



Repton Village History Group Newsletter

Autumn 2020 (22nd September 2020 – 2.30pm)



The ongoing programme:

The Covid 19 pandemic has prevented us from meeting together, but email has provided a means of sharing research and topics. We were planning a socially distanced get together on the Village Hall lawn, but the new restrictions caused by the increased infection rate may affect this. However, at present, the Village Hall has had guidance that it can remain open to serve customers in the open.

Activity has slowed a little in the summer months so this newsletter is shorter than usual.

The Buries,

In his hunting for historical gems, Russell came across an item in volume 33 (from 1911) of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal (DAJ) which left him wondering if something similar applied to The Buries.

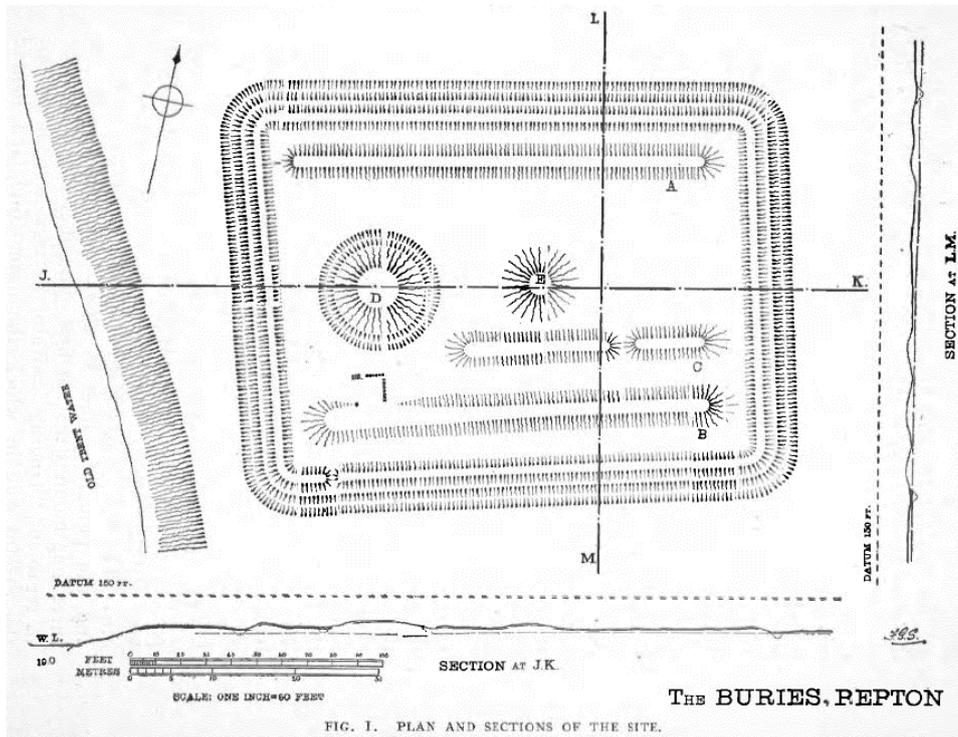
Background:

Close to the modern course of the River Trent and in the meadows on the Repton side, are some faint earthworks, known as The Buries. They have taxed historians and (amateur) archaeologists for centuries. Fortunately the landowner is aware that they are historically interesting and the sheep that graze there do little damage. Grassed over, they are pretty stable in spite of regular seasonal flooding. Indeed it may be this flooding that caused them to be created. They were not listed as an important archaeological feature or historic site, (probably because no one knows when they were constructed or by whom or why) until the recent arrival of the Derbyshire HER record.



They were excavated at least three times without adding to our understanding. They are a quadrilateral with a mounded border, ridges within and some mounds. They are close to one of the Old Trent palaeochannels known as The Hook which constituted the main navigational channel until 1705. The 1699 act of parliament to enable navigation allowed the Repton channel to be blocked. Thacker at the Hall objected on the grounds that it would render the Old Trent Water a stagnant pool, but later changed his mind and supported the closure. Early theories were that it was a Roman Camp (Stebbing Shaw's History and Antiquities of Staffordshire, 1798) a view preferred by Bigsby. But later

historians dismissed it as being too small. Bateman concluded that it was “sepulchral” and perhaps erected to protect burials. Certainly, it is possible that the name refers to local beliefs as to its purpose though Bigsby suggests it may derive from Burh – implying a camp.



From: Excavations at the Buries, Repton. F Gerald Simpson and G A Auden MA. MD. FSA. (Archaeological Journal 1913)

Excavations that we know about took place in 1855 by Thomas Bateman, in 1869 by W Molyneux and in 1910 by Dr Auden. Bateman arrived at no conclusion except that “it covered no sepulchral remains”. Molyneux found only a flint flake and Auden found inconclusive evidence. Bateman did find small pieces of coarse kiln-baked pottery which he considered to be “similar to that often met with amongst Romano-British remains”. Auden found late medieval pottery and a Charles II coin (1660-1685) which was deeper than he might have expected. All were deposited at Repton School and may still be there. He also uncovered an extensive corner of a stone wall.

Betty Kitching, in her notes for the History Group, wondered if the ridges were for growing garden produce in waterlogged conditions. This is echoed by Phillip Heath (retired Heritage Officer for SDDC) who suggests it might have been a pleasure. Hipkins (Repton and Its Neighbourhood 1894) suggests it is of Saxon or Danish construction as a refuge for beasts in the times of flood. In that case it could date from 873 or earlier. Auden favours a medieval cattle refuge.

Betty explores the possibility that it might be the remains of a house. There was the Ryvett family - fishermen (piscators) who leased meadow land and fishing rights from the priory and later from the Thackers. Specifically named was Convent Weir. They passed nets and boats and other fishing accoutrements down the generations. There was undoubtedly a house (“Channon Medowe logge”) on Cannons Meadow, but some confusion as to where this was. On the 1762 map, the Buries are in fields known as Notlow Close and one map shows Canons Meadow farther east nearer Milton. Possibly the Lodge was a forerunner of Meadows Farm and not at The Buries. Bunty Marshall researched woodworks protruding from the bank of the old Trent Water/Repton Brook in fields near Brook Farm. This turned out to be a medieval fish trap. Since these were sometimes called weirs, then Convent Weir and Canons meadow might fit together. There is a lot more discussion to be had on this topic. The Rivetts (various spellings) were a big family in Repton and we have B M D records in the 1500s and 1600s, but by 1735 the Repton line had died out.

Another possibility is that it was a dock. It is close to the route of the earlier main navigational channel (it is highly probable that there was braided flow and multiple channels) and The Buries may have been raised to allow for unloading in times of high river levels. Just possibly, the mounds were the bases of derricks for unloading goods. Roofing tiles were found in one area which might imply a building but at the time it was concluded that they had been dumped there with other material.

Which brings us to Russell’s notion.

In the DAJ Vol 33 (1911) is an article entitled *The “Harbour” and Barrows at Arbour-Lows* and has the following extract: “...From the story of the mad cow, or the dun cow as it is sometimes called, we may collect the following historical facts:-

1. Cows were milked by young women in a large fold, which was surrounded by a ring of stones.
2. The fold stood on a heath or moor at some distance from the village.
3. The fold was common to the tribe, or village community.

In Hrafnkels Saga, which describes Icelandic life in the tenth century, we are told that Einar the shepherd, who had just driven his sheep into the fold, “lay on the fold wall counting the sheep; but the women were milking.” In a note on this passage, Vigfusson [d: 1899], himself an Icelander, says:- “ This exactly describes a scene that takes place every evening of the season in Iceland.”

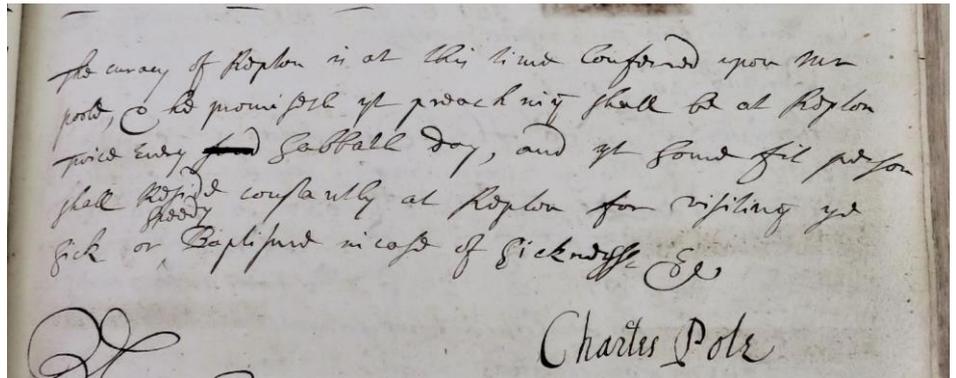
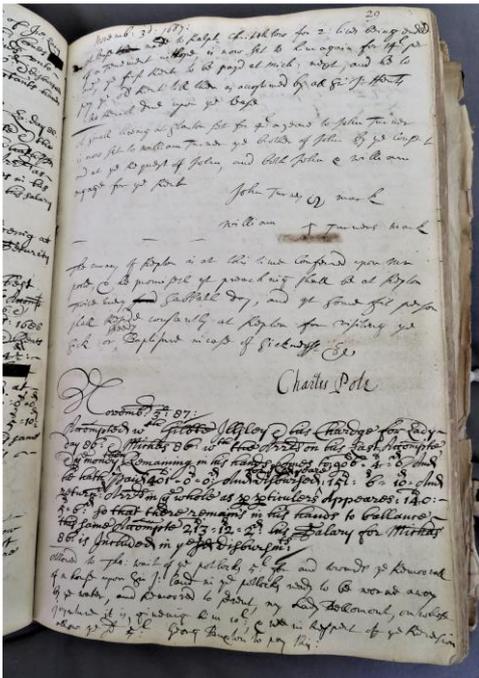
Russell asks - could this be the origin of The Buries?

Rectors, Curates, Vicars and Parsons.....

(Please do feel free to correct, or add to, the following)

The modern meanings of these titles are somewhat different from their historical meanings. It seems that the priest responsible for the souls in a parish was the Incumbent who could be any of them and was often referred to as the parson – sometimes living in the parsonage. The Rector was not necessarily ordained but got the “greater” tithes and could be a nobleman or even an institution. The Vicar got the rest. The Vicar was appointed by the Bishop but on the “advice” of whoever had the advowson – the right to nominate and present someone to be the parish priest – and who was often the lord of the manor. In the case of Repton there were several manors and the medieval priory manor held the advowson of St Wystan’s (and other churches). It seems then to have passed to the Harpurs. A Vicar in a parish with a decent income would sometimes employ someone else to do the routine work for him – a Curate. Indeed if he wished to retire, he had to find a curate to do the work for him.

Charles’s researches in the Harpur estate papers has found, in the DRO in Matlock, a lovely entry in a Harpur memorandum book from 1687:



This reads:

The curacy of Repton is at this time conferred upon Mr Poole, and he promises that preaching shall be at Repton twice every Sabbath day, and that some fit person shall reside constantly at Repton for visiting the sick or speedy Baptisms in case of sickness etc. It is signed by Charles Pole.

It is assumed that Mr Poole and Charles Pole are one and the same.

It was a member of the Pole family that married the widow of the Thacker (whose family had gained the Priory at its dissolution) and thus acquired the medieval mill we have been seeking.

There is a list of Vicars of Repton in our archive and from it we can see that in 1687, John Choice (sometimes Choyce) was Vicar and so Charles Pole must have been his curate. It’s not clear if Sir John Harpur the 4th baronet, appointed Charles Pole as the curate or if he was chosen by the Vicar. Perhaps Sir John merely got him to commit to what was expected of him.

However, there are queries about this list, and incumbents understood to be Vicars, may have actually have been curates. We probably need specialist guidance here and access to early Crockfords Clerical Directories or making sense of theclergydatabase.org.uk.

We know he was a son of Richard Choice and educated at Derby School and Christs College, Cambridge, entering aged 17 in June 1675. He gained his BA in 1679 and was an Usher at Repton School from 1680 – 1708 as well as being Vicar of Repton. That is presumably why he needed a curate. He was buried here on 2nd January 1720 aged 63.

PRIORS AND VICARS of REPTON

BISHOPS of MERCIA

c656 Diama
c658 Ceollach
c659 Trunhere
c662 Taruman
c669 St. Chad.

ABBESSES of REPTON

? St. Werburga.
c690 Aelfrihta.
c700 Eadburga.
c835 Kenewara

PRIORS of REPTON

c1172 Nicholas
c1200 Alured
c1208 Richard.
c1215 Nicholas
c1220 John
c1230 Reginald.
c1252 Peter
? Richard de Smythesby
c1289 Robert de Staunton
1316 John de Segrave
1316 Ralph de Tykenhall
1336 John de Lychfield.
1346 Simon de Sutton.
1356 Ralph de Derby
1398 William de
Tuttebuty
1411 William de Manesyn
? Simon de
Repyndon

PRIORS (contd)

1420 Wylan Potter
1437 John Overton
c1448 John Wylne
1471 Thomas de Sutton
1486 Henry Preste
1503 William de Derby
c1513 John Yonge

VICARS of REPTON

1547 Ja. Walter
1553 John Walton
c1584 Richard Newton
c1598 Thomas Blandy B.A.
1602 John Horobine
c1610 George Ward.
c1631 Thomas Allen
1639 Philip Ward. M.A.
1642 Matthew Roger.
1648 Bernard Fleshuier
1649 George Rhoades
1661 John Robinson
1663 John Thacker. M.A.
1663 William Weely. M.A.
1680 John Choice. M.A.
1726 Thomas Tooby. B.A.
c1734 John Clayton. M.A.
1739 Lowe Hurst. M.A.
1741 William Asteley. M.A.
1742 John Edwards. M.A.
1804 John Pattinson.
1843 Joseph Jones. M.A.
1857 William Williams B.A.

VICARS (contd)

1883 George Woodyatt
B.A.
1898 Acheson McMaster
M.A.
1911 Stephen Selwyn MA
1924 Percival Battersby
1932 Alfred Fletcher
M.A.
1944 Ronald O'Ferrall
M.A., D.D. Bishop
1947 Robert Harcombe
M.A.
1960 Peter Tomlinson.
1970 Frederick Lisemore M.A.
1978 Michael David AKC
1982 Julian Barker MA.

An email from an ex-pat Reptonian:

"Hi,
My name is Ron Garford and I live in Owensboro, Kentucky, USA. I am an old Reptonian.....not because I attended Repton School, but because I was born in the front bedroom of a terraced house in Repton in 1950. The house was on Burton Road alongside the Red Lion Inn. It had to be demolished in 1955 as it was a slum....outside toilet, well water, etc. George & Dolly Perry built their new shop on the site of the house and my family and my Grandparents were rehoused on Springfield Road in 2 separate houses virtually as Springfield Road was being constructed. I did attend Repton Infants and Junior School, where Mr Newbury was headmaster and teachers were Miss Marler and Miss Elliot. At age 11 I was bused to Etwall School on Blue Buses who provided a 1950's Daimler double decker with no rear door and a 1930's coach. I travelled to and from Etwall School on both buses for 4 years. The 1930 coaches feature on a painting of Repton Cross that you have on the A5 booklet about the Tailby & George Blue Bus Company (of which I have a copy).

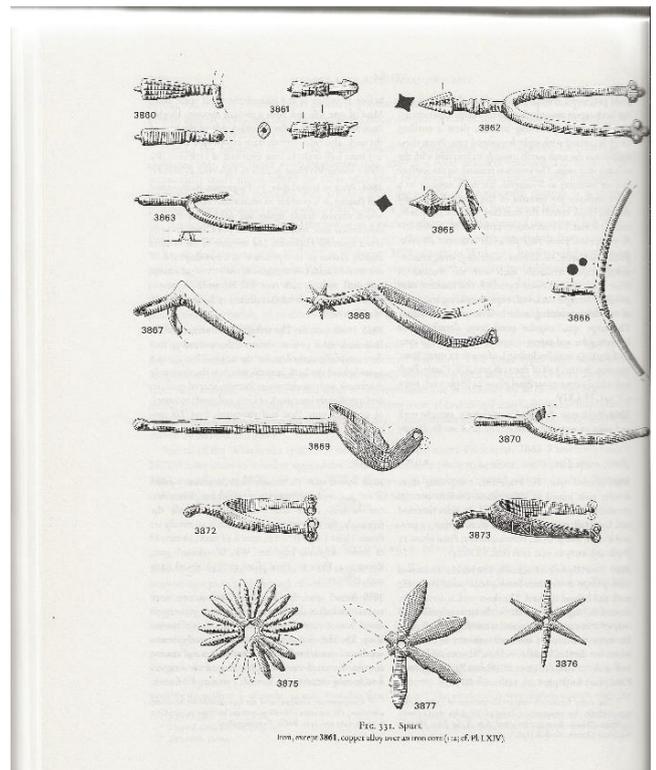
The painting reminds me of those times and I would love to obtain a print of this painting so I could frame it and enjoy it in my retirement. My request is do you have full sized prints of this picture for sale? Or if not do you know where I may be able to obtain one?"

Happily, with Ivor's help we managed to track down the artist. If anyone else is interested, he is David Wright on 01283 733547. He lives in Hilton and his email is David@dovedalemodels.co.uk.

Tim's well and spur.

Tim has kept us going with a series of interesting objects and topics, and recently unearthed a well in his garden. A map in his deeds does show it as a pump but uncovering it revealed some very nice brickwork (no mortar) and a fill of material which even 6 feet down was relatively modern. Discretion was the better part of valour and excavation ceased and the well back filled and made good with a plum tree marking the spot. Interestingly, the map refers to School Lane although it is definitely Trent Lane. We did find other such references and no doubt it is because the village school is on the corner. A simple hand pump can theoretically lift water 33 feet, but in practice, the limit is probably half that.

Some years ago, near where Toyota is today, he metal detected an object that might be part of an agricultural implement or perhaps a horseman's spur. Martin B confirms it as a spur and sent through a drawing from his book *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester* (Clarendon Press 1990). At £200 a copy, we will probably rely on library sources!



© M Biddle

Helping with enquiries

Emma Blunt: A headstone for Emma Blunt (1904-1979) in St Wystan's churchyard is in danger of falling and has been temporarily supported. So we were asked to try to trace the family so that they could be informed of the problem and get it repaired. She was born Emma Poyser and her early days are confusing. The census says she was born in Appleby Magna and her birth was certainly registered in Ashby, but there is also a suggestion she was born in Wareham near Bristol and ended up in a children's home/training school for domestic servants. She married Charles Blunt (a Repton lad) in 1925. They had two children – Nora and David - and Nora married Norman Gaskin and they had twin daughters. These girls (Catherine and Elizabeth) are Emma's grandchildren. Nora died in 1992 and Norman in 2019. By then they were all living in Kinver, Stourbridge. Tracking down Norman's funeral gave us a phone number for the vicarage and Martin F was able to get contact details for the two grand-daughters.

We did go back a generation or two and explored parallel lines, but found nothing on the Poyser. Charles Blunt's siblings did not leave traceable children - Irene did not marry and shares a grave plot with her sister-in-law Emma. Winnie married a Sergeant in India, John died aged 19 and Aubrey died at sea aged 21 and is buried in the Bay of Biscay.

Meakins: A slightly vague request for help with the Coxon, Meakin, Somers families came in and caused us to try to relate two William Meakins born in Repton in 1768 and 1794 respectively to the Coxon family in Burton on Trent. We knew the Coxon Meakin link was via a Jemima Raby née Jemima Meakin of Repton. This caused further confusion because not only were there several William Meakins, but also another Jemima Meakin. We did find a plausible tree

running through 6 generations from a Richard and Sarah Meakin who married in the early 1700s through to the enquirer's Coxon Grandmother (née Raby)

Maddocks: Another quite vague enquiry came from someone who had just moved to Midway and was digging into his mother's side of the family. He discovered that they had originated in Repton and at some point moved to Birmingham. We did a lot of research but there were many Maddocks in Repton and trying to put the families together and work out who went to Birmingham was too big a task. We did find his great great great grandfather Joseph in Birmingham and were able to suggest that the most likely candidate in Repton was Samuel Maddock born in Repton in 1784 and in Birmingham by the time of the 1851 census.

Catherine Fox: We had an email from a lady who offered us old tape recording tapes of Repton and Milton Residents recorded by her mother in the 70s for Radio Derby. One of them was of her grandfather James Fox – son of Catherine Fox who was the village infant's school headmistress from 1902 to 1928.

Catherine Fox is a bit of a favourite with History Group members. Not only was she head of the Infant's school but she took part in village life – including the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment in WWI) and the WI. She was strict but very kind – it was she who provided cocoa in the winter and a baked potato for lunch for the children who had nothing. Her family life was not simple and we are not entirely sure we have it right, but we were able to test our knowledge with the family and sent some school photos with her on. In return we were given some new photos of Catherine and her children and more information about her.



On the left is Catherine with her youngest three children. Living in School Lane, Farndon, Nottingham, she moved to Repton to take up the headship leaving her husband and eldest son William behind. It seems her husband's elderly, widowed mother lived with them and if changing jobs was not easy he stayed to look after her. They were all together later and after retirement they moved to Newark.

Conflicting evidence – a curious picture date:

Another of Charles's recent finds in the DRO is a good sketch of Repton Church dated provisionally by them to the 1790s. However the building which is the Bursar's Office has windows in it and we have postcards and photographs showing it without them. Clearly these are significantly later than 1790. Bigsby noted that the Cross shaft was changed from rectangular section in 1806 so the sketch must be later than that. With help from Richard (Finch) we managed to work out that it also ought to be before 1886 when the castellated parapet was added to the nave. However, the



Ancient shaft of the Market Cross removed in 1806 – Bigsby pg 261

post card shows there are still no windows - as does the photograph. Richard pointed out that the post card probably dates from 1905 as there is a workman on a ladder apparently working on the (new) Lychgate. So the sketch ought to be later than 1905 to have windows in.



No windows.

There are a couple of other curiosities. In the sketch, the cross is in the wrong place and there are steps outside Christleton (number 3) that was a confectioners and then the bank. No sign of them now or of an entrance they could have led to. If the windows were added because the artist didn't like the blank wall, then coming up with the arched window at ground level is an amazing coincidence of imagination and reality.

Artistic licence? Drawn from memory (perhaps with an old picture as a guide)? Or just to fool us all?

Your suggestions will be very gratefully received. Then Charles will talk to the DRO about changing the date - but to what?

Stop Press:

Richard (Fletcher) reports that preparatory work has started for gravel extraction opposite Anchor Church at Foremark.



We objected several times to the planning application for this as it is an old landscape and the river route up which the Viking longships came when attacking Repton in 873AD and taking the kingdom of Mercia. It is immediately below Foremark where there is some evidence that part of the Viking winter camp was based there and not far from the Viking cremation cemetery at Heath Wood.

Comments and more information about Repton and its occupants are welcome.
 For more information on the newsletter content or the History Group please contact us on 01283 702448 or rvhg@reptonvillage.org.uk or visit our website.