

Public Houses

The public house of Myddle is the Red Lion. This is an old building and the part attached to the school and nearest the road was built at least 300 years ago and is probably much older. Nowadays no alterations can be made either inside or outside without special permission from London. Outside the spaces between the old beams have been filled with bricks and these are younger than the beams. Inside the rooms are low with oak beams showing on the ceiling and in the wall. When cock fighting was allowed, there was a cock pit in the kitchen of this inn.



The Red Lion pub, Myddle

In Harmer Hill there are two public houses – the Red Castle which probably took its name from the castle at Myddle which is made of red sandstone, and the Bridgewater Arms which probably took its name from the previous owners of the estate, the Dukes and Earls of Bridgewater. The Bridgewater Arms lies on the fork of the roads at the southern end of the village. Both of the inns in Harmer Hill are built of sandstone although now the Red Castle is pebble dashed. At one time there were other pubs. One was at Alderton. This was called the Red Bull, probably because there was a Bull Shop nearby and in between the oak beams the house is built of red sandstone.



The house that was the Red Bull pub at Alderton

¹Another public house was on the outskirts of Myddle and it was called the Blacksmiths Arms, and is right opposite the blacksmiths shop. In the cellar stairs wall there can still be seen the trap door through which the beer was served.



The house that was the Blacksmith's Arms pub in Myddle

¹ Mr Hodnett, the present owner

Houses

²One of the largest houses in the parish is **Marton Hall**.



Marton Hall in the late 1920s looking North East

When the first Marton Hall was built is not really known. It was fairly near the road from Myddle to Baschurch and was a white building. All that remained of this now is one room which is used for storing cement. The new hall is 75 to 100 yards from the old house further in the grounds. An old yew tree marks the half way mark between the old and the new hall.



The yew tree which marks half way between the old and the new Halls

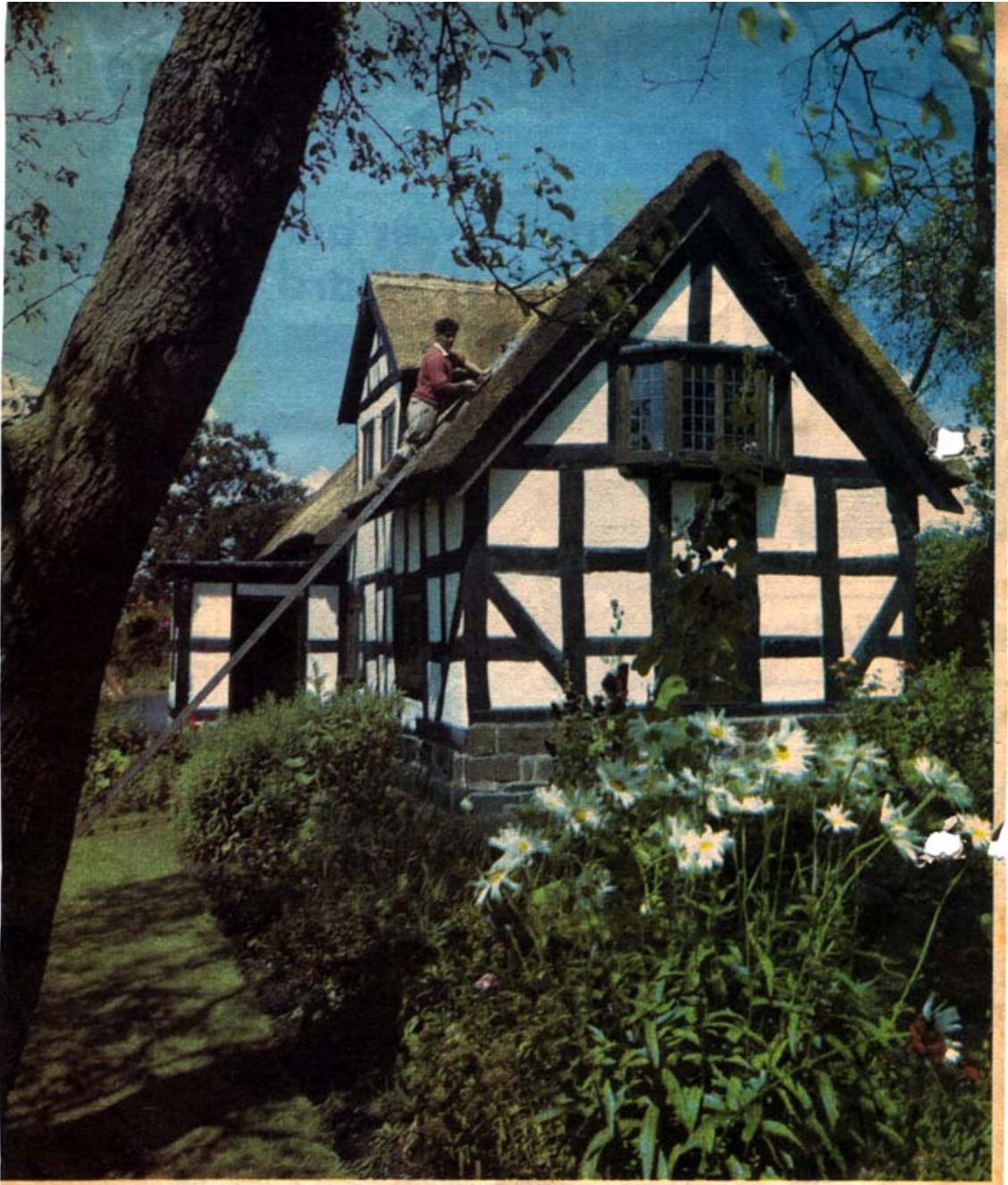
² Mr Gwilt, the present owner

The new Marton Hall was built mainly from the remains of the old hall and was transported by a small railway line which was built for the purpose. The new Hall was built for Colonel Gosling. New stone was fetched from Webscott. At first appearance the hall seems old but it was built in 1914 as a sixteenth century style house with fine mullion windows. The hall is built all of stone and lead, there is no wood in it at all. Even the window frames are of stone. The building is pointed round the sides but there is a large flat roof in the middle which is about the size of a tennis court. It is three stories high, the third storey originally being built for the servants. Even when it was built it was centrally heated and the hot water system went all through the house.

Now only the west end is lived in and so now there is only hot water in the living part. The central heating system is seen only behind a wooden grating under the windows and this is so it is possible to get to the system if anything went wrong. Most of the old wood was taken from the old hall and put in the new hall. One small room in particular is oak panelled and there is a beautifully carved fixture cupboard which is dated 1666.



Marton Hall in 1965 with an old grinding stone in the foreground



Not often seen nowadays is the thatcher at work. As the call for his services has lessened, so has the number of skilled craftsmen decreased. One who is master of his craft is Norfolk-born Mr. A. F. Davis, a member of the Master Thatchers' Association, seen in our picture at work on a 400-years-old half-timbered cottage at Marton, near Baschurch.

The house is occupied by Mr. R. Marsden, a retired insurance official, and his wife, who have had it completely re-thatched.

Mr. Davis is moving to Shropshire to live at Peplow. His next job is for the National Trust on a black and white cottage at Atcham—Picture by Cliff Nicholas.

Newspaper article from the Shropshire Journal, August 26 1966, showing a Thatcher at work on a cottage in Marton.

In the township of Balderton is another large house known as **Balderton Hall** which was built in 1572. This building is again three stories, the third storey being used by the servants both of the house and of the farm. ³On New Year's Day about fifty years ago a fire started in the beam in the chimney of the sitting room and the end of the house nearest Myddle, the west end was burnt out, but the chimney was left standing. The old gentleman who told me said the fire engines came from Wem and Shrewsbury and when they had put out the fire they were unable to put the hose away as it was so cold that it had frozen. The west end was built up in the same style as it was previously where possible using the same materials.



Balderton Hall looking North East



Balderton Hall showing the original end of the Hall

³ Mr W Formstone, a servant at the hall at the time of the fire.

Tan House, which is on the westerly edge of the parish at Marton is about the oldest house in the parish, built around 1550. It is a thatched cottage which has been kept as it was where possible. Inside there are many open beams and there are a large number of carpenters marks visible for fitting one beam to another.



Tan House looking north



Tan House looking east

There was a narrow spiral staircase, but this was recently taken out. All of the modern windows are in places where there were once windows but some were blocked up because

of the windows tax. The overhanging window is modern but there was a window there before.

Quite a proportion of the houses of the parish are made from the red sandstone which was at one time quarried at Webscott. For an example of a sandstone building, the one at **Newton on the Hill** was built in 1853.



Two sandstone cottages at Newton looking North East

Apart from the usual sandstone houses of which there were over a hundred in the parish, there are two which are a little more unusual in that they are built right up to the rock and in places the rooms are burrowed out of the rock.



Sandstone cottage built partly in the rock

The house down the Lower Road is almost passed without noticing and it is only on investigation that one realizes that it is built into the rock. This rock, although a little damp is

warm. The other house built against the rock is called "**The Nest**". No room of the house is cut out of the rock as it was in the other house. The Nest is just built right up against the rock. The room that is built in the rock is outside the house. This is a small room with an outside door which is now used for storing potatoes and fruit as it is perfectly dry. It has a hole in the roof where the house is met and was probably a chimney. At the other end of the narrow room – about four yards away – are two troughs, probably feeding troughs. In the 1920s another section was built onto The Nest, but it takes its place well and looks the same at the rest of the building.



The Nest looking North West in 1921



The Nest looking North West in 1965

Other cottages



One of the houses near the church.

This house is original up to the cross beam. Above it is brick. The house is about 300 years old.



House near the church

Up to the end of the nineteenth century these houses were thatched



A house on the Ellesmere Road at Myddle

This house was thatched as late as 1910. It is about 300 years old.

Roads

Myddle parish seems to have been well provided by roads which were kept in a good state of repair. A turnpike road connected the Holyhead road about five miles from Oswestry with the Chester road, eight miles from Shrewsbury, passing through Myddle and Marton. At Marton, the old toll gate house still remains.



The old toll gate house at Marton

It is built of sandstone and has six sides. This house is on the junction of the roads from Myddle and Burlton where they meet to go to Baschurch. There was another turnpike road which led from Wem to Shrewsbury and passed through the parish at Alderton and Harmer

Hill. ⁴When the toll gates were removed in 1872 the repairs of the road were then to fall upon the various parishes through which it passed. There was some disagreement as to who should repair the road between Alderton and Harmer, so they resorted to two extracts from Gough's history of the parish. (see appendix 26) The rector said that from the two extracts that in Gough's time none of the road between the brook and Alderton was in Myddle parish and that this agreed with the Tithe Commutation Act of 1839. If this was the case it was decided that the repairs of the road from Alderton down to the Brook should fall upon the parish of Broughton and from the brook to where the road entered the parish of Preston Gubbals on this parish, Myddle.

Another set of turnpike gates were on the Balderton road. ⁵It can be seen from extracts from the Balderton Highways book that the work of the upkeep of the road was taken very seriously. Each year the road was surveyed and some time was spent in levelling it. On alternate years it seemed that it was necessary to do more major repairs. Men who worked on the roads either for levelling, breaking stones or some other reason were paid one shilling a day in the late eighteenth century. This wage was increased to two shillings by 1805. In 1793, £13.6.6 was collected but this was an unusually high figure. The amount received varied from as little as £3 when there was great difficulty in covering expenses, to as much as £14 when after expenses were paid there was some left in reserve. In 1793 six loads of stones were bought at a cost of three shillings but by 1829, £2.2.6 was paid for 17 loads of pebbles. The Highway Board were still able to cover costs with the increasing prices. Repairs were supervised by wardens. The turnpike gates at Balderton were abolished in 1879.

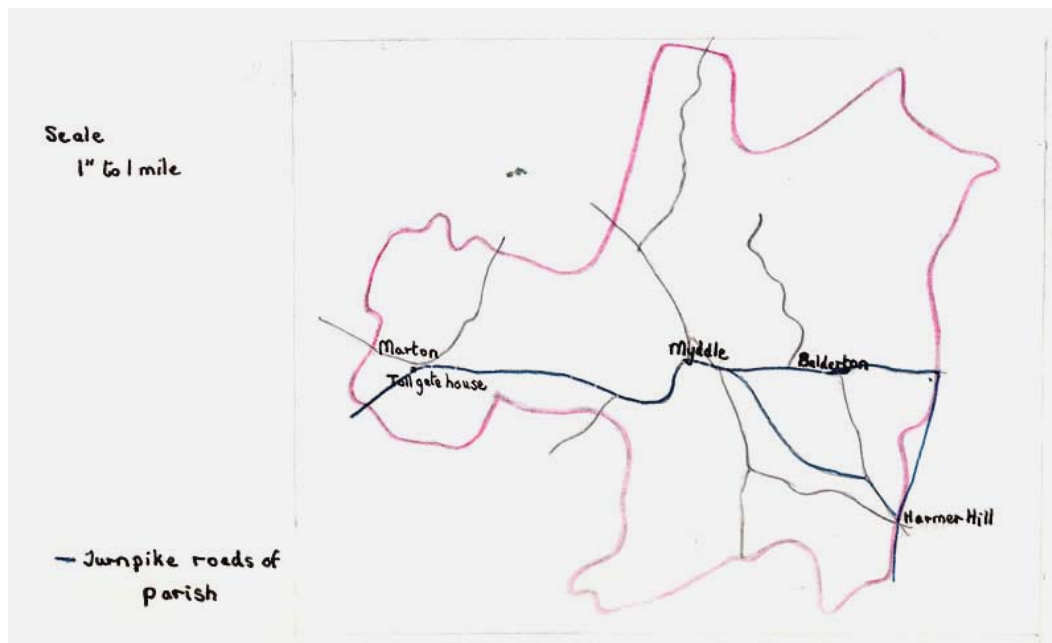


Fig 46 The Turnpike roads of the Parish

⁴ Myddle Parish Magazine, August 1868

⁵ Balderton Highway Book, 1789 – 1879, parish chest