

## Chronology of the Chapel

- 250-400 A smaller version of the Roman Temple at Lydney
- 577 Romans lose control of Bath, Cirencester & Gloucester to Saxons at the Battle of Dyrham
- 691-2 Ethelred, King of Mercia & uncle of St Werbungha, grants 30 cassates of land in the Henbury area to Oftor, Bishop of Worcester
- 699 St Werbungha dies
- 716 Canonisation of St Werbungha (dedication of Chapel to her?)
- 960-992 Document of 1148 records that the Chapel of St Wareburge on Hemberie Hill was held by monks of the Worcester cell in this period
- 1148 Simon, Bishop of Worcester, restores Westbury church and its appurtenances (inc. Chapel) to the monks of Worcester
- 1284 Bishop Gifford preaches in the Chapel of “Blessed Wereburg” at Henbury in the salt-marsh
- 1299 Red Book of Worcester mentions 22.5 acres of land lying in Henbury Manor beneath St Werbungh’s Hill
- ~1400 Change of dedication from St Werbungha to St Blaise (the Saint’s Day of both is 3<sup>rd</sup> February)
- 1544 Sir Ralph Sadleir acquires Westbury College and its possessions (probably inc. Chapel) in March – he is Henry VIII’s Falconer and an associate of Thomas Cromwell, orchestrator of the dissolution of the monasteries

### Chronology of the Chapel (continued)

- 1547 Sadleir is granted the whole Manor of Henbury by Letters Patent of Edward VI
- 1577 The Chapel of St Blaise is shown as a major landmark in Saxton's map of Gloucestershire
- 1707 The Chapel has become a ruin – its foundations (the “Vault of Skeletons”) are excavated to provide building stone for the small prospect tower known as Lady Astry's Summer House
- 1766-8 Thomas Farr constructs his folly next to the Chapel site
- <1850 J.S. Harford removes the last of the Chapel stones from the hilltop
- 1918 Bartlett excavates the Chapel site as indicated by Canon Way and uncovers footings of a building the same size as the “Vault of Skeletons”
- 1919 A pamphlet by Wilkins suggests that the Chapels of St Werburcha and St Blaise are the same building at different times – Bartlett publishes his evidence that the Chapel had been adapted from a Roman Temple
- 1957 Excavations by Philip Rahz solidify the evidence for a Roman origin for the Chapel
- 1959 Griffiths also concludes that the two Chapels represent one and the same building at different times

## Chronology of the Avenue

- ~1700 Sir Samuel Astry plants a double avenue of elms running up to the Hill
- 1704 Sir Samuel Astry dies
- 1707 Foundations of Chapel excavated for building stone for Lady Astry's Summer House tower on Hill
- 1708 Lady Astry dies
- 1710 Kip draws two views of Henbury and the Hill
- 1762-78 Thomas Farr fells avenue trees near its Hill end in the teeth of opposition
- 1795 Repton's plan of the estate shows many avenue trees remain at village end
- 1819 Tree planting by Harfords – some in the avenue, but aligned with Castle
- 1881 Early OS map shows many avenue trees and other trees on the main green
- 1904 Revised OS map
- 1919 Bartlett and Wilkins independently indicate that the small oval tower in the wooded fringe on the north brim is Lady Astry's Summer House
- 1926 Bristol City Council acquires Estate: fewer avenue trees in 1<sup>st</sup> guide map
- 1970's No avenue trees in the latest OS maps
- 1990's Partial replanting near mansion (but wrongly aligned with the Castle)

# Conclusions

- The Hill was a Late Roman stone fortress in a network commanded by the *Comes Britanniarum* (Count of Britain) that defended the estuary against Irish raids
- The temple in the fortress was converted into a Chapel dedicated to St Werbungha by the Mercian Saxons ~700
- The dedication was changed to St Blaise ~1400
- The Chapel became derelict following the Dissolution
- Chapel stones were excavated to build Lady Astry's Summer House tower in 1707 at the end of the avenue
- The oval foundations on the northern brim are this tower
- The building excavated by Bartlett in 1918 was the Chapel
  - Because the size matches the 1707 “Vault of Skeletons”
  - Because Bartlett excavated where Canon Way had seen scattered Chapel stones before 1850