

the construction of the nave of that cathedral, and it is dated 1215-1220 by reliable documents. The change in the masonry occurs at the sixth pier, going westward from the central tower crossing, and the use of the secret notched-lap in the roofs above the vaults in both triforium-aisle and nave proper coincides exactly with this. It appears, therefore, that the adoption of covered notches is exactly dated between 1215 and 1220 in a great church of first quality, and that the roof over the nave at Syde Church was constructed before this change took place. The immediate importance of this discovery is that the use of crown-posts with collar-purlins can be shown quite definitely to have begun a little before 1250, an assumption previously disputed by a majority of students of such matters; and secondly it may be possible to shorten the hypothetical time-lapse between structural modifications in great cathedrals and tiny parish churches.

C. A. HEWETT

PLANT REMAINS IN THE 15TH-CENTURY CLOISTERS OF THE COLLEGE OF THE VICARS CHORAL, HEREFORD (PL. XII)

During 1970 alterations were commenced at no. 1a, The Cloisters, Hereford. This forms part of the building of the college for the vicars choral, who first received their charter in 1395,²¹ and the building dates between two and three years after 1474, when the land was given by the bishop for the erection of the cloisters. Underneath the 19th-century plaster on the inner wall of the cloister-walk, upright timber framings have been exposed with wattle-and-daub between (PL. XII). Owing to the foresight of Mr. F. C. Morgan, the cathedral lay-librarian, samples of the wattle-and-daub were saved for analysis.

The main timbers were constructed of *Quercus robur*, the oak, as were the pegs inserted into holes or grooves in the upright timbers. The wattle was composed of hazel switches, *Corylus avellana*, which sometimes measured over two metres in length.

The daub consisted of mud (Old Red Sandstone marl) mixed with 'straw'. The plants were well preserved, and by careful separation in water it was possible to identify the species. All the plants were grasses and the following species were noted with their relative amounts:

	dry weight %
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	61
<i>A. tenuis</i>	10
<i>A. ? canina</i>	2
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	18
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	6
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	3

These species would be present in rough grasslands, probably waterside meadows. All the plants were vegetative apart from the remains of old inflorescences of *Poa*, and this suggests that the grass was cut before the summer. No caryopses were present.

Embedded in the daub was a plum-stone. Although the possibility cannot be ruled out that the stone came from a seedling hybrid plum that existed in the wild, the stone closely resembles those of the Reine-Claude de Moissac in general shape, although their facial ridge is not as well developed as on the Hereford stone. It had however similarities with several Reine-Claude cultivars, and these were among some of the earliest plums introduced into this country.

The Reine-Claude plum is known in Britain as the Gage plum. It originated in the region of Armenia, and was carried across the Mediterranean into Europe via Italy. The name Reine-Claude was given because it was thought to have been introduced

²¹ G. Marshall, 'The college of vicars choral in Hereford and some recent discoveries', *Ann. Report Friends of Hereford Cathedral*, vi (1939), 20-28.

into France during the reign of Francis I (1494-1547), and it was named after his Queen. The British name Green-gage owes its supposed origin to the Gage family. Sir Thomas Gage of Hengrave Hall, near Bury St. Edmunds, obtained it from his brother, a Catholic priest living in Paris, at the beginning of the 18th century. Hogg²² refuted this and said that it must have existed in this country for considerably more than a century before this, and it is now thought that it was introduced into France before the time of Francis I. Simmonds²³ gives more detail of the Gage family story.

The close similarity to the Reine-Claude plum poses the interesting speculation that the single Hereford stone may well represent an early accurate dating for that plum in this country. Next to the college of the vicars choral is the bishop's garden, and the stone boundary-wall well antedates the college. Hereford Cathedral was a secular foundation, and had close associations with the continent all through the middle ages; even some of the stone used in 11th-century building is said to have come from Caen. After 1066 the abbeys of Lyre and Corneilles in France were given endowments in the diocese of Hereford, and the abbots became ex-officio prebendaries of the cathedral, represented by vicars in the choir. In the hundred years before the building of the cloisters several bishops were connected with the continent, e.g. John Gilbert (1375-89) was often in France on state business, Robert Mascall (1404-16) went on various embassies to foreign courts and Thos. Poltone (1420-21) was consecrated in Florence. From the Norman conquest to the time of these bishops there were close links between the bishops and France, Flanders, Lorraine and Savoy.²⁴

J. T. WILLIAMS

PRIOR MORE'S FISHPONDS

Fishponds were a common amenity on large medieval lay and monastic estates, and a great many of them survive to this day. Fish was a much more important item of food in the middle ages and later than it now is; and fresh fish was very dear, in spite of prolific fish-production in the unpolluted waters of those days. The pond cultivation of fish was even financed by the London fishmongers.²⁵ But little published material is available to tell us how they were managed and thus enable us to make some comparison with modern fish-culture. William More, prior of Worcester from 1518 to 1536, had several fishponds at his granges at Battenhall and Grimley (including Hallow), and he built a moat around his manor at Crowle in 1533 at a total cost of £8 19s. 3d. He kept a journal²⁶ in which he gives itemized accounts of his expenditure on the ponds, and of the results obtained, which tell us something about their management.²⁷

In only one case, that of Crowle Moat, do we know the area of the pond. The identity of many of the other ponds is confused by changes of name, and the Worcestershire County Archivist kindly tells me that the named ponds cannot now be traced; Noake²⁸ could still see the outlines of several ponds at Lower Battenhall in 1866, though the newly-built railway crossed the site on an embankment. We can only infer that some of the ponds must have been small because they were emptied by baling out, while others must have been larger because the prior had boats on them.

Since the areas of the ponds are not known (with the exception of Crowle Moat) the

²² R. Hogg, *The Fruit Manual* (London, 1884), p. 704.

²³ A. Simmonds, 'The origin of the name Green Gage', *J. Roy. Hort. Soc.*, LXX (1945), 240-1.

²⁴ I am grateful to Mr. F. C. Morgan for his interest, to Dr. D. F. Cutler of the Jodrell Laboratory, Kew, who confirmed the identification of hazel, and to Mrs. A. M. Withnall of the National Fruit Trials, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, for her comments on the plum-stone.

²⁵ Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966), p. 88.

²⁶ *Journal of Prior William More*, edited for the Worcestershire Historical Society by Ethel S. Fegan (Mitchell Hughes & Clarke, London, 1914).

²⁷ I am very grateful to Mr. R. Gilyard-Beer for drawing my attention to this fascinating journal.

²⁸ John Noake, *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester* (Longman & Co., London, 1866), p. 155.