

MORETON CORBET CASTLE: A HOUSE AND ITS FAMILY

By BARBARA COULTON

The site of Moreton Corbet is one of the most attractive in Shropshire, with its ancient church of St Bartholomew, and the remains of medieval and renaissance buildings, the home of the Corbets for several centuries. This study is not concerned principally with the architecture, but the study of the family does throw light on some of the phases of the buildings.

We begin, appropriately, with a man named Bartholomew, of the family of Toret, the holder of the castle c. 1200. Like many others, he joined in the rebellion against King John who, in February 1216, ordered that the land and 'Castle of Morton' should be held by Engeram de Pratellis during the king's pleasure. By November 1217 Toret had 'returned to allegiance' and had been restored.¹ Two other men in Shropshire were in the same situation: Thomas Corbet, son of Robert the lord of Caus, and their kinsman and vassal Richard Corbet of Wattlesborough. Richard Corbet married Bartholomew's daughter and co-heiress Joan so that the estates of Wattlesborough and Moreton were united; Bartholomew was dead by 1235. The heir of Richard and Joan, also named Richard, married Petronilla, Lady of Booley and Edgbolton; their son Robert was of full age and seised of Wattlesborough and Moreton by 1255.² At some point during the later thirteenth century the place became known as Moreton Corbet, although the old name recurred on occasion.

Like the castle of Wattlesborough, Moreton Corbet's tower-house is medieval but difficult to date; both were altered from two-storey to three-storey buildings. West's opinion of Wattlesborough is that although it appears at first sight to be a typical twelfth-century solar-tower, it may have been built in the thirteenth century.³ Forty-two feet square (13m) externally, it was apparently free-standing. Moreton Corbet is similar in style and size (12m x 10m). Still visible at first floor level is the stone hood of a fireplace, the capitals of the shafts carved with stiff broad leaves. A length of curtain wall and the gatehouse (later altered) also survive. There would have been a complex of ancillary buildings and a well in the castle enclosure. Standards of comfort were not high in a small thirteenth-century castle, but the owner, and possibly the builder, of Moreton and Wattlesborough was a man of some consequence in Shropshire.

He held Wattlesborough of the Corbets of Caus by service of a knight's fee and there is evidence that he served in person with Peter Corbet of Caus in Edward I's wars against the Welsh (1277, 1282-3, 1294-5). Chancery Warrants include a grant of letters of protection to Robert Corbet in 1295 at Towyn, 'so long as he is with Fulk Fitz Warin (another vassal of Caus) on the king's service in these parts.'⁴ It is likely that Robert Corbet's assumption of knighthood late in 1272 was in connection with earlier border action; only a knight could lead troops in battle. His castle at Wattlesborough, near the front line, would have served as a military base, but he seems to have made his home at Moreton. A Geoffrey de Morton gave evidence at a later 'proof of age' inquiry that in 1281 'he came to dwell with Sir Robert Corbet at Morton'.⁵ In the same year a son was born to Sir Robert's second wife Matilda de Arundel, whose family were also vassals of Caus and did suit at the court there.⁶ She brought some property with her, and more was acquired during her marriage, of which she was jointly enfeoffed with her husband.⁷ Matilda, as châtelaine of Moreton, must have helped run the estate while Sir Robert was away on military or civilian service. He was sheriff in 1288-9⁸; on various commissions of gaol delivery, oyer and terminer, and array;⁹ knight of the shire in the parliaments of 1290 and 1295 and assessor and collector of taxes in 1295 and 1297.¹⁰ In June 1300 he sat as knight and juror on the Forest Perambulation of Shropshire.¹¹ At his death in November 1300 he must have been nearly seventy.

His grandson, Robert Corbet II of Moreton and Wattlesborough, was equally active in the reign of

Edward III. He was already knighted when he did homage for his lands to the young king in February 1327. By 1350 the Corbet line had died out at Caus whose barony was annexed to that of Stafford, when Ralph lord Stafford inherited.¹² The family of Moreton and Wattlesborough continued to flourish. Robert Corbet II played his knight's rôle in military service and local administration, as did his sons Fulk and Roger.¹³ Robert and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Fulk Le Strange, continued to enlarge the estate, the most significant addition being the manor of Shawbury, with its ancient church and village, acquired from Giles de Erdington in 1359; it was held of the king for half a knight's fee.¹⁴ Ten years later Robert and Elizabeth made provision for the Moreton Corbet estates to descend in the male line, should their heir Fulk have no son.¹⁵ This proved to be the case, and at Fulk's death in 1382 the two halves of the Corbet holdings were divided, the Wattlesborough estates passing to his young daughter Elizabeth and her husband John de Mawddwy while Moreton Corbet went to Fulk's brother Roger.¹⁶ Roger was a knight of some standing in the county, but we do not know anything of the home he inherited from his parents.¹⁷ In fact we have to move on to the Tudor age for the next phase of the site's history.

Weaver refers to 'an ambitious remodelling of the castle . . . by the Corbet owners of the sixteenth century.'¹⁸ Who were they? They were in direct male descent from their ancestors. By 1500 a third Robert Corbet was in possession not only of Moreton Corbet but also of estates centred upon Hopton Castle in the south of the county. His grandfather Roger had married the heiress Elizabeth Hopton (d. 1498) who also inherited property from her mother's Lucy estates. Robert Corbet III was under age when his father died in 1492 and the king, Henry VII, granted the valuable wardship to Sir Henry Vernon, lord of Haddon in Derbyshire and Tong in Shropshire;¹⁹ he was also controller of the household of the king's son and heir Arthur.²⁰ As was often the custom, Vernon married his ward to one of his daughters, Elizabeth. Two of his sons were married to Shropshire heiresses: daughters of Sir John Ludlow. They inherited Stokesay and Hodnet respectively. Corbet property and prestige were thus further enhanced by 1500. As a member of the Vernon household Robert Corbet knew the fine manor house of Haddon Hall, embellished by Sir Henry, and his newly rebuilt castle of Tong. Unfortunately we have no record of the home of Robert and Elizabeth at Moreton Corbet, but if we shift our attention from the castle to the nearby church we find a splendid monument to them in death — an altar tomb well worth consideration. There are several Vernon tombs at Tong church, one of which was 'made ther as (Sir Henry) appoynted'; his wife Lady Anne Talbot was reinterred there. The tomb, in a new chantry chapel, is in 'perpendicular' style, with effigies of the couple.²¹ Sir Henry died in 1515; two years earlier his son-in-law Robert Corbet had died; there are marked affinities between the tomb planned by Sir Henry and that at Moreton Corbet: the men are clad in armour, their wives in dress and mantle with wreathed headdress; angels support the women's pillows; Sir Robert has the Corbet raven at his head. His widow was not to join him for fifty years. Around their tomb are figures of their children, the eldest of whom, Roger, a minor at his father's death, became a ward of the king's friend Charles Brandon, created duke of Suffolk. This was an unhappy period in Roger Corbet's life, so that when he died (1538) he requested that his own heir be cared for by his uncle Richard and his grandmother, Elizabeth, a Vernon by birth.²²

John Leland made his famous itineraries c. 1535–1543. In an early book he writes of Cornwall, and 'the Castelle of Lanyhorne sumtyme a castel of 7 tourres, now decaying for lack of coverture . . . This land descendid by heires general to the best Corbets of Shropshir.' (It was part of the Lucy inheritance). In a later book Leland writes of Shropshire: 'From Shreusbiri to Haughmon Abbay . . . Thens ridyng partely thorough morisch grounde and pasture I came to Morton Corbet village, wher I saw a fair castel of Mr Corbettes.'²³ Regrettably, Leland gives no description of the castle. 'Mr Corbet' must be Roger (he was not knighted) or his son Andrew. Roger Corbet's father-in-law was an important courtier, Lord Windsor, Master of the Wardrobe. Roger and his family lived at their Buckinghamshire manor of Linslade so until their eldest son, Andrew, had possession of Moreton Corbet no further building work was undertaken.

At some date unknown in the mid-sixteenth century Andrew (who came of age in November 1543) undertook his re-building, re-facing the gatehouse and putting up a new east range, whose great hall was lit at the south end by a large mullioned and transomed window. Some of the outer wall of this building survives and there are traces of other windows and of fire-places. We can imagine a prestigious dwelling, befitting a man of Sir Andrew's status: he was knighted in 1547 for service in the Anglo-Scots war; he and his relations served as justices and members of parliament; and Sir Andrew himself was deputy to his friend Sir Henry Sidney, President of the Council in the Marches of Wales. It is worth noting also that Andrew's brother Robert, who married Jane Kynaston of Stanwardine, added an east wing to the hall-range of that house c. 1560.²⁴ Their brother Jerome would later add to the hall at Beslow.²⁵ By Elizabeth's reign new cultural influences were at work, to which Sir Andrew's eldest son, Robert, and a younger son, Vincent, were particularly open. Both went to Cambridge²⁶ and to the Middle Temple,²⁷ Robert to finish his gentleman's education and Vincent to study law as a profession: both are connected with the final phase of building at Moreton Corbet.

The most striking architectural survival at the site, and one which has occasioned most comment, is the shell

of the renaissance house. Its originator was Robert Corbet and it is not at all surprising when we consider his life. Born c. 1542, he entered Clare Hall, Cambridge at Easter 1559; in October 1561 he was admitted to the Middle Temple 'at the instance of Reginald Corbet, esquire, one of the Justices of the Queen's Bench' and Robert's great-uncle. Robert sat briefly in parliament, in 1563, with Reginald's brother Richard.²⁸ Instead of following the same course as his father Robert became a courtier and, again briefly, a diplomat. In September 1571 Sir Andrew sent his son to Lords Leicester and Burghley with a letter reporting the successful interception in Shropshire of money being sent to supporters of Mary Stuart in Scotland.²⁹ This would have brought the young man to the attention of these lords. He was in fact a distant kinsman of the Dudleys, of whom Leicester was the most influential, and through them of Philip Sidney, son of Mary Dudley, the earl's sister. Robert Corbet would later marry into the same circle.³⁰ Like Sidney, Robert Corbet was of Leicester's 'party' in politics and religion.

Apart from possible court connections, Robert Corbet spent time in London where his uncles Walter and Jerome, and later his brother Vincent, had chambers; in June 1569 Jerome was admitted to the Middle Temple chambers of his kinsman Lord Windsor. In the winter of 1573 and spring of 1574 Philip Sidney was at Venice where he met Robert Corbet. There is no evidence that Corbet travelled with Sidney, nor do we know whether his journey was of a private or an official nature. We do know that in April he left Venice for Vienna, with letters of introduction from Sidney to the distinguished scholar-diplomat Hubert Languet who was then at the imperial court of Maximilian II.³¹ From Vienna Corbet went on to Prague and may have called at Nuremberg and Augsburg — these were brief visits — in the course of his journey home. On his return he was accorded a welcome by the burgesses of Shrewsbury (winter 1574–5).³² Corbet's personal qualities and his devout protestantism resulted in his becoming a protégé of Walsingham and Cecil, Lord Burghley. In October 1575 he went as envoy to Antwerp to attempt to mediate with the Spanish governor Requesens; it was not Corbet's fault that the impossible mission failed. He was not a courtier in the subservient way, to judge from his plain speaking in a letter to the queen, advising her of the political and religious situation on the continent. His puritan tendencies would not have endeared him to Elizabeth either. For whatever reason he did not continue as a diplomat, but it is as well to note the extent of his foreign travels and career as diplomat because these are often exaggerated (never having been examined properly).³³

His contacts and experiences, in England and abroad, account sufficiently for his growing love of architecture, which is the salient feature in this discussion. In London there was Protector Somerset's house in the Strand as an early example of English renaissance style, and possibly the collection of books and drawings at Cecil House in the Strand, including plans of Longleat. Burghley, a patron of scholars and artists, had a great passion for buildings and gardens; his renaissance palaces of Burghley and Theobalds were then being built.³⁴ Other great houses, apart from Longleat, were Kirby Hall and Sir Christopher Hatton's new Holdenby, both in Northamptonshire.³⁵ It may be relevant that the Corbets had property in that county, Sir Andrew having acquired the manor of Dallington in 1570.³⁶ Robert Corbet must have been aware of the architecture that was the fashion in the 1570s. The house he was to build at Moreton Corbet was very modest in comparison with the great palaces mentioned, but it shares components of their style, most strikingly the windows and classical details. Malcolm Airs for one has remarked on 'the use of superimposed and engaged orders and the articulation of the south front by the full-height projecting bay windows'; only the execution of the carving betrays the 'provincial location'.³⁷ The carvings include emblems from Corbet heraldry, and the initials of Sir Andrew with the date 1579 — the year after he died and when Robert Corbet officially came into his property. Robert (he was not knighted) may have completed work on the gatehouse and also commemorated his father on the new building whose construction would necessitate some damage to the south end of the existing hall. The new range extended across the south side of the castle enclosure.

In March 1578, some months before Sir Andrew's death, a marriage settlement was drawn up at Moreton Corbet between Robert and Anne, daughter of Oliver Lord St John of Bletsoe, in Buckinghamshire; Robert's brother Vincent was a witness. The couple were given Linslade as their home.³⁸ Sir Andrew died on 16 August; early in 1579 Robert came into his inheritance and began building.³⁹ In May 1581 his uncle Jerome (probably only a few years older than his nephew) and his wife Dorothy formally entered on her property at Beslow⁴⁰ where they added a free-standing reception hall, traditionally timber-framed and jettied, in contrast with the stone building at Moreton. Jerome must have seen his nephew's house being built; a letter survives, signed by them both at Moreton in 1581, when they worked together on shire affairs.⁴¹ Two years later, in the spring of 1583, Robert visited Jerome's brother Walter who was ill in London. Both men died, and Robert was brought back to Moreton Corbet for burial.⁴² His wife and two small daughters must have stayed in the habitable part of the older building as the new one was unfinished. It was there that Robert's next brother, Richard, was said to have seized documents proving his claim to succeed to part of the property according to the old entail of the time of Fulk and Roger Corbet.⁴³ Robert's death, like Fulk's, brought about a division of the Corbet property as there was no son to succeed. The Hopton lands went to Robert's elder daughter, Elizabeth, later married to Sir Henry Wallop.⁴⁴

Richard Corbet had a survey made of Moreton and other manors in 1588.⁴⁵ It gives details of the castle and the house. There were two ancient towers ('keep' and gatehouse), the great kitchen between and a larder house, all with chambers above. Sir Andrew's hall was partly 'destroyed' at its south end (where it would abut on the new range). Robert Corbet's new house, a high and ample building of squared stone, carved with decoration, had a great chamber (*magna et ampla Aula*) with large windows, a large Parlour, large and small chambers on the upper floor, and a gallery. (The gallery, *deambulatorium sive Galiria*, may have been an outside viewing gallery, overlooking the formal gardens to the south, but there was an indoor gallery.) Only one window was glazed, and other parts of the house were not finished, but the building was roofed. The complex enclosed a courtyard, with outbuildings and barns, including a granary and a stable. To the south were two acres of gardens and orchards, with a small building called a 'kepe', several 'solars', and covered walks and arbours. Wilson-North's discussion of the garden 'earth-works' is valuable,⁴⁶ but his comments on the Corbet family contain several errors. Nor can one agree with words like 'pretentious' and 'ostentation' as applied to Moreton Corbet, taking into account Kirby Hall, Longleat, and the other Elizabethan palaces. In some errors he follows other writers (citing Camden's supposed comment and carelessly referring to Corbet's 'diplomatic missions all over the continent').

The much-quoted comment by Camden that Corbet built after the Italian model needs examination, not least because even an amateur's view of Moreton Corbet can see that it is English in style, with the *mélange* of French, Flemish and Italian features by this time amalgamated into many buildings. What did Camden actually say about Moreton Corbet? Examination of the early editions shows that in the 1589 edition of his *Britannia* the antiquarian knew but little of the Corbets:

Infra hanc ad Roden amniculum, MORETON CORBET Corbettorum castrum conspicitur, qui antiquae sunt nobilitatis in hoc agro . . .

By 1607 we have Camden's own additions, including this:

*. . . Morton Corbet castrum Corbettorum conspicitur, ubi nostra memoria Rob. Corbet Architecturae studio abreptus splendida magnificentia aedes inchoavit, ut latius et cultius habitaret, cum statim mors hinc demigrare et opera imperfectum relinquere iussit.*⁴⁷

The addition reveals personal knowledge of Robert Corbet, his passion for architecture, his ambition to build a magnificent house, so that he could live at ease and elegantly, and the beginning of this project before death snatched him away. There is no reference here to an Italian model. Camden was a frequent visitor to the home of Rowland Lytton at Knebworth (Herts), where a cultivated circle of friends included the letter-writer John Chamberlain. From these letters we learn of the affection of Lytton for his wife Anne and his step-daughters — the widow and daughters of Robert Corbet, and of Lytton's grief when his wife died. Chamberlain went to Knebworth soon after Anne's death in February 1602, 'where we found a sad and sorrowful house . . . The funerall was performed very orderly, and with goode solemnitie, and the more by Mr Clarencieux frendly presence.'⁴⁸ Clarenceux King of Arms was William Camden. The fine tomb put up by Lytton for his wife commemorates Robert Corbet and his children, as well as Lytton's own.⁴⁹ As for the phrase 'after the Italians model', this does not occur until the 1610 translation by Philemon Holland; it is said to have been done under Camden's direction, but we cannot be sure that all the changes and additions were authorized. In any case, what is more interesting is the realization that Camden was a friend of Anne Corbet and that she must have told him about Robert.

There is another point that is worth discussion. The survey of 1588 describes the new building as being covered with *tegulis ceruleis deportatis ex cornubia*. Blue Cornish slate (not tiles) was greatly prized as a superior roofing material. It had been widely used in southern England in the Middle Ages. Richard Carew's 1602 survey of Cornwall has this comment:⁵⁰

This slate is in substance thin, in colour fair, in weight light, in lasting strong, and generally carrieth so good regard, as (besides the supply for home provision) great store is yearly conveyed by shipping both to other parts of the realm, and also beyond the seas, into Brittany and the Netherlands.

The greatest concentration of quarries was between Delabole and Tintagel, the most famous type being 'Delabole blue'.⁵¹ A study of 'The use of blue slate for roofing in medieval England', by Jope and Dunning,⁵² describes how the slates were hung on wooden pegs (as at Totnes Castle), and how 'tiles called sklates of blue colour' were used at Windsor in 1481 — the phrase is remarkably close to that of the survey of Moreton Corbet. Welsh slates were the normal roofing material in adjacent counties, and may have been used on ancillary

buildings at Moreton Corbet. J B Lawson has also pointed out the use of local Harnage slate in Shrewsbury and nearby places, including Condober Hall; these slates were heavy.⁵³ Robert Corbet chose a superior slate as the crowning feature of his mansion. We do not know how he transported them — possibly by river from Bristol, nor any details of the transactions. However, the Corbets already had connections with Cornwall. Records show that Walter Corbet (described as ‘of the Middle Temple’ or ‘of London’) was engaged in land transactions in the county, in the parish of Tywardreath, in the 1550s and 1560s; an earlier grant refers to Anne widow of Roger Corbet of [Li]nchelade (Linslade), Robert Corbet’s grandmother.⁵⁴ Sales of land in Fowey were also made by Sir Andrew, Jerome, Walter and Robert Corbet in May 1565.⁵⁵ However his choice came about, Robert Corbet’s use of blue Cornish slate is an interesting detail of the new house at Moreton Corbet.

The story of the house did not end with the death of Robert. There is no evidence of any work being done on the house by Richard Corbet, who was much in debt. On his death in 1606 the remaining brother Vincent inherited the estate. He had been married to Frances Humphreston of Humphreston since about 1579: their eldest son Andrew was baptized at Moreton Corbet in 1580.⁵⁶ Work was then taking place and we may surmise that Vincent was interested in Robert’s plans, although he could not then have expected to inherit. Indeed he built himself a mansion at Acton Reynald, as recorded in a survey of 1615:

*... vocat le Manor Howse de Acton Reyner de novo nuper factum et edificat per ... Vinc. Corbett.*⁵⁷

At some point, Sir Vincent (knighted 1607) moved to Moreton Corbet, which he may have completed — the gables are of later date than the main part of the house; they appear in a drawing made by John Smythson in 1627,⁵⁸ but may be several years earlier. Sir Vincent is described as ‘of Moreton Corbet’ by 1607. His elder son made his home at Acton Reynald.⁵⁹ The younger son, Robert, made Humphreston his home. After Sir Vincent’s death in 1623 an inventory was made of his goods at Moreton Corbet; the rooms mentioned correspond to those of the survey of 1588.⁶⁰ The old hall and the new hall were in use; in the new house were the new parlour, the new dining room, Sir Vincent’s chamber, and a gallery over the new hall. His son, Sir Andrew, filled Moreton Corbet with his large family after his father’s death, and Acton Reynald was leased, to Sir Vincent’s ‘kinsmen’, William Younge and Edward Owen.⁶¹ When Sir Andrew died in May 1637 his heir Vincent was at Oxford and not yet of age. Dame Elizabeth, Sir Andrew’s widow, and her mother were still at Moreton Corbet. The manor courts were held in her name, presided over by the steward, Samuel Wood.⁶² During the Civil War the second Sir Vincent (the first baronet) garrisoned Moreton Corbet and his family went to live at Acton Reynald.⁶³

There have been certain misapprehensions about the fate of the house in the seventeenth century (apart from the nonsense of ‘the Puritan’s curse’) — that it was totally destroyed, or sold. It did suffer heavy attack in the autumn of 1644. On 9 September Sir William Brereton wrote from Tarvin to the Committee of Both Kingdoms to report that on the previous night the garrison of Wem had been successful in taking Moreton Corbet; the Wem force consisted of about 80 musketeers, mostly Cheshire men, and 50 horse. After an hour’s fight the garrison surrendered: there were several officers (but not Sir Vincent who was active elsewhere) and ‘about 70 common soldiers horse and foot, 6 barrels of gunpowder, two horse colours, and some other good prizes.’⁶⁴ Clearly some damage must have been done, but once the war was over there were repairs, such as carrying timber ‘to mend the dyning rome window at morton’.⁶⁵ A heavy composition fine forced Sir Vincent to leave Moreton Corbet: first for Linslade, then for London where he died in December 1656. His mother and some of her other children still lived at Acton Reynald; her second son, Richard (a captain in the Civil War) lived at Shawbury Park. But Moreton Corbet was not yet abandoned: the hearth-tax roll for 1672 shows that Acton Reynald was assessed for fifteen hearths, and Moreton Corbet for three, in the name of Arthur Corbet — another of Elizabeth’s sons, who helped her run the estate. Chimneys at Moreton Corbet bear the initials SVC and the date 1667, so repairs must have been carried out then, in the time of another Sir Vincent, the second baronet.

The next generation saw another division of the estate, when the third baronet, another Sir Vincent, died just before his sixteenth birthday, in 1688. His sister Beatrice, married to John Kynaston, inherited Moreton Corbet, Acton Reynald (her home), Linslade and other property. Richard Corbet and his family, of Shawbury Park, perpetuated the main line of Corbet. He still had rights in Moreton Corbet church, where he built a funerary chapel in 1696.⁶⁶ Both Corbets and Kynastons were buried at Moreton Corbet. Beatrice’s son Corbet Kynaston exhausted a fortune and died in debt in 1740; an act was passed in 1748 ordering the sale of some of his estates.⁶⁷ Moreton Corbet and Linslade were bought back by Andrew Corbet of Shawbury (d. 1757); his son Andrew (d. 1796) bought back Acton Reynald.⁶⁸ The younger Andrew was a very popular bachelor squire of Shawbury; his heir was his nephew and namesake, Andrew (b. 1766) who inherited the reunited properties in 1796. One of his first actions was to commission a leading Shrewsbury architect, John Hiram Haycock, to draw up plans for a possible restoration of Moreton Corbet.⁶⁹ The drawings show a pleasing combination of the original renaissance style with the new classicism, but the project must have been considered not feasible.

Instead Andrew Corbet had work done at Acton Reynald, where he moved soon after 1800. At about the same time he commissioned the brilliant young artist Thomas Girtin to commemorate the ancestral home with two views, taken from the north, to include features of several centuries.⁷⁰ The plans, the paintings, and the ruins survive, as does the story of the family, when teased from the surviving documents.

Notes

- 1 R W Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, x, 184
- 2 Ibid vii, 103
- 3 J J West, 'Wattlesborough Tower, Alberbury', *The Archaeological Journal*, **138**, 1981, 33–4
- 4 *Cal Chancery Warrants 1244–1326*, 65
- 5 *Inq Post Mortem Edward I*, vol **IV**, 109, 20 Feb, 31 Ed I
- 6 *IPM Edward I*, no 85, Thomas Corbet
- 7 Ibid no 635, Robert Corbet, 14 November, 1300 (writ)
- 8 *Pipe Rolls*, Edward I (sheriffs' returns)
- 9 *Cal Patent Rolls Edward I 1292–1301*, 112, 113, 171, 309, 507, 1895
- 10 H T Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Shropshire', *Trans Shrops Arch Soc*, **53**, 1925/26
- 11 Eyton, *op cit* vii, 103
- 12 G E C *Complete Peerage*, 2, 417–8
- 13 *Cal Patent Rolls Edward III*, various volumes
- 14 *Cal Pat Rolls Edward III*, 1358–61, 20 Nov, 1359
- 15 'Shropshire Inquisitions', *Trans Shrops Arch Soc*, 2nd ser xi, 1899, 267–8
- 16 *IPM XV*, 1–7 Richard II, no 742, 10 Aug 1382, and XVI, 7–15 Richard II, no 947, 14 Feb 1390
- 17 For his various commissions, see *Cal Pat Rolls Richard II*
- 18 O J Weaver, 'Moreton Corbet Castle', *The Archaeological Journal*, **138**, 1981, 44
- 19 *Cal Pat. Rolls Henry VII*, 13 May 1496 and 10 Dec 1498
- 20 Hist. MSS Commission, 12th Report Appendix Part IV, 14–15; *MSS of the Duke of Rutland*, I
- 21 W A Carrington, 'The Will of Sir Henry Vernon of Haddon', *Jnl Derby Arch and Hist Soc* **XVIII**, 1896
- 22 The will of Roger Corbet is printed in A E Corbet, *The Family of Corbet*, 270
- 23 Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed), *The Itinerary of John Leland*, Books I–III, 1907, 199; Books VII–VIII, 1909, 1
- 24 'Stanwardine Hall', *Soc. of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 1983; Also Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle*, (Penguin), 1981, 85
- 25 E Mercer and P Stamper, 'Beslow Hall: the Demolition of a Rival to Pitchford', *Trans Shrops Arch Soc* **LXV**, 1987, 56–63
- 26 J A Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part I, 1, 396–7
- 27 For details of the Corbets at the Middle Temple I am greatly indebted to Mrs J E Edgell, Librarian and Keeper of Records, The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple
- 28 *The History of Parliament, The House of Commons*, 1558–1603
- 29 Francis Edwards, *The Marvellous Chance*, 1968, 160–1
- 30 The Corbet-Dudley relationship derived from the first marriage of Edmund Dudley (exec 1510), to a sister of Andrew Lord Windsor; Philip Sidney called Robert Corbet 'cousin'. Corbet's wife was a kinswoman of the wife of Ambrose Dudley earl of Warwick, brother of Leicester.
- 31 Steuart A. Pears (ed), *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, 1845, 50, 77.
- 32 Bailiffs' accounts, Shrewsbury, 1574–75, *SRO* 505
- 33 For details of his embassy to Antwerp see *State Papers, Foreign and Domestic*, Elizabeth I; and *State Papers: Rome I*; Corbet's letter to the queen, British Library Harley MSS, 285 fo. 14
- 34 B W Beckingsale, *Burghley: Tudor Statesman*, 1967, 263–5
- 35 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire*, 1961; DOE handbook on Kirby Hall, G H Chettle, revised P Leach, 3rd ed, 1980; Eric St John Brooks, *Sir Christopher Hatton*, 1946, 156–164; for Longleat, Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 1966
- 36 *Cal Pat Rolls Elizabeth I*, V, 1569–72, no 1462, 1 Dec 1570
- 37 Malcolm Airs, 'Moreton Corbet Castle', *Soc. of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 1988, 20–21
- 38 Acton Reynald Collection, *SRO* 322
- 39 *Cal Pat Rolls Elizabeth I*, VIII, 1578–80, 10 Feb 1579
- 40 Ibid, IX, 1580–82, 6 May 1581
- 41 Shrewsbury Public Library, deeds, among Mytton papers, 16136–16159A
- 42 Moreton Corbet parish register, 28 July 1583
- 43 Case papers, *SRO* 322 box 71
- 44 Settlement of dispute over property in the reign of James I, see deeds etc Acton Reynald collection *SRO* 322
- 45 Moreton Corbet court book, 1, *SRO* 322 box 2
- 46 W R Wilson-North, 'Formal Garden Earthworks at Moreton Castle, Shropshire', in Bowden *et al* (ed), *From Cornwall to Caithness* British Archaeological Reports, **209**, 1989. I am grateful to Paul Stamper for bringing this article to my attention
- 47 I am grateful to the staff of the British Library for making the early editions of Camden available to me
- 48 S Williams (ed), 'Letters Written by John Chamberlain during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', *Camden Society*, **79**, 1861, letter XLVI
- 49 J E Cussans, *History of Hertfordshire*, II, 117, 1874–78, (reprinted 1972)
- 50 F E Halliday (ed), Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall* [1602], 1969, 87
- 51 *VCH Cornwall*, I, 519–522
- 52 E M Jope and G C Dunning, *The Antiquaries Journal*, **XXXIV**, no 3–4, 1954, 209–217
- 53 J B Lawson, 'Harnage Slates and other Roofing Materials . . .', *Trans Shrops Arch Soc*, **LXIV**, 1985, 116–8
- 54 I am indebted to Angela Broome, Librarian, Royal Institution of Cornwall, for advice on Cornish slates, for a copy of the article by Jope and Dunning, and for the Corbet references: HA/7/3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 16; HB/13/1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13
- 55 *Cal Pat Rolls Elizabeth I*, May 1565
- 56 Moreton Corbet parish register 28 August 1580
- 57 Moreton Corbet court book 2, 1607–1616, *SRO* 322 box 2

- 58 Weaver, *op cit*
59 Acton Reynald Collection *SRO* 322, deeds, 6 July 5 James I
60 *SRO* 322 box 59. The inventory is printed in *Shropshire Notes and Queries*, 3, 1894, 60–67
61 *SRO* 604 box 18
62 *SRO* 322 box 1
63 W Phillips (ed), 'The Otley Papers relating to the Civil War', *Trans Shrops Arch Soc*, 2nd ser **VI**, (1894)
64 *Cal State Papers Dom Charles I*, 19, 1644, 485
65 Steward's accounts 1649 *SRO* 322 box 68
66 Letter from Bishop of Cov and Lich *SRO* 322 box 1
67 Private Act, 21 Geo II c 22
68 *SRO* 322 and Stobbs Collection *SRO* 163
69 The book of drawings by Haycock is now in the possession of Shrewsbury School; I am grateful to J B Lawson, Librarian, for allowing me to see them
70 The watercolours are privately owned. One was reproduced by William Pearson in his *Antiquities of Shropshire* (1824). Thomas Girtin died in 1802; his sketching tours are difficult to reconstruct but he was in North Wales in the summer of 1798 and in the north of England in 1799

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Sir John and Lady Corbet for their help, and for allowing me to use the documents in the Acton Reynald Collection. I would also like to acknowledge the help given to me on various occasions by staff at the Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury, the Shropshire Record Office, and the Victoria County History, Salop.