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Newport

Salters Hall

This text has been prepared for VCH Shropshire by Professor Richard Hoyle with the research assistance of Dr Judith Everard, Linda Fletcher and Wendy Horton. It is made available to readers in advance of its full publication. We welcome suggestions for improvement, references and, of course, we invite readers to point out errors.

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Salters's Hall

Salter's Hall stands on Salter's Lane, a little way outside the town on the road to Longford. The earliest map (by William Hill in c. 1672) confirms that it had an isolated site but it is possible that it was built at the rear end of burgage plots extending south-west from the High Street.

The name is not found before the middle of the of the seventeenth century. Salter's Lane is mentioned in 1638.[1] The 1673 conveyance refers to Salters Hall alias Newport Hall, perhaps suggesting that the latter was an older rather than an alternative name.[2] It has always been assumed that Salter's Hall took its name from the lawyer John Salter of Newport (d. 1532), latterly chief justice of North Wales. His will refers to the chief messuage place in Newport in which he dwelled and which he had feoffed to him and his wife and the longest liver, and then to his male heirs. In their absence half of the property was then to pass to his daughter Anne and her husband Thomas Chetwynd. This share was to include the messuage, specified lands and all the burgages lying between the end of Beaumaris Lane (i.e. where it met the High St.) and the mills of Newport. His other daughter, Margaret, was to have £100 and an equal share of Salter's land pound for pound.[3]

The Salters were a long-established Newport family, resident in the town by 1320.[4] John Salter's father, John elder, was also a lawyer who served for an extended period as clerk of the peace in Shropshire. He died in 1492. The elder John had achieved some standing in the town as his son asked to be buried in the parish church 'at the foot of the marble stone which lieth upon [over] the body of my father, as near the end of the alter of St Thomas as conveniently may be'. Randle Holme described the elder John's gravestone as being inscribed 'with a full length figure in a gown'.[5]

[1] SA, 6000/19318 (ct roll 9 Nov. 1638).
[2] TNA, C54/4390 no. 2. It is also called Salter's Hall in the 1672 Hearth Tax, W. Watkins-Pitchford, *The Shropshire Hearth Tax of 1672* (1949), p. 84.
[3] TNA, PROB 11/24/75. It is not clear whether the text means all the burgages or all the testator's burgages. PROB 11/4/75; H. E. Staplyton-Cheywynd, *The Chetwyds of Ingestre* (1892), pp. 141-2.
[4] Everard, *Early Records*, no. 440. Roger Salter, a younger son of John Salter elder, was warden of the collegiate church in Newport and acted as executor to his brother. Roger Salter DD was a canon of Lichfield. Ibid., no. 68.
[5] Biographies of the the two John Salters are given in Sir John Baker, *The men of court, 1440 to 1550. A prosopography of the Inns of Court and Chancery and the Courts of Law* (Selden Soc., 2012), II, p. 1355.

It is possible that one or both of the two John Salters bought extensively in Newport[6] and erected a house in a slightly isolated position away from the town.[7] The clue to the origins of the house is that whilst it was deemed to be a freehold of the manor of Newport, the Salter's Hall lands also paid a rent to the burgesses. This is noted in an undated rental of the Burgesses estate's where the 6*s*. 2*d*. was paid by Mr Chetwynd. A rental of 1618 gives the rent owed by Sir Walter Chetwynd at 8*s*. 7*d*., but a much later (eighteenth-century) note gives the rent owed by the Earl of Shrewsbury as (again) 6*s*. 2*d*.[8] As a rent was owed to the burgesses, it is a reasonable assumption that Salter's Hall and its lands were initially land granted by them, and the land in question maybe the 'Marsh towards Longford' granted by the Burgesses in 1343 and 1356.[9] Unfortunately, in the absence of the earlier deeds for the Chetwynd/Talbot estate in Newport, there is no way of confirming such a suppostition.

After the younger John Salter's death, the house remained in the hands of his Chetwynd descendants until the mid-seventeenth century. Walter Chetwynd was named of Newport in a settlement of 1593/4.[10] As Sir Walter Chetwynd of Ingestre in Staffordshire he retained lands in Newport on his death in 1638 (although he instructed his executors to sell them to raise portions for his daughters if necessary).[11] There is also a report that he rebuilt the house.[12] The manor suit roll for October 1642 gives the freeholder as Walter Chetwynd, Sir Walter's son.[13]

However, the descent of the house is then something of a mystery until it was bought by Thomas Talbot in 1673. Talbot's vendors were Sir John Williams of Minster Court on the Isle of Thanet and Richard Williams of London gent. However, the deed notes that the property conveyed had been the inheritance of Ralph Chetwynd late of Longway (in the township of Curborough and Elmhurst in Lichfield parish) and Charles Chetwyn his son. Ralph evidently died in 1653 although no will can be found. His son was named as being 'of Salter's Hall' in the Visitation of Staffordshire, made in 1663-4. He later lived in London.[14]

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[6] The will of the younger John Salter refers to lands he had purchased.
[7] Dr Everard has suggested that it may be the house of the Aula/Halle/Hall family of Newport. It may have come into the hands of the Salters by descent or purchase (for which see TNA, C1/48 no. 371, but the land contested here is not the property later called Salter's Hall).
[8] SA, NB/B/1 (unfoliated); NTM/3/2.
[9] Everard, *Early Records*, nos 37-40, 44. In the latter it is called 'Alisaunders Marsh'.
[10] Staffs. RO, D1798/HM Chetwynd/30, settlement 1593/4.
[11] Staffs. RO, D1798/HM Chetwynd/34, will, 1638; grant of special livery [undated].
[12] Staplyton-Cheywynd, *Chetwyds of Ingestre*, pp. 183, 189.
[13] SA, 6000/19438.
[14] VCH Staffordshire XIV, p. 234: 'The Heraldic visitations of Staffordshire in 1614 and 1663-4', *Staffordshire Historical Collections* V pt 2, p. 83.

Ralph was a nephew of Sir Walter's, the son of a younger brother, Thomas, who pre-deceased Walter Chetwynd. These were members of a cadet line of the Chetwynds with no descent from Sir Walter (d. 1638). It therefore seems likely that Ralph Chetwynd acquired the house and its lands by purchase rather than inheritance.

Hill's map and survey gives us our first detailed account of the house and its lands.[15] The house, its outhouses, court and garden were leased to a Mr William Grosvenor for 21 years. Grosvenor also held the lands attached to the house but at will. These consisted of three fields all lying to the south-west of Salter's Hall and extending to the west to the Strine, Gorsty field, the Broomy field and the Webleys, each of them subdivided, and extending in the whole to 32a 3r 20p.

Salters Hall and its lands then remained in the possession of John Talbot to his death in 1743 and then returned to the possession of the earls of Shrewsbury by purchase in 1745. It is not known who bought the lands of Salter's Hall when the Earl of Shrewsbury sold his estate in Newport in 1788-9. The earl retained Salter's Hall and the field to the south alongside Salter's Lane (The Grove), the former to be the basis of a Catholic chapel and house for the priest serving the chapel, provision made necessary by the earl's sale of Longford Hall. The development of the chapel is considered elsewhere.

The tithe map shows that the land formerly attached to Salter's Hall was then in the hands of a number of owners and had started to be developed. It seems likely that the field boundaries had been rationalized. Two lanes had been made to give access to the individual fields, the southern most of which led to a small settlement which had developed around the windmill build in c. 1798. By the time of the tithe map this also gave access to the newly-made canal.

Around 1828 John Talbot 16th earl of Shrewsbury, developed Salter's Hall with a church and a presbytery, the latter including within it some or all of the medieval (or sub-medieval) building. In 1835 he conveyed Salter's Hall and the adjacent property to father Thomas Walsh of Wolverhampton, then Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District.[16] It was erroneously credited to his ownership in the tithe schedule made in 1840. For a period after the foundation of the Bishopric of Shrewsbury in 1850, Salters Hall served as the residence of the Bishop until he moved to Shrewsbury in 1868.[17] At the time of writing it continues in the

[15] Hoyle (ed.), *Surveys of Thomas and John Talbot*, p. 4 and pp. 6-7 for Hill's map. For the eighteenth-century occupiers of the Hall and its lands, see this edition passim.
[16] TNA, C54/15624 no. 20. For Walsh see ODNB.
[17] Peter Phillips, 'James Brown: first bishop of Shrewsbury', in John P. Marmion (ed.), *Shrewsbury. Millennium essays for a Catholic Diocese* (2000), p. 155.

possession of the Roman Catholic diocese and is used as a presbytery. A school to serve the Catholic population of the neighbourhood was erected in the south-west corner of the grounds of the hall in or about 1867.[18]

[18] See ‘Schools’ below.

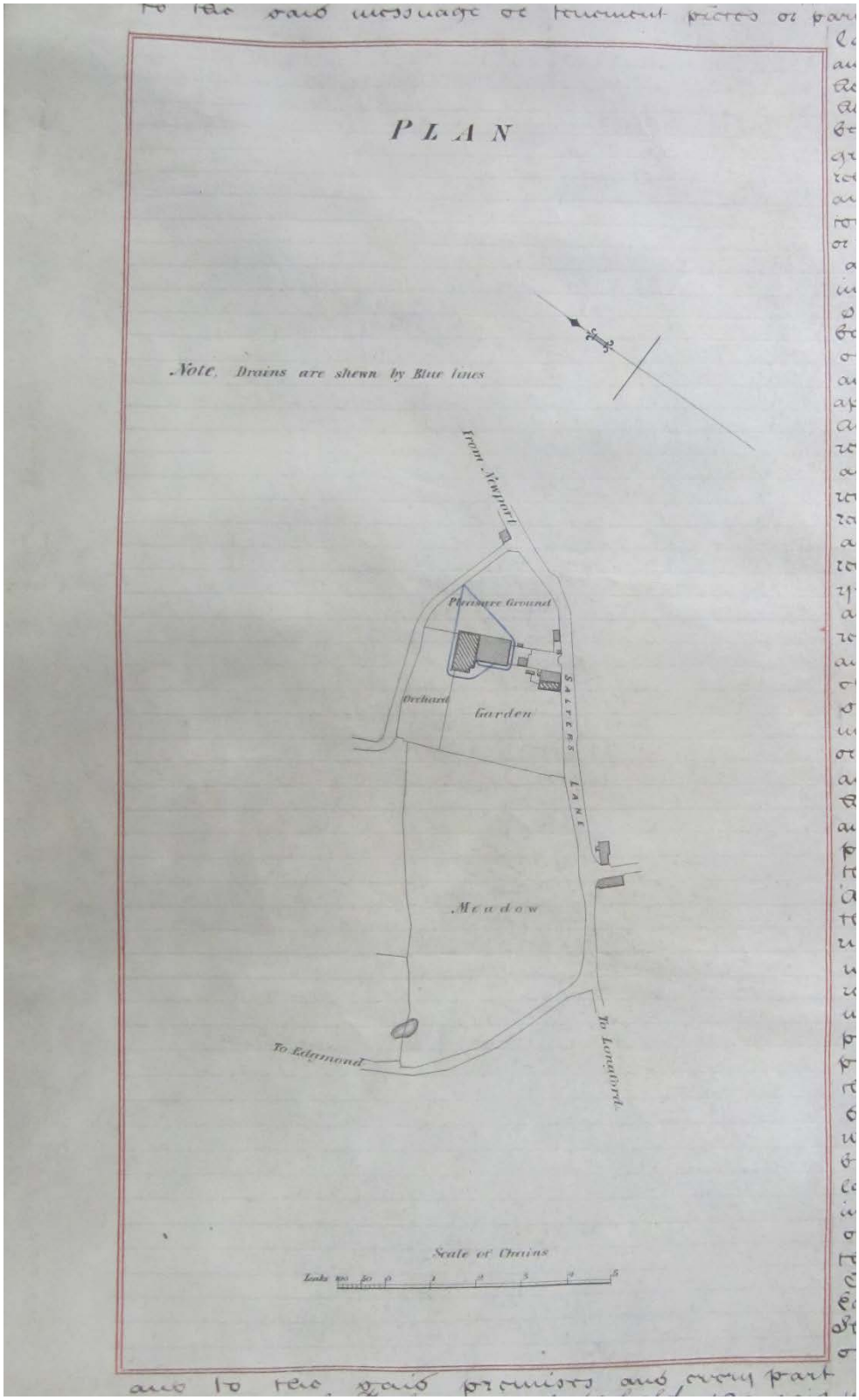

Figure 1. Salters Hall in 1835 on its conveyance to Bishop Thomas Walsh

Source: TNA C54/15624 no. 20 (enrolment of 1861).