VCH SHROPSHIRE

Wem Rural

Edstaston

by Judith Everard and Wendy Horton
edited, with additional material, by R. W. Hoyle

This is a draft text prepared by Dr Judith Everard and Wendy Horton for VCH Shropshire. The present version has been prepared by Professor Richard Hoyle who has added additional material.

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 April 2026, we are publishing as draft text our account of Edstaston.

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.

The illustrations referred to in the text will be found in another file which will be published shortly after this text file.

We welcome suggestions, corrections and additional references.

April 2026

VCH Shropshire acknowledges with gratitude a grant from Wem Rural Parish Council towards the research costs of this history of Edstaston.

© VCH Shropshire Ltd 2026. The text may be freely downloaded. It is supplied for research purposes only and is not to be reproduced further without permission.

[This page is intentionally blank]

EDSTASTON

Edstaston was the largest rural township of Wem parish, and one of the most populous. Whereas township names such as Aston, Coton or Tilley could belong to later or subsidiary Anglo-Saxon settlements, Edstaston is likely to have been a primary estate and to have had a longer, more independent history than most of the villages of Wem rural.[1] The presence of St Mary's church, apparently older than Wem parish church, adds to this impression (Figure 1). Yet Edstaston was as firmly integrated into the manorial regime of Wem as the other rural townships.

The township was and is uniformly rural in character. It lacks a recognizable village centre. Settlement - and landownership - was dispersed. This was an area of small dispersed farms, many of which specialised in dairying and cheese production. Agriculture was, and remains, the main economic activity. The 'canal boom' in the first half of the 19th century was a temporary phenomenon. The most tangible remains of it are two canal-side settlements, which are now peaceful rural hamlets.

LANDSCAPE, SETTLEMENT AND BUILDINGS

Boundaries and township origins

Edstaston was a large township north of Wem town. The township area was 2,018a 1r 2p (approx. 817 h.). It tapered in width from about 6 km in the north to 3 km in the south, measuring from about 2.5 km to 3 km from north to south. It was bounded by Wem township to the south, Lowe and Northwood to the west, Whixall and Coton to the north, and Lacon to the east, and was thus surrounded by other rural townships of Wem parish, apart from Whixall in the northwest. The township boundaries are largely indistinct field boundaries. The northern boundary, with Coton, was marked by Quina Brook; the boundary formed the northern limit of Edstaston Park and continued west through the middle of Caster Pool; the southern boundary was at the limits of Creamore (east of the Wem-Whitchurch road) and the Sambrook lands (west of that road), continuing west at the limits of the open fields of Wem as far as the boundary of Lowe and Ditches. The eastern and western sides of the township were formerly areas of unenclosed woodland and marsh, where the boundaries might have

[1] Gelling, *PN Shrops*., I, xiv, 101.

been defined at a later date, after the establishment of the Edstaston settlement in its relatively favourable, central location.

Edstaston is identified with the two-hide manor of *Stanestune* in Domesday Book. The place-name is Old English 'Ēadstān's estate'.[2]

Landscape

The township's topography is of a relatively uniform elevation, ranging from *c*.100 m. to *c*.80 m. ASL, generally higher in the west and lower in the east.

The superficial geology is boulder clay soil, described as 'cold and moist', but improved by drainage.[3] Lower ground between St Mary's church and Edstaston Park was the course of a stream flowing into Caster Pool to the northwest. The bed of the stream and Caster Pool were adopted for the course of the Prees Branch canal in 1806.

In the Middle Ages, large portions of the township and adjacent territory consisted of marsh and woodland. In 1086, there was woodland in the lord's hand for the pasture of sixty pigs.[4] To the west, Edstaston bounded the northern part of Lowe and Northwood, poorly drained and wooded areas which were not enclosed until the late Middle Ages (northern Lowe) and the 16th-17th centuries (Northwood).[5] At the northwest limit of Edstaston, 'Caster Pool' was 'above a mile in compass' prior to being drained and enclosed; the parish boundary with Whixall (Prees par.) ran across the pool.[6] To its east, still on the parish boundary was 'Mossy Pools', enclosed by 1561,[7] abutting the woodland pasture of Edstaston Park, which was not cultivated until the 17th century. In the northeast, Chettall Wood included a 'turbary or turf moor' in which have been found preserved tree trunks.[8]

The township's three open fields - its best arable lands - were near the centre (Chapel Field) and east (Cross Field and Whorrow Field) of the territory. Their location is shown on a sketch plan by Garbet (Figure 2).[9]

The clearance, drainage and enclosure of wastes and open fields was largely complete by the end of the 17th century. The landscape since then has been uniformly agricultural, with pastoral land use predominating from the 18th century.

---

[2] Gelling, *PN Shrops*., I, 121-2.
[3] Garbet, 260; Bagshaw, 330.
[4] Domesday Book, xxx.
[5] See 'Lowe and Ditches' and 'Northwood' chapters.
[6] Garbet, 270. It was still 'a pool' in 1561: *Survey, 1561*, 110-11.
[7] *Survey 1561*, 96-7; Arundel map (1631).
[8] Garbet, 266.
[9] SA, 9053, file A no. 1; Garbet, 261.

Communications

Roads

A network of lanes connects different parts of Edstaston and the adjacent townships and Whixall to the northwest. 'Pepper Street' in the northeast leads to Prees village. The sharp angle of the lane north of Edstaston Wharf is the legacy of lanes converging on the gate of the medieval park. The lane running west from Creamore Bank, past Highfields and Lowe Hall, to the hamlet of Horton was designated 'the king's highway' in 1561.[10]

The main route from Wem to Whitchurch traverses the east of the township, as the northerly continuation of New Street, Wem, via Creamore Bank. Formerly a series of lanes, its establishment as a turnpike road was authorised in 1751.[11] It is now the B5476. A new turnpike road was authorised in 1811 'to facilitate the conveyance of lime, coals and other commodities to and from the Ellesmere Canal'. From the Wem-Whitchurch turnpike at Quina Brook, it ran east to join the Sandford-Hodnet turnpike. An additional short branch of this turnpike road in Edstaston connected it with Park Bridge wharf; it joined the Wem-Whitchurch turnpike a short distance south of Quina Brook, where an existing lane led east to Edstaston Hall.[12]

Canal

The Prees branch of the Ellesmere Canal opened in 1806. From the canal junction in Whixall, it traversed the northern part of Edstaston and terminated at the Wem-Whitchurch turnpike road at Quina Brook. The presence of the canal had an important effect on settlement, population and commerce in the township. For a short period it was an important transhipment point for Shrewsbury, so much so that a railway or tramline was canvassed in the mid-1810s linking the wharf to the town.[13] The extension of the canal to Shrewsbury vastly reduced the trade at Edstaston. Commercial navigation on the Edstaston section of the canal ended in the 1920s. Sections of it were filled-in in the 1960s and reclaimed as agricultural land (below, Economic History).

---

[10] *Survey 1561*, 48-9.

[11] An Act for Repairing the Roads from the Town of Shrewsbury, through Ellesmere in the County of Salop, and Overton in the County of Flint, to Wrexham in the County of Denbigh. 25 Geo. 2. cap. 22, 26 Mar. 1752.

[12] SA, DP272, 29 Sept. 1810; An Act for Making and Maintaining a Road from the Wem and Whitchurch Road, to the Sandford and Hodnet Road, both in the County of Salop. 51 Geo. 3, cap. 44, 6 May 1811; SA, MI9064/1 (copy of 1811 Act); 1631 Map.

[13] *SC* 30 Apr. 1824; 14 Jan. 1825 (letter by 'Prospectus').

Railway

The Shrewsbury-Crewe railway line opened in 1858; it traverses the east of the township, on a northeasterly alignment. The nearest stations are Wem and Prees (the latter situated in Coton, Wem par.).

Population

Edstaston was the largest and most populous rural township of Wem. In 1327, there were six households wealthy enough to pay the lay subsidy, the most in any of the rural townships, and only one household fewer than in Wem town.[14] Seventeen households were assessed for the poll tax in 1381: thirteen headed by a married couple, one by a single man, and three by unmarried women.[15] In 1561 sixteen dwellings (fourteen 'messuages' and two cottages, and also one ruined messuage) were reported in Edstaston.[16] The crown survey of 1589 reported twenty-two households: twelve 'messuages' and ten cottages.[17] For the 1672 Hearth Tax, thirty households were liable; again, the most in any of the rural townships, but only a few more than for Coton and Tilley.[18] Additionally, around a third of households may have been exempt from paying Hearth Tax on grounds of poverty; hence the total number of households in Edstaston *c*.1670 can be estimated at forty-five.[19]

In 1800/01 the population of Edstaston township was 306.[20] By 1811, it had increased to 352, a relatively large increase probably explained by the commercial development associated with the arrival of the canal in 1806. The population increased to 456 in 1851, declining thereafter. In 1861, the population of 383 included sixteen people residing on canal boats that were moored within the township on census night. The population in 1901 had decreased to 287. Thereafter separate figures are not readily available, but it is unlikely that the population of the former township today exceeds its highest 19th-century level, although by 2011 the population of Wem Rural as a whole had markedly increased from its late 20th-century nadir.[21]

Medieval settlement

[14] *Shropshire Lay Subsidy 1327*, 144.
[15] *Poll Taxes … 1381. Part 2*, 394.
[16] *Survey 1561*, 56-7, 96-113.
[17] TNA, LR 2/225.
[18] *Shropshire Hearth Tax Roll of 1672*, 30-2.
[19] Based on the average for parishes in North Bradford hundred: *Shropshire Hearth Tax Exemptions*, Table 3.
[20] *Wem Parish Registers*, 778-9.
[21] See the discussion of the population of Wem Urban versus Wem Rural in the 'Introduction' chapter.

Edstaston was an Anglo-Saxon settlement, but the pattern of that settlement is unknown. The early development of a village around St Mary's church can be conjectured, based on this being a favourable place for habitation, the possibility that the church has Anglo-Saxon origins, and earthworks that were formerly visible to its north. In Domesday Book, the value of Edstaston was said to have been 7*s*. in 1066; it was waste when acquired by William Pantulf, but by 1086 it was valued at 20*s*. This increase in value indicates significant investment in just twenty years, and has more in common with the history of Wem, the site of Pantulf's castle, than of the other estates that became Wem's rural townships.

A park was created in the mid-13th century at the northern limit of the township, bordering Coton. Four medieval moated sites have been identified in Edstaston, of which three are also located at the limits of the township: Creamore (southeast), Highfields (south) and Poolhead (northwest); the fourth being at Edstaston House. Medieval moated sites were constructed as status symbols, their distribution reflecting wealth and status in the rural hinterland. Samuel Garbet believed the moated site in Creamore (also known as Cramer or Cranmore) had Saxon origins and was the home of a considerable person. Located 500m north east of Creamore Farm, on ground sloping gently down to the east, Garbet described the site as covered in trees and bushes with a broad and deep moat around it. The moat was labelled 'Drigadrake' on the OS map of 1833, meaning 'haunt of the dragon'. In 1889, William Phillips described it as a square moat with banks on the north and west sides, the water supplied via a small rivulet. The well-preserved site survives as a roughly square island, 36 x 40m and 0.5m high, with water-filled arms on all four sides, 8-10m wide and 2m deep.[22]

Highfields moated site is located on the north side of the lane between Ryebank and Lowe. It belonged to a medieval estate known as 'Sandbrook lands'. It is shown within an enclosure labelled 'Moteyard' on the survey map of 1631, by which time the dwelling house had been re-located to the south side of the lane, when it was owned by Lawrence Tunney. In 1889, William Phillips described the moat as very large, 167 x 177ft, with deep ditches partly filled with water on the west, north and east sides. It was formerly in a meadow, now a garden. By 1981, the south east and south west corners had been infilled whilst a 20m-length

[22] Garbet, 262-3; OS map, 1 inch to 1 mile, sheet 73SW (1833); Margaret Gelling, *Place-names of Shropshire*, part 5 (2006), 244; SA, 6001/240: William Phillips, 'Moated Dwellings of Salop' (1889), 13; HE list no. 1016827; Shropshire HER PRN 01013; OS Maps, 25in, Shropshire sheets XIV.15, 16 (1881 edn). Lidar data, Creamore: https://www.archiuk.com/archi/supertest/supermap.html/

of the south arm was still discernible. The level island measured 55m square, the ditches c.10m wide and 2.2m deep.[23]

The moated site at Poolhead was part of a large copyhold estate belonging to the Moodies. The Poolhead House estate was enfranchised *c.* 1650 by Richard Menlove who had acquired the copyhold from the estate of Richard Ash: in 1561 the tenement was held by the three unmarried daughters of Nicolas Moody as co-heiresses.[24] Garbet described the part water-filled moat as being a short distance from the present house. In 1889, Philips noted that the north and east sides had been recently drained and there were bricks and stones in the interior. In 1983, these arms were part water-filled again and were observed north east of the farmhouse with a possible entrance in the corner. To the west, a small leat led to a rectangular fishpond. The farmhouse may occupy part of the island, the south arm destroyed by the road. Some well-preserved ridge and furrow was recorded in the field immediately to the north.[25]

The fourth moated site lay to the south of Westfield, a modern house built in the grounds of the demolished Edstaston House. It is plainly shown on a map of 1773 as three sides of a moat surrounding one end of a rectangular platform laid out as a garden: the eighteenth-century farm lay to the north. A pond appears to feed to the moat. (Figure 2A) Whilst this site passed unnoticed by both the tithe and Ordnance Survey, part of it survives as a field monument visible on Lidar.

The medieval Edstaston Park is marked on the 1631 map as a large, roughly circular enclosure surrounded by pales. It was still partly wooded. (Figure 3). It was one of five woods belonging to the Manor of Wem and was stocked with wild animals for hunting. By 1589, it was without deer or game, some trees were over 100 years old and the herbage was farmed out by the Bannaster family. There were no pales left in Garbet's time, but the circumference measured two miles and was easy to follow. The park had been enclosed by 1648 and divided into fields. There was Park House within the park and a small dwelling on the north west edge. On the east side, Garbet labelled Ryal (Royal?) Gate on his sketch plan (Figure 2), opposite the lane leading to Edstaston Hall.[26]

Also shown on the 1631 map was the ancient Chittall Wood, on the north east edge of the township adjacent to Lacon and held by Sir Arthur Mainwaring of Edstaston Hall.

---

[23] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 263-4; SA, 6001/240: Phillips, 'Moated dwellings', 14; OS Map, 25in, Shropshire sheet XIV.7 (1881 edn.); Shropshire HER PRN 01016

[24] Arundel Castle, Ms MD59, p. 37; *Survey 1561*, 108-9, 110-11.

[25] Garbet, 270; SA, 6001/240, William Phillips, 15; Shropshire HER PRN 03691, 29099

[26] 1561 survey pp. 100-01 ('the croft at Ryall Yate'), SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Wem Survey, 1589; Garbet, 262; SA, 9043/A, Garbet, sketch plan; Shropshire HER PRN 07577

Originally part of the Lord's demesne, it was a copyhold of the Mainwaring family as early as 1561.[27] By 1631 the tree cover was sparse.

By the late Middle Ages there were numerous farmsteads dispersed across the central part of the township, with twenty-five copyhold tenants in 1561.[28] Their rather regular spacing might indicate organised allocation of customary tenancies by the lord of the manor.

The Built Environment

There were dwellings on each side of the church in the 17th and 18th centuries. The building to the east was the chaplain's house until 1548 when the chapel lost its endowment and the priest was retired. In 1631 the property was held by Lawrance Whitakers as leasehold (Figure 4). By Garbet's time, it was a handsome messuage belonging to the Lloyds of Oswestry. A watercolour by Revd Edward Williams of the chapel of 1791, shows the property immediately to its east consisted of a single-storey range with chimney and a higher, hipped-roof building behind. A timber-framed dwelling is depicted by Williams to the west of the church, its box-panelled east end facing the lane (Figure 5). In 1631 it was held by Richard Wells, and in 1707, the Wells family sold it to Andrew Downes. The field to the north was named Hallywell Meadow in 1631 and Holliwel Meadow in Garbet's time.[29]

To the south west of the church in 1631 was a small enclosure marked 'A' adjacent to Byre Croft where White Lodge now stands. The house fronted a track leading south west into Chapel field, one of the three medieval open fields of Edstaston. The 17th century timber-framed house is of two-storeys and probably two units, the framing partly concealed by roughcast and under a thatched roof. Facing west is a boarded front door, whilst to the rear is a lateral red brick stack. The north gable end faces the church, with a 3-light window to each storey and a gable with tie-beam, collar and raked struts. There are later additions.[30]

On the lane running east from the chapel in 1631 was a pinfold and three dispersed houses belonging to Thomas Harwar [Hayward], Thomas Evans and Allen Ellis. Garbet noted that Allen Ellys died in 1666, his estate passing to Thomas Payne of Moreton Corbet who had married his daughter in *c.*1650. The house was subsequently rebuilt or remodelled in

[27] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 260-1
[28] *Survey 1561*, 6. For dispersed farmsteads, see the Arundel map.
[29] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 264-5; SA, 9043/A, Garbet, plan; SA, 6001/372/3/71, Revd Edward Williams, 1791, watercolour
[30] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 261 ; HE list no. 1264492; Google street view, April 2009 .

brick by Daniel Payne (d. 1750), when it faced the main road (See Figure 4).[31] It was later known as (or was the site of) Edstaston House.

Some changes had occurred by the time of the tithe map of 1842 (Figure 6). The dwelling west of the chapel had been demolished and the property immediately east of the chapel is depicted as a ruin. In 1874, when the churchyard was extended, four old cottages in this location were demolished with no surviving remains. Further east in 1842, were two long ranges belonging to Henry Barker. He owned the dwelling opposite, described as a house, shop and croft, which was subsequently replaced. The probable farm ranges were no longer extant by 1901. White Lodge (above) was owned by William Rogers in 1842. There was another house on the opposite side of the track, but this too had been demolished by 1901. The alignment of the lane running east from the church had been altered and straightened by 1808, joining the main road slightly further north.

Edstaston House

Edstaston House was a sizeable late nineteenth-century property, demolished in 1988. This was not the first building on the site and there remain questions about how far the now-demolished building was an extension of earlier houses or an entirely new build.

The descent of the house from the mid-seventeenth century was in the hands of owners called Payne from Thomas Payne who enfranchised the copyhold in 1653. There was no lineal descent though. On one occasion it passed to man called Payne who, if a relative, was a distant one: and on another occasion it went by bequest to an unrelated individual who took the surname Payne.

The history of the site can be traced back into the sixteenth century. In fact it was already long-occupied at that time. A map of 1773 shows a moated site alongside a more modern farmhouse and a remnant of the moat survives as a pond in the grounds of the house. According to Garbet, the house shown in 1773 was ‘in great measure’ built by Daniel Payne (d. 1750). Garbet described the house as a ‘handsome brick house … fronting the great road’.[32] It is not known how long this house survived. The appearance is that Thomas Payne (d. 1814) improved the property and may have incorporated elements of the moat into a pleasure garden. In a codicil to his will, Payne instructed the trustees to build a small house, for £150, in ‘the plantations adjoining or near the Great Gate leading to the lawn before

[31] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 265-6; SA, 9043/A, Garbet, plan; SA, 6805/3/16, Stanley Leighton
[32] Curiously, all known depictions of the house indicate that it was set well back from the Wem-Whitchurch road and instead fronted the lane to Edstaston church, until that lane was diverted away from the house.

Edstaston House from the Whitchurch road'.[33] This may be the gate lodge depicted on the tithe map.[34] He may also have been responsible for having the road from the turnpike to Edstaston chapel straightened which served to conceal the house from the road. The old road, with two right angle bends, is shown on Garbet's sketch map (Figure 2) and the 1773 map, the new alignment on Baugh's of 1808. (It is possible that the road was straightened to facilitate access to the canal wharf at Edstaston, in which case it had been done quite recently when captured by Baugh.)

When Payne insured his property in 1806, it was described as a dwelling house called Edstaston House with the offices adjoining, stables, coach house, granary and hay loft over, a farmhouse adjoining in the possession of Anne Davies, and a blacksmiths shop.[35]

From *c*.1814 to late in the century, Edstaston House was leased to a succession of tenants. Advertisements to let the house describe it as two storeys with attics and vaulted cellars, five bedrooms plus servants' accommodation, two coach houses, stabling for six horses, cowhouse, walled and kitchen gardens, with 12 a. of grassland. In 1851 it was described as 'a handsome mansion of brick, delightfully situated, and beautified with pleasure grounds and shrubberies'.[36] The location, close to the turnpike road, with daily coaches passing, was emphasised in 1833, and in 1859 it was convenient access to the Shrewsbury and Crewe railway line.[37] One tenant was George Morris, gent., who died in 1838, bequeathing his rights in the lease to his widow and children.[38] The Revd. John Steward, the minister of Edstaston church, moved to Edstaston House with his large family between 1841 and 1850, and resided there until 1856.[39] From 1859 until his death in 1882, the tenant was Samuel Ryley, a Lancashire cotton merchant.[40] It is not entirely clear whether the footprint of the house changed between the tithe plan and the first edition OS survey.

The descent of the estate was to Mary Susanna Payne ([1830]-91). She married an Irish landowner, Horace Townsend (1824-85) who took the additional surname Payne in conformity with the will of Thomas Payne in 1863. The Payne-Townsends were absentees so

[33] TNA, PROB 11/1564/395.
[34] On plot 2587. Also, *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 2 Mar. 1859, 4.
[35] SA, 4791/1/6, p. 310 (policy 5178). He also insured a farmhouse and dairy on Pepper Street in Wem parish and a farmhouse and dairy in Loppington.
[36] Bagshaw, 331.
[37] *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 Nov. 1833, 5; *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 2 Mar. 1859, 4.
[38] TNA, PROB 11/1903/64.
[39] 1851 Census; Bagshaw, 331; *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 8 Oct. 1856, 4. See 'Religious History', below.
[40] Censuses 1861, 1871, 1881; *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 11 Jan. 1882, 10.

far as is known but retained an interest in Edstaston.[41] After Horace Payne-Townsend's death, his younger daughter Mary Stewart Payne-Townsend, married a career soldier, Hugh Cecil Cholmondeley who achieved the rank of Brigadier-General. She inherited the Edstaston estate from her mother and the Cholmondeleys made Edstaston House their home. Either the widowed Mary Susanna Payne Townsend enlarged Edstaston House in her widowhood or the young couple did so. The latter seems more likely.

The chief sources for the appearance of the house are a sketch dated April 1900 by Stanley Leighton (Figure 7) and an early twentieth-century postcard (Figure 8).[42] This large, square-plan gothic-style brick property was three-storey under hipped roofs, the three-window south front with outer projecting bays the full height of the house. Behind the late nineteenth-century house stood a smaller two-story symmetrical house of eighteenth-century appearance, with hipped roof, string band and three windows. This seems to have been relegated to being the service area of the enlarged house.

Exactly when this new block was built and by whom is far from certain. A call for bricklayers to work at Edstaston House in August 1889 may mark the moment of its erection.[43] But Leighton's sketch is accompanied by a text stating that the shrubberies were not yet grown up and the situation was bare. This may argue for the house being recently built. The postcard shows gardens which are well-established and so is later in date. And whilst the sketch and postcard show a building of a single date, it is uncertain whether the earlier building was demolished or an existing building was refurbished with new external walls.

The Valuation Office survey of the house (c. 1911-12) describes it as a house with buildings and two cottages and 13a 0r 31p of land. The internal arrangements are better described in the particulars prepared for the projected sale of 1941.[44] The ground floor consisted of an entrance hall, a large hall, dining room, drawing room and a side hall. The ground floor domestic offices were completely cut off from the residential part of the house and were listed separately. This assumes a link corridor from the old house into the new. The first floor had five principal bedrooms, a dressing room, study and billiard rooms. The second floor had day and night bursaries, four maid's bedrooms and two men servants' rooms. The

[41] In 1874 they declared their intention of being known as Payne-Townshend although this change seems not to have been gazetted. SA, 5168/4/1. For ease the spelling Townsend is employed here.
[42] Images of the 1890s house: SA, 6805/3/16, PH/E/7/1; for other images showing the house, National Trust Collections, NT 1715434, NT 1715434.5.
[43] Wellington J., 17 Aug. 1889
[44] Sale particulars of the Edstaston estate offered for sale on 22 Apr. 1942. We are grateful to Corrinne Brown of Edstaston for the loan of a copy of the particulars.

separate range to the north of the house included hunting stables, a cowhouse for six beasts, loose boxes and a power house, all situated round the stable yard. There were also two service cottages, Rose Cottage (occupied by the gardener) and White Lodge.

The stable yard, now also demolished and the site reused for housing, was created between first OS survey of 1881 and the revision of 1901. It appears in a photograph of Hugh Cholmondeley on a hunter.[45] A large 2-storey brick stable block on a north-south orientation under a slate roof with segmental-headed openings and a string course is partly visible. There is a wide carriage entrance, possibly in the centre, and two stables to the right, each with a door and window. To the upper storey are several windows under the eaves, suggesting grooms' accommodation. The OS map of 1901 shows that the stable yard had a circular lawn in the centre, also visible in the photograph. The photograph also depicts a later single-storey range at right-angles to the right which was added after 1901 survey had been made. This had its back to the public road: its rear wall may partly survive in the modern building on its site.

Mary Stewart Cholmondeley died in 1929. H. C. Cholmondeley remarried and stayed at the house until his own death in 1941. Their daughter and heir, Cecily Colthurst, moved quickly to sell the contents of the house, the house itself and the estate after her father's death.[46] According to the sale particulars, Edstaston House was offered for sale with 'two service cottages, garage, hunting stables, farm buildings, attractive grounds and park land' of about 20 a., with about 43 a. of pasture and arable land adjoining.[47]

The house failed to sell at auction and was advertised for sale or lease in June and July.[48] It was then requisitioned for a Woman's Army Hostel which opened in September 1942.[49] The Women's Land Army were still occupying the house in February 1946 when press reports appeared describing the rather rudimentary conditions in which they were living.[50] They must have left at sometime in the following months (in February the Wem branch of the NFU was asking for the hostel to be continued) and the house was advertised for auction on 29 August 1946 as being suitable for conversion into a residential country hotel, nursing home or flats. It was sold prior to the auction by private treaty to a Miss Fairburn of Shifnal.[51]

---

[45] Shaw photographs 1/18/1907:
[46] Contents, *Newport and MD Adv.,* 13 Feb. 1942 (and other newspapers). The house, *SC* 3 Apr. 1942 and other newspapers. It was reported later in the month that most of the lots had been sold to the tenants in advance of the sale and what remained unsold was the house and 43 acres.
[47] We are grateful to Corinne Brown of Edstaston for lending us a copy of the sale particulars: see SA 0000. *Shrewsbury Chron*., 17 Apr. 1942, 1. For the estate attached to the house, see pp. 000-000 below.
[48] *Wellington J.*, 20 June, 4 July 1942.
[49] *SC*, 25 Sept. 1942.
[50] *SC* and *Newport and MD Adv.*, 1 Feb. 1946.
[51] *SC*, 2 Aug. 1946 (and other papers); 6 Sept. 1946.

Miss Fairburn and a Miss Alford appear to have converted the house into flats. This had been done by the summer of 1947.[52] It seems likely that they were trying to make a living out of the house. If so, they may have failed. The house was advertised in November 1949 for auction the following month. It then consisted of nine self-contained flats with a tenth ground floor flat, sat in 5½ acres of grounds.[53] Advertisements of flats to let, whether furnished or unfurnished, appear regularly in the local papers through to the mid-1960s. The land formerly attached to the house was sold to Clifford Gregory who appears farming at Edstaston House farm.[54]

By the 1970s the house was in poor condition and it was demolished in 1988.[55] Planning permission for the demolition of the house and for the erection of three detached houses in its grounds had been granted before 1985 when an application was made to increase the number of new properties to five. This was refused by North Shropshire District Council.[56] Amended planning permission for one of the three houses was granted in 1993.[57]

The stable yard was redeveloped slightly later. The site was advertised for sale with planning permission to convert the standing buildings and erect two new dwellings in 1990.[58] But in 1992 a new planning application was made which envisaged the standing buildings being entirely cleared and five new properties erected in their place. This was agreed and the building opportunity advertised for sale in 1994.[59]

Home Farm

This is a large 3-storey L-shaped farmhouse of 19th-century character constructed of red brick under slate roofs with brick stacks. The front, facing the road, has three wooden cross-windows under wedge lintels to the first floor, whilst the main elevation facing east comprises the east gable end of the main range adjoined by a full-height wing of slightly later date. A stone band divides the ground and first floors, whilst there is a blue brick string course between the first and second floors. The 2- or 3-light casement windows with segmental blue brick heads are irregularly arranged, suggesting alterations, whilst there may

[52] *Newport and MD Advertiser*, 2 Jan. 1948 (report of rent tribunal hearing at Wem).
[53] SC, 11 Nov. 1949.
[54] Information from Sandra Price (Mr Gregory's granddaughter), 2025, *SC* 29 Oct. 1948.
[55] We owe the date of demolition to Mrs Corrine Brown who has photographs of the demolition in progress.
[56] *Shropshire Star* 19 July 1985.
[57] *Shropshire Star* 26 Nov. 1993.
[58] *SC* 6 July 1990.
[59] Notice by North Shropshire DC, *Shropshire Star* 4 Sept. 1992; *SC* 8 Dec. 1994.

have been a doorway into the wing, now infilled with brick. A large catslide lean-to behind the main range is also an addition, partly infilling the angle between the two ranges and containing an entrance. Although the interior is modernised, there is a box-panelled partition of scantling timber shown in a photograph, which might be 18th century. The farm buildings to the north have been converted into dwellings and in separate ownership.[60]

On the map of 1631, the lane running east from the chapel is on a different alignment, curving round and joining the main road further south. Home Farm may be on the site of Thomas Harwar's house, but this is difficult to confirm. The L-shaped house is shown on the tithe map of 1842, whilst the first edition OS map (1881) shows the house in its current form. There must have been late 19th-century alterations when the blue brick dressings on the east front were inserted. There are no farm buildings to the rear in 1881, the three ranges on the opposite side of the lane possibly used as a farmyard. By 1901, a large courtyard surrounded by farm buildings is shown behind the house which is labelled 'Home Farm', perhaps reflecting developments at Edstaston House. The farm buildings south of the lane were demolished by 1901. Instead, there is a single long range slightly further west, probably a stable block belonging to Edstaston House.

Edstaston Hall

Despite the prominence of Edstaston House in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the most significant historical estate was Edstaston Hall in the north east of the township, the residence of the Mainwaring family from the reign of Henry VII. The house is shown on the 1631 map on the north side of a lane leading to Pepper Street. Samuel Garbet referred to it as a large timber-framed house of which there was nothing remarkable but a profusion of timber. Charles Mainwaring sold the estate to Thomas Catherock in 1697, and during Garbet's time it belonged to the Cooke family. In 1786 the property was sold to John Mulliner of Moreton Wood in Prees who descendants owned the house to c. 1900.

In 1807, Edstaston Hall was rebuilt on the opposite, south, side of the lane, a small enclosure marking the former site to the north. The new hall is marked on a plan of 1810 when it belonged to John Mulliner. The 3-storey 3-window square-plan house is of brick on an ashlar plinth under a hipped slate roof. It is decorated with brick pilasters, those to the corners with round-arched recesses, stone sill bands, and windows with grooved lintels and raised keystones. The south-facing entrance front is said to have a pilastered doorcase. Above

[60] Sale particulars, https://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbwmrstes220175, accessed 17 Feb. 2026.

the central first floor window is a datestone with fluting and rosettes, reading IM/1807 (John Mulliner). Alterations were made in the late 19th century, including the addition of canted bay windows and new brick chimney stacks. There is said to be an open-well staircase inside. The house is set back from the road with farm buildings in front. One large cow-house of late 19th century appearance is of red brick with blue brick dressings, segmental-arched openings and pitchfork occuli to the loft. It is now converted to accommodation.[61]

The Edstaston Hall estate was for sale by auction in 1899, comprising a commodious country house with 134 acres suitable for dairying, 93 acres of freehold land adapted for conversion into small holdings, and six cottages in Wem (Figure 9). A carriage drive led to the south entrance front. A hall provided access to a sitting room and dining room, both with carved wooden mantel-pieces. Behind was a large kitchen, sitting room, and a second spacious kitchen with pantry, dairy and game larder. The main staircase was of oak with a mahogany handrail leading to two principal front bedrooms. A secondary staircase led to three further bedrooms, with four bedrooms in the attic. Outside was a front lawn, kitchen garden and orchard. The farm ranges were accessed from the road, along with stables and a trap house with granary over.[62]

Dispersed settlement

To the north of Edstaston Hall at Pepper Street was a freehold estate belonging to the Payne family in the 18th and 19th centuries. By 1899, it was owned by Samuel Tyler. The property is called Bridge Farm and consists of a timber-framed hall and cross-wing of late 16th and 17th century date. The 2-bay cross-wing is the earliest part, with a jowled post at the rear corner and deeply chamfered beams inside. The large hall is of two storeys and an attic under a tiled roof. On the ridge is a prominent decorative brick chimney stack with rebated shafts. Internally, there are said to be chamfered beams and an inglenook fireplace. The rear was probably re-clad in brick in the 18th century and a rear gabled range added. Later on, the front was rebuilt in brick along with additions and alterations.[63]

On the west side of Bridge farmhouse is a late 17th-century timber-framed barn, lofted and weather-boarded under a corrugated iron roof. The two main doors face south into the farmyard, with a small door facing north and the east gable end partly rebuilt in brick.

[61] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Garbet, 267; OS Map, 25in, Shropshire sheet XIV.8 (1881 edn.); SA, DP272, 1810; HE list no. 1236471; SA, 5168/24
[62] SA, 5168/3/7
[63] Garbet, 271; SA, DP272, 1810; SA, 5168/3/7; HE list no. 1236697

Internally, the square framing is said to be two panels high with jowled wall posts. The roof has tie-beam trusses with collars, except for one end bay which has a queen truss and wind-braces, possibly a survival from a medieval house.[64]

A house is marked on the map of 1631 adjacent to the south gate leading into Edstaston park. At that time, it belonged to Lawrance Powell (See Fig 23). The 2-unit house is roughcast over a timber-frame under a slate roof with brick end stacks. It was single-storey with evidence for a former door towards the centre. A late 19th or early 20th century lean-to at the south end contains the entrance, whilst the attic floor dormers and windows are later. Internally, there is box panelling to the south gable end, the cross walls and one longitudinal partition. The ceilings are said to have chamfered spine beams and joists and there are reconstructed inglenook fireplaces.[65]

Yew Tree Farm fronts the east side of the Wem to Whitchurch road, close to the turning for Edstaston village. The 3-unit cottage is single-storey with an attic and is late 16th or early 17th century. In 1631, it belonged to Hugh Davis. Timber-framing is concealed or replaced by brick, with box panelling recorded at the south end. There is a dentilled brick eaves cornice under a steep tiled roof and a brick chimney stack behind the ridge, just left of the entrance. Inside, there are said to be chamfered spine beams and heavy joists to the ceiling, with a rebuilt inglenook fireplace in the left-hand room, and a dog-leg staircase behind the stack in the right-hand room. A tie-beam truss with collar, and straight windbraces were recorded in the attic. The brickwork, including segmental heads over the windows, is probably late 18th century, whilst the gabled dormers and porch are later. There is a large brick farm range attached to the south end and an addition to the north, both shown on the tithe map of 1842.[66]

The Creamore estate at the south east corner of the township was sold in the reign of James I (1603-25) to the Higginson family. On the map of 1631, Creamore farmhouse and dower house are marked in the position of the current farm and it is unclear when the moated site was abandoned in favour of the new roadside position. In *c*.1725, William Mytton described Craemore as an ancient farmhouse, one of the best in the parish and close to Wem. A large 3-storey 3-window house was constructed during the 19th century, of brick under a

[64] HE list no. 1236698, image IOE01/16849/02
[65] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; HE list no. 1264489
[66] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; HE list no. 1264487; image IOE01/08308/23; SA, P295/T/1/2, 1842

hipped roof with heavy stone dressings, including a central porch and 2-storey canted bay windows. It is marked on the 1842 tithe map when it was owned by Thomas Davies.[67]

Rye Bank was a significant property historically, described by Garbet as a freehold estate belonging to Richard Goldisborough, an ancient family originally from Yorkshire. Godfrey Goldisborough was Bishop of Gloucester in Elizabethan times, his son, John, purchasing the Rye Bank estate from the Lacon family (See Fig 24). There is now a large brick house of 19th-century character set back from the road. The Goldisboroughs also purchased a small estate at Paddock Green from the Lacon family. It is shown in 1631 as a small triangular green at a road junction, surrounded by four houses and labelled Parock.[68]

To the far west of the township and of historical significance is Foxholes Farmhouse. A house is labelled 'Foxholes' on the map of 1631 accompanied by the name, Richard Menlove. It belonged to that family until 1689 when it was sold to the Glovers and then to Andrew Downes. The house was rebuilt in the mid-18th century but does not appear to be on the site of the original property which was at or near Birch Tree Farm. The new house is on the site of one belonging to William Groom in 1631. Garbet noted that a neat box of a house had recently been built by John Groom, which had small rooms due to the narrowness of the plan. The tithe apportionment of 1842 lists Thomas Groom as the owner. The 2-storey 3-window house is constructed of brick under a slate roof with external chimneys, a stone plinth and coped stone verges on carved kneelers. Brick detail includes a plat band, dentilled eaves cornice, corner pilasters and segmental heads over the ground floor windows. The house is symmetrical with a central entrance, above which is a blind opening.[69]

Ellesmere Canal

The Prees branch of the Ellesmere Canal was originally intended to reach Higher Heath. There was an application for amending the Act of Parliament dated 14 May 1796, the attached plan showing the Prees branch junction at Whixall Moss. By 1806, a stretch 3¾ miles long had been built as far as Quina Brook where two banks of limekilns were erected. The branch was not continued any further. The plan shows, towards the west, Poolhead bridge and Sydney bridge, both taken down, and a limekiln on the north bank just west of Sydney bridge. Edstaston wharf is located 200m north of the church. The bridge over the

[67] Garbet, 263; SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; SA-IMG601, William Mytton, c.1725; SA, P295/T/1/2, 1842
[68] Garbet, 268-9; SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; Wem Survey, 1589
[69] Garbet, 269-70; SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; SA, 9043/A, Garbet, plan; SA, P295/T/1/2, 1842; HE list no. 1236341, image IOE01/08308/10

canal was dropped when the road was widened and its position marked by a reconstructed parapet. There were three wharves, to the north west, south west and south east of the bridge, with warehouses on the former two. A black-tarred timber-clad warehouse for a coalyard, which continued in use until 1944, remains on the north west wharf. Adjoining to the right is a 3-storey 3-window brick warehouse with a pair of tall recessed front arches, now converted to a house. There was a wharfinger's cottage to the rear and an alehouse, The Marquis of Wellington, in the mid-19th century. On the south west wharf was a 2-storey brick warehouse with dentilled eaves and double doors to each storey, subsequently converted into a house with the insertion of windows. It was demolished and replaced by a new house between 2009 and 2021. To the south east is a small 2-window 2-storey rendered building, labelled as a machine-house on the tithe map of 1842. Further north east, Edstastonpark bridge has also been dropped. It carried a track to Park Farm, adjacent to which was a coalyard operated by John Brown. There was a smithy at the junction of this track and the main road, marked on the plan of 1796 and still present in 1881. Flanking the terminus of the canal at Quina Brook are lime kilns, those to the south in Edstaston and those to the north in Coton township. The southern bank face south east and consist of four round-arched kilns constructed of stone with brick facings and arches.[70]

Quina Brook

There is a small settlement at the road junction in Quina Brook, where Pepper Street leads east from the main road (Figure 11). A stream underneath the junction marks the division between Edstaston and Coton townships. Within the south east corner of the junction was a property which had belonged to the Hinton family for several hundred years, which was replaced by the Harp Inn by 1851 (Figure 12). This building is of painted brick under a hipped slate roof with brick end stacks and a dentilled eaves cornice. The 3-window front has a gabled advanced central bay with doorway reached by stone steps and a surviving pub sign. Its licence was surrendered in 1972 and the property converted into a house. There is a question over the date of the building. From its appearance it appears to be late eighteenth or early nineteenth century[71]

[70] SA, DP295B; Charles Hadfield, *Canals of the West Midlands*, Vol 5 (1966), 177-8; Derrick Pratt, *Prees Branch Canal* (1984), 6-9; OS Map, 25in, Shropshire sheet XIV.7 (1881 edn.); Newman and Pevsner, 261; Shropshire HER PRN 36301; Bagshaw's directory (1951), 332; Google street view, 2009, 2021; HE list no. 1236792

[71] *Eddowes* 12 Aug. 1868; *Wellington J.* 18 June 1887: HER PRN 35741.

There was a second public house, the Canal Tavern, in Quina Brook by 1851 and still in 1870, now no. 1 Quina Brook.[72]

A congregational chapel was established in Quina Brook between 1800 and 1834, which had 40 worshippers in 1851. It closed and was put up for sale by auction in Wem in June 1868. The Primitive Methodists, who had formerly met in a dwelling house, purchased the chapel. It is labelled on the OS maps of 1881 and 1901 as Methodist chapel (Primitive) at the junction of the main road and a short lane leading to the limekilns where there is a row of irregular brick houses on the south side (Figure 11). The chapel was described as recently renovated in 1904, but in 1914 a new chapel was built 150m to the north in Coton. The original chapel was converted into a dwelling. [73]

A turnpike road (B5476) was established in the mid-19th century following the line of the route shown on the map of 1631. The main straightening was at Creamore where a bend in the original road was by-passed. There is a milepost north of Creamore Farm on the east side of the road, of painted cast iron of triangular section with a chamfered top. The inscription in relief reads 'WEM/1/MILE' on the south side, and 'WHITCHURCH/8/MILES' to the north. An earlier milestone remains *in situ* to the rear. On the west side of the main road, at The Hollies, was a 19th-century toll-house. There were also proposals for a turnpike road from Quina Brook, following Pepper Street and continuing east to Hodnet. The deposited plans were received in September 1810 but the road was never built.[74]

There are five pairs of semi-detached houses on the south side of Pepper Street in Quina Brook. The eastern pair were built first, on a plot formerly owned by F. E. Edwards of the Harp Inn. They formed part of Edstaston's first year housing programme, the planning application dated 19 July 1944. The spacious houses are roughcast with gables and brick dressings and are set back within gardens. [75]

[72] Garbet, 271; SA, DP272, 1810; Bagshaw's Directory (1851), 332; Derrick Pratt, 3; Kelly's directory, 1870
[73] Janice Cox, Shropshire's non-conformist chapels: http://www.vchshropshire.org/chapels/quinacon.htm; ibid. /quinabrk.htm; OS Map, 25in, Shropshire sheet XIV.8 (1881, 1901, 1921 edns.)
[74] SA, 972 /7/1/49/5, map, 1631; HE list no. 1236504; Shropshire HER PRN 15450; SA, DP272
[75] SA, DA27/701/13-14: See Fig 31, land parcel 1179

LANDOWNERSHIP

In the Middle Ages, large portions of Edstaston were in the lord's hand, the remainder being held as customary tenements. In 1561, customary tenements were held by twenty-five different tenants. In 1805, there were forty-four different tenants; the largest tenement was Creamore Farm of 334½ a., while the next largest (the Edstaston Hall and Edstaston House estates, Upper and Lower Park farms combined, and Highfields) were of 130-200 a. each, and these were often farmed by the owners, their family or long-term tenants.[76] At the tithe apportionment in 1840, the number of tenements held by different tenants had increased to sixty-four, with little change to the family ownership or occupation of the larger estates. In other words, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Edstaston landownership was not subject to 'take over' by large landed estates.

Demesne

In 1513-16, the lord's revenue from Edstaston with Creamore was £19 5*s*. 9*d*. per annum.[77]

Edstaston Park

Edstaston Park, *alias* the new park, was created by Ralph le Botiler (lord of the manor, *c*.1241-80). It was probably the 'parcus non clausus' that belonged to the lord in 1280.[78] It was claimed (in 1561) that William le Boteler had confirmed to Nicholas son of Hugh son of Alan of Coton in 1356 the office of forester of the lord's demesne woodlands, namely 'Northwood, Chetalwood, Shoclase and the new park of Edstaston'. The copy of the purported 1356 charter produced in 1561 may have been an 'improved' version based on a genuine grant.[79] In 1436, the lord's demesne included 'newepark'.[80] In 1561, pannage of the park pertained to the lord of the manor, who leased a half share of it to John Higginson, with the herbage, for 20*s*. per annum. Higginson was responsible for the maintenance and repair of the hedges of the park.[81]

In the crown survey of 1589, Edstaston Park measured *c*.100 *a*., of which 80 *a*. was 'great timber woods' with over 100 years of growth, worth £5 per acre. There were no deer or game in the park, and the pasture was leased to Richard Banester of Lacon and Elizabeth

[76] 1805 Survey, pp. 164-89.
[77] Arundel Castle, MS W D/14.
[78] TNA, C 133/27/9; *Cal Inq. p.m.*, ii, 229, no. 390.
[79] *Survey 1561*, 112-13.
[80] TNA, C 139/76/34; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, xxiv, 348, no. 495.
[81] *Survey 1561*, 50-1.

Banester, his mother.[82] As depicted in 1631, the park was surrounded by a fence with a single gate to the south. Trees are depicted only on the northern half, and there was a parker's house in the southern part.

The wooded parkland had been enclosed by 1648, when it was leased to George Griffith as a farm of 198a. 1r. for £60 per annum. A new house and large new barn had been built, but there were still many trees standing in the various closes: 327 'spare' trees were counted, valued at £139 14*s*. 8*d*.[83] In 1652/3 Edstaston Park was sold by the Earl of Arundel's trustees to Sir Thomas Adams and Henry Paynter for £2000.[84] The freehold of Edstaston Park thereafter followed the history of Sir Thomas Adams's Northwood estates. Having been mortgaged to Lady Rolle in 1694, it was devised by her will in shares to several beneficiaries.[85]

By 1751, the boundaries of the park were still visible in the landscape and it was estimated to be about two miles in circumference. The park had been divided into two farms: the larger was Park Farm, its farmhouse was 'the Park house', recorded as new in 1648; Upper Park Farm comprised the north of the former park.[86] In 1776 it was advertised for sale as a messuage, tenement and farm called Edstaston Park Farm, with an annual rent of £140, occupied by 'widow Walmsley'.[87]

By 1789, John Knight of Dodington held a one-third share of Edstaston Park. In his will proved in 1790, he bequeathed all his property in Edstaston to his wife, Mary, who died in 1812. Their son, John Knight, attorney, was an associate of Thomas Payne of Edstaston House, who was co-executor of Mary Knight's will.[88] In 1805, John Knight the younger owned part of Park Farm, comprising 179 a., the tenant being Mary Walmsley. Another part, of 71 a., was owned by Thomas Bickerton and let to Thomas Roberts.[89] Bickerton's farm was advertised for sale in 1808.[90] Title to both farms was subsequently reunited as, in 1839, the 'Edstaston Park Estate', comprising two ring-fenced farms and a canal wharf, 260 a. in total, was advertised for sale.[91] John Knight's daughter, Mary Anne, inherited part of Edstaston Park; at the tithe apportionment her husband, Lt-Col. Thomas Cox Kirby, was the owner of

[82] TNA, LR 2/225.
[83] Arundel Castle, MS 508, fo. 19.
[84] Arundel Castle, MS MD 59, p. 55.
[85] SA, 6000/2492; Garbet, 262, 334-5.
[86] Garbet, 262.
[87] *Aris's Birmingham Gaz.*, 8 Jan. 1776, 2.
[88] TNA, PROB 11/1188/29; SA, 731/2/2237; SA, 6000/11623.
[89] SA, 167/47, pp. 168-71.
[90] *Chester Chron.*, 17 June 1808, 2.
[91] *Chester Courant*, 8 Oct. 1839, 2.

96 a. at (Upper) Park Farm, and Mary Anne's younger sister, Caroline Knight, owned the canal wharf.

Chetall Wood

This was an area of unenclosed woodland in the northeast of Edstaston. A wood called Shetles or Shutles was part of the lord's demesne in the late 14th century, when it was counted as one of the manorial woods along with the North Wood and (Aston) Brockhurst. Tenants had the right of free common pasture in Chetall wood and the undergrowth was farmed for 20*d*.[92] It was claimed (in 1561) that William le Boteler had in 1356 confirmed Nicholas son of Hugh son of Alan of Coton in the office of forester of 'Northwood, Chetalwood, Shoclase and the new park of Edstaston with the old pool and Horton moor'.[93] The distinction between the similarly-named 'Chetalwood' and 'Shetles'/'Shoclase' is unclear, but by the 16th century neither were part of the lord's demesne. In 1561, woodland on the eastern side of Edstaston was known as 'Shetenhurst', it belonged to 'Mr Banister' and was apparently part of Lacon manor.[94] By 1591, Chettal wood belonged to the Mainwaring copyhold estate of Edstaston Hall. On the 1631 map, the wood depicted on the eastern boundary of Edstaston is labelled 'Chittall Woode' and belonged to Sir Arthur Mainwaring.[95] The map here is also lacking the thick brown and yellow boundary of the manor and township, implying that there was no clear boundary through the wood, although this is not reflected in the 1561 boundary perambulation. Chetall was said to be one mile 'in circuit' and still wooded with oak trees in the mid-18th century.[96]

Creamore

Creamore is situated at the southeast limit of Edstaston, near where the township boundaries of Edstaston, Wem, Aston and Lacon meet. With its centrally-located moated site and elliptical boundary, Creamore may have been a medieval assart. By the 15th century, it was in the lord's hand and used for pasture. In 1409/10 the grazing (*herbagium*) of Creamore was valued at 53*s*. 4*d*.; in 1436 the tenement comprised 100 a. of pasture.[97] By 1530, it had been enclosed and then comprised a dwelling house with barns and bakehouse and 168 a. divided

[92] TNA, C 135/157/4; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, xi, p.27 no.37 (1361); TNA, C 135/206/15; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, xii, 324; TNA, C 136/14/11; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, xv, no. 349 (1380/1).
[93] *Survey 1561*, 112-13.
[94] *Survey 1561*, 110-11; Garbet, 368.
[95] Garbet, 267; Arundel map.
[96] Garbet, 260-1.
[97] Arundel Castle, MS WD/14.

into eighteen closes, let by William Lord Dacre to Richard Cowper for an annual rent of £6 6*s*. 8*d*.[98] By 1648, Creamore Farm comprised 300 a., was leased to Richard Higginson, and valued at £133 15*s*. 8*d*. per annum as well as the sale value of 598 trees.[99] It was then sold, probably soon after 1648 by the Earl of Arundel's trustees. In the mid-18th century, the freehold passed from Robert Jones of Gray's Inn to 'Mr Green of Stafford'.[100] In 1805, Creamore farm of 334 a. was owned by John Green and 'Mr Walmsley', and occupied by John Walmsley.[101] By 1840, Creamore Farm of 352½ a. was owned by Samuel Job and occupied by Thomas Davies.

Sambrook Land/Highfields

The moated site at Highfields and adjacent land to the south can be traced to *c*.1280 × 1295/6 when Walter of Hopton was lord of the manor by marriage to Matilda Pantulf. It was probably under Walter that William Tudor of Hopton acquired an estate in Wem, which he settled on his son Thomas in 1312.[102] By 1480, it had passed with Agnes, heiress of another Thomas Tudor of Hopton, to her husband, John Sambroke of Wem.[103] They settled it on their son, John Sambrook of Coventry, but he died in the war with Scotland. After Agnes's death, John Griffith and Elizabeth his wife (claiming Agnes as grandmother) claimed that a grant of the estate by Agnes to one Richard Mynton of London was invalid and that he had broken Agnes's coffers in Wem and taken the evidences. Believing there were no heirs, William, Lord Dacre (lord of the manor, 1516-63) took the estate into his own hands and held on to it.[104] It was probably then that the name 'Sambrook Lands' was adopted, for the purposes of manorial administration. In 1553, Sambrook Hall in Wem, the Horton land and three closes totalling 9 a. in Edstaston were granted to Humphrey Jebb as a copyhold. The remainder was leased on annual tenancies: in 1561 Thomas Bates held 26 a. including a messuage (on the south side of the road) and 'le Highefilde', and Richard Whottall two pastures of 13 a. adjoining 'the lord's meadow called Cross meadow'.[105]

---

[98] *Survey 1561*, 50-1.
[99] Arundel Castle, MS 508, fos. 33v-34r.
[100] Garbet, 263.
[101] SA, 167/47, pp. 162-5.
[102] SA, 322/2/82.
[103] SA, 322/2/279; Garbet, 264, citing a Wem manor court record of 4 Henry VII, 1489; *Survey 1561*, 56-7, 108-9.
[104] TNA, STAC 2/27/52: *Gryffyth v Lord Dacres*.
[105] *Survey 1561*, 56-7, 108-9. Thomas Bates of Morpeth (Northumberland) was Lord Dacre's receiver for Wem: TNA, C 3/7/59; *Survey 1561*, 88-9, 116-17, 144-5, 164-5.

By 1631, Highfields Farm was let to Lawrence Tunnah as a substantial farmstead with 112a.[106] Humphrey Jebb's tenement was enfranchised *c*.1650 by Richard Donne.[107] Highfields Farm was probably sold by the Earl of Arundel's trustees soon after 1648. It was owned in 1683 by John Shenton, then by 'Mr Archer' in 1689, and by 'John Bill' (Bell) in 1692. His daughter Mary inherited Highfields Farm and in 1726 married Thomas Colthurst, the minister of Dodington Presbyterian chapel (Whitchurch); Mary died in 1765.[108] Her daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, married Joshua Crompton of Derby.[109] In 1805, Highfields was owned and occupied by John Lea as a farm of 131 a. 1 r. 26 p.[110] At the tithe apportionment in 1840, John Lea still owned a malt kiln and buildings at Highfields Farm but had been succeeded in the farm by Samuel Lea and Joseph Lea.

Church Lands

When Edstaston church was closed and its clergy dismissed at the dissolution of chantries, William Lord Dacre took possession of the chantry's endowment before agents of the crown could do so. They were valued at 49*s*. 7*d*. per annum.[111] The property in Edstaston consisted of the messuage east of the church that had been the clergy house; adjacent closes of 11a.; 6a. of pasture adjoining *Shetenhurste* (part of Chetwall wood, presumably); a close of 3a. adjoining Caster Pool; and one nook (9a.) in each of the three open fields of Edstaston. Parcels of the estate were named 'Ridley's leasow' and 'Ridley's moor'; the Ridley family may have leased the estate from the church before its dissolution. Alice Ridley, widow, was the tenant until *c*.1560. In 1561, Lord Dacre leased a tenement to William Ash for an annual rent of 48*s*. and also the former chapel lands in Wem for 12*s*. 4*d*., both on the condition that Ash would 'stande to all charges in the lawe for this Chapell lande'.[112] The leases were probably later transferred to John Whitaker of Edstaston, whose will of 1593 left his two leased properties, in Edstaston and Wem, to his eldest son, Lawrence.[113] Lawrence Whitaker was the lessee in 1631, when the land in his tenure, between the church and Edstaston Park,

[106] Arundel map; Arundel Castle, MS 508, fo. 9.
[107] Arundel Castle, MS MD 59, p. 33.
[108] Garbet, 264, apparently citing title deeds he had seen. For Thomas Colthurst: *The Register of Dodington Presbyterian Chapel, Whitchurch, 1708-1812*, ix, 75, 76.
[109] Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, ZCR 469/336 (1766).
[110] SA, 167/47, pp. 172-5.
[111] 'Certificates of Shropshire Chantries', ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, *TSAHS*, 3rd ser., 10 (1910), 352.
[112] *Survey 1561*, 36-7, 110-11.
[113] TNA, PROB 11/82/537.

was labelled as 'terra Domini'.[114] In 1648 the tenant was 'widow Whitaker', holding the messuage and 69a. 2r. for an annual rent of £23 16*s*.0*d*..[115]

The former church lands in Edstaston were probably sold *c*.1652 to George Hinstock, who was living in Edstaston in 1655. Hinstock died in 1688, succeeded by his daughter Elizabeth, who married Andrew Lloyd.[116] In 1735 the owner was Andrew Lloyd of the Fords in Twyford (West Felton parish).[117] In 1756 his heir Samuel Lloyd sold the estate to Samuel Turner of Whitchurch.[118] In 1805 William Turner owned this estate of 81a. 1r. 13p.[119] Turner was declared bankrupt and the estate was sold in lots in 1818.[120] About 19a., including the 'messuage' and orchard east of the church and the canal wharf, was owned in 1840 by Henry John Barker, the Wem solicitor. In 1874, this was acquired by the Edstaston House estate.

Demesne after 1751

Samuel Garbet listed just the principal demesne tenements in Edstaston: the park, Creamore and Highfields, and showed how all three had become freeholds by 1751.[121] In 1805, the remaining demesne in Edstaston was the mowing and grazing of Caster Pool, worth £5 5*s*. per annum; a farm of 31a. leased to William Clawley; 10a. at Broomfield; and several cottages.[122] In 1809, the farm occupied by William Clawley was sold to Arthur Beetenson and three houses with gardens were sold to their tenants.[123] At the tithe apportionment in 1840, no demesne was recorded in Edstaston.

Copyholding

In 1436, customary tenants held 42 nooks of arable land, worth 66*s*. per annum, and eight messuages worth 16*s*. 0*d*. per annum.[124] In the sale of copyhold lands by the debt trustees of Thomas, earl of Arundel, *c*.1650, copyhold tenements in Edstaston were enfranchised by John Sherratt ('Little Limestones', 4a.), Richard Donne of Lowe ('Donnes Britch'), Thomas

[114] Arundel map.
[115] Arundel Castle, MS 508, fo. 10r. Lawrence Whitaker died in 1634. The widow was probably Mary, daughter of Thomas Adams, tanner of Wem - the sister of Sir Thomas Adams - who married Lawrence Whitaker in 1606: *Wem Parish Registers*, 99, 153.
[116] *Wem Parish Registers*, 171, 176, 271, 287, 328; Garbet, 264. For George Hinstock as a purchaser of copyhold tenements in Edstaston in 1652, see Arundel Castle MS, MD 59, p. 59.
[117] SA, 3561/B/151/24/2.
[118] SA, 3561/B/151/24/2.
[119] 1805 Survey, pp. 182-3. See below, 'Edstaston Wharf'.
[120] SA, 3651/B/151/24/1; *Chester Courant*, 19 May 1818, 1.
[121] Garbet, 262-4.
[122] 1805 Survey, pp. 178-81, 186-9.
[123] SA, 6000/12498.
[124] TNA, C 139/76/34; *Cal. Inq. PM*, xxiv, 348, no. 495.

Braine of Whixall ('Gorstie Brich' and 'Mossy Pooles', 9a.), Richard Menlove (Poolhead House and lands, 34a.; Hinds moor, 2a.; a messuage and other land including Wood leasow, 22a.; Parrocks Croft etc., 21a.; Cross Bank House etc., 22a.), Charles Mainwaring (Edstaston Hall etc., 150a.), John Groome (15a.).[125]

Other copyholds were sold by the Earl of Darlington around 1810. But a few survived into the twentieth century and enfranchisements continued to at least 1921.[126]

Principal Estates

Edstaston Hall

Before 1314, Madoc ap Eynon held 12a. in Coton. This land, with 4a. 1r. of the lord's waste in Coton and a messuage with 11½ a. 1r. in Edstaston, was granted by William le Boteler, lord of the manor of Wem, to William Gadaru[m] of Edstaston in 1314 for an annual rent of one mark and the services due from tenants of assarts. The charter was produced by Sir Arthur Mainwaring in 1561 as evidence of his freehold estate in Edstaston and Coton.[127]

The copyhold part of the Edstaston Hall estate was purchased from John Vaughan and John Hinton by a younger son of William Mainwaring of Ightfield, Thomas Mainwaring (d. 1508), and comprised two messuages (one built on, the other not built on) in Edstaston. Thomas also held a parcel of Chetall Wood and part of Caster Pool as copyhold.[128] The messuage known as Edstaston Hall was situated on the northern edge of Chetall wood.[129]

The Edstaston Hall estate descended to Thomas Mainwaring's son John (d. 1518). By 1561, it was in the hands of Sir Arthur Mainwaring of Ightfield (d. 1590). In 1589, the estate comprised three messuages, around 150a. of land, meadow and pasture, held in part by charter and part by copy.[130] In 1599 Sir Arthur's son, Sir George (d. 1628) sold the Coton messuage, called 'the hall of Coton', and lands to Edward Mynshall for £960.[131] Around 1650, Charles Mainwaring enfranchised the copyhold tenement, comprising one messuage called Edstaston Hall with closes totalling 150a., valued at £49 per annum.[132]

---

[125] Arundel Castle, MS MD 59, pp. 29, 33, 37-8.
[126] SA, 6001/12498.
TNA, MAF 9/247.
[127] *Survey 1561*, 114-15.
[128] *Survey 1561*, 110-11.
[129] As shown on the Arundel map.
[130] TNA, LR 2/225.
[131] SA, 6000/15404. Not to be confused with Coton Hall; it may have been Wood End Hall: Garbet, 290.
[132] Arundel Castle, MS MD 59, p. 38.

In 1697, Charles Mainwaring sold the estate to Thomas Catherock of Stoke Park (Stoke on Tern), from whom it descended, with Stoke Park, to William Cooke.[133] In 1753, William Cooke and his wife Damaris leased the freehold estate of Edstaston Hall to James Richards for fifty years at £75 per year. Their daughter and heiress, also Damaris, married three times, her second husband being Samuel Dicken of Fordhall (Moreton Say). They married in 1765 when Dicken was aged 64 and Damaris 38, neither having issue at that time. The marriage settlement, including Stoke Park and estates in Childs Ercall, Hinstock, Ightfield, Wem and Whitchurch, and Burleydam (Ches.), strongly favoured Dicken's family. In particular, the Edstaston Hall estate was assigned to Dicken as in fee, such that it would descend to his heir at law immediately on his death. During the marriage, Edstaston Hall was still let for the life of James Richards and after his death to be let at £120 a year; Damaris later claimed the timber was worth at least £1000 and the estate worth £5000. On Samuel's death in 1766, his niece Elizabeth, the only child of his brother, Thomas Dicken, was his heiress. Elizabeth and her husband William Grinsell took possession of Edstaston Hall. Damaris and her third husband, the Revd. St John Haynes, immediately brought an action in Chancery, claiming that Damaris had had no representation in negotiating the marriage settlement, but in 1770 their claim was dismissed.[134]

In a fine levied in 1770, William Grinsell and wife Elizabeth settled on Newton Ikin, as trustee for Elizabeth: one messuage, two gardens, one orchard, 130 a. land, 30 a. meadow, 100 a. pasture, 20 a. furze and heath and common of pasture for all manner of cattle in Edstaston.[135] In 1786, Elizabeth, with her husband, sold the estate to John Mulliner of Moreton Wood (Prees), for £3500. It comprised the 'capital messuage' called Edstaston Hall, in the occupation of James Richards the younger and Joseph Cooke, and 190 a.[136]

John Mulliner died in 1805 and was succeeded by his son, also John Mulliner.[137] The family became well established as farmers in the north of Wem parish: Mulliner's daughter Anne was married to John Walmsley of Creamore, and his other daughter Sarah was married to Thomas Maddocks of New Farm (Wolverley/Northwood).[138]

John Mulliner the younger died in 1838, leaving the Edstaston Hall estate to his two elder daughters, Mary Anne and Elizabeth, as tenants in common, with an annuity of £45 to a

[133] Garbet, 267.
[134] SA, 5168/1/2; see SA, 6000/4264.
[135] SA, 5168/1/5-6.
[136] SA, 5168/1/12-13.
[137] SA, 5168/1/14-15; *Chester Courant*, 30 July 1805, 3; SA, 6000/4285, 4287.
[138] SA, 5168/1/22, and see Creamore, above; and see 'Wolverley' chapter.

third daughter, Sarah.[139] Elizabeth married her cousin, John Walmsley of Creamore, in 1841 and Mary Anne married Daniel Boote in 1844.[140] In 1871, Elizabeth's son, John Mulliner Walmsley, sold his share of the Edstaston Hall estate ('half a messuage and land') to Daniel Boote.[141]

By 1880, Mary Anne, as a widow, was the owner of the whole estate, which was mostly freehold but still included some copyhold. The freehold was: Edstaston Hall and 190 a.; two messuages in New St, Wem; one messuage with shop in New St, Wem; three messuages in Noble St, Wem, with gardens, stable, etc. The copyhold was Hinds Piece and the Brankles (*alias* Brankelow); a cottage, Little Hinds Piece and the Big Field, and Brooke Meadow, all in Edstaston.[142]

Mary Anne was succeeded by her daughter, Mary Anne Bennett Boote, who married Francis Robert Wilbraham Hill, esq. They put the estate up for sale in 1899 and enfranchised the copyhold lands in 1900. On its sale, the estate consisted of Edstaston Hall with 134a of which 57a were arable and 77 a meadow or pasture. A further 93a were sold in smaller lots and were noted as being suitable for division into smallholdings. There were also six cottages in Wem.[143]

Edstaston Hall farm was purchased by John Garner (1840-1913), the proprietor of the Bridge Salt Works in Winsford.[144] Garner seems to have seen the property as an investment rather than as a weekend retreat. In the Valuation Office Survey the acreage is given as 190a 0r 19p. The tenant was C. Gregory and there was 'cow tie' for 70 cattle. The rent was £367 10*s*. 0d.[145]

Edstaston House

The 'messuage' of this estate, later Edstaston House, stood at the junction of the Wem-Whitchurch road and the lane leading to Edstaston chapel. In 1550, Thomas Ellis, the son of William Ellis, was admitted to a copyhold consisting of the messuage with a croft of 2 a., and 18 a. in different parts of the township including closes of 8 a. each in two of the open fields. He also held a similar copyhold estate in Coton.[146] In 1589, this estate was held by Allen

[139] SA, 5168/1/24, 27; *Birmingham Jnl*, 9 June 1838, 7.
[140] *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 15 May 1844, 2.
[141] SA, 5168/1/29.
[142] SA, 5168/3/2.
[143] SA, 5168/3/6-7, 5168/3/16; *Chester Courant*, 25 Oct. 1899, 4.
[144] SA, 5168/3/15; 5168/3/34.
[145] TNA, IR 58/75866 no. 1347: Obituary, *The Times* 22 Jan. 1913.
[146] *Survey 1561*, 96-8, 124-5.

Ellis, yeoman.[147] Allen died in 1599, and the estate then passed to Thomas, son of Thomas Ellis, who had married Margery Higginson of Wem in 1588. Their son Allen, born *c*.1593, was the tenant at the time of the 1631 survey. Allen was succeeded by his daughter Mary, who married Thomas Payne of Moreton Corbet.[148] They resided at Edstaston and in 1653 Thomas Payne purchased the freehold of several copyhold estates, a total of around 100 a.[149] Their grandson, Thomas, died in 1706 and was succeeded by his younger brother, Daniel Payne. According to Samuel Garbet, Daniel Payne enlarged the estate with the purchase of an additional copyhold estate in Edstaston.[150] He died in 1750, his heir being an infant grandson, Thomas; perhaps the Thomas Payne who died in 1762, apparently without issue.[151] He left his whole estate to his widow Margaret and her heirs. Margaret herself died in 1763, naming as heir her brother John Hurtle of Sion Hill, Wolverley (Worcs.).[152] Margaret also made the modest bequest of £50 to Thomas Payne, an apprentice apothecary in Shrewsbury, if he should reach the age of 21.[153] He was named as the son of Thomas Payne of Newcastle (under Lyme) (Staffs), but his relationship to Margaret's late husband is not stated.[154] John Hurtle, as soon as he inherited, made a will devising 'the Wem estate' to the young Thomas Payne.[155] When surveyed in 1773, Hurtle's estate in Edstaston and Coton comprised 133 a. in various separate parcels loosely centred on Edstaston House.[156] John Hurtle's later testamentary actions had the effect of revoking his 1764 will (in counsels' opinion); an unexecuted will of 1783 left his whole estate to his surviving sister Mary Smith. Hurtle died in 1792 and Mary Smith was granted letters of administration as next of kin and heir at law.[157] Thomas Payne, the apprentice apothecary, was by 1792 was a surgeon residing in

[147] TNA, LR2/225.
[148] *Wem Parish Registers*; Parish Registers of Moreton Corbet; Garbet, 265.
[149] TNA, C 5/30/94; Garbet (265-6) is the only source for the purchase of the freehold.
[150] Curiously, all known depictions of the house indicate that it was set well back from the Wem-Whitchurch road and instead fronted the lane to Edstaston church, until that lane was diverted away from the house.
[151] Garbet, 265, 266; TNA, PROB 11/873/254.
[152] *Wem Parish Registers*, 713 (marriage of Thomas Payne to Margaret Hurtle of Wolverley, Worcs, in 1757); TNA, PROB 11/873/254; PROB 11/889/111.
[153] TNA, PROB 11/889/111. Assuming this is the same Thomas Payne of Edstaston House who died in 1814, he was born in 1744: *Morning Post*, 2 Dec. 1814, and his memorial in Edstaston church.
[154] Thomas Payne of Newcastle under Lyme, timber merchant (d. 1796) inherited, by 1792, an estate at Noneley (Loppington parish) from his brother Daniel: TNA, PROB 11/1275/171. They were thus descendants of the Thomas Payne of Moreton Corbet who had acquired the Edstaston House estate by marriage *c*.1650, specifically of his younger son Daniel: Garbet, 266.
[155] SA, 6000/11651.
[156] SA, 1383/1.
[157] *Aris's Birmingham Gaz*., 17 Sept. 1792, 1; *Shrewsbury Chron*., 19 Oct. 1792, 4; SA, 6000/11651; TNA, PROB 11/1235/164.

Grosvenor Square, London. In 1793 he purchased from Mary Smith and her husband John Smith the freehold and copyhold lands in Edstaston and Coton for £5450.[158]

By his will of 1809, Thomas Payne of Edstaston created trusts for the estate and nominated, in default of heirs of his body, the children of John Knight, attorney of Whitchurch, who was one of Payne's executors. Payne authorised his widow to reside at Edstaston House and retain all its contents, with an annuity specifically for the upkeep of the house, for her life, and for his daughter to live there during her minority. In a codicil to his will in 1814, Thomas Payne instructed the trustees to build a small house, for £150, in 'the plantations adjoining or near the Great Gate leading to the lawn before Edstaston House from the Whitchurch road'.[159] This may be the gate lodge depicted on the tithe award map.[160] Payne also requested a marble memorial to be placed in Edstaston church.[161]

Thomas Payne died in 1814 leaving an infant daughter, Mary Anne.[162] In 1822 she married Vernon Dolphin of Eyford Court (Gloucs.). At the tithe apportionment, Dolphin owned Edstaston House, with 157 a. in Edstaston and 146 a. in Coton. Despite having inherited a large fortune of his own, Dolphin lived beyond his means; by 1839 he was seriously in debt and his aunt arranged a re-settlement of his property in favour of Mary Anne.[163] The couple had no surviving children and separated. Mary Anne travelled to France in 1853, where she began a relationship with a French army officer, General Amedée Theodore Davesies de Pontes. She attempted to divorce Dolphin and made a will leaving all her property to Davesies de Pontes. They married in 1854, but soon separated and Mary Anne entered a convent, where she died in 1856.[164] Mary Anne's will was declared valid in 1861 and succeeded in conveying some of Dolphin's property to Davesies de Pontes.[165] The trusts created by Thomas Payne's will, however, prevented alienation of the Edstaston House estate.

The heir to the estate was Mary Anne, the eldest daughter of John Knight. In 1829 she married Lt-Col. Thomas Cox Kirby at Bristol. At the tithe apportionment for Edstaston,

---

[158] SA, 6000/12080; 6000/11652; 6000/11704.
[159] TNA, PROB 11/1564/395.
[160] On lot 2587. Also, *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 2 Mar. 1859, 4.
[161] TNA, PROB 11/1564/395.
[162] *Chester Chron*., 9 Dec. 1814, 2; Edstaston Parish Register, 71. See also SA, 6001/2369: Accounts of John executor and trustee of Thomas Payne, 1814-1822.
[163] SA, 6000/12285; *Gloucestershire Chron*., 11 Jan. 1840; SA, MI1654/1; *London Evening Standard*, 2 July 1853, 4.
[164] *Ford v. Davesies de Pontes*, *Davesies de Pontes v. Kendall*, 54 E.R. 1012. The judgment in this 'romantic' case was widely reported in English and Scottish newspapers, e.g., *Buxton Herald*, 14 Nov. 1861, 6.
[165] *Ford v. Davesies de Pontes*; Gloucestershire Archives, D181/box98119/3.

Kirby was the owner of the 96 a. Park Farm, and Mary Anne's younger sister, Caroline Knight, owned the adjacent Park Bridge canal wharf. Mary Anne Kirby's daughter and heir, Mary Susanna, married Horace Townsend of Derry House, Roscarberry, co. Cork. Following the terms of Thomas Payne's will, in 1863, Horace and Mary added Payne to their surname.[166] !!![167] Whilst they did not live in Edstaston, the house being rented out to a succession of tenants, Horace Payne-Townshend purchased land in Edstaston to round out their estate when the opportunity arose. He donated the land used to enlarge the churchyard in 1874.[168]

Horace Payne-Townshend died in London in 1885 and Mary Susanna arranged for his burial at Edstaston as he had expressed a wish to be buried there should he die in England.[169] She also added to the Edstaston House estate,[170] but continued to reside in London and at Derry House.[171] Soon after Horace's death in 1885, their younger daughter, Mary Stewart, married Hugh Cecil Cholmondeley and the couple made Edstaston House their family home.[172] Within the next few years, the house was substantially rebuilt and updated.[173] On the death of Mary Susanna in 1891, Mary Stewart Cholmondeley succeeded to the Edstaston estate.

It was not a large estate. At the time of the tithe apportionment, the holdings of Vernon Dolphin (held in the right of his wife) in the township amounted to 157a 1r 13 which consisted of one large farm (later Home Farm) at 117a and two small holdings of 14 ac 2r 28p and 21 3r 36p. As the township's acreage was 2018a, Dolphin was far from being a dominant owner in the township. In 1898 it extended to a little under 500 acres in Edstaston alone.[174] In 1911 or 1912 the Cholmondeley estate as recorded in the Valuation Office survey

---

[166] *London Gaz*., 24 Nov. 1863, 5750-1.
[167] Delete footnote
[168] This list is probably far from complete, but in 1874 11a 1r 9p of copyhold (Chapel Field etc), SA, 167/38, pp. 294-5; also in 1874, a messuage and land at Moor Head 29a 0r 10p, 5168/4/1 and in 1877 20a 0r 22p of copyhold purchased in shares, 167/38, pp. 567-81.
[169] Letter from Mary Susanna Payne-Townshend to Aubrey Townsend, 12 Feb. 1885, in J. and R. Townsend, 'Horace Payne-Townsend', in 'The Townsend (Townshend) Papers', University of Madison-Wisconsin, http://user.astro.wisc.edu/~townsend/tree/scrapbooks/5D12.pdf. Horace Payne-Townshend's memorial can still be seen in the churchyard, and see below, 'Churchyard'.
[170] SA, D3651/B/11: purchase of premises at Edstaston Wharf in 1886.
[171] Dunbar, *Mrs. G.B.S.*, 47-65.
[172] They were there in the summer of 1887, Dunbar, *Mrs. G.B.S.*, 57; Hugh Cholmondeley was reported in his obituary (*Shrewsbury Chron*., 19 Dec. 1941, 4-5) to have lived at Edstaston for 42 years, but *Kelly's Dir., Shropshire, 1895*, 83, has him resident there in 1895.
[173] I. Woodward, *The Story of Wem and its Neighbourhood* (1952), 130; comparison of OS 25 in. maps: Shropshire XIV.11, 1879, published 1881, and XIV.11 revised 1900, published 1901. Images of the 1890s house: SA, PH/E/7/1; National Trust Collections, NT 1715434, NT 1715434.5.
[174]

was substantially larger owning the Home farm, Yew Tree farm and Rye Bank farm.[175] In c. 1911 Mrs Cholmondeley also owned Edstaston Park Farm although it is not clear when it was purchased, nor, as it does not appear in the 1942 sale catalogue, when it was sold again. The Home farm was sold c. 1920. The estate may have reached its maximum size immediately before the First World War.

The elder daughter of Mary Susanna and Horace Payne-Townshend was Charlotte Frances, who married George Bernard Shaw in 1898. From 1905, Shaw visited his Cholmondeley in-laws at Edstaston House, for instance, in July 1910 and in January and October 1912.[176] Shaw named a character 'Captain Charles Edstaston' in his play, *Great Catherine: Whom Glory Still Adores* (1913). He attended Mary Stewart's funeral, unveiled her commemorative window in the west end of Edstaston church, and continued to visit Edstaston even after her death.[177]

Mary Stewart Cholmondeley had one daughter, Cecily, who in 1911 married Richard St John Jeffryes Colthurst, also of an Anglo-Irish family.[178] Mary Stewart died in 1929.[179] Cholmondeley remarried and lived at Edstaston House until his death late in 1941.[180] The heiress, Cecily Colthurst, moved quickly to sell the contents of the house and the house and estate after her father's death.[181]

When offered for auction on 22 April 1942 in 14 lots, the estate consisted of Edstaston House and grounds (20a 2r 13p) which was offered with a further 43 acres of pasture and arable.[182] Rye Bank House was described as a county residence in the tenure of T. P. Shelmerdine: it had 15a 3r 17p of land attached to it. The house had lawns, a tennis court, ornamental pools, flower beds, a dingle with a summer house and a kitchen garden: the house and grounds accounted to 2½ a. It also had two cottages let to Shelmardine and a third, Oak Tree Cottage. The estate also had two small dairy holdings: Padol Green farm (35a 2r 13p) and Yew Tree farm (26a 0r 39p) and various areas of accommodation land and buildings, a

---

[175]

[176] Letters written by Shaw at Edstaston in 1910 and 1912: Cornell University Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Bernard F. Burgunder Collection of George Bernard Shaw, [ca. 1810]-1990, Box 11, Folders 26 and 27, 21 July 1910; Box 11, Folder 38, 5 Jan. 1912; Box 112, Folder 13, 28 Oct. 1912.

[177] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 12 Apr. 1929, 6; *Western Mail*, 5 Sept. 1936, 13.

[178] *Pall Mall Gaz*., 3 Aug. 1911, 3.

[179] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 12 Apr. 1929, 6.

[180] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 13 Feb. 1931, 12; 19 Dec. 1941, 4-5; *The Times* 16 Dec. 1941; *Wellington J.* 20 Dec. 1941.

[181] Contents, *Newport and MD Adv.,* 13 Feb. 1942 (and other newspapers). The house *SC*, 3 Apr. 1942 and other newspapers. It was reported later in the month that most of the lots had been sold to the tenants in advance of the sale and what remained unsold was the house and 43 acres.

[182] The following is based on a copy of the sale particulars let to us by Mrs Corinne Brown of Edstaston.

smallholding at the Old Wharf and cottages in the village. Most of the lots were sold to the tenants before the sale took place, and only three lots were offered at auction, the house, the land attached to it and Oak Tree Cottage.[183] The house and grounds did not sell and were finally sold after the War.

Edstaston Home Farm

Home Farm is situated on the opposite side of the road to Edstaston House. Its history is problematic and the account which follows is speculative.

The tithe map shows the field (apportionment number 2584), which was later filled by the buildings of the Home Farm, to be empty except for a farmhouse situated in the corner of the field by the roadside (2585). It had buildings on the opposite side of the road in what was to be later the stable yard to Edstaston House (2588), It was owned by Vernon Dolphin and tenanted by one Thomas Tunna. His holding was substantial, extending to 117a 2r 3p. The first edition OS map (1881) shows the same arrangement of the farm and buildings separated by the road.[184] The next version (1901) shows that extensive buildings had been erected in field 2584 and the buildings on the south side of the road folded into the expanded grounds of Edstaston House.

A newspaper search finds no references to the Home Farm at Edstaston before reports of a dance in 1891 to celebrate the marriage of Thomas Bebbington, elder son of Thomas Bebbington sen. of the Home Farm. Thomas senior died in 1893 but his widow lived on to 1903 when she was still living at Home Farm.[185] Bebbington's executors had a farm sale in March 1904 and this brought the Bebbington connection to the farm to an end.[186]

Tracking Bebbington in the census, in 1871 he appears as a farmer aged 39 farming 120 acres and was living at the Canal Wharf in Edstaston. In 1881 he was a farmer of 160 acres but in both that census year and 1891 he was, from the sequence in which his household was recorded in the census, living at Home Farm.

It was a sizeable farm. In 1898 Bebbington was the tenant of 195 acres of land from the Cholmondeleys and Hulse the same in the Valuation Office survey of c. 1911[187]

It is possible to trace the succession of farmers at Home Farm from newspaper reports and advertisements. After Bebbington's executors came Tom Hulse. He had a farm sale on 18

[183] *Newport and Market Drayton Adv.* 17 Apr. 1942.
[184] This farm was advertised for letting in *Eddowes Shrewsbury J.*, 20 Nov. 1850.
[185] *Wellington J.*, 8 Aug. 1891, 28 Feb. 1903.
[186] *Wellington J.,* 13, 20 Feb. 1904.
[187] TNA, IR58/75866 no. 1325.

April 1913 when he left the farm on his retirement. He was locally noted as a breeder of shire horses. He d. 1927. At the time of his sale he had inter alia, 68 cattle, 36 Shropshire Ewes and a shire stud.[188] He was followed by J. K. Lea. On his farm sale in 1920 he was reported to have left the district but he appears to have moved to a farm in Loppington. He was living in retirement in Moele Brace in 1945. Lea also had a sizeable dairy herd (74 cattle in all) together with 63 sheep and other animals.[189]

Lea was succeeded in the farm by Thomas Simon. At the time of his golden wedding (widely reported in the local press) in 1937, he was said to have purchased the farm in 1920. This seems to have been correct as in the return to the National Farm Survey of 1941, the farm, then in the hands of Messrs E. H. and W. H. Simon, was recorded as freehold. And the Simons sold the farm in May 1947 when it contained 140a 0r 18p.[190] It therefore seems likely that the farm was sold to Thomas Simon in 1920 or at a date shortly thereabouts. He died in 1943 at the age of 83.[191]

[188] *Northwich Guardian,* 11 Apr. 1913; *Newport and Market Drayton Adv.* 24 Sept. 1927.
[189] *Wellington J.* 31 Jan. 1920; 15 Dec. 1945 (report of the death of his son W. H. Lea).
[190] *SC* 2 Apr. 1937; NFS; *SC* 23 May 1947, *Wellington J.* 20, 27 Sept. 1947.
[191] *Wellington J.* 12 Feb. 1943.

ECONOMIC HISTORY

Agriculture

[to follow]

Canal Wharves

The Prees Branch of the Ellesmere (later Shropshire Union) Canal opened in 1806; it connected a wide area to the south and east of Edstaston with the national canal network and with international shipping via Chester and Ellesmere Port. For its first thirty years, Edstaston was the nearest point on the canal network to Shrewsbury and the industrial areas of east Shropshire.

Along the length of the canal in Edstaston, three wharves developed: Edstaston Wharf, where the lane from Edstaston church to the old Edstaston Park gate crossed the canal; Park Bridge Wharf; and Quina Brook canal hamlet and wharves on the Wem-Whitchurch turnpike. 'Wrens Nest' limekilns and a wharf to serve them were constructed a short distance along the canal to the west of Edstaston Wharf.

The heyday of the Prees Branch came to an end in 1835 when the Norbury branch of the Shropshire Union Canal reached the Shropshire canals at Wappenshall Junction, creating a direct waterway connection from Shrewsbury and the east Shropshire industrial area to the Midlands canals. This was soon followed by competition from the railways. Sources are scarce for the canal-based commerce in Edstaston before 1835. The relatively more abundant sources from 1841 onwards show the legacy of that era of rapid growth - the infrastructure of wharves, warehouses, weighing machines, workshops, workers' housing, chapels and public houses. The canal trade, however, became limited to bulk, non-perishable goods that were not economical to transport by rail.

Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company (SURCC) monopolised commercial carrying on the Shropshire Union Canal, including the Prees Branch, from its formation in 1846 until it ceased trading in 1921. Independently-owned boats could have continued trading after 1921, but records are lacking. The inland waterways having been nationalised in 1948, in 1960 central government, via the Inland Waterways Redevelopment Advisory Committee, transferred part of the Prees Branch to Wem Rural District Council for use as a refuse tip. As the canal was progressively filled in, the ground would be sold to neighbouring

landowners for agriculture.[192] The process was never completed, however, as the canal bed in Edstaston is still distinguishable in places, notably at the Quina Brook terminus.

Edstaston Wharf

Samuel Turner in 1783 was succeeded by William Turner, architect, of Whitchurch, in the part-copyhold, part-freehold tenement in Edstaston that comprised the future Edstaston Wharf hamlet.[193] William Turner was a keen proponent of the Ellesmere Canal, arguing for the project by 1793.[194] He fenced off about an acre of land, where the lane north from Edstaston church crossed the canal, for the development of wharves on both sides of the canal. He leased part of the canal-side to Manley, Hiles & Co., a partnership founded in 1805 for carrying goods on the Ellesmere Canal, for ninety-nine years at an annual rent of £10. The lessees were authorised to build the necessary infrastructure such as wharves, warehouses and cranes.[195] Turner leased the parcel of copyhold land on the other side of the canal in 1807, probably on similar terms, to Thomas Whittle & Co., canal carriers of Tower Wharf, Chester, for about fifty years.[196] These developed as wharves on the north and south sides of the canal, respectively.

Manley, Hiles & Co. and Whittle & Co. soon advertised their freight rates on goods (potentially) traded between Edstaston Wharf and Chester, including hops, malt, grain and flour, slates, pig-lead and pig-iron, kelp, cheese, groceries, wine, fruit, hides, linen, hemp and tallow, deal, oak timber and oak bark.[197] By 1817, the Liverpool carriers Shanklin & Co. advertised their freight business on the Ellesmere Canal, naming John Goolden, a timber merchant, as the company's agent at Edstaston Wharf.[198] Canal carriage from Edstaston was advertised by a Shrewsbury wharfinger in 1822, and by 1835 Edstaston Wharf was served by two Shrewsbury road carriers operating daily.[199] So important was the trade that a tramway from Shrewsbury to Edstaston Wharf was proposed to reduce transport costs.[200]

---

[192] P. Brown, *The Shropshire Union Canal* (2018), 155-6, 216, 230, 250-1.
[193] SA, 3651/B/151/24/2, Schedule.
[194] SA, 6000/15007-15012, 15015, 15016, 15032, 15053, 15056, 15089-15092.
[195] SA, 1848 box 55, 'Draft Abstract of title of the trustees of the late Jn° Kilvert Esq. to a leasehold warehouse, … contracted to be sold to Mr T.E. Ward'.
[196] SA, 3651/B/151/24/1. On the enterprising Thomas Whittle, see *Chester Courant*, 31 July 1810, 1; *Chester Chron*., 11 Oct. 1816, 3; 7 Aug. 1818, 4; *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 May 1817, 5; *Chester Courant*, 26 June 1821.
[197] *Chester Courant*, 11 Apr. 1809, 3; 1 Jan. 1811, 1; *Chester Chron*., 5 Oct. 1810, 4.
[198] *Chester Courant*, 8 July 1817, 2. John Goolden (*alias* Goolding & Co.) was the tenant of the southern wharf (*c*.1820-1829): *Chester Chron*., 3 Apr. 1829, 1.
[199] *Pigot's Dir. 1822*; *Pigot's National Commercial Dir., 1835*, 380, 385.
[200] *Chester Chron*., 11 Oct. 1816, 3; *Hereford Jnl*, 5 May 1824, 1.

In 1818, the bankrupt estate of William Turner was sold off in lots, including a dwelling house, warehouse, crane and the wharf leased to Manley & Co. and a warehouse, stable, crane and wharf leased to Whittle & Co.[201] From this date, the wharf developments on the north and south of the canal had different owners. The northern wharf was purchased by John Kilvert of Grinshill.[202] The southern wharf, of 2 a. 20 p., was purchased by Beatrice Walford for £161.[203]

A trade directory of 1835 listed at Edstaston Wharf: Edward Clarke, agent for Fairhurst, Tilston & Co., canal carrier (the successor lessee to Whittle & Co.); Ireland & Davies, coal merchant, lime burner and brick and tile maker; Thomas Weston, coal merchant; Edward Nicholas, joiner; the 'Marquis of Wellington' public house; and Edward Nicholas, beer seller.[204]

In 1841, the Wem solicitor Henry John Barker owned the whole wharf development south of the bridge, of nearly 2 a. The wharf and warehouse was leased to Tilston, Smith & Co. Thomas Edward Ward, a Denbighshire coal master,[205] had also invested in the canal, owning the 'substantial and well-built warehouse', dwelling house, recently installed weighing machine and wharf, still leased to John Brown, on the north side of the canal, and the Wren's Nest limekilns, occupied by Davies & Co., as well as a small wharf at the canal terminus at Quina Brook.[206]

Ward sold his Prees Branch wharves in 1844.[207] This was probably connected with the formation of the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company (SURCC), which set out to dominate carrying on the canal by leasing wharves and operating its own boats. SURCC took over the lease of Tilston, Smith & Co. of the southern wharf at Edstaston.[208]

In 1851, Thomas Richards (aged 74) was the 'agent and canal clerk for the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company', as well as landlord of the Duke of Wellington public house.[209] The public house was located at the SURCC wharf, and apparently was renamed the

[201] SA, 3651/B/151/24/1; *Chester Courant*, 19 May 1818, 1.
[202] SA, 1848 box 55, 'Draft Abstract of title …'.
[203] SA, 3651/B/151/24/1.
[204] *Pigot's Dir., 1835*, 384-5; *Pigot's Dir., 1842*, 48-50.
[205] See SA, 5360/19, fos. 65-78; SA, SC/25/6, p. 11; NLW, MS MAPS Vol. 99 028/7/6: Maps of an estate belonging to T. E. Ward Esq., 1854. See 'Tilley … Trench Farm'.
[206] TNA, IR 29/29/334, 109, 124; *Eddowes's Jnl*, 11 Sept. 1844, 3; 25 Sept. 1844, 1.
[207] *Eddowes's Jnl*, 11 Sept. 1844, 3; 25 Sept. 1844, 1. The 22 a. of freehold agricultural land that Ward had also purchased near the wharf was sold by his heir in 1875: *Wrexham Guardian*, 19 June 1875, 1.
[208] Brown, *Shropshire Union Canal*, 155-6.
[209] TNA, HO 107/1995, 89; Bagshaw, 332. See also, 'Mr Richards's, The Duke of Wellington Inn': *Shrewsbury Chron*., 19 Oct. 1849, 2.

'Marquis of Wellington' between 1849 and 1854.[210] It had ceased trading by 1874, when it was described as a dwelling house.[211] John Hayward, coal agent, may also have operated at this wharf; in the 1851 census his occupation was 'coal wharfinger'.[212] John Brown operated a wharf at Edstaston as 'coal, slate, lime and guano merchant'.[213] A case heard in Petty Sessions in Whitchurch in 1856 exemplifies the trade at the wharf, and one of its weaknesses; Richard Hayward and Richard Parry, in charge of the boat *Sarah*, were charged with stealing two bags of guano from Edstaston warehouse, the property of SURCC, the loss being discovered after *Sarah* had left the wharf. Counsel for SURCC informed the court that 'robberies committed on the canal were to an enormous amount'.[214]

There was a sub-post office at Edstaston Wharf, on the north side of the canal by 1861 when Thomas Rogers was 'post-master'. In 1891, the sub-postmaster was Richard Weston, the Edstaston parish clerk.[215] Between 1895 and 1901, his son, Henry Weston, took over as sub-postmaster.[216] The canal trade was still thriving at this date.

In 1889, the major customers of SURCC importing goods via Edstaston Wharf were businesses based in Wem: Charles Tommy, builder, and Platt & Dobell, cheese-factors and -makers. Tommy imported pipes, roof and ridge tiles, chimney tops, slabs, deal and other building timber. Platt & Dobell imported coal, salt and livestock feed, and cheeses from cheese fairs. Various local farmers had occasional deliveries of livestock feed and manure. In May 1889 (as a random sample), at least one boat delivered goods, for one or more customers, every day except Sundays - a total of twenty-seven boat visits. In comparison, in May 1893, boats visited on nineteen days.[217]

Accounts of exports from Edstaston Wharf survive from 1896. If they do record all exports, then these show considerable variability within the space of a few years. In 1896, almost the recorded exports were bales of empty sacks, shipped in large quantities to various mills and other locations, from Shrewsbury to Liverpool; sacks of wheat were occasionally exported to canal-side mills, for instance, at Shrewsbury or Middlewich. From 1900, however, the export of grain (wheat and oats) increased. From 1910 to 1912, there was an experiment - possibly by the Shrewsbury & Wem Brewery Co. which was increasing its

[210] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 12 Oct. 1849, 3; *Eddowes's Jnl*, 6 Sept. 1854, 1; *Harrod's Dir., 1861*, 728.
[211] Sale to William Newbrook of The Oaklands, Edstaston, in 1874: SA, 3651/B/151/24/4; *Wellington Jnl*, 30 May 1891, 1.
[212] TNA, HO 107/1995, 89; Bagshaw, 335.
[213] Bagshaw, 322.
[214] *Eddowes's Jnl*, 23 Jan. 1856, 5. See, generally, Brown, *Shropshire Union Canal*.
[215] *Wellington Jnl*, 9 Jan. 1904, 11.
[216] *Kelly's Dir. Herefordshire and Shropshire 1895*, 83; TNA, RG 13/2553, 5.
[217] SA, 6000/5042.

production in Wem - in sending cases of cider and casks of ale by canal to individual customers near Cheswardine, perhaps canal-side public houses. The predominant export until 1911, however, was cheeses, consigned by Platt & Dobell to their agents in Wolverhampton, Liverpool and Manchester.[218]

In May 1908, at most fifteen boats delivered goods at Edstaston Wharf. (SURCC raised fifteen invoices for deliveries that month, but some orders may have arrived on the same boat.) There were only two consignees: R. D. Bromley of Shrewsbury, who imported livestock feed and sacks, and Platt & Dobell.[219] John Platt died in 1910, having appointed Percival Swain as successor to his cheese and dairy business. Generational change may explain why the business, renamed Platt & Swain, ceased using canal transport in April 1911; the next year receiving their last two deliveries by canal, of cheeses from Whitchurch cheese fair.

In the last decade of its operations, Bromley was almost the only customer at Edstaston Wharf, taking receipt of large quantities of livestock feed. Wem Brewery occasionally took delivery of empty casks by canal. During the whole of 1912, just eight boats left the wharf with exported goods: oats, timber, ale and cheeses; and only five in 1913, all carrying wheat. During the First World War, for the first time, exports exceeded imports, with about eighteen grain shipments in 1917. After the war, imports and exports dropped back, but Wem Mills belatedly started to use the canal in 1921.[220] Canal carrying at Edstaston Wharf ceased in September 1921. The wharf re-opened temporarily in 1925, for the supply of grain from Ellesmere Port to Wem Mills, with about twenty-five boat deliveries to the wharf over six months.

Large warehouses remained on either side of the disused canal in the early 2000s, that on the north side converted to a private residence, the other derelict and decaying.[221] Around 2018, the southern warehouse was rebuilt as a dwelling house, New Wharf House, retaining the footprint and architectural design of the former warehouse. Other 19th-century buildings remain on the east side of the bridge, that on the southeast having been developed as a bus depot.

Park Bridge Wharf

[218] SA, 6000/5043.
[219] SA, 6000/5044.
[220] SA, 6000/5043, 6000/5045; *Kelly's Dir. Herefordshire and Shropshire, 1895*, 83; *Kelly's Dir. Shropshire, 1913*, 95.
[221] Pers. obs.; cf. J. Newman and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Shropshire* (2006), 261.

This wharf was constructed beside the canal bridge on the lane between Upper Park Farm and Lower Park Farm, apparently by the then owner of both farms. Located on the canal between Edstaston Wharf and Quina Brook, contemporary records do not always distinguish this wharf as a separate place. In 1839 Park Bridge Wharf was advertised for sale, as part of the Park Farm estate, as a cottage, warehouse, limekilns and 2a. of land, leased to Ireland & Co., and a wharf leased to Mr Pickering.[222]

In 1841, the cottage, warehouse and limekilns on 2a. was owned by Caroline Knight and occupied by Davies & Co. A blacksmith's shop with 4a., at the junction where the short lane to the wharf turned off the Wem-Whitchurch turnpike, was owned by the Edstaston House estate and occupied by John Rogers.[223] At the 1841 census, Thomas Richards, aged 60, his wife and two servants lived at Park Bridge Wharf; Richards gave his occupation as clerk. Living nearby were the households of John Brown, clerk, and Joseph Sutton, porter. Trade directories in 1842 and 1851 listed John Brown as a coal merchant at Park Bridge Wharf.[224] The only residents in 1851 were Phoebe Roberts, a poor widow, and Joseph Hodskiss, a boatman, and his family.[225]

The blacksmith's shop was sustained from roadside trade, but the canal wharf failed to develop commercially.[226] A barn there was used for a day school from *c*.1842 until Edstaston National School opened in 1874.[227] By 1881, the cottage and warehouse had been replaced by a terrace of four cottages on the same small site between the lane, bridge and canal. They became known as 'Bedlam'; at the 1881 census, thirteen people lived there in three houses, the fourth house was unoccupied. In 1901 and 1911, there were still three houses occupied, two by elderly widows living alone.[228] The houses were condemned for demolition by Wem Rural District Council in 1938.[229]

Quina Brook

[222] *Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser*, 10 Oct. 1839.
[223] TNA, IR 29/29/334, 113.
[224] *Pigot's Dir*., 1842, 49; Bagshaw, 332.
[225] TNA, HO 107/1995, 12 (93).
[226] The blacksmith in 1911 was Thomas Watkin.
[227] See below, 'Education'.
[228] 1881 census: TNA, RG 11/2667, 52; 1901 census: RG 13/2553, 18; 1911 census, three households at 'Bedlam': Sarah Heath and Sarah Penk, both elderly widows living alone, and Frederick Lamb, his wife and baby son.
[229] Wem Rural District Council No. 6 (Edstaston) Clearance Order, TNA, HLG 23/1653.

The settlement here pre-dated the canal; it was known as Quina Brook by 1746, the location of a copyhold tenement held by the Hinton family from the 16th century.[230]

Quina Brook developed rapidly after the arrival of the canal in 1806. There were lime kilns there by 1810.[231] A new turnpike to improve road access from the east to the canal wharf was authorised in 1811 ('Transport', above). A trade directory of 1835 listed, at Quina Brook: Thomas Holding, tailor and shopkeeper; John Rogers, blacksmith; and two public houses, the Harp and the Canal Tavern.[232] In 1842, George Ruscoe was listed as a wharfinger, having given his occupation in the 1841 census as 'farmer'.[233] The owner of the main wharf development in 1841 was Samuel Calcott, who owned the Harp Inn, leased to Edward Rogers; a canal wharf and limekilns, leased to Davies & Co.; the terrace of cottages there, leased to tenants including Thomas Holding, and a canal side cottage and brickyard, leased to Anne Davies. The limekilns and cottage that still survive were owned by Samuel Tiler and leased to Davies & Co. The Canal Tavern, with 8½ a., was owned by Edward Colemere, his only landholding in the township, and leased to Thomas Cliff. Quina Brook House, then a 'cottage and garden' of 1r. 33p., was owned and occupied by John Ashley.[234] On the north side of the canal terminus, by 1841, Edward Thomas Ward, a Denbighshire coalmaster, owned a coal wharf and limekiln, occupied by Davies & Co., and several cottages. The Coton Hall estate had developed its own small wharf: 'machine garden wharf' occupied by George Ruscoe and adjacent 'coal wharf and limekiln' occupied by Davies & Co.[235]

At the 1841 census, there were eighty-eight residents at 'Old Harp' and Quina Brook. They included Thomas Cliff, publican of the Canal Tavern and butcher, with his wife, seven children and servants; Edward Rogers, the publican of the Harp Inn, with his wife, seven children, a servant and a young blacksmith. John Ashley, with a wife and four children, was a boatman. Thomas Holding was a tailor, with a wife, children, and two apprentices. The majority of households residing at Quina Brook were nevertheless headed by an 'agricultural labourer'.

In 1844, the main wharf development was advertised for sale: ten-twelfth shares of the lime kilns, cottage, coal wharf and croft of land, on a 99-year lease from 1810 (perhaps the

[230] Garbet, 271; Wem Parish Register, 642, 779; Edstaston Parish Register, 38, 48, 49, 70, 73, 74.
[231], 6, 13 July 1810.
[232] *Pigot's Dir., 1835*, 384-5. The smithy was at Park Bridge, see above.
[233] *Pigot's Dir., 1842*, 50. In 1858, the marriage of Ruscoe's daughter at Edstaston church was celebrated by '150 of the tenants and workmen's wives' at Quina Brook: *Cheshire Observer*, 15 May 1858, 6.
[234] TNA, IR 29/29/334, 111-12. See 'Coton … Religious History'.
[235] Tithe apportionment, TNA, IR 29/334, pp. 91, 104.

date they were constructed); five freehold houses and gardens and wharf beside the canal, all occupied by Davies & Co.[236] The Canal Tavern was sold in 1850, advertised as 'an old established public house and land'.[237]

A trade directory of 1851 recorded at Quina Brook: Thomas Cliff, victualler at the Canal Tavern; Thomas Holding, shopkeeper; Edward Rogers, blacksmith and victualler at the Harp; and George and Abraham Ruscoe, dealers in coal, slate, brick, lime and general tillage, at their warehouse.[238]

In 1863, the main wharf development was again advertised for sale, as: a coal wharf with weighing machine, office, stables and other buildings, and five limekilns, with five cottages, as well as the Wren's Nest limekilns, all in the tenure of George Ruscoe and his undertenants. The trade in Welsh coal and lime was emphasised.[239] In 1868, John Jones ('coal, lime and timber merchant, boat builder, coach builder, wharfinger and general carrier' of Ellesmere) operated 'Quina Brook Lime Works'.[240]

In 1871, there were five men and boys working as 'boatman' or 'boatboy'. Jacob Titley was the landlord of the Harp and Joseph Darlington of the Canal Tavern, and William Davies was 'clerk at canal wharf'. However, a trade directory of 1871 does not list any canal traders and in the 1871 and 1881 censuses Joseph Darlington gave his occupation only as 'farmer'. By 1891, the Harp was owned and occupied by Samuel Ford; the house was reported as in good order but the buildings not; part of the house was used as a butcher's shop. The Canal Tavern had ceased trading; it was advertised for sale as a freehold house with 9 a. in 1907 (now No. 1 Quina Brook).[241]

The Harp Inn was purchased by William Hall & Co., predecessor to Wem Brewery Co. Ltd, between 1891 and 1896.[242] By 1901, there was no resident at Quina Brook apparently making a living from the canal trade. The landlord of the Harp Inn was still Samuel Ford; Mary Holland and her daughter kept a grocer's shop and her son was a carpenter.[243] The Harp Inn closed on the retirement of its licencee in 1972 and was converted into a private dwelling (called Harp House).[244]

---

[236] *Eddowes's Jnl*, 11 Sept. 1844, 3.
[237] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 2 Aug. 1850, 2; 20 May 1859, 6.
[238] Bagshaw, 335.
[239] *Eddowes's Jnl*, 14 Oct.1863, 1.
[240] *Slater's Dir. Glos., Herefs., Mon., Shrops. and Wales*, 1868, 1101.
[241] SA, QA/9/3/1; *Wellington Jnl*, 27 Apr. 1907, 1.
[242] County of Salop. Return of Licensed Houses in the Petty Sessional Division of Wem, 1896.
[243] *Kelly's Dir. Herefordshire and Shropshire, 1895*, 83; 1901 Census.
[244] *Shropshire Star,* 9 Mar., 27 Apr. 1972.

Bus Depot

The commercial use of this site, in an otherwise rural environment, is a legacy of the former Edstaston canal wharves.

Norman Cyril Brown started a bus company at this location in 1966, initially providing school bus services. By the early 1980s, his sons Derek and Paul Brown were working in the business which had a fleet of six coaches. The business, named NCB Motors of Wem, was acquired by Lakeside Coaches of Ellesmere in 2019. However, the Brown brothers retained ownership of the depot and the former wharf site across the road, leasing the depot to Lakeside Coaches as an outstation.[245]

Oaklands Farm Eggs

Oaklands Farm was owned by William Newbrook who died in 1884. In 1892, the farm was sold by the trustees of the late Samuel Thompson, then being in the occupation of Thomas Snape. On the road from Whixall to Wem, there was a substantial brick and stone house with slate roof with 29 a. of pasture and arable land.[246] It was offered for sale in 1950.[247]

In 1969, the owner/occupier of The Oaklands farm retired from farming. The Oaklands was advertised for sale as a residential freehold dairy farm of 44¾a.[248] It was purchased by John Aled and Olwen Griffiths and developed for egg production. The business is now run by their sons Gareth and Elwyn Griffiths and grandsons. The organisation claims to be one of the largest and most technologically advanced facilities in the UK for rearing chickens and packing eggs on site.[249]

[245] https://cbwmagazine.com/lakeside-of-ellesmere-acquires-n-c-b-motors/ Find primary sources
[246] *Wellington Jnl*, 18 June 1892, 1.
[247] *Chester Chron*., 26 Aug. 1950, 5.
[248] *Nantwich Chron*., 24 Apr. 15; 15 May 1969, 15.
[249] https://www.griffithsfarms.co.uk/griffiths-family-history/ ; www.shropshirestar.com/business/shropshire-business/2014/04/11/nice-lidl-earner-joy-for-shropshire-egg-firm/

SOCIAL HISTORY

Education

In 1832, the curate of Edstaston reported that there was no day school within the chapelry. There was a Sunday school, partly in Edstaston church and partly in a hired room nearby, attended by about fifty children.[250] In 1851, the Sunday school was held at the church, morning and afternoon, attended by forty-four scholars.[251]

There was a day school by 1842, when John Vernon kept a school at Quina Brook.[252] At the 1851 census, Hannah Weston of Park Gate gave her occupation as schoolmistress and dress maker. In 1859, the school was conducted by Alfred Roberts.[253] At the 1861 census, an uninhabited dwelling 'under the school' is recorded next to the household of Phoebe Roberts (aged 70, nurse) where two children were boarding; Martha A. Schofield, born in Yorkshire and residing as a lodger at Paddol Green, gave her occupation as schoolmistress.[254] In 1869, the schoolroom, 'tastefully decorated', was the venue for a meeting of the parishioners of Edstaston and Coton to honour the departing minister, the Revd. John Steward.[255]

In 1870, the new incumbent, the Revd. P. Mason, reported that there was school accommodation for eighty in Edstaston parish, which was insufficient given the parish population of 799; under the Elementary Education Act, 120 school places were required. The school was held in a converted old 'barn' near the bank of the canal, possibly the former warehouse at Park Bridge wharf. Revd. Mason claimed that not only was the building unsuitable, but there was also such a danger of falling in the water and drowning that parents were reluctant to send their children to school there. Revd. Mason intended to apply for a government grant and raise funds to build a parish school.[256]

Land in Coton township near Quina Brook was donated by Viscount Hill later in 1870 and construction was funded by voluntary subscription. Edstaston National School opened in 1874.[257] The vicar of Edstaston was chairman of the school's managers and visitor, and the

---

[250] SRO, B/V/5/22.
[251] C.D. Field, *Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire; Returns from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship* (Shropshire Record Series Volume 8, 2004), 106.
[252] *Pigot's Dir., 1842*, 49.
[253] *Slater's Dir., 1859*, 58; 1861 Census.
[254] By 1871, Martha Schofield had become a headmistress in St Albans (Herts.): TNA, RG 10/1379, 4.
[255] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 27 August 1869, 8.
[256] *Oswestry Advertiser*, 19 Oct., 1870, 6; *Shrewsbury Chron.,* 21 Oct. 1870, 7. See inquest on the death of Charles Withington, aged five, of Foxholes: *Oswestry Advertiser*, 1 August 1866, 6.
[257] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 16 Dec. 1870, 7; TNA, ED 103/120/43, p. 797.

school was actively supported by the leading residents including the Revd. Sir William Honyman of Coton Hall and Hugh Cholmondeley of Edstaston House. The school was located on the east side of the Wem-Whitchurch road, close to the border between Edstaston and Coton, which together formed Edstaston parish. Of a plain design by the architect James Denham of Wem, it was constructed of red brick with a slate roof and stone surrounds to the windows and the arched entrance to the porch. It consisted of a schoolroom measuring 37 ft × 18 ft, and, projecting to the front, a 'class room' of 18 ft × 18 ft. A school teacher's house was attached on the east side. The site was 1,150 square yards (0.1 hectare) in area.[258] There was also a school garden, gardening being a subject on the boys' curriculum for most of the school's history.[259] The school's third headteacher, Richard Smith, was in post from 1888 to 1923. His wife, Kate (Kathleen) Smith, was employed as the assistant teacher and their two daughters, as teenagers, also assisted.[260]

Numbers grew gradually, with average attendance of 47 in 1876. In 1903 there was accommodation for 85 children and 82 on the register, with an average attendance of 69 in 1902.[261] This appears to have been the high point. Numbers on the register declined during the 1920s, to around 45 in 1926.[262] After reorganisation of educational provision, in 1931 the school became a Junior Department. Children aged 11 and over transferred to the County Senior School in Wem or, for the minority, to the grammar school in Wem (boys) or Whitchurch High School (girls and boys). In 1935, there were 45 pupils: 28 infants aged four to eight, and 17 juniors, aged nine to 11+. In 1938 the number on the register had dropped to 34, which was fortuitous as the school received a series of school groups evacuated from Liverpool during the Second World War. The first and largest group - 58 children and a teacher - arrived in September 1939. During the war, older pupils were held back from progressing to Wem Senior School, which further added to the number to be accommodated. When normal conditions returned in September 1945, there were just 32 on the register. Again, however, numbers began to rise, up to 62 in 1954.[263]

Although the number of pupils was lower than at the start of the 20th century, the school's accommodation was now inadequate. Soon after the war, school dinners began to be provided, which were prepared at the Wem central kitchen and delivered by van. Part of the

[258] SA, ED 1564/114-115; ED 2699/39/6; ED 3593/3.
[259] SA, ED 3593/4, *passim*.
[260] SA, ED 3593/3-4; Census 1891 (Coton); Census 1901 (Edstaston).
[261] SA, ED 2699/39/6; ED 3593/3.
[262] SA, ED 3593/4, e.g. entries for 1926 and 1927.
[263] SA, ED 3593/4-5.

school room had to be used as the service and dining area. New educational methods also required more space for children, especially infants, to move around the class room during lessons.[264] To alleviate the 'rather difficult physical conditions' at the school, in 1966 the Shropshire Education Committee decided to merge Edstaston Church of England Primary School with Whixall Church of England Primary School and Whixall County Primary School, at the latter's premises at Brownsbrook. The three schools closed in July 1967 and re-opened at Brownsbrook in September 1967 as Whixall Church of England Primary School.[265] The school had 122 pupils enrolled in 2013, admitted from a wide area. In 2016 the school became an academy. In 2019 there were 117 pupils, which had risen to 161 by 2023, when the school also offered nursery provision.[266]

The former Edstaston school has been sold into private ownership and converted to a private house.[267]

Public Houses[268]

The late eighteenth-century registers of alehouse licences for Shropshire do not record any licenced premises in Edstaston. The list for 1805 though records Samuel Callcott taking a licence. This appears to be one of the earliest signs of his development of the canal wharfs at Quina Brook.[269]

The mid-nineteenth century directories record three public houses in Edstaston, all of of them closely associated with the canal.[270] Bagshaw (1851) has Thomas Richards as publican of the Marquis of Wellington: he was also the agent and canal clerk for the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company and the public house was - as references to auctions conducted there make clear - situated at Edstaston Wharf.[271] The Marquis of Wellington appears in directories of 1861 and 1863 but not later.

There were two public houses in Quina Brook. Thomas Cliff was the licencee of the Canal Tavern in 1851. It was described as a 'well accustomed public house' when offered at

[264] SA, ED 3593/4-5.
[265] SA, ED 3593/5, letter pasted in, dated Jan. 1966; ED 6064/6; Whixall History website: http://whixallhistory.co.uk/schools-and-education/extracts-from-the-school-logbooks/ (accessed 5 Feb. 2024).
[266] Whixall Church of England Primary School, Ofsted Reports, Jan. 2013, Oct. 2019; Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report, Whixall Church of England Primary School, 23 July 2023; Whixall C.E. School and Nursery website: https://www.whixall.shropshire.sch.uk/, accessed 5 Feb. 2024.
[267] Pers. obs., 2017.
[268] See also the accounts of the Wharves at which these public houses were situated.
[269] Calcott does not appear in the previous list (of 1801). SA, QE 2/1/4, 2/1/5 (both unfoliated).
[270] The Valuation Office Survey also mentions a property formerly the Greyhound Inn in Edstaston, but this is otherwise undocumented. IR 58/75866 no. 1359.
[271] For instance *SC* 25 Aug. 1854.

auction in 1850.[272] It disappears from the Directories after Cassey's of 1874, not appearing in the Post Office Directory of 1879 or subsequently.[273]

Of the three, the first to be documented and the longest to endure was The Harp. In 1819 payments for lime from Samuel Callcott's lime works at Quina Brook were to be paid at the Harp.[274] It hosted a dinner for 'the friends and well-wishers of the Hawkstone Family' to celebrate the coming of age of the Hon. R. C. Hill in 1854.[275] When offered for sale in 1868, it was described as 'old licenced', but it was called The New Harp Inn. It was again called The New Harp in an auction notice of 1887.[276] It may have been purchased on that occasion by the Shrewsbury and Wem Brewery company who were its owners immediately before the First World War.[277]

It then seems to have a continuous existence until its licencee, Mr Frank Edwards, retired after 35 years in the trade in 1972, when the pub was closed and the building sold by the Shrewsbury and Wem Brewery Company.[278]

It seems likely that The Harp did not provide a living without a second business. In Bagshaw and Harrod's Directory of 1861, James Rogers of The Harp was also a blacksmith; Samuel Ford was a grocer in 1891. When offered for sale in 1868, it was suggested that it was suitable for a someone who would to pursue the joint businesses of a publican and butcher. The last publican, Frank Edwards, was also a coal merchant.[279]

Recreation

Although the population was small and thinly scattered, there was a communal life in Edstaston, certainly by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A parish festival was being held by the mid-1880s. In 1887 it was decided to fold the parish's Jubilee celebrations into the annual festival rather than hold a separate celebration. There was to be a dinner or meat tea for cottagers and the parish's children: others were to pay for a ticket to attend.[280] A report of the parish festival held in July 1891 reveals that it began with a church service and sermon. There was then tea served in the field opposite the church and school sports days. The vicar

[272] *SC*, 26 July, 2 Aug. 1850.
[273] The buildings of the former Canal Tavern were described in an auction notice of 1907: *Wellington J.*, 4 May 1907.
[274] *SC* 8 Jan. 1819.
[275] *Eddowes*, 6 and 13 Dec. 1854; *SC* 8 and 15 Dec. 1854.
[276] *Eddowes*, 12 Aug. 1868; *Wellington J.* 18 June 1887.
[277] IR 58/75866 no. 1378.
[278] *Shropshire Star*, 9 Mar., 29 Apr. 1972
[279] *SC* 15 June 1945.
[280] *Wellington J.* 21 May 1887.

distributed the prizes. Races were held to win a sheep which was donated to the churchwardens to be butchered and the meat distributed amongst the parish poor. The profit of the day was to go towards the support of the school. An advert for the festival two years later promised 'tea, sports and dancing: hobby horses, swings, stalls and other amusements'.[281]

The festival features only intermittently in the newspapers. The report for 1901 suggests that there had been little innovation over the previous 10 years. In 1902 the festival was held in the vicarage grounds. But by 1909 the festival had been transmitted into the 'Edstaston and Coton Flower Show and parish festival'.[282] The festival appears to have continued to be held at the end of the summer term and to have been a fundraiser for the school. The profits of a quite separate occasion to celebrate the Coronation in 1902 were divided between the District Nursing Fund and Shrewsbury Infirmary.[283]

The celebrations of the king's coronation in 1911 were subsumed into the parish festival: there was a knife and fork tea, school sports, the Whixall silver band to accompany the dancing. Sir W. M. Honeyman presented over 200 coronation cups to the children of the parish.[284]

In the years immediately before the First World War there was also a flower show held at the end of August. This was certainly running by 1909 when the Wem Agricultural Sciety invited the flower show to become part of their activities, an offer which the Edstaston people declined.

It is not certain if these annual occasions survived the First World War, but in 1920 and 1921 there was an Edstaston Carnival held in the vicarage gardens towards the end of July. That in 1920 was to be opened by the Marchioness of Cambridge. All manner of attractions were promised, and a fancy dress costume procession and cycle parade through Wem was to be held the previous day. Dancing would be from eight to eleven in the evening accompanied by the Whixall Silver Band. The profits, in 1921 at least, went towards the augmentation of the benefice and the churchroom/village hall, which was opened as a part of the festivities.[285] Whether an Edstaston carnival was held in later years is uncertain but seems doubtful. The parish festival (now called parish fete) was still being held in the late 1930s but was no longer

[281] Ibid., 1 Aug. 1891; 24 June 1893.
[282] Ibid., 3 Aug. 1901; 26 July 1902; 24 July 1909.
[283] *Wellington J*. 4 Oct. 1902.
[284] *SC* 30 June 1911.
[285] Wellington J. 17 July 1920; 17 Sept. 1921.

generally newsworthy.[286] Much of the impetus may have passed to Wem: it was the Wem Carnival Committee who in 1939 held a Miss Edstaston competition. She was one of nine who went to the finals in held in Wem in August when Miss Clive was awarded the sash.[287]

Whilst the fete was held in the grounds of Edstaston House, winter events were held in the church hall. In 1921, land near the vicarage was donated by Mary Cholmondeley of Edstaston House for the erection of a church hall.[288] A wooden building from the First World War military camp at Prees Heath was purchased by subscription by the residents of Edstaston, who transported the building and re-erected it. 'The Hut' was a popular venue for social and fundraising activities, and was used by Edstaston church for a Sunday school. By the 1970s the building was in poor condition. It was demolished in 1976 and replaced, on the same site, by a brick building. The cost was £20,000, of which Shropshire Community Council and North Shropshire Council contributed £15,000. The new hall opened in 1977.[289] The hall was upgraded and extended in stages between 2017 and 2022.[290] It continues to host a variety of social and community events and is a polling station for elections.

Edstaston Football Club had formed by 1884, and played in a local league at least until 1887.[291] In 1905, the football team was Edstaston Rovers, and in 1908, Edstaston United.[292]

[286] *Wellington J.,* 14 July 1934; *SC* 2 Aug. 1935, 17 July 1938.
[287] *Wellington J.,* 22 July, 26 Aug. 1939.
[288] *Strong's Wem Almanack, 1925*, 81.
[289] L. Vernon, 'Edstaston Village Hall. Links to the First World War', *Rural Review. The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council*, Issue 16, March 2016, 6-7.
[290] Edstaston Village Hall: https://bev408.wixsite.com/edstastonvillagehall/history
[291] *Wellington J.*, 11 Oct. 1884, 2, 19 Feb. 1887, 7; *Eddowes's Shrewsbury J.*, 9 Feb. 1887, 8.
[292] *Wellington J.*, 4 Mar. 1905, 9; *SC*, 13 Nov.1908, 2.

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Parish Church

Medieval

The present church of *ST MARY, EDSTASTON* is dated, stylistically, from the late 12th century,[293] but the circumstances of its foundation or whether there were earlier churches on the site is unknown.

Within the medieval parish of Wem, Edstaston church was a chapel independent of both parochial and diocesan authority.[294] The patron was the lord of the manor of Wem. When the lordship of Wem was temporarily in the king's hands, clergy were appointed by the crown to the 'free chapel of Wem': Philip de *Doueslegh*, king's clerk, in 1293 and Walter Estham in 1295.[295] The dedication to the Virgin Mary is recorded in 1337 in the will of Richard de Weston of Shrewsbury, bequeathing, among many small benefactions to Shrewsbury churches and to Hodnet church, half a mark to 'the light of the blessed Mary of Edstaston'.[296]

In September 1484, Richard III confirmed that he had founded a chantry at Edstaston chapel called 'the chantry of King Richard the third'. It is likely that this was an act of gratitude for the arrest nearby of Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham, in October 1483.[297] The chantry was founded in the chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, called '*capella de Hedisaston*' in the parish of Wem, for a chaplain in perpetuity to pray there every day for the wellbeing of the king and his wife Queen Anne and of all benefactors to the chapel, and for the souls of his late father, Richard, duke of York, and of those who founded the chapel,[298] A payment of eight marks from the farm of the borough of Shrewsbury was assigned, to be paid by the bailiffs and burgesses of the town, to maintain the chaplain.[299]

---

[293] Pevsner, 260-1.
[294] Garbet, 273.
[295] *Cal. Pat., 1292-1301*, 33, 168; Eyton, IX, 177-8.
[296] 'The Shrewsbury of Past Ages', ed. W. A. Leighton, *TSAHS*, 11(1) (1887), 89-100, at p. 98.
[297] The sources are examined in H. Owen, *A History of Shrewsbury* (London, 1825), I, 234-42, and see G. H. F. Vane, 'The Chantry in Edstaston Chapel', *TSAHS*, 3rd ser., 1 (1901), 287-8.
[298] Disappointingly, unnamed. The lord of the manor of Wem at the time was Ralph, Lord Greystoke (1411-87), generally a staunch Yorkist.
[299] TNA, C66/557; *CPR, 1476-85*, 373, 473.

In 1513/14, legal proceedings were held at Edstaston chapel (*apud Edstanston chappell*) 'in the matter of Stanwardyn', over several days, in which John Salter, *jurisperitus*, was engaged by the lord the manor.[300]

The priest in 1532/3 was Richard Nichols.[301]

Endowment

At its suppression, the chapel's endowment consisted of a messuage east of the church, the residence of the clergy serving there; land in the open fields of Edstaston, as well as two crofts in the north of Wem township and a burgage in New Street, Wem.[302] The chapel was closed around 1553 when the priest, Richard Nichols, was awarded a pension of 49*s*. 4*d*. per annum.[303] The chapel's estate was seized by the lord of the manor, William Lord Dacre.[304] However, the Crown also made grants of rents worth £2 per annum and a lease of unspecified lands in Edstaston and Wem, 'late of the chapel of Edstaston', probably as a concealment.[305]

Post-Reformation

How Edstaston church was used for worship in the following decades is not known. In his will proved in 1558, Thomas Oliver gave 3*s*. 4*d*. to the chapel of Edstaston 'as long as there is worship there'. In 1611/12 John Brabant left 10*s*. for the repair of the chapel.[306] The Revd. John Bisby MA was the chaplain in 1642.[307] The curacy was probably reorganised by the Revd. Andrew Parsons, the puritan rector of Wem (*c*.1643-62), who witnessed Bisby's will in 1650. Parsons appointed Samuel Taylor in succession to Bisby, assigning him the great tithes of Edstaston and Coton to serve the curacy. Taylor was ejected in 1662, along with Parsons, and came to lead Wem's first Nonconformist congregation.[308] Parsons's encouragement and financial support of both the chapels of Edstaston and Newtown was replaced by the unscrupulous regime of Daniel Wycherley as lord of the manor. Wycherley presented his son

[300] Arundel Castle, MS W D/14. Expenses for the lord's business concerning 'the land of Alan Stanwardine' are recorded just below in the same account. In 1490/1, Alan Stanwardyn held a messuage and 40a. in Wem and also property in Clive and Nonneley: SA, 1/45.
[301] Witness to wills of William Dun, 2 Jan. 1532/3; Nicholas Moody (*Mode*), 1535: 'Wem Wills 1535-1660 in Lichfield Joint Record Office', ts ed. by S. Watts; SA, C55.5 v.f.
[302] See above, 'Demesnes'; Garbet, 264-5, 277-8; *Survey 1561*, 27, 29, 37, 111; SA, 9043, file A, no. 1, sketch map of Edstaston by Samuel Garbet; 'Certificates of Shropshire Chantries', 352.
[303] Garbet, 277-9.
[304] *Survey 1561*, 36-7, 110-11. See 'Demesnes', above.
[305] *CPR 1563-6*, 265, 499.
[306] 'Wem Wills', ed. Watts.
[307] Bisby, ordained in 1627, held the prebend of Prees at Lichfield cathedral from 1634: SRO, D30/2/7/96 (Miscellaneous).
[308] 'Wem Wills', ed. Watts; *Wem Parish Registers*, 170; Garbet, 213, 279.

George as rector of Wem and transferred Robert Smith, then curate of Edstaston, to Wem in 1674. Treating the Wem rectory as his own residence, Wycherley proceeded to ruin the finances of both his son and Smith. The curate of Newtown, Richard Cartwright, was obliged to take up the post of third master at Wem grammar school. When he was transferred to Edstaston in 1674, Cartwright continued in that post.[309]

Cartwright's successor, John Collier, was elected second master of the grammar school in 1687. Samuel Garbet remarked that 'the curacy of Edstaston … was a great addition to the profits of the school'.[310] The curacy was not in the gift of the school feoffees and it might be held that the school's second or third mastership was actually a subsidy to the curate of Wem. From 1701, the rector of Wem provided a curate for Edstaston with an annual salary of £30.[311] Garbet described the award of the curacy to himself, after he had been elected second master of the school in 1713, as owing to the recommendation of Lord Newport and the good will of the rector.[312]

During Garbet's incumbency, on 19 June 1723, the 'inside and middle of the west wall fell down in the night'. The roof was found to be so decayed that the whole west end was taken down. It was soon rebuilt, but 'ten or eleven feet shorter than before'. Garbet reckoned that the chapel had been 90 ft in length but after the rebuilding it measured 82½ ft.[313]

Curates of Edstaston after Garbet were: Robert Pryce (1780-1814), George Salt (1822) and William Andrew Dixon (1825-31). John Steward was the nephew of the Revd. Edward Tucker Steward, the rector of Wem; appointed curate in 1834, he oversaw the creation of the new parish of Edstaston and served as its first minister until 1869.[314]

There was a register of baptisms by 1646. Its contents, from 1646 to at least 1659, were transcribed and added to the end of the first volume of the Wem parish register.[315] A burial at Edstaston was entered in the Wem parish register in 1658 and a marriage in 1676.[316] The extant register of Edstaston, for baptisms and burials, commences in 1712.[317]

c.1850 to Present

---

[309] Garbet, 156, 166, 207-8, 210, 280, 321-2. Richard Cartwright: schoolmaster, 7 Mar. 1676, SRO, B/A/4/4 (Subscription Book).
[310] Garbet, 209.
[311] *Shropshire Glebe Terriers*, vol. 2, 155.
[312] Garbet, 280.
[313] Garbet, 273-4.
[314] *Crockford's Dir*., 1865.
[315] *Wem Parish Registers*, vi, xi-xii, 90, 169-71, passim.
[316] *Wem Parish Registers*, 285, 269
[317] *The Register of Edstaston*, ed. W.G.D. Fletcher, Shropshire Parish Record Society (1908).

Edstaston chapelry (the townships of Edstaston and Coton) was created an ecclesiastical parish in 1850. The Revd. John Steward, curate of Edstaston since 1834, continued as the parish minister until 1869.

The parish of St Mary the Virgin, Edstaston, was united with the parishes of Tilstock and Whixall in 1994. The parishes of Prees and Fauls were added in 2010.[318] Tilstock and Fauls later formed a group Whitchurch parish, leaving Edstaston a member of the Prees, Edstaston and Whixall group of parishes.[319]

St Mary's church

The building: Exterior:

Saxon

Samuel Garbet's *History of Wem*, compiled during the mid-18th century, is of considerable value when discussing the church. He was curate of Edstaston chapel from 1713 and until his death in 1756 so knew the building well. Garbet believed that in Saxon times, Edstan was Lord of the township and founder of the chapel. His dwelling place was just north of the chapel, facing the north doorway, some remains of which were noted by Garbet. It is not known whether the Saxon chapel was built of wood or stone, or whether it was single-cell or two-cell, but if the position of the north door remains the same, it would have been on the site of the nave. The dedication appears always to have been to the Virgin Mary.[320]

Norman

St Mary's church is a long rectangular building consisting of an aisleless nave, slightly narrower chancel, west bellcote, south porch and north vestry. The south and north sides are of Norman fabric, constructed of good quality red and white coursed sandstone, whilst the east end was rebuilt in ashlar in *c*.1300. Following the collapse of the west end in 1723, the

[318] *Crockford's Clerical Dir.*, 94th edn, 1995/6'; 101st edn, 2010-2011.
[319] Edstaston St Mary the Virgin, Whitchurch St Alkmunds: https://www.achurchnearyou.com (accessed 19 July 2024).
[320] Garbet, 259, 272, 280: There were low earthworks adjacent to the north west boundary wall, which may relate to the Saxon dwelling; William Mytton collection, *c*.1725, SA-IMG603

building was shortened by 11ft and a new west wall constructed. Before this event, the chapel was 99ft long and 23ft wide. A tiled roof covers the building (Figure 1). [321]

The 2-bay chancel is 36ft (11m) long with narrow pilaster buttresses of Norman form, that to the south truncated by a Perpendicular window (Figure 13). There is a sill band with characteristic Norman moulding. The nave may be slightly later than the chancel as the north wall is flush with the Norman pilaster buttress which marks the west end of the chancel. There is a slight projection of the south chancel wall, 4.6m wide and 0.16m deep, its west edge aligned with the nave wall, and which forms a butt joint in the upper levels. The purpose of the wall thickening is not clear: it may relate to a former crossing tower although there is no such thickening on the opposite, north, side of the church. There is evidence internally for a rounded pier, possibly relating to a chancel arch (see below).[322]

A fine corbel table of moulded trefoiled arches on rolls continues across the break between nave and chancel. The style suggests a very late Norman or Transitional date of *c.*1190-1200 and it is probably contemporary with the doorways (Transitional marks the overlap between Norman and Early English, the first gothic style). Hugh Pantulf (d. 1224) was Lord of the Manor of Wem at this time.[323]

The main south doorway is inside the porch, the opposite north doorway known as the founder's entrance. There is a south priest's door within a shallow projection against the thickened section of the chancel (see above). The mouldings on the doorways are some of the most elaborate in Shropshire outside the religious houses of Lilleshall and Haughmond. The ornamentation on the south doorway was described by Revd Cranage as the richest in the county and is of national significance. It has four orders of mouldings with bands of chevron and fretwork variations, some similar to those at Haughmond abbey. These are carried on attached shafts, the capitals decorated with leaves, spiral stems and volutes (the leaves are of different forms, some close to Early English stiff-leaf). The east capital of the inner order depicts a rearing lion, whilst the east capital of the outer order bears a woman's face, her hair or cap decorated with foliage. The hoodmould has dog-tooth ornamentation (Early English) with head stops depicting a man to the west and woman to the east. At the apex is a large male head. The axe-hewn door appears to be contemporary and has unusually fine crescent

[321] Garbet, 272-6; Cranage, 682-5; Newman and Pevsner, 260-1; William Mytton collection, *c.*1725, SA-IMG603
[322] Cranage, 682-5; HE list no. 1236691; HE archive, Card ref. 5115_096; Paul Barnwell pers. comm.
[323] Cranage, 682; Sir Stephen Glynne, 40-1; https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441, 1998 & 2023; VCH Shropshire, *Wem* (2019), 44

ironwork, some with animal-head terminations. Above the door is a quatrefoil recess (Figures 14, 15).[324]

The north door has three orders of mouldings (Figures 16, 17). A fretwork band decorates the inner order which is supported on attached shafts, the capitals decorated with furled leaves and blossom. The central order bears a scroll of foliage intertwined with small heads of babies or angels, and winged beasts and rests on small decorative corbels. The third order is carried on imposts and includes a keeled roll, whilst the hoodmould bears a band of palmette leaves. There is a male head with long neck at the apex. The axe-hewn door with fine crescent ironwork is probably contemporary.[325]

The Transitional round-arched priest's door has a plain inner order which has been restored. The second order, with a chevron design, is carried on large imposts on triple-ringed shafts with water-leaf and stiff-leaf capitals (to west and east, respectively). The hoodmould is decorated with a band of crocus blossom, seen also at St Mary's church, Shrewsbury, and Lilleshall abbey. Large dog-tooth motifs are spaced out along the splayed jambs, which along with the ringed shafts and capitals, mark the transition to Early English style. Immediately above the porch projection is a small rectangular niche. Although the door has been replaced, the original ironwork appears to have been reinstated (See Figure 13). [326]

Round-arched Norman windows light the north side of the nave and chancel (Figures 18 and 19). The former has a plain chamfered inner order, the outer order bearing a lozenge and chevron design resting on shafts and capitals with foliage and volutes. Its hoodmould has zig-zag ornamentation. The narrow chancel light has a plain inner order, whilst the outer order has an incised band and rests on shafts with foliage capitals.[327]

Early English

The chancel has a tall sloping plinth with filleted roll-moulding characteristic of *c*.1200 which wraps around the Norman pilaster buttresses on the north elevation. The plinth was an enhancement, signifying the status of the building (See Figure 13).[328]

Decorated

[324] Newman and Pevsner, 260-1; Sir Stephen Glynne, 40-1; Cranage, 683-4 https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441: see comments section; Garbet, 274
[325] Cranage, 683; https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441; Newman and Pevsner, 260-1; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, drawing, 1846
[326] Cranage, 683, 685; Glynne, 41; https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441; Newman and Pevsner, 261
[327] Cranage, 683; Glynne, 41; https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441
[328] Cranage, 682

The east gable end was rebuilt in around 1300 in well-coursed ashlar, most likely for structural reasons, and was re-fenestrated in geometrical Decorated style. There is a 2-tier plinth and sill band, the masonry beneath the latter including red sandstone blocks which may be re-used. The masonry above the sill band is mainly grey free-stone and the large angle buttresses are contemporary, along with a short buttress beneath the east window which is carved with a trefoiled arch. Mid 19th-century depictions show a fine 5-light east window, the lights with cusped heads and with a sexfoil under the arch, whilst the jambs have characteristic wave mouldings (Figure 20). A Decorated 3-light window with quatrefoils under the arch was inserted towards the east of the south chancel wall, its apex cutting through the corbel table (Figure 5). It may have replaced a Norman window like that in the north wall, although the latter was provided with a trefoiled head, as depicted by Thomas Dukes. It is likely that William le Botiler (d. 1334) was Lord of the Manor at this time.[329]

Perpendicular

There are five Perpendicular windows in characteristic style, three to the south front and two to the north (See Figures 1, 5, 18). They would have improved the lighting but unfortunately cut through the earlier corbel table and sill band. The windows are 3-light with cusping, except that to the south west nave which is 4-light. The latter has a small carved head in the central spandrel, and there are carvings elsewhere, including small figures with shields in the spandrels of the north chancel window. There are large, often grotesque, head bosses on the ends of the hoodmoulds. The masonry is slightly disturbed beneath the south east nave window, possibly to remove a tomb (see interior).[330]

Richard III founded a chantry in Edstaston chapel in 1484. The Perpendicular windows may have been inserted at this time, along with new wall paintings, floor tiles and stained glass. The manor of Wem was under Ralph, Lord Greystock (d. 1487), who was also credited with partly rebuilding the parish church in Wem.[331]

Four massive post-medieval buttresses support the north wall, but the plinth of the eastern buttress is medieval although of indeterminate date. Medieval masonry is also found on the inner faces of the porch.

[329] Cranage, 684; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, Interior drawing of north light, 1846; SA, PR/1/152: H. Burton, drawing, mid-19th century; SA, 6001/372/3/71, Revd Edward Williams, watercolour, 1791; VCH Shropshire, *Wem* (2019), 44

[330] Cranage, 684

[331] Garbet, 363-4; Vane, 'Chantry in Edstaston Chapel', pt 1, 151-2, pt 2, 287-8; VCH Shropshire, *Wem* (2019), 45, 116-7

Post-medieval

In June 1723, the west gable end collapsed. William Mytton reported that the west wall was ancient and over a yard thick, whilst the apex had supported a small stone pillar on which a statue or cross was placed. The large medieval roof trusses were of axe-hewn oak and proved hard to dismantle. The collapse was thought to have resulted from poor repairs undertaken only six years earlier. A new wall of grey ashlar was constructed, supported by large buttresses and with a gothic-style 3-light window. It was positioned 11ft further east, shortening the church and thereby reduced the charge payable to the diocese. The work was inspected by William Renshaw and David Bowen, carpenters, and Samuel and Edward Cureton. They considered the costs and charges to be very reasonable (Figure 21).[332]

The gabled south porch was rebuilt in grey stone in 1710 around a medieval structure, an eroded, dated tablet on the west side naming the churchwardens, including Thomas Hill of Soulton Hall and John Barnes of the Lowe. It was depicted by Revd Williams in 1791 with a semi-circular entrance arch on imposts and a tablet above (See Figure 5). Having become ruinous, the upper part of the porch was rebuilt in 1878 with a pointed entrance arch on attached shafts. Above was an inscribed memorial tablet supporting a cross, to George Essex Honyman Bart. of Coton Hall and formerly of Armadale, Sutherland, a gift of his brother and sister. The architect was George Birch, who undertook the subsequent church restoration of 1882.[333]

Of the four massive full-height stone buttresses supporting the north wall, Revd Cranage noted that the western pair, flanking the north door, bore dates of 1829 and possibly 1839. The western one is inscribed: 'Near this place lies the body of John Overton, 175[8]', implying that his grave was disturbed (See Figure 18).[334]

Mounted on the west end was a small timber-clad bell-cote with pyramidal cap, shown in 1791 and said by Sir Stephen Glynne in 1856 to contain two bells. A new stone bellcote was constructed on the west gable apex in *c*.1860 with cusped openings for two bells.[335]

The north vestry was constructed in 1882 by George Birch, architect, on the lines of the ancient sacristy. It is of red sandstone under a flat roof with moulded cornice and a chimney

[332] William Mytton collection, *c*.1725, SA-IMG598, 601, 603; Garbet, 274, 276
[333] Garbet, 276; SA, 6001/372/3/71, Revd Edward Williams, 1791; *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, 20 June 1883; SA, P104/B/2/1/1; Staffs R. O., B/C/5/1878/14: Faculty
[334] Cranage, 685
[335] SA, 6001/372/3/71, Revd Edward Williams, 1791; Glynne, 40-1; SA, P104/B/2/1/1; PC/E/7/1, *c*.1900

in the south east corner. The north door has a chamfered surround with a 2-light flat-headed window to its left. There is a similar single light to the east side (See Figure 18). [336]

Interior

Medieval

The nave and chancel are undivided, the chancel slightly narrower than the nave with inward splays between the two (Figures 22 and 23). On the south side, the splay becomes larger and more rounded towards the base, coinciding with the wide external projection and perhaps indicating the position of a pier, maybe of the chancel arch. The splay also tilts out towards the top.

Norman strings in the form of a roll are seen at two levels. One runs over the windows and doors continuing as an impost band, the other is a continuous sill band. They are broken in places by later insertions. A round-arched recess is offset beneath the Norman window in the nave with a hoodmould in the form of a roll, the voussoirs restored. Samuel Garbet reported that a piscina was placed there, a round stone basin of 7 inches diameter (Figure 24). In the opposite south wall was a square basin of 8.5in across. These must have been associated with altars against the screen between nave and chancel. The Perpendicular window in the south east nave cuts through an earlier feature. The shoulder of a low arch is visible to the left, with a painted consecration cross adjacent (Figure 25). It may represent a tomb recess, disturbance on the exterior wall suggesting the tomb was removed from outside. Beneath the Perpendicular window, the wall has been altered to form a seat.[337]

There were formerly three stone steps beneath the Decorated south chancel window, thought to be either sedilia or kneelings. Only the back survives, on which is painted a consecration cross and small circular motifs, the edges with good vertical mouldings (Figure 26). At the east end of the chancel, right of the altar, is a rectangular cupboard containing a piscina and credence shelf. Garbet noted pre-reformation features which no longer remain: a stand cut into each side of the stone altar for holding tapers, and two stone bases projecting from the east and north walls which supported statues of the Virgin and a saint.[338]

There was a doorway with flattened trefoiled head in the north wall of the chancel which led to an ancient sacristy. In Garbet's time, the sacristy was no longer extant, only the

[336] SA, P104/B/2/1/1
[337] Glynne, 41; Newman and Pevsner, 261; Cranage, 683-4; Garbet, 275; https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=5441
[338] Garbet, 275; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, drawings, 1846; Cranage, 684

doorway and one of its hinges. The opening is shown in a drawing by Thomas Dukes, along with an adjacent aumbry in the thickness of the wall. At that time, the north chancel light was infilled with masonry (Figure 27 bottom).[339]

The nave, shortened in 1723, is of four bays with an open King-post roof. There are two purlins and two tiers of arched windbraces on each side. The western tie-beam is dated 1723 so was reconstructed with the west wall (See Figure 23). Two carved stone tablets of medieval date were built high up into the west wall of 1723. One shows a notched cross within a cusped triangle. The other depicts a bow and arrow, the latter with a pheon (heraldic emblem) on the head, two animals and a probable bird. Revd Cranage believed the latter was from a tomb slab.[340]

Historical observers provided descriptions of the fine medieval fittings and fixtures which were cleared away during the 1882 restoration. There were colourful decorated floor tiles, the boarded roof of the chancel was painted with stars and there was beautiful stained glass in the windows. Some of the encaustic floor tiles were depicted by Thomas Dukes, with flowers, fish, a robed figure and geometric designs (Figure 16). In one of the south windows was the arms of the Mainwaring family, a shield with two red bands, depicted by both William Mytton and Thomas Dukes (Figures 28 and 29). In the east window was representation of a noble wearing rich robes seated in front of a table bearing a Yorkist white rose, possibly Richard III. The heraldic emblem of Admiral George Bowen of Coton Hall had been installed in a south window before 1846.[341]

Before 1882 there was a west gallery which obscured some of the wall paintings. In 1860, Revd John Steward wrote that although the gallery was unsightly, he was always pleased to see it full on Sundays.[342]

Samuel Garbet computed that the chantry in Edstaston chapel had received an endowment of about £40 including £30 from lands in Edstaston. Further endowments were said to be held in stocks of cattle. William Mytton noted in *c*.1725 that the chapel was repaired at the expense of the inhabitants of the whole parish of Wem, an argument for it being the original parish church. Perhaps at the end of the 12th century, the focal point of public worship switched from Edstaston to Wem. Edstaston chapel, or at least its chancel,

[339] Garbet, 275-6; Glynne, 41; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, drawings, 1846
[340] Newman and Pevsner, 261; Cranage, 685; *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, 22 Feb. 1883.
[341] Garbet, 274-5; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, drawings, 1846; William Mytton collection, *c*.1725, SA, IMG604
[342] SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, correspondence, *c*.1860

then became the private domain of the lords of the manor of Wem who paid towards its enhancement.[343]

The restoration of 1882

On 15 September 1882, a meeting was held in the vestry regarding an application for a Faculty for improvement of the church. Plans had been devised by George Henry Birch, architect of London, and these were laid out before the meeting. It was agreed that the alterations should go ahead and a Faculty submitted to the diocese. Beyond income from the church rate, normally set at one penny in the pound, and regular subscriptions from wealthier residents, it is not clear how the 1882 restoration was funded. The cost was rumoured to be around £2,000. (One of the churchwardens was Revd Sir William MacDonald Honyman, of the family formerly resident at Armadale, Sutherland - who may have been a donor). The Faculty, dated 24 November 1882, included a plan of the church as existing and a plan of the proposals (Figures 30 and 31). On the former, the west gallery was over a staircase to the south and a small vestry to the north, the font positioned in front. There was no division between nave and chancel with box pews lining the central aisle, and the pulpit and desk on the south side adjacent to the priest's door. Notes referred to ruined sedilia beneath the Decorated south chancel window and traces of the ancient sacristy on the north side. The north wall was said to be much out of the perpendicular. The builder selected was a Mr George.[344]

The planned work was mainly internal, with the clearing out of fittings and furnishings including the west gallery. The church was re-ordered with a division created between nave and chancel. A new vestry was built on the lines of the ancient north sacristy, the blocked doorway of the latter rebuilt and heightened. Choir stalls were installed in the chancel with steps leading up to the altar, the altar furnishings replaced. To its rear, the east wall was lined with ashlar in preparation for a new reredos which was never built. It was intended to re-use the old sedilia, but this did not happen. The renewed 3-bay open chancel roof has King-posts and internal boarding, the truss between nave and chancel decorated with open quatrefoils and a cross. In the nave, the Jacobean wood-panelled pulpit was adjusted and moved to the north wall, with space for a harmonium adjacent. The box pews were replaced by benches but re-using the oak panelling. The old floor tiles were dug up and new floors laid over concrete,

[343] Garbet, 277-8; A. H. Thompson, 'Certificates of the Shropshire chantries', *TSAS*, 33 (1910), 279; 34 (1911), 128-9

[344] SA, P104/B/2/1/1, P104/B/1/1, P104/C/1; *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, 28 Mar., 20 June 1883.

with encaustic tiles in the chancel, flagstones and wooden flooring in the nave. The windows were partly or wholly re-glazed, and a new heating system was installed.[345]

Local correspondents were fearful that antiquities might be lost or damaged during the restoration, including the Norman mouldings and carved medieval tablets in the west wall. It was noted that the old pews and triple decker pulpit had been condemned, and the north wall was at risk as it leant out. A recommendation was made that the building should be recorded or photographed but no work appears to have been undertaken. Following the restoration, the church was re-opened on 15 June 1883 by the Bishop of Lichfield. The service was followed by a public lunch at the Castle Hotel, Wem.[346]

The round basin of a medieval font is repositioned in the north east corner of the chancel. It is severely eroded, suggesting it was once cast outside. In 1856, the font was described by Sir Stephen Glynne as modern, but a new font was installed as part of the 1882 restoration in memory of Miss Bowen of Coton Hall. Of Mansfield stone, there are four circles painted on the sides of the round bowl in black and red, representing the four rivers of paradise (See Figure 23). [347]

A Faculty was granted in 1913 for the erection of a new organ. The two-manual organ, by J. J. Binns of Leeds, is sited inside and over the priest's door in a wooden case raised up on posts (See Figure 22).[348]

Wall paintings

The church retains an unusually fine collection of medieval wall paintings, with others still preserved beneath the white-wash. On the north wall of the nave is a painted 4-bay arcade of early 14th-century appearance. Under the round arches are depictions of St Christopher, John the Baptist and the Adoration of the Magi (See Figure 24). The painted consecration cross beneath the Decorated south chancel window is described above (See Figure 26). In the left reveal of this window was a painting of Virgin and child, recorded by Thomas Dukes in 1846 but no longer visible. The supplicants or devotees may have kneeled on the steps beneath the window (Figure 27). A fresco with scroll is positioned above and right of the north door, showing the founder addressing the Virgin and perhaps asking for protection for those entering (Figure 32). Left of the door is a robed figure and beast underneath a decorative

[345] SA, P104/B/2/1/1
[346] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, 7 Mar., 28 Mar. 1883, 20 June 1883.
[347] Glynne, 41; *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, 20 June 1883
[348] Staffs R.O., B/C/12/1/173: catalogue; https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4545

band. On the south wall are remnants of two figures facing each other, an official and a bishop. There are many geometric designs with lines and circles. Some paintings date to *c.*1500 and could be from the reign of Richard III, whilst there are also post-medieval wall paintings relating to the restoration of Charles II in 1660.[349]

Monuments

On the north wall of the nave are three wall monuments dedicated to the Payne family of Edstaston House (See Figure 24). These include: to the left, a large stone monument with columns, fluted consoles and a segmental cornice dedicated to Mary Payne (d. 1720), wife of Daniel Payne, who was buried in a vault beneath; in the centre on a black background, a white marble tablet with urn, dedicated to Thomas Payne (d. 1814) and his wife Mary (d. 0000). Underneath is an arched brass in memory of Elizabeth and Richard Chambre of Rye Bank (d. 1788 and 1805). In the north east corner of the chancel is a classical-style stone monument with moulded cornice in memory of Richard Goldisburgh (d. 1762). An inscribed marble slab beneath the south nave window is dedicated to Admiral George Bowen (d. 1844), the family vault being beneath. There are small memorial tablets relating to the Cholmondeley family, dating to 1929, 1943 and 1946, and a war memorial to Hon. Frederic Raymond Clegg-Hill who died in action in 1945.[350]

Stained glass

There are medieval glass fragments in the upper lights of the south nave windows. In the larger window is a robed and bearded figure holding an orb and a white rose, whilst there are two white roses under the arch of the smaller window. In the east window are colourful medallions in grey surrounds, depicting a central crucifixion and biblical scenes, by David Evans *c.*1840 and presumably replacing the Yorkist glass described by Samuel Garbet. This window is dedicated to Thomas Nickson of Rye Bank. A number of windows are dedicated to members of the Bowen family of Coton Hall. The south east nave window bears heraldic emblems and is dedicated to Admiral George Bowen and his wife Mary, a gift of their children, 1844. The depiction of the Crucifixion in the north west chancel is in memory of George Bowen (d. 1861), and the empty tomb in the south west chancel *c.*1864, is dedicated to Elizabeth Honyman, daughter of Admiral George Bowen. These latter two windows are

[349] Newman and Pevsner, 261; Mercer, 89; SA, 6000/19295: T. F. Dukes, drawings, 1846; Garbet, 276
[350] Staffs R.O., B/C/12/1/173: catalogue

attributable to Lavers and Barraud. The chancel south east window depicts the archangels Raphael, Michael and Gabriel, possibly by Burlison & Grylls, 1884, in memory of Thomas Bearcroft. The chancel north light is labelled 'Patient in Tribulation', 188(7) a dedication to Justice Sir George Honyman, a gift of his sister. There was a faculty in 1911 for stained glass depicting 'Charity' in the north nave window in memory of Revd Francis Talbot Purcell. Glass in the west window depicting the Virgin flanked by Jesus and Mary Magdalene commemorates Mary Cholmondeley, 1929.[351]

Churchyard

The church is located within a raised rectangular churchyard, the lane passing round the south and west sides. It was extended to the north and east in 1874 and further north after 1989. The boundary wall consists of old red sandstone to the south west corner. Further north on the west side, the wall is of large blocks of coursed grey stone with a pedestrian gate between stone piers with pyramidal caps. To the south, the red sandstone wall is broken by the main entrance, double iron gates between concrete piers. Beyond, the wall is of coursed grey stone with a single gate. On the north side of the church are a few trees, including yews, and a slightly raised area to the north west, possibly the site of the founder's house. [352]

In 1870, the vicar of Edstaston reported that he had been attempting to acquire land to extend the churchyard, but none of the contiguous owners were willing to sell land for the purpose.[353] In the event the churchyard was extended in 1874 by the addition of a parcel of land measuring 1,103 square yds owned by Horace Payne Townsend of Derry House, County Cork, to be given free but with an area 20 x 24ft reserved for the donor. A coloured plan of March 1874 accompanying the draft conveyance shows a strip around the north and east sides of the existing churchyard with the owner's area at the south east corner (Figure 33). In the latter position were four old cottages, on the site of the former chaplain's house, which required demolition. This delayed the work for several months. Following their removal, the enlarged churchyard was enclosed by a strong, roughly coursed stone wall with saddleback coping. A petition for the consecration of the addition was sent to the Bishop of Lichfield in December 1874.[354]

[351] Newman and Pevsner, 261, Cranage, 684; Garbet, 275; Staffs R.O., B/C/12/1/173: catalogue
[352] Garbet, 259, 272; Staffs R.O., B/C/12/28/284: catalogue
[353] *Eddowes Shrewsbury J.,* 19 Oct. 1870; *SC* 21 Oct. 1870.
[354] SA, MI6316/1-4; *SC,* 12 Dec. 1873 (and *Wellington J.,* 13 Dec. 1873); *SC,* 27 Feb. 1874; *Eddowes,* 30 Dec. 1874.

Graves

In front of the porch is the Payne monument, a table tomb supported on six fluted stone piers. An earlier decorated brass plate with arched head is attached to the centre of the grave slab and is dedicated to Daniel Payne of Ellesmere (d. 1750). The lettering on the slab itself reads 'In memory of Mary Ann Payne (d. 1806?), daughter of Thomas Payne' and other family members. Located within shrubbery to the north is a tall sandstone pedestal tomb with corner pilasters and a moulded capstone surmounted by a large urn. Eliza Walmsley (d. 1817), wife of John, is commemorated on the west side. The south face refers to John Mulliner of Edstaston Hall (d. 1858), and the east face to Daniel and Mary Ann Boote (d. 1872 and 1888), also of Edstaston Hall. A mid 19th-century tomb chest north west of the church has trefoiled pilasters and floral motifs and refers to the Callcott family. Three eroded stone tombs have been aligned in front of the west wall, one dedicated to Anna, Edward and Samuel Garbet (See Figure 21). Two decorated but eroded grave slabs adjacent to the east end commemorate the Tiler's of Pepper Street. To the south east is the area for the Payne Townsend family. A Celtic cross on a marble base is dedicated to Horace Payne Townsend of Derry House, County Cork (d. 1885) and his widow, Mary, of Edstaston.

Many of the original grave slabs have been cleared to the east side of the churchyard.[355]

The prominent War Memorial on the south side of the church consists of a stone cross of octagonal section with a metal sword attached to the shaft. It stands on a high octagonal base on a 4-tier plinth and is set within an enclosure marked by short tapering stone piers. There are slate panels attached to the base and plinth over the original ones. On the south face is an inscription: 'Edstaston / In proud memory of 13 soldiers of this parish who gave their lives for their country 1914-18'. Another panel is dedicated to the 3 men who died in 1939-45 (see Fig. 1).[356]

Clergy house

A messuage at the east end of the church was provided for the clergy who served the chapel. At the Reformation, it was taken into the lord's hands and leased to successive tenants. In 1561, it was a messuage with gardens, orchards, barns and bakehouses.[357] In 1648, there was a two-bay, two-storey dwelling house with bakehouse, wain house, stable and two barns of

[355] HE list nos. 1236692, 1264488
[356] www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/14019
[357] Survey 1561, 110-11.

six bays.[358] By the mid-18th century, it had been replaced by 'a handsome messuage', but no traces of buildings remain there today.[359]

After the Reformation, no residence was provided for the minister in Edstaston. John Bisby resided at Coton.[360] John Collier (curate, 1687/8-1712) purchased a large house in (now) Market Street, Wem.[361] His successor, Samuel Garbet, resided for his incumbency of over forty years in the house he owned in New Street, Wem.

In the 19th century, Edstaston House was the residence of at least two ministers.[362] The Revd. John Steward, curate of Edstaston from 1834 and the first incumbent of Edstaston parish, resided initially in Noble Street, Wem; between 1841 and 1851 he moved with his large family to Edstaston House. They returned to Noble Street around 1856 and lived there until Steward left to take up a new benefice in 1869.[363]

In 1870, the new rector, the Revd. P. Mason, reported that he was making efforts to secure the site for a parsonage house, but had so far been prevented from doing so as none of the landowners near the church were willing to sell the land required.[364] A plot enclosed from a parcel of freehold farmland of 22 a. 2 r. 11 p., north of the canal, was acquired in 1874 at the sale of the Trench Estate.[365] But in 1884, the Revd. Francis Purcell Talbot reported there was still no clergy house: they too resided at Edstaston House.[366]

In 1887, a vicarage was built to the design of Thomas M. Lockwood, architect of Chester, just north of Edstaston wharf and set back from the east side of the road. In Elizabethan revival style, it was constructed of red brick under a tiled roof with decorative brick end stacks, the front is asymmetrical with jettied faux timber-framing to the upper storey and sandstone windows beneath. There is a full-height polygonal bay to the right with hipped roof. A gabled porch leads into the south gable end which has a tile hung gable. The building became a private dwelling after 1976 when Revd. Colin Shaw left the parish. It was sold in 1990 and is now a private residence.

Nonconformity

[358] Arundel Castle, MS 508, fo. 10r
[359] Garbet, 264-5, 277; personal observation, 2017.
[360] Garbet, 279.
[361] Garbet, 208.
[362] Woodward, *Story of Wem*, 130.
[363] Bagshaw (1851), 331; *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Jnl*, 8 Oct. 1856, 4; Census.
[364] *Shrewsbury Chron*., 21 Oct. 1870, 7.
[365] Sale particulars of the Trench Estate, lot 6: SA, SC/25/6; further sale in 1877: SA, 5360/6. Sale particulars of The Old Vicarage Edstaston, 1990: SA, SC/28/60.
[366] *Shropshire Glebe Terriers*, ed. Watts, II, 93; *Shrewsbury Chron*., 1 Feb. 1884, 6.

There were no nonconformist chapels within Edstaston township. The dwelling house of John Huxley was licensed for Nonconformist worship in 1814, and that of Aaron Huxley in 1818.[367] Aaron Huxley's property was at Foxholes, at the northwestern edge of Edstaston township.[368] A Primitive Methodist chapel within the Prees Green Primitive Methodist Circuit was erected, probably by the Foxholes congregation, in 1841 at the junction of lanes west of Pool Head farm. It was therefore in Northwood township and is treated there.[369]

Pool Head Primitive Methodist chapel had 16 members in 1841, 12 in 1845, 10 in 1847 and 14 in 1850.[370] Evidently, 'members' did not equate to congregation, as in 1851 the average attendance at the chapel was reported as 90.[371] The chapel was substantially rebuilt and re-opened in 1864. Of red brick and slate, with two arched windows to the south (front) and north elevations, the chapel has a lateral entry with a date stone above.[372] It became part of the Wem Primitive Methodist Circuit in 1878. A Sunday school was conducted until 1960 when an extension to Northwood chapel enabled the two chapels' Sunday schools to merge.[373] From 1962 both chapels belonged to the Wem and Prees Green Methodist Circuit.[374] Pool Head chapel closed in 1983; it was sold and around 2003 was converted to a residential property.[375]

An account of the successive Nonconformist chapels at Quina Brook is given in the chapter on Coton.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT[376]

For all governmental purposes Edstaston was subsumed into larger bodies, whether the manor or the parish. It formed a ward in Wem Rural Parish council after 1894. Parish meetings were held for the nomination and election of parish councillors although in some years (for instance 1907, 1919 and 1922) no one attended the meeting.[377]

---

[367] *Quarter Sessions Orders*, III, 189, 263. See assignment by Aaron Huxley to his sons, Moses and John Huxley, 30 July 1832: SA, 1416 unnumbered box, 'Bygott (Wem)' containing Bennion and Richards deeds. 1805 Survey, p. 96; Tithe apportionment, lots 3285, 3288-91.
[368] For more on Pool Head chapel and its adjacent community hall, see 'Northwood'.
[369] *Church and Chapel*, 107; *Wellington Jnl*, 5 June 1964; J. Cox, '[former] Pool Head Primitive Methodist Chapel', *Shropshire's Nonconformist Chapels*: http://www.vchshropshire.org/chapels/index.html (accessed 12 July 2024).
[370] SA, 2775/8.
[371] SA, 2775/1, minute of 18 Mar. 1850; *Church and Chapel*, 107-8; Census 1841, 1851.
[372] SA, 2775/3, minutes 12 Dec. 1864
[373] *Northwood Methodist Chapel, Centenary Handbook, 1960* (in possession of Tom Edwards); *Wellington Jnl*, 5 June 1964.
[374] 1960 centenary: SA, NM4627/5/E1.
[375] Cox, '[former] Pool Head Primitive Methodist Chapel'.
[376] See the general introduction to Wem Rural Parish.
[377] SA, CP 325/1/1/1.