn Estuary. Professor Allen is currently extending his research interests to the geoarchaeology of building stone in south-east Wales and East Anglia.

Richard Avent is Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings in Cadw, a post that he has held since 1984. He first joined the Inspectorate in 1973, and excavated at Laugharne Castle in Carmarthenshire from 1976 to 1995. He has written a number of guidebooks to monuments in Cadw's care, and has published numerous articles to castles in Wales.

Annette Burton was successively City Archivist of Chester, County Archivist of Northumberland and Glamorgan Archivist. After she retired, she worked for some years as a part-time lecturer in local history for Cardiff University, and was Honorary Archivist to the diocese of Monmouth from 2000–2003. She was Honorary Editor of the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, 1980–87. In 2000, she became Honorary Editor of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*.

Jonathan Burton, Paul Huckfield and Daryl Williams graduated with B.A. degrees in archaeology from University of Wales Newport, in 2004.

Barry Cunliffe studied archaeology and anthropology at Cambridge, and has been Professor of European Archaeology at Oxford University since 1972. His current research interests include the communities of the Atlantic Façade, exploring especially maritime links between Britain and Gaul in the first millennium BC; and the Iron Age communities of Britain, a programme of research and excavation, including the large-scale excavation of an Iron Age hillfort at Danebury, Hampshire. Amongst his numerous publications are reports on excavations at Richborough; the Roman palace at Fishbourne; and Roman Bath. He has also written such 'popular' books as *Rome and the Barbarians* (1975) and *Origins* (1987). Professor Cunliffe describes *The Ancient Celts* (1997) as 'a more substantial' overview.

Madeleine Gray lectures in history at the University of Wales Newport and is one of the editors of *The Gwent County History*. A specialist in medieval religion and culture (and a highly popular speaker on these subjects), her *Images of Piety*, a study of the iconography of late medieval religion in Wales, was published in 2000. She has since written a study of the Reformation (*The Protestant Reformation: Beliefs and Practices*, Sussex Academic Press, 2003) and several articles for *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* and other journals.

Simon Haslett, born in Caerleon and brought up in Usk, was educated at the Universities of Keele and Southampton, obtaining his doctorate from the University of Glamorgan. He is Leader of the Department of Geography, Bath Spa University College, and specializes in Quaternary environmental reconstruction. He has published many articles and two textbooks – *Coastal Systems* (2000) and *Quaternary Environmental Micropalaeontology* (2002). He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Geological Society.

Raymond Howell is Reader in history and medieval archaeology at the University of Wales Newport. For seventeen years, he has conducted annual research excavations in Trelech, a decayed medieval urban site. His publications include *A History of Gwent* (1988) and with Professor Miranda Aldhouse-Green as co-author, *Celtic Wales* (2000). They were also the editors of *The Gwent County History. Volume 1. Gwent in Prehistory and Early History*, published in 2004. Now, with Tony Hopkins of the Gwent Record Office, Dr Howell is co-editing Volume 2 of *The Gwent County History.*

Jeremy Knight, who was born in Caerleon, read archaeology at University College, Cardiff. For over thirty years, he was an Inspector of ancient monuments, whose wide area of responsibility included Monmouthshire. He has undertaken a major excavation at Montgomery Castle; written many guidebooks to monuments; and has published numerous articles. A major work, *The End of Antiquity,* was published in 2000. His book on Monmouthshire in the Civil War and the Popish Plot will be published in 2005.

Geoffrey Morris is Canon Chancellor of St Davids Cathedral and Rector of Lampeter Velfrey, Pembrokeshire. He has published *Romilly's Visits to Wales 1827–1854* and written extensively on local history. Kingshill, then called Bishopstow, was his home from 1945 to 1967.

Elizabeth (Liz) Pitman began her career as a social worker, moving into university teaching until her retirement a few years ago. Since then, she has undertaken a number of historical research projects – the history of stained glass; the Brute family of Llanbedr, stonemasons; and more recently, the travel diaries of women visiting Wales, *c.*1770–1860. As well has books on social theory, she has published her research into the Brute family in *Brycheiniog* and *Church Archaeology.*

Bob Trett has had a long career in museums. He was Curator at Chertsey Museum, then at King's Lynn Museum and finally, Museum Officer at Newport Museum and Art Gallery until he retired. His current research projects include historic Caerleon, and the history of the Newport medieval ship. He has been Chairman of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

David H. Williams was born in Newport, and educated at Bassaleg School and Trinity College, Cambridge. Throughout his adult life, he has had two main research interests: the study of seals, but especially Cistercian studies on which he has published numerous works, which have rightly led him to be acknowledged as one of the foremost scholars in this field. David Williams accomplished this whilst serving as an Anglican priest in Wales, Libya, and most recently Poland, where he worked for two years and from which he returned in 1997. He was editor of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* from 1990 to 2000.

FIELD EXCURSIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, 2004

We have once again had an enjoyable and informative season, although attendance has been sparse on the coach outings, resulting in a loss, which we cannot afford. Have we not chosen visits to our members' liking, or do our regular supporters find it more difficult to attend these days? Please consider the matter seriously, as it would be very sad to have to abandon our coach outings, a feature of our programme over so many years. These outings take us to sites not always open to the general public, afford us the expertise of local guides, and engender an important bond between members.

On a more cheerful note, we offer our grateful thanks to members who share their extensive knowledge with us on our evening visits and who have a faithful following, be it to hillfort or church, for example. We are indebted too to Geoff Evans, who unfailingly provides notes and plans to accompany each visit.

Day Outing: 8 May to Bristol

We visited first the *SS Great Britain*, the world's first great ocean liner, built by Brunel in 1843, to see the major conservation programme in progress. We saw some of the problems being addressed, such as the extensive corrosion, as well as the start of the re-construction of the ship's interior as its first passengers would have seen it.

After a lively conducted tour of the museum narrating the history of Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge, we walked over the bridge itself, a fascinating experience, which gave us views of Bristol from a new perspective. We returned to the dockland area for lunch, and spent a pleasant afternoon exploring the ship in more detail, visiting one of the many museums or viewing Bristol in a leisurely fashion from the water, to the accompaniment of an excellent commentary.

Day Outing: 4 September to Malmesbury and Cirencester

This enjoyable outing was very sparsely attended, due partly to some of our faithful supporters being engaged elsewhere on the same day. We were met in Malmesbury by members of The Friends of Malmesbury Abbey, who arranged the morning's programme for us. After a walk around the historic town, England's oldest borough and a prosperous early weaving centre, full of beautiful old buildings, we were entertained to coffee at the Abbey. The morning ended with a comprehensive talk on the Abbey's history and a walk around the beautiful church, founded in the seventh century by Aldhelm.

After lunch, we made our way to Cirencester, where David Viner, formerly Curator of the Corinium Museum, took members on a walk around the conservation area, where his expert knowledge was thoroughly enjoyed by members.

Evening Visits

A large group came along to our first visit of the season, a tour of Llanmelin Iron Age hillfort, with our own Allan Probert as guide. On a beautiful May evening, with spring flowers around us in profusion, we walked the large multivallate fort, a stronghold of the Silures, which overlooks the Roman town of Caerwent. With new information, fresh off the press and kindly provided by students of the University of Wales Newport, Allan was able to interpret for us the latest thinking on the hillfort's history.

In June, members enjoyed a very special evening at the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff – a wine reception and private viewing of *Buried Treasure: finding our past*, with Catherine Johns, formerly of the British Museum, who also lectured to us on the Hoxne hoard, on display in the exhibition.

July found us in Blaenafon, on a joint visit with the Cardiff Archaeological Society. John Evans, an authority on the history of Blaenafon, showed us upland industrial sites dating from AD 1500. Without his knowledge and careful supervision, we might easily have lost members into the large cracks and holes which apparently suddenly open up in the now wild terrain covering earlier workings! Supper afterwards at the nearby Whistle Inn was a pleasant end to an excellent evening.

Also in July, we visited the Nelson Garden in Monmouth to hear about the latest findings of the Monmouth Archaeological Society, when they excavated a small area of the garden. While it was somewhat alarming for those of us who had known the garden since its re-discovery some years ago, to find out about recent irresponsible and deliberate removal of trees by a Monmouth resident, it was also heart-warming to hear three generations of the Archaeological Society giving their views and answering questions on the history of the garden. The visit was arranged by Stuart Wilson, the youngest member of the three!

In August, we paid an exciting visit to a very small, well-preserved sixteenth-century house – Persondy, in Mamhilad. Because of the size of the house, numbers were restricted, so we apologize to any members who applied too late to join the group. The owner, Mrs Francis, and her late husband, moved in forty years ago and set about restoring the house in faithful, authentic detail. She was, therefore, able to throw valuable light on earlier alterations, building materials and much more, to the delight of Jeremy Lowe, who oversaw the visit. Supper at the local hostelry was once again a congenial way to end the evening.

Our final visit of the season was to two beautiful churches, St Bridget's, Llansantffraid and St Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey, with the ever-popular Dr Maddy Gray. The first, the tiny church in the grounds of Llansantffraed Court, boasts two very fine alabaster panels and a series of seventeenth-century gravestones set in the wall, the quaintness of whose inscriptions was a subject of much discussion. At St Teilo's Church, we were greeted outside by the melodious sounds of the bell-ringers practising and inside by the warm welcome of the vicar, who spoke about special features, such as the three chantry chapels, the genuine and *faux* Brute monuments, and the unfinished John Petts stained glass window. We are already planning visits to some more churches for next year!

Annual General Meeting: 3 April 2004

After the business meeting, an illustrated lecture on *Re-creations: Twenty Years of Reconstruction Drawings for Cadw* was delivered to a most appreciative audience by Mr Chris Jones-Jenkins, a freelance illustrator for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

Annual October Lecture: 2 October 2004

The annual public lecture was delivered by Dr David Dykes, formerly Director of the National Museums & Galleries of Wales and President of the British Numismatic Society. His subject was *British Trade Tokens: the Monmouthshire Dimension.*

Gwenllian V. Jones