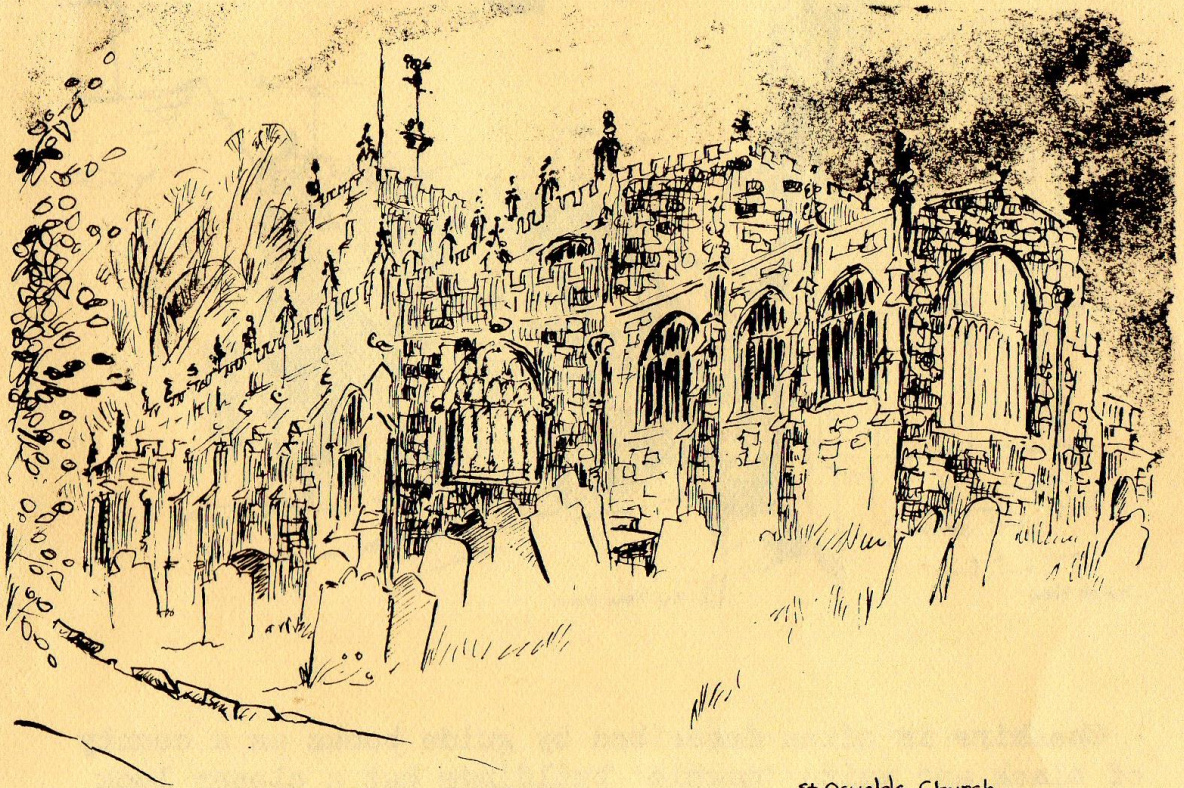


D. HAYNS

MORE OLD FASHIONED THAN MOST

A look at Buildings in Malpas



St. Oswald's Church

'The Town of Malpas consists chiefly of four streets, intersecting each other at right angles. The buildings are generally mean and the whole place has contracted that neglected appearance which is the sure consequence of the non-residence of the principal proprietor'

(Ormerod's 'Cheshire' 1819)

'The town has remained old fashioned for longer than most though today, apart from the church, its antiquarian interests are of the slenderest'

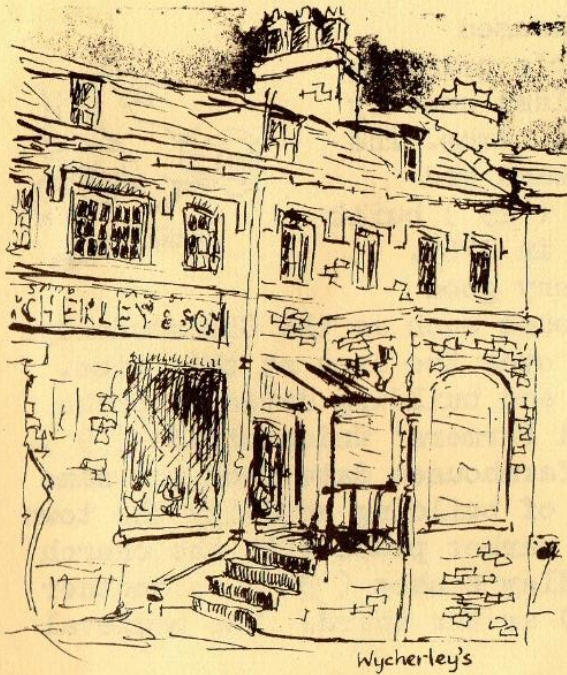
(Fred Crossley 'Malpas Church' 1936)

Mean may be our buildings and old fashioned our town but we hope that this short guide to 'old fashioned' Malpas will prove that it is certainly not slender in antiquarian interest!



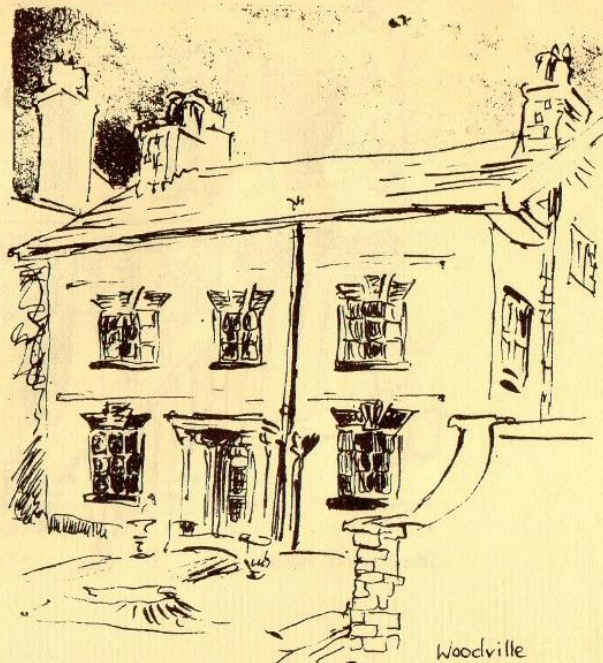
Cheshire is often described by guide books as a county of black and white 'magpie' buildings but a closer look reveals that the number of these timber framed buildings surviving, whilst distinctive, is comparatively small. Our most well known example is the Tithe Barn (19)^{*} in Church Street, converted to a house about 35 years ago. It was originally used to store the tithes, or taxes in kind, levied by the church upon local inhabitants. The timber framing is of the style used in the 17th century, as are most of the timber frame houses in the area. Imagine them being built just before the time of the Civil War, when Colonel Brereton's Roundhead soldiers were billeted in St. Oswald's church. Timber was already becoming scarce at this time and those who could afford to do so built in brick. The Bolling (20) is a fine

^{*} Numbers in brackets refer to Map on the middle pages.



example of an early 18th century brick house, which became the Lower Rectory for Malpas. Another recently converted barn, this of local red brick and Welsh slate (but once thatched, maybe) is 'Scholes' (21). The decorative brickwork along the eaves is very typical of the 18th century. Many other buildings have also changed their use over the years. Old records refer to the 'Griffin' and 'Wiffin' inns, both in Church Street. These were in fact the 'Gryphon', now

Church View (17), which is an excellent example of a 17th century box framed house, and the 'Wyvern', now Wycherley's shop (11). These hostelries belonged to the two major land owning families, the local Cholmondeleys of Cholmondeley Castle (The Gryphon) and the absentee Drakes of Shardeloes, near Amersham in Buckinghamshire (The Wyvern). The mythical heraldic beasts Gryphon, whom Alice met in Wonderland, and Wyvern were the crests from the coats of arms of the two families. Representations of both these creatures can be found painted on the panelling from the old box pews, which is still preserved in the parish church. Both families had houses for their stewards in Malpas, the Cholmondeleys being at the Old Printing House (14) built in 1733 - note the Gryphon on the pediment - so called

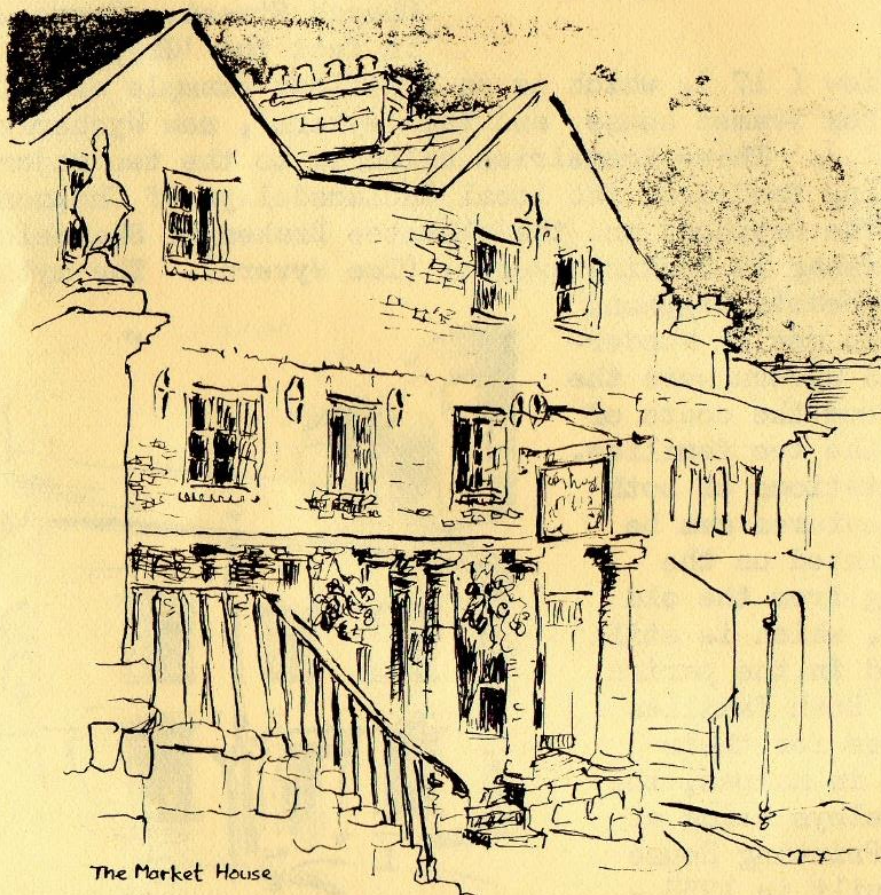




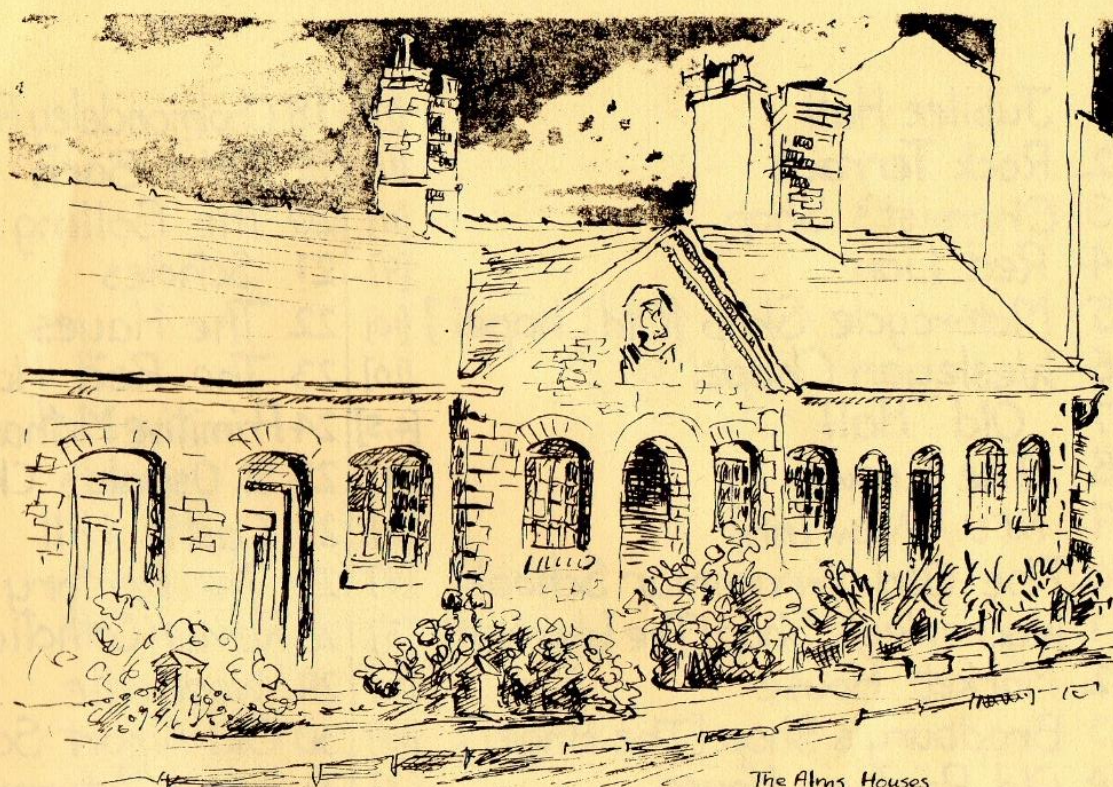
because it housed
Mr. Fletcher's printing
press from last century
until recent times. The
Drakes' steward had
'Woodville' (29) built
for himself in 1765.



This is a very good
example of an 18th century house such as the Cholmondeleys
and Drakes were building all over the area at this time.
Look for the Drake monograms and building dates on Drake
House (33) and the National Farmers' Union office (9).
Many of our beautiful local farmhouses date from the same
period. Prior to this burst of building activity the town
probably had a large cobbled market place with the church
steps as the top corner, Bradley's shop (34) as another
corner and the Old Hall (7) as the third. The medieval

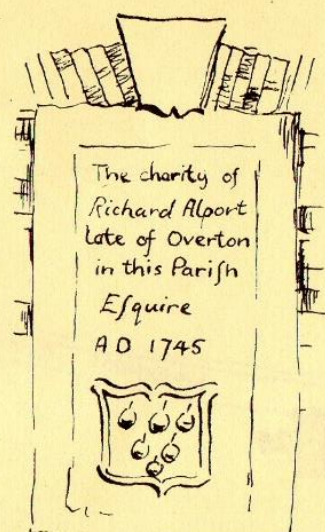


The Market House



The Alms Houses

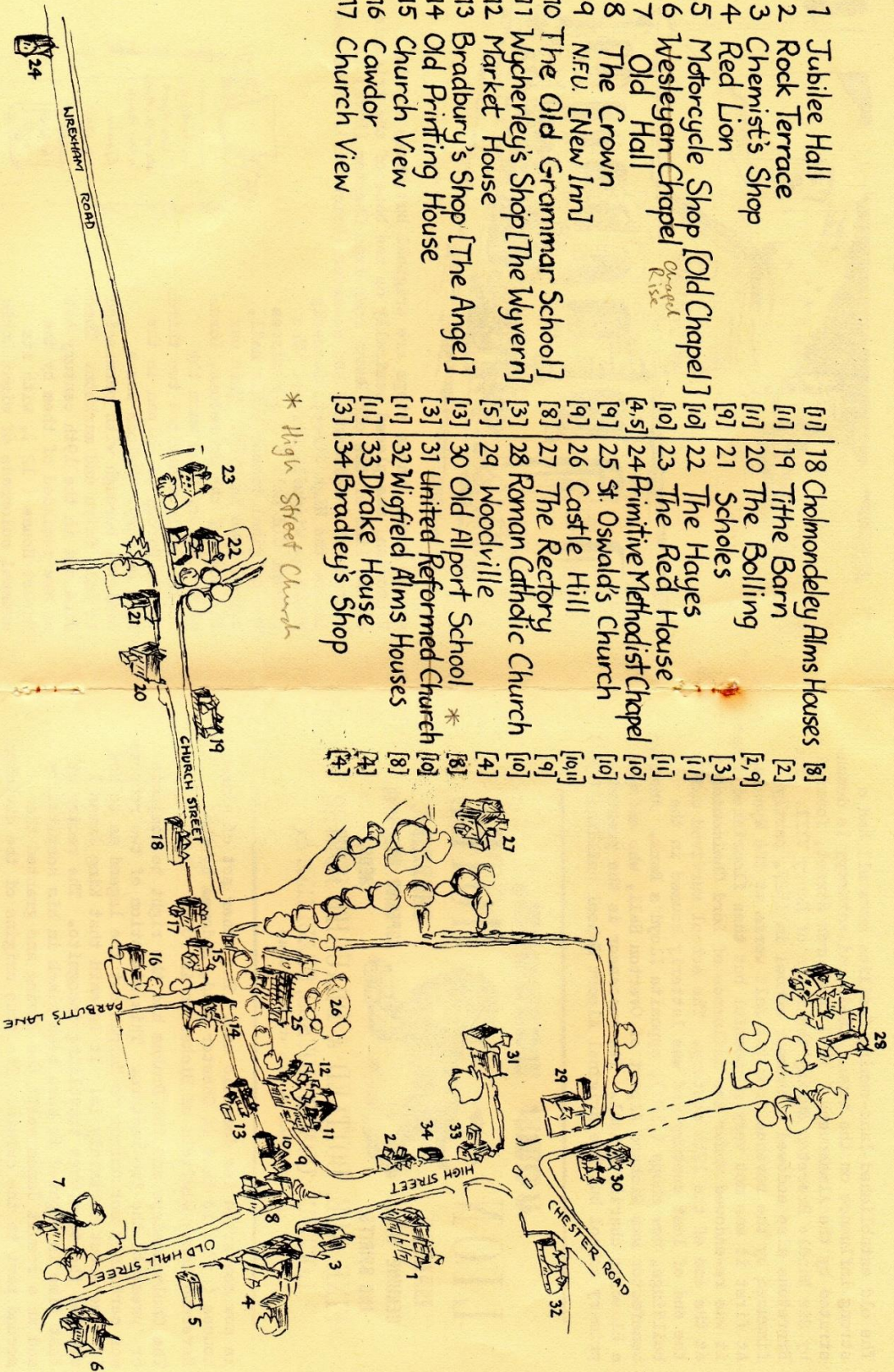
market Cross, whose steps are original but whose top is Victorian, was placed centrally on the base of the triangle, on the line of the old Roman road from Chester (Deva) to Whitchurch (Mediolanum) and Wroxeter (Uriconium). This road is now the High Street, formerly known as Windmill Street. The present Old Hall (7) replaces the original timber built hall, burned down in 1768. This was the home of the Breretons, Lords of the Manor, from whom the Drake family inherited two thirds of the Barony of Malpas in the 17th century. Malpas was a medieval borough with permission to hold fairs and markets. These died out in the 19th century but we are reminded of them by the Market House (12), with its unusual colonnade of eight Doric columns. This was built by the Drakes in 1762, as two houses or shops.



- 1 Jubilee Hall
- 2 Rock Terrace
- 3 Chemist's Shop
- 4 Red Lion
- 5 Motorcycle Shop [Old Chapel]
- 6 Wesleyan Chapel *Orange*
- 7 Old Hall
- 8 The Crown
- 9 N.E.U. [New Inn]
- 10 The Old Grammar School]
- 11 Wycherley's Shop [The Wyvern]
- 12 Market House
- 13 Bradbury's Shop [The Angel]
- 14 Old Printing House
- 15 Church View
- 16 Cawdor
- 17 Church View

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|----------|
| [11] | 18 Cholmondeley Alms Houses | [8] |
| [11] | 19 Tith Barn | [2] |
| [11] | 20 The Bolling | [2, 9] |
| [9] | 21 Scholes | [3] |
| [10] | 22 The Hayes | [11] |
| [10] | 23 The Red House | [11] |
| [4, 5] | 24 Primitive Methodist Chapel | [10] |
| [9] | 25 St. Oswald's Church | [10] |
| [9] | 26 Castle Hill | [10, 11] |
| [8] | 27 The Rectory | [9] |
| [3] | 28 Roman Catholic Church | [10] |
| [5] | 29 Woodville | [4] |
| [13] | 30 Old Alport School | [8] |
| [3] | 31 United Reformed Church | [10] |
| [11] | 32 Wigfield Alms Houses | [8] |
| [11] | 33 Drake House | [4] |
| [3] | 34 Bradley's Shop | [4] |

* High Street Church



The old established land-owning families have all had a strong influence on the town. Their philanthropy is demonstrated by the Almshouses (18) in Church Street, founded by Sir Randle Brereton during the reign of Henry VIII. The Breretons also endowed a Grammar school in 1527, partly financed by the revenue from the salt works at the Wyches. At first it was not very successful but then flourished after it was re-endowed under the influence of Lord Cholmondeley at the end of the 17th century. The school survived until the end of last century and was latterly housed in the buildings, now shops (10), opposite Lloyd's Bank. Another benefactor was Richard Alport of Overton Hall, who endowed a Bluecoat charity school. Its successor is the present primary school but the original Alport School building (30)

JOHN BOSTOCK,

LION HOTEL,

MALPAS,
GENUINE WINES
AND SPIRITS,
FINE ALE, BOTTLED & DRAUGHT PORTER.
LOCK-UP COACH HOUSES, STABLING, &C.

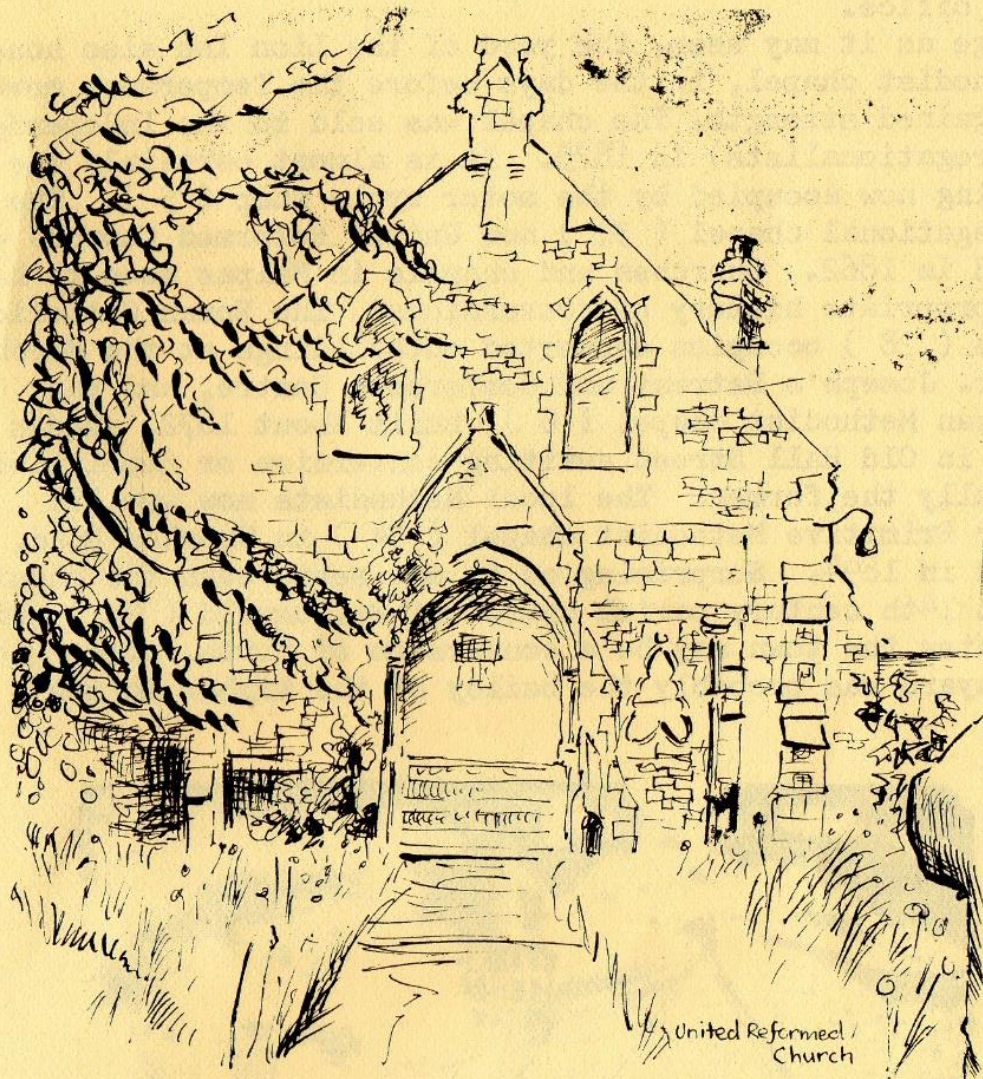


CHESHIRE.
SUPERIOR WELL-AIRED
BEDS,

POSTING IN ALL ITS BRANCHES.

is now converted for domestic use. The other set of almshouses (32) is that in Chester Road, endowed by the Reverend Henry Wigfield of Bickerton in 1856.

The Cholmondeleys and the Drakes had the right to nominate or 'present' the two rectors. This situation of two rectors was certainly not unique to Malpas but the legend as to how it came about certainly is! It is said that King James I visited the town when travelling incognito. The rector at that time is reputed to have been slack in his hospitality and as a result James split the living and granted the second part to the curate. The true origins of the division lie in medieval times but the legend, which is a far more picturesque explanation, was perpetuated in a long poem

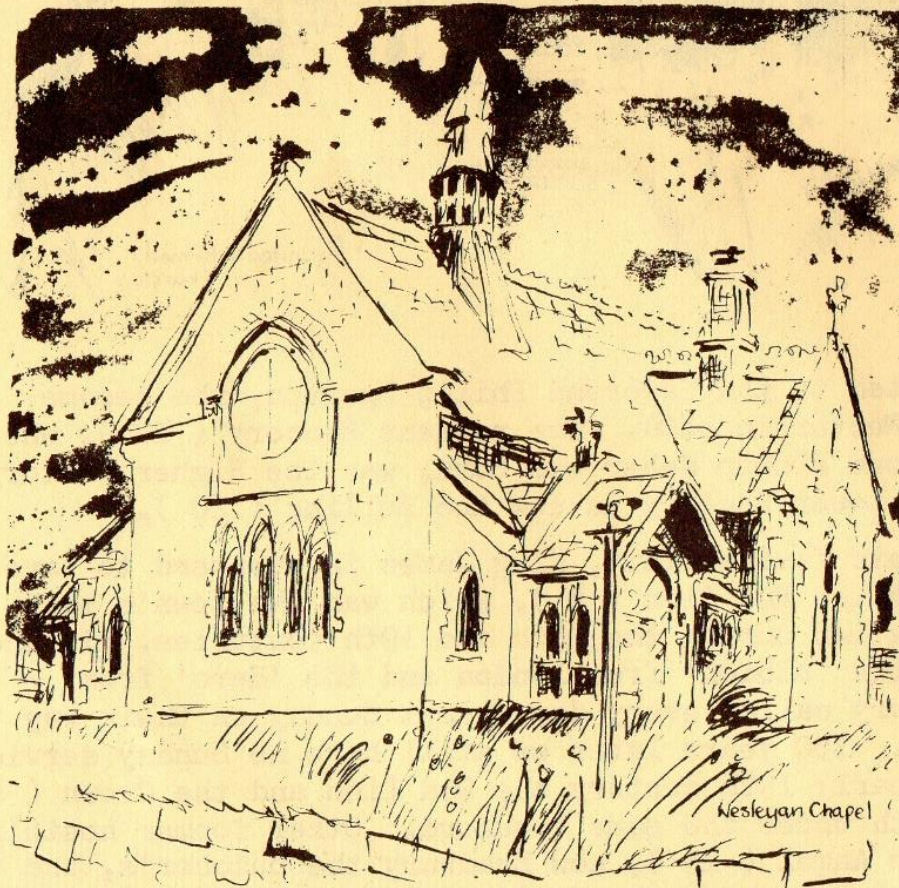


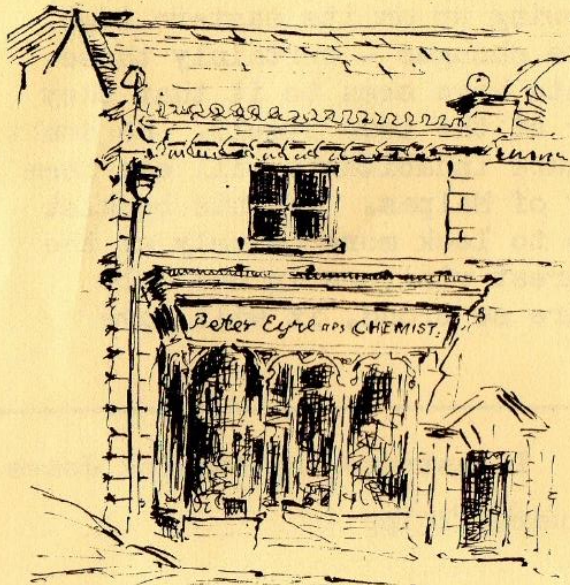
attributed to the Reverend Philip Egerton, who became Higher Rector in 1804. The present Rectory (27), where the famous Bishop Heber was born, was the Higher Rectory and the Lower Rectory is now the Bolling (20).

During his famous visit, King James is supposed to have dined at the Red Lion (4), which was the town's main coaching inn during the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 1830's the 'Albion' from London and the 'Hero' from Shrewsbury called every day except Sunday on their way to Chester. 150 years later we still have no Sunday service! In the early 19th century the Red Lion and the Crown (8) were both under the same landlord. Other former hostelries were the Angel (13), now Bradbury the butcher's, and the New Inn (9) where the National Farmers' Union now have

their office.

Strange as it may seem, the yard of the Lion Inn also housed a Methodist chapel, in the days before the Temperance movement gained strength. The chapel was sold to the Independents (Congregationalists) in 1825. It is almost certainly the building now occupied by the motor cycle shop (5). The new Congregational chapel (31) now United Reformed Church) was opened in 1862. Churches and chapels in Malpas seem to have an appropriate history of conversions! The Roman Catholic Church (28) occupies converted outbuildings at the Beeches, now St. Joseph's Retreat and Conference Centre, and the Wesleyan Methodist chapel (6), built about 1872, stands empty in Old Hall Street awaiting conversion or demolition - hopefully the former. The local Methodists now use the former Primitive Methodist chapel (24) in Wrexham Road, opened in 1894. Surprising as it may seem, even the magnificent 14th century parish church of St. Oswald (25) which dominates the town may be a conversion of sorts, since the churchyard was probably the bailey of the timber Norman





Chemist

influences of this period can be seen in the splendid decorative cast ironwork on the front of the chemist's shop (3), on the Jubilee Hall (1) and on Rock Terrace (2), which is a good example of Victorian terrace housing using many mass produced materials. The coming of the railway to Malpas in the 1870's meant that these materials could easily be imported, thus ending the reliance on local materials. The Hayes (22) in Church Street has good examples of Victorian decorative brickwork and the Red House (23) next door has a splendid facade of red Ruabon brick, a material first produced about 1870.

So ends our brief look at some of the buildings in our town. We have had to leave out many which we are sure are just as interesting and would like to hear about

Castle (26) and the church itself may have started life as the private chapel to the castle.

As a tailpiece to our conversion saga it is interesting to note the ecclesiastical type windows in the rear of Church View (15) and 'Cawdor' (16) in Parbutt's Lane. It seems that these windows may have been brought onto the site in the 1860's for a proposed chapel which, for some unknown reason, was never built. The windows were then incorporated into the houses, built soon afterwards. These two houses are examples of Victorian building in the town and other



Rock Terrace

them. Over the past 50 years Malpas has expanded considerably with large housing estates growing up on its eastern edge. We may or may not welcome these changes - certainly those responsible for the developments have seen to it that they have not spoiled the character of the town itself. No doubt in another 100 years' time future inhabitants will see them as part of the unfolding story of Malpas. If this booklet encourages those who live here to look more closely at the story so far and helps to interest visitors in our 'old fashioned' town, of which we are so proud, it will have served its purpose.

Written by David Hayns

- Illustrated by Patrick Jones

- Typing by Audrey Tripp -

1980

1864 Advertisement for the Lion Inn reproduced by
courtesy of the Cheshire Record Office.

