



History of Shrawley, Early Norman to 1700.

R.D.Sproat@Feb2021

Early Norman Period.

Shrawley is not named in the Domesday Book showing they probably had a destitution of population at this time. Ralph de Tosny, standard-bearer to William the Conqueror, owned Astley, (the next parish north), and several others in the area, but is not recorded as making a claim to Shrawley. Shrawley Wood would have been a valuable commodity as it was used in the brine boiling at Droitwich where many nobles including the clergy owned 'brine houses'. Ralph probably had little interest in his Worcestershire manors for he never visited here, and Shrawley became under the ownership of Urso de Abitot, Sheriff of Worcester. Upon Urso's death his daughter inherited his estates. As a wealthy heiress a poor knight called Beauchamp courted her and won her affections. They set up court at Elmley Castle, south east of Worcester. Shrawley, being part of Urso's estate, was included in the ownership and the Beauchamps set about constructing a castle to collect dues at the crossing, and enforce the King's law along their stretch of the River Severn.

Medieval Period.

It would appear that by the end of the 1100s the castle at Shrawley had been established, for William Beauchamp of Elmley had '*built a castle to control the ancient fording place across the river Severn*'. The castle then appears to be under the stewardship of Sir William Poher, '*sometime lord of the manor*'¹. By the time of the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) Roger le Poher held a fee of four hides in Shrawley, from his overlord baron William de Beauchamp and was dealing with land in Shrawley in 1234-5². The Poers were the first recorded under-tenants of the Beauchamps in Shrawley, and would have resided at Shrawley Castle soon after it was built³. In 1248-9 Hugh Poer granted 2

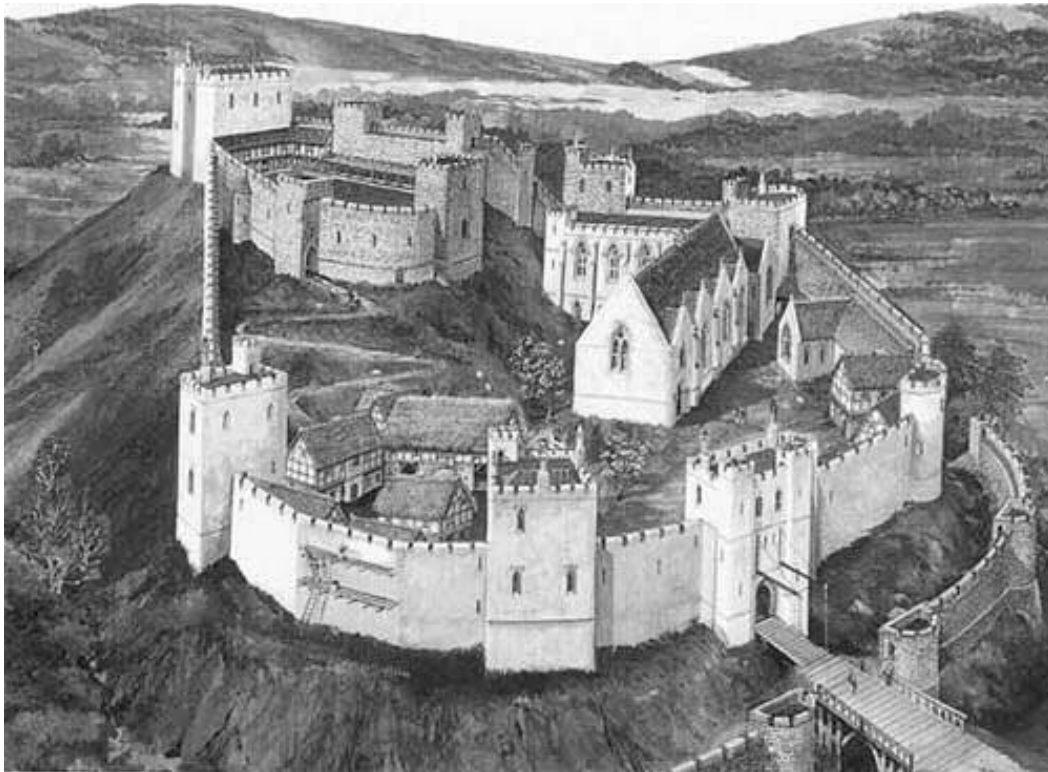
¹ Habington, page 354.

² Feet of Fines, Worcs, case 258, file 4, no. 37.

³ *Victoria County History, Worcestershire*. Vol IV. pp 338-9

carucates of land in Shrawley to William Poer⁴. William claimed free warren in the manor in 1274-5⁵. The next reference is in the Lay Subsidy Rolls c.1280 when William Poer paid 20s. 0d. in tax to the king⁶. William died without male issue and the manor was granted by his daughter Alina le Poer, one of his co-heirs, to Edmund Mortimer, of Wigmore Castle, and Margaret his wife,⁷ who were jointly seised at the time of Edward's death after he was wounded in Blith in 1304⁸. He later died in 1305.

Aline, known as "Aline the dark" (probably by her clothing), never married but was wealthy in her own right owning the large manor of Bromsgrove. She would have been well acquainted with Wigmore Castle in Herefordshire, and the Mortimer family. In her journeys to and from Wigmore she would have crossed the River Severn at Olivers Mound, at Shrawley, and used her residence there as a convenient resting place.



**Fig 2. Wigmore Castle as it might have looked in the mid-14th century.
Reconstruction drawing by Brian Byron.**

⁴ Ibid. file 6, no. 60.

⁵ Assize Roll, 1026, manu. 35.

⁶ Lay Subsidy Roll, Worcester Historical Society.

⁷ Chan. Inquisitions Post Mortem, 32 Edw. I, no. 63b.

⁸ Ibid; G.E.C. *Peerage*, v, 379. Parts of knights' fees held of this manor belonging at that time to John de Remeseye, Hugh de Northampton, and Alice de Farley.

Late
half
1100s

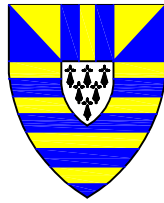
Sir William Poher [held lands from the Beauchamps
of Elmley Castle]

1234/5

Roger le Poher

1248/9

Hugh Poher



1280

William Poer

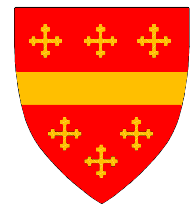
William Mortimer = Margaret

Aline le Poher

Granted the manor of
Shrawley for life.

Mid 1300s

John Mortimer =
Earl of March



Catherine = Thomas Beauchamp
Earl of Warwick
(purchased the
manor of Shrawley
from
the Earl of March)

Connections with the le Poher, Mortimer, & Beauchamp families

Co-heirs to William Mortimer
(died 1304)



Margaret granted the manor of Shrawley in 1314, along with the manor of Eckington, to Alina Poer for life, with the proviso that on her death the manor would revert John, son of Edmund Mortimer, and his issue, and that the contingent remainder of the manor to Margaret and her heirs⁹.

In 1316 Margaret Mortimer was holding the manor of Shrawley¹⁰ as lord of the manor and was assessed at 20 shillings rent to the king. She probably passed the manor to her great-grandson, Roger Earl of March. Roger's eldest daughter Catherine married Thomas, Earl of Warwick in 1337. The manor passed by marriage to Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and here must have been an arrangement for Aline le Poer was still living at Shrawley Castle. Aline must have died soon after for she is recorded as being in dispute with the Church and was buried on site within the grounds of her castle¹¹. Thomas Beauchamp apparently must have bought the manor of Shrawley in 1344 for it was settled by him on himself and his wife Catherine, and the remainder of the estate to his sons Guy, Thomas, and Reynburn, and to the mail heirs of John, his brother¹².

The documentary evidence suggests that by 1344 Aline had died and that the Beauchamps had lost interest in the upkeep of Shrawley castle, for they built a new castle, four kilometres downstream on the River Severn, at Holt. The castle at Shrawley, probably due to lack of maintenance must have progressed into a dilapidated state. The influence of the castle must surely have diminished by the year 1389 for the Shrawley estate was administered by Hugh Belchamp's bailiff, Robert Hyllhampton¹³. The Beauchamps would then have removed all saleable materials and left all the rough stone for local tenants to use. Whether the destruction was complete or not for up the early 1600s the site was always called 'Courte Hills' on tenant's rent rolls.

⁹ Feet of Fines, Worcs, Mich. 8 Edw. II, no.20.

¹⁰ Chan. Inquisitions Post Mortem, 9 Edw. II, no.71, m. 53; Worcester Historical Society, *Worcester Inquisitions part II*. 'Margaret le Mortimer held of the same 1 fee in Schraul [Shrawley], worth yearly 20li.'

¹¹ S&DLHS journal 2, pp.7 'Masterman. S.W, Researches by Canon R.A. Wilson relate that Aline le Poher of Shrauele, was excommunicated, for that she 'obstinately despised the keys of the Church.' Masterman also relates that, 'The ancient stone coffin lid now lying in Shrawley Churchyard, was found near here [the castle]'.

Kelly's Directory, 1904, states that, 'under the east window, on the outside of the church, is a curious stone coffin lid, supposed to be seven centuries old:'. Was this Aline's tombstone, and was she buried near her castle?'

¹² *Cal. Pattinton*. 1343-5, p.251; Feet of Fines, Div. Co. Trinity, 18 Edw. III, no. 55. Thomas, Earl of Warwick was returned as holding the manor

¹³ Bailiff's Account Roll dated 22nd June 1389/90, WRO Ref. 705:66. BA 4221/7. This was the crossing place where large numbers of faggots were sent from Shrawley Wood to fuel the brine pans, to make salt, at Droitwich.

There is a reference at Shrawley Parish Church¹⁴, that '*Underneath the eastern window, on the exterior side, and fastened upright to the wall, is an ancient prism-shaped stone coffin lid, supposed to be nearly 700 years old*'. The Mortimer family probably moved Aline le Poer's grave from the Shrawley Castle to consecrated ground at St Mary's Church later after she had died.

The Manor of Shrawley 1558-1700.

With the death of Aline le Poher in the early 1300s the ownership of the manor of Shrawley was then passed on through various Mortimer and Beauchamp family lines. Shrawley manor in the Middle Ages became one of the many number of lands and estates owned by the Beauchamps overlords. Richard Neville, son of the 5th Earl of Salisbury, married Anne Beauchamp, 16th Countess of Warwick, and so he became the 16th Earl of Warwick. During the last stages of the Wars of the Roses Richard Neville was defeated and killed at the Battle Barnet on the 14th April 1471 by King Edward IV. All his lands and estates, (including Shrawley), then became forfeited to the king.

Little happened at Shrawley for the next 80 years. The village appears to have been concentrated around the church and called '*Great Shrawley*' [superior or upper], which suggests that the rest of the parish called '*inferior*' [on lower ground] was scattered cottages. Shrawley wood appears to have been unutilised and considered as waste in the time of King Henry VII, (c.1500), a forester was appointed to stop the '*depredations going on in Shrawley Wood*'.

An ancestor of William Sheldon of Beoley (1558) had purchased the manor of Shrawley from King Henry VIII's Crown Commissioners after it had been seized from the discredited Earl of Warwick.¹⁵ In 1558 William sold the manor of Shrawley to William Gower Kt. of Redmarley,¹⁶ (sited near to the present day village of Great Witley). Shrawley Wood seems to have been held back and not included in the sale, for it was later granted to a William Childe of Northwick in 1579-80.¹⁷

William Gower held Shrawley (and Redmarley Oliver), and settled the rights of the manor of Shrawley on his two eldest daughters Ann and Ursula. William Gower died in 1595. It appears that the manor was divided into three parts. Shrawley manor, or Upper Shrawley, was based around the church and held by the Adams'. The Rotherhams held Lower Shrawley, and the Childe family held Shrawley Woods, '*Courte Hills, Court Poole.... The Park*',¹⁸ and

¹⁴ Billings Directory & Gazetteer of Worcestershire 1830(?)

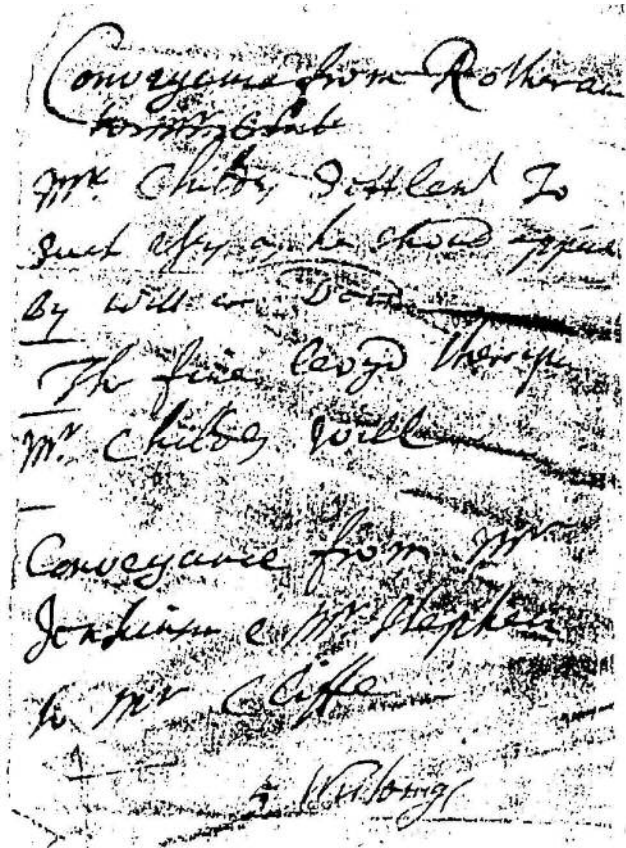
¹⁵ Walker, R.O. *The Parish of Shrawley*, p. 4.

¹⁶ *Victoria County History, Worces.* Vol. IV. pp. 338-9, and p. 374.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ WRO BA 7335:20 (ii). Rental of the Demense of Shrawley, 1607.

other lands. The Adams' were lords of the manor from 1602 till 1663.¹⁹ The Rotherhams held lower or 'inferior' Shrawley, from 1619 till 1647 when George Rotherham sold his rights to Shrawley lands to Anna Maria Jenkinson. The Jenkinsons held their land till it was transferred through marriage to the Childes.²⁰



**Fig. 3. Conveyance:
Between Rotherham to Childe, Jenkinson & Stephens to Cliffe.**

Civil War Period

After the Battle of Worcester, which had taken place on 3rd September 1651, the Royalist and a large Scottish army was routed and the Parliamentary Army controlled Worcester and the River Severn. The Royalist Childe maintained a detachment of troops within Shrawley Wood. Such was the paranoia that they dug deep defensive ditches on Olivers Mound against attack from the river. Major-General Waller's Parliamentary troops roamed north

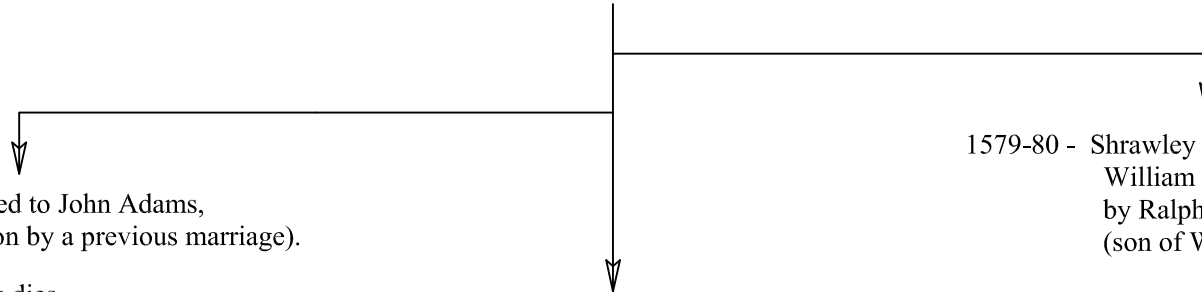
¹⁹ WRO BA 7335:107 (i). Frances Adams, Lord of the manor of Shrawley, held Court Baron here in 1659.

²⁰ WRO BA 7335:19 (i). This is a conveyance from Rotherham to Mr. T. Childe and from Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Stephens to Mr. Cliffe, dated 1655.

The Manor of Shrawley
1558-1700

1558 - William Sheldon then of Beoley sold the manor of Shrawley, (not including Shrawley Wood), to William Gower kt. of Redmarley.

1573 - Manor settled jointly on William's two eldest daughters, Ann Hungerford & Ursula Nash.
William died in 1595.



1602 - Manor passed to John Adams, (Ursula's son by a previous marriage).

1616 - John Adams dies.
His daughter Anne, wife of Frances Adams succeeded to the manor.

1628 - Manor conveyed to Charles Adams & John Corbett, trustees for Frances Adams.

1637-8 - Trustees still holding Shrawley manor.

1659 - Lord of the manor was another Frances Adams.

c.1663 - Thomas Stephens, acting for his father-in-law, Thomas Childe who bought the other half of the manor at this time.

1681 - Thomas Childe and his son William sold the manor to Allan Cliffe.

1699 - Allan Cliffe, son of Humphrey Cliffe, brother of Allan Cliffe sen. succeeded to the manor.

1700 - Allan Cliffe, sold the manor to Thomas Vernon of Middle Temple & Lord of manor of Hanbury.

1579-80 - Shrawley Wood was granted to William Childe of Northwick by Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, (son of William Sheldon).

1627 - Thomas Child borrows sum of £3500 from Sir William Jones kt. for Shrawley Woods and Ship Grove etc.

William Childe, ardent Royalist held Shrawley Wood for the King during the Civil War.

Thomas Childe of Northwick

1619 - Moiety passed to Thomas Rotherham, (son of Anne Hungerford by a previous marriage).

1620 - Thomas Rotherham died at Worcester, seized of Lower Shrawley, succeeded by his brother Edmund.

1647 - Edmund was succeeded by his son George Rotherham who sold his moiety to Anne Maria Jenkinson and her son Robert Jenkinson. She also inherited 1/3 of the manor from Mary, widow of Edmund Rotherham.

1681 - Anna Maria Jenkinson, (daughter of Robert), had married Thomas Childe of Northwick, joined with his son and successor William, to sell the manor to Allan Cliffe.

Chronology of landowners.

Worcestershire and Hereford hunting down pockets of Royalist soldiers. The detachment were so impoverished that they turned to being highway robbers much to the annoyance of the locals.

At this time Thomas Stephens, acting as an official for his father-in-law, Thomas Childe, acquired the whole manor for the Childe family. In 1662 William Cliffe, gent, was taxed at 6 hearths, and Thomas Chylde taxed at 5 hearths in the Shrawley Hearth Tax.²¹ There then appears to have been a tripartite agreement and collecting of lands and a grand sale to Mr. Allan Cliffe in 1681, (see figure 1), who lived at Dod Oak, Shrawley, in 1693.²² His nephew, (another Allan Cliffe), then sold the manor to the lawyer Thomas Vernon of Hanbury. The Vernon family then controlled the manor of Shrawley from then on into the 20th century.

The flow chart gives a chronology of the landowners during the 150 years when the Childe family organised for themselves the acquisition of the whole manor, and sold it to Allan Cliffe. Allan Cliffe then sold the manor to Thomas Vernon in the year 1700 which consolidated the manor after the bitter enmity between the Parliamentary Rotherhams and Royalist Childe's during the English Civil War.

Notes.

WRO – Worcester Record Office.

moiety – A half or part share in a piece of land or property.

seized – The giving up of the possession or the right to a piece of land, or to a tenancy.

²¹ Shrawley Hearth Tax – Quarter Sessions – 10th July 1662.

²² WRO BA 7335:20, Ref. 705:7. Shrawley Rental dated Feb. 28th 1693.