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Page 82 to 85 Other Churches in the neighbourhood

The other church of the parish is at Harmer Hill. It was built by subscription and opened 31<sup>st</sup> May 1865. It is a school church licensed for public worship. During the week it is allowed to be used as an elementary day school.



Harmer Hill School Church in 1935



Harmer Hill School Church in 1965

Another place of worship is the Chapel at Harmer Hill. When it was built in 1833 it was an Independent Chapel but became a Presbyterian Chapel in the early 1920s.



### Harmer Hill Presbyterian Chapel

The chapel at Harmer Hill has its own graveyard. At one time there were three chapels in the parish. One was at Houlston but has since been demolished. They fell out of use early in the twentieth century.

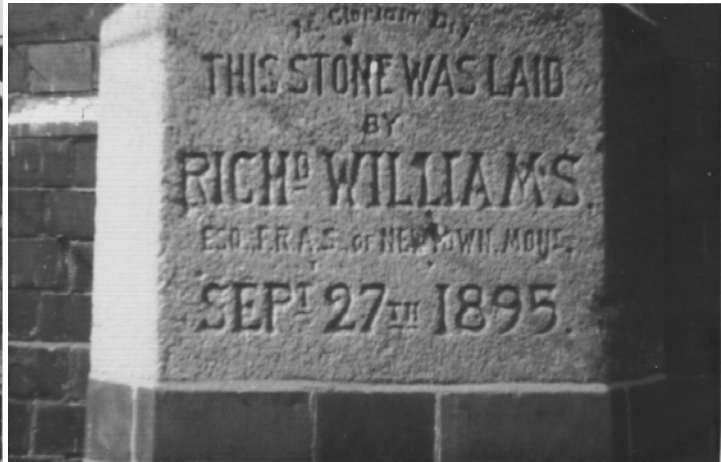
At Webscott there was a primitive Methodist chapel which was erected in 1842. It is now used for storing cement and other bricklayers materials.



### Webscott Methodist Chapel remains

As can be seen from the photograph the main door has been taken out and the opening has been widened and gates put across it. It is now wide enough for a lorry to reverse into the opening.

At Newton on the Hill there was a Presbyterian chapel which was erected in 1895. This chapel has been converted into two houses and little remains which shows it once was a chapel.



### Newton on the Hill Chapel

From the photograph the outline of the main door can be seen. One stained glass window remains in the upstairs window. In the other house one room narrows where the font used to be.

A Sunday School was established by the wishes of Mr. Smyth in 1793 and <sup>1</sup> "it was thought by many to have had good effects in the decent and orderly behaviour of the young persons who have formerly attended it". At the time of writing (around 1966) Myddle Sunday School was still going on and so was one at Harmer Hill Church and another at Harmer Hill Chapel.

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<sup>1</sup> Shropshire Parish Registers Society "The Registers of Myddle" Volume XIX

### Pages 86 to 87 Myddle Rectory



### Myddle Rectory on a postcard dated 1937



### Undated photograph of the Rectory

Although there is a terrier of all buildings, glebe land and tithes belonging to the rector of Myddle in 1699 (see Appendix 21) which states that there is a rectory, there is nothing which says what it is like. Mr. Richardson built part of the Parsonage House – the kitchen and the room below it - and he made use of as much of the timber as was left of a barn that had fallen down in the time of Mr. Moore. The next clue is a tablet on the chancel wall which bears the following inscription:- “This chancel and parsonage house was rebuilt by Dr Egerton leigh AD 1747.

The house must have been really let to go into disrepair for in 1799 a report was made on the dilapidation of the Parsonage and the buildings in Myddle late possessions of the Rev Smith. (see Appendix 22). This report showed that the whole house was in a bad state. The list of repairs seemed endless. William Green the builder who was called in gave his estimate at £114-18-0. A number of alterations to the house were made. The entrance was formerly in the middle of the front. On entering the house as the entrance formerly stood there were two small parlours on the left hand side and the kitchen on the right but now the two parlours were converted into one, and the old kitchen was turned into a parlour and a new kitchen was built beyond the Brewhouse. It was necessary to make an alteration in the

situation of the staircase but in consequence of the unskilled removal of the partition or from some other cause the building was weakened and the walls gave way so much that in 1807 it was necessary to repair it again.

A terrier of all the buildings and glebe lands belonging to the rectory dated 27<sup>th</sup> July 1853 shows the influence of the Tithe Map of 1839 and the rectory owned land now is distinguished by tithe numbers (see appendix 23). There is no noticeable similarity between this terrier and that of 1699.

The next important change in the rectory was at the turn of the twentieth century (margin note here "1936?") when part of the house was demolished as it was too big.

### Pages 89 to 94 Myddle Castle

Myddle Castle was probably built after the conquest of Wales by Edward I. <sup>2</sup>It was a border castle of the inner eastern chain. Lord Le Strange built the mansion from the freestone of the manor from near Harmere Heath. The Le Stranges held the manor under Fitz Alan. The castle was first embattled by the fifth Lord Le Strange in 1308.

<sup>3</sup>The castle was square within a square moat and a square court within it. There was a piece of ground of almost an acre on the east side of the castle and this piece was moated by a lesser moat than that which went round the castle. The moat is of uniform width on three sides but the eastern side is wider and its two corners have a width of sixty feet.

<sup>4</sup>From its relative position to the church and the masonry-banked platform on the interior site it would appear to have been planned in a manner transitional from the mount and bailey to the moated homestead.

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<sup>2</sup> Collected Archaeological Communication made to the British Archaeological Association, Volume 1 (1843) Chapter on Castles of Shropshire by Rev Eyton

<sup>3</sup> R Casey 'Shropshire' p193

<sup>4</sup> VCH Volume 1, page on Homestead Moats





### Myddle Castle from a drawing by D Parkes

<sup>5</sup>The entrance was through a gatehouse which stood at the north east corner of the castle moat – the passage through the gatehouse was eight feet wide. There were four rooms, two of which were on one side of the passage and two on the other. Another building was once on the site which was a slaughter-house for use of the castle. The floor of this building was clay and made high along the middle of the building, like a bridge – “for case of slaughter men in falling his beeves, and for laying them to bleed more freely”. <sup>6</sup>Very near this building was a bridge over the castle moat. The passage from the end of the bridge went through into the court in the middle of the castle. On the south side of the passage was a large room (probably the kitchen as it once had a very large chimney in it). On the south side of the castle was a parlour, on the west side against the passage two rooms opened together only parted by part of a wall which had several large doorways through it so this was probably the hall. The castle was two storeys high, had a flat roof, a tower, and a staircase at the north west corner of the inner court and there is a doorway near the top to go on to the roof of the castle.

Leyland on his tours, 1538-1543 says that Myddle Castle was very ruinous. One side of the high window remained with fine mouldings and also one side of the mullioned window of the Great Hall. A stone carving of the Strange Arms (two lions passant in pale) was fixed on a corbet below a window seat in the wall facing south.

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<sup>5</sup> R Gough 'The History of Myddle' 1700-1

<sup>6</sup> R Gough



### The Le Strange family coat of arms

<sup>7</sup>C. Hibert said in 1837 he was informed that orders had been given by the Lady of the Manor for great care to be taken of the existing vestiges. The moat enclosed a garden in the occupation of Mrs Bate, tenant of the adjoining farm. The embankment under the garden hedge is of stone from the ruins of the castle. Rev Egerton in 1895 said that part of the great wall within the moat which supported the courtyard and two sets of stone steps leading down to the moat side still remained.

<sup>8</sup>In 1911 at the end of a long hot summer the farmer was busy with the oddly named operation of 'mudding the pits' and when the mud was got out of the moat of Myddle Castle it was spread over the meadows. Some fragments of enamelled tiles were found by the Rector, one bearing an intricate design of oak-leaves and trefoils. Some were plain and one had a very bold design of a white fleur-de-lys. These probably came either from the chapel which was in the castle or from the Banqueting Hall. The best find was a large fragment showing a coat of arms which can be described as first and fourth a lion rampant, sinister, second and third chequers. These seem to be the combined arms of Warrene and Fitzalan, both being connected with the ancient family of Le Strange who obtained a royal license to crenellate in 1308. All the tiles are assigned to the fourteenth century.

The Lords Le Strange were the first to live in Myddle Castle and the spent part of their time in Knockin Castle and part in Myddle Castle. <sup>9</sup>One of the earliest mentions of Myddle is in 1234 when three bishops met at Myddle. They were Edmund Rich, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Lichfield and the Bishop of Rochester, and they met Llywellyn at Myddle and concluded a truce which was to be for two years. This was ratified on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1234.

Another mention of Myddle is in a 1383 document which gives a glimpse of a domestic practice of the Middle Ages. (see appendix 24). The document gives an account of the terms under which Lord John Le Strange and followers stays for a year with his mother. His esquire is charged 4d and a yeoman 3d a day. The levying of a charge for staying with relations was not at all uncommon in the noble households in mediaeval times, although

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<sup>7</sup> The History and Description of the County of Salop (1837)

<sup>8</sup> SAS Volume 4, 4<sup>th</sup> Series, page X of the Miscellanea

<sup>9</sup> Warrington 'History of Wales'

their embodiment in a legal agreement as here was not usual. It must be remembered that such visits were often for lengthy periods and catering would have to provide for a number of servants and horses.

Another mention of Myddle comes soon afterwards in 1403. This document concerns a pardon to the tenants of Lord Le Strange. They had gathered together to fight for the King at the Battle of Shrewsbury but the Lord Le Strange's steward John Kynaston wanted to take them to fight against the King, so the tenants refused. Kynaston threatened to hang them if they would not go, so the tenants changed their minds. This document is to pardon them for fighting against the King. (see appendix 25). What became of Kynaston after the battle is not known and neither is Lord Strange's thoughts of his steward's treachery.

The Lords Le Strange held the manor and castle for about 420 years and then the heiress of John Le Strange of Knockin married Sir George Stanley. Sir George was summoned to parliament as Lord Strange in 1482. The manor contained his descendents until the death of the fifth earl of Derby in 1594 when the barony fell into abeyance amongst his three daughters. The first Constable of the Castle was Will Dodd, who was succeeded by Sir Roger Kinaston of Hordley who was by commission made Castle Keeper of Myddle Castle and Knockin. After his death, his younger son Humphry Kinaston (known as 'Wild Humphry') was tenant of the castle. He had two wives, both of lowly birth. He got into debt and was outlawed and so left Myddle Castle which he had allowed to fall into disrepair.

Wild Humphry went into hiding in a cave near Nescliffe which is still called Kinaston's Cave. On one occasion he got over Montford Bridge and needed to return back to his cave. The undersheriff came with a company of men to the bridge and took up several planks making a gap which they thought no horse could jump, and hid themselves in ambush. Humphry was about to enter the bridge when they got up to arrest him, but he spurred his horse when then jumped over the gap. After wild Humphry's time the castle was never inhabited and slowly decayed but there was still enough to give shelter to a fugitive Cavalier during the Civil War. Now nothing much remains except for the north west tower and the moat, some of which has been filled in. On the whole the remaining part of the moat is thought to be very deep.

The church and the castle were the most important buildings in the parish. They lie very close together and both are buildings of historical importance.





Myddle Castle looking north west, and showing its proximity to the church



Myddle Castle looking north east