

The History of Ruyton XI Towns Castle

Report of the research
Carried out on behalf of the
Ruyton XI Towns Group

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Introduction

This report is the result of documentary research carried out in connection with the Ruyton XI Towns Heritage Group project to conserve and interpret the ruins of the castle located in the churchyard at Ruyton XI Towns.

At the start of the project what little was known about the history of the castle came from the work and writings of Robert Lloyd Kenyon, a local historian active at the end of the 19th century. More recent histories of Ruyton XI Towns appear to have relied almost entirely on Kenyon's research in their coverage of the castle.

Kenyon's research indicated that the castle only functioned as such for two short periods: for approximately 50-60 years at the end of the 12th century before being destroyed by the Welsh in the early 13th century; and for another 50 years or so in the 14th century. It appears that the castle was never considered particularly important, which might explain why the castle's early history is so poorly documented.

The history of the castle should not have been considered to stop when it ceased to function as a fortification. The later role of the castle ruin as local landmark is of equal importance to the history of the site but very little was known about the ownership and use of the site during this period.

Scope and methodology

A preliminary literature search indicated that there had been nothing published about the history of the castle other than that by, or based on the research by, Robert Lloyd Kenyon. Kenyon is believed to have expended considerable time and effort in researching the history of Ruyton XI Towns but appears to have found little documented history on the castle. Although there is likely to be more information to be found concerning the early history of the castle, to find it would involve an extensive search of widely dispersed mediaeval documents.

At this stage of the project, it was more practical to concentrate on the post-mediaeval history of the castle. Not only would this fill in the gaps in our knowledge of this period in the site's history, but it would give a better understanding of how the site has been used over the years, which would aid in the interpretation of the archaeological evidence.

Therefore, research was focussed on tracing the ownership of the site prior to its acquisition by the Church, as well as searching local archives for any additional information concerning the castle's history.

The early history of Ruyton XI Towns Castle

Kenyon (1891) reports that he found no record of the castle being constructed but surmised that it was probably built by John le Strange around the year 1155, when he consolidated the manors of Ruyton, Wykey and Felton into one. This would date the building to the death of King Stephen and the succession of Henry II as king in 1154.

In 'Castle of Shropshire', Michael Jackson (1988) notes that the castle was destroyed by Fulk Fitz Warine in 1148. It must have been rebuilt as it was destroyed again, this time by the Welsh, in either 1202 (Kenyon, 1891) or 1212 (OS, 1977; Jackson, 1988). The castle was then abandoned in favour of Knockin and the ruins are mentioned in a document in 1272 (Jackson, 1988). The castle was still in ruins in 1299 as there is no mention of a castle in the fine of the manor of that date (Kenyon, 1891).

In 1302 the site was sold John le Strange II to Edmund, Earl of Arundel, who must have had the castle rebuilt as it was defensible by 1313 (Kenyon, 1891; OS, 1977; Jackson 1988).

Upon Arundel's death in 1326, the castle was acquired by Roger Mortimer, Earl of March (Jackson, 1988). After Mortimer's death in 1330, ownership reverted to the Earl's of Arundel (Jackson, 1988). The castle is mentioned in a document of 1357 concerning the fine paid by someone for not completing his quote of work on the castle (Jackson, 1988), and again in 1364 (OS, 1977).

Jackson (1988) concluded that Ruyton Castle was abandoned shortly after this date as the castle is not mentioned in the inquisition post mortem after the execution of Richard, Earl of Arundel in 1397.

Masonry from the castle was used to repair church in the early 15th century (Jackson, 1988).

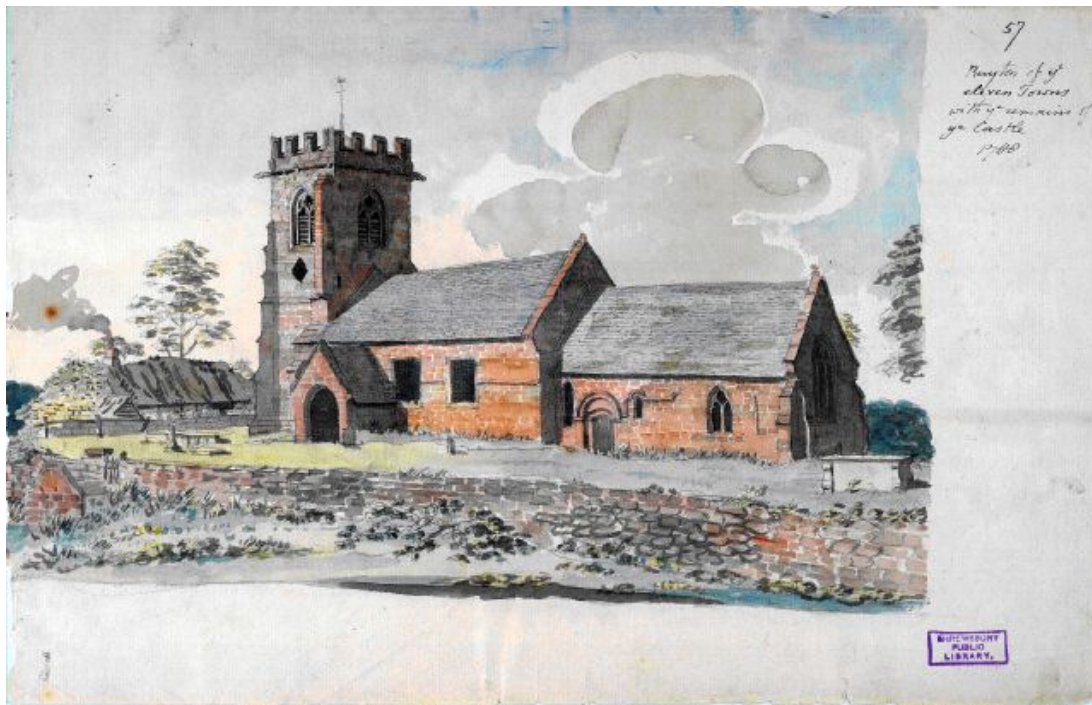
The post-mediaeval history of the castle.

At some point prior to 1771, the plot of land containing the castle ruins come into the ownership of William Lord Craven. On the map and schedule of the Craven Estates at Shropshire Records and Research Centre the plot (numbered 96) is described as a small tenement of 32 perches occupied by Samuel Griffiths.

Shropshire records also holds a document (ref: Durton Deeds 12842) that gives details of a large number of properties in Ruyton, West Felton and Baschurch that were due to be sold by auction in September 1777. Of particular interest is Lot VIII comprising Ruyton Park together with a number of “small tenements in Ryton”, one of which measures 32 perch and is occupied by Samuel Griffiths. The combination of occupier and plot size indicates that this was the castle site. The document is not catalogued with any reference to Lord Craven but considering the properties concerned, I think it is likely that this is the auction by which Lord Craven disposed of his property in Ruyton XI Towns.

The parish register of Ruyton XI Towns indicates that there were at least two Samuel Griffiths in the parish. A Samuel Griffiths was buried on 9 June 1772 (a possible match for the occupier in 1771 but not for the 1777 occupier), and Samuel Griffiths who married Elizabeth Jones on 1 April 1788 (who would match both dates).

A watercolour painting of Ruyton XI Towns church dated 1788, also at the Shropshire Records and Research Centre, clearly shows an occupied cottage abutting the castle ruins.



By the time the tithe map for Ruyton XI Towns was drawn up in 1838, the site was owned by John Glover and had been divided into two. The map shows a single building straddling the division of the two plots. It is probable that Samuel Griffith's home had been subdivided to make two dwellings. The northern part of the house and gardens was occupied by John Dovaston, and the southern part by John Bevan. (John Dovaston is recorded as having found a cannon ball while digging in the garden, which he handed over to his landlord. This cannon ball was passed on to the vicar during the 1878 excavations of the site but its present location is unknown.)

The castle site was sold again ten years later in 1858. A copy of the original auction details (in Shropshire records) includes the two cottages and their gardens as Lot 25 “Old Ruyton Castle” in the auction to be held by Mr George Hilditch at two o’clock on 25 November at the Powis Arms Inn, Ruyton. The copy of the auction details in Shropshire Records is incomplete and the descriptions of the individual lots is missing. As yet no record has been found to identify either the seller or the purchaser at this time.

In the 1871 census there is one address clearly identified as the “Castle”. This is the home of an agricultural labourer called Richard Bevan (aged 56), his wife, Mary (aged 58) and their children , Ann (aged 30, described as being “at home” due to “ill health”) and son Thomas (aged 17 and an apprentice tin plate worker and glazier). Mary was from Oswestry, but the rest of the family were born in Ruyton, so it is possible that Richard Bevan was a relative of John Bevan who was living in one of the cottages in 1838.

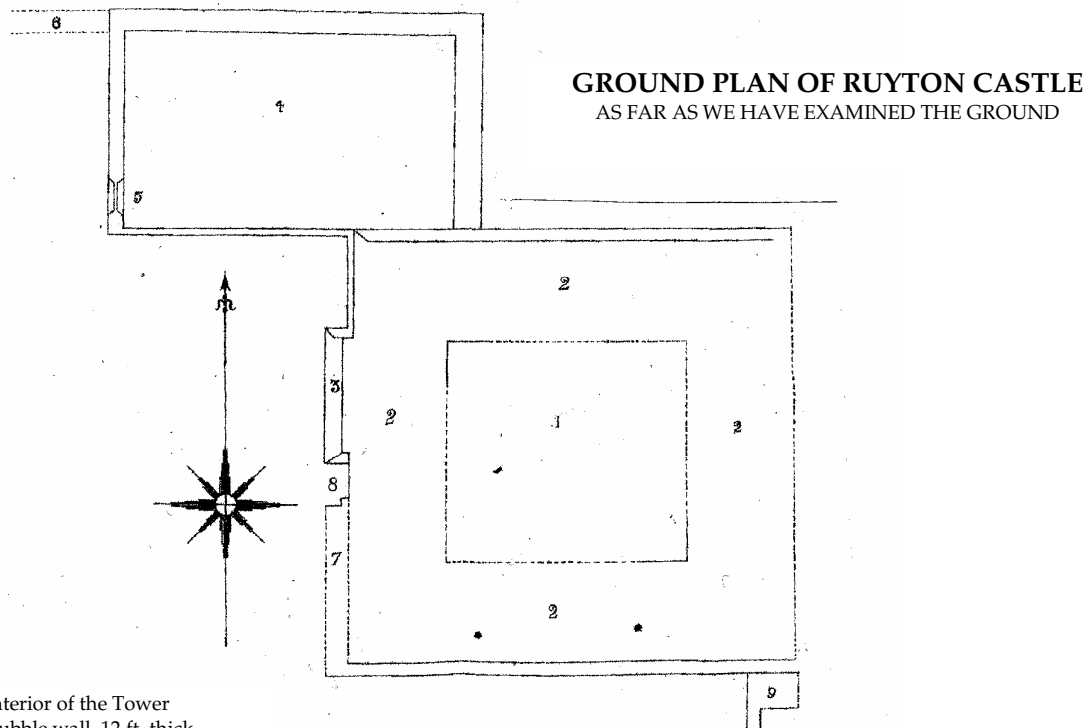
By 1876 the castle was owned by Richard Rowlands Minton, an oil and varnish manufacturer of Cheshire, who offered to sell the castle and its surrounding land to the Church to enable the churchyard to be expanded and the ruins preserved. In the conveyance of the sale, dated 1 October 1877 (See Appendix A), the site is described as “All those two several cottages called “Ruyton Castle” with Piggeries Gardens and premises containing in the whole about one rood and twenty four perches or thereabouts more particularly delineated on the ground plan drawn in the margin of these presents and thereon coloured round with red and which were formerly in the occupation of John Bevan and Widow Dovaston but are now late of Richard Bevan and are void.”

The widow Dovaston was presumably the wife of John Dovaston who occupied one of the cottages in 1838.

Once the site came into Church ownership then the vicar, the Rev. F. P. Wilkinson had the foresight to undertake an extensive archaeological investigation of the castle ruins before work to landscape the extended churchyard was started. He chronicled his findings in reports to the ‘Parish Paper’ (appendix B).

Taking expert advice, Rev Wilkinson appears to have excavated the castle foundations down to floor level and his reports are an invaluable record of features that are now lost or buried. The plan of the castle ruins he published in the October 1878 issue of the 'Parish Paper' suggests that the castle buildings cover a much greater area than the present ruins indicate.

Ground plan of Ruyton Castle published by Rev F.P. Wilkinson in the October 1878 issue of the 'Parish paper'.



- 1 - Interior of the Tower
 - 2 - Rubble wall, 12 ft. thick
 - 3 - Buttress (good workmanship),
 - 4 - Out work at N.W. angle
 - 5 - Window sill, a ft. below surface.
 - 6 - Probable line of out work.
 - 7 - Buttress foundation of more recent date.
 - 8 - Some attempts to undermine,
 - 9 - Buttress or stairs at S.E. corner;
- the face stones of East wall are all quarried away.
- In South wall are two *light* shoots, quite perfect marked *

Suggestions for further research

- There may be material relating to the castle in the archives of any of the early owners of the castle (le Strange, Arundel, Mortimer). These may be held in national, regional or private collections (e.g. National Archives at Kew, county record offices, Arundel Castle archives). A search of these archives would not be practical but as the cataloguing of archives is improving in quality and coverage almost, searches in the on-line catalogues (e.g. A2A and others) may prove worthwhile. What were Kenyon's and Jackson's sources? Is there material at Pradoc?
- Putting the castle in context. Find out about similar structures and their function, and about Welsh raids as background to the story.
- Diocese of Lichfield archives – the proximity of the church and the fact that masonry from the castle was used to repair the church in the 1400's means that there is a possibility of the castle being mentioned in the church records.
- Craven Estate Papers (Shrewsbury RO) – possibly further material here relating to acquisition and sale of castle, and/or relating to the construction of the cottage, tenancy of cottages. (e.g. I have searched for castle references but not by tenants' names.)
- Toll road cut through area – any maps, plans, reports that mention castle and ownership. (Try Hunt of Boreaton papers)
- Search records of Richard Rowlands Minton re: castle ownership.
- 1841, 1851, 1861 census returns will reveal more information about the families who lived in cottages.
- Excavation of ruins by Rev Wilkinson – did he leave papers or diary – photos?

- Shrewsbury architect, Mr. Pountney Smith visited and advised on excavation. He is quite a well-known local figure – do any of his papers survive? (Consider architectural as well as local archives).
- The opinion of “certain learned archaeologists” was sought during the excavations. Who were they likely to have been and do any relevant papers survive?
- The local archaeological society visited the excavations – any surviving reports, descriptions, and photos. Are the societies papers deposited somewhere (i.e. local record office, national archaeological archives)?
- Community memories – stories (photos) passed down in village families about the castle including work carried out in 1960s.
- Oral history – childhood, courtship etc memories re: castle ruins.

Sources

Jackson, Michael (1988) 'Castles of Shropshire', Shropshire Libraries

Kenyon R.L. (1891) 'The Borough of Ruyton', Trans Shropshire Archaeol Hist Soc. (Shropshire Record Office).

Kenyon R.L. (1901) 'Manor of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns', Trans Shropshire Archaeol Hist Soc. P69 (Shropshire Record Office).

Hist Soc. P69 (Shropshire Record Office)

Ellesmere Ruridecanal Magazine (Shropshire Record Office)

Chronology

- c1155 Castle built, probably by John le Strange
- 1148 Castle destroyed by Fulk Fitz Warine
- 1202/12 Castle destroyed by the Welsh and abandoned in favour of Knockin.
- 1299 Castle still in ruins.
- 1300 Castle bought from John le Strange II by Edmund, Earl of Arundel.
- 1313 Castle defensible.
- 1326 Arundel dies and castle acquired by Roger Mortimer, Earl of March
- 1330 Mortimer dies and ownership reverts to Earls of Arundel.
- 1357 Castle in repair.
- 1364 Last mention of castle.
- 15th C Masonry used to repair church in the early 15th century (Castles of Shropshire, 1988).
- 18th C Cottage(s) built within ruins.
- 1771 Estate map shows plot as “small tenement” owned by William Lord Craven and occupied by Samuel Griffiths.
- 1777 Castle site occupied by Samuel Griffiths sold by auction.
- 1778 Watercolour painting of church shows occupied cottage abutting castle ruins.
- 1838 Tithe map shows castle site owned by John Glover and divided into two plots (original cottage subdivided with gardens) occupied by John Bevan (south) and John Dovaston (north).
- 1858 “Old Ruyton Castle” offered for auction on 25 November by George Hilditch.
- 1876 Richard Rowlands Minton offers to sell castle ruins and grounds to church.
- 1877 Ground containing castle ruins & cottages purchased from Richard Rowlands Minton to extend churchyard.
- 1878 Archaeological excavation of ruins by vicar, Rev F.P. Wilkinson
- 1879 Cottages demolished and new churchyard extension remodelled including covering old roadway to north.
- 1880 Works to churchyard completed. Northern boundary wall collapses for second time. New churchyard consecrated in November.

Appendix A. Conveyance dated 1 October 1877. (Photocopy of document supplied to Ruyton XI Towns Heritage Group by Mrs S.M.Tonking, Diocesan Registry Archivist for the Diocese of Lichfield, 3 December 2001.).

"I Richard Rowlands Minton of the The Hurst in the County of Chester, Oil and Varnish Manufacturer under the authority of "The Consecration of Churchyards Act 1867" do hereby in consideration of the sum of One Hundred Pounds to me paid (the receipt whereof and that the same is in full for the absolute purchase of the Cottages land and hereditaments hereinafter described and expressed to be hereby conveyed I do hereby acknowledge) grant and convey unto the person or persons or Corporation sole or aggregate in whom the Churchyard or Burial place of the parish Church of Rayton of the Eleven Towns in the County of Salop is now vested his or their heirs or successors. All those two several cottages called "Rayton Castle" with Piggeries Gardens and premises containing in the whole about one rood and twenty four perches or thereabouts more particularly delineated on the ground plan drawn in the margin of these presents and thereon coloured round with red and which were formerly in the occupation of John Bevan and Widow Dovaston but are now or late of Richard Bevan and are void. All which said premises are situate in the township and parish of Rayton of the eleven towns aforesaid and all right title and interest in the same and everypart thereof. To be held for ever as part of the said Churchyard or Burial Place In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this first day of October One thousand and eight hundred and seventy seven."

Appendix B.

In 1870s, the vicar of Ruyton XI Towns, Rev F.P. Wilkinson gave a monthly report of activities in the parish in 'Parish Noters for Ellesmere etc' (also known as the 'Ellesmere Ruridecanal Magazine' or 'Parish Paper'). A copy of this publication is held in the Shropshire Records Office in Shrewsbury and it provides us with a contemporary and detailed description of the purchase of the castle and the subsequent excavations undertaken by the Rev. Wilkinson himself.

December 1876 under the heading "Old Ruyton Castle and ite Precincts"

"Mr. Minton has offered to sell to the parish the ancient ruin of Ruyton Castle with adjacent ground, with a view to its being enclosed within the churchyard, and preserved as an object of historical interest. It is believed that the ground floor of the keep can be clearly defined, if not laid bare. The only other interesting feature in the ruined walls is a curious entrance to the keep, through the massive masonry, through which it is supposed the beseiged were secretly supplied with provisions. The removal of the modern additions, two inferior dwellings, pigsty, etc close to the graves will throw out the Church Tower into full view from its base, give more privacy and quit to the Churchyard, present a more interesting landscape, and eventually the whole area of the high ground would be enclosed within the walls surrounding the Church. It would be expressly stipulated that the ruin shall be no further demolished. The adjoining ground would be consecrated and used for the burial of the dead. As time goes on additional ground will be required. Fot this and other reasons above mentioned it is hoped that Mr. Minton's offer, which is of a very liberal character, may be accepted. He himself gives £10 towards it, and Mr. Kenyon of Pradoe, signifying his hearty approval offers a like sum."

January 1877 under the heading "Ruyton Castle"

"The purchase money for the extension of Ruyton Churchyard, so as to include the old ruin, is nearly raised. Mr. Minton's offer has therefore been accepted, an the purchase will be completed in due course. The following is the subscription list, which has been confined to landowners:- Mr. Minton £10; Mr.Kenyon £10, Mr.Humphreys £10; Mr. Basnett £10; Mr. Oswell £10; Rev. M. Owen £10; Lord Brownslow £10; Mr.Arthur Lloyd £10; Mrs Darby £10; Dr. Broughton £5. Further subscriptions will be thankfully received

by the Parish Churchwarden, Mr. Broughall, of Wikey House, who has kindly consented to act as treasurer.

The above purchase has led us to look up the history of Ruyton Castle, which however. We find to be involved in a good deal of mystery. Ruyton, as ancient Rutunium of Roman times, would of course have its strong hold, and there are several indications that the present remains date from the more remote period. We know that a great many castles were built in the reign of Stephen, and destroyed again in the reign of Henry II, as many as 1100. This, however, was not destroyed at the time, for we find that it existed in the year 1313. The Manor had been previously held under Fitz Alan by the Stranges, of Ness, but about the year 1300, John le Strange had sole or surrendered his tenacy to Edward, Earl of Arundel. Half the Manor of Great Ness, with the Ford*, held by le Strange under Fitz Alen, owed suit and service to Ruyton Castle. It was probably destroyed during the latter part of the 14th century, when that tower of the present Church was built.”

* (“with the Ford” has been crossed out in pencil and a marginal note added “Withyford [sec?] Collec[lance?] Antique 1.47” added. This bound copy of the publication carried the bookplate of the Kenyon family of Pradoc.)

(There is no further mention of the castle for a few months)

May 1877

“The Churchyard extension round the Old Castle will be carried out immediately, Mr. Minton having expressed his wish that there should be no further delay. Subscriptions are to be paid to Ruyton Castle Fund, Old Bank, Salop, and most of the purchase money has been already paid. The Bishop has signified his hearty approval and expressed his thanks to Mr. Richard Minton for his liberal and considerate action in making over to the church this interesting and useful addition to the Churchyard. We shall be glad of some choice evergreens to plant on the Church Bank. By judicious arrangement this might be made one of the most beautiful churchyards in England. In a sanitary point of view it is perfect.”

(There is no mention of the castle for a few months)

June 1878 under the heading “The Old Castle”

“Mr. Pountney Smith, of Shrewsbury, has visited these old ruins. It is his opinion that the layout of the ground should be delayed until it has been thoroughly examined. A plan should then be drawn of the strong Tower and its outworks, which appear to be spread all over the ground. About 30 feet west of the Tower we find a window sill, neatly worked; it is about 18 inches under the ground and from the window we work out the foundations of a building joining onto the north west corner of the Tower: a similar building appears to have also to have been on the north side. The above window sill (we have dug down to the floor) leads us to conclude that the present level of the garden is about 4 feet above the original level. It is recommended that a portion of this be removed to the south bank, recently planted; which is capable of receiving all that need necessarily be removed. We hope to give a plan of the grounds in our next number. The keep is of unusual strength and must have been built solely for defence; the width of the walls (12-15 feet thick) resemble Denbigh Castle. Funds are required to go with the excavations.”

(There is no mention of the castle in the June issue)

August 1878

“The delay in proceeding with the excavations is because we are waiting for the opinion of certain learned archaeologists as to the best way of preserving the ruins of this interesting old Border Tower. Funds are required for the work. Another curious opening has been discovered in the South Wall.”

September 1878

“The ground plan of the Tower is, for the sake of accuracy, delayed til next month. Two cannon balls have been given us by Mr. John Comberback; they were dug out of the Castle garden in the beginnging of this century, by John Dovaston, and handed over to the landlord. It appears that cannons were first used in the reign of Edward III. Ruyton Castle having apparently been destroyed in the latter part of the fourteenth century, the above may be considered early and interesting specimens of iron shot. From the place in which they were found, and one being indented, it is probable they were fired against the Castle by some enemy. They will be preserved as interesting relics of bygone days.”

October 1878

“We have tried in a rough sketch of the ground plan, to give some idea of what Ruyton Castle was some seven or eight hundred years ago – a strong massive tower. It is said that the tower of Chester Castle is of the same character and dimensions – a comparison of the two may throw some light upon our ancient stronghold.”

(An annotated fold out plan of the castle is bound into the publication. Shropshire Archives conservator will not allow photocopying or tracing of the plan which is produced to the scale of 1/8inch to 1 foot. It is planned to take a digital photograph of the plan and make detailed measurements from it so that an accurate copy can be made.)

November 1878

“Further search proves the plan in our last number to be slightly incorrect, the buttress work marked 7 is found to be exactly in form and workmanship the same as No 3; the three feet offset being the same, it was covered over by the rubble buttress which runs four feet further west. Foundations are also discovered at the south east corner extending to the rock work on the Church bank. We are prepared now for a definite plan of operations; the building material of the cottage will be sold to pay for expenses, the grounds should no longer remain a succession of pitfalls, dangerous even in day-light. Mr. Pountney-Smith, the architect, has been consulted, but until the foundations of all the outworks have been discovered, he decl;ines to venture an opinion. We must hope, however, that before the Spring, all excavating, levellign and wall building will be complete, and the old relic of Rutunium let alone for ever.”

February 1879

“Work being scarce we have taken down the old cottages leaning against the tower walls. The remains of our ancient fortress begin to present an interesting appearance. The building material, bricks, slates etc. will be sold to pay expenses. A third light shoot has been discovered in the northern fragment; it seems to have been serving the purpose of a chimney for some centuries.”

March 1879

“A meeting was held on the 11th inst and plans for levelling, walling, planing, etc were approved. Funds are wanted. A few lithographs of the Church, similar to the one in Eyton’s Shropshire can be had for 1s 6d each; early application necessary.”

April 1879

“Our friends will be glad to hear that the work proposed to be done this spring is nearly finished. Recent excavations show the immense strength of this ancient fortress, and it is exceedingly interesting to find that the Norman Tower has been built upon the foundations of a still older structure – whether Saxon or Roman, learned archaeologists will be able to inform us; but it is proved beyond doubt, as we find different masonry and an old embrasure forming the foundation. We have also discovered in the north-western outworks a three-inch embrasure, through which the bow and crossbow have doubtless done execution upon the invader (firearms were not used in those days). This has been partially restored. A raised embankment will mark the eastern wall, so that the entire base of the tower will be clearly defined. We want some shrubs and evergreens for the south bank; a few yew trees would be very acceptable. The old building material has been disposed of, realising £10. However, more money is wanted. The vicar and churchwardens will receive donations, and see that they are wisely and economically expended. We hope to get some coping stones for the new walls from Shelvoke Quarry. A copper coin was found this week, but the inscription was entirely effaced; also a curious piece of stone marble ornament, richly carved.”

May 1879

“After the Easter Vestry Meeting, a committee was formed for the purpose of completing the boundary wall for the extension of the churchyard, consisting of the following persons:- Edward Broughall, Richard Brown, William Vaughan, John Oswell, Charles Stokes, R.R.Minton, H.F.Elliot and the Vicar and churchwardens. With such a strong committee we have no doubt the work will soon be finished. The coping stones will come from Shelvoke quarry, the burrs from Dunning’s Wood and the Cliffe. We want a quantity of shrubs for the church bank. Joseph Briscoe has sent us a nice Yew tree. We shall be glad of *anything* and the sooner the better.”

June 1879

“On Saturday the 17th, a meeting of Committee was held on the ground. It was decided that the boundary wall should be kept as low as possible; also that the north wall should go *straight* to the corner of the old churchyard. While digging out the foundation we came across quite a mine of cobble stones which we have determined to take out as they will pay for their removal, and we may discover some matter of interest, either an old well or stone entrance; local traditions tell of wonderful underground passages, etc reaching for miles!! The old high road ran along just below on the north side. Mr Porter of Oswestry has most kindly presented us with some fine specimen trees for the Church Bank – 15 – in all –various species of deodora, cypress and others. The *cupressus lausonii* at the east end of the old churchyard was planted in 1862 by Mr. John Broughton, so that by looking at that tree we may know what to expect of these 17 years hence.”

July 1879

“Our friends will be sorry to hear of the misfortune which had befallen our new wall. The foundations were insecure, and the wall itself of hardly sufficient strength. The accident has been repaired, and solid buttress work added, which will secure a strong and durable boundary. This mishap must occasion some further outlay. Will anyone propose some measures for raising a few pounds?”

(There is no further mention of the castle for a few months)

December 1879

“The walling, levelling etc has been dragged on for a very long time, a few days will see it completed. It will be seen from the statement of the accounts below, that there is a balance of £25 on the wrong side, which it is proposed to clear off by the proceeds of a concert to be given in Christmas week. Colonel Edwards has kindly given us stone from the Cliffe and a subscription besides. An ancient window sill has been stolen from the Castle ground. 10s will be given to any one who will replace it in *situ*. Through the kindness of Liet. Lloyd, RN, and old cannon captured from the French in the last century has been given to us: it is proposed to place it somewhere about the old ruin as an object of interest. The whole of the foundation of the massive Norman Tower has now been exposed. We hope to discover some further interesting facts and then, perhaps the Archaeological Society will pay us a visit.”

January 1880

“After the concert to be given by the hon. Mrs Stapleton Cotton, on Tuesday the 27th inst., will only require a few days works to put the ground in order. A few more trees or shrubs are wanted to cover the old roadway. The cannon supposed to have been taken from a French Privateer in the last century, has arrived from Portsmouth Dockyard, and is mounted. It remains for the committee to say whether they will have it or not; some people may think it a little incongruous, so close to the church and churchyard.”

April 1880

“The levelling is now completed and the ground can be sown with grass seed. If anyone wishes to plant a yew tree or some evergreens, now is the time.

The proceeds of the Concert on the 27th amounted to £19 14s, the expenses were £3 4s leaving a balance of £16 10s to pay off the £20 borrowed from the Bank, thus there is a deficiency of £3 10s besides some trifling additional expenses incurred since the levelling etc.”

August 1880

“We regret to say another catastrophe has befallen our ill-fated north boundary wall, ten yards of it being completed destroyed. There may be different opinions as to the cause of this, but on Friday last, about 5am a severe thunderstorm broke over the village. A perfect deluge of water rushed along the bank, and forcing its way down inside the wall seems to have undermined it in the very strongest part, causing it to give way to the very foundation. It will be repaired immediately.”

(In the November 1880 issue it was noted that the new churchyard was to be consecrated on 9th November at 2.30 and the ceremony was duly reported in the December issue. There was no further mention of the castle area in the subsequent issues that became more concerned with the engine hearse house project and later the church clock.)