

THE HISTORY OF WORKSOP

PART ONE: PREHISTORIC AND MEDIEVAL WORKSOP

The earliest known occupation of Worksop was in the Neolithic period. Polished stone axes have been found in Eastgate, at Kilton and on the north side of Windmill Lane. There was possibly a Bronze Age settlement in Gateford. Later, there were Iron Age and Roman settlements including field systems on several sites such as Raymoth Lane where excavations in 2004 uncovered a pottery kiln. A Roman lead coffin was found at Gateford. An Anglo-Saxon 9th century strap end was found near Sparken Hill.



The Roman coffin from Gateford



The 9th century strap end

Please go to **Worksop Extended Urban Survey** for more information on the archaeology and urban growth of the town.

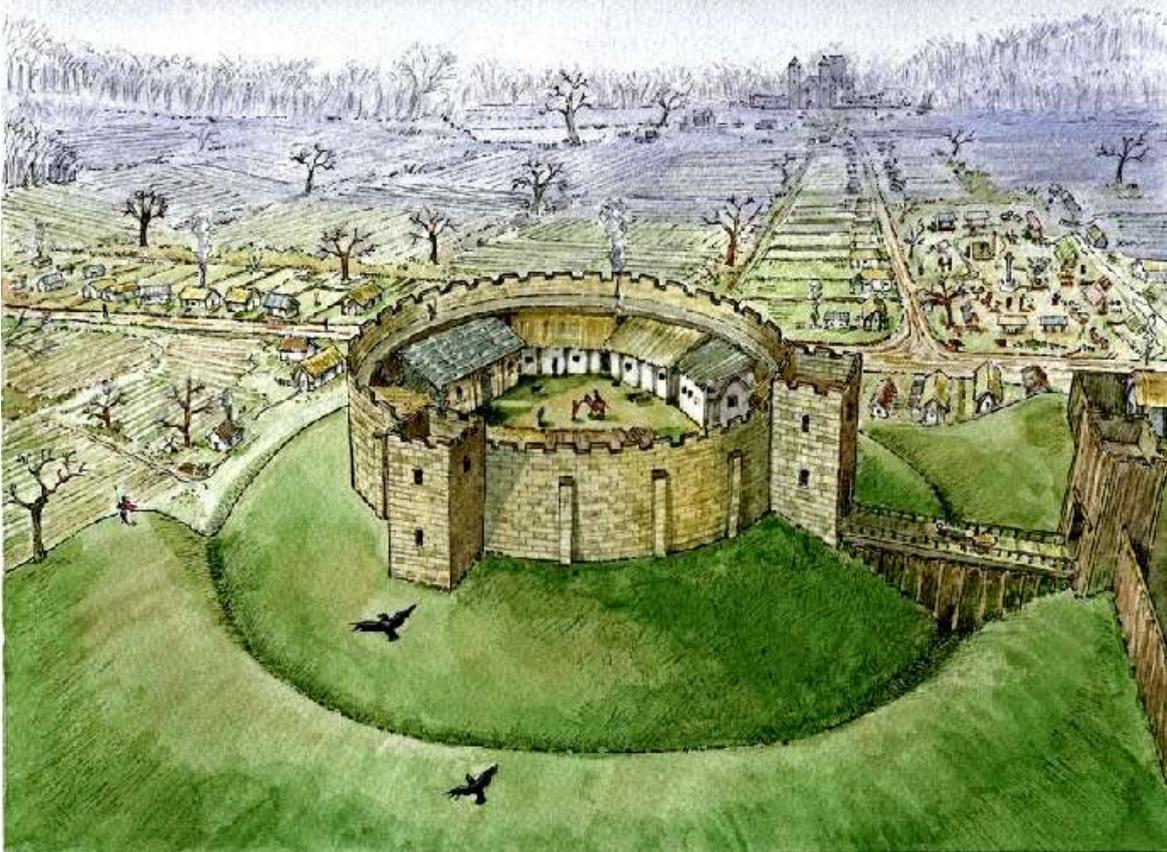
The name Worksop is derived from Wyrce's valley. Elsi, son of Cauchin or Kaskin, was the Saxon lord of the manor of Worksop listed in The Domesday Survey. Robert White in 'Worksop and The Dukery Records' states that Elsi was a person of distinction who had Sac, Soc, Toll and Thaim, which meant that he could collect rents and administer the law. White suggests that Elsi would almost certainly have had a hall at Worksop. Saxon halls were of wood and often built on raised ground. Elsi's hall might have been the moated house to the east of Radford, later called Jesus House, or alternatively, he may have had a motte and bailey where the castle mound still remains.

After Saxon uprisings against William the Conqueror between 1068 and 1070, William took the land from Elsi and gave it to his friend Roger de Busli who had accompanied William from Normandy. The entry in Domesday Book of 1086 states:

'The Land of Roger de Busli. Bassetlaw wapentake. In Worksop Alsige [Elsi] had 3 carucates of land to the geld. There Roger has 1 plough in lordship and 22 freemen on 12 bovates of this land and 24 villagers and 8 smallholders who have 22 ploughs and 7 acres of meadow. Woodland pasture 2 leagues long and 3 furlongs broad. Value before 1066 £8; now £7.'

Three carucates are about 300 acres. The woodland pasture was about 720 acres. In the Domesday Book Worksop is also listed as paying 2 pence to the King in the list of Shire customs which may indicate that there was already a church in the town. Therefore before the Norman Conquest, Worksop was already a substantial settlement.

At the time of the Domesday survey, Worksop was tenanted by Roger, the man of Roger de Busli. Roger de Busli, whose name comes from a place near Rouen in Normandy, was given, by William the Conqueror, extensive estates including 174 manors in Nottinghamshire and also land in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. He founded Blyth Abbey in 1088 and built Tickhill Castle.



An interpretation of Worksop Castle in Medieval times. The Priory is visible at the bottom of Potter Street with the market place on the right.

Castle Hill, Worksop is a motte and bailey castle built after the Norman Conquest in order to control the existing Anglo-Saxon town of "Werchesope". It dates from the late eleventh to early twelfth century. It was built by either Roger de Busli, or his successor William de Lovetot.

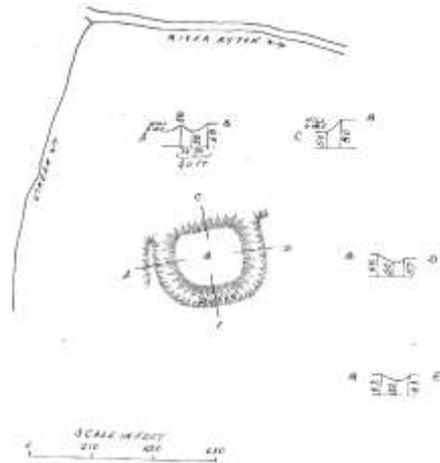
The motte or mound was surrounded by a massive defensive ditch and an exterior "counterscarp" bank. The River Ryton originally ran along the line of Newcastle Avenue, at the base of the castle mound. On the summit of the motte was a large, stone shell keep in which were buildings such as a gatehouse, chapel and great hall. A wooden bridge connected the motte to another fortified enclosure known as the bailey. The bailey is now lost beneath the modern car park. This enclosure contained buildings such as stables, living accommodation, and kitchens. Castle Street was known as Ward Lane until the 19th century and indicates that a ward house or guard house would have been situated there, on the main entrance to the castle.

By the late twelfth century the castle and manor had passed by marriage to the Furnival family. The site would have functioned as an administrative centre for the manor, town and market of Worksop.

During the 1540s the scholar John Leland travelled through England recording ancient monuments. Leland visited Worksop Castle which he described as : “Cleane downe and scant knowen wher it was. The stones of the Castel were fetchid, as sum say, to make the fair lodge in Wyrkesoppe Parke.” He goes on to say : “I am of the opinion that the Chanons [the monks of Radford Priory] had the ruins of the Castil stones to make the closure of their large waulles.” It is clear that by the mid sixteenth century the castle had been completely demolished. Leland lays the blame on the local monks because his travels were funded by Henry VIII, who had recently dissolved Radford Priory. Although it is not clear who demolished the castle, by this period, stone from the site had been reused for building projects in the town.



Above Left: Kelk's map of Worksop of 1775 showing the Castle mound.



A plan of the Castle made in 1911

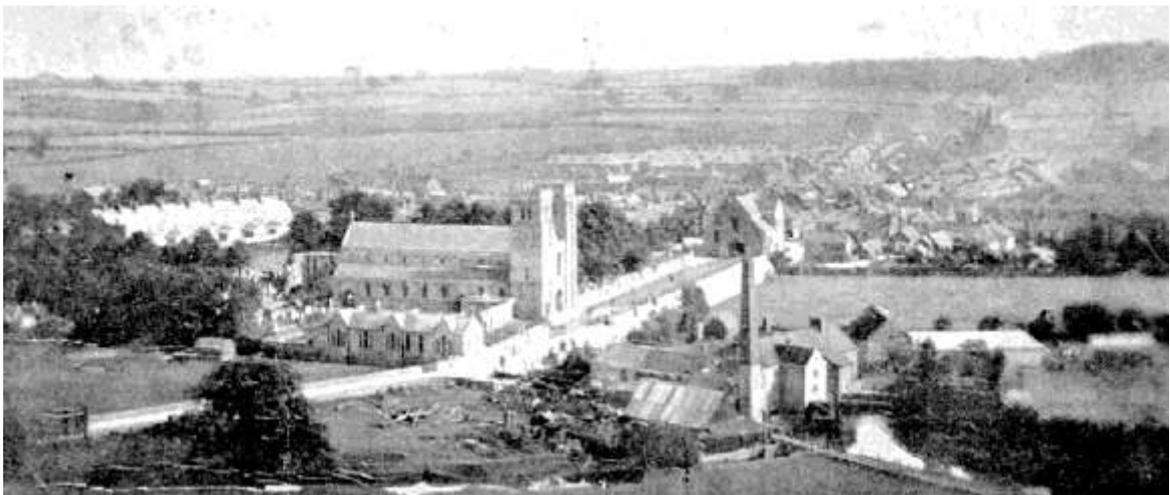


Right: Worksop Castle mound in 2008

Roger de Busli died in 1098. He left a son who died without issue, a brother Arnaldus and a sister Beatrice. By about 1120 William de Lovetot owned de Busli's estates including Hallam, Attercliffe, Sheffield and Worksop. He also acquired some lands of Robert, Earl of Morton. Previously he had acquired the barony in Huntingdonshire. He married 'Emma, daughter of Roger' who may have been de Busli's tenant.

William de Lovetot founded Worksop Priory by the following charter:

'Be it known to T. Archbishop of York, the Archdeacon of Nottingham, and to all the barons, clergy, laity, French and English, in all England, and Nottinghamshire, that William de Lovetot, by the concession and consideration of Emma, his wife, and their sons, grants and confirms by his breve, the donation which he made to God, the holy church and the canons of St Cuthbert, of Worksop'. He gave 'his whole house ... all that meadow which is by the mill and fishpond; likewise, all the tythes of the pence of all his settled revenues, as well in Normandy as in England ... and all his churches of his demesne of the honour of Blyth, viz. the churches of Gringley, of Misterton, of Walkeringham, of Normanton Coleston, of Willoughby, of Wishou, and his part of the church of Tyreswell with all lands, tythes and other things belonging to the said churches: likewise the tythe of his pannage, and of honey, and of venison, of fish and of fowl, of malt and of all other things which tythes are wont and ought to be given...'



The area of the monastic site of Worksop Priory
taken about 1901



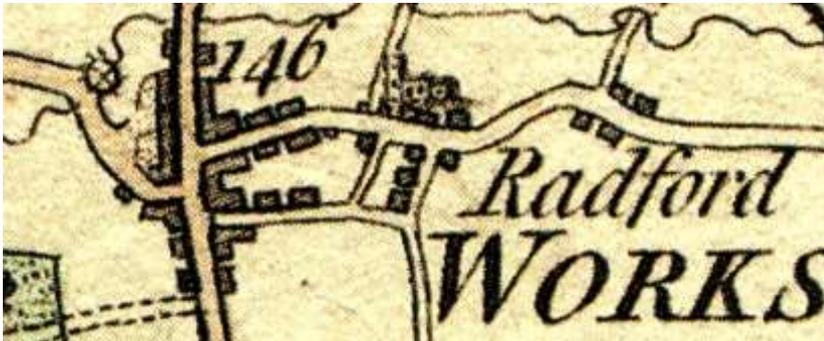
Monastic buildings similar to those that would have appeared at Worksop Priory

In 1156 William's son Richard de Lovetot married Cecilia, paying King Henry II a fee of 20 marks and one Norroy Hawk and one Gerfalcon. In 1160 Richard de Lovetot increased the grant to the Priory by adding Clarborough Church and 'Totum videlicet situm villae de Wirksop, iuxta ecclesiam, sicut per magnum fossatum clauditur usque ad pratum de Bersebrigg, et extra fossatum sedem molendini cum mansura und', that is 'the whole site of the town of Worksop, near the church enclosed by its great ditch as far as Bracebridge meadow, also without the ditch, a mill, dwelling house'

Also listed: 'and Buselin's meadow which is between the holt of the church and the water. On the other part of the water towards the north, the meadow and land, by the bound of Kilton, from the water to the way under the gallows, towards the south and by the crosses which he and his son William erected with their own hands, to the moor, that is the mucky and moist plain, the lands also towards the south, from the head of the causeway, beyond the plain, as it was girt by a ditch to the water. In Manton, the mill and fish pond and all Sloswicks'.

He also gave a house enclosed by a moat, later called Jesus House, which stood next to the mill. He confirmed grants made by his mother Emma including a mill at Bollam. He gave permission for the canons of Worksop Priory to feed their pigs in Runwood, and the keeping of two carts in his park at Worksop for the purpose of collecting all the dry wood, 'whatever they should find lying except green and timber'. The grants to the Priory were confirmed by a Bull of Alexander III dated February 1161.

The street plans of the two manors were L shaped, with Potter Street and Bridgegate in Worksop, and Cheapside and Lowtown Street in Radford, which may indicate that Radford existed as a settlement before the Priory was built.

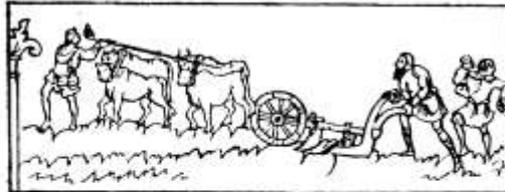


The main medieval streets and the original line of the river Ryton in Worksop and Radford. From Chapman's map of 1776

William Lovetot II, the son of Richard, gave to the Priory on the day of his father's burial the tithes of all the rents he then had or ever should have, whether on this side of the sea or beyond it. William died in 1181, leaving his only child Matilda aged seven, to inherit his many estates. His will listed that he held in Worksop 10 cows, 1 bull, 8 oxen and 300 sheep. The Priory also kept large numbers of sheep, selling the wool to Flemish and Florentine weavers and it is probable that the Lovetots also exported wool. About 1300 John de Tickhill, the Prior at Worksop produced a manuscript illustrated with scenes from local daily life. Sheep shearing can be seen top right in the example below



As well as sheep farming, the surrounding woods were also a profitable resource for both the Priory and the lord of the manor. The land around the manors of Radford and Worksop would have been farmed by the three field system where strips of land were portioned off between the townspeople and crops were grown on a rotation system. Below a Medieval calendar shows how the seasons of the year were occupied. Although the peasants were allowed to grow their own food, in exchange they paid rent and dues to the lord of the manor and tithes (or a tenth of their produce) to the Priory church.



JANUARY. PLOUGHING.



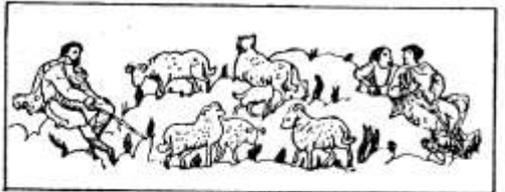
FEBRUARY. PRUNING TREES.



MARCH. BREAKING UP SOIL. DIGGING-SOWING-HARROWING



APRIL. FEASTING.



MAY. WATCHING SHEEP.



JUNE. CUTTING WOOD.



JULY. HAYMAKING.



AUGUST HARVESTING.



SEPTEMBER. HUNTING-PASTURING SWINE.



OCTOBER HAWKING.



NOVEMBER. GROUP ROUND A FIRE.



DECEMBER. THRESHING AND WINNOWING.

Matilda Lovetot was given in marriage to Gerald de Furnival by his friend King Richard I. Gerald was a Crusader who had been with the king at the siege of Acre. After King Richard's death there was a dispute over Gerald's claim to his wife's estates until he gave King John 15 horses, £1,000 and a further 400 marks for confirming his marriage and rights. Gerald later returned to the Crusades and died in Palestine in 1219, and was buried at his estate at Fournavail in Normandy.

Gerald and Matilda's eldest son Thomas was killed in the Fifth Crusade in 1228 and his heart was brought back by his brother Gerald to Worksop Priory for burial. There are Crusader crosses cut into the stonework of the south doorway of Worksop Priory, thought to have been carved by the Furnival family.



King Richard I

In 1270, Gerald's grandson Thomas de Furnival was granted a licence to build a castle at his manor at Sheffield. His son Thomas was a member of parliament from 1294 until his death in 1332. In 1296 he procured from King Edward I a charter for a market and fair in Worksop on the Feast of St Cuthbert as follows:

'Granting among other things to Thomas Furnival and his heirs forever, a weekly market on Wednesday and an eight day fair yearly within his manor of Worksop in the county of Nottingham. The King to his Archbishops etc Greeting. Know ye that we have granted and by this our charter have confirmed to our beloved and faithful Thomas de Furnyvall that he and his heirs for ever may have one market in every week on Wednesday at his manor of Worksop in the County of Nottingham, and one fair there in every year to last 8 days, that is to say, on the eve and on the day and on the morrow of St Cuthbert the Bishop, March 20th and for the 5 days following and one market in every week on Tuesday at his manor at Sheffield in the county of York, and one fair there in every year to last for three days, that is to say on the eve and on the day and on the morrow of the Holy Trinity unless those markets and fairs be to the nuisance of neighbouring markets and fairs. And that they may have free warren in all their desmesne lands of Wyrkesop in the aforesaid country of Nottingham and in all their demesne lands of Sheffield in the aforesaid county of York. Provided that the same lands be not within the metes of our Forest, so that no one may enter those lands to chase in them or take anything which appertains to the warren without the licence and will of the same Thomas or his heirs upon forfeiture to us of £10. Wherefore we will and firmly enjoin for ourselves and our heirs that the aforesaid Thomas and his heirs for ever may have the aforesaid markets and fairs at their aforesaid manors with all the liberties and free customs pertaining to such like markets and fairs, unless those markets and fairs be to the injury of neighbouring markets and fairs. Source: Charter Roll, 24, Edward 1, No. 3'. Confirmation of the Charter was signed by King Richard II on December 12 1385, Patent Roll 9, Richard II, Part I.

The market cross may have been situated at the corner of Potter Street and Bridge Street and moved to a site outside the Priory in the 19th century.

A number of kings visited Worksop including Henry III in 1251. Edward III was a frequent visitor and in 1335 granted to the Priory part of Runwood, to be free of rent forever in return for the 'manifold charges they had frequently incurred when he visited their priory'.

The Priory Gatehouse was built about 1314 and was used as guest accommodation for visitors. About 1390 the porch and a shrine for pilgrims were added. The statues in the higher niches represented St Augustine and St Cuthbert and the central statue represents the Holy Trinity with the figure of God the Father holding the crucifix of God the son between his knees, with a dove above representing God the spirit. The lower missing statues are thought to have been knights of the Lovetot and Furnival families.



The Priory Gatehouse from a 19th century painting

Please go to **Worksop Priory** for more information about the Priory and Gatehouse.

Thomas Furnival's grandson William had died in 1383 leaving his daughter Joan as his heiress. She married Sir Thomas Neville who became Lord Furnival. At this time the Neville family was one of the most powerful in England. Sir Thomas's brother was Ralph, Earl of Westmorland who married Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt. Ralph's grandsons were kings Edward IV and Richard III. According to Alison Weir in her book *Britain's Royal Families*, Thomas and Joan Neville's daughter Margaret married Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, the son of John of Gaunt. Thomas Beaufort was a close adviser to his half brother King Henry IV. Thomas Neville had supported King Henry IV against Richard II and was made Lord Treasurer of England. After Joan died he married Ankaret, the widow of John, Lord Talbot. Sir Thomas and Joan Neville's daughter Maud married John Talbot, the son of Ankaret from her first marriage.

John Talbot became Baron Furnival in 1409. After Maud died he married Margaret Beauchamp, daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. In 1442 John was created Earl of Shrewsbury by King Henry VI for his military expertise in the war with France against Joan of Arc, described by Shakespeare in Henry VI part 1 as:

'Valiant Talbot, above human thought,
Enacted wonders with his sword and lance;
Hundreds he sent to hell, and none durst stand him;
Here, there and everywhere, enraged he slew:
The French exclaimed, The devil was in arm;
All the whole army stood agaz'd on him:
His soldiers, spying his undaunted spirit,
A Talbot! A Talbot! Cried out amain,
And rush'd into the bowels of the battle'.

He became High Steward of Ireland and Marshal of France. We know that he was living at Worksop Manor in 1442 when John Sayton was paid 3s 4d for 'carrying with his wain and oxen one hogshead of salted venison from Sheffield to Worksop by command of the lord'. The 1st Earl of Shrewsbury died at the siege of Chatillon in 1453 aged 80.

The death of the Earl
of Shrewsbury at the
Battle of Chatillon



His son John, the 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, married Elizabeth Butler, daughter of the Earl of Ormond. He was Lord Treasurer of England and died at the Battle of Northampton during the Wars of the Roses in June 1460, supporting the Lancastrian side and was buried in Worksop Priory.

Later the same year, there was a skirmish in Worksop recorded by William of Worcester: 'The Duke of York, with the Earl of Salisbury and many thousand armed men, were going from London to York, in December 1460, when a portion of his men, the van, as is supposed, or perhaps the scouts... were cut off by the people of the Duke of Somerset, Edmund Beaufort at Worksop'. This occurred a few days before the Battle of Wakefield. Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York had married the daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, and the Earl of Salisbury was Ralph Neville's son. The Beauforts and Talbots supported King Henry VI on the opposing Lancastrian side.

The 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury was succeeded by his eldest son, John Talbot. He was described by William of Worcester: 'He was more devoted to literature and the muses, than to politics and arms'. He married Catherine Stafford, daughter of Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham. He also during the Wars of the Roses at the Battle of Coventry in 1473, and was buried in the Lady Chapel at Worksop.

John's son George became the 4th Earl of Shrewsbury at the age of five. Leland, in his 'Itinerary' of 1534-43, stated that 'The 4th Earl of Shrewsbury has a fair lodge at Wyrksoppe Park, not yet finished. A fair manor of squared stone'. This house may possibly be Worksop Manor Lodge, which was built at around this period.



Worksop Manor Lodge

Please go to **The Dukeries** section about **Worksop Manor** for more information about the people who lived there