IRISH ANTIQUITIES IN WEST MIDLANDS MUSEUMS

Phil Watson, Philip Wise, Debbie Klemperer and David Symons
Introduction

The following article is a result of a survey of archaeological collections in West Midlands museums carried out by the West Midlands Archaeological Collections Research Unit. All museums in the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire were included in the survey but not private collections or material currently under study at field units. One of the aims of the project was to increase awareness of the collections, especially material of non-local origin.

Eleven West Midlands museums have antiquities from Ireland and these are presented below in the form of an abbreviated catalogue. They are arranged in alphabetical order of County and within that by site. Many do not have a provenance more precise than the name of a town or village and about one third are reputedly from Ireland but with no known provenance beyond that. Where further details of discovery are known these are given though it has to be admitted that resources have not permitted extensive trawls through documentation and literature. The lack of good provenances is in large part due to the fact that most of the pieces originate from antiquarian collections built up during the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries and subsequently dispersed. Very often little is known of these early collectors. For example George Sandy, from whom Birmingham acquired material in 1948, was based in Stafford and his collection included archaeological material from all over the world though virtually nothing is known about his sources. T.G. Barnett was a local (Birmingham) collector who died in 1935 and several of his pieces were purchased at the 1924 sale of the collection of W.J. Knowles, the well known Irish antiquarian of Ballymena. The trail of many of the bronzes in Warwick is even longer. The majority of them were bequeathed to Rugby School in 1888 by M.H. Bloxam, a Warwickshire antiquarian, who it is known had contact with the Cork Cuvierian Society. Moreover, most of these seem at one time to have been in the collection of Thomas Crofton Croker, a resident of Cork who moved to London in 1818 and whose collection was sold in 1854. At least one piece was acquired at the sale but whether Bloxam and Croker ever had any direct contact with each other is tantalizingly unknown.

The majority of the artefacts uncovered during the survey are of prehistoric, predominantly Neolithic and Bronze Age, date and only the last fifteen entries are from later periods.

Prehistoric Antiquities - Phil Watson, Philip Wise and Debbie Klemperer

Co. Antrim, near Ahoghill

Co. Antrim, Antrim
2 Stone axe polished all over; two deep flaking scars on one face. Slightly irregular shape with one side more convex than the other but both tapering to a narrow rounded butt. Blade very rounded with a few chips from the cutting edge. Lentoid section. L. 112, max. W. 56, max. Th. 22 mm. Birmingham 1931A68-6. Presented by Dr. G. Rome Hall 1931.
Co. Antrim, Ardnaglass, Grange Park

Co. Antrim, Ballycastle

Co. Antrim, Ballymena, Fenagh

Co. Antrim, Ballymena
6-12 Seven flint arrowheads All presented by W. Myers in 1885.
   6 Leaf-shaped type 2C, 50x22 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.2
   7 Leaf-shaped type 3A, 28x18 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.1
   8 Irish oblique type, L. 46 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.5
   9 Barbed and tanged Sutton type a, 44x19 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.13
  10 Barbed and tanged Sutton type b or c, 48x26 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.14
  11 Hollow based, 27x23 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.7
  12 Hollow based, 27x24 mm., Birmingham 1885A2134.8

Co. Antrim, near Ballymoney, Secon?

Co. Antrim, Ballymoney
14 Discoidal pebble, flattish on one face, more convex on the other. Both faces smooth. Slight carination on edge which is rougher. Perhaps used as a polishing rubber? or an unfinished implement. Di. 69-75, max. Th. 34 mm. Birmingham 1988A33. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.

Co. Antrim, Belfast
20 Copper flat axe of dubious authenticity. L. 142, max. W. 73, Th. 16 mm. Birmingham 1966A42. Purchased from George Sandy in 1948. Watson 1993 no. 117.
Irish Antiquities in West Midlands Museums

Co. Antrim, Carrick-a-rede

Co. Antrim, Clough

Co. Antrim, Connor, Cullybackey

Co. Antrim, Connor

Co. Antrim, Cragyairea

Co. Antrim, Culbane
30-37 Eight flint tools comprising four boring tools, two hollow scrapers and two knives. All are marked "Culbane" except one which is marked "Culbane Portglenone". Birmingham 1991A361.1-8. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.

Co. Antrim, Cushendall

Co. Antrim, from peat bogs near Giant's Causeway
41 Stone axe polished all over but some deep scars and bruising remain. Convex tapering sides which converge to a narrow pointed butt. Rounded blade. Lentoid section. L. 134, max. W. 57, max Th. 28 mm. Birmingham 1921A33. Presented by J.M. Hemphill of Co. Antrim in 1921. Thin sectioned by F.W. Shotton who reported it as group IX.
42-63 Group of twenty two flint arrowheads. All presented by J.M. Hemphill of Bushmills, Co. Antrim in 1920.
42 Leaf-shaped type 3C, 45x20 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.22
43 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 45x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.1
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44 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type c, 38x20 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.2
45 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 28x21 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.3
46 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b or c, 45x25 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.4
47 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 38x24 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.5
48 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 45x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.6
49 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 44x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.7
50 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 36x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.8
51 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 42x28 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.9
52 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type a, 47x29 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.10
53 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 28x15 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.11
54 Barbed and tanged, Sutton type b, 33x20 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.12
55 Barbed and tanged, Ballyclare type b, 54x28 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.13
56 Hollow-based, square base, 35x18 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.14
57 Hollow-based, concave base, 42x29 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.15
58 Hollow-based, concave base, 49x24 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.16
59 Hollow-based, deep concave base, 49x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.17
60 Hollow-based, deep concave base, 50x25 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.18
61 Hollow-based, deep concave base, 42x27 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.19
62 Hollow-based, deep concave base, 41x13 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.20
63 Hollow-based, deep concave base, 49x23 mm., Birmingham 1920A35.21

Co. Antrim, Giant's Causeway

64-65 Two arrowheads. Presented by W.H. Lloyd in 1924.
64 Barbed and tanged flint arrowhead. L. 55, W. 33 mm. Leamington M764.1924.1
65 Barbed and tanged flint arrowhead. L. 76, W. 30 mm. Leamington M764.1924.2
68 Point or fabricator in buff-white flint; broken in two pieces. Birmingham 1885A2134.24. Presented by W. Myers in 1885.

Co. Antrim, Glarryford


Co. Antrim, Glenariff


4
Co. Antrim, Glenarm

Co. Antrim, Glenleslie
73-75 Three arrowheads purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.
73 Barbed and tanged arrowhead in greyish-white flint; one barb broken off. L. 28, max. W. 18 mm. Birmingham 1991A354.2
74 Barbed and tanged arrowhead in pale grey translucent flint; tang and one barb broken off. L. 30, max. W. 19 mm. Birmingham 1991A354.6
75 Hollow based arrowhead in buff flint. L. 34, max. W. 19 mm. Birmingham 1991A354.3
76-77 Two blade flake tools; one in grey-brown, the other in creamy-coloured flint. Birmingham 1991A360.1-2. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.

Co. Antrim, Glenwherry

Co. Antrim, Larne
81-84 Four flake tools including a Bann flake in cream to grey flint. Birmingham 1887A974.1004 to 1007. Presented by W. Myers in 1887.
85 Triangular section flake in grey flint now with a thick cream-white patina. From "Neolithic Raised Beach". Birmingham 1918A7.11. Presented by L. Richardson of Birmingham in 1918 acquired by him in 1908?

Co. Antrim, Loanhill

Co. Antrim, Mount Sandal

Co. Antrim, Omerbane
91 Stone macehead. Thick oval macehead with pronounced hour-glass perforation. Di. 86-97, max. Th. 55, min. di. perf. 20 mm. Birmingham 1957A138. Purchased from
Irish Antiquities in West Midlands Museums

Birmingham Archaeological Society in 1957 ex Barnett, possibly ex Knowles.

Co. Antrim, Portglenone

Co. Antrim, Port of Glenon

Co. Antrim, Portrush

Co. Antrim, Rasharkin
95 Stone axe smoothly polished all over; large flake missing from one face which has removed just over half of the cutting edge. Chip missing from butt. Straight tapering sides. Rounded blade; cutting edge convex in profile on one face but ground flatter on the other. Lentoid section. L. 120, max. W. 69, max. Th. 30 mm. Birmingham 1988A22. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.

Co. Antrim, Rathlin Island
97 Four flakes of Group IX rock found on surface in 1962. University of Keele, Dept. of Geology, un-numbered.

Co. Antrim, Skerry East

Co. Antrim, Slemish

Co. Antrim, Toome, Lough Neagh
100 Thin siltstone axe with rounded butt, convex sides and almost straight cutting edge. Found in 1865. L. 82, max. W. 44, Th. 17 mm. Birmingham University Lapworth Museum B37.

Co. Antrim, Toome
I
rish Antiquities in West Midlands Museums

Co. Antrim, Toome Bridge
109-121 Thirteen flakes, blades and Bann flakes in brown or grey flint. Birmingham 1887A974.1008 to 1020. Presented by W. Myers in 1887. Possibly originally from three different collections: eleven have irregular rectangular labels marked "Toombe Bridge Ireland", one a circular label marked "Toome Ireland" and one a rectangular label with oblique corners and blue border marked "TOOME LOVGH NEAGH 1865".

Co. Antrim, no exact provenance
122 Narrow polished stone axe with convex sides and narrow rounded blade; narrow butt broken. L. 176, W. 65, Th. 32 mm. Hereford City Museum 1304/2. Presented by Mrs. H.T. Jenkins.
123 Polished stone axe with straight, tapering sides and curved cutting edge; oval section. Butt missing. Marked "July 1885". Hereford City Museum 1301/h.
130 Ten pieces comprising five waste flakes, one blade flake, two end scrapers, a crude point and a finely flaked, broken, leaf-shaped point, possibly an arrow. Birmingham 1991A362. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.
137 Flint flake. Worcester City Museum unnumbered.

Co. Armagh
138-141 Four arrowheads marked "Armagh". Presented by W. Myers in 1885.
138 Leaf shaped of type 2A in grey flint. L. 42, max. W. 26 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.3
139 Leaf-shaped of type 3A in grey flint. L. 31, max. W. 19 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.4
140 Hollow based with convex sides and concave base in pale fawn coloured flint. L. 26, max. W. 26 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.10
141 Triangular in pale grey-buff flint. L. 27, max. W. 20 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.6

Co. Cavan, no exact provenance
142 Bronze socketed axe; faceted. Haft ribs centrally on each face at bottom of socket; blow hole above loop. L. 58, W. 44 mm. Warwick A1453. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 11, ex Croker.

Co. Cork, Rathcormack
Co. Cork, Red Abbey

Co. Cork, no exact provenance

Co. Donegal, no exact provenance

Co. Down, Carnbane

Co. Down, Carrowdore Bog

Co. Down, no exact provenance

Co. Galway, Connemara

Co. Kildare, Bog of Allen
153 Bronze unlooped palstave with shield pattern and short rib; casting flash not removed from edges. L. 100, W. 42 mm. Warwick A277. Presented by Dr. George Lloyd in 1842.
154 Bronze palstave with high flanges extending below high, projecting stop ridge. L. 110, W. 53 mm. Warwick A272. Presented by Dr. George Lloyd in 1842.
155 Bronze high-flanged, looped, trident pattern palstave with very expanded blade; swallow hole in one stop ridge. L. 139, W. 59 mm. Warwick A273. Presented by Dr. George Lloyd in 1842.
156 Small bronze bag-shaped socketed axe; one wall very thin and cracked. L. 52, W. 40 mm. Warwick A274. Presented by Dr. George Lloyd in 1842.

The above pieces (152-156) from the Bog of Allen are mentioned in WNHAS 1842-43, 12 and are also probably included amongst the pieces listed erroneously in VCH Warks 1904, 218-9 as
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"presumably .... found in Warwickshire".

Co. Kilkenny, Gerpoint

Co. Londonderry, River Bann
158-161 Four flake tools (two points and two blades) in mid-brown flint. Birmingham 1921A20.4 to 7. Presented by J. Humphreys of Birmingham in 1921.

Co. Londonderry, Bellaghy

Co. Londonderry, Coleraine, Bog Hill
163 Barbed and tanged arrowhead in buff flint; one barb broken. Ballyclare type c. L. 64, W. 31, Th. 8 mm. Coventry, Herbert 55/105.

Co. Londonderry, Coleraine
165-166 Two arrowheads presented by W. Myers in 1885.
165 Barbed and tanged in darkish grey flint, barbs broken, of Sutton type b or c. L. 47, max. W. 23 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.16
166 Hollow based in pale buff-grey flint with straight sides and square base. L. 29, max. W. 23 mm. Birmingham 1885A2134.9

Co. Londonderry, Londonderry

Co. Londonderry, Port Stewart
170 Oval stone pounder with slight depression on one face. 115 x 94 x 60 mm. Stoke-on-Trent K74-1981. Transferred from Shugborough Museum 1/61-145.

Co. Londonderry, near Tobermore
171 Stone axe polished all over apart from two deep chips on one face and on end of butt where some bruised areas remain. Irregular shape; one side straight, the other convex (oblique-edged
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Co. Londonderry, no exact provenance

Co. Meath, no exact provenance

Co. Roscommon, near Boyle

Co. Roscommon, Taylorstown

Co. Tipperary, Ballyvistea
176 Polished stone axe of oval section with fairly broad rounded butt and gently rounded blade. L. 175, max. W. 73, Th. 38 mm. Birmingham University, Lapworth Museum unnumbered ex Oscott College.

Co. Tipperary, Bog of Cullen

Co. West Meath, Athlone

Co. Wexford, ....?-Castle

Co. Wicklow?, Bray?

Co. Wicklow, Glendalough
181 Bronze palstave with flanges extending below stop ridge. L. 142, max. W. 59 mm.
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Co. ?, Carnalaragh Bog.

Co. ?, Kentallath

Northern Ireland, Bann

Northern Ireland, Lough Neagh
185 Two small blades, one in grey, the other in pale yellow-brown flint; one battered blade flake and three other flakes all in orange-brown flint. Birmingham 1913A11.10. Presented by A. Clemshaw of Birmingham in 1913.

Northern Ireland, no exact provenance
191 Small group of flint flakes including some Bann flakes; labelled "Lake dwellings". Birmingham University Lapworth Museum B21.
192 Four Bann flakes. Birmingham University Lapworth Museum un-numbered.
193 Large polished stone axe. Birmingham University Lapworth Museum unnumbered.

Ireland, Bed of the River Bann

Ireland, no exact provenance
197 Stone axe very well polished all over. Straight tapering sides, one more steeply sloping than the other, converging towards the butt which is broken off. Blade rounded and cutting edge blunted for most of its length with many small chips missing. Lentoid section. L. 112, max. W. 82, max. Th. 29 mm. Birmingham 1948A17-29. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948. Thin sectioned by F.W. Shotton
who reported it as group IX.

198 Stone axe polished all over and well finished. Convex sides which converge only slightly towards the broad straight butt. Cutting edge straight. Lentoid section. L. 102, max. W. 63, max. Th. 28 mm. Birmingham 1973A1360. Purchased from Birmingham University Medical School in 1973.

199 Stone axe polished all over apart from a deep scar on one side. Sides taper only slightly towards a broad oblique butt which is flattened and slightly dished at the end. Cutting edge almost straight. Oval section. L. 101, max. W. 58, max. Th. 33 mm. Birmingham 1973A1361. Purchased from Birmingham University Medical School in 1973.

200 Stone axe polished all over; two flakes missing from one face and large area of bruising on the other. Straight tapering sides to a narrow rounded butt. Rounded blade. Oval section. L. 117, max. W. 70, max. Th. 34 mm. Birmingham 1973A1362. Purchased from Birmingham University Medical School in 1973.


211 Axe hammer. Fragment of re-worked triangular axe hammer; tip broken off and butt missing. Central hour-glass perforation; there are remains of another perforation at the butt end suggesting that this piece was made from a larger, broken example. L. 115, max. W. 95, max. Th. 66, min. di. perf. 23 mm. Birmingham 1957A137. Purchased from Birmingham Archaeological Society in 1957 ex Barnett, ex Knowles. Sotheby's 19.11.1924 lot 578.

Iris Antiquities in West Midlands Museums

213 Cylindrical stone implement (pestle?) with one flattened edge. The ends are gently rounded and both are battered and bruised from use. Some deep polishing scratches still remain on the body of the piece. Found with the battle axe no. 212 above. L. 166, di. 35 mm. Birmingham 1963A1285. Purchased from Birmingham Archaeological Society in 1957 ex Barnett, W.J. Knowles. Sothebys 19.11.1924 lot 572.

214 Barbed and tanged arrowhead in fawn flint with long thin triangular blade; Ballyclare type c. L. 69, max. W. 30 mm. Birmingham 1973A64. Purchased from Birmingham University Medical School in 1973.

215-216 Two arrowheads. Purchased from G. Sandy in 1948.

215 Barbed and tanged in straw-brown flint, one barb broken off. L. 19, max. W. 17 mm. Birmingham 1991A354.7

216 Barbed and tanged in grey-brown flint, one barb damaged. L. 20, max. W. 19 mm. Birmingham 1991A354.8

217 Eleven blade flakes; one is marked Co. Antrim and another River Bann. Birmingham 1937A68.7. Presented by J. Humphreys of Birmingham in 1937; at least one is ex G.F. Lawrence of Wandsworth, London.


221 Ingot type copper flat axe. L. 123, W. 65, Th. 8 mm. Warwick A1467. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 25, ex Croker no. 10. Harbison 1969, no. 500.


224 Type Ballyvalley copper flat axe. L. 177, W. 102, Th. 9 mm. Warwick A1477. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 35, ex Croker. Harbison 1969, no. 1531.


227 Ingot type copper flat axe. L. 124, W. 71, Th 10 mm. Warwick A1466. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 24, ex Croker no. 22.

228 Ingot type copper flat axe. L. 101, W. 57, Th. 10 mm. Warwick A1488. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 46, ex Croker no. 6.

229 Type Lough Ravel copper flat axe. L. 158, W. 95, Th. 11 mm. Warwick A1481. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 39, ex Croker.

230 Type Lough Ravel copper flat axe with very slight flanges. L. 139, W. 98, Th. 9 mm. Warwick A1489. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 47, ex Croker no. 26.

231 Type Ballyvalley copper flat axe. L. 121, W. 66, Th. 12 mm. Warwick A1461. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 19, ex Croker.

232 Bronze palstave with flanges extending below stop ridge. Steep edge bevel on blade. L. 126, W. 53 mm. Warwick A1457. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 15, ex Croker.
233 Bronze palstave with flanges extending below stop ridge. Flanges damaged and cutting edge badly nicked. L. 165, W. 63 mm. Warwick A1455. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 13, ex Croker no. 4.

234 Bronze palstave. L. 150, W. 62 mm. Warwick A1492. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 50, ex Croker no. 2.


236 Bronze bag-shaped socketed axe; loop broken off and mouth damaged. L. 77, W. 53 mm. Warwick A1450. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 8, ex Croker no. 9.

237 Bronze bag-shaped socketed axe; blade damaged on one corner. L. 73, W. 60 mm. Warwick A1451. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 9, ex Croker.


239 Bronze sword. L. 453, W. 31 mm. Warwick A1502. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 60, ex Croker.

240 Bronze sword fragment; hilt and upper blade only. L. 193, W. 45 mm. Warwick A1503. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 61.

241 Bronze pegged socketed spearhead. L. 285, W. 49, Th. 22 mm. Warwick A1507. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 65, ex Croker.


243 Bronze basal-looped socketed spearhead. L. 221, W. 30, Th. 27 mm. Warwick A1506. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam no. 64.


249-280 Thirty two miscellaneous pieces. Hereford City Museum 1301.

249-250 Two perforated whetstones.

251-259 Nine barbed and tanged arrowheads.

260-267 Eight leaf-shaped arrowheads.

268-269 Two oblique arrowheads.

270-271 Two hollow-based arrowheads.

272 Triangular arrowhead

273-274 Two small polished stone axes.

275-277 Three flint blades/points.

278-280 Three perforated stones (spindle whorls?).

281-284 Four polished stone axes. 163x71x28; 96x53x25; 71x42x19; 153x60x31 mm. Hereford City Museum 1304. Presented by Mrs. H.T. Jenkins.

285-287 Three stone spindle whorls, two with straight and one with hour-glass perforation. Di. 37, 28 and 26 mm. respectively. Hereford City Museum 6745/1-3.

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299-307 The following copper flat axes in Warwick are included by Harbison 1969 but the current records list them as unprovenanced:
299 Warwick A1478, ex Bloxam 36, Harbison 323
300 Warwick A1479, ex Bloxam 37, Harbison 324
301 Warwick A1483, ex Bloxam 41, Harbison 325
302 Warwick A1472, ex Bloxam 30, Harbison 328
303 Warwick A1468, ex Bloxam 26, Harbison 329
304 Warwick A1476, ex Bloxam 34, Harbison 441
305 Warwick A1475, ex Bloxam 33, Harbison 499
306 Warwick A1480, ex Bloxam 38, Harbison 758
307 Warwick A1469, ex Bloxam 27, Harbison 1218
308-309 There are also two Irish type bag-shaped socketed axes in Warwick (A1452, A1494) but no provenance is recorded for these.
310-318 Watson 1993 nos. 97, 101-108 in Birmingham Museum may be unprovenanced pieces from Ireland.

Later Antiquities - David Symons and Philip Wise

Co. Dublin, Dublin
319-323 Five mediaeval bone artefacts comprising two possible gaming pieces, a toggle and two spindle whorls. Warwick A1538 and A1539. Rugby School loan, ex Bloxam nos. 96 and 99.

Co. Westmeath, Ballinderry Crannoge
324-327 Four iron spearheads, three socketed and one tanged. Birmingham 1996A136-139. Presented by the Wellcome Trustees, ex Prof. Sir Bertram Windle.

Co. Westmeath, no exact provenance

Ireland, no exact provenance
332 Twelve dark blue glass melon beads. The late Margaret Guido dated them to the 5th-6th centuries and confirmed that they were Irish. Birmingham 1960A208.
Bibliography

VCH Warks 1904. Victoria County History of Warwickshire.