



Repton Village History Group Newsletter

Winter 2021 (21st December 2021 – 3.58pm GMT)



reptonvillage.org.uk

Membership matters:

Given that our age profile is somewhat skewed to the more mature end of the scale, we decided that another face to face meeting would not be too prudent and so cancelled our November meeting and are waiting to see how the Omicron variant works out before planning another. That hasn't stopped work carrying on and we have decided to take out an archaeological insurance policy again which will enable us to undertake small scale field work as well as the geophysics. We think that there are sufficient ways to reduce the Covid transmission risk.

It is also time to renew memberships by paying the fee of £8 (please) to John (membership sec) or Andy (Chairman) by cash or cheque or by BACS. See end of Newsletter for details.

The Vicar's Ammo Store?

Martin F (our Vicar) reports that he had a close shave when he discovered a large brick lined hole behind his garden shed. He measured it as 5 feet to the soil and nearly 3 feet square and he had a narrow escape! It's not clear if that is the bottom or simply soil that has fallen in.



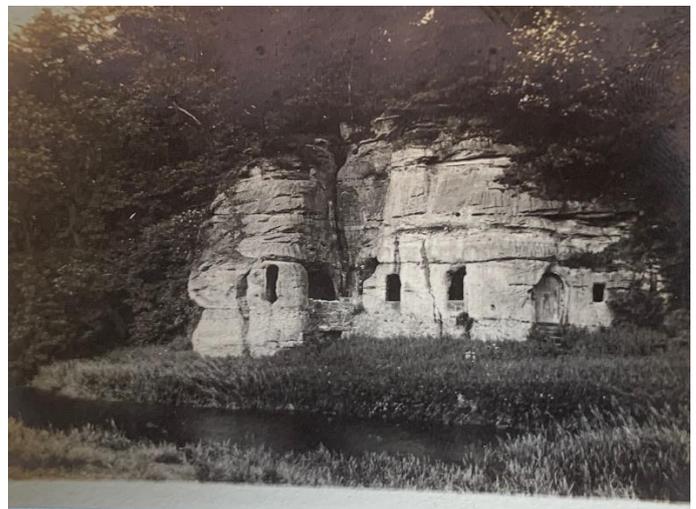
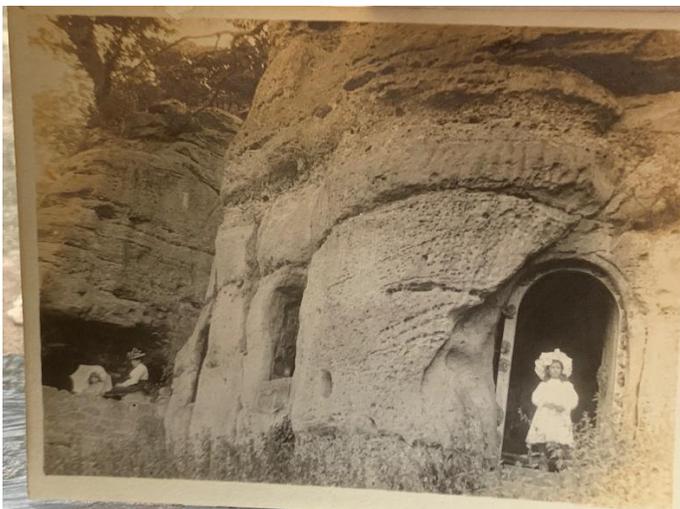
Martin wondered if it could have been an ammunition store for a nearby anti-aircraft gun. We have not found anyone with memories of such armaments but we believe there was a searchlight battery beyond Springfield Road, which was a wartime access from Milton Road. There is a spigot mount nearby on Jeremiah's Walk which we are pretty sure was for a Blacker Bombard anti-tank mortar

to defend the causeway. These had proved ineffective on the front line so were given to the Home Guard. However, in the January 2022 issue of Village News, Keith Thompson notes it as a machine gun point. Either way, the vicarage hole could have served as a safe and secure store for ammunition - perhaps more appropriate for mortars than bullets.

Another possibility is that it was a simple bomb shelter accessed by a ladder - similar to the spun concrete drain pipe shelter at the gas works on Main Street. However, it would only accommodate one person.

Anchor Church

Remember the recent interest in this subject? Sue Goodwin has passed on a couple of photos:



Anyone care to date this one from the costumes?

Dating of St Wystans Church.

It is probable that the crypt started life as a baptistery for the Benedictine Monastery royally founded in Repton around 660AD and that it was converted to a mausoleum to receive the remains of King Æthelbald who died in 757. Until now, it was thought that before his death in 839, King Wiglaf had the 4 pillars installed supporting the stone ceiling and what is now the chancel above it. This would not have been the first church, but probably the start of the church we know today. However, detailed research by Martin B has changed this dating. His full and beautifully illustrated work on this is included in volume 13 of the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture and Shelagh Wain has summarised it:

This article is entirely based on the published work of Professor Martin Biddle, and any quotations are from the same source. Any mistakes are my own - SW.

Residents of Repton are used to seeing the twisted columns in the crypt of Repton Church. They may not realise how special they are – *‘unique in vernacular architecture.’*

The shafts themselves have been chiselled to form a gentle spiral (like a screw), with a thin curved rib in the hollows of the ‘screw thread’, as if there were a cord wound round each pillar. The capitals are square at the top with two grooves, like a triple-decker sandwich, on a concave pedestal. They resemble the two pillars in the porch, which were once part of the Anglo-Saxon nave arcade.

Columns with spiral decoration carved on the surface (spiral fluting) are common. In Britain there are several examples, such as those in Durham and Norwich cathedrals. They all date to the eleventh century, but comparison of these eleventh century columns with those in the Repton crypt is not helpful. In the Repton columns the actual body is carved into spirals, (as if the pillar were made from thick twisted dough). This type is so rare that *‘their ultimate source must be in the original set of six twisted columns given by (the Emperor) Constantine to St. Peter’s in Rome’*.

These pillars adorned the actual tomb of St. Peter. Further similar pillars were added by two eighth-century popes.

The St. Peter’s columns, (eight of which still exist adorning the niches of saints’ statues), have far more surface decoration, including luxuriant curving scrolls of vine, alternating with multiple finely-carved spiral grooves. The ‘cording’ of the Repton pillars can be seen as an attempt to copy this in simpler form.

The positioning of the pillars offers another parallel. Two pillars have an ‘S’ twist and two a ‘Z’ twist, i.e. the spirals go in the opposite direction. They are carefully arranged so that each side of the square has one of each pattern. This matches the arrangement at St. Peter’s tomb. Although the St. Peter’s pillars have been moved more than once over time, the original tomb is known in illustration. In the National Archaeological Museum of Venice is an ivory casket carved on one side with a detailed representation of the tomb. The casket is dated to the fifth century and is thought to have been made for the Emperor Valentinian, (425-55).

This casket was found in Samagher, Croatia. Since we have historical evidence that many people travelled to Rome from Britain in the Anglo-Saxon period and brought back various artefacts, it is quite feasible that an object illustrating the tomb could have been among them.

No other examples of twisted columns of an early date exist. The pattern was associated with the founding saint of the Holy See. Professor Biddle therefore suggests that the Mercian Royal family were inspired to use the same pattern to adorn the tomb of a Mercian Saint, Wigstan (or Wystan). Wigstan was a prince of Mercia who died around the year 849, and was seen as a martyr. Earlier kings of Mercia had been buried at Repton. Biddle imagines a large-scale re-modelling of Repton Church to accommodate the saint. This would account for the similarities between the nave pillars (now in the porch) and those in the crypt.

This would have been an ambitious scheme, perhaps designed to take care of pilgrims as well as the Royal House. It must have taken place between the death of Wigstan and the arrival of the Viking Great

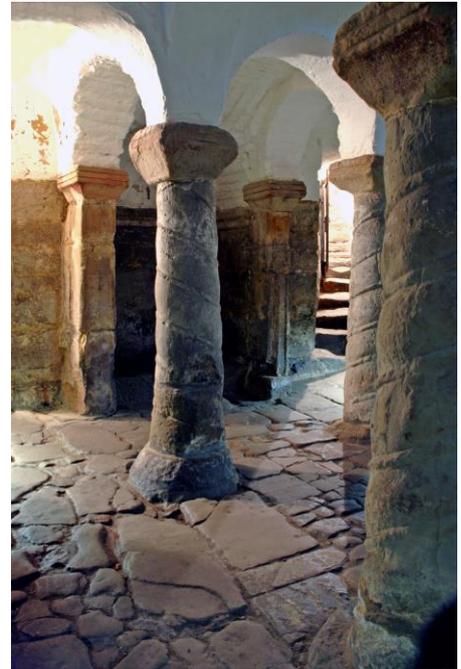


Photo: John Crook

Army in 873. Furthermore, it marks out Repton as a major centre of the Christian faith, potentially a rich one, and so an obvious target for the invading Vikings, intent on plunder but also on destroying all forms of Mercian power, temporal and spiritual.

[As always, there is more than one theory, and art historian Professor Eric Fernie speculates that the pillars could be even later – even during the post Viking rebuilding.]

Beehive querns at Ingleby:

During August, some building work in Ingleby unearthed two magnificent querns. These are stones used for grinding wheat or other grains by hand to make flour. They are rotary querns and their shape gives them the name of Beehive Querns. Crushing the seeds by pounding between two rocks was replaced by using a rubbing action to break them down. These were saddle querns where one stone was slid to and fro across another and they wore to make a concave saddle shape in the lower stone. Eventually, rotary action querns were introduced, often as two flat discs or, as in this case, with the top stone shaped like a beehive to give it weight. These two are great examples although the lower stones were not found. The hole in the side allowed a handle to be fitted to help rotate them. They sat on a flat stone and grain could be poured into the conical hole in the middle to reach the grinding surfaces. When ground, it spilled out around the edges.



Un-washed. Photo M Wicks



The nearer stone is the smaller one.

Rotary querns first appear about 500 BC - the earliest examples having been found in southern Europe, but appearing in Britain in the iron age, 400-300 BC.

With the help of John Cruse of the Yorkshire Quern Study, the taller stone was dated to as early as 300-200BC though more likely to be 1st century BC/AD and the smaller one probably after 70AD. Romans tended to import lava quern stones so although these may date to the Roman period, they are unlikely to imply a Roman or Romano-British presence.

The “by” part of Ingleby could be of Norse origin with Ingle representing the landowner of the settlement or farm, so these querns have pushed back the date for Ingleby to the start of the 1st millennium or earlier.

According to John, the “two querns are both upper stones of a beehive quern. They look relatively intact, but show some indications that the edge of their grinding surface has been chipped away (often found, presumed to be deliberate decommissioning before disposal). Both are nicely finished, presumably pecked, with at least one handle hole visible on each (often they have two opposed)”

Nik and Chloe pictured here with the stones, were excavating into a bank to build a garage and found one area was of pure sand. In this sand and some 3m down, just below the level for the floor slab, these stones appeared. Both the depth and the presence of sand was a puzzle till John pointed out that “one possibility is being left in an abandonment deposit in a settlement feature – another favourite, at places such as Borough Hill fort in Leics was to leave intact querns in the base of a grain pit, when it was finally filled in.”

For safety, a disused grain storage pit would need to be filled in and at Ingleby there is plenty of sand by the river which will have had little other value.



Milton Farms:

Charles Proud has done some amazing research into the Milton farms from 1543 through to the early 1800s. Not only has this involved considerable documentary research, but he has constructed an excellent map of the open fields:

There is fragmentary documentary evidence of the early history of Milton's farms and farmers including manor court records, leases, probate records & rentals but it is not until 1632 that a clear picture emerges. A detailed survey made that year⁽¹⁾ records the demesne lands held by the Harpur lords of the manor, the lands of eleven individual tenant farmers and the total held by the freeholders.

Demesnes:	a	r	p (acres, roods perches)
enclosure:	6	1	0
meadow:	17	3	31
arable:	70	0	25
pasture:	23	3	0
	117	1	16

Tenants			
enclosure:	22	2	19
meadow:	43	0	18
arable:	210	2	16
pasture:	85	1	20
	362	2	33

Freeholders:			
enclosure:	22	3	8
meadow:	34	1	0
arable:	155	1	30
pasture:	50	1	0
	262	2	38

Common grass in the arable fields: 87 3 20

Common at Towns End: 27 2 30

Total of Milton: 825 1 17

The tenant farmers listed with acreages were:

Henry Waite 71a, William Fisher 47a, Mr Gilbert Ward 40a, Robert Orchard 30a,
John Stones the elder 27a, John Stones the younger 30a, William Wayte 27a,
Robert Hunt 27a, John Wain 14a & Henry Dakins 6a.

Identifying the freeholders is more difficult although the number was probably small, there were only six at enclosure in 1756. Sir Thomas Burdett held land in Milton with the Shepherd family his main tenant, Thomas Hill & Gilbert Browne of Milton are included in a 1633 list of Derbyshire freeholders⁽²⁾. The 6 freeholders including the Waine family held 7 of the 24 Milton yardlands in 1721⁽³⁾.

The 1632 Survey shows a village typical of the nucleated open field settlements so common in the Midlands, with homesteads on the village street with home crofts behind, each farm having arable strips in the open fields & meadow and limited rights to graze stock on the common pasture. The tenant holdings appear to be based on the ancient yardland with 5 of the 11 holding 27 to 30 acres. John Wain paid rent on 'half a yardland' in 1638⁽⁴⁾.

Milton was enclosed in 1756 and, although the enclosure map has not survived, a 1756 Survey⁽⁵⁾ & the enclosure agreement⁽⁶⁾ provide enough information to draw an accurate map of the Milton open fields on the eve of enclosure (see Fig.1); whilst various 19th century maps link the documentary references to actual locations.

what is now known as Old Post Office Farm at the North end of Main Street, tenanted by the Waytes until 1830. It is the history of the latter, to the end of the Wayte tenancy, that is outlined below.

Henry Waite	
The house and yard	2-2-6
The 2 barns	1-3-37
The meadow	6-3-11
The arable in Carr h. fields	9-2-10
The arable in Long fields	17-3-32
The arable in Heath fields	4-3-31
The arable in the Carr fields	13-0-0
The 12 1/2 gates	14-3-15
Enclosure	4-2-3
Meadow	6-3-11
Arable	45-1-33
Enclosure gates	14-3-15
The totall	71-2-22

Fig.3 1632 Survey – Henry Waite farm ⁽¹⁾

Chosen and perfect Inventory of all the goods of Henry Waite of Weyington late deceased ascertained and provided the xxth day of November Anno Domini 1598. by Willm. Giddard Clerk and Wm. Wainwright writing master within west of Milton as followeth

Item his apparell provided to a _____ mth of his wife
 Item his kilted provided to a _____
 Item his linc provided to a _____
 Item his horse & mares provided to a _____
 Item his heifers & his weanling calves to a _____
 Item his sheep provided to a _____
 Item his swine & w. fowls provided to a _____
 Item his six in the field & in the barn provided to a _____
 Item his sea in the barn and about the house provided to a _____

Fig.4 Henry Waite inventory 1598 ⁽⁸⁾

Henry Waite held the largest of the Milton tenant farms with a total area of 71a 2r 22p. His enclosures were simply his homestead & a croft immediately to the East. He held 45 acres of arable in the four open fields in about 80 individual strips. The Heath Field noted was probably part of Carr Field & land to the South; there is more work to be done on the changing names & boundaries of the Milton Fields. His 6 acres of meadow would again be composed of a number of strips, providing hay for winter feed & grazing after the haymaking. His 12 1/2 beast gates gave him the right to graze a certain number of animals on the village pasture.

Henry Waite’s farm can be traced back from 1632. Henry paid £6 5s 6d in 1625 for ‘a messuage & two yardlands’⁽⁸⁾. Another Henry Waite, probably his grandfather, held a messuage in Milton with one yardland in a 1570s rental (see Fig.5)⁽⁹⁾. His 1598 probate inventory (see Fig.4)⁽¹⁰⁾ gives an idea of the type & size of farm. He had 90 sheep, 17 cattle, 4 horses & 9 pigs. His corn in the ground would be winter sown whilst the £5 of hay in the barn represents about 5 tons at 1598 prices.

Milton Harpur
 Henry Waite the elder
 I have granted unto the said Henry Waite the elder
 my messuage tenement and two yardlands
 situate in the parish of St. Andrew the Apostle
 in the town of Milton Harpur
 together with the messuage tenement
 and two yardlands situate in the parish
 of St. Andrew the Apostle in the town
 of Milton Harpur
 for the term of years therein expressed
 and the rent thereon to be paid
 as is therein expressed
 in witness whereof I have hereunto
 set my hand and seal the xxth day
 of November Anno Domini 1570

Fig.5 1570s Rental⁽⁹⁾

Henry Waite the elder his tenement
 71^a 2^r 22^p p annuo £ 15. 00. 00
 William Waite for Nicholas Harpur
 2nd year beside the in Weyington £ 06. 00. 00
 for Mr Ward St. Charles
 1st 6th 2nd 01. 01. 02

Fig.6 1655 Rental⁽¹¹⁾

Henry Waite’s 1632 rent is not recorded but a 1655 Harpur rental (Fig.6)⁽¹¹⁾ notes Henry Waite the elder paying £15 for exactly the same acreage as in the 1632 Survey. Rents for properties were very stable in this period so the various tenants paying £15 for this farm can be followed right up to enclosure in 1756. John Waite is recorded as paying £15 for a ‘messuage & tenement’ from 1686 to his death in 1702. His widow Mary married Bainbridge Reader in 1703 and he took over the tenancy until his death in 1712, with his widow Mary tenant until 1720. Thomas Wayte, Mary Reader’s son, took over the tenancy, paying £15 from 1720 until enclosure in 1756 and then paid £28 until 1761. All the tenant farmers paid considerably higher rents post enclosure. Thomas’ son William took over the tenancy until his death in 1792 when it passed to his son Thomas Wayte, his rent rising from £28 to £42 & then £48 as part of a general increase in estate rents. Thomas’ rent was raised again in 1810 from £48 to £70 which he was still paying when the Burdetts took over the Harpur properties in Milton in exchange for Burdett properties in Southwood in 1821. The Burdett rentals⁽¹²⁾ record Mr Thomas Wayte paying £75 from 1822 to 1830. There are no Burdett rentals extant post 1830.

The Harpur to Burdett exchange⁽¹³⁾ provides the opportunity to link the rental history above to specific properties. The farm had shrunk to 59 acres but the homestead (ref. C32 – Fig 7) is recorded as 2a 3r 30p.

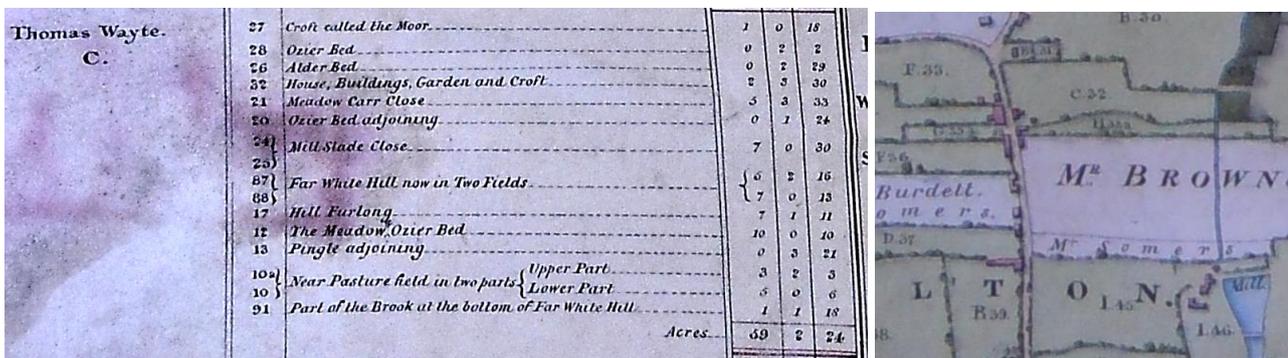


Fig. 7 1821 Harpur/Burdett Exchange - Schedule & Map ⁽¹³⁾

The 1756 Milton Survey⁽⁵⁾ notes 'house & croft', 2a 3r 30p, tenant Thomas Wayte whilst the 1800 Survey⁽¹⁴⁾ has the same 'house & croft' 2a 3r 30p, tenant William Wayte. The area matches that of C32 in the Harpur – Burdett exchange and is not dissimilar to the 2a 2r 6p of the 'house & yard' of 1632.

Thomas Wayte of Milton died Jun 3rd 1832 aged 71 & his wife Ann died Jun 12th 1838 aged 81⁽¹⁵⁾. By the 1829 Survey⁽¹⁷⁾ the Waytes had departed and Joseph Webster had arrived, albeit with only 34 acres.



fig. 8 1829 Parish Map ⁽¹⁶⁾

Sir James Burdett Part Webster Joseph	9	Marsh Less	3	1	16
	162	Moor Lands	2	0	17
	163	Garden	-	2	2
	166	Homestead	-	-	30
	328	Gardens Croft &c	2	-	-
	328	Near Broad Carr	4	2	9
	329	Buch Hill	5	3	3
	330	Middle Hill	3	3	27
	331	Far Hill	5	1	18
	332	Far Broad Carr	3	0	16
	333	Middle Broad Carr	3	1	-
			34	0	18

fig 9 1829 Poor Law Survey ⁽¹⁷⁾

Notes:

- (1) Harpur Estates Survey, 1632-33, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/S/1/1
- (2) Derbyshire Archaeological Journal, Vol 6, 1884
- (3) Harpur Crewe Rental, 1721-22, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/R/1/1
- (4) Harpur Crewe Rental, 1638-42, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/R/1/4
- (5) Milton Survey, 1756, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/S/2/12/2
- (6) Milton Enclosure Agreement, 1756, Derbs CRO D5054/17/5/1-2
- (7) Tax Return, 1543, National Archives, E179 91/148
- (8) Harpur Crewe Rental, 1625, Derbs CRO, D2375/C/1/2/2
- (9) Harpur Crewe Rental, c1573, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/R/4/9
- (10) Henry Waite invent'ory, 1598, Lichfield Wills & Inventories, Staffs CRO
- (11) Harpur Crewe Rental, 1655-59, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/R/2/4
- (12) Burdett Rental, 1817-29, Derbs CRO, D156/M/A/7/1-1
- (13) Exchange between Sir Francis Burdett and Sir George Crewe, 1821, Derbs CRO, D7309
- (14) Harpur Crewe Survey of Milton, c. 1800, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/S/2/12/3
- (15) Repton Monumental Inscriptions, 1993, Derbyshire FHS
- (16) Parish Map, 1829, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/M/2/28
- (17) Survey reference book for Repton and Milton, 1829, Derbs CRO, D2375/E/S/2/13/2

Gravel Extraction near Anchor Church:



This work is now actively underway and someone sent this photograph taken when walking their dog.

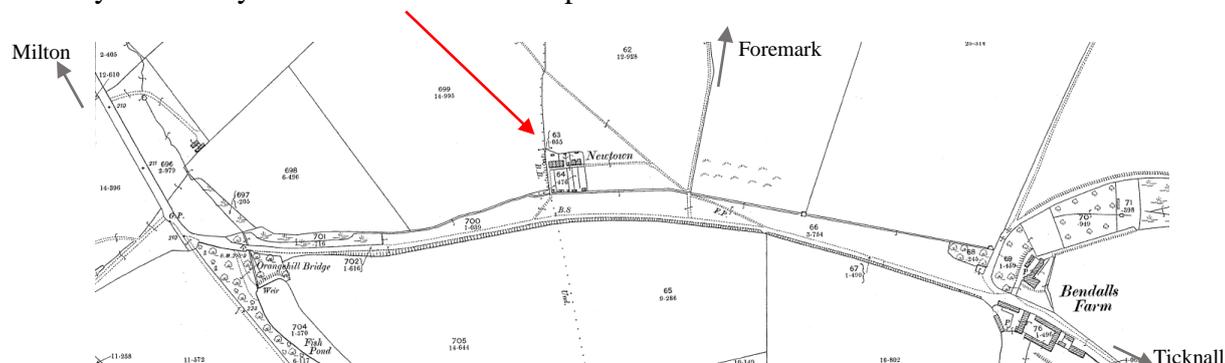
They have obviously come down through a sandy level to what looks like silt or clay overlying gravel. The row of posts seem to have been driven into the clay layer which has preserved the bottoms. It would be nice to think they are old, but hopefully the archaeologists supporting the extraction will have some idea about their role and age and we may get to hear one day.

Helping with enquiries:

1) Newtown Cottages

In October, a request for information was relayed to us from one of the Church Wardens. Kathryn Wyatt was trying to trace a location in Foremark where her father-in-law Henry was born in 1921. In the event it turned out to be Newtown Cottages which we associate more with Milton than Foremark although the footpath from Foremark through Home Farm comes out nearby.

Newtown Cottages were built on the Milton to Ticknall Road and just down the hill from Bendall's Farm. In fact they are clearly marked on the 1901 map:



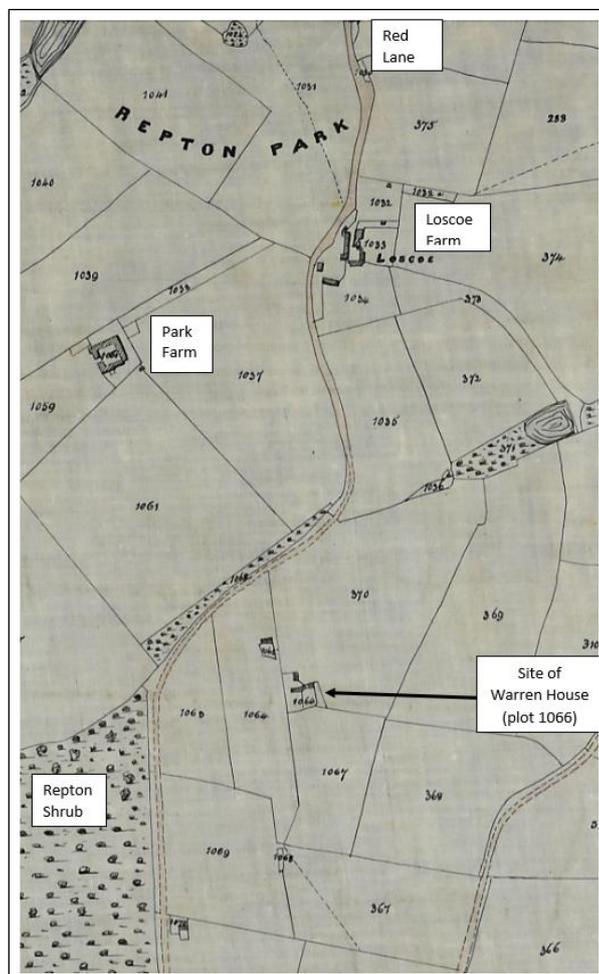
Just when they were built is unknown but they are on a map surveyed in 1879 and were presumably farm cottages for Bendalls Farm. The accommodation in the 6 cottages was basic. Bunty Marshall remembered them and said that the toilets were at the end of the garden and drained into the brook that ran on through Milton. In fact, these were probably earth closets and only the fluids would have filtered into the brook. This ran on through reed beds and then, diluted by the flow from the fishponds, to the village a mile and a half away. The cottages were later demolished and Julian and Joan MacKerracher replaced them with a bungalow which is still there. In addition to the Wyatts in 1921, we have a few names of other people living there - the Adams family in 1880s, the Dyer family in the 1890s, the Malpass family in 1911, the Kendricks who bred Airedale puppies in 1927, the Brittle family in 1931, the Brookes family about the same time, the Bakers around 1934 and Walter Batty in 1944.

2) Warren House:

In October, Judith from Cardiff contacted the Church Wardens about locating a grave and they passed her onto us. She was planning to visit and wanted to find the grave of James and Ann Parker, her great great grandparent's. They died in 1865 and 1867 respectively. We were able to send her a map and clear guidance to the grave. Their son Henry (Judith's great grandfather) married Harriet Bradley in St Wystans in 1864 and lived in Repton all his life. He too was buried in Repton but has no monument.

Interestingly, she mentioned that James and Ann lived most of their married life in Warren House. Charles had spotted Warren House from the 1829 map (plot 1066) and the 1830 and 1842 land tax registers. It was leased by William Matthews at that time and owned by the Burdetts who had gained it in a land exchange from the Harpurs in the 1820s. Charles had found records of rabbit warrens on Repton Waste – including a violent clash in the 17thC over ownership. The Warrener would presumably have used Warren House. In 1638 Richard Swayne was “Warrener of Conneys on ye waste”. By 1646 Thomas Salt was leasing the warren at £7 10s per annum.

There are still outbuildings on the site – but no house now.



Ring ditch?:

In conversation about Romano-British activity in Repton, Martin B suggested that a possible area worth considering was south of the Vicarage and before the road turns north to Willington. That corresponds with the area in front of the 400 Hall and the school kindly gave us permission to carry out resistivity surveying during half term. It was a very long shot. Although there has been very little building on these grassed areas there has been centuries of activity and we know some modern services will run underneath so it was unlikely that we would spot anything

We carried out 6 grid surveys but only one area revealed anything – nothing classically Roman (like nice straight ditches) but a curved low-resistance feature did appear.

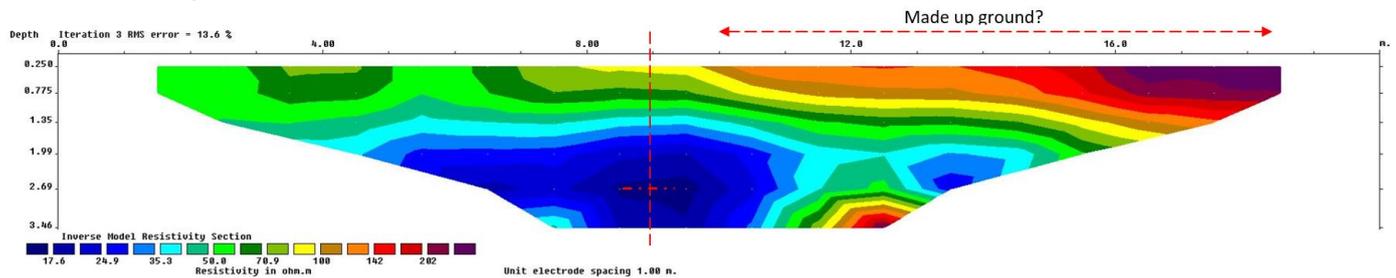
The curved line is most likely to be an infilled ditch. It may carry services or be a drainage ditch capturing run-off from the hill. Or it might be much older - perhaps a field boundary. In which case it is unlikely to be Roman as they tended to have straight ditches.

Could it be part of an eaves drainage ditch from a Anglo Saxon round house? Fitting a circle indicates a minimum diameter of 36m (118 ft) which is far too large. It could be a field boundary or, more exciting, is the possibility that it is a ring ditch and could be contemporary with the Anglo-Saxon monastery site only 70m away and the Science Priory Anglo-Saxon “settlement” area only 100m away (or even earlier).



The green circle is 36m dia, about the smallest to fit and the blue one is 53m -about the largest to fit.

Two pseudo-sections were also created, both parallel to the roadside wall. One was 7m from the wall and the other 12m away.



This is the section 7m from the roadside wall. The low resistance feature at about 9m along and 2m depth coincides with the low resistance (darker) curved feature found in the grid survey. This is rather deep for it to be a service trench.



It was important to work out if the curved feature was a complete ring by locating other points on its circumference. The circles showed that the Red House garden was the only accessible location and again, the school and the residents (Mr and Mrs Naylor) were very accommodating. We carried out a grid survey and 3 pseudo-sections but with no success. Gardens are rarely very satisfactory and this one has been there for several centuries and has paved areas and buried material.

It is just possible to speculate that the slightly lower resistance patches lie on a circle (in red).

The pseudo-sections also revealed a low-resistance layer and the lowest values on two of them roughly coincide with each other and the possible red line. But it is fanciful to imagine that the ditch continues.

Via Devana

The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust lease Trent-side land from St Modwens Development between Branston and Barton under Needwood. This is where some local historians with a long experience of tracing Roman Roads believe the Via Devana crossed the river - with good mapping evidence. The actual course of the river at that time isn't known but it cannot have been much farther east due to the terracing. The area has been extensively quarried for gravel, but it looks as though it did not quite reach the expected site of the road.

St Modwens want to develop the land and have heritage and cultural responsibilities to meet. The Wild Life Trust could benefit from helping with this work and a quick visit convinced us that it would be possible to carry out a mixture of grid surveys and pseudo-sections to try to locate the road and maybe follow it up with a proper trench.

So planning is under way for a (warmer) survey in the spring of 2022 and help will be appreciated..

Repton and the lease of Calke

While at Calke one day, we acquired a small booklet with a long title "How John Preste and the 99 Year Lease of 1537, saved Calke for us today". It was the result of research by NT volunteer Noel Cook "*to find out more about the lease relating to the cell of Calke Priory issued to John Preste by Repton Priory*" and what happened after John Preste died and who built the Tudor House at Calke. She uncovers dreadful and cruel skulduggery by a series of people after John's death but does conclude that out of 4 candidates, John Preste is probably the man who built the Tudor house.

However, our interest is in the lease itself.

The old bit of Repton School (through the arch) is in one of the old Augustinian Priory buildings. The Priory was started in the late 1100s and finished about 1250 and the land was given by Maud, widow of the Earl of Chester, on condition that the canons from the priory at Calke moved to Repton - which they did. A small daughter cell remaining at Calke.

King Henry VIII started to close the religious houses down, appropriating their income, selling off many of their properties and other assets. Repton was targeted in 1536 but agreed to pay a "fine" of 100 marks to be re-instated. This was a large sum for a relatively small priory. In fact the money came from a donation by a wealthy London grocer, John Preste, of silver plate worth 100 Marks. In 1537 however, when the fine was issued, it was for 400 Marks so John Preste took out a 99 year lease for Calke from Repton Priory. He paid 300 marks up front for the first 59 years and agreed a rent of £6.13s 4d a year for the remaining 40 years. This enabled John Young, the Prior, to pay the fine and the Priory was reinstated. There exists a note from Young to Preste thanking him for helping the house. It is dated 29th August 1536 and signed "Repton". John Young died and in 1538, the Priory was finally closed down and acquired by Thomas Thacker. His son Gilbert inherited it but demolished almost all the buildings when Mary Tudor came on the throne lest she reinstate the Priors. The same fate could have befallen Calke except that John Preste already had the lease.

John Preste was the Respected Master of the London Company of Grocers and wealthy and well-connected in London business and society. His connection with Repton Priory is unclear except that some 50 years earlier, a Henry Prest was Prior at Repton. Could they be related?

Membership Renewal:

The membership fee is our main source of income nowadays and our membership year runs from January. So the fee of £8 is now due please, and can be paid by cheque or cash to Mr J Kidd, 6 Burdett Way, Repton DE65 6GA or by BACS to sort code 60-12-01 A/c 05851238 (Repton Village History Group).

Comments and more information about Repton and its occupants are always welcomed.
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.