

THE AYLESFORD COLLECTION

BY ALBERT FENTIMAN

These notes refer to a little-known set of three very large volumes of illustrations which, together with a calendar, are now to be found in the archives of the Birmingham Central Library under accession no. 390548. They are of particular interest to students of Warwickshire before 1800.

The collection is the result of a project initiated in 1792 by three Coventry businessmen, Thomas Sharp, John Nicholson and George Howlet, who wished to illustrate their copies of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. To this end they employed the services of a drawing master, Mr. Jeayes of Coventry, to take views of the seats of the nobility and of manor houses, churches, etc. in Warwickshire.

Originally the work was in five volumes, the most important set being that of Thomas Sharp, who, when his business failed, moved to Leamington and died in 1841. Sharp disposed of his copies to Lord Aylesford of Packington Hall in 1821, but the other sets disappeared. Subsequently Aylesford's grandson sold the collection in 1871 to booksellers Ellis and White. L.L.Hartley purchased it, and on the sale of his library in 1885 the collection was acquired by the Central Library.

Many of the buildings shown have since been modified or rebuilt. Of particular interest to Suttonians are representations of:-

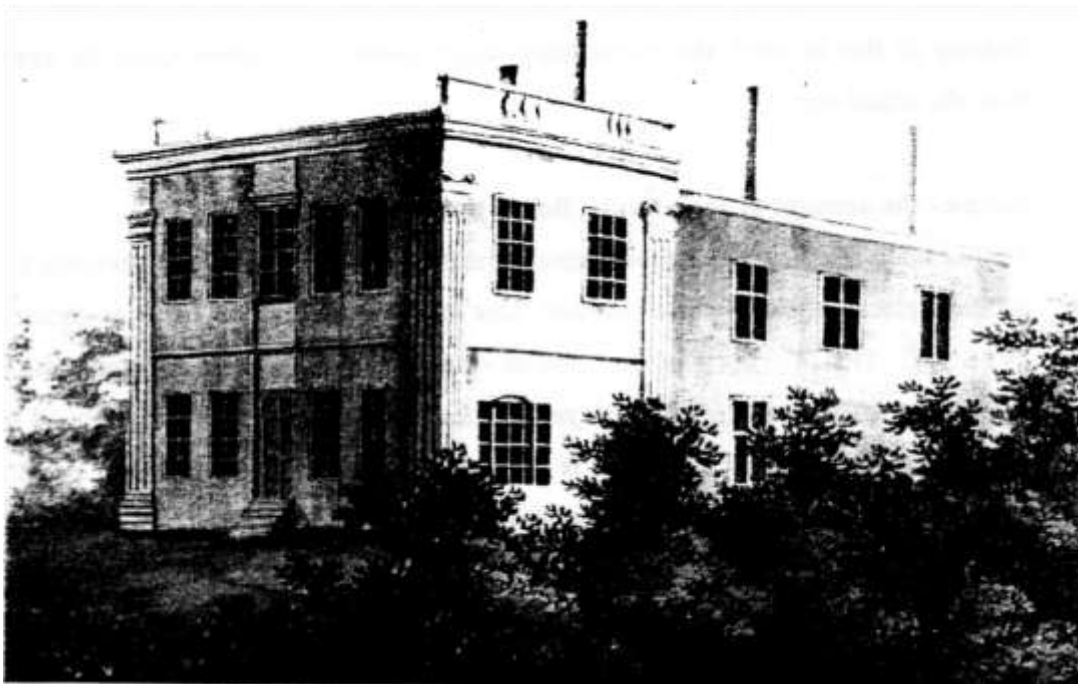
Trinity Church	Nos. 213, 214, 214a;
Middleton Hall	528
Moor Hall	532
New Hall	546
Peddimore Farm House	566
Pipe Hall	571
St. Mary's Hall	650

The calendar has four separate indexes, viz. (1) Churches. (2) Country Seats. (3) Warwickshire drawings. (4) Portraits.

These notes are based on an article by Barbara Ronchetti in the Birmingham Archaeological Society vol. 71 (1953). Miss Ronchetti says "Jeayes work indicates that it was done before 1800, and concentrates heavily on Coventry and near, the home locality of the originators".



St. Mary's Hall. from the Aylesford Collection



Moor Hall. from the Aylesford Collection