

The Red Church

Old St Mary's Church (1767-1961)



The Red Church - Old St Mary's Church

or

“The Chapel in a remote part of Broseley”

*“.....Mrs Mary Brown late of Broseley in the County of Salop.....
did in her lifetime at her own Costs and Charges erect a new Church or Chapel
in Jackfield in a remote part of the Parish of Broseley....”*

With that intriguing reference to its location, those words by the Bishop of Hereford began the consecration on 28 August 1767 of “*the Chapel of St Mary*” and decreed it “*to be so called and named in all future times forever.*”⁽¹⁾ Despite the decree, it became known as “The Church on the Hill”, “Old St Mary’s”, “The New Church” or - by far the most familiar - “The Red Church.”

The following is a review and interpretation of available information on the history of the Red Church with particular reference to original material from Diocesan archives in Hereford.

The Red Church

The site of the old Red Church is alongside a footpath behind Red Church Close uphill from St Mary’s Close to the west of Ironbridge Road in Broseley. For some hundred years, it was a focal point for the community, particularly Jackfield, in the years when local industrial success was at its peak.



Fig 1. The Red Church
(by James Hartshorne, courtesy of Margaret Beddow)

The painting in Fig 1 clearly summarises its appearance as “*a large ambitious church in red brick with*
.....
To minimise misunderstandings, reference to the old St Mary’s will normally be as “the Red Church” or “old St Mary’s” while the new one will be “St Mary’s” or “new St Mary’s.” Quotations from original texts are italicised.

stone dressings, having a louvered bell tower in four stages with a substantial clock, crowned with four stone urns and a weathercock.”⁽²⁾ As “a pleasing landmark and feature of the landscape,”⁽³⁾ the Georgian structure must have been an impressive sight, compared with the old main church of St Leonard’s in Broseley, which in 1842 was described, rather unfairly, as having “the appearance of a respectable farmer’s outhouse.”⁽⁴⁾

The Red Church was 30 yards long, 7 yards 4 inches wide at the east end and 9 yards, 2 feet, 4 inches wide at the west end.⁽¹⁾ The height of the tower, estimated from photographs was about 75 feet. The nave, Fig 2, with five windows each side, seated 188 with pews mostly 3ft 6in high but with four higher at 4ft 6in.⁽⁵⁾ The gallery accommodated 88 children with smaller pews 2ft 3in high. In all, 200 places were “sold” to regular patrons and 76 were “free.” Unfortunately we have no seating details.

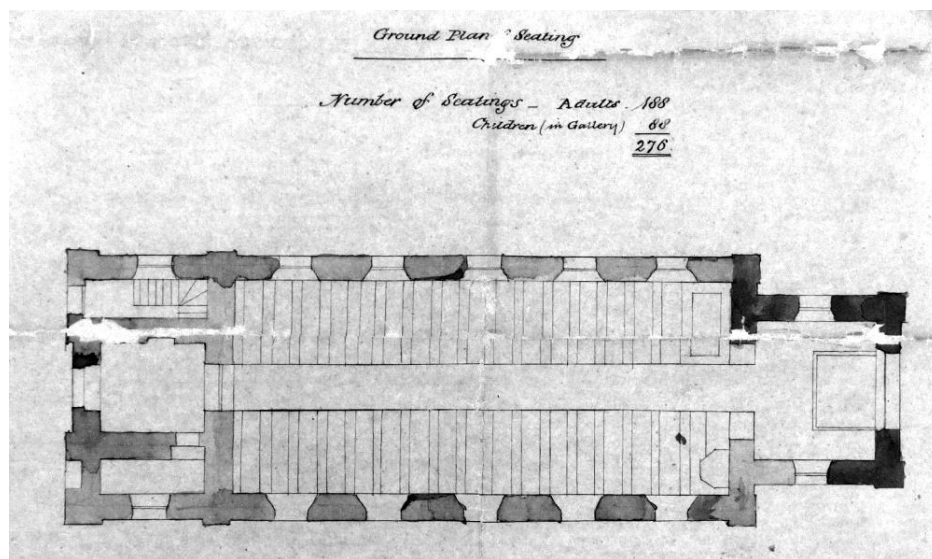


Fig 2. Seating plan and ground floor layout of the Red Church
(Shropshire Archives⁽⁷⁾)

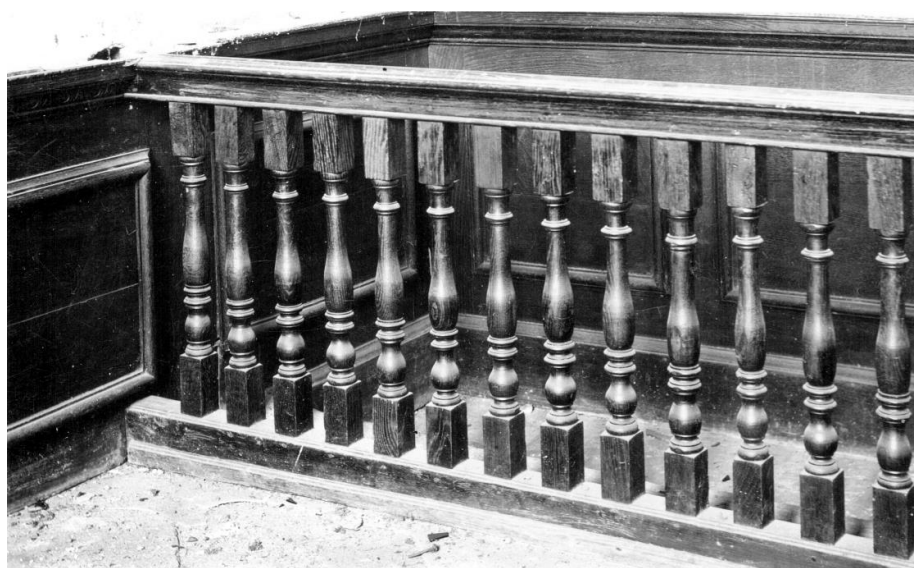


Fig 3. Section of the 20-foot-long oak communion rail in the Red Church
(Ken Molineux Collection⁽⁸⁾)



Fig 4. Gallery at the east end of the Red Church
(Ken Molineux Collection ⁽⁸⁾)

Most of the internal woodwork was oak, including the pulpit, communion table and rail (Fig 3), pews, panelled gallery (Fig 4) and stairs. ⁽⁶⁾ It was clearly a spectacular Church, inside and out.

The most popular story about the Red Church is that the builders, presumably at the wish of the Church authorities, started to build it on a north-south axis in keeping with an alleged tradition of facing the Mother Church in Broseley. ⁽³⁾ However, Diocesan officials today ⁽⁹⁾ indicate that no such rule or tradition existed.

Mrs Brown, who had died in 1761 ⁽¹⁰⁾ had wanted it built with an east-west alignment. It is said that each night her ghost destroyed the builders' work because it was not as she favoured. William Reace Evans ⁽¹¹⁾ summarises this in detail, including a meeting of her apparition with a member of the ministry of the Church after which it was agreed that the orientation would be to Mary's wishes.

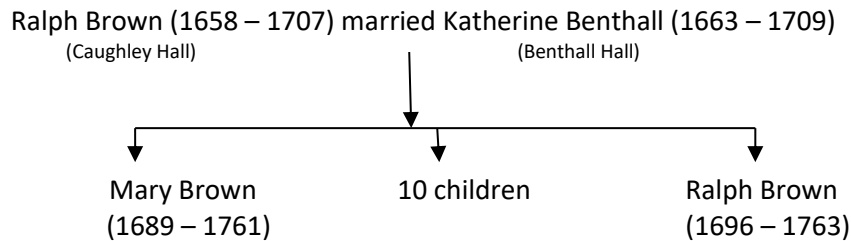
Various sources have suggested less exotic explanations than ghostly interventions for the building problems. One is that collapse of foundations was due to their proximity to old mines. ⁽¹²⁾ Mining damage could be imagined as affecting a heavy structure at a late stage in construction, but is more difficult to accept for ruining a day's work at an early stage of building.

Other stories compound the eerie nature of the site. One is of the boatman who disbelieved the ghost story and visited the site with his young son one evening. He was apparently found the next morning two miles away in Caughley with two broken legs, stating that he had been "*carried there by the wind.*" His son was found unharmed next day at the Church, giving credibility that they had reached it the previous evening. ⁽¹¹⁾ There are further records of sightings of a 'Lady in White' and of a young girl wearing a bonnet and carrying a lantern. ^(13,14) In 1943, there was a further sighting by a gentleman too frightened to describe the detail. ⁽¹³⁾ When the Church was demolished some 200 years later, it is said that dust from the building apparently drifted off in the direction opposite the wind. ⁽¹⁵⁾

There are several versions of the genealogy of the main characters behind building the Red Church all of which involve the complex relationships between important landowners and estates. ^(10,16-19) Key people are Mary Brown, her sister-in-law Anne and brother-in-law Francis Turner Blithe.

Mary Brown

Mary Brown was one of 10 children of Ralph Brown of Caughley (1658-1707) and Elizabeth Benthall (1663-1709) of Benthall Hall.⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁸⁾ By 1747, both parents and eight of the children had passed away, leaving Mary (1689-1761) and her younger brother Ralph (1696-1763).



The history of the Red Church really starts in Stone, Staffordshire, where the Crompton family were substantial landowners with Thomas Crompton being High Sheriff in 1707. They also owned lands in Shropshire and the latter became known as Broseley Hall Estate. In her Will, the last surviving member of that family, the spinster Elizabeth Crompton, bequeathed the estate in 1747 to Mary.⁽¹⁸⁾ No obvious relationship has been found between the two families which would have resulted usually in Ralph being the heir. The impressive memorial, Fig 5, to Elizabeth in All Saints' Church clearly reinforces that as her close friend and adopted heir,⁽³⁾ Mary "*caused that monument to be erected in honour to that sincere and inviolate friendship so long cherished between them.*"



Fig 5. Memorial to Elizabeth Crompton, All Saints' Church, Broseley

Two relatively small parts of the estate became important in the story of the Red Church. One was Woodhouse Farm, home of Mary Brown. The other was a small area of land separate from the main estate, Fig 6 and Fig 7, known as Astley Fields, which became the site of the Red Church.⁽¹⁹⁾



Fig 6. Map of Broseley Hall Estate ca 1728 with later annotations.⁽¹⁹⁾
(Some of the land originally owned by the Crumpton family is shown shaded)

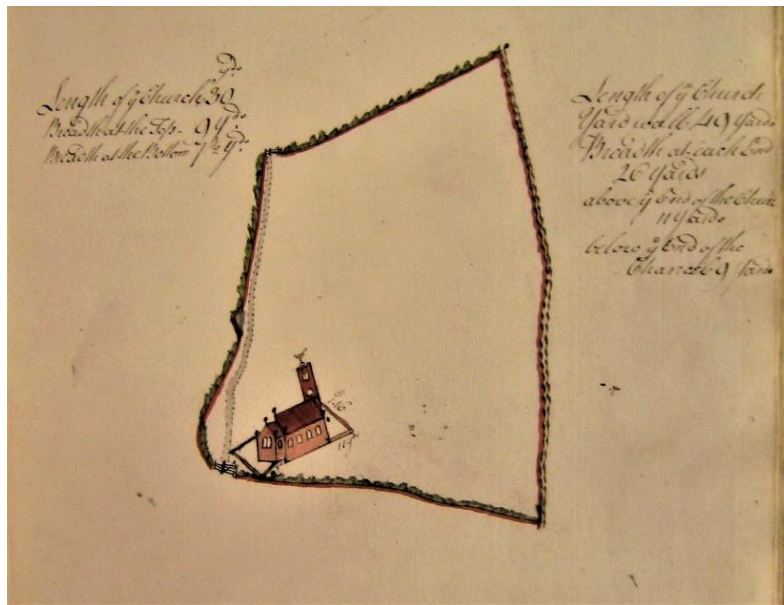


Fig 7. Earliest recording of the Red Church
 (Shropshire Archives ⁽²⁰⁾)

The Brown family appear to have been generous landowners showing care for the welfare of the less fortunate population who had poor access to a church and Mary chose these fields as the site of a church for the community. The main St Leonard's Church held just 108 worshippers and had become very overcrowded as a result of the increase in population at those times of industrial prosperity. ⁽⁴⁾ Several documents in the Bishop's Registers ^(1,21-24) make it clear that "*Mrs Brown, late of Broseley aforesaid spinster deceased did in her lifetime at her own cost and charges erect a new church...in the vill of Jackfield in a remote part of Broseley...for the better accommodation of the inhabitants of that extensive and populous parish....the present church of Broseley being not large enough for that purpose.*" She did "*decently provide and furnish the same with a communion table, baptismal font, pulpit, pews and all other things necessary for the Worship of God in the most proper and becoming manner.*"

Unfortunately, Mary never saw the result of her vision as she died unmarried, and was buried on 2 June 1761 in St Bartholomew's Church, Benthall.⁽¹⁰⁾ Presumably the estate passed to her brother Ralph but he died on May 9 1763 and the estate passed to his wife, Anne.⁽¹⁶⁾

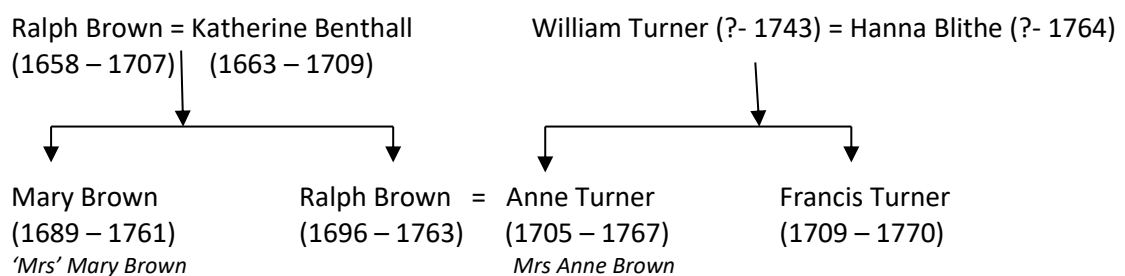
Despite the mysterious confusion in titles, there is little doubt that the "*Mrs Mary Brown*" and the "*Mary Brown, spinster*" daughter of Ralph and Katherine are the same person. It seems accepted that the term 'Mrs' as an abbreviation of 'Mistress of the house' was used in formal situations for unmarried women;⁽²⁵⁾ the unmarried Elizabeth Crompton is also shown as 'Mrs' on her memorial.

It is strange that neither Mary's or Ralph's Will can be traced in any on-line archives, yet there are Wills available for all other persons involved in the early story of the Red Church.

Moreover, no records exist in Diocesan archives of the original commitment by Mary to build a church.

Anne Brown

Anne was the daughter of William Turner and Hanna Blithe from Welbatch Hall, St Chad's Parish Shrewsbury.⁽²⁶⁾ She married Ralph Brown in 1734 and they were without children. Welbatch Hall is not shown on any maps today, but Welbatch Farm is a Grade II listed building, south west of Shrewsbury.



Ralph Brown died on 9 May 1763 and Anne survived him until 19 March 1767. Both are buried in St Bartholomew's Church, Benthall. On her death, the estates and obligations for the Church were inherited by her brother, **Francis Turner. ⁽²⁷⁾

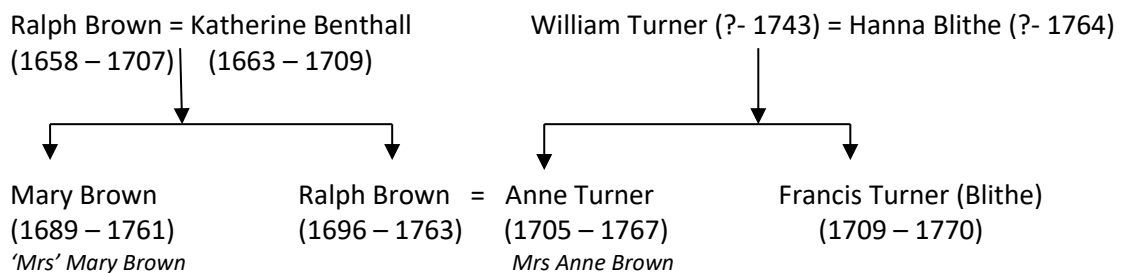
.....
 **An alternative published version of the genealogy suggests that Ralph (1696 - 1763) inherited the estate from his brother John (1690 - 1746) who inherited it from his sister Elizabeth (1686 – 1738). Dying childless in 1763, Ralph left the estate to his wife, Anne. ^(3, 17) hence to her brother Francis Turner Blithe on her death. However, the direct bequest to Mary Brown in the Will of Elizabeth Crompton is preferred as it appears unambiguous.

Two documents in the Diocesan Archives ^(21, 22) dated 1766 are specifically entitled “*A new church in Jackfield built at the sole cost of Mrs Mary Brown.*” With those titles, it was hoped that they would contain substantial details of the bequest, design and architectural features of the church, but they do not. They deal with the endowment of £22.10.0 a year by Anne to fund the Minister or Curate of the new Church in agreement with the patron of the Church, George Forester. The money was to be taken from the estate Anne had inherited from Mary at Woodhouse Farm.

One feature in Anne’s endowment makes it appear onerous rather than generous. ⁽²¹⁾ Payments from the estate were to be made on quarter days and if “*unpaid for fourteen days... the patron of the Church, George Forester..... and Francis Turner (Blithe) and their heirs..... upon any part thereof to enter and load, drive, carry away, impound and dispose of..... until they shall be fully paid.*”

Francis Turner
also known as
Francis Turner Blithe

Francis, born in Shrewsbury and Anne were the two children of William Turner and Hanna Blithe. ⁽²⁶⁾



Following his inheritance from Anne, Francis appears to have tackled his obligations towards the Church with enthusiasm. It seems clear that he played a significant part supporting his sister in overseeing the building of the Church between 1763 and 1767, after the death of her husband. He became owner of the land adjacent to the church which he donated as a graveyard and £500, ^(22,23) presumably to prepare and enclose it. At the Consecration in August 1767, he became patron replacing George Forester. ⁽¹⁾

Francis was obviously a wealthy man in his own right, in close contact with influential large landowners with among other interests, a passion for hunting ⁽¹⁸⁾ for which he maintained a notable pack of dogs. He had been High Sheriff of Shropshire in 1755. ⁽²⁸⁾ In 1743 he had inherited Alton Hall and associated estates in Allesley, Warwickshire and ‘as directed’ in his Uncle’s will, he adopted that family name as his surname. ⁽²⁹⁾ The Blithe (or Blythe) family were obviously wealthy and had a significant presence in that part of Warwickshire - there is even a river Blythe and a Blythe Valley in that area, possibly named after the family - and presumably they wished that name to continue.

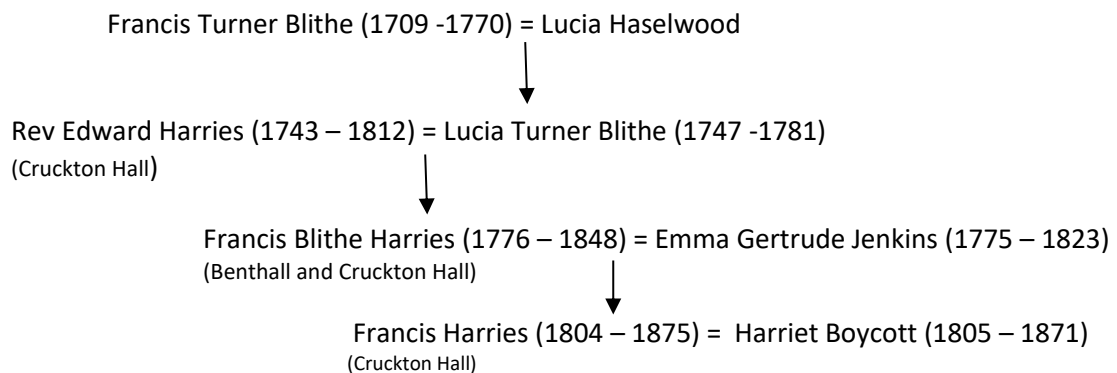
Francis Turner Blithe married three times: ⁽³⁰⁾

His first wife was Lucia Haselwood, grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Haselwood from Pershore. Their marriage was in Gloucester on 25 November 1746. Their only child, Lucia, was born in 1747.

His second marriage to a Martha Forester was at St Alkmund’s Church in Shrewsbury on 19 February 1759. Martha was one of the daughters of William Forester of Dothill. ⁽³¹⁾

He then married Jane Elizabeth Crowley, the daughter of a wine merchant in Bath on 30 July 1767 in Broseley.⁽³²⁾ However, this marriage was also short-lived as he died three years later in 1770.⁽³³⁾ He is buried in Shrewsbury. Except for a gift and an annuity to his nurse, he left the whole of his estate to Elizabeth, who remarried William Yelverton Davenport (1750-1832) and the couple shared the patronage of the Church until her death in 1811.⁽³⁴⁾

Unusually, Broseley Hall Estate did not pass to the Davenport estates. It was inherited by Lucia,^{***} Francis Turner Blithe's only daughter from his first marriage. She had had a short first marriage in 1767 to a cousin, Francis Turner (1741-1770) but in 1771 remarried Rev Edward Harries from Cruckton Hall, an estate adjacent to the Blithe estate at Welbatch.⁽³⁵⁾ It then passed to the Harries family on Lucia's death in 1781.⁽³⁷⁾



This ancestral line provides a link between the Red Church and the new St Mary's Church in Jackfield which was built in 1863. Francis Turner Blithe had been instrumental in donating ground for the Churchyard and in the consecration of the Red Church; Francis Harries and his wife Harriet donated the ground on which the new St Mary's was built.⁽³⁸⁾

When was the Red Church built?

Among the sources of information on the Red Church can be found several alternatives for the date of construction, including 1755⁽³⁹⁾, 1759^(6,2,40) or 1766.^(6,13)

Two of the original documents in the archives referred to earlier^(21, 22) are dated 16 September and 26 October 1766. Both state that the church is "*lately erected*" and "*intended to be consecrated*" by the Bishop of Hereford. It is unlikely that such wording would be used had the church been completed earlier than 1766. Further records show it unfinished on 27 September 1766 when a Thomas Bryan began the foundations of the Churchyard wall.⁽⁴¹⁾

Consecration of the "*new Church or Chapel of Jackfield in a remote part of the parish of Broseley*" was carried out by the Bishop of Hereford on 28 August 1767 "*arraigned in his Episcopal robes*" at which time "*he found the church with ornaments and all things requisite and necessary for divine worship.*" On the same date, John Holme⁽⁴²⁾ became the first person "*licensed to the perpetual curacy of St Mary's, to which position he was nominated by the new Patron, Francis Turner Blithe.*"

The Church was not built in 1755 or 1759 but it is possible that some construction had taken place before Mary Brown's death in 1761, perhaps explaining some records suggesting an earlier date. It

.....
^{***}An alternative genealogy⁽³⁴⁾ is that the estate passed directly to the son of Lucia and the Rev Edward Harries. What is clear is that by either route the Harries family became owners of the estate and patrons of the Church.

would be an unreasonable long time for a church started in 1755 or 1759 to be consecrated as late as 1767. As the date of building a church is often recorded as the date at which it was open for services after consecration, 1767 would be correct.⁽¹⁾ It served the local community for nearly 100 years before damage from undermining left it beyond repair and it was used only intermittently between 1863 until the 1920s. It was demolished in 1961.

There is no record of the architect of the Church but it is attributed to Thomas Farnolls Pritchard,⁽¹³⁾ designer of the Iron Bridge. At that time his portfolio included several churches and interiors of estate homes, including Benthall Hall and Broseley Hall. He was a close friend and associate of Francis Turner Blithe.⁽¹⁶⁾

Why was the Red Church built?

As a member of the generous Brown family, Mary Brown provided the funds to build the Red Church for the population of Jackfield to reduce overcrowding at the “*Mother Church*” at that time, St Leonard’s Church. The relationship between the Churches was clear in original documents stating that “*all inhabitants.....as a mark of subordination of that Chapel shall every year at the Feast of Easter or Pentecost repair to the said Mother Church to hear Divine Service...*” It must have seemed strange that the subordinate church was a much more impressive building capable of holding more than twice as many persons than the “*Mother Church.*”

For some churches, the term “*Chapel-of-Ease*” is used in their original consecration and while this was not the case for the Red Church, the Diocese⁽⁹⁾ suggests that to all intents and purposes, building a chapel to avoid overcrowding in a particular parish would mean that it would be considered as a “*Chapel-of-Ease.*”

It is unfortunate that two most important pieces of information have not been found. Bishops' papers normally record all major details associated with the Diocese. Building a new Church certainly meets that criterion, yet they contain no record of Mary's initial bequest. Furthermore, no record of a Will has been found for her. All the statements of her commitment are recorded in documents created in 1766 some years after her death.⁽²¹⁻²⁴⁾ The onerous terms imposed by her executors in funding the Ministry of the Red Church seem inconsistent with the generous bequest that she appears to have made.

Mary Brown’s untimely death passed responsibility for building the church to Anne Brown (nee Turner). While the Church was being built, it would be totally logical that Francis Turner Blithe supported - or even led - his sister to become the person controlling the project, even before he inherited the estate from her, hence the records that he built the Church.^(3,5,12) It has been suggested that it was a memorial church built for him or one of his female relatives.^(3,12) The basis for this seems to be a memorial plaque which was placed on the left of the chancel, Fig 8, featuring a female figure holding an urn under which was written “*Sacred to the memory of Francis Turner Blithe of Brook Hall who departed this life in 22 September 1770 aged 61 years.*” It was presumably donated to his memory by his third wife or daughter. There is no formal record of the church being a memorial church to him; any such dedication would normally be defined before its consecration. The suggested memorial to a female relative⁽¹²⁾ also has no basis in the archives.

The term “*Chapel of Ease*” has also been used to describe the location of the Church being more convenient for residents in Jackfield.^(5,12) This has been questioned because the church was built on a high point in the land, on the fringe of Jackfield “*in a remote part of Broseley*” away from roads and only accessed by a track? Clearly the site had the advantage of being away from much of the noise and pollution of Jackfield, but closer to homes would have been so much more convenient.

Worshippers still had to climb up a significant hill, over a mile from many houses. Normally any church built on a ridge in view of the local population and with a conventional east-west location would not attract undue comment. However, its location was in direct line of sight from Woodlands Farm, part of Broseley Hall Estate. Its orientation east-west has been considered a deliberate design feature, enabling the windows to catch the sun's rays in the early morning and at sunset at midsummer.^(11,43)

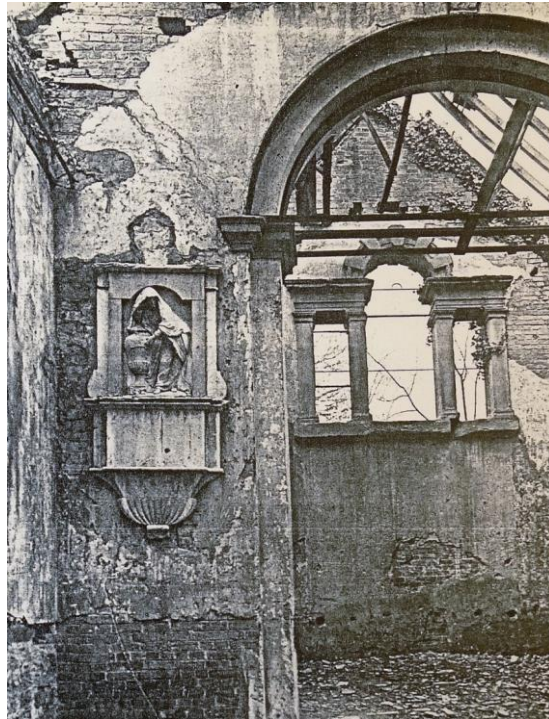


Fig 8. Memorial to Francis Turner Blithe in Red Church
(Photographed circa 1960)

Factors such as these have led to speculation that the new church was not built just to reduce overcrowding. One view expressed⁽⁴⁴⁾ is that *“the church reflected the arrogance of the Middle Ages.”* The self-importance of the Turner-Blithe family was well demonstrated by the Francis' uncle insisting that his nephew and heir had to perpetuate the family name as a condition of his inheritance. It is not unique for such a 'vanity church' to be built to glorify the image and importance of a family and would have been an attractive option for Francis as he had no male heir to further promote the Blithe name.

There is also something significant that the Red Church lacks. Everything suggests Mary Brown's bequest funded the Church. Apart from the haunting stories, nowhere in any history is there any mention of or memorials to Mary Brown. Surely, it would be quite appropriate for her bequest to have been acknowledged? The only mention of the Brown family name anywhere is on the normally-hidden bell and that reflects its donation by Mary's sister-in-law, Anne. The lack of any acknowledgement to Mary Brown is in accord with another family seeking more recognition.

The position, size and stature of the Red Church compared with the smaller St Leonard's Church also raises a question whether it may have been different from the overflow church Mary Brown had planned. Certainly, some of the features in the haunting story could be explained by a change in the design of the Church, which would explain destruction of earlier building and a realignment of the Church's orientation. The Turner Blithe families were wealthy and powerful and it is easy to imagine that they might have instructed or encouraged their employees to interfere with the building

process and ensure their wishes were carried out. Is it possible that prying eyes were kept at bay by inventing the ghost story and deterring visitors to the site with Francis's employees?

"The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones," wrote William Shakespeare. If "evil" is the impression given by the foregoing, that is unfair as the information is largely circumstantial and the conclusions mildly speculative. Without missing documents, we will never know the truth. The "interred good" done by Francis Turner Blithe must surely be emphasised because the Red Church was a magnificent "large ambitious church in red brick as a pleasing landmark and feature of the landscape."

Decay of the church

In 1862, the new ecclesiastical Parish of Jackfield was established ⁽⁴⁵⁾ with a boundary largely parallel to the River Severn except for a significant deviation to specifically include the Red Church and the graveyard, shown circled in Fig 9.

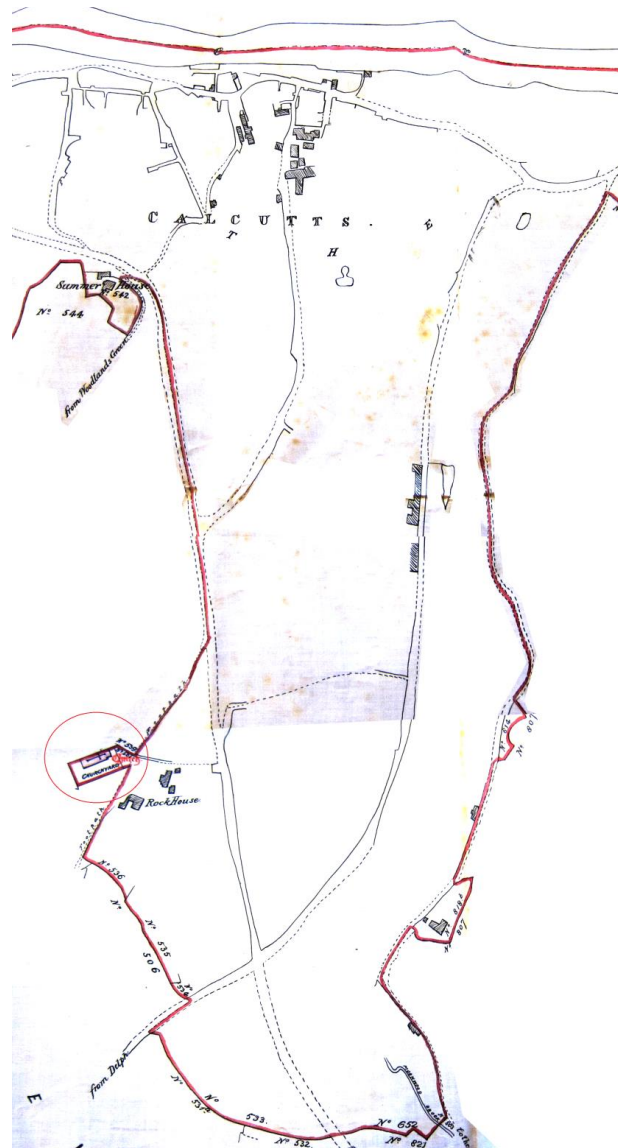


Fig 9. Extract from Jackfield Parish map, 1862
(Shropshire Archives ⁽⁴⁵⁾)

It is not difficult to image 'lively' debate and conversations between members of the existing Broseley Parish and those of the newly separated Parish of Jackfield. The larger All Saints' Church had replaced St Leonard's in Broseley in 1845. Surely Broseley Parish would have been pleased to get rid of the costly decaying Red Church. While it retained its own graveyard, surely Jackfield Parish with its new St Mary's Church under construction, could hardly have relished the encumbrance of the ruin of the old church.

Nothing but neglect could reasonably have been predicted from these conflicting views.

In the mid-1800s, the Red Church was classified as dangerous and threatened with permanent closure. The faithful congregation clearly objected to this closure, markedly demonstrated by an event⁽⁴⁶⁾ late in July 1863, when *"a very numerous meeting of the inhabitants of Jackfield protested against taking down the "Red Church" which had stood for 104 years, a feeling intensified by the removal of the bell and its quiet transference to the belfry of the Pritchard Memorial Church."* The persons present had the impression *"that the coal, ironstone and brick clay would eventually be got from under the church and graveyard and that this would most seriously desecrate the last resting place of their relations and friends."*

Their representations to the Bishop were met with the reply⁽⁴⁷⁾ that *"the removal was not in compliance with his wish and instructions given to restore the bell to its original position, much to the satisfaction of the population."*

Following the construction of the new St Mary's, there is no doubt that the views of those protesting parishioners were justified as the church and graveyard then suffered catastrophically from apparently intentional undermining some years later. A letter in 1874 from Francis Harries to the perpetrator, Mr Foster via his solicitor⁽⁴⁸⁾ states:

"I said I should not object to you getting certain mines near St Mary's church...having been told it could be done without causing damage to the church or churchyard....but that if any should arise you, on Mr Foster's behalf, would be responsible.....I understood that you got all that could be got safely and the work was stopped...Since that time, however, you have got a quantity of clay...which has seriously injured the church and the east end of the churchyard is beginning to give way....and will certainly cause great injury to the graves. No money can be equivalent to such damage and I can be no party to it."

This is echoed by Randall⁽³⁾ in 1879, *"here were laid the lifeless tenements of friends in the belief that no unhallowed greed of love of gain would disturb them."* *The church outside and in....leads to the impression that an earthquake had been at work."*

As early as 1863, a Church Committee had considered applying for a faculty to demolish the Church, but this was rejected.⁽⁶⁾ A further suggestion was that a Mortuary chapel should be erected capable of housing some 70 persons^(3,6) but as Mr Foster agreed to pay compensation it seems that this was abandoned in favour of repairs to the Church in which the floor was levelled, foundations strengthened and walls strapped with mining chain. Randall records that it was reopened on 8 May 1881 by Rev E Lloyd Edwards, the then Rector of the new St Mary's (1878-1889) who had plans to hold a service there once a month during summer and autumn. While no record of these events is obvious in the Bishop's Registers, the strapping from mining chains is clearly shown, Fig 10, in later photographs.

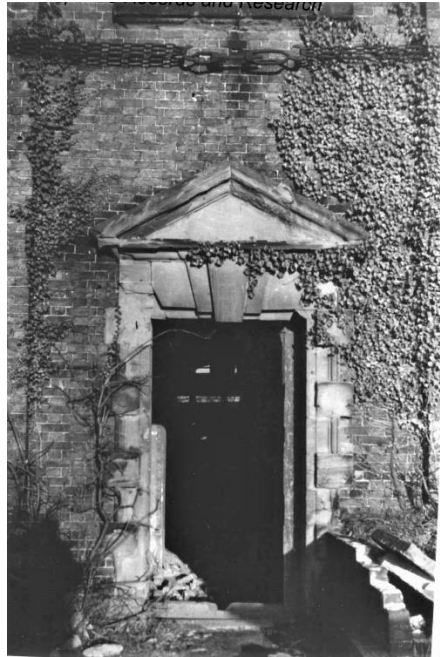


Fig 10 West Entrance to Church showing strapping

Clearly the Church had very limited further use and there is conflicting information on when it finally ceased to function. It hosted Sunday School and there are suggestions that these continued into the 1930s. Victorian County History states that they ceased in the 1920s.⁽⁴⁹⁾ William Reace Evans comments that he was the last person to ring the church bell in 1917.⁽¹¹⁾ The archives include details of an agreement to sell effects from the church in 1919.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Fig 11 shows what appears to be a suitably grand service at the Church, possible on the date of the last event there.



Fig 11. Choristers leading a parade including the Jackfield band possibly for the final service at the Red Church, date not known.

(Courtesy of John Oakes)

By April 1951, the Rector of the new St Mary's Jackfield, the Rev R Preston Thomas (1948-1953) wrote to the Diocesan Registrar "*troubled by the fact that youths of the neighbourhood were constantly guilty of vandalism.*"⁽⁵¹⁾ He asked what steps were necessary to get the church demolished, commenting that the bricks could be useful for roadmaking. The Bishop's Advisory Committee was asked to visit the site to ensure that nothing of historical value was lost. This largely consisted of a survey in June by Dr Watkins,⁽⁵²⁾ who found cows straying into the Church and Churchyard, Fig 12.



Fig 12. Interior of Red Church
(circa 1960)

Dr Watkins recommended that:

- Demolition was long overdue, however before that was carried out, high quality photographs of the Church should be obtained and lodged with a responsible authority as a memorial of the Church
- For common decency, the faculty for demolition should be granted on condition that the Churchyard wall be made good all round.
- A record should be made of all inscriptions on the 90 or so memorial stones that remained

The reaction from the Rector was a strong statement that the Advisory Committee had made an impossible condition.⁽⁵³⁾ Demolition would be held in abeyance as the likely cost of £500 to repair the wall could not be found by St Mary's Church. The Rev Thomas went on to say that "*it is a geographic oddity that the old church should be in my parish at all. This old church appears to have been built as a district church to serve Broseley Wood and Jackfield but it was, of course, never the parish church of Jackfield.*" The Rector's view prevailed and demolition was postponed in October 1951.

It was not until February 1960 that the subject was raised again when the Bishop of Hereford wrote to the new rector the Rev David F P Dawe (1953-1961), concerned with safety of the site. In fact, the letter⁽⁵⁴⁾ had the tone of an instruction that:

- Estimates should be obtained for protecting the Churchyard from trespassers by a strong steel fence
- Any dangerous parts of the fabric should be removed

- The Church Council should consider taking out appropriate third-party insurance
- All should be done before Spring 1960

Then it was the turn of Rev Dawe to issue a strong reaction, again reflecting the geography of the Parish of Jackfield.⁽⁵⁵⁾ He stated that *"It happens to be within the boundaries of my Parish but has no connection with the present day Jackfield church apart from the fact that a few offerings including the pulpit were given to the building to finish the church. When I was initiated in the Parish, there was no mention of any obligation to the old church. My own view is that someone has got to see the building made safe and insured and that someone is myself; the cost of this is a wider affair. Jackfield had no resources to carry out his Lordship's instructions."* He suggested a return to considering demolition as an alternative.

The passion of this outburst was received sympathetically and in August 1960 approval was given for a petition leading to a faculty with conditions⁽⁵⁶⁾ that:

- Opinion be sought on the value of monuments in the Church
- Contact should be made with the Blithe family to advise what they would like done with the monument to Francis Turner Blithe
- Before demolition, an inventory should be made of inscriptions on memorials
- Detailed photographs should be made as a memorial of the Church
- Demolition should be by competent contractors

Dawe claimed that he had not been able to find any living relatives of the Blithe family.⁽⁵⁷⁾ This is not surprising as their name-line and inheritance came to an end and had passed from the Blithe family to the Harries family in 1811, but the cursory look at names through the Shrewsbury telephone directory recorded in his letter seems inadequate. As early as March, he had written⁽⁵⁸⁾ that *"I certainly don't want it (the Blithe memorial) in my church in Jackfield as this used to be attached to Broseley."* He suggested that *"a corner might be found where it could be put out of sight."* The problem went away in September 1960 with a decision of the Advisory Council that the Blithe memorial was not worth preserving, a decision that would probably not be made today.⁽⁵⁹⁾

On 6 October 1960 the faculty to demolish the church was granted.⁽⁶⁰⁾ However, a supplementary faculty was issued on 7 February 1961⁽⁶¹⁾ as the original was inadequate for the protection, removal and replacement of gravestones.

The Churchyard

On 27 August 1767,⁽²³⁾ Francis Turner Blithe, owner of the ground on which the chapel stood, formally presented *"surrounding land for a cemetery burial ground containing in length from east to west fifty yards or thereabouts in breadth at the east end twenty-three yards one foot and four inches and at the west end twenty five yards one foot six inches."* The following day,⁽¹⁾ this was consecrated at the same time as the Chapel by the Bishop of Hereford *"finding the church and chapelyard with the ornaments and all things necessary for the performance of divine worship...and the chapelyard properly made, fenced and enclosed."* Blithe and his heirs were required *"at their own proper costs and charges maintain and repair the brick wall and environs of the chapelyard as need shall require."*

Prior to 1863, all records of life events at the main Church in Broseley, the old St Mary's Church and St Leonard's Church in Linley are together in one register.⁽⁶²⁾ Many are annotated as "at St Mary's Church" or "St M" by the officiating minister, but it is not known how accurately this was done. After 1863, the new St Mary's Church had its own Parish Registers. Burials continued in the Red

Church graveyard, ceremonies initially being carried out by Rev Henry Lee who had been appointed the first vicar and later the rector at the new St Mary's, having also been the last curate at the Red Church.

On 27 January 1885,⁽⁶³⁾ the Churchyard was designated "closed." The ruling states: "*in Court at Osborn House, Isle of Wight, in the presence of The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty*" that "*burial should be discontinued, subject to exception..... in Jackfield Church....and Churchyard after 31 March 1885, except.....in such vaults and wholly walled graves as are now existing....on condition that every coffin buried therein be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork.*" Those conditions, virtually impossible to apply, are still in force today.

A searchable list of Baptisms and Burials specifically in the old Red Churchyard has now been compiled and this gives a minimum estimate of its use. The first of over 1250 burials so far identified was that of Francis Oaks on 5 April 1770; the last is believed to be that of Thomas Poole on 12 August 1884.

Over 500 baptisms have been noted. However, whether by accident or reason, the annotation "St M" is missing for many years and these records are less complete than the burial records, particularly after 1830. We do not know if this is an error by the officiating Minister or whether baptisms were carried out only at the Mother Church in Broseley. The first baptism was that of Susannah Bradley on 8 November 1767 and the last was of John George Cullis on 29 March 1863.

No records have been found of any weddings specifically performed at The Red Church, despite them being allowed as defined in the consecration.

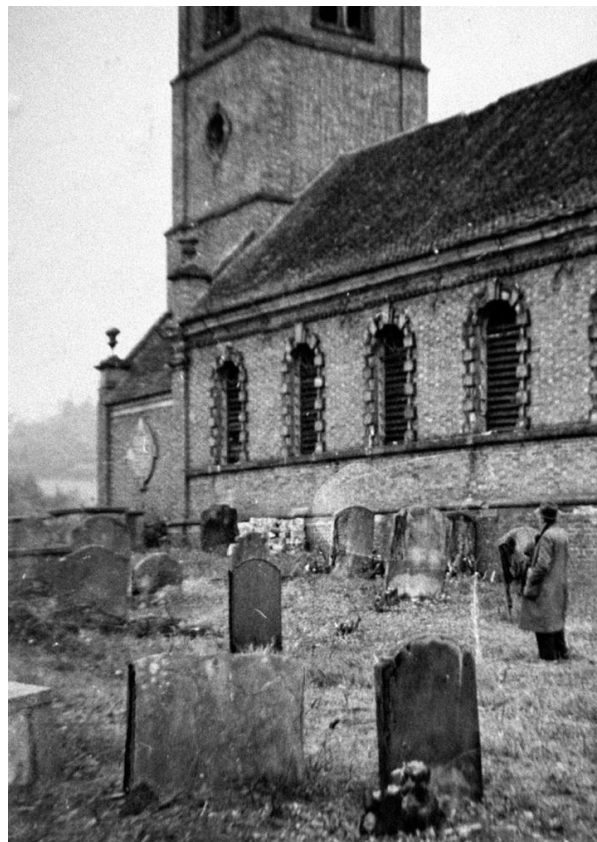


Fig 13. The old Red Church Churchyard in good condition, (*before 1950*)
Ken Molineux Collection⁽⁸⁾

Clearly, the Churchyard was in good condition before 1950, as suggested in Fig 13. On 6 October 1960 the faculty to demolish the church was granted and the Diocese made it clear that *“the contractor was not authorised to break the tombstones nor to remove them and level the site. Unless the contractor agreed in writing to a condition not to injure, break or destroy the existing headstones, tombs or memorials, a supplementary petition should be made for a faculty allowing levelling of the graves. In that case the next of kin of those buried there should be notified and their consent obtained. This would need to be advertised in the press and will require information on what is proposed with the headstones, such as placing them against the churchyard wall or laying them flat on the ground.”*

Rev'd Dawe continued to respond vigorously and replied ⁽⁶⁴⁾ *“that the churchyard was in a shocking state with many gravestones already broken and that he was of the opinion that as little as possible expense be given to the problem.”* However, on 7 November, a supplementary petition was made for the removal of unbroken gravestones and placing them flat on the ground prior to demolition of the Church.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Rev Dawe also stated⁽⁶⁶⁾ that he had heard *“that two or three burials had taken place in the previous 20 years but he could find no inscriptions regarding them and had become aware that there could be trouble should those graves be damaged.”*

The importance of trying to get in touch with next of kin including by advertising, was reiterated in further correspondence from the Diocese.⁽⁶⁷⁾ An advertisement was placed in the Wellington Journal, Fig 14, for the required three weeks⁽⁶⁸⁾ stating that *“memorial stones that remain undamaged in the Churchyard are removed after inscriptions are taken and placed flat on the ground. Any objections should be made to the Rector.”* In later correspondence, the Diocesan Registrar confirmed that no objections had been received.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Similar information was posted on the St Mary's Church door⁽⁷⁰⁾ with a presumably similar result.



Fig 14. Advertisement in the Wellington Journal, December 1960
(Diocese of Hereford Archives)

By the end of February 1961, a supplementary faculty was issued for the removal of gravestones preparatory to the demolition of the church, *“without prejudice to any claim by anyone interested to have any gravestone replaced when the work of demolishing the church had been completed.”* The required permission ⁽⁶¹⁾ was given and demolition of the church commenced on 21 August that year. Rev Dawe also left Jackfield in 1961; the reason is not known.

Clearly something went badly wrong. As far as can be established, the major consequence of demolition was that instructions on the care of gravestones, memorial and tombs were totally ignored. The graveyard wall was never repaired. No memorial inscriptions were recorded.

Today, demolition debris covers a large part of the site and it has since been seriously neglected, Figs 15 and 16.



Fig 15. Overgrown conditions typical of the Red Church graveyard, 2019



Fig 16. Cast iron memorials to members of the Hinsley family.

The site was partially cleared in 1975⁽⁶⁾ and 1983 and in the latter work, 19 mostly broken memorials were recorded.⁽⁷¹⁾ A more detailed survey in 1996 recorded 40 graves with 28 headstones, two of which are in cast iron.⁽⁷²⁾ In contrast, the 1951 survey by Watkins Pritchard, noted over 90 memorial

stones “*in good order*” but not recorded in detail, other than stating there was one inscription as late as 1899.⁽⁵²⁾ Attempts to confirm this have not been successful. The earliest readable inscription is to Mary Simmonds who died on 24 August 1770, the latest is to Ann Beard who died on 13 November 1871.

When Rev Henry Lee changed his role in 1863 from being the last curate of the old Red Church to become the first at the new St Mary’s Church, he must have seen the advantage that Jackfield then had its own independent burial ground. However, the general tone of the correspondence from the rectors in the 1950s-1960s suggests that they had little regard for the old Red Church. Rev Dawe claimed that he had not been able to find any living relatives of The Blithe family. Nor did he seem to have little enthusiasm for exploring contact with next of kin of those buried in the graveyard as he advised the Diocese that this was going to be a difficult operation as he did not know who they were and many were not resident in the Parish. Broseley Parish burial records would have shown that many of those interred in the old Church had descendants with the same surname living in Broseley and Jackfield. The small advertisement in a local newspaper probably not as widely read as some and information posted on the church door represents a trivial attempt at contacting relatives. It is no surprise that objections were not received.

It seems unbelievable that destruction of the Church was allowed without adequate care to the Churchyard.

When a churchyard is “closed” responsibility for its maintenance normally reverts to the local authority. Such responsibility was accepted by Bridgnorth Council on 16 September 1998.⁽⁷³⁾ This carried over to Shropshire Council after declaration as a Unitary Authority. Their definition of maintenance appears to be restricted to trees being inspected periodically to ensure that they do not pose any Health & Safety hazard. It is far from being a dignified and respectful site - what a contrast to the main cemetery in Broseley which must be one of the best kept burial grounds in the country.

The likelihood of finding further undamaged memorials is low following the demolition process. At least two memorials are important as they are in cast iron and a further one is suggested in Fig 13. Clearance of the site in the known position of the church might establish whether there is also any evidence of subsurface foundations with a north-south orientation that might give substance to the stories associated with changing the initial orientation of the Church.

The Churchyard or Chapelyard was first abused by greed in the form of undermining. In 1879 it was “*in a neglected and ruinous state.*” In 1951, it was nearly rescued as a “*Sense of Decency*” was expressed about the way it should be treated. However, the lack of funds and responsibility felt for the site by Rectors of Jackfield led to neglect in its demolition which is as much a disaster as the undermining. It is difficult not to conclude other than there were shortcomings by both ecclesiastic and civil authorities? How has the Church and Diocese allowed the still-consecrated site to be so abused? How have the values of dignity and respect been lost? It is amazing that there has been no major outcry by the descendants of those buried at the Red Church and by citizens of a town that is so sensitive to its history. Perhaps some of the answers lie in the Church being as originally defined “*in a remote part of Broseley*” and barely being ‘alive’ in living memory.

Importance of the Red Church to the Heritage of Broseley

The story of the Red Church reflects local history through the 100 years that it served the community. We have a story of a wealthy lady who builds a church at her own expense, whose gift to the community reflects the social structure of the 18th century, followed by many mysteries. In the records can be found celebrations of baptisms, tragedies from deaths, disease and accidents,

stories of persons from all walks of life and events in the history of the district when Broseley and Jackfield were at the peak of their industrial prosperity. With its destruction⁽³⁾ *“down came alabaster, marble and other memorials intended to record to generations yet to come, the virtuous acts and deeds of man and women of olden time.”*

Parish records⁽⁶²⁾ from 1767-1884 reveal that at least 1268 persons are buried in the small graveyard and the real total is probably substantially greater. It is no surprise that some 20% of children died before the age of five, but perhaps the longevity of adults may be unexpected, with over 30% surviving beyond the age of 60 years, the eldest burial record being for a 96-year-old man.

Understandably, many family names are repeated in the baptism and burial records. While more detailed examination of these is necessary, along with the most frequently recorded name of Lloyd, are many members of the Beard, Burroughs and Cullis, families, known to have been heavily involved in barge building, ownership and trading on the river. The name Hartshorne is frequent, famed in many aspects of Broseley including coal mining. As many occupations were handed down from father to son, information given in the 1851 census⁽⁷⁴⁾ indicates the earlier livelihoods of some families. The iron memorials, Fig 16, carrying the Hinsley family suggest they had some contact with ironmaking; indeed, later members had occupations as blacksmiths. The Amphlett family has a significant number of early recorded life events; some were watermen in 1851 but a member of that family was also a Curate in Broseley around 1820.

The Calcutts Ironworks - Alexander Brodie II and Thomas Cochrane

Alexander Brodie I, the renowned iron master at the Calcutts Iron Works was famous for inventing and manufacturing ‘Brodie stoves’ widely fitted to ships in the Royal Navy. His cannon also contributed to arming the fleet and two, known to be on board at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 are present today on HMS Victory in Portsmouth harbour.

After his death in 1811, the ironworks was run by his nephew, Alexander Brodie II who lived at Rock House adjacent to the Red Church until his death in 1830. He is buried in the Red Church graveyard. A memorial to him from the Red Church, weather-beaten by exposure in the ruin, is now in the new St Mary’s Church, Jackfield, unfortunately partly hidden behind the organ.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Among the eminent persons also buried in the graveyard is Thomas Cochrane. He came to Broseley from Scotland in around 1790 to be Works Manager for Alexander Brodie I. Thomas would have been responsible for manufacturing the various engineering components that made the ironworks famous. He also married Brodie’s niece Lilius. He is buried in the family vault at the Red Church alongside his wife and three of their children.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The Phillips Memorial

One splendid memorial from the old church, protected but currently hidden in the vestry at the new St Mary’s Church, Fig 17, contains the rather severe words:

“This Marble is intended to perpetuate the Memory of THOMAS CARTER PHILLIPS Esq. who departed this life (Deservedly lamented) January 9th 1783 aged 29 years as Honest as the nature of Man first made ere fraud and vice were fashions ALSO of MARGARET his virtuous and affectionate relict (who agreeable to the Divine Will) died February 28th aged 26 years Reader Forget not to observe how transient their days And such may be thine own Go thy way and prepare accordingly.”

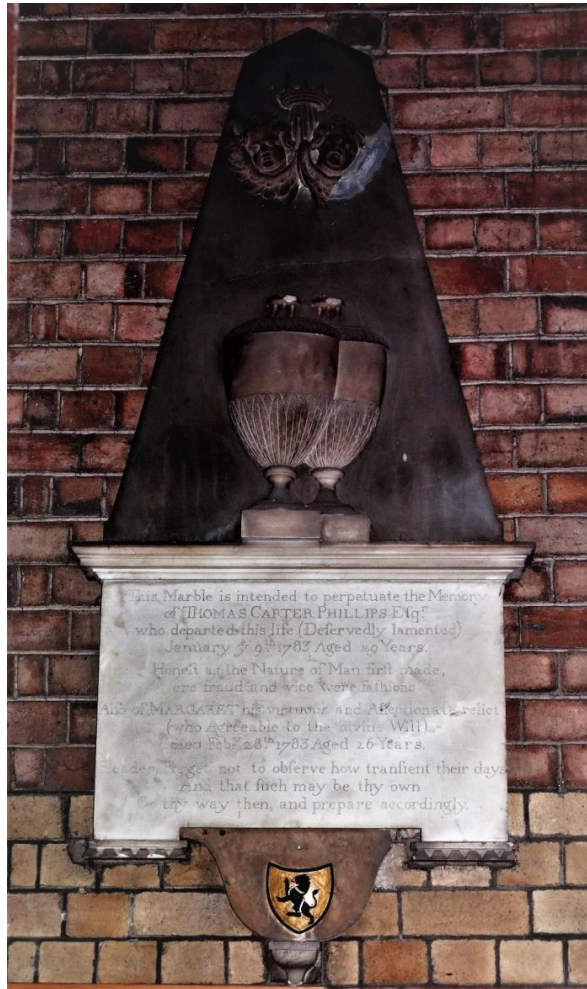


Fig 17. Memorial to Thomas Carter Phillips and his wife Margaret, St Mary's Church, Jackfield

A memorial as impressive as this must have had wealthy connections. Indeed, his Will shows that he owned iron and coal mining interests amounting to one-third of the Manor of Wrockwardine. There is an amazingly complex history to this estate which is believed to go back to succeeding Roman Wroxeter as an administrative centre. Thomas Carter, born in Shifnal in 1753, inherited it from his father John Revell Phillips at the age of 14 in 1767.⁽⁷⁷⁾

As a footnote to this memorial, the Rev John Oakes found the crest at the bottom broken into pieces. He glued this together repainted and then refitted it.⁽⁶⁾

The Coalport Ferry Disaster

During one week in 1799 there was the abnormal number of 19 burials in Broseley and two of these, William and Elizabeth Beard are clearly identified as being at the Red Church.⁽⁶²⁾ This was the week after the Coalport Ferry disaster when 28 persons drowned on 23 October while returning home across the swollen River Severn after a day's work at the China works.⁽⁷⁸⁾

It is somewhat surprising that there is no remembrance of this appalling tragedy that affected many families of workers at the Coalport China Factory who lived in Broseley and Jackfield. In contrast, the Madeley Pit disaster of 1864 in which nine miners died is widely commemorated in that town.

Cholera

Today, cholera in England is virtually unknown, but it arrived in Broseley in 1832. It was the result of one of the earliest identified pandemics which started in Bengal in 1826 and spread to Persia, Afghanistan, Russia and Western Europe by 1830.^(6,79) The first cases in Great Britain were reported in Sunderland in September 1831 after the port authorities failed to implement a directive to quarantine all vessels arriving from the Baltic. The disease was previously unknown in England and surgeons thought it was transmitted by touch or from bad smells; there was no known cure.

Attempts were made to stop the disease by isolating the sick, burning the victims' beds and clothes, painting the walls and roofs of the houses with lime wash and covering drains and sewers, where these existed.⁽⁶⁾ A special carriage was built to collect victims and corpses, some of the sick being taken to Calcutts House which effectively became an isolation hospital, where some patients recovered. Following a request from the Broseley Board of Heath, a piece of land 40ft x 20ft adjacent to the Red Church graveyard, Fig 18, was given by the landowner, Francis Harries for burials due to cholera as it was not thought "right" to use the main cemetery. The first burial recorded specifically in the Cholera Field is dated August 18th 1832.⁽⁶²⁾ The outbreak in Jackfield was recorded in the London Morning Chronicle of 11th September 1832 stating that between 12th July and 8th September, 25 cases had been reported with 9 deaths.⁽⁸⁰⁾ By October 1832, the epidemic subsided but at least fifteen burials had taken place in the cholera burial ground. There was a further outbreak in 1834 with twenty-two more burials. The Parish Registers show the names of the 37 victims, with 1834 appearing to be more severe year.⁽⁶²⁾ It is likely that this is a significant underestimate of the

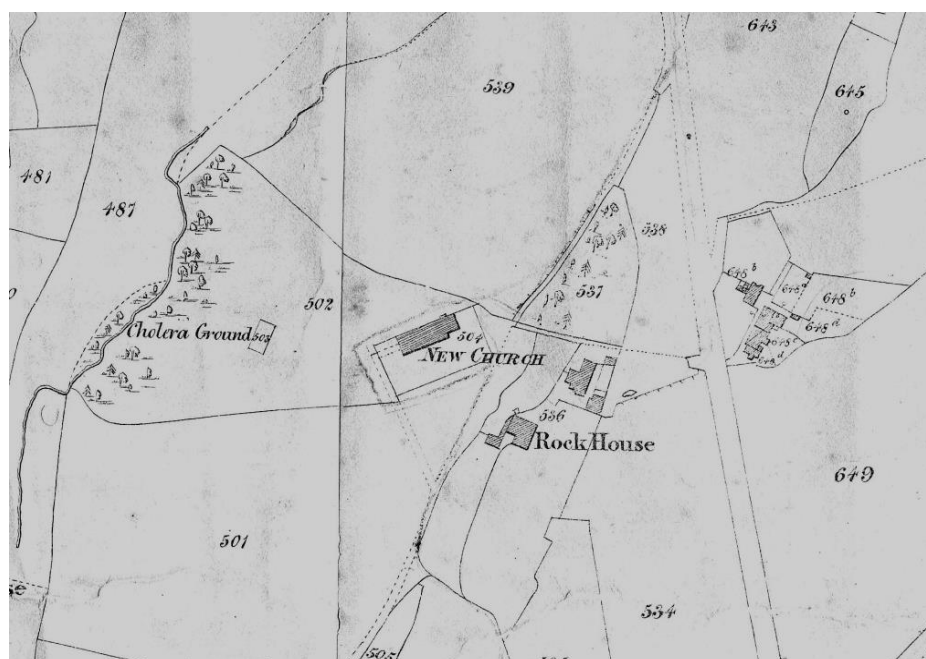


Fig 18. Site of the Red Church and the Cholera Burial Ground
(Tithe Map 1838 ⁽⁸¹⁾)

numbers. Indeed, Randall suggests that "*the plague swept away hundreds if not thousands in Broseley and the neighbourhood.*"

While some reports suggest that the Bishop of Hereford consecrated these graves, ⁽³⁾ this cannot be confirmed by the Bishop's Register^(6,11,82) and it is most likely that the burials are on unconsecrated

land. The graves were initially surrounded by railings, but vandalised many years ago. Originally, only flat stones level with the soil surface were permitted.⁽⁶⁾ The only one known to exist was to Thomas Crump. The name and date scratched with an improvised tool on the stone, Fig 19,

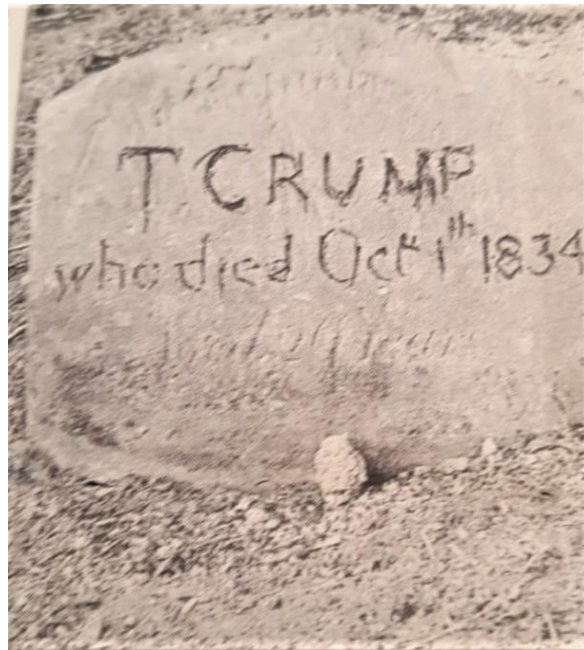


Fig 19. Original memorial stone to Thomas Crump
(Courtesy of Lynn Ball)

says a thousand words about the tragedy felt by grieving relatives at that time. Today, the land designated on the Tithe map, Fig 18, is now bisected by a substantial steel fence and the site of the cholera graves is now protected on private land and marked by one sympathetically restored erect headstone, Fig 20.



Fig 20. Memorial to Thomas Crump in the Cholera Burial Ground

The Crump family were significant contributors to the church in Broseley including one Henry Crump, a churchwarden at St Leonard's Church, who died in 1800,⁽⁸³⁾ possibly father or grandfather of Thomas.

Cholera victims also do not escape old stories in Broseley. One is that brandy would keep the illness at bay and apparently one person, comatose from its excesses but thought to be dead, was inadvertently placed in a coffin. It was only the noise of earth falling on it which aroused him - giving rise to the rumour that victims were buried alive in the cholera field.^(3,11,40)

Apparently, water of a similar colour to brandy from the nearby "Brandy well" was alleged to have similar miracle potency.^(11,40)

Contents of the Red Church

Initiated by a Mr Tranter and Mr Bowen at a Parish Council meeting on 23 October 1919 and supported by Arthur Reynolds and W Hudson in a Vestry meeting a month later, decisions⁽⁵⁰⁾ were made "*to sell the oak fittings of the Red Church while retaining sufficient material to erect a memorial screen between the vestry and choir stalls at the new St Mary's Church, to transfer the pulpit from the old Red Church to St Mary's*" where they can be seen today. It was also agreed "*to sell the bell from the old Red Church.*"

As mentioned earlier, two memorials from the Red Church have been moved to the new St Mary's. The memorial to Alexander Brodie II, weather-beaten from exposure in the decay of the old Church is virtually hidden now behind the organ. The Memorial to Thomas and Margaret Phillips is in the normally locked vestry. Both deserve greater prominence.

Sadly, the impressive white marble Memorial to Francis Turner Blithe has been lost. Writing in 1879, Randall⁽³⁾ states that it had already been removed and placed in the new Pritchard Memorial Church, a fact also recorded in the Wellington Journal of 1868.⁽⁸⁴⁾ However, this was clearly not the case as it was still in place in the Red Church in 1951,⁽⁵²⁾ and described as being in a fair state of preservation except that the figure had lost the tip of her nose. It was photographed on site in the 1960s. Following an amazing decision in 1960 by the Advisory Council to the Bishop of Hereford⁽⁵⁸⁾ that the Memorial was of no significant historical value, its fragments may lie beneath the rubble of the demolished church.

The old font from the Red Church was also transferred to the grounds of St Mary's Church,⁽⁶⁾ but it is no longer there and is believed to have been vandalised.

The Bell

The bell from the old Red Church has an intriguing history.

It has an inscription "*The gift of Mrs Browne 1766*" and the letters "*T R*" within a decorative border. This raises the question: Which Mrs Brown? Was this left deliberately vague for future generations to wonder about by not specifying Mary or Anne? As it was dated 1766, after the death of Mary, it does seem that Anne is the more likely benefactor. It has a magnificently clear note of B on the scale.⁽⁸⁵⁾

The letters "T R" indicate that the bell was cast by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester in 1766. It weighs over 650lbs. It is 31.75 inches diameter. The Rudhall family were prolific bell founders from 1684 to 1830 including 4521 church bells among which is the peal at St Martin's in the Fields, London.⁽⁸⁶⁾

As mentioned earlier, in July 1863, the inhabitants of Jackfield protested against the removal of the Red Church bell to the belfry of the new St Mary's Church.⁽⁴⁶⁾ It was quickly restored ⁽⁴⁷⁾ to quell unrest.



Fig 21. The Red Church Bell at Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire

However, there is another side to this story. Before the mid-1800s, most church bells were hung to swing.⁽⁸⁷⁾ There was plenty of room for that in the tower of the old Red Church, but the tower of the new St Mary's Church is much narrower. Certainly, there are markings on the interior walls of that tower which support the view that attempts had been made to fit the bell there⁽⁸²⁾ but it was too large to swing correctly. The bell in the new St Mary's is more appropriately designed for stationary chiming.

The bell was bought by Lord Fairhaven in 1934, an oil magnate, and installed at his home, Anglesey Abbey, Fig 21, now a National Trust property, near Cambridge. He bought it for his local church in Lode, but it was also too large for that church.

Summary

In any historical review, conclusions can always be modified if and when further information comes to light. There are certainly several mysteries to clear up in the story of the Red Church and it is perhaps easier to discount some of the reports about it.

Mary Brown inherited from her close friend, Elizabeth Crompton, the land on which the Red Church and the churchyard was placed. Surely Elizabeth could never have envisaged that the estate and wealth she bequeathed to Mary Brown in 1747 would be passed through four families in less than a decade.

The Church was completed externally in 1766 and consecrated on 28 August 1767. It served the local community for nearly 100 years before damage from undermining left it beyond repair. It was used only intermittently between 1863 until the 1920s and it was demolished in 1961. Previous records that it was built in 1755 or 1759 are not supported by Archives in Hereford Diocese.

As Mary Brown died in 1761, it seems that the church "*built at the sole cost of Mrs Mary Brown,*" is best interpreted as "funded by Mrs Mary Brown."

Francis Turner Blithe completed the building and donated the land to provide a Churchyard. The Church contained a memorial inscription to him, but was never designated as a memorial church in his name.

The main reason for building the Church was to reduce overcrowding at the main Church in Broseley and it was effectively a "Chapel of Ease." However, the impressive structure more than twice the size of the original Mother Church and its less-than-ideal location is also consistent with it intended to be a monument reflecting the importance of the Turner Blithe family.

Despite her bequest, there is no suggestion of any memorial to Mary Brown in the history of the Church. The lack of any significant acknowledgement to Mary Brown is in accord with another family seeking recognition for the Church.

The Church was damaged irreparably as a result of greed from undermining. The lack of funds and responsibility felt for the site by Rectors of Jackfield led to neglect of the building and the Churchyard. Most of the memorials were destroyed when the Church was demolished, which is as much a disaster as the undermining.

Well over 1200 burials and over 500 baptisms were carried out in the Red Church in over 100 years in which it served the community. The graveyard was "closed" in 1885. The cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834 accounted for at least 37 more burials in an adjacent cholera burial ground.

The occupants of the Churchyard reflect the district at its peak of industrial activity. With them are stories of people from all walks of life and significant local events such as the Coalport Ferry disaster and Cholera epidemics that affected their lives.

The story of the Church and Churchyard is a significant contribution to the heritage of the district and should be more widely promoted and appreciated.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Margaret Beddow, Neil Clarke, Steve Dewhirst, Joan Griffiths, Ron Miles and the Reverend John Oakes for additional information and very useful discussions.

References

- 1 Consecration of the Chapel of St Mary, Jackfield, 28 August 1767, Bishops' Register Hereford Diocese Archives AL19/23
- 2 Description of Red Church, Shropshire Archives, 6001/372/3/64
- 3 John Randall, "Broseley and its surroundings," ed Steve Dewhirst, Broseley Local History Society 2001
- 4 Michael Pope, "The story of All Saints' Church," Broseley, Broseley Local History Society, 1 May 2019 and Newsletter August 2019.
- 5 Rev J C Oakes, "Guide to St Mary's Church," 1973
- 6 Rev J C Oakes, personal communications

- 7 Interior layout of St Mary's Church, Shropshire Archives 1681/1116/30
8 K Molineux Collection (S Dewhirst), Broseley Local History Society
9 Tim Bridges and Andrew Pike, Diocese of Hereford, personal discussions
10 Brown Family Tree Records, Ancestry.com
- 11 William Reace Evans, "The Church on the Hill" ca 1927, IGMT Ref E1986.7386
12 M A Kinna, "Annex to Guide to St Mary's Church," 2003
13 Steve Dewhirst, "The Red Church Ghost," Broseley Local History Society Newsletter, August 2011
14 Haunted History Education website, opensource.apple.com
15 Melinda Evans, personal discussions
16 Veronica West, "Broseley Hall and Thomas Farnolls Pritchard," Broseley Local History Society Journal, Vol 10, 1982
17 History of Benthall, British History On-line, pp 247-257
18 Will of Elizabeth Crompton, 11 February 1739
19 Catherine Clark and Judith Alfrey, Figure 46 in "Fourth Interim Report of the Nuffield Archaeological Survey of the Ironbridge Gorge," June 1988.
20 Broseley Hall Estate, Shropshire Archives 6001/2366
21 Agreement of Anne Brown as Executor of Mary Brown with George Forester and others, 16 September 1766, Bishops' Register Hereford Diocese Archives, AL19/23
22 Grant and Endowment by Anne Brown, Hereford Diocese, 28 October 1766, Bishops' Register Hereford Diocese Archives, AL19/23
23 Donation of burial ground by Francis Turner Blithe, 27 August 1767, Bishops' Register, Hereford Diocese Archives, AL19/23
24 Bond by Francis Turner Blithe as Executor of Anne Brown's Will, 28 August 1767, Bishops' Register, Hereford Diocese Archives, AL19/23
25 Amy Louise Erickson, "Mistresses and Marriage or A Short history of the Mrs," Cambridge University CWPEHS No 8, undated
26 Turner Family Tree Records, Ancestry.com
27 Will of Anne Brown, 30 May 1764
28 High Sheriffs of Shropshire, Wikipedia.
29 "Historic Allesley Houses – Alton Hall," Allesley Parish Magazine, Issue 22, Easter 2017
30 Francis Turner Blithe Family Tree Records, Ancestry.com
31 Settlement and Marriage of Francis Turner Blithe, Shropshire Archives D3651/B/14/2/11/11
32 Settlements and Marriages of Francis Turner Blithe, Shropshire Archives D3651/B/14/2/11/12,
33 Will of Francis Turner Blithe, 29 August 1770
34 Will of Jane Elizabeth Davenport, 18 February 1810
35 Lucia Turner Blithe Family Tree Records, Ancestry.com
36 1754 Map of the Turner Blithe Estate, 49/474
37 "Harries of Cruckton, - The Landed Gentry" Blake's peerage, p 743
38 Francis and Harriet Harries, Conveyance of land, Shropshire Archives 1681/116/25-31
39 Salop County Sites & Monuments, SA 671, 22 November 1976
40 Joan Griffiths, "Broseley - the Present and the Past," 2003
41 Shropshire Archives 6001/2366
42 Nomination of John Holme, 28 August 1767, Bishops' Register Hereford Diocese Archives AL19/23
43 Ron Miles, personal discussions
44 Dennis Mason, "Churches of the Broseley Area," Broseley Local History Society, 1974
45 Formation of the Parish of Jackfield 1862, Shropshire Archives WB/H/3/20
46 Birmingham Post, 30 July 1863 and Wellington Journal, 1 August 1863

- 47 Birmingham Daily Gazette, 6 August 1863 and Shrewsbury Chronicle, 7 August 1863
- 48 Francis Harries, Letter to Mr C W Pearce re undermining, 7 May 1874, Shropshire Archives 1681/110/35
- 49 Victorian County History, British History Online, Vol 10, pp 257-293
- 50 Broseley Parish Council Meeting 23 Oct 1919, Vestry Meeting 17 Nov 1919, Faculty to sell effects of the old Red Church and erect pulpit and screen in new Church, 1 Dec 1919, Hereford Diocese Records.
- 51 Rev R Preston Thomas, Letter to Diocesan Registrar, 10 April 1951
- 52 W Watkins-Pitchford, "Proposed Demolition of the old Church of St Mary," 6 June 1951
- 53 Rev R Preston Thomas, Letter to Diocesan Registrar, 27 Sept 1951
- 54 Bishop of Hereford, Letter to Rev D Dawe, 10 Feb 1960
- 55 Rev D Dawe, Letter to Bishop of Hereford, 12 Feb 1960
- 56 Diocesan Registrar, Letter to Rev Dawe, 3 August 1960
- 57 Rev Dawe. Letter to Diocesan Registrar 7 Aug 1960
- 58 Rev Dawe, Letter to Diocesan Register, 21 March 1960
- 59 Diocesan Registrar, Letter to Rev Dawe, 14 Sept 1960
- 60 Diocesan Registrar, Letter to Rev Dawe, 10 Oct 1960
- 61 Diocesan Registrar, Letter to Rev Dawe, 17 February 1961
- 62 Broseley Parish Registers, Shropshire Archives
- 63 "Closure of Jackfield Churchyard," in Court at Osborne House, 27 January 1855, Sarah Girling, Diocese of Hereford,
- 64 Rev Dawe, Letter to Diocesan Registrar, 7 Nov 1960
- 65 Supplementary petition 7 November 1960
- 66 Rev'd Dawe to Diocesan Registrar, 15 Nov 196
- 67 Diocesan Registrar to Rev'd Dawe, 12 Nov 1960
- 68 Advertisement in Wellington Journal, December 1960
- 69 Diocesan Registrar to Chancellor, 15 Dec 1960
- 70` Chancellor J T Elphinstone to Diocesan Registrar 29 December 1960
- 71 K Evans, P Lloyd and N Burd, "Monumental Inscriptions," Shropshire Family History Society 1983.
- 72 Adrian Davis, "Management Plan for the Graveyard of St Mary's Church, Jackfield, "Shropshire, for Broseley Forum 1996
- 73 Letter from Bridgnorth Council to Rev M A Kinna, 29 September 1998
- 74 National Archive Census Records, Ancestry.com
- 75 Michael Pope, "The Life and Times of George Pritchard," Broseley Local History Society Newsletter, August 2010
- 76 Jenny Cochrane, personal communication, July 2018,
- 77 Wrockwardine Manor, British History On-Line, Vol 11, 310-313
- 78 John Randall, "History of Madeley," 1975, ISBN 10:0903802023
- 79 Marjorie Bloy, "Cholera comes to Britain: October 1831," www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/p-health/cholera3.htm
- 80 London Morning Chronicle, 11 September 1832
- 81 Broseley 1838 Tithe Map, Broseley Local History Society
- 82 Bishops' Register, Hereford Diocese Archives CG19/3
- 83 Bishops' Register, Hereford Diocese Archives, 6 February 1800
- 84 Wellington Journal, 1 Feb 1868 page 6
- 85 H B Walters, Jackfield Old Church, Church Bells of Shropshire (1915)
- 86 Chris Pickford, National Bell Register, personal communications, 2018
- 87 Richard Wilkinson, personal discussion

