

VCH SHROPSHIRE

Wem Rural

Newtown

by Judith Everard and Wendy Horton

This is a draft text prepared by Dr Judith Everard and Wendy Horton for VCH Shropshire

Following on the completion of the Wem short (2019), we took the decision to work on the townships of Wem Rural especially those which fell within the manor of Wem. Now, in July 2021, we are publishing as drafts the text prepared by Dr Everard and Ms Horton.

This text will be further amended in a number of respects. It will be expanded to include more material on landholding. Subsequent versions will include maps and other illustrations. At a later stage there will also be a section on agriculture.

We welcome suggestions, corrections and additional references.

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July 2021

NEWTOWN

LANDSCAPE, SETTLEMENT, AND BUILDINGS

Landscape and boundaries

The township of Newtown was relatively small and compact, about one mile (1.5 km) from east to west and half a mile (800 m.) from north to south, comprising 640 a. The relief of this territory is quite level and gently undulating at around 90–100 m. ASL; highest in the north east at Northwood Hall and lowest in the west along the course of Redfellis Brook. The soil is ‘ebb, consisting chiefly of clay’.¹ Redfellis Brook, a tributary of the Roden, flows southwards through the western part of the township.

The township boundaries are not marked by any particular features. The eastern portion reflects the bounds of the roughly rectangular parcel of the North Wood allotted to Northwood Hall in the 13th century. To the south and west, the boundary is with the common fields of Horton and Wolverley, respectively. The western boundary follows the west bank of Redfellis Brook. The northern boundary represents the limit of encroachment, at a particular time, on the North Wood. The township name refers to this process of colonisation within the manor of Wem; it is first recorded as ‘Neuweton’ or ‘Neuton juxta Wemme’ c.1370.²

Population

Although Newtown existed by c.1370, the township is not listed in the poll tax assessment of 1381. By 1436, there were eight ‘messuages’ in Newtown, plus Northwood Hall. A survey of the manor in 1561 reported 10 dwellings (seven ‘messuages’ and three cottages); the crown valuation of 1589 similarly reported 11 dwellings (six ‘messuages’ and five cottages).³

Twelve houses are depicted in Newtown on the 1631 Arundel map. Twelve households were assessed for hearth tax in 1672, but around 32 per cent of households may have been exempt from paying hearth tax due to poverty; hence the total number of households in Newtown can

¹ Garbet, 310.

² *Cal Inq Misc.* III, nos. 880, 955; *Cal. Close Rolls, 1369–74*, 507; *Cal. Close Rolls, 1374–77*, 159.

³ *Survey 1561*, 69–77; TNA, LR 2/225.

be estimated at 16.⁴ Applying a multiplier of 4.5 (see General Introduction) gives an estimated population of 72.

In 1800 the population of the township was 64, growing to 79 in 1841.⁵ Thereafter, it is more convenient and reliable to count the population of Newtown ecclesiastical parish (Newtown, Northwood and Wolverley). The parish population was 382 in 1881, 358 in 1911 and 1921, and 374 in 1931. In the 20th century the population of the rural townships overall declined. In 1977 the incumbent of Newtown parish church reported that the parish population was 220 and decreasing, while the congregation was increasingly elderly.⁶ This decline has reversed since the 1980s. Recent population growth in Newtown is reflected in the infill development of new houses in the village.

Settlement

The township originated with medieval colonisation of the North Wood. Although named as 'Newtown by Wem' c.1370, in connection with Northwood Hall, Newtown does not appear as a named township in the poll tax returns of 1381.⁷ Northwood Hall (q.v.) probably represents an earlier settlement; its name and location, extending north from the Lowe, suggests it was established within the woodland at a time before sufficient colonisation had occurred to constitute a new township. The medieval house was set within a substantial double moat. A second moated site (Moat Farm) lies about 500 m. to the west, situated at what was the entrance to a lane that led directly to the North Wood.⁸

After the establishment of Northwood Hall, colonisation of the North Wood proceeded with the planned settlement at Newtown. West of Northwood Hall, farmsteads were distributed at regular intervals along the lane leading to the ford on Redfellis Brook, with large crofts extending north to what was then the limit of the North Wood, or south to the open fields of Horton and Wolverley, which may have required some adjustments to those townships' limits. In 1436 there were eight houses and 24 nooks of arable land (216 a.) in Newtown

⁴ Based on the average for parishes in North Bradford hundred: *Shropshire Hearth Tax Exemptions*, Table 3.

⁵ Wem Parish Registers, 778; Census reports.

⁶ Diocese of Lichfield, Diocesan Survey 1977.

⁷ *Poll Taxes ... 1381*, 392–4.

⁸ As shown on Arundel map (1631).

(‘*Nova*’), held by customary tenants.⁹ In 1561 there were eight tenants in the township of Newtown, not all of whom were resident, but the area cleared and enclosed appears already to have achieved the township limits shown on the 1631 Arundel map.¹⁰

Newtown ‘village’ is a rather later development. In 1631 there were two or three farm houses, and cottages encroaching on the lord’s waste, near the ford. The character of this area as a hamlet was then consolidated from the mid 17th century by the building of a stone bridge and the establishment of the Newtown chapel of ease, rebuilt as a parish church, with parish school nearby, in the mid 19th century.¹¹ Some 26 dwelling houses were then constructed during the 20th century. Initially these were pairs of semi-detached houses provided by Wem Rural District Council. Latterly several detached private houses were constructed near the bridge, followed by The Woodlands estate of eight houses constructed in 2001.

Communications

No major routes pass through Newtown, but lanes connecting Newtown with Wem and the surrounding townships remain today as the local network of minor roads, bridleways and public footpaths. Lanes named in the 1561 survey were: Northwood Hall Lane, Newtown Lane, the lane (*venella*) leading towards Northwood, the common lane and Davis Lane.¹² The latter may be identified as the short lane that connected Newtown hamlet to the Wem–Brony-Garth turnpike and continued west to Wolverley Hall.¹³

The crossing of Redfellis Brook was probably named ‘sheep ford’: ‘Shappeford’ in 1561.¹⁴ A stone horse-bridge was built in the second half of the 17th century by William Hinton, the owner of a substantial tenement near the ford. A short distance downstream, where ‘Davis Lane’ crossed the brook, a second stone horse-bridge was built in 1752, improving access to the Wem–Ellesmere road.¹⁵ Both have been reinforced and widened to carry motor vehicles, their maintenance presumably the responsibility of the parish and latterly of the county.

⁹ TNA, C 139/76/34 John de Greystoke 1436; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, xxiv, 348, no. 495. In the manor of Wem, a nook was calculated as 9 a. in the open or common field/s: *Survey 1561*, 34–5

¹⁰ *Survey 1561*, 68–77.

¹¹ Below, ‘Communications’, ‘Social History: Education’, ‘Religious History’.

¹² *Survey 1561*, 68–77.

¹³ Garbet, 325.

¹⁴ *Survey 1561*, 76, and ‘Shipforthes leasow’ beside the brook, *ibid.*, 70; Arundel map, ‘Shepford meadow’; Garbet, 325.

¹⁵ Garbet, 314, 325.

The Built Character

The township of Newtown is focussed on a small hamlet around the Redfellis Brook, the remaining properties spread out at intervals along and off the surrounding lanes. In the medieval period there was a second focus, on Northwood Hall moated site, which lies towards the east of the township and was a seat of some importance in the manor of Wem. The hamlet of Newtown can be compared on the 1631 Survey of Wem, the tithe map (1841) and successive Ordnance Surveys. Perhaps the most surprising aspect is how little the size or density of the settlement has changed over time: in 1861 the chapelry to Wem became a parish church and a National school had recently been built, but the population served by these institutions continued to come from the rural hinterland. The bridge over Redfellis Brook, though relatively small, was historically significant. Samuel Garbet referred to a stone bridge of late 17th- or early 18th-century date, but this was replaced by a brick bridge with round arch and keystone, probably in the 19th century. The north parapet is brick with sandstone coping, but the south parapet has been rebuilt.¹⁶

Limited change occurred in the mid-20th century with the construction of several pairs of council houses. Opposite the school are 1–4 Oakhurst Villas, spacious well-designed semi-detached houses, rendered under hipped tiled roofs with brick stacks, central gabled entrance bays and bay windows. Two pairs of similar semi-detached houses, 1–4 Roden Villas, are found further north east, the ranges at an angle to the road. At the north end of the village are two pairs of brick cottages of early- to mid-20th century date. Some infill has occurred in the late 20th- and early 21st century, including a cul-de-sac known as The Woodlands.

Northwood Hall moated site

As one of only two double moated sites in Shropshire, this earthwork has been designated a Scheduled Monument. The early 14th century was the period in England when moated manor houses were most commonly constructed, their purpose as status symbols rather than defensive. This date corresponds to the evidence for the foundation of Northwood Hall

¹⁶ SA, 972/7/1/49; Wem Tithe Map, 1845 (Newtown Township); Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1890, Shropshire Sheet 14SW; Garbet, 314.

between 1327 and 1370, where there was a ‘message’ by 1370.¹⁷ The monument consists of a small square moat set towards the east side of a much larger water-filled enclosure. The central island is approximately 27 m. north–south by 30 m. east–west, the arms 10–13 m. wide. All contain water except the south arm which is partly infilled. The east arm has been extended to connect with the outer enclosure and it is thought the water source came from the northeast. The outer enclosure has external dimensions of 120 m. north–south by 110 m. east–west, but is now mainly dry, having been partly damaged by ploughing and infilling. Access to the outer enclosure was via a 4 m. wide causeway, located slightly south of the mid-point of the western arm. The house would have been on the island, though no masonry remains, and was probably reached from the north where two narrow ponds appear to delineate a narrow causeway. The outer enclosure was probably used for storage, and immediately to its north was a fishpond. On the 1841 tithe map, the interior was in use as an orchard, a function which continued until at least 1890.¹⁸

Northwood Hall

In 1561 the ‘message’ was said to stand in a close of 2 a. called the Moats.¹⁹ The 1631 Arundel map of Wem shows a large house with central turret or porch labelled ‘Northwood Hall’; in 1672 Northwood Hall was assessed for hearth tax on seven hearths.²⁰ ‘The old Hall’ was later replaced by a farmhouse, built outside the moat. In an account apparently prepared for its sale in 1722, the house was described as a brick house with small hall, parlour with wainscot panelling, two cellars, two good lodging rooms, two rooms for servants, a kitchen, salting room and two butteries with rooms over.²¹ According to Garbet, the purchaser, Richard Wollaston, took down part of the structure and ‘neatly rebuilt [it] of brick’.²² Northwood Hall was described in 1958 as an early 18th-century, two-storey five-bay farmhouse in the Queen Anne style, with an older timber-framed wing on one side. It was of brick with a hipped tiled roof, modillion eaves cornice and stone quoins. Additions included a

¹⁷ *Cal. Inq. Misc.* III, nos. 880, 955; *Cal Close Rolls, 1369–74*, 507; *Cal Close Rolls, 1374–77*, 159. And see below, Landownership.

¹⁸ Historic England, List Entry No. 1019606; SA 6001/240: William Phillips Manuscripts; Garbet, 310–11; tithe map (Newtown township); Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1890, Shropshire Sheet 14SW.

¹⁹ *Survey 1561*, 68–9.

²⁰ *Shropshire Hearth Tax Rolls*, 50.

²¹ SA, 552/18/1/28.

²² Garbet, 311.

19th century gabled brick porch and later casement windows.²³ The Queen Anne house is marked on the tithe map (1841) just beyond the north west corner of the adjacent moated site and appears to face south.²⁴ The house no longer survives, having been demolished after the late 1950s, but was located in the north garden of the modern farmhouse, its position marked by an old red brick boundary wall with sandstone copings.

Moat Farm

Some 500 m. west of Northwood Hall is another moated site, possibly the messuage with one carucate in Newtown recorded in 1375.²⁵ The medieval house would have stood within the former moated site, the east arm and south east corner of which still retain water. In 1981, the east arm was measured as being 80 m. long and 8 m. wide, whilst the outer face of the south arm has been partly destroyed by the road, resulting in a marshy area. John Newtown was admitted as tenant in 1541, and Thomas Newtown purchased the freehold in the mid 17th century.²⁶ As depicted on the 1631 Arundel map of Wem, the site was at the entrance to a lane leading north to the North Wood.

The medieval house was replaced in the late 16th or early 17th century, probably that marked on the 1631 map. A view of this house is shown in a painting signed 'H.J. Lee', probably early 20th century.²⁷ The painting shows a typical sub-medieval, timber-framed house consisting of a hall and gable-fronted cross-wing. It is of one-and-a-half storeys, the box panels rendered, with a large chimney stack to the hall range, beneath which is a lobby-entrance, typical of this period. The gable of the cross-wing has a jetty supported on brackets. Internally, there was 'a huge central chimney-breast, with wide angled fireplaces in both the principal chambers'.²⁸

²³ Shropshire HER PRN 12404: A former grade III listed building, no longer a formal designation; N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Shropshire* (1958), p. 310.

²⁴ SA, 972/7/1/49; Garbet 310–11; SA, 552/18/1/28; tithe map (Newtown township).

²⁵ *Cal. Close Rolls, 1374–7*, 159.

²⁶ *Survey 1561*, 70–1; ACA, MS MD 59, p. 34; Garbet, 311–12.

²⁷ The artist may have been Harriet Jane Lee, wife of the Revd. Henry Phillips Lee, the incumbent of Newtown, 1904–22, whose vicarage was immediately opposite the site: see Census 1901, The Vicarage, Forest and Frith, Barnard Castle Rural District; Census 1911, The Vicarage, Newtown. The watercolour is in the possession of Thomas Edwards of Wem, who kindly allowed JE to photograph it.

²⁸ H.E. Forrest, 'The Moat Farm, near Wem', *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 19 Mar. 1920, 5.

Moat Farm was purchased by SCC c.1920 to create smallholdings. The timber-framed house was then demolished and replaced on the same site by a pair of brick-and-tile cottages to SCC's standard design for smallholding cottages.²⁹ The cottages have been converted to a single farmhouse, retaining the distinctive appearance of the SCC design, with cream-painted rendering 'and a sloping roof with a central gable window facing the road ... almost a thatched cottage look'.³⁰

In the farmyard was a timber-framed four-bay threshing barn, also shown in the painting by H.J. Lee. The gable end has long tension braces and the roof appears to have been raised. It was said to have contained a threshing bay and three storage bays, one lofted, and had a queen-strut roof. It was dismantled in 1984 following storm damage.³¹

Newtown Villa Farm

Many farmhouses were rebuilt in the early 19th century as part of the expansion in the agricultural economy at that time. This house is a well-detailed example of the type, symmetrical, two-storey and three-window, constructed of red brick under a hipped slate roof with a modillion eaves cornice. The two brick chimney stacks are set back behind the roof-line and there is a lower rear range in a similar style with the same modillion eaves cornice. The front has a central wooden doorcase, its cornice supported on consoles, containing a panelled door with radial over-light. Small-pane sash windows with wedge lintels with keystones light the front. (There is a stone tablet in the east gable of the rear range, but it is not legible from the road.)

The present house is shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1833, but an earlier house is shown in this location on the 1631 map of Wem. It appears to be the farm belonging to William Donn in 1561. It was later sold to Thomas Jenks, a goldsmith of Shrewsbury, who in 1668 built the half-timbered house which was standing in 1752. Some of the farm buildings are later and are

²⁹ L. Staines, 'Smallholdings in Wem Rural', in Wem Rural Parish newsletter, undated, 6–7 (copy provided by Dr Len Staines, member of Wem Rural Parish council), from minutes of SCC Smallholdings and Allotments Committee (SA, XXX).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹ SA, 972/7/1/49; Garbet, 311; Shropshire HER 17149 (check DRF); Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1890, Shropshire Sheet 14SW.

shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1890 where they form a courtyard plan behind and adjoining the house.³²

Longbridge Cottage

Of interest to local historians is the house owned by Samuel Garbet, which he referred to in his book as 'late Hintons'. It is the cottage on the bend, at right-angles to the road, immediately west of the bridge over Redfellis Brook. Although rendered and much altered, the house has a large central brick stack and dentilled brick eaves. In 1631, a house here belonged to William Hinton; his antecessor William Hinton was admitted to the tenancy in 1514/15.³³ Samuel Garbet purchased the house and its estate from John Hinton in 1748 for £1,400. By the time of the 1890 Ordnance Survey it is shown as a pair of semi-detached cottages, so was probably rebuilt or remodelled in the 19th century.³⁴

LANDOWNERSHIP

Demesne

The territory of Newtown was formerly part of the lord's demesne of the North Wood. The Northwood Hall estate was granted as freehold to the lord's steward in the 14th century. More tenements were then created in Newtown; by 1436, customary tenants held eight messuages with extensive crofts and arable land.³⁵ The remaining demesne in the small township was negligible, with one field of 11 a. ('Lord's field') in demesne in 1805.³⁶ In 1809, the earl of Darlington's agents sold three cottages with small gardens in Newtown to

³² *Survey 1561*, 72–3; SA 972/7/1/49; Garbet, 312; Ordnance Survey 1833; Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1890, Shropshire Sheet 14SW; Shropshire HER PRN 27335: C. Baxter, *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Dataset*, 2010.

³³ *Survey 1561*, 74–5.

³⁴ Garbet, 313–14; SA, 972/7/1/49 (Arundel map); Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1890, Shropshire Sheet 14SW.

³⁵ TNA, C 139/76/34; *Cal.Inq. PM*, xxiv, 348, no. 495.

³⁶ 1805 Survey, 158–9.

their occupiers;³⁷ probably these were roadside encroachments. Lord's field had been sold to the Northwood Hall estate by 1841.³⁸

Freehold - Northwood Hall estate

Richard Hord was steward of the barony of Wem in 1304–6.³⁹ His son, Ralph Hord, who probably succeeded him as steward, was assessed in the 1327 lay subsidy for his tenement at Edgeley, near Whitchurch.⁴⁰ In that year, however, Edgeley (with Dodington) was settled by William le Botiler, baron of Wem, on his daughter Angharad and her husband John Lestrangle of Whitchurch and thereafter passed to their descendants.⁴¹ This may explain why Thomas Hord, son of John son of Ralph Hord, held his tenement not in Edgeley but in Wem.⁴² In 1371 Thomas Hord of 'Norwode' was pardoned for outlawry incurred after he was appealed for debt by, *inter alia*, Richard de Pontesbury of Wem.⁴³ The next year, Thomas abducted Juliana le Rous, a royal ward, for which he was again outlawed and his estate forfeit.⁴⁴ Thomas's estate at 'Neuton by Wemme' was restored to the lord of the manor in two instalments: the first, apparently Northwood Hall, in 1373, and the second, a messuage and one carucate in 'Neweton', in 1375.⁴⁵ Finally in 1386 a full pardon was issued to Thomas Horde, esquire, of Northwood.⁴⁶ By that time, however, Thomas had married into a burgess family in Bridgnorth, where he settled at Horde Park.⁴⁷ His descendants retained Northwood

³⁷ SA, 6000/12498.

³⁸ Tithe apportionment, lot 3574.

³⁹ Eyton, *Antiquities*, VIII, 21, citing *Monasticon Anglicanum*, IV, 176, no. III and 178, no. XII. See also *Survey 1561*, 92–3, attestation of Richard Whord (*sic*), 1304.

⁴⁰ SA, 1514/478; SA, 6000/4543; Eyton, *Antiquities*, IX, 234; *Subsidy Roll of 1327*, 147.

⁴¹ Eyton, *Antiquities*, IX, 175.

⁴² John Hord: SA, 1514/478 (1328); SA, 322/2/143 (1340); a John Hord of ?Loppington, SA, 6000/6304 (1318).

⁴³ *Cal. Pat. R. Edw III, 1370–71*, 68.

⁴⁴ *Cal. Close R., 1377–81*, 67–8. Juliana's guardian was Robert de Kendale, perhaps the knight of that name who was active in North Bradford hundred and whose lineage claimed lordship of Soulton (Wem parish) throughout the 14th century: SA, 322/2/163; SA, 465/15; SA, 972/1/1/320; SA, 322/2/216–17; TNA, SC 8/249/12437; Eyton, *Antiquities*, X, 13.

⁴⁵ *Cal. Close R, 1369–74*, 507; *Cal. Close R 1374–7*, 159.

⁴⁶ *Cal. Pat. R. Ric. II, 1385–89*, 250.

⁴⁷ L.S. Woodger, 'Horde, Thomas, of Northwood, Newton by Wem and Bridgnorth, Salop', in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1386–1421*, ed. J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe (1993).

Hall;⁴⁸ in 1506 Thomas Horde of Bridgnorth assigned Northwood Hall, then let to Richard ap Howell ap Morgan, to trustees.⁴⁹

By 1561 the freehold estate of Northwood Hall was held by Thomas Broomhall by homage, fealty and suit of court and rent service of 16*d.* per annum. The lord of the manor was obliged to render 2*s.* per annum to the crown for the estate, perhaps the legacy of a past forfeiture. The estate then consisted of a dwelling house (messuage) standing in a close of 2 a. called the Moats, with a cottage and adjacent closes totalling 52 a., and an area of meadowland called Handhey on the Roden at the head of Wem Pool.⁵⁰

In the second half of the 17th century succession to Northwood Hall was contested within the Broomhall family. In 1683/4 the tenant, Grace Broomhall, widow, was sued by her granddaughter, Amy, wife of William Broomhall, gent, of Prees, over the inheritance of Northwood Hall.⁵¹ At the death of William Broomhall in 1709 his debts were such that his son, Thomas, sold the estate, in 1713, to Francis Butter, an attorney of Market Drayton.⁵² Butter's widow then sold it in 1722 to Richard Wollaston, who was still the owner in 1752.⁵³ The owner in 1805 was Francis Lloyd, when the farm comprised 166 a.⁵⁴

Northwood Hall Farm was purchased in 1841 by Henry John Barker under the trust established in 1828 on his marriage to the daughter of John Walford, to whose Wem legal practice Barker had succeeded.⁵⁵ Barker died in 1873 and Northwood Hall was sold in 1874 in the administration of his estate. The Northwood Hall estate then comprised approximately 181 a.⁵⁶ The estate was again offered for sale in 1913 in six lots comprising 177½ a. Northwood Hall Farm, 88 a., with 9 a. of meadow and 9 a. of arable, was purchased by Edward Bygott, the Wem solicitor, for £4,485. Another lot of 21 a. was purchased by J.R. Glover.⁵⁷

Northwood Hall remains a working farm, but since 2010 the moated site has been developed as a visitor attraction, overlooked by The Moat Shed restaurant and visitor centre.

⁴⁸ Woodger, 'Horde, Thomas, of Northwood'; TNA, E 199/38/49–54 (1443 x 1448).

⁴⁹ SA, 9071/B/3/1/3.

⁵⁰ *Survey 1561*, 68–9, 168–9.

⁵¹ TNA, C 6/387/65.

⁵² SA, 4756/3/1-12

⁵³ SA, 112/1/2417–2425; SA, 5981/B/1/91; Garbet, 311.

⁵⁴ SA, 167/47, p. 158.

⁵⁵ SA, 816/5.

⁵⁶ SA, 816/6; SA, MI8998/1; SA, SC/6/70.

⁵⁷ *Cheshire Observer*, 18 Oct. 1913, 5.

Copyhold

West of Northwood Hall were copyhold tenements probably planted by the lord of the manor in what had been the North Wood, possibly by 1370, when the place-name ‘Newtown’ was already in use, certainly by 1436, when eight messuages held by customary tenure each paid the lord annual rent of 2s., as well as 40s. in total for 24 nooks (216 a.) of arable land.⁵⁸ At the 1561 survey there were seven such messuages; an eighth copyhold tenement was held by Thomas Sturry, the owner of Wolverly Hall.⁵⁹

Freehold – Other Estates

In the mid 17th century most of the copyhold tenements were enfranchised on purchase from the trustees for sale of the earl of Arundel. These were the tenements of Thomas Newtown (28 a.) and Richard Jebb (36 a.), and those latterly held by deceased tenants: Roger Donne (90 a.), Edward Mason (50 a.) and William Newance (55 a.).⁶⁰ The last two had both come into the hands of Richard Heneage, a staunch Shropshire Parliamentarian.⁶¹ William Hinton also purchased the freehold of his whole tenement (105 a.) in 1658.⁶² The resulting freehold estates can be identified as the farms that continued until at least the 20th century: from east to west, Northwood Hall Farm, Moat Farm, Newtown Villa Farm, Church Farm, and the Hinton estate, which was purchased by Samuel Garbet in 1748.⁶³

In 1805 the largest landowners were Francis Lloyd (Moat Farm, 58 a., and Northwood Hall Farm, 166 a.), Jenks (198 a.), John Walford (59 a.) and Thomas James (39 a.),⁶⁴ all of the land being let to tenants.⁶⁵ By 1841, Lloyd’s estate had been acquired by Henry John Barker (see Northwood Hall, above). Thomas Maddocks of The Woodlands, Wolverley, held 176 a. and Thomas Dickin of Loppington House held 55 a.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ TNA, C 139/76/34; *Cal Inq PM*, xxiv, 348, no. 495.

⁵⁹ *Survey 1561*, 70–7. See also valor of Wem, 1589: TNA, LR 2/225.

⁶⁰ ACA, MS MD 59, pp. 28, 34–5.

⁶¹ TNA, E 367/2442; SA, D3651/B/149/2.

⁶² Garbet, 314.

⁶³ Garbet, 314.

⁶⁴ Thomas James, the illegitimate son of Revd Samuel Garbet the younger, was heir to the Garbet estate in Newtown and Wolverley: SA, 9043, files D, E, K and V.

⁶⁵ 1805 Survey, 153–63.

⁶⁶ Tithe apportionment.

Moat Farm (76 a.) was purchased by SCC in 1919 and divided into smallholdings for council tenants.⁶⁷

ECONOMIC HISTORY

Farming

Newtown appears to have had at least one common field; both the Northwood Hall estate (c. 1370) and the lord of the manor (1436) possessed arable land measured in carucates or nooks, and the field/s of Newtown are mentioned in the 1561 survey. The open field/s apparently lay in the southern part of the township.⁶⁸ One, possibly named Brook Field, abutted the common fields of Wolverley.⁶⁹ By 1561 the only remaining part was ‘Colebricke’ furlong, but some Newtown tenements also had arable land in the common fields of Wolverley and Horton. ‘Colebricke’ furlong had been enclosed by 1631 and by 1805 it had been detached from Newtown and joined to Wolverley.⁷⁰

Brickworks

In the mid 19th century there was a brickyard on the lane north of Northwood Hall. Commercial production was underway by 1863 with James Stokes as manager, when bricks were supplied to Lowe Farm.⁷¹ In 1864, H.J. Barker leased to James Stokes of Newtown, farmer and brickmaker, a tile and brickyard and close of 2 a., including ovens, clay mills, stone cutter machine and other machinery.⁷² The brickworks had ceased to operate by c.1879–81, when the first edition Ordnance Survey depicts the ‘Old Brick Works’.⁷³

SOCIAL HISTORY

Social Welfare

⁶⁷ Staines, ‘Smallholdings in Wem Rural’.

⁶⁸ Shropshire HER 31850: ridge-and-furrow earthworks, south of Newtown Cottage, visible on LiDAR imagery; *Survey 1561*, 70–7.

⁶⁹ *Survey 1561*, 70–73.

⁷⁰ 1805 Survey, Pit Field and (perhaps) ‘Colley hurst’; Tithe Apportionment, lots 3330 ‘Pit field’ and 3331 ‘Coalbrook’.

⁷¹ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 15 July 1864, 6–7.

⁷² SA, 1868 box 159.

⁷³ OS 25” Shropshire Sheet XIV.10 (1881).

An estate in Newtown, probably Newtown Villa farm, was charged by a former owner, whose identity was unknown by 1830, with £2 10s. per annum to be distributed to the poor attending Newtown chapel. Harper's charity was established by the will of Arthur Harper in 1787 for the annual distribution on St Thomas's day (29 December) of the interest on £50 to selected poor, industrious residents of Wolverley, Newtown and Northwood who were not in receipt of parish relief.⁷⁴

Community

In the absence of public or civic amenities in the area, from its opening in 1857 Newtown National School (see below) became a venue for community activities. In particular, it offered an alternative to the public houses; the Newtown branch of the Church of England Temperance Society was founded in a meeting at the school in 1878 and held successful fund-raising concerts there over the next few years.⁷⁵ In 1861 the schoolroom was used for community celebration of the wedding of Thomas Barker, son of the townships's largest landowner, H.J. Barker.⁷⁶ The schoolroom was occasionally used in the evening for dances.⁷⁷

Education

There is no record of educational provision in Newtown prior to the mid 19th century. A Sunday school held at Newtown chapel was attended by 15 to 20 scholars in 1851.⁷⁸

Newtown National School, a public subscription elementary school, was established shortly before the creation of the parish. Land almost opposite Newtown church was donated by the Wem solicitor, H.J. Barker. Funded by local subscription and a Treasury grant of £93, the school was designed by James Denham of Wem.⁷⁹ Accommodating 50 children, it consisted

⁷⁴ Charity Commissioners Report, 336.

⁷⁵ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 6 Dec. 1878, 8; *Eddowes's Jnl*, 4 Feb. 1880, 10.

⁷⁶ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 28 Jun. 1861, 6.

⁷⁷ Extract from school log book, 5 Feb. 1909: *Newtown C.E. Primary School, 1854–2004, 150 Years Anniversary Programme*.

⁷⁸ *Church and Chapel*, 106.

⁷⁹ Denham, born on the Isle of Wight in 1817, was staying at Wixhill in 1851 when he gave his occupation as 'Land agent clerk', but evidently he soon qualified as an architect and settled in Wem, where he died in 1877: Census 1851; Census 1871; Civil Register of Deaths. As well as Newtown National School, James Denham designed the Primitive Methodist chapel, Castle Hill, Whitchurch, erected in 1866: J. Cox, *Shropshire's Nonconformist Chapels*: <http://www.users.waitrose.com/~coxfamily/whitprim.htm> (accessed xxx).

of a single school room, 27 ft 6 in. by 17 ft, with a door to the west and windows to the south and east. Within the walled plot a small two-storey house was built as the teacher's residence. The school opened in 1857. The rector of Newtown was the visitor and chairman of the managers.⁸⁰

In 1887 the school room was enlarged and a playground added; the site then comprised 618 square yards (0.05 ha.). In 1897 a second class room was added, with a new porch and toilets, so that the school house was doubled in size. In 1902/3 there were places for 80 older children and 36 infants, but the total number on roll was 63 with an average attendance of 51.⁸¹ The school was supplied with electricity from a generator at the church from 1926 until the village was connected to the national grid in 1958. In 1973 adjacent land was acquired for a playing field. Further major remodelling and updating of the accommodation and facilities took place in 1984 and 2001.⁸²

In the 20th century the teacher's house became the residence of the school caretaker, the last being Brian Robinson. After retiring in 1975, Robinson, who was also verger of the parish church, continued to reside there until his death in 1995 and the house was demolished in 1997. Robinson is commemorated by a window in the church.⁸³

In recent decades, due to its low numbers of pupils, Newtown has been periodically reviewed for closure or merger with other local schools. In 1981, however, Loppington Primary School closed and its pupils transferred to Newtown, boosting the numbers on the register from 52 in 1980 to 67 (plus a third teacher from Loppington) in 1981.⁸⁴ In 2013 there were 123 pupils aged from three to 11 years.⁸⁵

Since the opening of the County Senior School in Wem in 1931, most Newtown children aged 11 and over have travelled to Wem for secondary education.⁸⁶ At the time of writing, most attended Thomas Adams School in Wem, for which a school bus service was provided by SCC.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ TNA, EDxxx; SA, ED 1564/384–5.

⁸¹ SA, ED 2699/41/30. The school log books are in the possession of the school. Extracts cited from: *Newtown C.E. Primary School, 1854–2004*.

⁸² *Newtown C.E. Primary School, 1854–2004*.

⁸³ *Newtown C.E. Primary School, 1854–2004*; personal observation, June 2018.

⁸⁴ *Newtown C.E. Primary School, 1854–2004*.

⁸⁵ Newtown CofE Primary School, Ofsted report, Oct. 2013.

⁸⁶ SA, ED2782/29, and see *Wem, Social History*.

⁸⁷ *Wem Rural Community Plan*, 18.

Newtown National School

The school was built on land previously owned by H.J. Barker, solicitor of Wem, in the centre of the village on the north side of the road. A proposed plan was produced by John Allen of Prees on 11 March 1856, although it was not built until the following year and some detail was changed. A note on the plan reads, ‘Help asked for school, not for the residence’, suggesting that the purpose of the plan was fund-raising. Allen’s drawing shows a single school-room with doorway at the west end, a three-light window at the east end, and three two-light windows to the south elevation, along with a hearth on the north side. The boundary wall forms a square enclosure, with playground in front. Two features along the back wall are probably toilets, for boys and girls, respectively. A small square coal bunker is located in the northwest corner of the boundary wall, whilst inside the southeast corner of the yard is a building labelled ‘cottage’, which was the teacher’s residence. A second drawing, dated 3 May 1856, shows some amendments in brown ink. A gallery is proposed along the interior south wall and a small entrance for girls has been added to the northeast corner. A cross-section shows a queen-post truss, a suspended timber floor and the chimney stack.⁸⁸

When sufficient funds were raised, the school was built under the supervision of local architect, John Denham of Wem. Other work by Denham includes a large drapery shop on the corner of Crown Street and High Street, Wem (1867); the former vicarage in Fauls, a fine brick building with blue brick diapering (1856); and the former Primitive Methodist chapel in Castle Street, Whitchurch, a brick building in Gothic style (1866).⁸⁹

The single-storey range is constructed of red brick under a renewed slate roof, with corbelled brick eaves on stone kneelers. The rectangular windows have stone surrounds and mullions, providing a hint of the Tudor-Gothic style, though the glazing has been renewed. The south elevation, facing the playground, has a tall central cross-window flanked by small two-light windows, and a gabled brick porch to the left with infilled east doorway. The east gable end has a three-light window and a doorway to the far right, reached from a late 20th-century extension. A large four-light window in the west end may be a later insertion. Modern extensions wrap around the rear of the building. There are two main differences from John Allen’s plan: the addition of the porch at the southwest corner which may have been part of

⁸⁸ SA Box ED1564/384.

⁸⁹ Newman and Pevsner, 269; Cox, *Shropshire’s Nonconformist Chapels*, www.users.waitrose.com/~coxfamily/whitprim.htm; Wellington Jnl, 29 June 1867.

the enlargement of 1887, and the tall central window and the tall central window of the south elevation, possibly raised to light the gallery.⁹⁰

Part of the teacher's cottage is visible in a photograph taken on 13 May 1990, before its demolition in 1997. The two-storey cottage was, like the school, of brick under a slate roof with corbelled eaves. A casement window under a segmental head is to the left of another opening, whilst a short wall with a boarded door linked the school to the cottage. The school itself has changed little since 1990, though the south light of the porch has lost its patterned cast-iron glazing.⁹¹

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

A chapel of ease was established at Newtown around 1655. According to Samuel Garbet, the inhabitants of Newtown, Wolverley and Northwood purchased a private house and 'fitted it up after a decent manner'.⁹² The Arundel map of 1631 depicts a house on the site of the later chapel within a large close labelled 'William Newans'. Soon after William Newans's death, his copyhold estate was enfranchised by Richard Heneage, including a pasture 'wherein the chapel standeth, called Newance Yard'.⁹³ The first minister, Robert Smith, in post from 1655 to 1662, received a stipend from the puritan rector of Wem, Andrew Parsons (rector 1647–62); and a baptism at Newtown chapel in 1659 was recorded in the Wem parish register.⁹⁴

The foundation faltered with the Restoration and there was a vacancy from 1662 to 1665. According to Garbet, the bishop refused to consecrate the chapel unless it was adequately endowed. The terms of the settlement are recorded in the consecration deed of 1665. The chapel was to be dedicated to the Blessed Charles, king and martyr. The chaplain was

⁹⁰ SA, Box ED1564/385.

⁹¹ SA, PH/W/8/10/16.

⁹² Garbet, 314. Andrew Barton, said by Garbet (p. 315) to have been the last person born in the house before it became a chapel, was baptised 7 Nov. 1645: *Wem Parish Registers*, 86.

⁹³ ACA, MS MD 59, p. 35: the record is undated, but the manuscript also includes a summary of sales of demesne properties from the 1650s. There is no mention of a chapel in the detailed survey of the manor taken in 1648: ACA, MS 508.

⁹⁴ Garbet, 314, 321. The entry in the Wem parish register regarding a baptism on 17 Apr. 1659, to which Garbet refers, was missing or illegible when the register was transcribed by the Revd G.H.F. Vane c.1900; *Wem Parish Registers*, 182.

authorised to perform all the sacraments of the Church.⁹⁵ Initially, baptisms, marriages and burials were recorded in the Wem parish registers; the chapel's own registers of baptisms and burials survive from 1780.⁹⁶

As provided in the consecration deed, the inhabitants of Newtown, Wolverley and Northwood held the advowson and undertook to pay the chaplain's stipend of £10 per annum.⁹⁷ This stipend soon proved insufficient; from 1689, with the appointment of Francis Williams as perpetual curate, successive rectors of Wem added from £10 to £30 per annum.⁹⁸ Francis Chambre, the tenant of Wolverley Hall, gave a silver cup for use in the chapel and, by his will of 1676, charged a certain 'pasture ground' to pay 40s. per year to keep the chapel in repair with any surplus to be paid to the third schoolmaster of Wem grammar school.⁹⁹ The land was in Horton, near Pensford bridge;¹⁰⁰ by 1831 it belonged to Thomas Dickin, who undertook to pay the 40s. to the chapel and the third master in alternate years.¹⁰¹

Queen Anne's Bounty of £200 was awarded in 1741, and was invested in freehold land by the Revd Samuel Garbet the younger, then the incumbent.¹⁰²

From 1685, and probably from the chapel's consecration, Wem parish church rates were regularly applied to reimburse the chapel clerk for expenses such as the purchase of books and washing the linen.¹⁰³ At a meeting in Wem in 1809 it was resolved that the churchwardens for Horton quarter should no longer claim expenditure by the Newtown chapel clerk or for wine as disbursements from the church rates they collected, because the 1665 consecration deed specified that the cost of the minister, clerk and sexton, and sacramental wine and all other expenses attending the chapel, should be paid by the inhabitants of Newtown, Wolverley and Northwood. For the avoidance of doubt, it was also

⁹⁵ Consecration deed, 7 June 1665: Garbet, 315–21; *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

⁹⁶ T.R. Horton and Rev. H. Phillips Lee (eds), *Newtown Parish Register, 1780–1812* (Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1907). Transcript available at: <http://www.melocki.org.uk/salop/Newtown.html>; K.J. Bulmer (ed.), 'Newtown (Wem) Parish Register. Baptisms 1813–1906, Burials 1813–1963' (typescript, 1969–70; photocopy at SA).

⁹⁷ Garbet, 315–21.

⁹⁸ Garbet, 322–4; *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 155.

⁹⁹ Garbet, 315; *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44, 155; *Charities Commission Report*, 332.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; Garbet, 327–8.

¹⁰¹ *Charities Commission Report*, 332; *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

¹⁰² Collected papers of Samuel Garbet the younger concerning Newtown chapel, c.1746–1754: SA, 9043, file H; Garbet, 324.

¹⁰³ SA, P295/B/3/1/1.

ordered that 200 copies of the 1665 consecration deed be printed and one copy be framed and hung in a conspicuous place in the chapel.¹⁰⁴

Two closes of land in Newtown – Husband’s Croft (2a. 2r. 22p.) and Hare Horn (5a. 1r. 34p.) – were sold in 1819 by John Groom the elder to the Governors of Queen Anne’s Bounty and conveyed for the perpetual augmentation of the curacy of Newtown.¹⁰⁵

By 1834 the original chapel was dilapidated; it was demolished and rebuilt on the same site in 1835–6 at a cost of £417 12s., raised by public subscription and a collection in Wem parish church.¹⁰⁶ There were 220 sittings, of which 50 were free.¹⁰⁷

A further award of £625 by the Bounty Board c.1841 was used to purchase 25 a., in total, in Newtown, Northwood and West Felton.¹⁰⁸ The tithes of the three townships in Newtown chapelry belonged to the rector of Wem; in 1841 they were commuted for £2,100.¹⁰⁹

Around this time, the Primitive Methodist congregation proposed a new chapel in Newtown. A petition for a Nonconformist meeting house in Newtown had been made to the diocese of Lichfield in 1833.¹¹⁰ In 1843 Thomas Dicken of Loppington House offered to donate land in Newtown for a chapel.¹¹¹ In 1850 there was weeknight preaching at Newtown, but it was to be removed to The Lawn in Northwood.¹¹² The Newtown chapel plan seems to have been abandoned in favour of chapels at Pool Head (where Newtown, Northwood and Edstaston met) and at Northwood Green.

On Census Sunday in 1851, the attendance at the morning service in Newtown chapel was 43, including 15 scholars at the Sunday school. The minister, Revd. William A. Dixon, reported there was also an average of 60, including 20 scholars, for the afternoon service.¹¹³ Within Newtown chapelry there was also a Primitive Methodist chapel at Pool Head with 100 sittings and meeting houses at Wolverley, The Lawn and Northwood Green, with a total of

¹⁰⁴ SA, P295/B/3/1/3: Oct. 1809.

¹⁰⁵ SA, P120/V/7/1.

¹⁰⁶ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 28 Nov. 1834, 3; Bagshaw, 337.

¹⁰⁷ *Church and Chapel*, 106.

¹⁰⁸ *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

¹⁰⁹ *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

¹¹⁰ SRO, B/A/12 ii/29.

¹¹¹ Prees Green Circuit minutes: SA, 2775/1, Quarter day 23 Sept. 1839, Newtown committee meeting, 30 Jan. 1843.

¹¹² SA, 2775/1, Quarter day 1849.

¹¹³ *Church and Chapel*, 106.

almost 100 sittings.¹¹⁴ In 1853 it was estimated that within Newtown chapelry there were about 12 resident Nonconformist families.¹¹⁵

In 1860 Newtown chapelry was established as an ecclesiastical parish, comprising the townships of Newtown, Northwood and Wolverley. Consent was given by the Lord Bishop of Lichfield on 8 August 1861, the Order in Council given in November of that year.¹¹⁶

On the death of the Revd. Dixon in 1862, the parishioners struggled to appoint a new minister. At issue were the responsibilities of the parishioners under the 1665 consecration deed versus involvement of the lord of the manor, who held the advowson to Wem rectory, and the low value of the living.¹¹⁷ The Revd. Thomas Crossfield was appointed.

A parsonage house was provided, for the first time, in 1864 on the glebe land, formerly Husbands Croft and Hare Croft.¹¹⁸ The minister now received £40 per annum from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and £10 from the inhabitants of the parish.¹¹⁹

The brick chapel, after just 30 years in use, was now judged ‘a poor and sorry structure’, its ‘arrangements ... the pews, pulpit, singing gallery etc.’ outdated.¹²⁰ Funds to build a replacement were raised by subscription in 1867, with a large donation from Mary Maddocks and her son Thomas, of The Woodlands, Wolverley,¹²¹ who also donated a plot adjoining the original churchyard to the north.¹²² Services continued in the old church during construction. The foundation stone was laid in May 1868 and the church was consecrated in April 1869.¹²³ The old church was then demolished and its materials sold to defray the building costs.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, the Revd. Crossfield left for another Shropshire parish and the difficulties of appointing to the living re-emerged. The rector of Wem, the Revd. Harry Vane Russell, wrote that, since the abolition of church rates, the Newtown parishioners had declined to contribute their £10 per annum to the minister’s stipend. Russell, a kinsman of the duke of Cleveland,

¹¹⁴ *Church and Chapel*, 107–8. See Northwood.

¹¹⁵ TNA, ED xxx.

¹¹⁶ SA, 1416, box 46; SA, P208/V/1/1; SA, P295/F/1/1/1; Cranage, 708–9.

¹¹⁷ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 27 March 1863, 4.

¹¹⁸ *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

¹¹⁹ *Glebe Terriers*, 2, 44.

¹²⁰ *Wellington Jnl*, 24 Apr. 1869, 8; *Whitchurch Herald*, 24 Apr. 1869.

¹²¹ *Eddowes’s Jnl*, 4 Dec. 1867.

¹²² Deed, 16 July 1868, Thomas Maddocks conveys to Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England a parcel of 1 r. 37 p, part of Chapel Field: copy at Newtown church.

¹²³ *Shrewsbury Chron.*, 23 Apr. 1869, 6; *Wellington Jnl*, 24 Apr. 1869, 8; *Whitchurch Herald*, 24 Apr. 1869.

¹²⁴ *Whitchurch Herald*, 12 Mar. 1870.

had attempted to engage the lord of the manor in supporting Newtown church, but to no avail. He proposed that the lord of the manor should contribute £50 per annum, the rector of Wem £50, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners an additional £100, on the condition that the patronage should be given to either the lord of the manor or the bishop. Failing this, Russell offered to pay £50 per annum himself, on the condition that the parishioners should resume their, now trivial, £10 contribution.¹²⁵

In 1884, the incumbent, the Revd. H.J. Hope, reported to the diocese of Lichfield that Newtown church had 220 sittings, while the population of the ecclesiastical district was 400, 'consisting of farmers, labourers and one squire'. The present endowment was £75 and the parsonage house. It was proposed to raise £400 or £500 to increase the endowment, and £400 had been offered.¹²⁶ In 1907, Hope oversaw the transfer of the patronage of Newtown to the rector of Wem, in consideration of the latter providing £50 per annum.¹²⁷

The vicarage house was sold in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1973, Newtown was included in a group ministry with Edstaston, Lee Brockhurst, Loppington, Wem and Whixall.¹²⁸

In response to a diocesan survey in 1977, the then incumbent reported that church attendance was in general decline. The parish population was 220 and there were 40 communicants the previous Easter and 50 at Christmas. There were just two baptisms in the past year. The Mothers' Union was active, however, and a parish newsletter was sold.¹²⁹

In 2019 the Revd Adam Clayton, rural dean of Wem and Whitchurch, was priest in charge of Newtown, with Myddle, Broughton and Loppington.

The Chapel and Predecessor to the Church, Newtown

Newtown chapelry to Wem was founded by the residents of Northwood, Wolverley and Newtown because they lived so far from the parish church. Between 1645 and 1655, they purchased a large timber-framed house, located in the southern part of the current

¹²⁵ Letter dated '9 December' [1872 x 1881], at Newtown church.

¹²⁶ *Wellington Jnl*, 6 Sept. 1884, 5.

¹²⁷ *London Gazette*, 17 May 1907; Letter from Ecclesiastical Commission to Revd. H.A. Pugh, Newtown Vicarage, 30 Apr. 1943: original at Newtown church.

¹²⁸ *London Gazette*, 26 Apr. 1973; SA, P295/F/2/1/1; Letter from Church Commission to Parochial Church Council of Newtown, 27 Apr. 1973: original at Newtown church.

¹²⁹ Diocese of Lichfield, Diocesan Survey 1977: completed draft, 31 Mar. 1977, at Newtown church.

churchyard, and made an addition to it. The first baptism was registered there in April 1659, but the chapel was not consecrated at that time due to the Civil War and lack of sufficient endowment. Owners of estates in the area agreed to provide £10 per annum for a minister and the chapel was consecrated in 1665. In 1754, Revd Samuel Garbet the younger obtained £200 worth of Queen Anne's Bounty for the purchase of freehold lands, the income going towards the curacy. In addition, Francis Chambre of Wolverley Hall (d. 1791) left 40s. per annum for repairs. He is commemorated by a wall monument in the current church.

The chapel building is shown in detail in a watercolour dated 25 July 1791 by the Revd Edward Williams. The timber-framed house was of two storeys, close-studded and with diagonal struts to the gable, reflecting the relatively high status of its owner. The gable-end of the house faced east towards the road, the box-panelled chapel range added at right-angles to the right. It was an unusual time for church-building when little funding was available, hence the timber-framed construction. The painting shows the box panels with brick infill, though the north gable end (ecclesiastical east) was of brick. There are two doorways, one into the north side of the former house, in the angle of the two ranges, and another towards the right of the new range, which may have been a priest's door as the pattern of framing changes slightly at that point, perhaps denoting the chancel. This range also has a three-light window to the nave and a round-arched window to the ecclesiastical east end. The windows of the former house are probably the original ones, whilst a bellcote was added to the gable apex. Overall the building was said to be 54 ft long and 20 ft wide, containing a font, pulpit, communion table and convenient seats.¹³⁰

In 1835-6, the chapel was rebuilt and enlarged to accommodate 50 sittings additional to the 160 formerly provided, at a cost of £417 12s. These additional seats were to be free, a condition of the grants provided by the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS) and the Diocesan Society. A proposed plan was drawn up by Thomas Francis, builder of Wem, in 1835. The surveyor was thought to have been Thomas Walton. It was a simple T-shaped brick building with single-chamber nave and chancel, with transept to the rear and bell turret at the west end. All the openings had round-arched heads, with doorways to the west end and right-hand side of the front elevation, the latter leading to the communion table. A second ICBS plan labelled 'T. Francis Builder 1836' is similar to the first but shows a gallery 'for 40

¹³⁰ Newman and Pevsner, *Shropshire*, 445; E. Mercer, *English Architecture to 1900: The Shropshire Experience* (Logaston Press, 2003), 288 and footnote; SA, 6001/372/3, p. 67; Cranage, 708–9; Garbet, 314–15, 325.

free sittings' at the west end, a pew for 10 free sittings adjacent to the communion table and an oak pulpit against the south wall, which would have been visible from the transept. It is signed William Dixon, minister, and Thomas Maddocks and John Davies, chapel wardens.¹³¹ The chapel was described in 1851 as 'a neat edifice of brick' with 'nave, transepts (*sic*), and a square tower' containing one bell.¹³²

In 1861, Newtown separated from Wem parish, the chapel becoming a parish church. Just 30 years after it was built, the brick chapel was deemed unfit and was replaced by the present church.

King Charles the Martyr Church, Newtown

The new lancet-style church was designed in 1868 by Edward Haycock the younger of Shrewsbury and built by Messrs Nevett of Ironbridge at a cost of £1,200. Brothers Samuel and John Nevett had worked on several church restoration projects in Shropshire, often with high-profile architects, and were held in high esteem. The church was designed to accommodate 219 persons. The foundation stone was laid in May 1868, celebrated by a service in the old church, which was still standing and immediately adjacent. It was led by Revds S. Wilkinson, T. Crossfield (incumbent) and J. Wright (curate of Wem). Cheers and a silver trowel were given to Mrs Maddocks of Wolverley and her son, Thomas, who had provided the land along with a generous donation towards the new church.¹³³ A copy of the church plan, with measurements, is available in the vestry, though annotated to show a proposed Sunday school area. The old church was demolished in 1870.¹³⁴ Compared with its predecessor chapels, the new church occupies an open and imposing position, at the road junction in the centre of Newtown 'village'.

The building consists of a nave with west bellcote and south porch, and a chancel with lean-to vestry to the north. It is built of snecked Grinshill flagstone with dressings of Grinshill freestone, including window and door surrounds, angle buttresses, sill bands and hoodmoulds. The roofs are of Staffordshire tiles with pierced ridge tiles and raised stone copings. The nave is lit by plain lancet windows, single or grouped. More detailing is provided for the chancel windows: those facing north and south with cusped heads, the latter

¹³¹ Lambeth Palace Library, ICBS 01539 & 01539a.

¹³² Bagshaw, 337; SA, P208/V/1/1; SA, P295/F/1/1/1; Cranage, 708–9.

¹³³ *Wellington Jnl*, 30 May 1868, 7.

¹³⁴ *Whitchurch Herald*, 12 Mar. 1870.

with a sill band which rises vertically and becomes a hoodmould. The east window has three stepped lancets. On the north side, the vestry has a narrow doorway and chimney stack in the right-hand corner. The porch, like the chancel, is afforded more detail, with pointed-arched entrance under a hoodmould, decorative buttresses and pierced quatrefoils to the side walls. The open gabled bellcote is in a similar style and contains a ring of six hemispherical bells, by John Warner & Sons of London, installed in 1889.¹³⁵

The interior is plain with a king-post roof, central aisle and a pointed chancel arch of two orders of chamfered mouldings. This simplicity accentuates the chancel screen of delicate wrought iron scrollwork, with an overthrow in the form of an ogee arch. In the corner, to the left of the chancel arch, is an alabaster and marble pulpit supported by ringed, foliate piers, dated 1898. The organ is against the north wall of the chancel and was added in 1883, whilst the stone reredos bears a carving in high relief of the Last Supper. The octagonal decorated alabaster font is opposite the porch entrance.

The most distinguishing factor in the church is its stained glass, which dates from 1869 to 1923. Not only allowing in light and colour, there are some unusual depictions. That in the north east nave window is a Boer War memorial to Thomas Brassey Maddock (*sic*), depicting a knight rising out of his tomb into the arms of an angel, modelled on Sir Joseph Noel Paton's painting, *Mors Janua Vitae*, by Curtis, Ward and Hughes, 1901. Opposite is another Boer War memorial, to John Eaton Tagg, which depicts a more traditional nativity scene. A window depicting King Charles the Martyr is in the northwest of the nave. At the top, the King is shown in 1619 holding a book (the Bible?). Underneath, he is shown in October 1642 receiving communion at the altar of St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, with the stained glass of the east window clearly visible in the background. It is dated 1923, by Shrigley and Hunt, and was a bequest of Revd H.P. Lee, vicar from 1904 to 1923. One of the west lancets has stained glass contemporary with the building of the church, *Noli Me Tangere*, by Saunders and Co. of London. The second lancet is by Charles Evans, 1880, depicting the Beheading of St John the Baptist. Also by Evans is the east window, the three lancets showing the Baptism, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Between the west lancets and overlain by the bell ropes is a shaped marble monument with a vase, to Francis Chambre (d. 1791), which would have come from the first church. Elsewhere is a marble wall monument with foliate decoration to

¹³⁵ *Wellington Jnl*, 7 Dec. 1889, 7.

Thomas Maddocks of the Woodlands (d. 1847, aged 36), his wife Mary (d. 1897) and their three-year-old son, Thomas Parton.¹³⁶

Churchyard including Newtown war memorial

The war memorial is located in the churchyard, east of the church in a prominent position. Of Grinshill stone, it takes the form of an octagonal Latin cross on a tall octagonal base on a three-tier octagonal plinth. On the front of the cross is an inverted sword of sacrifice. The inscription on the base reads: 'To the/ Glory of God/ and in grateful/ memory of the men/ who died in the/ Great War/ 1914-1919/ Greater love hath no/ man than this that a/ man lay down his life/ for his friends', followed by five names: Thomas Huxley, James Park, John Joseph Park, Edwin Speakman and Robert John Williams. A second face reads '1939-1945/ Peter Joseph Lockett/ George E. Bowen'. The memorial was unveiled and dedicated in June 1920.¹³⁷

Inside the rectangular churchyard, fine cedar trees are spaced out between the gravestones. Towards the south, on the site of the earlier chapels, is a large square-plan monument enclosed within iron railings which is dedicated to the Maddocks family. It has a moulded plinth and cappings and classical-style motifs. At the northwest corner of the churchyard is a small gabled structure, rendered under a tiled roof with door to east end, which contained the engine for the organ. It was built on a narrow strip of land which extended the churchyard to the south and west sides, and is shown on an undated plan labelled 'Extension to churchyard and site of electric power house'. It is probably contemporary with the installation of the organ in 1883.¹³⁸

Newtown Old Vicarage

The vicarage was constructed in 1864 after the decision to establish Newtown as a separate parish from Wem in 1861. As there are similarities with the contemporary National School, it may have been designed by the same architect, James Denham of Wem. It was located some

¹³⁶ Newman and Pevsner, *Shropshire*, 445; Historic England, List Entry No. 1236696; Cranage, 708–9; 'The Haycocks', *Shropshire Magazine*, Feb. 1960; Information from church (with thanks to Margaret Fox); *Wellington Jnl*, 1929, article by M. Kynaston; SRO, B/C/12/1/339 (index only – the faculty for the King Charles window is dated 1938?).

¹³⁷ War Memorials Register: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/37958>

¹³⁸ Information from Newtown church.

distance east of the church for historical reasons, in a field labelled ‘Husbands Croft’ on the Tithe map of 1845. This field and one adjoining had been sold by John Groome in 1825 to the governors of Queen Anne’s Bounty for the perpetual augmentation of the curacy of Newtown. Initially the land would have helped to provide an income for the curate, then the Revd Richard Parkes of Loppington.

The tall two-storey vicarage, with elements of Tudor-Gothic style, is constructed of red brick under slate roofs with four tall brick stacks, an entrance turret and rectangular stone windows. It is an irregular arrangement with two adjoining ranges and projecting gabled bays. Between the two ranges and facing north east is the two-storey entrance turret with a dentilled and corbelled pyramidal roof.¹³⁹

West of the entrance to the vicarage is a small lodge of brown brick under a tiled roof with clustered shaft to the right end. It is single storey with an attic. A gabled front bay to the right has a large three-light window and a roundel in the gable, whilst in the angle to the left is the lean-to porch. The lodge is later than the vicarage, having been built between 1890 and 1902.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Tithe map (Newtown township); SA, P120/V/7/1; SA, P295/F/1/1/1.

¹⁴⁰ OS, Shropshire Sheet 14SW, 1st edition, 1890 & 2nd edition, 1902.