

# WARWICKSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

## Information for record number WA4113

**Site Name and Summary** A row of almshouses, houses that were built for poor people to live during the Post Medieval period. They are situated on Rugby Road, Dunchurch.

Type: Almshouse  
Period: Post-medieval - Modern (1540 AD - 2050 AD)

**Location**  
Parish: Dunchurch  
District: Rugby, Warwickshire  
Grid Reference: SP 48 71

**Level of Protection** Old SMR PrefRef Building (Grade: II)

### Description

Source Number

**1** Thomas Newcomb the younger, gave by his last Will, dated March 2nd 1690, 600 pounds for the building of an almshouse, and the maintenance of six poor men or widows. The almshouse was built for 150 guineas in 1693.

**2** The almshouses were built in 1693. They were entirely rebuilt in 1818 in brick.

**3** They were extended in 1949. There are six adjoining units, two storey, six doorways with stone voussoir mouldings. The four outermost doorways have covered porch entrances of brick.

**4** There are six identical ground floor windows, six second storey windows with stone voussoir mouldings. There are two central double chimney stacks, two single stacks at either end.

### Sources

Source No: 1  
Source Type: Bibliographic reference  
Title: Antiquities of Warwickshire  
Author/Originator: Dugdale W  
Date: 1730  
Page Number: 1065  
Volume/Sheet:

Source No: 2  
Source Type: Bibliographic reference  
Title: Victoria County History, vol 6, Warwickshire  
Author/Originator: Salzman L F (ed)  
Date: 1951  
Page Number:  
Volume/Sheet: VI

Source No: 3  
Source Type: Newspaper/Magazine Article

Title: Almshouses, Dunchurch  
Author/Originator:  
Date: 1980  
Page Number: 42  
Volume/Sheet:

Source No: 4  
Source Type: Site Visit  
Title: SMR Card  
Author/Originator: Pehrson B  
Date: 1983  
Page Number:  
Volume/Sheet:

**Word or Phrase**  
SMR Card

**Description**

Sites and Monuments Record Card. The Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record began to be developed during the 1970s. The details of individual archaeological sites and findspots were written on record cards. These record cards were used until the 1990s, when their details were entered on to a computerised system. The record cards are still kept at the office of the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Modern

The Modern Period, about 1915 AD to the present (the 20th and 21st centuries AD)  
recent years archaeologists have realised the importance of recording modern sites. They do this so that in the future people will be able to look at the remains to help them understand the events to which they are related.[more]  
of these events is the Second World War (1939 – 1945). The war began when Britain and France declared war on Germany in 1939. This happened because Adolf Hitler invaded Poland despite earlier promises that he would not. Several months later he invaded France. With the Germans sitting just over the other side of the English Channel, Britain feared that it too would be invaded. To stop this happening, defences were quickly built along the coasts and transport routes. New airfields were also built so that British planes could prevent the Germans bombing the country.  
sites relating to the war are still visible in Warwickshire. Pillboxes were built to defend the main roads, canals and railways. One example exists at Butler's Leap, Clifton on Dunsmore. This pillbox was built to defend the Oxford Canal. There is another pillbox along the same canal near Priors Hardwick.  
number of new airfields were built in Warwickshire during the Second World War. Some of these were used for training aircrew. One such airfield was located at Church Lawford. At some of the airfield sites the runways are still visible, as are some of the buildings associated with the airfield such as pillboxes, air raid shelters and battle headquarters.  
end of the war came with the devastating explosion of the first nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. In the 1950s the more powerful countries in the world started to make their own nuclear bombs. This led to a period of mistrust and rivalry between Western countries (America and Britain) and powers such as the Soviet Union. This period is known as the Cold War and was a time when the threat of nuclear attack on Britain became an alarming possibility.

order to monitor the possibility of attacks and their aftermath if they actually happened, a network of underground monitoring posts were built. Some of them were built in Warwickshire, one example being at Church Lawford.

## Medieval

1066 AD to 1539 AD (the 11th century AD to the 16th century AD) medieval period comes after the Saxon period and before the post medieval period.

Medieval period begins in 1066 AD. was the year that the Normans, led by William the Conqueror (1066 – 1087), invaded England and defeated Harold Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings in East Sussex. Medieval period includes the first half of the Tudor period (1485 – 1603 AD), when the Tudor family reigned in England and eventually in Scotland too.

end of the Medieval period is marked by Henry VIII's (1509 – 1547) order for the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the years running up to 1539 AD. The whole of this period is sometimes called the Middle Ages.[more]

Normans are well known for building the first motte and bailey castles. There are a number of these in Warwickshire. Brinklow Castle and Boteler's Castle, near Alcester, are fine examples. Warwick Castle and Kenilworth Castle began their long histories as motte and bailey castles.

Domesday Book was written in the reign of William the Conqueror. It was completed in about 1086 AD. is a detailed statement of lands held by the king and his tenants and of the resources that went with those lands, for example which manors belonged to which estates. Book was probably put together so that William knew how much tax he was getting from the country. It provides archaeologists and historians with a detailed picture of the size of settlements and the population at the beginning of the medieval period. Many of these settlements were later deserted as a result of a number of causes, including changes to land tenure. In other cases the focal point of settlements physically shifted. Either way, Warwickshire is well known for the contrast in types of settlement between the Arden area of the north west and the Feldon area of the south and east. In the Arden area medieval settlements were of the small, dispersed type, whilst in the Feldon area the settlements developed into nucleated villages. Some medieval deserted settlements in Warwickshire can still be traced as earthworks. A good example exists at Wormleighton.

of medieval farming survive in many parts of Warwickshire as earthworks of ridge and furrow cultivation. Ridge and furrow earthworks show where the land was ploughed so that crops could be grown. The ridges and furrows formed because successive years of ploughing caused the soil to be drawn up into ridges whilst the furrows lying between them became deeper. The fields were ploughed using a team of oxen pulling a small plough, which was very difficult to turn. This accounts for why the land was ploughed in long strips and why fields were left open i.e. without hedges, fences or walls dividing up the land into smaller pockets.

were much smaller in the medieval period. The people who farmed the land did not own it. The land belonged to the lord of the manor. The people farming the land were simply tenants who worked a strip of land or maybe several strips. This is why medieval farming is sometimes called strip farming.

the time that Domesday Book was written the only town in what is now called Warwickshire was Warwick. Documentary evidence shows us that as the years went on more and more markets appeared in the county. By 1450 there were forty.

towns that grew around the markets were different from the surrounding villages in their appearance and the type of people who lived in them. They were larger than the villages and had a more complicated network of streets and lanes. The towns had an open space in the centre where a market was held each week. The houses and workshops that lined the streets had long narrow strips of land behind them called tenements. Some historic maps show these medieval build

Post Medieval

About 1540 AD to 1750 AD (the 16th century AD to the 18th century AD)

Post Medieval period comes after the medieval period and before the Imperial period.

period covers the second half of the reign of the Tudors (1485 – 1603), the reign of the Stuarts (1603 – 1702) and the beginning of the reign of the Hannoverians (1714 – 1836).[more]

the early part of the Post Medieval period the population of the country was increasing and towns started to grow in size. People still built their houses as they had done during the Medieval period, with timber frames and thatched roofs. These types of houses still survive in some towns in Warwickshire, such as Henley in Arden.

1694 a huge fire swept through Warwick, destroying two of the town's main streets and large parts of St Mary's Church. As a result of this, and fires elsewhere, regulations were brought in about new buildings. They had to be built in brick with tile roofs.

period also saw changes to the countryside as a result of an increase in the population. These changes were largely a result of new systems of farming that were introduced in order to produce the larger yields of crops needed to feed the growing population. The most notable change to the appearance of the landscape was the enclosing of the open fields with boundaries. Private Acts of Parliament were needed in order for the fields to be enclosed, hence the name "parliamentary enclosure" given to this type of field pattern.

period also saw the rise of the country house, sometimes called "prodigious" or "prodigy" houses. The development of these large country houses really began during the late medieval period under Henry VIII but it reached its peak during the Elizabethan era (1558 to 1603). These houses were usually large enough to accommodate the entire king or queen's court whilst it was travelling around the country as well as other aristocratic travellers.

The houses are often characterised by their symmetrical layout, decorative chimneys, large windows and the use of columns and arches. Built mainly of brick or stone, the country houses were surrounded by gardens and parks, making up large estates.

Together, the houses and their grounds reflect the huge wealth of a small number of English families in this period. Warwickshire examples include Compton Wynyates House and Charlecote Hall, both originally built during the Tudor period, and Packington Hall and Upton House, both built during the reign of the Stuarts.

of the major events in English history that took place in this period have connections with Warwickshire.

1605 there was an attempt to blow up parliament. The gunpowder that was intended to cause the explosion was discovered in the cellars

below the House of Lords. The men who organised the Gunpowder Plot are supposed to have waited in a house in Dunchurch to hear whether the plot had worked. It was in this house that they heard that Guy Fawkes had been arrested. The building is now known as Guy Fawkes House.

first battle of the English Civil War took place at Edge Hill, in the south of the county, in 1642. The battle was between the Royalists (also known as Cavaliers) who supported King Charles I (1625 – 1649) and the Parliamentarians (also known as the Roundheads).

Civil War started because Charles and his troops attempted to attack Scotland because they would not accept his reforms to the Scottish church. Parliament did not support this attack on Scotland and so Charles dismissed Parliament. The attack on Scotland was unsuccessful, however, and Charles was forced to recall Parliament. Between Charles and Parliament remained high. When Charles's™ troops were unsuccessful in trying to arrest five members of Parliament in January 1642 the king left London. Both he and parliament began to stockpile military resources and recruit troops.

the Battle of Edgehill, The Royalists gathered on the top of the hill with about 14,000 troops. The Parliamentarians camped at the bottom of the hill, near Kineton, with a similar number of men. The Cavaliers attacked the Parliamentarians first but as the battle went on it became more and more disorganised as the soldiers gradually became exhausted. Eventually, the fighting stopped and the two armies parted. Neither side really won the battle.

large number of musket balls and the odd canon ball have been found at the battlefield site. There are two mounds in the area of the battlefield that may be where the dead soldiers were buried. The Battlefield of Edgehill is a Registered Battlefield.

connections with the Civil War can be found in Warwickshire, for example, at Compton Wynyates House. The house was seized and occupied by the Parliamentarians. The owner unsuccessfully tried to recapture the house in 1644, during which it suffered a great deal of damage.

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monuments are not the only 20th century sites that are recorded on the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record. Other sites include, for example, the hydroelectric power station at Alscot built in 1912, a BBC radio transmitter site at Brinklow Heath built in 1966, and the modern memorial to the Battle of Edgehill, which was erected in 1949.

HOUSE	A building for human habitation, especially a dwelling place. Use more specific type where known.
BUILDING	A structure with a roof to provide shelter from the weather for occupants or contents. Use specific type where known.
STONE	Use only where stone is natural or where there is no indication of function.
FLOOR	A layer of stone, brick or boards, etc, on which people tread. Use broader site type where known.
ALMSHOUSE	A house devoted to the shelter of the poor and endowed by a benefactor for this use.
ROAD	A way between different places, used by horses, travellers on foot and vehicles.
ROW	A row of buildings built during different periods, as opposed to a TERRACE.
POUND	A pen, often circular and stone-walled, for rounding up livestock.
CHIMNEY	Chimney used on an industrial or commercial site.