

Report and Documentary History for
Pypes Mill, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

Site Code: STO-G

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of the house from the south.

© *N W Alcock and contributors 2012. Copyright in this document is retained under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved including publication. Copyright in illustrations is reserved to the original copyright holder.*

Oxbow Books

STO-G: PYPES MILL, STONELEIGH, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 3280 7388

Survey Date: 1974

By: Nat Alcock

Illustrations:

	<i>Page</i>
1. View of the house	1
2. Ground floor plan	2
3. Section of truss T2	3

Table

1. Tenants of Pypes Mill	5
2. Probate inventory of William Pype	5

References: Alcock, N. W. (1993) *People at home: Living in a Warwickshire village, 1500-1800*, Chichester: Phillimore.

For documentary source references, see the bibliography of primary sources.

Abbreviations:

SCLA Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon

WCRO Warwickshire County Record Office.

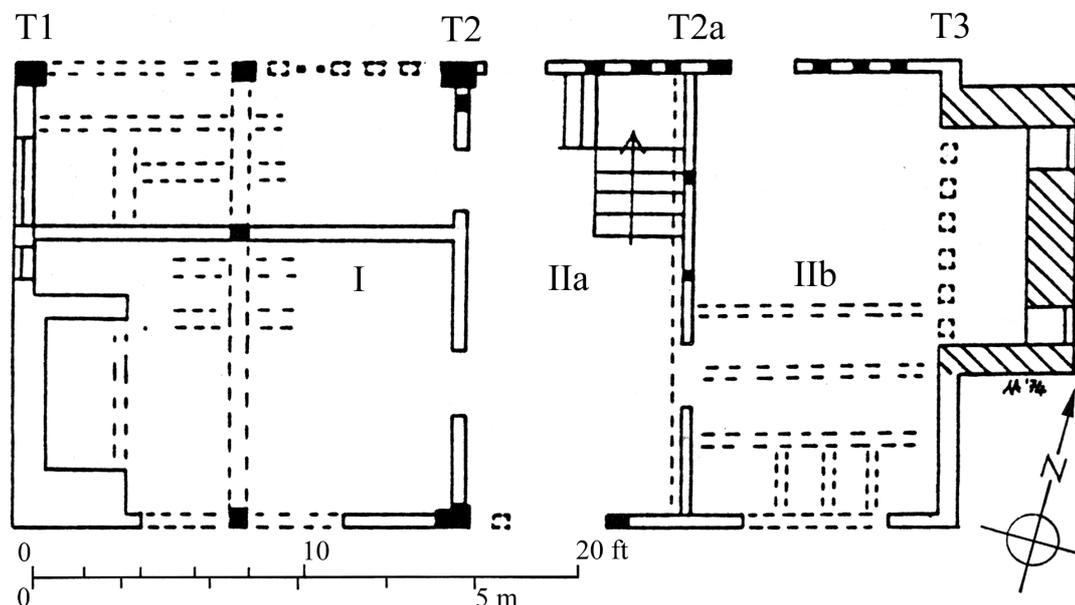


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: The house is close-studded with the most substantial timbers of any house in the parish, very unusual in character for Warwickshire in which small scantling timbers were generally used. It is box-framed, with a principal rafter roof. It was originally of two unequal bays, a large open hall (bays IIa-b) and a floored service/chamber, and its construction is dated from documentary evidence to 1490.

PHASE 2: Comparatively soon after building, and certainly by 1557, it was updated. An intermediate partition (T2a) was inserted in the hall, dividing it into a small hall (bay IIa) and a kitchen (IIb). Somewhat later, a substantial stone chimney was added at the east end of the house.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The walls are close-studded with exceptionally large timbers, standing on a high sill (mostly removed) and with intermediate storey posts; the studs are 8in across, set at 8in centres. The mortices for the two mullions of an original three-light window survive in the rear wall of bay I. The present south door position is original, and the house presumably had an matching nort door (now a modern opening). The central truss (T2) has an arch-braced cambered tiebeam and collar, with queen posts between

tiebeam and collar. The principal rafters cross to support the diagonally-set ridge. The purlins are trenched at the central truss, but are butted at each gable. The roof over the original hall (central and east rooms) is very heavily soot-blackened, and it seems that truss T2 was not fully closed, as the roof in bay I is also sooted, though more lightly. The west room has an unchamfered transverse beam morticed into the intermediate posts, with large axial joists (8in across at 23in centres); a trimmer defines the original stair position. The partition in this room is not original, but could be early.

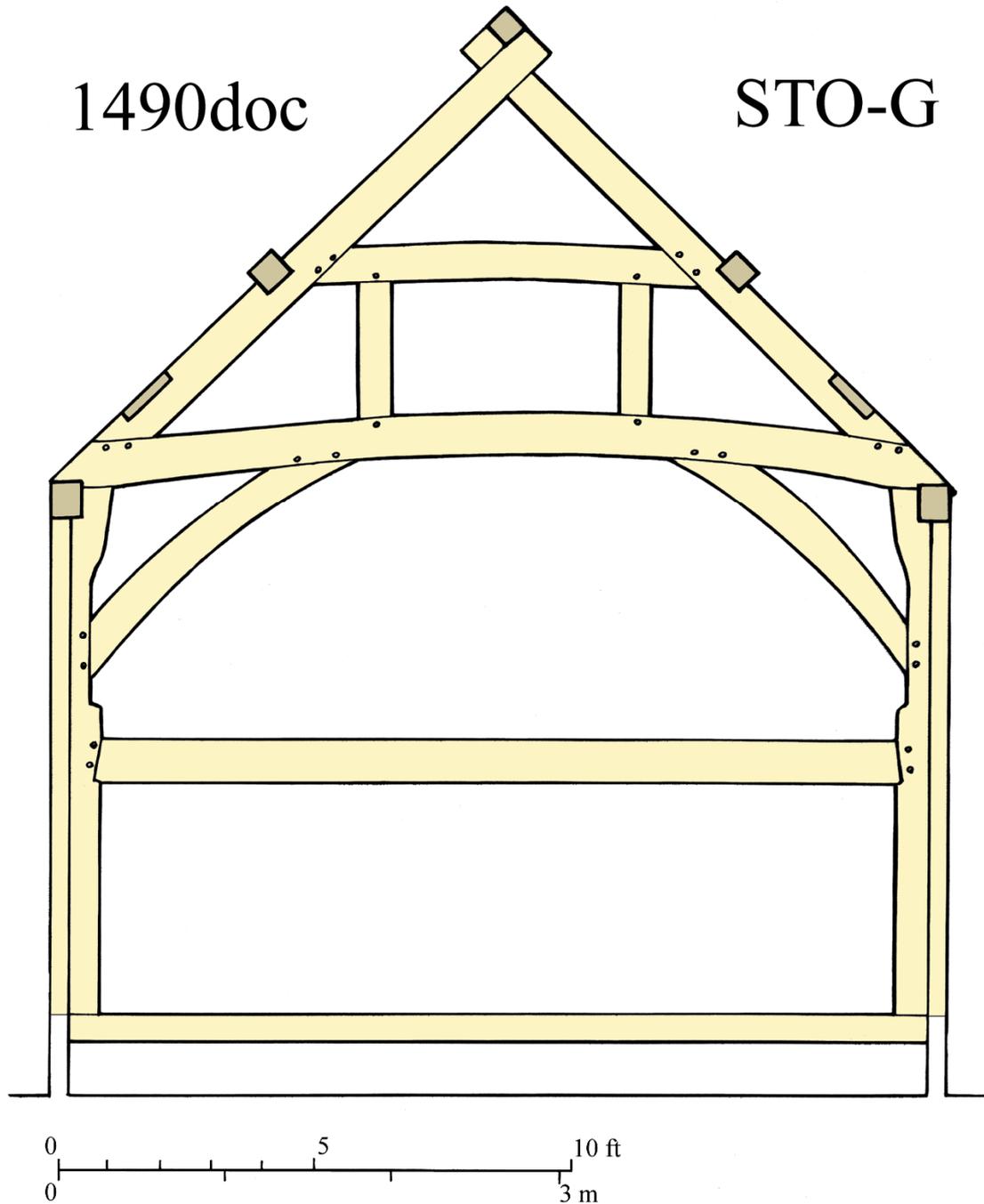


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2.

PHASE 2: The partition between the central and east room is an insertion, with flimsy studs, presumably added when the end chimney and floor were inserted; its infill comprises clean daub but over sooty wattles, implying that it was re-daubed after the chimney was added. The east room has a massive sandstone stack, inserted as it cuts across the original stud mortices. Its ceiling joists are 6in across at

28in centres, with a trimmer for a second stair on the south side. The present central stair is modern. The north door in the kitchen has a chamfered jamb, but appears to be an early addition rather than original, presumably dating from when the house was re-planned.

DATING

This house is dated to 1490 (probably the summer) from the documentary evidence described below.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

This is one of the most significant of the medieval houses in Stoneleigh, because of the survival of a deed relating to it dated 10 September 1490.¹ By this deed, the rector of Ashow endowed an obit in the Abbey church of Stoneleigh. He had:

newe made and reryd up a watyr mille called a walke mylle with flodeyates and a newe house with ij bayes ... in a croft callyd Rabcroft bysyde Fynham Brygge

The location given mill identifies this as the present Pypes Mill, and the standing structure is clearly the rector's two-bay house. In paying for the mill to be built, presumably during the preceding summer, the rector had spared no expense, as is clear from the substantial timbers used.

The fulling (*walk*) mill was leased in the early sixteenth century to two successive members of the Pype family who gave it their name. After the Dissolution, it passed to Katherine, Duchess of Suffolk and was bought from her by John Hales of Coventry, and sold by him to Thomas and Elizabeth Gregory of Coventry in 1550; it was sold to Lord Leigh in 1683.² The Hearth Tax assessments for a later tenant, Thomas Grissold, initially list two hearths. He is then said to have stopped one up.³

Thomas Pype's inventory (1544) does not name the rooms, although it seems to list the contents by room. Unlike the succeeding inventory, it does not include any group of furnishings that might have been in a brewhouse. That of his kinsman William (1557) complements the structural evidence for this precisely dated house, listing six rooms

Haul, Kechen, Bruehousse, Chamber, Celer, Other Celler (text on p. 5).

For the kitchen, the furnishings and especially its painted cloths suggest that it was not a detached subsidiary building. Rather, the conversion of the house to its present form had probably taken place, giving three ground floor rooms, chamber, hall and kitchen. The small central hall would still have been open to the roof but the kitchen chimney and upper floor had been inserted (with the separate stair in the position shown by the ceiling joists). This would have led to the 'other celler', in contrast to the original one over the chamber. The brewhouse, apparently added by William, was probably in a separate building with access from the rear door of the kitchen. It is notable that these developments converted a smaller than usual medieval house (two bays, though generous in size) into one of standard plan, with rather small rooms. Clearly this made the house more convenient for tenants of middling social status. The extra space was perhaps needed in the first instance for Thomas Pype's widow who by his will was permitted to lodge in the house. Accommodation was also needed for the apprentices (also mentioned though not named in his will). They may have bedded down in the mill itself, but a room with its own access over the service end of a house was traditionally the one used by servants,⁴ so they may have slept in the 'other celler'.

¹ SCLA, DR10/996; see also DR18/3/52/37a, the lease by the Abbot of Stoneleigh, dated 10 March 1492.

² SCLA, DR10/1000; DR10/1010.

³ WCRO, QS11/1; TNA, E179/259/9.

⁴ C.Carson, 'Segregation in vernacular buildings', *Vernacular Architecture*, 7 (1976), 24-29.

Table 1. Tenants of Pypes Mill

Date	Rent	Name	Notes
1497	£4 6s 8d	James Tompson	'for newe myll'
1522	£4 10s	Thomas Pype	Lease for 60 years (SCLA, DR 10/997; DR18/1/755)
1550- 1557	£4 10s	William Pyppe	Sale to Thomas Gregory (DR 10/100); will and inventory of William Pyppe
1571	£10	John Griffyn	Lease for 31 years (SCLA, DR 10/1002)
1583	£10	Symon Yeate	Lease for 21 years (SCLA, DR 10/1005)

Table 2. Probate inventory of William Pype.

He left his lease of the mill and all his goods to his wife Katren and son John, but his overseers were to take them over for the latter's benefit if Katren supported her brethren with them.

Inventory appraised by Peter Evotte and Wyllyam Lee, 16 February 1556[7].

In the Haul

2 Tabulles, 2 formis, one chere, 4 qwyscions; on halmere, pentyt clothes 5 0

In the Kechen

5 Pentyt [cloths, -] platers, 3 socers, a brason mortar, a pestell, a latron bason, a chafynge dysche; 4 candylstyckes, 2 brasse pottes, 2 posnettes, 4 brasse pannis, a caldren; 2 spyttes, 2 goub-yrones; a pere of pottehokes and hengges of yron 1 0 0

In the Bruhousse

3 Lomes, 2 paylles, 4 tubbis, dyshes; trenchers, a steppefatte, a bultyg wyche [*boulting which*]; a kymnell, a chyrene, 2 wylles, a troyght, a tanker; cuppes and pottes 5 0

In the Chamber

A bedsted, a matrys, a coverlet, 2 bolsturs, a blanket, 5 pere of hurden schettes; one pere of flaxon schettes, a dyapur burdeclothe; a hourdon burdeclothe, 2 flaxon towelles, a lenen testur, a cheste, a coffer, a balons, 2 pentyt clothes, wyeght stones of ledde [*weights*] 1 6 8

In Aperell

One clothe gowne, 6 clothe cottis, a wolstyd cotte, a dublet, 2 pere of housse, a pere of bottes; a pere of schoyes [*shoes*] 13 4

In the Celer

Two bedstyddes, a feturbed, a flockebedde, a maturys, 4 coverlettes, 2 bolsturs of fedurs; a pello, 2 testyrs, 2 chestes 1 6 8

In a other Celler

A beddestydde, a laver, and 20 pounce of lede; 4 pounce of woll, 3 pounce of flockes 5 0

In Cattell

2 Kyne, 2 herlynge [*yearling*] calves, 3 6 0

2 Mares, 5 colttes 4 0 0

33 Scheppe, of the qwych 20 be hoyes [*hogs? (yearlings)*] 6 13 4

Total 15 15 0