



CONSERVATION AREA HISTORIES:

TICKNALL

DISTRICT OF SOUTH DERBYSHIRE



"Ticknall Arch", a tramway bridge of c1802. By courtesy of Janet Spavold and Sue Brown.

Ticknall's name was derived from its landscape setting and land use. The first syllable 'tic' reflects the pastoral economy of the time, showing that it was grazed by goats. There were still goatherds in the area in the 16th century. The second syllable is 'halh' (Saxon) = a nook or hollow of land, the village being tucked into a slight dip in the landscape.

The lasting impression of Ticknall is of rows and clusters of modest, informal cottages of brick and stone, loosely arranged on long, straggling roads. Many cottages have had their roofs raised to improve the first floor accommodation, sometimes accompanied by the replacement of thatch with tile; evidence of this change can still be detected in many cases. They are interspersed by a number of grander, finer houses and farmsteads of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Although Ticknall is now simply an agricultural and desirable residential area, in the past it supported a thriving industrial community based on the mineral deposits, which created the present landscape. The overgrown brick and limeworks (46, 47, 52, 52), shaded under a canopy of largely self-set trees, are a dominant feature of the conservation area. They provide the landscape setting for all the buildings east of the prominent tramway bridge, known as "the Arch" (42).

South of the Main Street, there were originally several independent limeyards run by separate families such as the Sales, Hutchinsons and Gilberts. Their individual identities and boundaries can still be traced despite gradual purchase and amalgamation by the Harpur Crewe Estate in the 19th century. Together they form one of the largest concentrations of historic lime kilns in Great Britain. On the north side of the street are the remains of further limeyards and also two brickyards, run in the 19th century by the Hill and Smart families. It is no surprise then, that limestone

rubble, sandstone rubble and warm red brick, all produced locally, are the principal building materials.

Apart from the industry, the other dominant theme in the village's history is the influence of the Harpur family of Calke (known from 1808 as Crewe, and later as Harpur Crewe), principal owners in the parish. Many features of the village are the result of their will or patronage.

The village appears to have grown up at the intersection of two routes, one from Repton to Loughborough and one from Ashby de la Zouch to Derby. Other former roads survive in the liberal network of footpaths and bridleways, and a stone field stile for one of these survives on High Street **(15)**.



Main Street, Ticknall, perhaps in the 1950s. By courtesy of www.picturethepast.org.uk

Ticknall lies at the northern point of the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire coalfield. The coal outcrops on the south side of the village in thin seams which can be seen in the Limeyards **(52, 52)**, interlayered with the limestone. On the west side, and further south of the village, the coal seams are interlayered with clays. There is also a spring line to the east of the village and although little surface water can be seen there is no shortage of water for domestic or agricultural use.

Ticknall is recorded as early as 1004 in the will of Wulfric Spot, who gave his lands there to Burton Abbey. In 1086, at the “Domesday” survey, the land in Ticknall was divided between the King, Nigel de Stafford and Burton Abbey. From c1115 onwards, several parcels of land in Ticknall were given to the newly-formed Priory of Calke and later to its successor, Repton Priory, by the Earl of Chester and his heirs.

By the Dissolution in 1538, Repton Priory held a considerable amount of land in Ticknall. This resulted in the development of a grange in the village; a barn at Ticknall is mentioned as early as 1232-3. The site is Grange Farm **(18)**. The present building dates mostly from the eighteenth century but incorporates elements of an earlier building, most noticeably a huge stone chimney at the east end, now lacking its stack.

The eastern part of the village, from the east side of the Royal Oak **(48)** and up Stanton Hill and Melbourne Lane on both sides of each road, was originally one of several detached parts of the parish of Repton, no doubt

reflecting the early ownership of Repton Priory. This area of land, known as “The Spires”, was included in Thomas Thacker’s purchase following Henry VIII’s Dissolution of the Monasteries and was not incorporated into Ticknall parish until 1880. The house called ‘The Priory’ **(49)** was built in the early nineteenth century, probably when the land was occupied by Thomas Cope who was working part of the Limeyards at that time.

At the eastern extremity of the conservation area is “Broadstone End” **(53)**, which originally stood outside the parish of Ticknall in a place called Derby Hills. Derby Hills was an “extra-parochial liberty” and detached part of the manor of Castle Donington, and belonged to the Melbourne Estate following their purchase of the manor of Castle Donington in 1633. Broadstone End was built in the 1910s by Mr. Clower, assistant general manager of the Midland Railway. It was built on “Archer Croft”, named after the Archer family who had lived in a previous house on the site in the 1720s. Derby Hills no longer exists as a separate entity, having been divided between Melbourne and Ticknall.

Other local mediaeval landowners were the Francis family of Foremark, who had acquired property in the parish at an early date, and the Abels, who from the early 1300s were being granted land by the Prior of Repton, including land where the Limeyards are now. Both families continued to own land in Ticknall after the Dissolution. Part of the Francis share passed to the Burdetts of Foremark and Bramcote in Warwickshire; another part was sold to George Biddle of Yoxall in the early 17th century. Much of the Abel property was sold to Henry Harpur in 1625 shortly after he had bought Calke. Later generations bought much of the Biddle property too. Although considerable documentation survives, the early documents rarely enable individual properties to be identified with buildings that survive today.

After the Enclosure of Ticknall by private agreement in 1765, the Harpurs of Calke embarked on an intensive buying programme there. By the 1830s they owned most, but not quite all, of the parish. Within recent memory, most of Ticknall was still owned by the Harpur Crewe estate, but the estate never achieved sole ownership and Ticknall was never an estate village in the accepted sense of the term. The building plots on the north side of Chapel Street, for instance, were laid out as allotments for smaller owners in Ticknall at the Enclosure in 1765, and are the most formally planned part of the village as shown on the 1899 Ordnance Survey plan.

With the death of Charles Harpur Crewe in 1981, his brother Henry made negotiations with the Treasury enabling enough property to pass to the National Trust to cover death duties. At the same time, numerous properties in Ticknall were sold off. Today, Ticknall has quite a number of privately owned properties, but the Estate retains a minority and the National Trust owns much of the surrounding farmland.

The entrance to Calke Abbey and Park (NT), former seat of the Harpur Crewes, is at a focal point of the village by the tramway arch. The present drive and lodge **(39)** date from 1805, replacing an earlier drive into the park further west known as Walker’s Lane, which survives as a green track **(41)**. The much-loved avenue of limes beyond the lodge was planted to commemorate the birth of Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe in 1846.

The present layout of the village core reflects its past and has changed little over the last 150 years under the stewardship of the Harpur Crewes. The Green **(8)** did not form part of this core; it developed on waste land on the edge of the open field known as Park Field. It is a typical encroachment settlement with the cottages set higgledy piggledy on the edge of the waste. More recent building has linked it to the village.

From the earliest times agriculture has been the mainstay of the village. The historic pattern of farmsteads along the village street, from the days of the former open field system of agriculture, can still be seen. Examples include the converted barns **(51)** which once accompanied a vanished farmhouse and are now called Honeysuckle Barn and Limeyards Stables; Arch Farm **(43)**; Hayes Farm **(36)**, a post-enclosure rebuild on an earlier site); The Estate Yard **(28)** and Springfield Farm **(10)**. The last two of these contain vestiges of timber framing. Slade House **(24)**, formerly Slade Farm), has elements of an older building within it and a converted barn alongside Rose Lane **(25)** formerly belonged to it. Along Ashby Road are Basfords Hill Farm **(6)** and Top Farm **(2)**. Both are post-enclosure rebuilds on much earlier sites. Enclosure took place in 1765 and the present buildings on these sites are after this date. Top Farm is probably the latest, built after the mid 1820s.



"modest cottages of brick and stone, loosely arranged"... Syringa Cottage, 39, Ashby Road.

Agriculture was combined to a greater or lesser degree with other seasonal industries such as limeworking, coalmining, pottery, malting and brickmaking. Before plant and machinery became too complex and expensive, farmers were not afraid to diversify and make the most of the opportunities that their land offered.

Claypits in Ticknall are recorded from the late 13th century, when they are mentioned in a deed. They could have been used for marl or for building. By the 1530s a thriving pottery industry had sprung up in the village. It continued until the 1880s when the last pottery, at Pottery House **(5)**, was closed. The pottery was well known over four centuries; most of the products were dairy ware and kitchen pots, which sold widely throughout the Midlands, getting as far north as Bolton in Lancashire. At any one time there were several sites working within the parish, but after 1830 just one survived. Either as full time employment, or combined with farming, the pottery industry was important to the local economy.

Within the Conservation Area known pottery sites include The Continent **(50)**; Ivy Leigh **(30)**; the cottages known earlier in the twentieth century as Cackle Hill **(17)**; the cottage at the junction of Ashby Road and Heath End Lane **(4)** and the last cottages on the right beyond Top Farm **(1)**. No pottery kilns survive.

Lime kilns were operating by 1462 when Elyn Assewall leased her late husband's limekiln and house to Symond Ragge, so the limeyards have been worked at least since then. Lime was burnt to make mortar and plaster, or to spread on the fields. Rough limestone was used as a cheap building material. By the seventeenth century, wills and inventories show that several leading farmers were involved in working the limestone quarries. Limeworking prospered during the late 18th century and into the early 19th, when the Harpur Crewes were buying up and leasing out the works. By 1804 the tramway **(7)** was conveying lime to the Ashby Canal. It formally closed in 1915. Its most prominent feature is "the Arch" **(42)** built in about 1802, like a canal bridge with a horseshoe-shaped arch, while a cut-and-cover tunnel nearby **(40)** carries the tramway under Calke Park. The tramway formally closed in September 1915. Within the limeyards **(52, 52)** there is a network of tramways and tunnels, banks of limekilns, water-filled quarries and embankments, threaded by unofficial footpaths. It has become rich in plant life and is an S.S.S.I. (Site of Special Scientific Interest), one of only six in the South Derbyshire district.

Brickmaking is first recorded in the early 1600s and the names of some brickmakers are known from the 1690s. Of the two surviving brickyards within the conservation area, the earlier remains can hardly be discerned apart from the loading bay and gin circle **(46)**; this site was always on Harpur Crewe land. The later site has a Scotch kiln, drying shed, gin circle and loading bay **(47)**. It was first developed by the Burdetts of Foremark and taken over by Sir George Crewe in a land exchange of the 1820s. It worked for estate purposes until 1939 and impressed bricks with 'Ticknall' or 'IHC' for Sir John Harpur Crewe (died 1886) are still occasionally found.



Banton's Lane. Photographed by, and reproduced by courtesy of, Clifford Heath.

It would be interesting to know more about the layout of the brickyard and limeyard areas before they were quarried and mined away.

Unfortunately, the earliest parish plan dates only from the 1830s. An earlier plan made in 1762 is lost, although the survey book made to accompany it still survives.

As the brewing trade expanded in Burton during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, barley was grown and malted in Ticknall. The village boasts three former malthouses, now all in private hands. One of them is to the west of the Royal Oak **(48)**; another is at 106 Highwayside **(44)** and the third is the Old Town Malthouse, Bantons Lane **(37)**, converted to living accommodation.

Three public houses survive in the village: “The Wheel” **(35)**, “The Staff of Life” **(16)** and “The Chequers” **(12)**. The last two of these were accompanied by bakeries, as brewing and baking were complementary processes. Other pubs known to have existed were “The Royal Oak” **(48)**, now a private house, “The Turk’s Head” and “The Crown”. The latter two have not yet been located with certainty. Of equal importance were the village blacksmiths. The two surviving smithy buildings are at 37 Main Street **(31)** and The Old Smithy, High Street **(11)**. Their services were essential for local agriculture and industry.

A church in Ticknall is first recorded in 1200. It was confirmed to the Priory of Repton in 1271. Within the churchyard are the worn remains of a probable preaching cross, said to have been moved there from an original site nearby **(21)**. This may pre-date the earliest church. The remains of Ticknall’s first church **(20)**, dedicated to St Thomas à Becket, stand in the churchyard. By the 1700s Ticknall’s population was around 300, and by 1789 there were 179 houses. A steady rise in the population to its peak of 1,278 in 1831, coupled with ready work and industrial expansion until the 1840s, meant that the church became too small to serve the parish adequately.



The church through the ages in Ticknall: The cross, the remains of the old church, and the new church, photographed in 1978. By courtesy of Derby Evening Telegraph/ www.picturethepast.org.uk

The churchyard was extended in 1834 and a site was reserved for a new church **(19)**, vigorously promoted by Sir George Crewe, 8th Baronet of Calke (1795-1844). Built in 1842, it was designed by Henry Isaac Stevens of Derby, architect of a number of other local parish churches including those of Hartshorne, Woodville, Shardlow and Swadlincote.

Following demolition of the body of the old church, the tower and spire were blown up with gunpowder in September 1841. A corner of the tower and the east window of the north aisle still survive today. Spare stone from the new church is said to have been used for the façades of the cottages known as ‘Stone Fronts’ **(29)**. Unfortunately from the time the new church - dedicated to St George - was completed in 1842, there was



Lady Crewe's School, before the thatch was replaced with tiles soon after the First World War. By courtesy of A. P. Knighton/www.picturethepast.org.uk

a steady decline in the population of the parish. During the second half of the nineteenth century the population decreased by 500, a dramatic reduction for a village that had never had more than 1300 inhabitants. As the frequency of new buildings is often linked to population increase and commercial prosperity, the declining population explains why so many of the buildings date substantially from the 18th and early 19th centuries. Many incorporate earlier fabric.

Nonconformity was also catered for in Ticknall. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel **(32)**, dated 1815, occupies a commanding site on Chapel Lane. It retains its original gallery, supported on cast iron pillars and is a very good example of its period. However it is not the earliest Methodist chapel in Ticknall. 10 Chapel Street **(33)** was fitted out as a meeting house in 1792 and later converted to cottages. Evidence of alterations can still be seen in the brickwork. The disused Baptist Chapel **(34)** has been converted to residential use, but the exterior is preserved. Ticknall's Baptists had their origin in the Melbourne Baptist Congregation.

Ticknall's earliest school was founded 1744 under the patronage of Dame Catherine Harpur. In 1824 Sir George Crewe replaced the schoolrooms with the present building **(22)**. It is now a private school. Education for girls was provided by Lady Crewe's School **(38)** from 1822. This building, originally intended as a private house for Dame Nanny Crewe, was formerly thatched and was built in 1819. It was designed in a "cottage ornee" style, fashionable during the Regency period. The veranda with columns was another common feature of such "cottages". The Almshouses **(23)** were founded by the will of Charles Harpur Esquire and built in 1772 as a 'hospital' for 'poor decayed men and women of Ticknall and Calke'. Number 2A Church Lane had a long room extending along Main Street. In 1892 this was opened as the village Reading and Coffee Rooms **(27)**.

The parish had its own means of enforcing law and order. In 1790 parishes were empowered to build a lock up for unruly inhabitants or other wrongdoers. The Round House **(26)** on Main Street, built under this authority, dates from 1809. As a concession to occasional unfortunates there is a small fireplace in its back wall. Before this, a special room was designated in Ticknall's workhouse (built 1790 and demolished 1830s) for the same purpose.



Definitely not a Harpur Crewe property, and proud of it! Sheffield House, High Street.

Along High Street, Sheffield House **(13)** was built by George and William Sheffield, respectively a surgeon and veterinary surgeon, and important inhabitants in the 1840s. This property never belonged to the Harpur-Crewe Estate. It has an impressive frontage with 'SHEFFIELD' cut in large stone letters on the top, like a mute demonstration against the Harpur Crewe monopoly. The top storey of the frontage is actually a high parapet wall with blind windows in it, deliberately designed to fool the public into thinking that the house is larger than it really is.

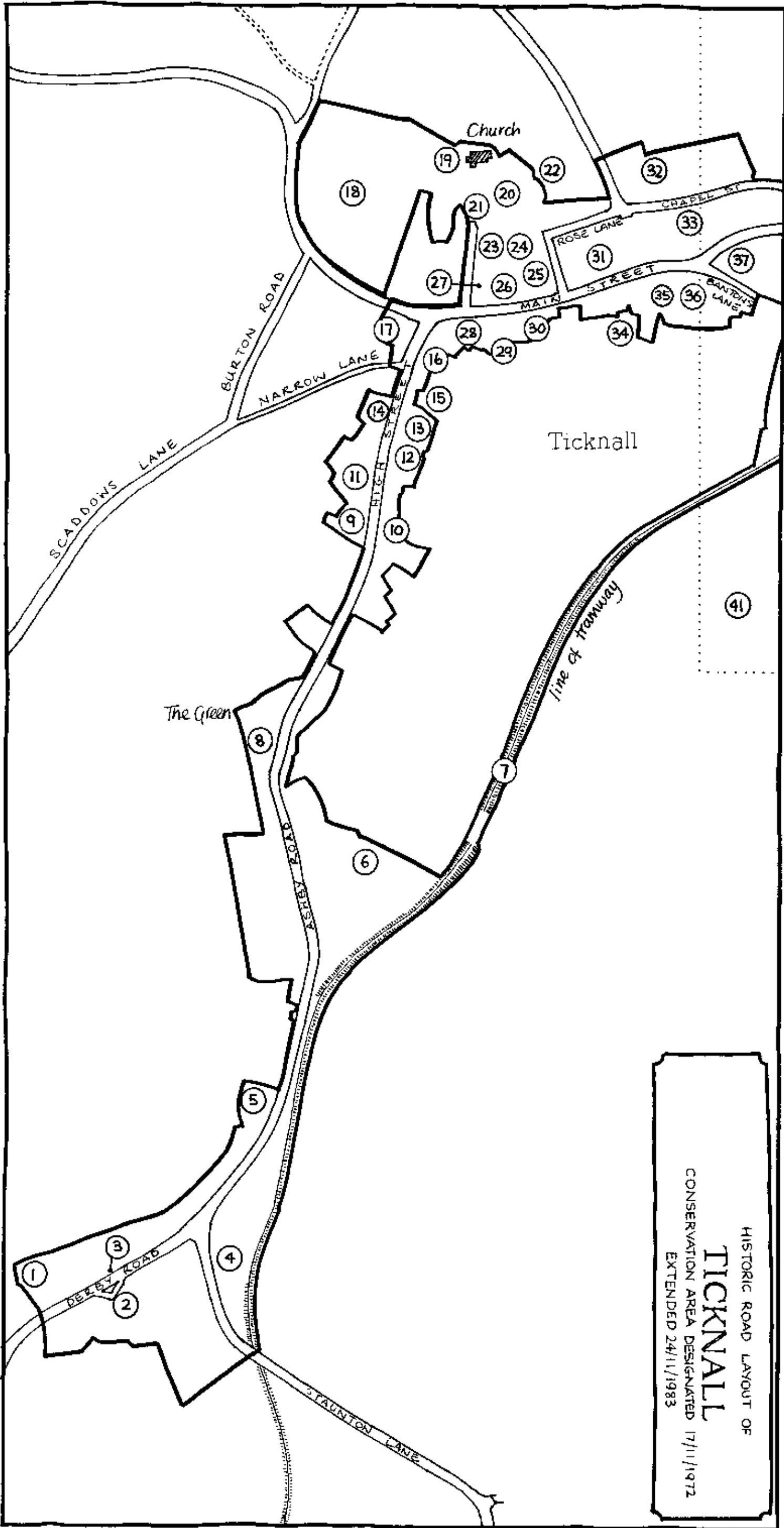
One of the most interesting elements of the village streetscape is the water supply. The open stone trough on the roadside at Spring Cottage **(9)**, with a later wellhouse beside it, is an early supply. There are two other wellhouses at Top Farm **(3)**, built in 1871) and 20 High Street **(14)**, as well as a pump **(45)** on Highwayside. In 1914 a new water supply was installed by Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe, 10th Baronet of Calke (1846-1924). Water was raised from a well by a windpump, and stored in a reservoir. It was then piped to cast iron pumps or 'taps' distributed throughout the village. The taps were of a standard catalogue pattern cast by Messrs. Glenfield and Kennedy of Kilmarnock and were painted green. They are an attractive design, with lion mask spout and bucket rest, and are a distinctive Ticknall feature.

When walking along High Street and Main Street the visitor should also look out for the well-established, attractive Corsican pine trees. These were planted in pairs to commemorate the marriage of Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe in 1876. Not all survive.

Janet Spavold and Sue Brown.

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HISTORIC ROAD LAYOUT OF
TICKNALL
 CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATED 17/11/1972
 EXTENDED 24/11/1983

