'HUNTING FOR HIDDEN MEANING':
AN ANALYSIS OF
THE HISTORY, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION
OF
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PLASTERWORK
AT
ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT, CORNWALL

by

KAREN MARGARET LA BORDE

A thesis submitted to the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the original historical, visual and cultural context for the seventeenth-century plasterwork at St Michael's Mount in Cornwall. This plasterwork runs in a frieze around the upper section of the walls of a hall in what is now a substantial mansion house atop the Mount. The frieze depicts scenes of hunting all manner of animals, set within an undulating landscape. This study explains the original meaning and significance of the themes and imagery it contains.

A history of the Mount from 1523 to 1680 is provided through a re-examination of existing histories and a recent archaeological report along with new material discovered in family, local and state archives. This has enabled a detailed examination of the development of the buildings on the Mount from priory to country home, demonstrating that a building of high status was created into which was installed a decorative frieze. The association of this decoration with the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' is analysed through a review of the way in which the frieze has been presented to the public over the years and how its name was imposed as a consequence of early tourism. A visual context and approximate date for the frieze has been provided through comparative analysis of examples of decorative art and artefacts which share similar hunting scenes, in particular the Hertford Borough Charter of 1605.

CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to set a particular piece of decorative plasterwork at St Michael's Mount, Cornwall into its visual and cultural context. Having worked at the Mount as a castle guide for five years I became increasingly aware how the presentation of historic buildings and objects may sometimes rest on the persistence of myths and stories and, as this plasterwork and its imagery remained undated and unexplained, I hoped to elucidate its original meaning and function.

In the old priory buildings perched atop the island of St Michael's Mount is a plasterwork frieze dating from the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The most striking feature of the frieze is its unusual hunting imagery including scenes of an ostrich hunt and the execution of a fox. This imagery has long been interpreted as symbolic of the events of the early English ballad of 'Chevy Chase' and the room in which the frieze is situated has come to share its name.

There has, however, been no serious assessment of the meaning or significance of this plasterwork frieze in its historical context, and although several histories of the Mount have been produced they give little attention to the decorative work in the building. This thesis provides a detailed review of the Mount's history from the earliest date at which the frieze may have been created until the late seventeenth century in an attempt to identify what factors may have contributed to the creation of the frieze.

This project also involves analysing the way the frieze has been interpreted and presented over the years giving special attention to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the earliest guides attached their own version of history to it. The thesis explores the processes

whereby meanings become attached to historic buildings, people and objects over time and acquire an authority through their presentation in the heritage environment.

To provide an historic context for the frieze, a broad range of early modern sources have been consulted relating to the building and its occupants over the approximate period 1523-1670. These include family papers in relation to tenants and owners of the property as well as state and legal documents. The Holy Grail, of course, was to discover that one document or account which would date the frieze and identify its patron. Needless to say, that particular document remained elusive. However, by comparing material from the archives with the most recent archaeological reports and analysing them in respect of current theories on the development of the Tudor and Jacobean country house, a more comprehensive account of the Mount between 1500 and 1700 has been achieved.

Because the frieze has become indelibly associated with the ballad of 'Chevy Chase', its relevance to the frieze is investigated through a review of the ballad's history, popular use and its revival in the late eighteenth century. Additionally, diaries written by tourists of the nineteenth century and guide books published at the time to satisfy their curiosity, have provided new insights into the way history was presented. Reflecting on how artefacts and history have been interpreted for the public in the past has allowed the link between the frieze and its name to be challenged.

To understand the frieze within its local context it has also been compared with surviving examples of similar plasterwork in the South West. The resulting information has given parameters for the dating of the frieze and a revision of the likelihood of the existence of a local workshop of plasterers, known as the Abbot family from Devon.

An extensive search of art galleries, museums and libraries for hunting iconography of the period has provided an abundance of new material to set the frieze in its visual context. Numerous printed sources and pieces of decorative art which share similarities with the frieze have been identified. These have helped to date the plasterwork and demonstrate the imagery of the frieze is not unique. Further investigation into actual hunting practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the study of contemporary treatises on hunting also shows that some of the more unusual scenes on the frieze are representations of traditional activities.

Acknowledging that the presentation of the frieze since the eighteenth century has built upon some 'fanciful' historical ideas, presumably created by the earliest castle guides, allows a reinterpretation of the frieze where the myths and stories are stripped away to reveal a more detailed history beneath. A comparative visual analysis of the frieze, that connects the decoration at St Michael's Mount with comparable material in other historic buildings, will afford those who present the frieze the opportunity to provide a clearer and unmitigated interpretation to the public.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a description of the frieze and a history of the Mount from roughly 1500 to 1700 including the identification of potential patrons of the frieze: these candidates are discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to their involvement in the creation of a country house at St Michael's Mount and possibly a decorative frieze. Having established an approximate date for the frieze, Chapter 4 assesses the relationship between the frieze and the ballad of 'Chevy Chase', highlighting the issues arising from the presentation of the frieze in the eighteenth century. The final two chapters contain an object-based analysis of the frieze in which the use of plasterwork as a medium for decorative art is considered and a study of comparative works

made. The last chapter explains the nature of the imagery of the frieze through comparison to printed sources and other examples of decorative art as well as actual hunting practices. This thesis concludes with a final estimation of the date of the frieze and identification of the individuals who may have been responsible for its creation.

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF 'CHEVY CHASE' FRIEZE

The so called 'Chevy Chase' frieze of St Michael's Mount with its bold, hunting imagery has delighted and intrigued visitors to the island for many years. This first chapter will provide a detailed description of the physical location and appearance of the frieze so the reader may share in its charm. It will also establish some of the more unusual features of the frieze and highlight any evidence which may assist in dating the frieze.

The 'Chevy Chase' frieze is located in what was once the monks' refectory in the monastery building which lies almost parallel to the priory church on the summit of St Michael's Mount. (See Appendix 1). The church and 'Chevy Chase' building lie on an east/west axis with a small courtyard between them.[1] The 'Chevy Chase' building has two floors; the principal room housing the frieze is accessed from ground level in the courtyard and the cellars beneath via a staircase in the courtyard or a winder staircase in the corner of the 'Chevy Chase' room.[2]

The 'Chevy Chase' room is approximately 35ft by 25ft and is currently entered by the general public from an internal door on the western side ensuring the visitor receives the full impact of the large royal coat of arms found at the eastern end of the room just below the rafters of the exposed timber roof. (See Plate 1.1).

---

[1] Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro, 2008, p.69.
[2] Berry and Thomas, ibid.

Plate 1.1

'Chevy Chase' room. West to east. Photo: Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas

The royal coat of arms in plaster contains the letters C & R which relate to either Charles I or

Charles II. The arms bear the dates 1641 above the motto and 1660 below. Considering that

between 1641 and 1660 Charles I was in dispute with his Parliament resulting in war,

imprisonment, his execution and replacement with a Commonwealth, these dates may appear

ironic on the royal arms. However, these two dates relate to the seventeenth-century owners

of the property who almost certainly saw the royal coat of arms as a symbol of their loyalty to

the king. Francis Bassett, who acquired the Mount in 1640, probably installed the arms and

added the first date. Then John St Aubyn, who bought the Mount in 1657, reaffirmed his own

confidence in the restoration of Charles II by adding the date 1660.

Plate 1.2

 'Chevy Chase' room. East to west. Photo: Berry and Thomas

Opposite the royal coat of arms on the western wall is the coat of arms of the St Aubyn family. John St Aubyn was married to Katherine Godolphin, whose arms of a twin headed eagle are evident in the shield. (See Plate 1.2). Katherine died in 1663, so presumably these arms predate her death.

The plaster frieze encircles the 'Chevy Chase' room as a narrow band approximately 36 inches wide positioned beneath the level of the coats of arms and above the doorways. The frieze is made of hand-modelled plaster with figures in high relief. Additional depth is afforded to the composition by the inclusion of metal objects such as spears which have been set into the plaster and stand proud of the background. The craftsmanship varies throughout

the frieze, in some parts appearing simplistic and naive and then in others much more accomplished with finer detail. This variation could be the consequence of a disparity in the ability of the original plasterers, or the result of many attempts at restoring the frieze. The most recent conservation report states that up to 75% of the plasterwork has been remodelled with new plaster and repairs.[3] However, sketches of the room made in the early nineteenth century show that for the most part the frieze has retained its general form and appearance.

Plate 1.3

C S Gilbert: Watercolour Chevy Chase Room, circa 1818.
Photo: Author

Comparing the early nineteenth-century watercolours by C S Gilbert and John Nixons (Plates 1.3 & 1.4) to a sketch made after the renovations completed by Piers St Aubyn in 1878 (Plate 1.5), it can be seen that major changes were made to the room, frieze and coat of arms during

---

[3] Cliveden Conservation Workshop Ltd., *Chevy Chase Frieze, St Michael's Mount* , Maidenhead, 2009.

the Victorian period.[4] It was at this time that the royal coat of arms was painted (probably for the first time) and gothic plasterwork added to doorways and windows.

One troublesome feature to explain is the date of 1647 on the royal coat of arms in the Nixons' picture. (Plate 1.3) These arms now bear the dates 1641 and 1660. The St Aubyn family consider their connection to the Mount began in 1647 when John St Aubyn was first made captain of 100 men at the Mount,[5] and it is possible that the family requested Nixons to insert the date into his sketch. The date 1647 actually looks incongruous on a royal coat of arms considering the political situation of the time, and, could not have been added to the plaster in 1647 since the Mount was then under Parliamentary control. In the sketch made in 1878 (See Plate 1.5), the dates on the arms read 1641 and 1660. If 1647 had existed prior to 1878 it would be difficult to explain its removal and the significance given in the late nineteenth century to adding the dates 1641 and 1660.

The existence of elaborate coats of arms and plaster friezes in the 'Chevy Chase' room suggests that this was the 'great' hall of the house, and consequently the room by which people entered the building.[6] The original doorway, therefore, must have been on the northern wall providing access directly from the courtyard.

---

[4] John St Aubyn, *St Michael's Mount, Illustrated History and Guide,* St Ives, 1978.
[5] Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War,* London, 1933, p. 224 where she references Commons Journal, Vol. V, pp. 96 & 110, 23rd February and 12th March 1647.
[6] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household :Religious Art in Post-Reformation,* London, 2010, p. 122.

Plate 1.4

John Nixons: Watercolour Chevy Chase Room, 1812.
Photo: Author

In the sketch of the 'Chevy Chase' room dated 1878, a woman is shown on the top left hand side walking into what is now known as the servery. (See plate 1.5) This recessed area or alcove juts out into the courtyard between the church and the 'Chevy Chase' building. (See Appendix 1) It has windows on three sides. The windows on the east and west side of the servery date from the sixteenth century whilst the northern window dates to the nineteenth century.[7] This later window could possibly have replaced a door or original entranceway to the 'Chevy Chase' room.

---

[7] Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro, 2008, p. 58.

Plate 1.5

The Dining Hall

Plan of the principal floor
before the alterations

St. Michael's Mount
restored by J. Piers St Aubyn, f.r.i.b.a.

Piers St Aubyn: Chevy Chase Room, circa 1878.
Photo: Author

Taking the servery therefore as the possible original entry into the 'Chevy Chase' room, on a clockwise tour around the room the first hunting scene on the left is the bull hunt. (See plates 1.6 to 1.10)

Plate 1.6

Plate 1.7

Bull Hunt SMM
Photos:Author

Plate 1.8

Plate 1.9

Plate 1.10

Men on horseback and gun men are lined up against this poor creature, which has dogs snapping at its heel. A bulldog is restrained by its collar waiting in anticipation to attack. (See plate 1.10). Strangely, the huntsman blowing his horn casually rests his arm on the rump of the bull.

After the bull hunt is the boar hunt. (See Plates 1.11, 1.12 and 1.13).

Plate 1.11

Plate 1.12

Plate 1.13

Boar Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

The boar is chased on foot and on horseback with dogs biting its legs. The hunter wields a club at the charging boar - an inappropriate choice of weapon for such a dangerous animal.

Turning the corner on to the south wall there is a figure of a gentleman drawing a large sword from a scabbard. Not involved directly with any hunting, he has long hair, beard and a moustache similar in style to those made fashionable during the reign of Charles I. (See plate 1.14)

Plate 1.14

Man drawing his sword, SMM
Photo: Author

Next is the bear hunt. (See plates 1.15, 1.16 and 1.17).

Plate 1.15   Plate 1.16   Plate 1.17

Bear Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

Bear hunting on an English frieze appears strange since bears are not indigenous to this country and intriguingly the hunters are using clubs again. The portrayal of the action is lively with movement evident in the animals as well as in the arms of the hunters wielding the clubs.

After the bear hunt is the stag hunt - placed for effect in the centre of the southern wall directly opposite the entry. (See plates 1.18 to 1.21).

Plate 1.18   Plate 1.19   Plate 1.20   Plate 1.21

Stag Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

The stag was the most venerated quarry of kings and their noblemen.[8] A large amount of traditional symbolism is attached to the stag, from representing Christ, as in the legend of Eustace, to being an allegory for lust where the hunt is a metaphor for love as a chase.[9] In this particular scene, the deer is at bay and faces the final slaughter from the man wielding the spear from behind the tree.

The last hunting scene on the south wall is that of the ostrich. (See plates 1.22 to 1.26).

Plate 1.22   Plate 1.23   Plate 1.24

Ostrich Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

Plate 1.25   Plate 1.26

---

[8] John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk,* London, 1988, pp. 68 - 83.
[9] Cummins, ibid, pp. 68 - 83.

This remarkable event is untypical of European hunting. Two ostriches are chased through a landscape of palm trees by shoeless horsemen wearing turbans. The action is full of vigour with galloping horses. Mysteriously, one ostrich holds a horseshoe in its mouth.

On the west wall is the peculiar image of a fox being hung by its neck from a tree.

Plate 1.27

Hanging Fox SMM
Photo: Author

The next image is of a fox being attacked by dogs.

Plate 1.28

 Fox Hunt SMM
Photo: Author

Then the hunting of big cat.

Plate 1.29

Large Cat Hunt SMM
Photo: Author

Finally, on the northern wall there are two hunting scenes of hare and of rabbit. (See plates 1.30 to 1.38).

Plate 1.30

Plate 1.31

Plate 1.32

Hare Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

Plate 1.33

Hare Hunt SMM.
Photo: Author

Plate 1.34

Hare Hunt SMM.
Photo: Author

The hare hunt has men on horseback, a pack of eight hounds scenting the prey and a greyhound held by a huntsman ready for release to course the hare. In this scene, as well as in others in the frieze, the landscape is detailed with hillocks, tufts of grass and large trees with leaves that are identifiable to particular species, such as oak. (Plate 1.40) Imagery of trees and flowers were often used in Tudor art to convey information through symbolism, for instance the image of an oak leaf could mean strength or the representation of a pomegranate might mean fertility.[10] The appearance of this type of imagery in the frieze could be symbolic or purely illustrative.

---

[10] John & Jane Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork in the Houses of Somerset,* Taunton, 1994, p. 45.

The rabbit hunt continues to the end of the north wall returning into the servery.

Plate 1.35   Plate 1.36   Plate 1.37   Plate 1.38

Rabbit Hunt SMM
Photos: Author

The rabbits are hunted with guns and can be seen atop their warren whilst two unfortunate creatures are being tied together by a hunter kneeling on the floor. The rabbit hunt follows the wall into the servery where the imagery is contained in small block sections between the windows (see plates 1.39 to 1.41).

Plate 1.39   Plate 1.40   Plate 1.41

Rabbit Hunt SMM.
Photos: Author

The comprehensive quality of the 'Chevy Chase' frieze depicts a wide range of hunting from the noble pursuit of stag to the more humble rabbit and fox. Because this typically English hunting imagery is set alongside such oddities as an ostrich holding a horseshoe in its mouth and a fox being hung as if it were a person, the frieze and its imagery has been open to interpretation.[11] Hopefully, by setting the frieze into its visual and cultural context, perhaps by even dating its manufacture and ascertaining who was responsible for commissioning it, more sense can be made of its interesting but peculiar content.

---

[11] In my own experience as a guide at the Mount for 5 years I found that visitors are curious about the content of the frieze and want to understand its symbolism but that many different interpretations are arrived at by staff and visitors alike.

CHAPTER 2

A SHORT HISTORY OF ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT C1523 - C1680

The 'Chevy Chase' frieze was installed at St Michael's Mount at some point between 1500 and 1700.[1] In order to set it in its historic context and identify potential patrons, this chapter gives a brief history of the island between these two dates. The Mount history has been researched by Canon Taylor in 1932[2] and Canon Fletcher in 1951,[3] and more recently has been added to by Professor Orme in 2007.[4] Orme's detailed research of church and monastery records ends at around 1560 and helps begin the story of how the priory on St Michael's Mount became a castle and then a country house. This chapter is an attempt to bring all these sources together to afford a more comprehensive study of the Mount during the period 1500 to 1700. A long list of owners, tenants, governors and captains who have been involved with the property are identified, and new material discovered in family papers, leases and legal documents used to examine their relationship to the Mount and their role in local and national events.(See Appendix 2) This information will help to uncover the nature of the buildings on St Michael's Mount, how they were perceived and utilised in this period, and hopefully provide clues to when the 'Chevy Chase' hunting frieze was installed in the house and by whom.

The site on top of St Michael's Mount was built upon by the monks of Mont St Michel whose Benedictine Priory was consecrated in 1135. For 300 years the monks from Normandy

---

[1] Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas in *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro, 2008, estimate the 'Chevy Chase' frieze to date between late 16th century and 1660. Canon Thomas in *St Michael's Mount,* Cambridge, 1932, offers two speculative dates. The first from the personal comment of John St Aubyn who suggests post 1660 after the restoration of Charles II, secondly from Dr Schwertz whose study of the subject concluded that the frieze is not later than the 16th century.

[2] Canon Thomas Taylor, *Saint Michael's Mount,* Cambridge, 1932.

[3] John Fletcher, *Short History of Saint Michael's Mount,* St Michael's Mount, Cornwall 1951.

[4] N. Orme, *St Michaels' Mount, Benedictine Priory later chapel of St Michael,* 2007, Draft, Victoria County History Cornwall.

followed their monastic traditions and welcomed pilgrims to the Mount until 1415, when Henry V took the 'alien' priory into crown ownership and granted the rents and revenues of the Mount to the nuns at Syon Abbey. The Abbess of Syon replaced the priory with an archpresbytery where three resident priests ensured mass was celebrated daily and pilgrims welcomed. This arrangement continued up to 1523 when the Abbess at Syon granted a lease of the Mount to a member of the local gentry, John Milliton.[5]

John Milliton (1523- 1549) - Tenant and captain.

The lease granted by the Abbess of Syon in 1523 conferred the first recorded captainship of the Mount to John Milliton and entitled him to all rents and tithes of the monastery. In return he had to ensure the security of the Abbess's income by forwarding all offerings received at the church and paying the wages of any soldiers needed for the defence of the priory. The Abbess renewed the lease in 1534 granting Milliton and his son, William, another thirty years under the same conditions.[6] At the dissolution of Syon Abbey in 1539 and after the prohibition of pilgrimages, the religious establishment was allowed to continue at the Mount because, according to Orme, John Milliton and subsequently his son, William, continued to pay the wages of the priests, clerk and janitor whilst paying their rent to the crown.[7]

Despite the continuation of a religious establishment at the Mount, during John Milliton's tenure the island became an important part of the nation's defence.[8] Milliton had been a gentleman usher in the court of Henry VIII and because his family estate was only three miles

---

[5] "Transcription of Grant of St Michael's Mount to John Milaton from Abbess of Syon." Mor/Hist/59, Pengersick papers, Morrab Library, Penzance, Cornwall.

[6] N. Orme, *St Michaels' Mount,* p. 16.

[7] Ibid. p. 17.

[8] This dual function of the Mount was illustrated by John Leland in about 1540 when on a visit to the Mount he described the existence of lodgings for both "the Capytayne and Prestes" on the South and West side of the church. J. Leland in "The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary 1534-43 in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed. R. Pearse Chope, New York, 1918, p. 28.

from the Mount, was probably recruited to ensure the fortification of the Mount during uneasy times with France. In 1525 the crown granted money to improve the defences at St Mawes, Pendennis castle and the Mount.[9] By 1547 the fortress was considered secure enough to host such important state dignitaries as Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral, who wrote and despatched a letter from 'the captain's house' at St Michael's Mount to his brother the Duke of Somerset.[10] Two years later during the Cornish rebellion, the island's defences were used by supporters of the king seeking refuge from the rebels. Under orders from Humphrey Arundell the Cornish insurgents stormed and took the Mount, but the rebellion was eventually quashed and Arundell executed.[11] Regardless of the uprising John Milliton's lease appears to have continued unabated from the dissolution of the abbey to his death in 1549, when the Mount passed to his son, William.[12]

William Milliton (1549-1571) –Tenant and captain.

When William inherited the lease of the Mount two priests were still resident providing holy services for presumably the garrison.[13] By 1551 William Milliton was refusing to pay the

---

[9] Frances Rose-Troup, *The Western Rebellion of 1549*, London, 1913.

[10] *Calendar of State Papers, Edward IV, 1547-1553*, Vol. No. 35, Letter dated April 20th 1547.

[11] Rose-Throup, *The Western Rebellion,* p. 124.

[12] Canon Fletcher, *A Short History of St Michael's Mount,* Cornwall, 1951, p. 70 mentions Humphrey Arundell as being granted revenues of SMM in 1533 before the dissolution of the abbey. In 1549, during the Cornish rebellion against Edward VI's enforcement of the use of the Book of Common Prayer in English rather than Latin, the Mount was used by supporters of the crown as a place of refuge. The leader of the rebel forces, Humphrey Arundell, ordered that the Mount be put under siege and the island was stormed and retaken. The rebellion was eventually quashed and Arundell executed for his involvement. The events of the Cornish rebellion were recorded by many sixteenth-century writers including Carew, Foxe and Holinshed, in which they refer to Humphrey Arundell of Lanherne as variously 'governor', 'captain' or 'commander' of the Mount. In Daniel and Samuel Lyson's *History and Topography of Cornwall* of 1814, it is further claimed that Humphrey Arundell was granted all revenues of the Mount after the dissolution of Syon Abbey, however, no surviving state, legal or local document has come to light to confirm this, and it must be assumed that John Milliton's lease was honoured from the dissolution until his death in 1549 when his son, William, inherited the captaincy as laid down in the terms of the lease granted in 1634. Humphrey Arundell's involvement with the Mount must, therefore, have been confined to the rebellion itself. For this reason I have discounted Arundell as being governor or captain of the Mount.

[13] N. Orme, *St Michaels' Mount,* p. 16.

wages of the priests claiming all chantries had been suppressed by Edward VI.[14] The arrears

were noted in the church accounts and one or both priests went on to take positions elsewhere

ending the religious function of the Mount.[15] William was granted a new lease by Elizabeth I

in 1560 for a term of forty years this time including a clause providing for the maintenance of

five soldiers and instruments of war.[16] William Milliton died in 1571 leaving only daughters

as heirs. Later in that year his widow remarried William Harris of Hayne, Devon and the

responsibility for the Mount appears to have devolved to him. No records have been

discovered to establish exactly what happened to the Mount after 1571 but by 1584, it was

William Harris's son, Arthur, who was maintaining the defences at the Mount.

Arthur Harris (1584 -1595) - Unofficial captain of the Mount.

(1596 -1628) – Tenant and captain.

William Harris died in 1591, however, petitions dating from 1584 to 1591 from Arthur Harris

regarding the necessity for the provision of ordnance for the Mount, reveal it was his son who

had taken over the role of captain.[17] It was probably Arthur Harris who was in command of

the Mount as the Armada sailed past in 1588, and in 1595, it was a local force probably

recruited and trained by Arthur Harris, who were mustered to defend nearby Mousehole,

Penzance and Marazion from a rogue, Spanish invasion.[18] Not surprisingly then, the lease

granted by Elizabeth I in 1596 to Arthur Harris reaffirmed the importance of the Mount's

defensive role, committing Harris to maintain five soldiers and provide for the upkeep of the

pier. Harris held this lease for the term of his life and was regarded with great respect by the

---

[14] Canon J. R. Fletcher, *Short History of St Michael's Mount,* p. 70.

[15] N. Orme, *Ibid,* p. 16.

[16] J. Fletcher, *Ibid,* p. 71.

[17] Thomas Taylor, *St Michael's Mount,* pp. 156 – 163.

[18] Richard Carew, *Survey of Cornwall 1602,* Redruth, 2000, pp. 188 – 190.

local population.[19] Though originally from Hayne in Devon, Arthur Harris relocated to be near the Mount and bought a mansion at Kenegie near Penzance in 1602. He died in 1628.

Thomas Harris (Circa 1623-1628) – Lieutenant and chief tenant of the Mount

Thomas was the third son of Arthur Harris and in letters between himself and the Earl of Salisbury in 1623 is cited as 'Lieutenant of the Mount' as well as 'chief tenante of the Mount'.[20] Thomas probably resided in the castle on the Mount and in his father's will was bequeathed furniture and effects from it.[21] After the death of his father he did not inherit the lease of the Mount or the position of captaincy.

Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1599-1612) – Owner

William Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1612-1640) – Owner

In 1599 the Mount was sold by Elizabeth I to Robert Cecil.[22] The conditions of the sale stated that Cecil should provide for the maintenance of five soldiers for the defence of the Mount. When William Cecil inherited the property from his father in 1612 the same conditions were applied through letters patent of James I. Both Cecils honoured the lease granted to Arthur Harris in 1596, and there are no surviving records to prove they ever visited the Mount.

Hannibal Newman (1628 –circa 1640) – Salaried captain, tenant of property on the Mount but not the castle.

---

[19] Cornwall Record Office, *AU/6.* Letter written in 1658 by Richard Copyear concerning the Mount recalls how Arthur Harris was responsible for issuing warrants for the raising of the trained bands, and was successful in securing guns and match for defence of castle. As Arthur Harris died some 30 years before this letter was drafted, his memory endured within the local population.

[20] Royal Institute of Cornwall, *HA/8/5,* letter dated 27.9.1623.

[21] *Will of Arthur Harris*, National Archives, prob/11/154.

[22] Cornwall Record Office, AU 33/34.

In 1628/9 after the death of Arthur Harris, Hannibal Newman wrote to the Earl of Salisbury requesting to be put in command of the castle. The Earl of Salisbury agreed to Newman's terms on condition Newman forwarded a £500 bond of security. This was supplied by Francis Basset and Newman took up his position in April 1630.[23] Newman received £20 per year and the privilege of the island by the Earl of Salisbury. His gunner was paid £12 and each of the five soldiers £8. Newman was the first waged captain of the Mount and did not lease the property as his predecessors had.

Francis Basset (1640 – 1645) – Owner and governor.

During the reigns of James I and Charles I the Mount continued its importance as part of the nation's defence. In 1625 Robert Killigrew was given £350 by the office of the Ordnance and Forts of England for "reparations of the castles of Pendennis, St Mawes, St Michaels Mount in Cornwall".[24] At this time the local population was concerned at the level of pirate activity along the coast of Cornwall especially Francis Basset, the Vice Admiral of North Cornwall, who in 1625 petitioned the King with regard to the Sallee pirates that were plaguing the seas around Cornwall.[25]

The letters written by Basset in his role as Vice Admiral also illustrate the competition between local gentry to the rights of wreckage and show how Basset struggled to claim what rightfully should belong to himself or the King.[26] For these reasons Bassett presumably purchased the Mount with its harbour, castle, revenues and defences from the Earl of Salisbury in 1640. In the terms of the sale Basset was conveyed the title to the Manor

---

[23] *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House,* Vol. 22, 1612-1668, pp. 255 - 260.
[24] Cornwall Record Office, B35/ Transcription of letters and State papers in relation to Sir Francis Bassett and Civil War.
[25] Cornwall Record Office, B35.
[26] Cornwall Record Office, B35.

Lordship and Farm of St Michael's Mount and had to continue providing for five 'able and sufficient' soldiers.[27]

Only three months after Basset bought the Mount Turkish pirates took "from the shore about Penzance, near St Michaels Mount, 60 men, women and children".[28] As a result it is unlikely that Bassett chose to live at the Mount for the fear of these pirates; rather he remained with his family on their farm at Tehidy on the north coast some fifteen miles from the Mount.

Two years later, during the civil war, Bassett supported the Royalist cause raising funds and ensuring the importation of weapons and powder from France landing them at Falmouth, St Ives and Penzance.[29] The Navy had declared for Parliament leaving the far west as the only reasonable access point for imports from abroad. At St Michael's Mount Bassett maintained twelve men and a gunner and for a greater part of the conflict the island remained distant and safe from the tribulations of seventeenth-century warfare.

In September1644, after the Earl of Essex's army came close to taking Royalist Cornwall for Parliament, Bassett was given a commission to the Mount making him Governor and Commander in Chief. For the greater security of the county he was to enlarge the garrison to fifty.[30] As the situation worsened and the Prince of Wales withdrew to Cornwall to command the western forces, Lord Hopton ordered major improvements to the Mount's defences and a speedy provisioning of the island with food and men.[31]

---

[27] Royal Institution of Cornwall, Henderson Papers, HA/8/9A, Royal Cornwall Museum.

[28] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Vol. 459, Charles I 1640, July 1st – 13th, July 4th, p.450.

[29] Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War*, Oxford, 1933.

[30] Cornwall Record Office, B35/ Transcription of letter from George Digby, secretary of state for Charles I to Francis Basset.

[31] Ibid.

On September 19th 1645 Francis Bassett died at his home of Tehidy. The fortifications at the Mount were incomplete and in his stead his brother, Arthur, oversaw the building of the new defences and governed the garrison.

Parliament (1646 – 1660) – Garrison and Prison

Robert Bennett (1647 – 1660) – Governor

Lady Ann Basset (1645 – 1657) - Owner

In March 1646 as the Parliament forces drew closer, the Prince of Wales, accompanied by Arthur Bassett, sailed for the Scillies from Lands End.[32] A week later Hopton surrendered to Fairfax at Truro hoping to save Pendennis and the Mount and sent 200 foot under Colonel Collins to the Mount.[33] The Mount was well prepared for its siege though the men were not. Discontent and weariness of war saw one hundred of them desert on the 19th March with a further eighty captured by a surprise attack a few days later.[34] On 16th April 1646 Colonel Hammond took the surrender of the Mount with all its guns and supplies.

In August 1647 Fairfax commanded Colonel Robert Bennett to the position of governor of the Mount requiring him to take immediate possession of the garrison and fortify it.[35] It remained as a garrison and an occasional prison for the next twelve years and apart from a brief uprising in 1648 was relatively quiet. John Taylor, travelling through Cornwall in 1649, visited the Mount and described it as a garrison with the church being a "well stored magazine with ammunition" though the bell ropes had been broken by soldiers.[36]

---

[32] *Lady Fanshawe memoirs* edited by Beatrice Marshall 1905, p. 70. Lady Fanshawe says Sir Francis Bassett, the governor of the Mount, accompanied the Prince, but Sir Francis had died in September 1645, and she refers really to his brother Arthur.

[33] M. Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War*, p. 209.

[34] Joshua Sprigge, *Anglia Rediviva. Englands Recovery 1647*, Oxford, 1854.

[35] Cornwall Record Office, AU/4.

[36] John Taylor, "Taylors Western Voyage to the Mount 1649" in *Wandering to see the Wonders of the West,* Ed. Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1967, pp. 15 – 17.

From 1646 to 1657 the Mount remained in the ownership of Basset's widow, Lady Ann.[37]

Her eldest son, John, married in 1648 and in a tripartite deed appeared to rent the property to

his mother for £200 a year for her life. In November 1657 John Bassett then sold the Mount

to John St Aubyn for £1900 ensuring his mother and sister lay no claim to the title.[38]

John St Aubyn (1657- 1684) - Owner

In 1656 John St Aubyn was a member of Cromwell's Protectorate Parliament serving as a

commissioner in Cornwall. In March 1658, as the new owner of the Mount, he petitioned the

Lord Protector to take back the Mount "as in a short time this place will wholly fall into decay

and become uninhabitable."[39] In response the Council of Whitehall requested information

from Colonel Robert Bennett as governor of the Mount. In April 1658 affidavits were

provided by local people, including Hannibal Newman, that the Mount had been for many

years an important place of local defence. The Treasury commissioners considered John St

Aubyn's interest in the Mount on July 13th and August 12th 1658 but no decision was made

and then Cromwell died in September 1658.[40]

After the death of Oliver Cromwell when George Monck had taken the reigns of state to

restore Charles II to the throne, Monck wrote to Colonel Bennett in March 1660 commanding

him to hand over the garrison at St Michael's Mount with all weapons and provisions to

---

[37] From 1646 to 1657 the Mount remained in the ownership of Basset's widow, Lady Ann Basset. The natural death of her husband before the end of the Civil War was fortunate for it meant that the Mount was not sequestered as it belonged to Lady Ann Bassett.
Cornwall Record Office, AU32/33 - A comment in the St Aubyn archives reads as follows:
"Sir W Steven bevels affidavit that the Mount was never sequestered but allowed to the Lady Bassett for her jointure according to the articles themselves read in Parliament 23rd April 1646 (one week after its surrender) attested by W. Stobull Clerk of the Parliament."
[38] Cornwall Record Office, AU32/33.
[39] Cornwall Record Office, AU/8.
[40] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1649 – 1660, 1658, Vol. CLXXXII, p. 161.

Colonel John St Aubyn who was to preserve them for the use of the state.[41] It is not known how long the garrison continued to exist after the Restoration, though soon after his occupation of the building John St Aubyn erected his coat of arms of plaster in the main hall of the castle and presumably added the date 1660 to the existing royal arms.

In his later years John St Aubyn appears to have chosen to reside at the Mount leaving the affairs of the family estate at Clowance (ten miles away) to his son. A lease dated 1684 refers to John St Aubyn as being of St Michael's Mount and his son, Sir John Seyntaubyn, baronet of Clowance.[42]. St Aubyn's residency of the Mount probably saw the end of its military function.

John St Aubyn, the elder, died in 1684 and the Mount passed to his son, the baronet, who made further improvements and additions to the Mount including the installation of his own plaster coat of arms which now stands above the fireplace in the entrance hall to the castle.

This brief history has shown that the Mount's transformation from religious establishment to castle to country home was a gradual process between 1500 and 1700. For most of this period the island was regarded primarily as a military stronghold yet, the existence of decorative plasterwork in the great hall and archaeological evidence that suggests the buildings were converted into a country house during this period requires further explanation.[43] To explore how the buildings on the Mount functioned as a country house as well as a possible garrison, the next chapter will consider what roles each of the individual owners, tenants, captains and governors had in establishing a country residence, if any, and hopefully ascertain which of

---

[41] Cornwall Record Office, AU9/1.

[42] Royal Institution of Cornwall, *Henderson Papers*, HA/4/29, Royal Cornwall Museum.

[43] Berry and Thomas, *St Michael's Mount.*

this list of ten were potential patrons of the frieze. This will result in a closer approximation

for the date of the installation of the frieze and an understanding of its subject matter.

CHAPTER 3

ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT: PRIORY, CASTLE, GARRISON, COUNTRY HOUSE.

The aim of this thesis is to date the 'Chevy Chase' frieze at St Michael's Mount, identify who possibly commissioned it and explain its unusual imagery. In order to appreciate how the frieze was understood in its original context it is important to understand the nature of the building itself. So in this chapter the latest archaeological information is reviewed for the first time alongside the archival evidence to establish the principal functions of the buildings and rooms at St Michael's Mount, to see how these have changed over time and who was involved in making those changes. The final part of the chapter summarises the hunting imagery of the frieze within this context.

What is so remarkable about St Michael's Mount is its notable absence from most of the secondary literature on the subject of the country house during the period 1500-1700. Unlike other houses in Cornwall such as Cotehele, and Lanhydrock House, which are documented for their, architecture and interior decoration, there is little comment on the significance of the cluster of buildings at the top of St Michael's Mount. Yet St Michael's Mount was, and continues to be, an iconic symbol of this region. So what can explain this omission? Perhaps the difficulty lay in defining the exact nature of the buildings. An ambiguity over the property's status arises from archaeological evidence which suggests the buildings were converted into a country house sometime in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries,[1] and the archival evidence which points to the persistence of military usage up to and after the English civil war. Of course the buildings may have served both purposes as they are not necessarily

---

[1] Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the Summit Buildings"*, Truro, 2008.

mutually exclusive, and though St Michael's Mount was regularly referred to as 'castle' and 'farm' in documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth century,[2] this does not preclude it from also providing a comfortable residence. So what is the case for this old priory being converted into a prestigious country house after the dissolution of the monasteries as so many others were?[3]

J T Cliffe defines the country house for a member of the gentry in the seventeenth century as being "more stylish and commodious than an ordinary farmhouse..... situated within its own grounds ideally including parklands." It should also have a dominating presence within the landscape to represent the economic power and status of the gentleman who owned it.[4] Paula Henderson in her analysis of Tudor country houses has shown there was a move away from isolated, wall-enclosed properties to houses set in the drama of their own surroundings. Instead of looking inward, the new country houses looked outward. Those adapted from old monasteries, she argues, were encircled by gardens, hunting parks and farm services providing a backdrop of extravagance, prestige and status.[5] Within these definitions provided by Cliffe and Henderson, the Mount had the potential to provide an excellent location for a country house. Though not at the centre of beautiful parks and farmland and separated from its estates by sea and tide, it had a dramatic setting atop a craggy tor and had the economic and strategic benefits of a harbour at its base. As a dominating presence within the land and seascape; as a stronghold with a lucrative income from an ex monastic estate, it had all the essential elements to provide someone with a marvellous expression of wealth and power.

---

[2] *Calendar of the Cecil Papers In Hatfield House, Ed.* G.Dyfnallt Owen, 1971, Vol. *22.*
[3] Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* London, 2007.
[4] J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England*, London, 1999, pp. 1 – 5.
[5] Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden*, London, 2005.

 The archaeological report on St Michael's Mount by Eric Berry and Nick Thomas confirms that someone did indeed construct a country house on the top of the crag. It was created from two buildings, (one monasterial: one military), which existed there after the dissolution of the priory.[6] As can be seen from the plans drawn up by Berry and Thomas in Appendix 1, a hall house of late medieval construction intended for defence had been built to stand separately from the priory to guard the only vulnerable approach on the western side of the Mount. The two properties, they argued, were joined together sometime in the sixteenth or seventeenth century by the building of an extension or new tower in the south west corner which afforded access and a route through from one to the other. (See Appendix 3 for plans of the house dated 1862.)

The archival evidence in the previous chapter points towards the two buildings still being separate in 1551. A letter in 1547 written and despatched by Lord Seymour from the 'captain's house' at the Mount indicates that the defensive building was either a distinct detached building, or the old priory buildings and hall house were considered altogether as a military stronghold. [7] However, Orme's research showed the Mount retained a religious community of two resident priests until 1551.[8] It is unlikely any tenant or owner would invest in large scale renovations until the priests had left and there was no prospect of them returning. (See later section under William Milliton). Berry and Thomas were unable to determine from the archaeology when the old priory buildings were joined with the 'captain's' house to form a larger building or country house. It is possible the two buildings existed separately for many years in order to distinguish between the military and domestic functions of the property, nevertheless, the installation of a large coat of arms and an elaborate

---

[6] Berry and Thomas, *St Michael's Mount.*
[7] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Edward IV, 1547-1553*, Vol. 35, Letter dated April 20th 1547.
[8] N. Orme, *St Michaels' Mount, Benedictine Priory later chapel of St Michael,* 2007, Victoria County History Cornwall, 2007, p. 16.

plaster frieze in the 'Chevy Chase' room indicates that by at least 1641 this was the central hall of a much more refined and grander house.

In the sixteenth century the 'great' hall was considered one of the most important rooms in the homes of the gentry providing a reception space and room for communal dining. The symbolic function of the hall was to express an owner's wealth and social status and as such was decorated lavishly with tapestries, heraldry and plasterwork.[9] The 'Chevy Chase' room with its impressive coat of arms and striking frieze must have been the 'great' hall of the buildings on the Mount meaning the house had a different layout from the one seen today. An entrance from the courtyard on the northern side, as discussed in chapter 1, would have been vital, and to arrive at this entry point, whether the ex-priory and the captain's house were conjoined or not, the route through to the converted 'Chevy Chase' room could only have been achieved via a passage beneath the church. (See Appendix 1). The royal coat of arms situated on the eastern side of the 'Chevy Chase' room imply this was the 'high end' of the hall where the head of the household sat; thus the domestic side of the country house including the kitchens should be opposite. However, most of the extra accommodation and chambers were located on this western side of the building so a staircase was constructed at the western end of the 'great' hall to connect it to the cellars beneath where the service area, including kitchen and buttery could be situated.[10] This would have left the west side of the priory and the 'captain's house' free to create a larger more commodious residence.

There is little doubt, then, that a country house was created out of the buildings on top of the mount, but why and how did they still continue to exist as a military outpost and be known as

---

[9] Nicholas Cooper, *House of the Gentry 1480-1680,* London 1999, pp. 275 - 289.

[10] This interpretation differs from the reconstruction provided by Berry and Thomas in Appendix 1, where they site the kitchen on the same floor as the 'Chevy Chase'. As they date the winder staircase in the south west corner to the sixteenth century, I would argue this was installed for the kitchens to go below leaving accommodation space above.

a 'castle'? And was it possible that a 'country house' also accommodated a garrison of soldiers? Documents, letters and leases relating to the Mount during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have supplied some clues to answer these questions, but the archives can only provide tantalisingly incomplete glimpses of the lives of the people that owned and leased the Mount. The following section uses newly discovered archival material as well as previously known information to try and establish when and how the buildings on the Mount were converted to a country house and by whom.

John Milliton (1523-1549) - Tenant and captain.

As discussed in the previous chapter, John Milliton oversaw the fortification of the Mount and when John Leland visited in about 1540, he described the buildings as if they were a castle with inner and outer wards noting also the lodgings for a captain and priests.[11] By 1547 the 'captain's house' must have been a high status building to accommodate a visiting state dignitary such as Thomas Seymour.[12] However, no other evidence has been found to suggest John Milliton spent money on the Mount to provide domestic accommodation.

William Milliton (1549-1571) –Tenant and captain.

William's lease of the Mount was renewed in 1560 by Elizabeth I who granted a new forty year lease 'in consideration of the £44 16s 11d spent by them (John and William) upon the repair of the pier, church, chapel and hall, where a commission had estimated it would cost at least £200'.[13] The work that was completed by 1560 was probably carried out by William Milliton as his father, John, died in 1549. Most ex monasteries granted or leased to royal favourites were a risky investment during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary I for fear that the

---

[11] John Leland in "The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary 1534-43 in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed. R. Pearse Chope, New York, 1918, p. 28.
[12] *Calendar of State Papers, Edward IV, 1547-1553*, Vol. 35, Letter dated April 20th 1547.
[13] Roger Ash, *Chronology of Pengersick,* Morrab Mor/Hist/59, No. 6, Morrab Library, Penzance.

old faith could be brought back and priories be returned to their previous orders, so it was more likely that William spent money on adapting the old priory buildings under the more stable religious and political regime of Elizabeth I after 1558.[14]

The reference in the lease to 'church, chapel and hall' probably alludes to repairs made by William Milliton to the priory buildings as opposed to the 'captain's house', and consequently helps to establish a date for the rebuild of the priory buildings, (which Berry and Thomas were unable to ascertain in their archaeological report), to between 1558 and 1560. This speculative date corresponds to Mark Girouard's study of Elizabethan Architecture in which he argues that from about 1560 the design of the great hall changed from an open one-storey construction with high ceilings and exposed beams, as seen in the 'Chevy Chase' room, to a building of two storeys where the hall had a lower ceiling to accommodate a chamber directly above. This modification in design, he claims, was a reflection of how the function of the hall was evolving in the late sixteenth century. Whereas the hall had once been important for communal activity involving the whole household, by the mid sixteenth century the heads of the household began to seek out the more intimate spaces of the great chamber, parlour or withdrawing room. Girouard concludes that the last one-storey hall to be constructed was in a private house built at Burghley House in Northants in 1578.[15] Since the 'Chevy Chase' room is of the earlier style, its construction can be confidently dated to between 1558 and 1570. Even though the priory buildings were renovated by 1570, there is still a lack of documentary evidence to suggest if they were combined with the 'captain's house' before or after these renovations

---

[14] Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England.*
[15] Mark Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture, Its Rise and Fall, 1540 -1640,* London, 2009, p. 67.

Arthur Harris (1584-1628) - Tenant and captain.

After the sale of the Mount to Robert Cecil in 1599, the crown retained an interest in the castle as a part of the nation's defence and Arthur Harris kept his lease and captaincy. In 1617, Arthur Harris wrote to the Council of War stating that 'the Commissioners of the Forts of the west parts' surveyed the Mount four years previously and reported that, though in good repair, the Mount required further supply of munitions or money to procure them.[16] In his letter Harris petitions for either. In 1623, a valuation of the Mount for the Earl of Salisbury listed the existence of nine great 'peeces' (cannon) on the Mount of which seven belonged to Arthur Harris.[17] Clearly, Harris was concerned enough to invest personally in the defence of the Mount. However, no records have been found to substantiate whether Arthur Harris invested in improving the buildings or creating a country house.

Thomas Harris (Circa 1623-1628) – Lieutenant and chief tenant of the Mount

Below is an extract from the will of Arthur Harris, dated 1627, in which he bequeaths to his third son, Thomas, a list of items from the Mount.

Item I give to Thomas harris my third Sonne the featherbedds with their furniture by him to be chosen of such as are at the mount
next all the Beddsteeds there
Item I give hime next all the lyvinge there
Item next I give him all the plate there at the nowe writinge of this my will and all the fformes Stooles and bordes there with the Spitts and Andirons
Item next I give him fiftie poundes of current monie of England.[18]

---

[16] *Calendar of the Cecil Papers*, Ed. G Dyfnallt Owen, Vol. 22: 1612-1668 (1971), pp. 41 - 55.
[17] *Calendar of the Cecil Papers*, Ed. G Dyfnallt Owen, Vol. 22: 1612-1668 (1971), pp. 167 - 188.
[18] *The Will of Arthur Harris*, PRO, Cat Reference: prob/11/154.

As Thomas Harris was already known as 'chief tenant' and 'lieutenant' of the Mount (see Chapter 2), and was left effects from the property on his father's demise, he probably resided there. A recently discovered inventory of the Mount taken in 1629 after the death of Arthur Harris gives the most complete picture of the Mount so far uncovered for the period 1500-1700. (See Appendix 4) The inventory reads as if compiled by someone who began cataloguing goods in the harbour and worked their way up the Mount to the buildings at the top, recording items as they went. The armour and weapons in this inventory account for the greater proportion of the value of items at the Mount, signifying the on going defensive nature of the Mount, however, there were additional domestic items listed, most notably six 'bedsteds' furnished with feather beds valued at £19 and kitchen equipment. The tables, forms and stools bequeathed to Thomas Harris in his father's will seem to have already disappeared from the house. Nevertheless, this inventory verifies that by 1628 the buildings on the top of the Mount could accommodate and cater for a large number of people. Whether these people were the inhabitants and guests of a country house or soldiers as part of a permanent or temporary garrison remains undetermined.

Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1599-1612) – Owner

William Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1612-1640) – Owner

During the ownership of both Robert and William Cecil, the Mount is variously referred to as 'farme' in the will of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, [19] and 'castle' in correspondence between William Cecil and Hannibal Newman.[20] Leases discovered in the Henderson papers at the Cornwall Record Office, show that during their period of ownership, both Robert and William Cecil appeared to be maximising revenues by renting off assets and property at the

---

[19] Royal Institution of Cornwall, *Henderson Papers,* HA/8/4, Royal Cornwall Museum.
[20] *Calendar of the Cecil Papers,* Ed. G Dyfnallt Owen, Vol. 22, 1612-1668, pp. 255 - 260.

Mount.[21] This asset stripping venture culminated in the sale of the property to Basset in 1640 when many valuable lands and incomes which had historically been associated with the Mount, were withheld from the sale and kept by William Cecil. So as the value and status of the Mount was slowly eroded it is unlikely that either Robert or William Cecil made any investment in the fabric of the buildings on the Mount. Their main concerns seem to have been ensuring the defence of the building and exploiting the full potential of the Mount's revenues.

Hannibal Newman (1628 –circa 1640) – Salaried captain, tenant of property on the Mount but not the castle.

As Hannibal Newman was paid an annual retainer of £20 to act as 'captain' of the Mount, he is unlikely to have made any personal investment in the buildings and can be eliminated from the list of potential patrons to have created a country house or installed a plaster frieze.

Francis Basset (1640–1645) – Owner and governor.

A covenant in the purchase of the Mount in 1640 by Francis Bassett from the Earl of Salisbury requested that Bassett 'whenever necessary at his own cost provide 5 able and sufficient soldiers for defence of the Mount and pay them .... not above 8d per day'[22] , suggesting that soldiers were not permanently stationed on the Mount but employed when required. By 1641 when Basset installed the royal coat of arms in the 'great' hall there was without doubt a prestigious house on the top of the island. In his book, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, Maurice Howard argues that by the seventeenth century castles in the North had been allowed to decay. A stable monarchy had rendered castles

---

[21] Ibid, HA/8/3.

[22] 'Abstract of the Conveyance of St Michael's Mount' Appendix to "The Ancient and Present State of St michael's Mount, 1762" ed. P. Pool in *Cornish Studies,* Vol. 3, 1975, pp. 46 – 47.

redundant and their features came to be seen as fashionable fantasy rather than purposeful.[23]

This is perhaps not the case at St Michael's Mount. The archival evidence shows that its status as castle had come to define not only the building but its owners and tenants too. By the time Bassett bought the property in 1640, the Mount was important not for its economic power but its military might. So did Bassett pay for an expensive 'fashionable fantasy' of a castle, costly to maintain and with relatively less income than in the past? Well probably, but as admiral of the North coast, Bassett would have recognised the importance of possessing a port which put him at the centre of trade in the region to rival and impress his contemporaries.

Parliament   (1646–1660) – Garrison and Prison

Robert Bennett   (1647–1660) – Governor

Lady Ann Basset (1645–1657) – Owner

After the civil war, the castle became the centre for local Parliamentary control. It was governed by Robert Bennett and housed a garrison. It fell into disrepair and was only eventually handed over to its new owner, John St Aubyn, during the negotiations to return Charles II to the throne. It is unlikely that any work or restoration was undertaken on the Mount during the interregnum.

John St Aubyn (1657-1684)

John St Aubyn was the first owner free of any obligations to ensure the payment of soldiers or defence of the Mount. Released from this burden, did he set about creating a country house? He certainly erected two family coat of arms, one of plaster in the 'Chevy Chase' room and one in carved stonework over the main, western entrance. He also had the date 1660 added in

---

[23] Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, p. 7 - 11.

plaster to the royal coat of arms. Given this level of investment he may also have installed the plaster hunting frieze.

After this consideration of the series of owners, tenants and captains it can be concluded that the accommodation at the Mount was not perceived as a safe and quiet home until the ownership of the St Aubyns. The Mount was primarily a fortress and the tenants or owners kept it as such. Its separation from the mainland and exposure to weather and threats from the sea, notably the Barbary pirates in the early seventeenth century, would make this building stand apart from the more refined country residences at Lanhydrock, Godolphin and Cotehele.

So how would a plaster frieze of hunting scenes be viewed in this environment? It is unusual that the connection to the sea and the importance of St Michael's Mount as a fortress or harbour is not manifested in any decoration or feature of the house. Instead the hunting scenes in the frieze in the Chevy Chase room appear incongruous in a dining hall of a house surrounded by sea and not parkland; an irony which could not have been lost to a viewer of this plasterwork in the seventeenth century. Alternatively, could a hunting scene in the 'great' hall suggest the Mount buildings were used as a hunting lodge? There could be no hunting of animals on the island except for the few rabbits in the rocky warrens at its base. Hunting was pursued in parkland at nearby Godolphin house and a hunting party could have departed from there to reach the Mount. However, due to the constraints of the tide it is unlikely that anyone would choose to use the house at the Mount as a hunting lodge. It is more likely that the imagery of the frieze was chosen to entertain and allude to the fact that the country house of St Michael's Mount was not surrounded by parkland but sea. Hunting in the seventeenth

century was also a spectator sport, and as there were no hunts to amuse the guests from the terraces,[24] was one created on the walls instead?

Whosever from the list of potential candidates was responsible for commissioning the plasterwork frieze of hunting scenes in the great hall of St Michael's Mount , they possibly did so with humour and irony . They used hunting scenes where no hunting party would ever dine, and in one of the most venerable religious places in Cornwall with substantial connections to its catholic heritage in the shape of a medieval church and pilgrim route to the top, they chose secular rather than religious imagery. This choice of subject matter for the frieze on the Mount sets it apart from the great fashion of the period for biblical imagery which was used to decorate many of the homes of the gentry, a trend that Tara Hamling has recently identified. [25] In complete contrast to work carried out at around the same time at Lanhydrock House near Bodmin and Prideaux Place in Padstow, where the owners manifested their piety by commissioning large plaster images of biblical scenes, at St Michael's Mount it was considered safer to avoid using religious imagery in an ex-monastic setting where it might be misconstrued as devotional art.

This chapter has explained the differences of St Michael's Mount which sets it apart and excludes it from wider trends in the development of the country house as described in the secondary literature. It simultaneously functioned as a 'country' house having decorative features and costly furniture but was also a military stronghold stocked with weaponry. Archival and archaeological evidence establishes the presence of soldiers on the Mount from 1523 -1660, though not necessarily always as a permanent garrison. The dual functions of the Mount as military establishment and country home may have been facilitated by the existence

---

[24] Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden,* p. 167.
[25] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain,* London, 2010.

of two separate buildings which were only eventually combined when the military use of the building came to an end in 1660. However, no evidence has been found to support this.

A search of state and family papers has not produced any documents which can effectively date the creation of a country house on the Mount, nor have any come to light that relate directly to the frieze or any plasterwork on the Mount, so to continue this investigation an analysis of the visual imagery of the frieze and the use of plasterwork as a decorative medium must be undertaken. However, before these hunting scenes are examined in more detail, the next chapter will investigate the reliability of the association of the frieze with the 'Chevy Chase' ballad; an association now indelibly sealed through the appropriation of the title to identify not only the frieze but the room in which it is located.

CHAPTER 4

THE BALLAD OF 'CHEVY CHASE'

In the previous chapters a discussion of the chronology of events at the Mount and an overview of the development of the property from priory to country house between 1500 and 1700 have provided few clues to date the frieze, nor have they afforded a greater understanding or interpretation of its imagery. Therefore, the next avenue of research is to investigate the frieze's association with the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' after which it is reputed to be named. To examine this relationship this section explores the history of the ballad as an oral and printed piece of folk culture giving an account of how the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' emerged from this oral tradition to become, according to Adam Fox, the "nation's favourite song" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[1] Consideration will also be given to how the ballad was perceived and received by the general population with particular reference to the Chevy Chase tune and its imagery, and whether any of this imagery can be associated directly with that contained in the frieze. If the hunting scenes in the frieze are allegorical or symbolic then it will also be useful to establish how the Chevy Chase tune and ballad were used as a vehicle for amusement, political commentary and satire. Finally, the chapter assesses the significance of a late eighteenth-century revival of interest in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' to see if this had any bearing on the naming of the frieze.

The earliest ballads emerged from the medieval tradition of travelling entertainers or minstrels who roamed the country performing their songs. Most minstrels enjoyed the patronage of a member of the nobility performing for them and their guests in their grand country houses. However, after the Reformation, ballads 'rife in poperie' became less popular and by the reign

---

[1] Adam Fox, *Oral & Literate Culture in England,* Oxford, 2005, p. 1.

of Elizabeth I the art of minstrelsy was in crisis. Minstrels were forced to travel further afield to make their living supplementing their meagre earnings by selling goods to their audiences and resorting to a spot of vagrancy.[2] Indeed, by the end of the century minstrels were outlawed.[3]

At the same time as minstrelsy was in decline great improvements were made in the development of printing techniques enabling the presses in London to churn out large, paper sheets printed on one side only called broadsides. By the late sixteenth century 3000 ballads had been published in this format costing just one penny to purchase.[4] Broadsides containing ballads were by far the most popular and it was the hard pressed minstrels and pedlars of the day who assisted in disseminating balladry throughout the countryside selling broadside sheets alongside their performance.

By the early seventeenth century ballads in this printed form were widely circulated reaching over 200 towns nationwide.[5] Cheap print available throughout society from the nobility to the literate, lowly peasant saw the creation of a shared and common culture.[6] For those who could not read, the printers incorporated more images and by the 1620s the broadside had evolved into a standard two-part folio sheet with a row of woodcuts over the top. Ballads with a good storyline and catchy tune became part of an early mass market and there could have been very few people England in the seventeenth century who had not heard of the ballad of 'Chevy

---

[2] Nicholas Bounde, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath Plainely Layde Forth,* London, 1595 cited in Adam Fox, *Oral & Literate Culture in England,* Oxford, 2005, p. 9.
[3] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550 -1640,* Cambridge, 1991, p. 14.
[4] English Broadside Ballad Archive, http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/page/ballad-culture.
[5] Tessa Watt, Ibid, p. 76.
[6] Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories,* London, 1985.

Chase'. So what made this particular ballad so popular that Adam Fox could label it the "nation's favourite song"?[7]

The first available printed reference to the "Huntiss of Cheuet" where the "Persee and the Montgumrye" meet in battle is a couple of lines in The *Complaint of Scotland* by Wedderburn printed in 1549 which describes Scottish history and grievances.[8] The earliest recorded version of the actual ballad of 'Chevy Chase' appears in a notebook of a Tamworth travelling minstrel, Richard Sheale, [9] dated to between 1557 and 1565. This notebook contains a collection of songs and ballads probably copied from broadside publications.[10] Sheale's version of Chevy Chase was recovered and published by Thomas Percy in 1765 in his book *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* under the title 'The Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chace'.[11] (See Appendix 5)

A second version of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' registered with the Stationer's Company of London in 1624 can also be found in Percy's collection entitled "The more modern Ballad of Chevy-Chase". (See Appendix 6). This refined Jacobean version differs from the first either because it was altered to suit a refined, sophisticated seventeenth-century audience,[12] or because Sheale's earlier ballad was written with a broad northern accent.[13] Irrespective of how the story was told, the two ballads convey exactly the same narrative which has all the

---

[7] Adam Fox, *Oral & Literate Culture,* p. 1.
[8] Cited in Adam Fox, *Oral & Literate Culture in England,* Oxford, 2005, p. 2.
[9] Tessa Watt, Ibid, p. 2.
[10] Hyder E Rollins, 'Concerning Bodleian Ashmole 48', Modern Language Notes, 34, 1919, pp. 340 - 51 cited in Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550 -1640,* Cambridge, 1991, p. 18.
[11] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* ed. E Rhys, London, 1906, p. 65.
[12] Adam Fox, ibid, p. 3.
[13] Thomas Percy's introduction to, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.*

ingredients to entertain an audience of the period. It recounts a battle between the English and

the old adversary, Scotland, and includes acts of bravery, violence and chivalry.[14]

The events which unfold in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' are not a factual portrayal of any one

incident or battle between the Percy and Douglas families. Charles Dickens, writing in 1872

argued that the old balladists muddled and combined events to produce the ballad of 'Chevy

Chase', first by taking elements derived from the contemporaneous and more accurate ballad

of the 'Battle of Otterbourne' and mixing these with an account of a border skirmish over

hunting rights.[15] Dickens analysed fourteenth and fifteenth century accounts of the battle of

Otterburn and concluded that none equated with the episode described in the ballad of 'Chevy

Chase'. He went on to suggest that the ballad probably recounted an altercation that took place

in the Cheviot hills some years earlier between the fathers of Henry Percy of Northumberland

and James Douglas of Scotland, who went on to fight each other at the battle of Otterburn in

---

[14] A summary of the story as told in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase.'
> This hunting of the Cheviot is the account of a battle over contested hunting rights in the border territory between England and Scotland where Earl of Northumberland, Lord Percy, vows he shall go hunting on Scottish soil and kill the fattest harts. Douglas of Scotland asserts that he will not allow it. Percy leaves Bamborough with 1500 archers as greyhounds run through the woods to raise the deer. By noon 100 fat harts are dead. Douglas, however, is on his way with 1200 strong and hardy men brandishing spears and axes. Arriving on the other side of the Tweed, Douglas warns Percy to stop cutting up the deer and take care for he intends to attack. To prevent an unnecessary waste of guiltless men, Douglas offers Percy a duel. Percy refuses and claims all will fight. Percy's archers shoot first and kill 140 spearmen. The battle ensues until Percy and Douglas meet face to face in the middle of the turmoil. Douglas offers Percy a deal to stop fighting. Percy refuses. Douglas is then hit in the chest by an arrow and as he lay dying he urges his men to continue to fight. Percy holds Douglas's hand while he dies.
>
> Percy is remorseful extolling the bravery of Douglas until a Scottish knight, Sir Hugh Montgomery charges through 100 archers to spear Percy through and kill him. Now both captains lay dead. Suddenly one of Percy's archers fires an arrow to penetrate the heart of Montgomery and he too is slain.
>
> The two sides continue to battle all through the night. Only 53 English archers and 55 Scottish spearmen survive. The next day the widows come to collect their men and the funeral pyres burn. King James of Scotland is informed of the death of Douglas and Henry IV of England is told of Percy's fate. Henry promises to avenge the death of Percy and fights the battle of Humbledown for his honour in which 26 Scottish knights perish.

[15] Charles Dickens, 'Chevy Chase', *All the Year Round,* ed. Charles Dickens, 8:205 1872: Nov 2nd pp. 588 - 594.

1388.[16] Squabbles between these two families were commonplace in the fourteenth century when the land between England and Scotland was governed by the Laws of the Marches. To hunt across the border required permission from the land owner or warden on the other side. John Hales in an article in the *Gentleman's magazine* describes this era as 'irritable' where the likes of the Percy and Douglas families would find any excuse to fight over the prerogatives of land rights.[17]

Like its story, the tune of 'Chevy Chase' was also well known. On most surviving copies of broadside ballads from the early seventeenth century, a named tune was given to which the words of the ballad should be sung. This was important for those who could not read the text because knowing the melody helped them to remember the words.[18] However, tunes were interchangeable and new ballads were written using old tunes and traditional ballads were sometimes sung to a new tune. Before 1700 there were at least three dozen examples of broadsides with ballads to be sung to the tune of 'Chevy Chase'.[19] In addition there are seventeenth-century copies of the 'Chevy Chase' ballad which are to be sung to the tune of 'Flying Fame'. The tune existing separately to the ballad allowed interesting combinations to be devised; an issue which will be discussed later in this chapter in reference to the allegorical and libellous use of the ballad.

Popular and widely distributed ballads like 'Chevy Chase' printed on broadside sheets were not only enjoyed as a story or a song, but also became used as interior decoration. According to Tessa Watt the lowly home and the alehouse had ballads pasted to their walls and chimney

---

[16] Dickens, 'Chevy Chase', pp. 588 - 594.

[17] John W. Hales, 'Chevy Chase', *Gentleman's Magazine,* 266: 1900 (1889: Apr) pp. 396 – 413.

[18] Tessa Watt, ibid, p. 7.

[19] Simpson, "Broadside ballad 129" cited in Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702,* Oxford, 2004, p. 104.

breasts.[20] A fashion, which Sheila O'Connell argues, continued up until the late eighteenth-century.[21] There is also evidence to suggest craftsmen copied printed pictures from broadsides to paint on to the walls and furniture of wealthier households.[22] The close relationship between prints and decoration has been well documented by Anthony Wells-Cole, who has proved that many items of interior decoration of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period have been copied by craftsmen from a printed source.[23] As there is little evidence of any direct relationship between the subject matter of the ballad and the hunting scenes of the frieze, (apart from the hunting of the hart or stag, there is no mention in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' of ostriches, foxes, boars or bears), is there any surviving broadside imagery which corresponds with the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' and in particular the frieze at St Michael's Mount?

The growth in popularity of broadsides prompted printers to make their publications more attractive and lively. Whereas illustrations had initially been a simple repeating pattern or a stock image, by the seventeenth century woodcuts were being commissioned to run alongside and reflect the text.[24] It might, therefore, be possible to identify a source for the frieze. A visual analysis of broadside sheets to locate a depiction of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' showed that the majority of copies of the ballad were without illustration.[25] The few that were illustrated had pictures of knights or soldiers rather than hunting. Ballads set to the tune of 'Chevy Chase' were much more varied in content, many lacking imagery and none containing

---

[20] Tessa Watt, ibid, p. 1.

[21] Sheila O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England 1550-1850,* London, 1999.

[22] Sheila O'Connell, ibid.

[23] Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* Yale, 1997, p. 8.

[24] Tessa Watt, ibid, p. 78.

[25] George Thomason, *Thomason Tracts Collection,* www.eebo.chadwyck.com and Samuel Pepys Collection, www.ebba.english.ucsb.edu.

anything to pertain to the frieze. Ballads about hunting often had images of the hunt and one in particular called the *Huntsman's Delight* has an illustration which is similar to the hare hunting scene of the frieze. Both contain out-sized foliage, a low horizon and rolling landscape. (See plate 4.1) Nevertheless this is an isolated scene, and could not have furnished the panoramic and comprehensive series of scenes found in the frieze. From this study of broadsides it must be concluded that the imagery of the frieze at St Michael's Mount is unlikely to have been copied from an illustration of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase'.

Plate 4.1

The Huntsman Delight – 1686 -1688 Samuel Pepys Collection - Pepys 4.271 • 21932, www.ebba.english.ucsb.edu

Since the imagery of the frieze does not relate to the story of 'Chevy Chase' and has no identifiable source in any printed material which relates to the ballad, can any symbolism or allegory be identified in the imagery? Sixteenth and seventeenth-century decorative art was renowned for its use of symbolism and visual allegory. The Elizabethan and Jacobean public understood puns and hidden meanings as well as the obscure and ironical. Depending on their context, simple motifs such as a rose entwined with a thistle conveyed different meanings. In

the first instance it could represent the joining together of the thrones of England and Scotland, but used in a matrimonial chamber the thistle could signify marital infidelity and the rose epitomise the frailty of love where the petals die and fall.[26] Regrettably, there is no conspicuous symbolism of this nature apparent in the imagery of the frieze and is impossible to interpret it in this way. This is not to conclude that the frieze does not contain allegory; it just is very difficult to prove it has meaning at this level.

There are of course examples of seventeenth-century decorative art which were designed with layers of meaning. In the Heaven Room of the Little Castle at Bolsover, there is a painted frieze running around the top of the chamber which contains symbols from the crucifixion with a musical notation alongside it. When played the music is an extract from a round which alludes to Robin Hood. There is no modern-day explanation for the juxtaposition of religious imagery with local folk music though Timothy Raylor has argued that the whole scheme of Bolsover castle is designed to provide a fusion of classical and Christian ideals.[27] If there were similar intentions at St Michael's Mount could the frieze be named 'Chevy Chase' and yet tell a different story? As discussed previously the tune existed independently of the words of the ballad, and the old tune could be used to tell a new tale.

From the late sixteenth century onwards, ballads were used as vehicles for libel and political commentary. They were used as templates into which local names and jibes could be dropped either for amusement or dramatic effect.[28] One such example is a ballad entitled called "The Dregs of Drollery or Old Poetry in its Ragges" which is sung to the tune of 'Chevy Chace'. It is a metaphorical account of the Civil war where Charles I is hunted like a stag by a kennel of

---

[26] J & J Penoye, *Decorative Plasterwork*, p. 45.
[27] Timothy Raylor, 'Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue: William Cavendish, Ben Jonson and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle, *Renaissance Quarterly,* Vol 52, No 2 pp. 402 – 439.
[28] Tessa Watt, ibid.

Parliamentarian rebels.(See Appendix 7) From the accounts of Star Chamber activity in the early seventeenth century lawsuits over libel cases were frequent and the writing of seditious poetry an intrinsic part of English culture. H. Love contends that the ballad was not only used to libel neighbours but to lampoon the state too, and was a consequence of the accession of a weak king (James I) with poor communication skills. The 'Stuart Phenomenon' he argues, saw an outburst of clandestine satire in the early seventeenth century written by educated elite who used the ballad melody as a hook to hang their opinions. In many cases this libellous material was not intended to be read or performed but distributed secretly between allies and occasionally placed anonymously where others could read it.[29]

After the abolition of the Star Chamber in 1641 there was an explosion in unlicensed works particularly libellous and political commentary, and despite attempts by Parliament to prevent this outpouring, they could not be stopped. Ballads during and after the civil war were used for political purposes and anti Parliamentarian songs were sung in ale-houses and the keepers bound over for not preventing the crooners from doing so.[30] During this time ballads became vital for the dissemination of news and opinion through the well established minstrel and ballad seller network. Richard Cust has compared these types of ballad to the modern day political cartoon, often written for a more educated audience and viewed by those who perhaps took the political situation more seriously than others.[31] Nevertheless, despite the way in which ballads could be adapted to make personal or political comment, there is still no explicit evidence to suggest the imagery of the frieze has any allegory or symbolism which can relate to whatever form the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' took.

---

[29] H Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1704,* Oxford, 2004.
[30] Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing,* Cambridge, 1989, p. 15.
[31] Richard Cust, 'News and Politics in Early 17th Century England', *Past and Present* No. 112, Aug 1986 pp. 60 – 90.

The popularity of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' waned at the end of the seventeenth century,[32] but was revived again in 1765 when Thomas Percy published his collection of old ballads entitled the *Reliques of Old English Poetry.* This publication reawakened an interest in the value of balladry as folk history and the scholarly and literary elite studied and deliberated upon them as part of a rediscovered national heritage. Many articles were written for magazines throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which the literary and historical relevance of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase' were discussed. According to Dianne Dugaw this eighteenth-century spirit of antiquarianism was not confined to academics but swept through the popular level too.[33] It is possible that during this revival of interest the frieze at St Michael's Mount acquired its name.

Any reference or description of the frieze in any guide book or letter written about the Mount before the nineteenth century is vague. Letters written by William Borlase of his visit to the Mount in the 1731, make no allusion to a plaster frieze in the old refectorium or 'great hall', remarking only on the roof which was "exceedingly well timber'd and carv'd".[34] W.Maton's description of his visit to the Mount in 1794/6 notes the renovations carried out by Sir John St Aubyn and comments that the 'old taste' has been retained whereby a 'number of curious figures, escutcheons, emblems and ciphers occur in the different compartments'.[35] Again there is no direct reference to a plaster frieze just a hint at the imagery. The earliest description of the actual frieze in which the name 'Chevy Chase' also appears is in Richard Polwhele's account of his visit to the Mount in 1804 when he writes,

---

[32] Adam Fox, ibid, p. 4.

[33] Dianne Dugaw, 'The Popular marketing of 'old Ballads': The Ballad Revival & Antiquarianism Reconsidered', in *Eighteenth Century Studies,* Vol. 21 No. 1, Aug 1987, pp. 71 - 90.

[34]Letter written to Dr Oliver, William Borlase, *Letterbook 1,* Morrab Library, Penzance, and William Borlase, "The Ancient and Present State of St Michael's Mount, 1762" ed. Peter Pool in *Cornish Studies,* Vol. 3, 1975.

[35] W.G. Maton, " Observations on the Western Counties of England, 1794-1796", in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed R. Pearse-Chope, Newton Abbot, 1918, p. 256.

"the hall of the monks remain without the name in a long

handsome room, that from the representations in stucco

around the cornice, of men hunting stag, even shooting hares,

appears to have been fitted up since the reformation as a

dining-room for a hunting party, and is popularly

denominated Chevy Chase"[36]

From the manner in which Polwhele tells the reader about his visit to the Mount, it is apparent he was there in person and subject to a comprehensive guided tour, presumably given by a member of staff. Polwhele' s visit was part of the first wave of tourism to the South West and his account is replicated nearly verbatim in subsequent guidebooks to Cornwall, and the frieze thereafter is consistently referred to as 'Chevy Chase'. It is unknown whether the writers of these later guidebooks copied from Polwhele's book or were given the same tour.

So where did the name 'Chevy Chase' spring from? Early tourism relied upon the services of willing household staff to show visitors around the property. [37] The St Aubyn family, who owned the Mount, were not often in residence. According to the 1841 census there were only two retained staff in the castle, a housekeeper and a younger lady. In 1846 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the Mount and according to Victoria's diary were escorted around by the housekeeper, Thomasine Sim.[38] Francis Kilvert in 1870 took a similar tour of the castle on the Mount and was guided by a "pretty delicate gentle melancholy girl". From his diary he records that the family had just returned to take up residence at the Mount and so the girl was cautious about entering some of the rooms in fear of disturbing them. [39] From the accounts of

---

[36] Richard Polwhele, *The History Of Cornwall,* London , 1802, Supplement 1804, p. 8.
[37] Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist, A History of Country House Visiting*, London, 1998, pp. 91 – 112.
[38] John St Aubyn, *St Michael's Mount, Illustrated History and Guide,* St Ives, 1978.
[39] *Kilvert's Cornish Diary, Journal No. 4 1870,* eds. R. Maber and A. Tregoning, Penzance, 1989, p. 41.

these visitors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is clear their guides had a

good knowledge of the property. Visitors were able to record detailed histories and stories

which they had been given by their escort. For the enjoyment and entertainment of these

pioneer tourists who relished these old buildings which symbolised past times of utopian,

social harmony,[40] is it possible that a member of staff, impressed by the hunting allegory of

the ballad published in Percy's collection of 1765, imposed their own narrative on the frieze

and dubbed it the 'Chevy Chase'? Or, as a consequence of the revival of the English ballad,

had 'Chevy Chase' simply become the 'shorthand for hunting'?

In the ballad tradition 'Chevy Chase' was a chivalric poem performed and enjoyed for

generations by oral transmission in the homes of the nobility and in the market place. It was

one of the earliest printed publications to be handed down to us nearly intact from 1557. It has

simultaneously created historic and literary debate especially during the revival of the ballad

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when scholars appreciated anew the antiquity and

imagination of the old ballads and sought to preserve them for the nation's history. The ballad

of 'Chevy Chase' has been central to the emergence of a shared culture in which the majority

knew the ballad to be the 'nation's favourite, and it has, as a consequence, been reworded for

amusement and political lampooning. However, images relating to the ballad of 'Chevy

Chase' are rare. So far only a few woodcuts from the seventeenth century have been

identified, none of which contain scenes of hunting. Nineteenth- century paintings named after

'Chevy Chase' are generally of battles though one by Sir Edwin Landseer dated 1826 held by

the Birmingham Museum and Art gallery shows a deer being killed by hounds. These later

images are probably all inspired by the renewed popularity of the ballad in the late eighteenth

century at which time the frieze almost certainly acquired its name. Therefore, the 'Chevy

---

[40] Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home,* London, 1997.

Chase' label acts as a red herring when trying to determine the date and understand the imagery of the frieze as there is no correspondence between the ballad in its two earliest forms and the scenes evident in the plasterwork. And so in the next two chapters alternative materials and influences which may have inspired the subject matter of the frieze will be examined.

CHAPTER 5

PLASTER, PLASTERERS AND PATRONS

This chapter focuses on the use of plaster as a decorative medium and how it became popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To help with the dating of the frieze there is an analysis of the costs and timescales for the production of plasterwork and a discussion of those tenants and owners who had the funds and the time in which to erect the 'Chevy Chase' frieze. The relationship between the patron and plasterer is also considered to discover how the content of the frieze was determined. Lastly, a comparison is made with local examples of contemporary decorative plasterwork to review their similarities and provide further evidence for dating and the identification of potential local craftsmen or workshops.

Decorative stucco was introduced into England at the beginning of the sixteenth century as part of the wider 'Renaissance' interest in Roman classicism. In Italy the rediscovery of stucco in the ruins of ancient Rome led to a rebirth of the art of stucco or plasterwork. Italian craftsmen soon exported their skills to the rest of Europe with the King of France using their talents to embellish his palace at Fointainebleau. Henry VIII also embraced the fashion employing Italians to work on the stucco modelling for his palace at Nonsuch. Of course, the trend filtered through the ranks of the nobility and by the latter part of the sixteenth century great houses such as Longleat and Chatsworth had their own examples of decorative plasterwork. With the increased demand for plasterwork, the London Company of plasterers grew in number as more apprentices were trained, and eventually the skills and the practice of decorative plasterwork spread throughout the country.[1]

---

[1] Geoffrey Beard, *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain,* London, 1975, pp. 23 – 32.

Between 1620 and 1640 plaster decoration became most popular in the households of the gentry where it was seen as a "cheap piece of magnificence".[2] Decorative art was used as an outward expression of status demonstrating wealth, education and social standing through the use of classical, religious and heraldic imagery. By the early seventeenth century figural and moulded plasterwork was used by rich farmers and gentlemen in their homes to convey their social aspirations. Local craftsmen with greater skills gained from contact with London and Europe assisted in this development as they embarked on more ambitious projects using hand modelling techniques to make figural designs as seen in the frieze at St Michael's Mount.

Despite the relative cheapness of plasterwork, an undertaking like the one at St Michael's Mount because of its geographic location required a great deal of planning and cost. Once it was decided that a frieze was to be created, craftsmen who could complete the work had to be sought, probably at some great distance from the Mount, and then contracted to do the work. Importing or manufacturing the lime required to make the plaster was also time consuming and expensive. In Cornwall, according to Richard Carew writing in 1602, lime was derived from a 'marl-stone' which was burned at high temperatures requiring a great amount of fuel.[3] As Celia Fiennes observed in 1695, some years later, very little fuel was available in the area surrounding the Mount, only 'turf and furze and fern'[4] making it expensive either to import an efficient fuel like coal or employ men to collect the 'furze' and stoke the kilns.

Processing lime into plaster also required time and preparation. Once the lime was burned it had to be 'slaked', this meant submerging the lime ash under water and removing any lumps with a rake. The resulting lime putty had to remain under water for days - often weeks - for it

---

[2] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation,* London, 2010, p. 18.

[3] Richard Carew, *Survey of Cornwall 1602,* Redruth, 2000, p. 18.

[4] Celia Fiennes, "Through England on a Side Saddle" in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall'* ed. R. Pearse Chope, Newton Abbott, 1918, pp. 127 – 131.

to mature and become malleable. Whilst the putty soaked, a carpenter constructed and attached laths and armatures to the walls ready to take the plaster. Once the putty was deemed ripe for use, apprentices washed and sieved sand that they beat into the putty and then added either ox or cow hair to give the plaster strength.[5] Only then was the plasterer ready to set to work. Whilst he may have used previously prepared moulds, in the case of St Michael's Mount the plasterer almost certainly used his hands. Moulds made the work quicker and, as a consequence, cheaper. However, what the patron gained in monetary value he lost in exclusivity. As a result individually commissioned, hand-modelled, narrative and figural scenes, like the hunting frieze at St Michael's Mount, were far less common than moulded standard work. They required artisans with greater competency and were more expensive.

So, though plasterwork was cheap in comparison with other forms of decoration, taking into account the location of the Mount and the need to bring in plasterers and import or manufacture the lime, the construction of an individually designed frieze is evidence of a huge investment and commitment to the buildings on the top of the Mount. If Tara Hamling's assertion that plasterwork was most popular for the gentry between 1620 and 1640 is correct, then there are only four potential patrons of the frieze. These are: tenants Arthur Harris and his son Thomas between 1600 and 1628: owner Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, from 1612 to 1640: and Francis Bassett 1640 to 1645. All four are briefly reviewed below for their availability of time and funds to create the frieze.

Francis Basset

The most obvious candidate for the patron of the frieze must be Francis Bassett who purchased the Mount in April 1640. By 1641 plasterers had installed the royal arms in the

---

[5] Claire Gapper, *Plasterers and Plasterwork 1530 -1640*, PhD, London, 1998.

hall, and whilst on site presumably had the opportunity to make the frieze. Francis Bassett

also had a significant disposable income for investment at the Mount as prior to and during

the civil war he was donating substantial amounts of money to the King's cause.[6]

Arthur and Thomas Harris

The 1629 inventory of goods at the Mount and the will of Arthur Harris prove that the Harris

family invested in the Mount. However, from the detail of weapons and armour in the

inventory it would seem the principal function of the building at this time was military. This

may make it less likely that Arthur or Thomas Harris were responsible for commissioning a

decorative frieze but does not eliminate them.

Robert and William Cecil

As owners of the Mount, the Cecils had substantial funds available to invest in a plaster

frieze, but, as discussed previously, their interest lay in maximising the revenue from their

rents and not in spending time or money there.

Though Hamling has identified 1620 – 1640 as the high water mark of the fashion for

figurative, plaster decoration in the region, John St Aubyn, who bought the property in 1657,

must still remain as a candidate. Geoffrey Beard's analysis of the development of styles of

plasterwork through the seventeenth century has shown that plasterwork built during the

Commonwealth or immediately after the Restoration still demonstrated a 'stiffness' in style

and a content preoccupied with 'pattern books, heraldry, beasts, carytids and figures' redolent

of the earlier seventeenth century rather than the much more accomplished era of plasterwork

production which was to flourish from the 1680s onwards. This, he argues, was because of the

---

[6] Reginald Metcalfe, *Transcription of letters and papers of Basset family,* 1924, held at Devon & Cornwall
Record Society, Exeter.

shortage of skilled craftsmen and the lack of funds in the post war era. Examples similar to the frieze on the Mount that were constructed in the latter part of the seventeenth century include Forde Abbey in Dorset, where the dining room ceiling is dated to 1655 and contains hand-modelled, fairly simplistic figures, and Denham Place in Uxbridge which has a plaster frieze of hunting scenes running around the drawing room dated 1693 and, although being far more sophisticated in style than the 'Chevy Chase' frieze, demonstrates the endurance of the fashion for figurative plasterwork as well as hunting imagery. [7]

Before work commenced on any installation the patron liaised with the plasterer to determine the imagery to use. A plasterer carried 'stock' moulds, and probably stock images in a pattern book, which, like a modern day salesman, he could sell to his client. It is important to recognise the plasterer as an artisan not an artist. He did not design or draw creatively. He copied from prints which either he or the client possessed. As Anthony Wells Cole has established most of these prints were from Europe, especially Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, and the majority of surviving Devon and West Country plasterwork demonstrate a dependence on continental prints dating from the 1570s to the 1620s. This plasterwork also manifests a preference for certain favourite subjects and prints, mainly religious.[8] There are of course examples which stand apart from these common themes such as the Elizabethan frieze of the 'Skimmington Ride' at Montacute House in Somerset and the 'Chevy Chase' hunting frieze at St Michael's Mount. Nevertheless, the former is almost certainly dependent upon an unidentified, English printed source, and the latter, as shall be shown in the final chapter, is like its regional cousins and derived from prints originating in Europe.

---

[7] G Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660-1820,* p. XIX.
[8] Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* Yale, 1997, p. 159.

A regional cluster of surviving hand-crafted, high relief plasterwork in the South West, as identified by Wells-Cole and Hamling, points towards the existence of at least one native workshop.[9] However, the wide variety of dates, styles and quality of workmanship suggests there were actually a number of different workshops and craftsmen active in the region, most of them unidentified.[10]

Compared to the detailed and intricate plaster ceilings of the Cornish houses at Lanhydrock near Bodmin (dated post 1636) and Prideaux Place in Padstow (dated 1630-1660), the frieze at St Michael's Mount is far more naive. George Bankart describes the figures of the 'Chevy Chase' frieze as being of a 'pudding-like' appearance, most probably created by English modellers whose work was far less refined then their European contemporaries and tending towards the 'burlesque'.[11] Although there are obvious stylistic differences between the frieze on the Mount and the ceilings in Lanhydrock and Prideaux, there are some similarities shared in the imagery. For instance, the ceiling at Lanhydrock has a depiction of an ostrich with a horseshoe in its mouth, an image which is replicated, although in a different context, in the frieze at the Mount. So can this indicate that the ceilings which share imagery with the Mount have been created by the same workshop or plasterer?

There has been a long-standing and wi--dely-held belief that the Abbots of Frithelstock in Devon were a family of plasterers responsible for the production of much of the plasterwork in the region. This original premise was first put forward in an article written by Bruce Oliver in 1917 based upon the existence of the tools, portrait and sketchbook of a plasterer named

---

[9] Tara Hamling, "The appreciation of religious images in plasterwork in the protestant domestic interior" in *Art Reformed,* Eds. T Hamling and R Williams London, 2007, p. 149.

[10] Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation,* pp. 17 – 18.

[11] George Bankart, *The Art of the Plasterer,* London, 1911, p. 53.

John Abbot from Frithelstock who was born in 1640 and died in 1727.[12] Subsequent articles by Margaret Jourdain in 1940 and Kathleen and Cecil French in 1957 compared plasterwork of the region to imagery in the Abbot sketchbook and concluded, because of the mismatch of dates, that the sketchbook must be a pattern book which had been passed down through the generations and that John's father and grandfather had both been plasterers before him. [13] The articles of Jourdain and French have continued to inform many reputable authors on the subjects of plasterwork and decorative art such as Geoffrey Beard and Anthony Wells-Cole, and, as a consequence, the supposition that an Abbot family of plasterers existed in the West Country during the sixteenth and seventeenth century has persisted.[14]

Nevertheless, evidence has emerged to counter this long-established assumption. Michael Bath's analysis of the sketchbook showed the pages to have been manufactured between1650 and 1660, and was probably therefore the sole work of the John Abbott born 1640, with a few later additions.[15] In his comparative study of plasterwork in and around Exeter and Barnstaple, Mike Baldwin has also established that John Abbott worked mainly in properties geographically close to his home village of Frithelstock.[16] This is confirmed by my own research of the parish records, where the births of John Abbot's children coincided with the places and dates where John Abbot worked. It is, therefore, impossible to credit any of the early to mid seventeenth-century plaster decoration of the far South West to the Abbot family. Indeed, because John Abbot was born in 1640, by the time he completed his apprenticeship sometime in the 1660s, it is unlikely that he was responsible for the plasterwork at

---

[12] Bruce W. Oliver, "The early seventeenth-century plaster ceilings of Barnstaple", *Transactions of the Devonshire Association,* 49, 1917, pp. 190-99.

[13] Kathleen and Cecil French, "Devonshire Plasterwork", *Transactions of the Devonshire Association,* 1957 vol. 89, pp. 124 – 144.
M .Jourdain, "A 17th Century Plasterer", *Country Life,* 2 Mar 1940, pp. 222 – 225.

[14] G Beard, *Decorative Plasterwork* & A Wells-Cole, *Art & Decoration.*

[15] Michael Bath, "The Sources of John Abbott's Pattern Book", *Architectural History,* 41, 1998, pp. 49 – 66.

[16] Mike Baldwin, "Gravitit in Publicke Places & Yet Inwardly Licences", *Devon Buildings Group,* Vol. 2, 2006, pp 5 - 28.

Lanhydrock, Prideaux or the Mount. My own examination of the sketchbook has verified that

it does not contain any imagery that can be associated with the hunting scenes of the Mount,

and so the plasterer or workshop responsible for the frieze, for now, remains unidentified.[17]

Analysis of the use of plaster as a decorative art form and comparisons with contemporary

regional examples has enabled a closer approximation of the date for the construction of the

hunting frieze on the Mount. This has allowed a focus on potential patrons and given an

indication of how choices were made in the design process. The next chapter moves to an

examination of the visual context of the frieze in an attempt to discover any printed sources of

the imagery and thereby explain its unusual themes.

---

[17] Abbot Sketchbook, Devon Record Office, MS 404 B/1.

CHAPTER 6

VISUAL SOURCES FOR THE HUNTING IMAGERY

OF THE 'CHEVY CHASE' FRIEZE

Finding potential sources from which the imagery of the plasterwork frieze at St Michael's

Mount derives proved easier than anticipated with the availability of digitised archive data on

the internet. I was able to browse all major collections of hunting iconography held at the

British Museum, the V&A, the British Library as well as holdings in other international

galleries, museums and libraries. Through an extensive search of this material several

discoveries were made of prints, original sketches and other examples of decorative art which

share similarities with the hunting imagery of the frieze. An assessment of these examples in

this chapter shows that the subject matter of the so-called 'Chevy Chase' frieze is not unique,

and that the imagery derives from printed sources incorporating medieval hunting

iconography, classical Renaissance ideals as well as actual hunting practices of the era. A

comparative analysis of these prints with the frieze and other examples of decorative art of the

period will demonstrate when these prints were at their most popular and afford a greater

degree of confidence in dating the frieze. Once the frieze has been set in its visual context and

its approximate date taken into account, the final part of this chapter concludes with a

discussion of why this particular imagery was chosen for its setting in the great hall on St

Michael's Mount, and examines any further clues that may help to identify the possible patron

and any symbolic meaning.

One of the most striking scenes on the frieze is that of the ostrich hunt, (Plates 6.1 - 6.3),

which bears an uncanny resemblance to the original sketch by the Flemish artist, Jan van der

Straet, otherwise known as Stradanus. (Plate 6.4) Stradanus was born in Flanders in 1523 and

trained as an artist in his father's shop. He left for Florence in his late twenties and was

commissioned to design 28 tapestries of hunting scenes for the villa belonging to Duke

Cosimo de Medici.[1] The sketches completed by Stradanus comprised a series of hunts

containing exotic creatures such as alligator, lion and ostrich.[2]

Stradanus's designs were influenced by the imagery of ancient Roman frescoes and mosaics

depicting the hunt of exotic animals. In ancient Rome wild beasts were imported from all

corners of the earth to be displayed in staged hunts called 'venationes', which were held

before the gladiatorial contests in amphitheatres. Since many of these animals had not been

seen in Europe since Roman times they intrigued and delighted a whole new audience in the

sixteenth century.

Stradanus was not just popular because of the unusual nature of his subject matter, unlike

earlier Renaissance artists like Durer and Van Orly, Stradanus's portrayal of hunting is more

spirited and lively containing scenes of action with huntsmen poised for the kill.[3] He was also

more commercially aware than other artists dealing not just directly with his customers but

with printmakers too.[4] As a consequence his work was carried from Italy to Antwerp to the

hub of European printing and was engraved, published and sold across Europe.[5]

---

[1] William Adolph Baillie-Grohman, *Sport in Art Iconography of Art,* Tyrol, 1919, pp. 135 – 165.
[2] Baillie-Grohman, *Ibid*, pp. 135 – 165.
[3] F Hamilton-Hazlehurst, "Wild Beast Pursued: The Petit Galerie of Louis XV at Versailles" in *The Art Bulletin,* Vol. 66, No. 2, June 1984, p. 233.
[4] Baillie-Grohman, *Sport in Art*, pp. 135 - 165.
[5] Baillie-Grohman, *Sport in Art,* pp. 115 - 116.

Plate 6.1

Plate 6.2

Ostrich Hunt SMM Frieze
Photos: Author

Plate 6.3

Plate 6.4

Stradanus Original Sketch 'Ostrich Hunt' 1570 from W. Baillie-Grohman,
Sport in Art, Iconography of Art, Tyrol 1919

The famous engraver and printer, Philip Galle, eventually issued the entire series of 28

hunting scenes in 1578 under the title *Venationes, Ferarum, Piscium, Avium* including of

course his own interpretation of Stradanus's ostrich hunt (Plate 6. 5).[6] Stradanus's popularity in England can only be confirmed by the unusually high survival rate of copies of this publication.

The image of the ostrich hunt was thus available to plasterers and patrons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through a profusion of prints, not only by Galle but others too. The Italian printer, Antonia Tempesta also engraved and published Stradanus's work and there may have been many more engravers and printers who copied not only from Stradanus but from each other. It is impossible to determine which print of the ostrich hunt was used for the design of the frieze at the Mount, as the plaster image is stylistically so much simpler than, for instance, Galle's print. However, similarities can be discerned in the detail.

Plate 6.5

Ostrich Hunt printed by Philip Galle after Stradanus from *Venationes, Ferarum, Piscium, Avium* 1578. British Museum.

---

[6] Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* Yale, 1997, p. 102.

For example, in his portrayal of the ostrich hunt Stradanus created a sense of the foreign and exotic by giving the huntsmen turbans and leaving them barefoot whilst setting them in a forest of palm trees.[7] As can be seen from Plates 6.1 & 6.3, the frieze at St Michael's Mount shares these features. The horseman in this section has no shoes and can be seen with a similar headdress to that in Galle's engraving. The composition is similar too. An ostrich can be seen hunted in the foreground whilst one is being attacked in the background. The only odd addition to the scene is the inclusion of a horseshoe in the mouth of the ostrich in the St Michael's Mount frieze. A long standing belief that the ostrich could ingest iron meant that over the centuries ostrich had often been depicted as eating a horseshoe.[8] (See Plate 6.6).

Plate 6.6

Ostrich with Horseshoe - Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *Proprietaire des Choses*, Lyon, about 1485-86. Taken from Arthur Hind's *An introduction to a history of woodcut* (1963).

---

[7] Hamilton-Hazlehurst, "Wild Beast Pursued", p. 233.

[8] Early Christian text, *Physiologus,* cited in Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism,* New York, 1994, p. 248.

Though popular, Stradanus's art was not representative of hunting of the era. It is unlikely that Stradanus had ever witnessed an ostrich hunt, nor perhaps ever seen an ostrich. The designs of his tapestries which worked their way into print came mainly from his imagination and built upon previous hunting imagery and legend. In his study of the iconography of hunting, Baillie-Grohman considers it extraordinary that for centuries artists continued to paint and draw images that they had never seen in real life.[9] Compositions including obvious mistakes were often replicated and superstitions about creatures reinforced. Relying on the limited knowledge provided by the early bestiaries of Konrad Gesner and Edward Topsell,[10] artists knew little about these foreign creatures, so it is not surprising that most of the hunting imagery completed by Stradanus was fanciful and inexact. Indeed, the intent was not to pursue accuracy but to delight.[11] Stradanus's series of hunting scenes even contains hunts of alligators, dragons and even bears attacked by knights in full armour. (See plate 6.7)

Plate 6.7

After an original Stradanus: Bear Hunt: 1st-art-gallery.com

---

[9] Baillie-Grohman, *Sport in Art,* pp. 119 - 126.

[10] Edward Topsell, *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents,* 1572-1625, Huntingdon Library & Art Gallery.

Konrad Gesner, *Historiae Animalum,* 1551-58 @ www.nlm.nih.gov/proj/ttp/flash/gesner/gesner.html.

[11]Baillie-Grohman, *Sport in Art,* pp. 119 - 126.

Stradanus was not alone in creating imaginative hunting scenes; many contemporary surviving hunting prints contain imagery based on traditional iconography rather than reality. In a series prints will typically include stag, hare, boar and bear hunting despite the fact that bear hunting had never been practised in England or even Germany since the early middle Ages, and by the sixteenth century boars were extremely scarce in England due to over hunting.[12] In terms of hunting imagery, though, boar and bear hunting were still considered standard scenes to include. Prints distributed across Europe, therefore, were not an exact representation of the practice of hunting which by the end of the sixteenth century hunting had become a managed activity conducted in enclosed parks and chases rather than the open forests of the medieval period. By the early seventeenth century hunting was the leisurely pursuit of aspiring nobles and gentlemen whose measure of wealth and influence were associated with their ownership of fenced parks. Where once hunting had been considered important for military training and demonstrations of strength and stamina, by the time of James I it had become a parody of itself where the reduction in the number of prey led to the fencing of fields and woodlands to prevent the game escaping, whilst stadia and platforms were erected from where the ladies could watch or shoot at deer which were driven past.[13]

Nevertheless, because of its association with tradition, popular hunting imagery continued to reflect its medieval past. The so - called Sheldon tapestries and in particular the bed valance dated 1600-1610 held at the V&A museum is a good example of this (Plate 6.8). The sumptuous rolling landscapes with castles on the horizon and images of courtly love (an allegory of the chase), and courtiers in their best clothing is inspired by much older medieval works like the Flemish Devonshire tapestries, also in the V&A, (Plate 6.9) rather than any actual hunting experience. The Devonshire tapestries dated to the early fifteenth century focus

---

[12] John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk,* London, 1988, p. 120.
[13] Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting,* Stroud, 2011, p. 65.

on exploring the symbolic association of the hunt and the sexual predatory nature of the courtiers, as well as giving prominence to the traditional rites of killing and dismembering the animals.[14]

Plate 6.8

Sheldon Bed Valance: dated 1600-1610: V&A Museum, London

Plate 6.9

Devonshire Tapestry: dated 1430 -1440: V&A Museum, London

---

[14] Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk,* p. 8.

A recent assessment of the origins of the 'Sheldon- tapestries' by Hilary Turner has thrown doubt on assumptions made in the early twentieth century that a sixteenth-century tapestry workshop started by the Sheldon family existed in and around Warwickshire. Instead, by analysing and comparing the imagery of the tapestries to comparative prints and works in Brussels, Turner concludes that émigré Flemish weavers from London were the more likely candidates to have produced these tapestries.[15] Much like the 'Abbott family workshop' and the 'Chevy Chase' frieze discussed in earlier chapters, it appears that the 'Sheldon tapestry workshop' is another case where a theory has been accepted as fact and becomes commonplace without being subjected to further investigation. These narratives or myths are often attractive not only because they offer a neat and tidy explanation to resolve problematic historical evidence but also because they offer versions of history that appeal to a sense of local or national identity and heritage.

The hunting scenes of the frieze at St Michael's Mount have a different atmosphere to the evocative, Medieval, symbolic representation of hunting and rural life as seen in the 'Sheldon' tapestries, and are stylistically similar to the simpler but more realistic illustrations of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century hunting manuals.[16] These manuals, like G.Gascoine's The *Noble Art of Venerie,* 1575, did not go out of fashion quickly staying popular with the public through several reprints over many decades. However, by the mid to late seventeenth century, reality had caught up with the iconography of hunting, and new treatises such as Francis Barlow's *Several Ways of Hunting, Hawking and Fishing* etched and printed in 1671 by Hollar, used imagery based on real life drawings with a faithfulness to contemporary hunting practices. Barlow's hunting imagery was popular and also copied for

---

[15] H.L.Turner, " Tapestries once at Chestleton House" in *Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 88, pp. 313 – 346.
[16] George Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie,* London, 1611 & Sir T Cockaine, *A Short Treatise of Hunting,* London, 1591.

interior decoration. In Denham Place in Buckinghamshire a plaster frieze in the drawing room has scenes of fox hunting copied directly from Hollar's engraving of Barlow.[17] This frieze constructed in 1693 clearly demonstrates two issues, firstly that the popularity of hunting imagery endured through many centuries, and secondly that a huge time-lag between the print going into circulation and being copied for a piece of decorative art was quite common.

One aspect of hunting imagery, though, which is shared across ages and styles, is its use in linear decoration. The action of the pursuit of animals lends itself to elongated decorative features, examples include the Sheldon bed valance, the Bradford table carpet (Plate 6.10), the plasterwork frieze at St Michael's Mount as well as margins and page-headings in manuscripts such as the Egerton Book of Hours (Circa 1500).

Plate 6.10
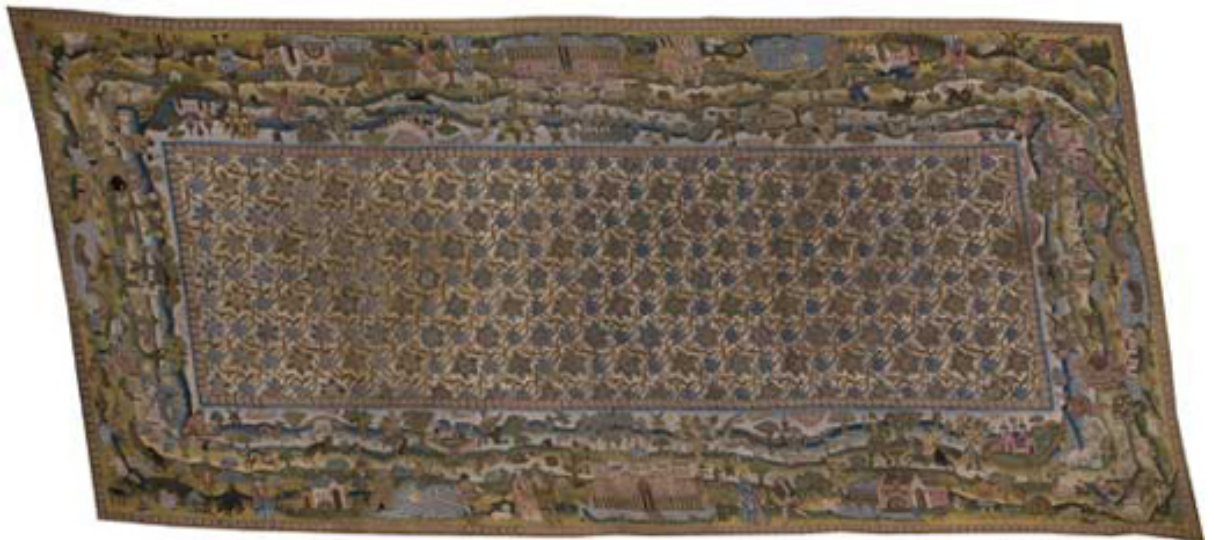
Bradford Table Carpet: dated 1600-1615: V & A Museum, London

---

[17] Geoffrey Beard, *Decorative Plasterwork,* London, 1975, Figs. 43-45.

In 1595 Frank Issac Brun engraved and printed a series of twelve hunting scenes in this linear, frieze-like format, five of which survive at the British Museum. Very little is known of this particular printer/etcher from Nuremberg, however of all the prints examined these resemble the plasterwork on the Mount the closest, especially the stag, bull and bear hunts. (Plates 6.11-6.13)

Plate 6.11

Stag Hunt: Frank Issac Brun: dated 1595: British Museum

Plate 6.12

Bear Hunt: Frank Issac Brun: dated 1595: British Museum

Plate 6.13
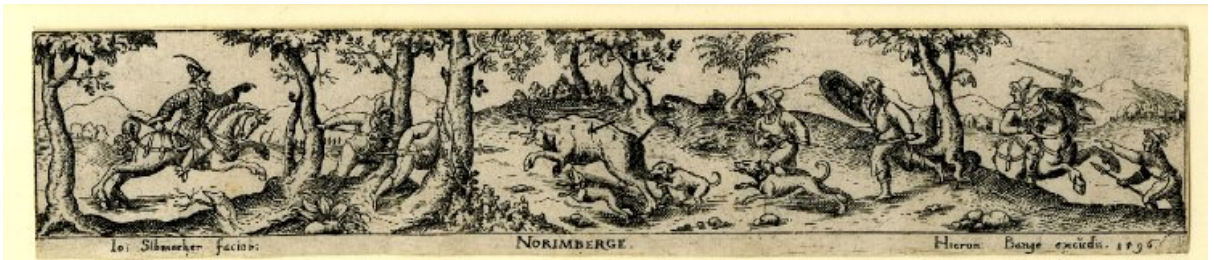
Bull Hunt: Frank Issac Brun: dated 1595: British Museum

Plate 6.14

Fox Hunt: Frank Issac Brun: dated 1595: British Museum

Plate 6.15

Hanging Fox: SMM Frieze
Photo:Author

Plate 6.16
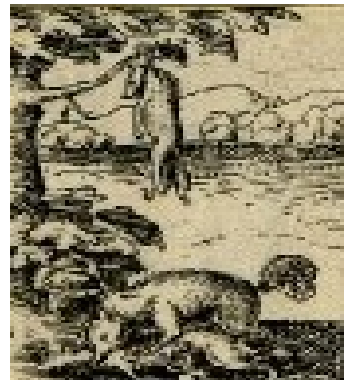
Hanging Fox: See 6.14
Frank Issac Brun

Though there is no direct correspondence in the detail between the Brun prints and the frieze at St Michael's Mount, in the overall design the placement of figures and motifs is comparable. The landscape of the Brun prints undulates in a similar fashion to the imagery of the Mount frieze, trees are dotted on the hillocks and men hide behind them to attack their quarry. Printed sources were obviously adapted and simplified when translated into decorative art so a direct correlation should not be expected. However, in Brun's print of a fox hunt there is a small detail in the far left corner which compares directly to that curious image of a hanging fox evident in the 'Chevy Chase' frieze. (See Plates 6.13 to 6.15) This intriguing scene can be explained by the fact that the act of hanging dogs or foxes was a common occurrence in the sixteenth century. The Framlington Park Game Roll gives several accounts

of hunting dogs being hung by their keepers for unruly behaviour.[18] Whereas today a dog or

fox can be shot, in previous times they were strung by the neck.

Although the Brun prints are comparable to the frieze, a discovery in the Hertfordshire

archives proves without doubt that the imagery of the frieze was copied from a particular

source rather than being the original and unique invention of the craftsman or patron. The

Hertford borough charter of 1605 has identical imagery to that of the frieze and contains

hand-painted, hunting scenes in the margins bordering the text. Plates 6.17 to 6.26 illustrate

the same scenes depicted in plaster and on the parchment. The positioning of the figures and

the animals are markedly similar.

Plate 6.17

Stag Hunt SMM:

Plate 6.18

Stag Hunt: Hertford Borough Chart 1605

Plate 6.19

Bull Hunt: Hertford Borough Charter 1605
Photos: Author

Plate 6.20

Bull Hunt SMM:

[18] Cummings, *Hound and the Hawk,* pp 264 - 5.

Plate 6.21

Boar Hunt SMM:

Plate 6.22

Boar Hunt: Hertford Borough Charter 1605

Plate 6.23

Hare Hunt: Hertford Borough Charter 1605

Plate 6.24

Hare Hunt SMM: Photo: Author

Plate 6.25

Fox Hunt SMM: Photo: Author
Photos: Author

Plate 6.26

Fox Hunt: Hertford Borough Charter 1605

The Hertford Charter granted to the borough in 1605 after the accession of James I replaced a previous charter granted by Elizabeth I, which also survives in the Hertfordshire archives and has flowers in the margins instead of hunting scenes. (Plate 6.27) Comparing the charters it seems as if the person who commissioned the artwork wanted to represent the new king with more masculine imagery than the floral and probably allegorical imagery on the Elizabethan charter. James I was renowned for his love of hunting[19] and the imagery on the charter, like the imagery on the Mount frieze, was presumably used as an emblem of identity.

Plate 6.7
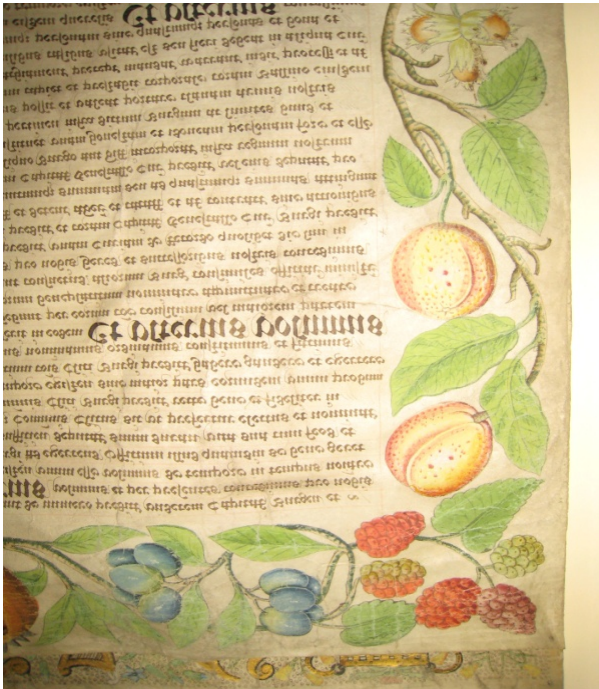
Hertford Borough Charter: Elizabeth I: Hertfordshire Archives.   Photo: Author.

There are many surviving charters nationwide, but from my research none that bear the hunting imagery as on the Hertford charter. Most charters contain the royal armorial bearings and a portrait of the king or queen in the left hand corner framed by the capital letter of their name. Some have simple black and white lettering illuminated with gold, whilst some are

---

[19] Roger Burrow Manning, *Hunters and Poachers,* Oxford, 1993, p. 202.

more decorative and colourful. All charters up to Charles I appear to be hand-painted whilst copies of charters from the reign of Charles II onwards are printed. From the apparent differences between the charters it is likely that the individual guilds and boroughs in receipt of these charters paid for their own decorative borders and provided the relevant printed source to be copied. Each charter or letters patent contained imagery particular to the individual or institution, however, the work itself was carried out by the limners in the Chancery court.[20] Limners were professional artists who decorated official government and royal documents such as charters, letters patent and grants of arms and as such would have completed the hunting scenes of the Hertford charter.

Interestingly, from 1599 the owner of St Michael's Mount was Robert Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury who, coincidentally, was also the Capital Steward of Hertford borough in 1605 when the Hertford charter was granted.[21] It may be possible that the imagery supplied for the charter and for the frieze at St Michael's Mount may have come from this central source, however the *Calendar of the Salisbury Papers* and the archives at Hatfield House have provided no evidence to confirm this. It is also doubtful that the Earl of Salisbury had any direct involvement with Hertford borough on an administrative level, probably having had the title of steward conferred on him as honorary.

Though the six hunting scenes of hare, rabbit, bull, boar, stag and fox are shared by the Hertford charter and the frieze at St Michael's Mount, they still contain some unusual features which appear strange to us as a modern day viewer. Bull hunting, in particular, looks out of place being associated more with Spanish tradition than English and, though bull baiting was

---

[20] Katherine Coombes, " 'A Kind of Gentle Painting': Limning in 16th-century England", in *European Visions:American Voices,* p. 83.
[21] Lewie Turner, *History of Hertford,* Hertford, 1830, p. 93.

a popular sport in England in the early seventeenth century, the scene in the frieze does not appear to portray the act of baiting. Surprisingly, there is evidence to suggest that bull hunting was an English tradition described by Richard Carew in his 1603 *Survey of Cornwall*:

Some gentleman suffer their beasts (cattle) to run wild in their woods and waste grounds where they are hunted and killed with crossbows and pieces in the manner of deer...... [22].

Bull running was also practiced. One example being in Tutbury where on Lady-day the prior set a bull loose amongst the minstrels who attempted to catch it before it gored them or got away.[23] Bull hunting was not, therefore, an untypical sight in England and may suggest the imagery in the frieze was influenced by local tradition. However, hunting boars or bears with clubs, as seen in the frieze, would have been a dangerous exercise. Boars were typically killed with a lance which had a cross piece behind the blade to prevent the animal's tusks reaching the hunter when the animal made its final charge.[24] It would be foolhardy to use a club unless the animal was already wounded. This choice of weaponry defies explanation and may be a consequence of the original artist never having been a hunter, or there being some artistic confusion with Herculean imagery. In one of his twelve labours Hercules slays the Erymanthian boar, an act which is sometimes depicted with Hercules brandishing a club, as in the wall painting at the Little Castle, Bolsover.[25] (Plate 6.28)

---

[22] Richard Carew, *Survey of Cornwall 1602,* Redruth, 2000, p. 40.
[23] Manning, *Hunters and Poachers,* p. 19.
[24] Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk,* p. 100.
[25] James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art,* London, 1991.

Plate 6.28

Hercules & Erymanthian Boar wall painting, Little Castle, Bolsover: Photo:
Peak District Online

So why was imagery of exotic and classically influenced depictions of ostrich, boar and bear hunting chosen in conjunction with more typical examples of native hunting in the frieze at St Michaels' Mount? It is a perfect example of what Catherine Belsey argues is the English idiosyncratic use of the vernacular alongside or incorporating the classical.[26] The aspiring English nobility and gentry welcomed the stylish influences of Greece and Rome which became more readily available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They used these classical ideals and imagery to design and decorate their houses to outwardly exhibit their worldly wisdom, education and sophistication. At the same time, however, they tempered these Renaissance influences by including traditional elements of local architecture and interior decor, presumably to give themselves a sense of continuity and stability. Whosoever chose the hunting imagery for the frieze on the Mount, wanted to be seen as refined and stylish - hence the ostrich hunt - yet still grounded in their cultural heritage thus the inclusion of the fox, hare and stag hunt.

As opposed to the traditional view of hunting as an exclusive sport of kings and aristocrats, Roger Manning, in his study of hunting, contends the hunt was an event which promoted social cohesion. A lord's household, his tenants and local peasants were all included in the hunt providing essential manpower during the chase as well as acting as servants and,

---

[26] Catherine Belsey, " Classicism and Cultural Dissonance" in *Albion's Classicism,* Ed. Lucy gent, London, 1995, p. 427.

although, the aristocracy and gentry generally hunted on horseback seeking out either deer or

hare, which were considered the nobler prey, the lowly beasts or vermin such as rabbit and

foxes were regularly hunted by the peasantry. [27] Consequently hunting scenes are more

appropriate to their setting in the 'great' hall of St Michael's Mount where they had a broad,

inclusive appeal to the household of servants and lesser gentry who dined there. In

comparison, the plaster hunting frieze in the high great chamber at Hardwick Hall in

Derbyshire, which includes classical imagery of Diana the Huntress, is aimed at an elite and

educated audience who would have been entertained there.

An analysis of the visual representation of hunting through prints and decorative artwork has

explained some of the unusual themes of the frieze at St Michael's Mount, but does it allow a

more accurate dating of its installation? The imagery in the frieze is influenced and sourced

from prints produced between approximately 1570 [28] and 1605 [29]. Stradanus's hunting

imagery was at its most popular and copied for use in other contemporary examples of

decorative art from the late sixteenth century until about 1640. The earliest known example is

a copy of Stradanus's bear hunt in the plaster frieze at Hardwick Hall dated 1595, and a later

example of the same image can be seen in the wall paintings at Madingley Hall, Cambridge

dated to before 1634.[30] It was probably during this period that Stradanus's ostrich hunt was

copied for use in the 'Chevy Chase' frieze. Because of the hiatus of the civil war the next

opportunity to install plasterwork would have been after the Restoration when the property

was purchased by John St Aubyn in 1660. No other surviving examples of decorative art

influenced by Stradanus from the post Restoration period have been discovered and, if the

frieze was installed post 1660, then there would be nearly eighty years as time lag between the

---

[27] Manning, *Hunters and Poachers,* pp. 17-20.
[28] Earliest publication of Stradanus prints, Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration,* p. 102.
[29] *Hertford Borough Charter*, 1605.
[30] Madingley Hall Guidebook.

earliest printing of the Stradanus hunting imagery and its use on the Mount. Though time lags were common, an eighty year gap would be unusual. Therefore, this final analysis suggests a date for the frieze from between 1600 and 1642 and the final candidates for patron of the frieze remain as Arthur Harris, Thomas Harris and Francis Basset.

In their long association with St Michael's Mount from at least 1596 until 1628, either Arthur or Thomas Harris had ample opportunity to install a decorative frieze. Thomas, who probably lived on the Mount, maybe had the greater incentive to install a frieze to impress and remind his visitors and household of his social standing. Whilst Arthur's focus appeared to be purely on defence.

Francis Basset also made considerable investments in the Mount and, from records kept by his wife, spent £1288 01s 10d during the civil war.[31] Basset almost certainly installed the royal coat of arms in 1641 and may have commissioned the frieze at the same time. From an examination of the transcripts of Basset letters and papers made by Reginald Metcalfe in 1923 (letters and papers which have since disappeared and have proved impossible to trace), a picture of the character of Francis Basset has emerged. He was a man who took his civil duty seriously. He held the position of vice-admiral of the north coast of Cornwall for over twenty years and most of his adult life was spent corresponding with the King's representatives over matters to do with pirates, wreckage and collection of monies for the crown.[32] A man prone to outward expressions of status he may well have installed the frieze, for in the same year as he bought the castle at St Michael's Mount, he presented a loving cup to the newly incorporated borough of St Ives in 1640 with an inscription promoting peace between his friends: a

---

[31] Reginald Metcalfe, *Transcription of letters and papers of Basset family,* 1924, Vol. 3, p. 24, held at Devon and Cornwall Record Society, Exeter.
[32] Metcalfe, *Ibid,* Vols. 1, 2 and 3.

significant act perhaps by a man wishing to consolidate and reinforce his position in the community. In his over-sized portrait, still displayed at St Michael's Mount, Francis Basset chose images of the sea to reflect his status and personality rather than anything to do with hunting despite being a keen falconer.[33] If Basset was the patron of the frieze, it is surprising that he chose hunting scenes instead of imagery of a maritime nature.

In this final visual analysis of the frieze and by identifying the probable sources for its hunting scenes, it can be seen that the unusual and bizarre imagery in the frieze is explainable by its derivation from a medieval tradition, an understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth century hunting practices and the recognition of the exotic, classical elements which can be attributed to the most popular and most copied artist of hunting scenes of that period, Stradanus. It also has provided parameters for dating the installation of the frieze and clues to who commissioned it.

---

[33] Metcalfe, Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 82, letter relating a story of the loss of a falcon belonging to Francis Basset which was recovered and returned to him by the Mayor of Camelford.

CONCLUSION

As a by-product of this investigation of a plasterwork frieze, a more comprehensive history of St Michael's Mount between 1500 and 1700 has been provided. New material has surfaced to illustrate the process that transformed the Mount from priory to country house. Without doubt the principal function of the Mount from the early sixteenth century until after the civil war was as a military stronghold and it is difficult to determine how the domestic use of the building married with its defensive nature. The two buildings identified by Berry and Thomas in their archaeological report may have remained separate entities over most of the years of this study, which would have allowed a differentiation between the two functions.[1] No conclusive proof was found to date the creation of a large country house. Nevertheless, the existence of an elaborate frieze and heraldic plasterwork confirmed the buildings on the Mount were of high status.

Using the archives in conjunction with the archaeological evidence, it has been possible to speculate that the date of the conversion of the 'Chevy Chase' room to its current form was around 1560, which provides the earliest date at which the frieze could have been installed.

The same archives also revealed new information about people who were associated with the Mount. However, it became apparent through the reading of leases, wills, inventories and letters that it was impossible to connect any one potential patron with the installation of the frieze through any of this activity, accounts or imagery. Consequently, a dating and understanding of the frieze had to be achieved via alternative means.

---

[1] Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro, 2008.

To understand the imagery of the frieze, which has long been associated with the ballad of 'Chevy Chase', the next logical step was to investigate the relationship between the two. Through a study of the ballad it became evident there was no discernible link between the story, imagery or tune of the ballad with the hunting scenes on the frieze. An investigation of diaries and guide books of the nineteenth century showed that the references to 'Chevy Chase' began during this period. It is likely that the household staff who guided the early tourists around the house named the frieze 'Chevy Chase'. It was given this title as 'Chevy Chase' had, by this time, become synonymous with hunting.

The 'Chevy Chase' frieze is not the only example of the persistence of imposed myths and stories originating in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Within this short project two others have been discussed, that of the so-called 'Sheldon' tapestries which are now assumed to have been made in London rather than Warwickshire, and the supposition that a West Country family of plasterers called Abbot was responsible for all the sixteenth and seventeenth-century work in the region; the information gathered in this study clearly demonstrates this assertion is unfounded.

What is fascinating about this phenomenon is that some of these imposed narratives still play a major part in the presentation of information in museums, castles, and country houses. I challenge anyone to visit a country house where a guide or guidebook does not tell you of a body that has been discovered either bricked up in a tower or at the bottom of a well. And how many grey ladies roam corridors with the intent of throwing themselves off the terraces? As an historic buildings guide there is a tendency to play to the audience, but strip away these imagined histories and ghost stories, and beneath are layers of historic detail with scope for more fascinating tales.

Visual analysis of the imagery in the frieze was the most fruitful aspect of this investigation in terms of providing a date for the installation of the frieze and an understanding of the unusual hunting scenes. Uncovering evidence for printed sources for the frieze was the most exciting discovery, and establishing for certain that this imagery was copied from a particular source which was shared with the imagery of the Hertford Borough Charter was very satisfying. The archivists at Hertford were just as surprised to discover 'their' charter was not unique as I was to find out that neither was 'my' frieze.

Establishing a visual context which connected the plasterwork to comparative works of decorative art at Hardwick Hall and Madingley Hall, helped date the frieze, though this time frame of 1600-1640 is still disappointingly large. And unlike the imagery of the Little Castle at Bolsover and the hunting frieze of the great chamber at Hardwick Hall, which are closely associated with the personalities of those who commissioned the work, it has not been possible to establish such connections between the imagery of the frieze at St Michael's Mount and any of the potential patrons.

To conclude, the 'great hall' at St Michael's Mount was constructed from the derelict buildings of a priory in about 1560. Sometime between 1600 and 1641 the room was decorated with a plaster frieze and a plaster royal coat of arms. The unusual hunting scenes of the frieze were copied from prints which were in the possession of a patron or a plasterer, and apart from the one scene of ostrich hunting attributed to a copy of an original by Stradanus, the remainder are unidentified. The hunting imagery reflects classical influences, medieval hunting iconography and hunting practices of the day. A plasterer or a workshop responsible for the frieze has not been identified, and the potential patrons who may have installed the

frieze have been reduced to three candidates, Arthur Harris, Thomas Harris and Francis
Basset.

While the specific identity of the patron remains elusive, this thesis has demonstrated that the
creation of a plasterwork frieze of hunting scenes represents an important moment in the
history of the Mount; it proclaimed the new status of the building as a showy domestic
residence and provided a means for the occupant to express their own social status, interests
and artistic tastes.

APPENDIX 1

Piers St Aubyn's plans of St Michael's Mount 1862
Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro, 2008.
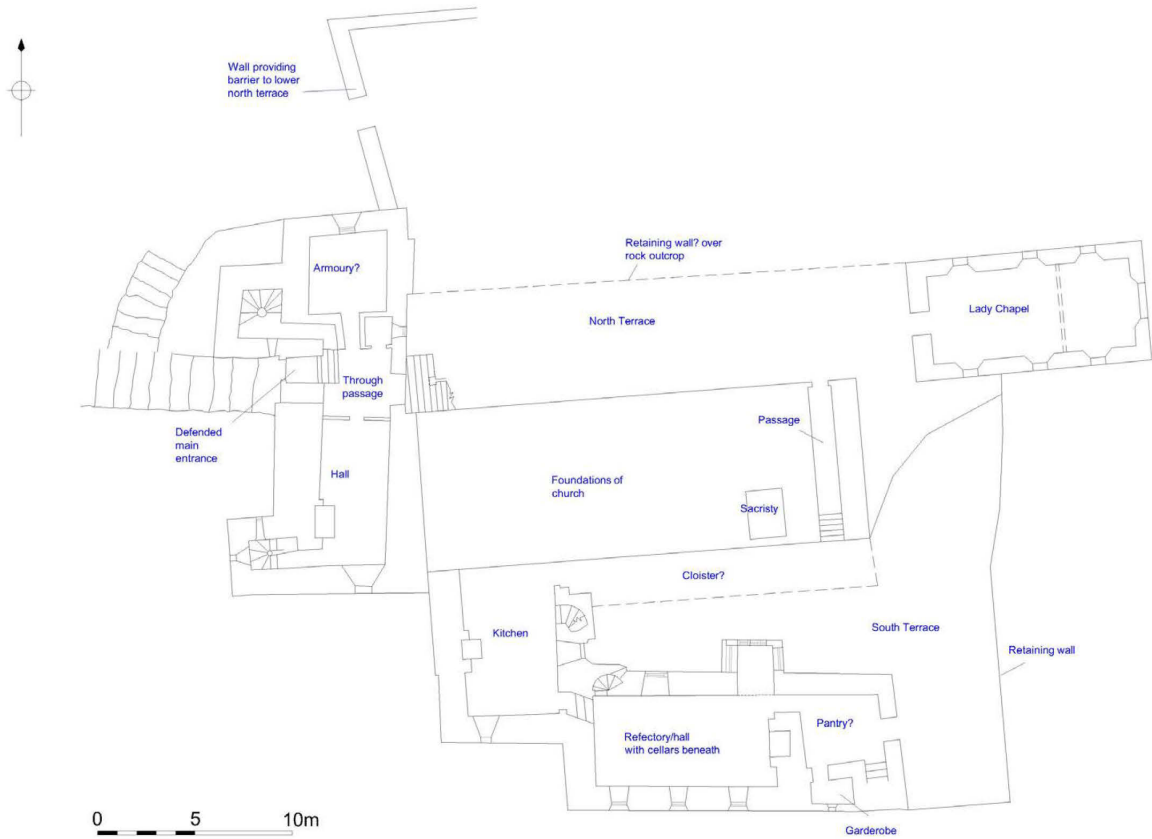
APPENDIX 2

Date	Owner	Leasee	Governor	Captain	Comments
1521	Syon Abbey	John Milliton		John Milliton	
1533	Henry VIII	John Milliton	Humphrey Arundell[i] ?		Granted revenues by Hen VIII
1537	Henry VIII	John Milliton	Humphrey Arundell?	John Milliton	
1547	Edward VI	John Milliton	Humphrey Arundell?	John Milliton	Rebellion and siege of SMM by local gentry who fear the rebels of whom Arundell is one... Arundell retakes building.
1549	Edward VI	William Milliton		Wm Milliton	Death of John Militon
1553	Mary I	William Milliton		Wm Milliton	
1558	Elizabeth I	William Milliton		Wm Milliton	
1571	Elizabeth I	William Harris		Wm Harris	Wm Milliton dies 1571 with no male heirs. His widow, Honor Godolphin remarries Wm Harris who appears to inherit captaincy.
1586	Elizabeth 1	?		Arthur Harris	Letter petitioning for ordnance[ii]
1596	Elizabeth I	Arthur Harris		Arthur Harris	Granted Lease
1599	Earl Of Salisbury Robert Cecil	Arthur Harris		Arthur Harris	
1612	Earl Of Salisbury William Cecil	Arthur Harris		Arthur Harris/ Thomas Harris[iii] Thomas referred to as lieutenant.	Will of Arthur Harris details effects at Mount. Bequeaths living to his third son.[iv]
1628	Earl of Salisbury William Cecil	?	Lieutenant Harvey	Lieutenant Harvey[v]	Arthur Harris Died.
1630	Earl Of Salisbury William Cecil	Hannibal Newman	Hannibal Newman[vi]	Hannibal Newman	Bassett was involved with the lease of SMM.[vii]
1640	Francis Bassett Esq	?	?	?	
1644	Sir Francis Bassett	?	Sir Francis Bassett	?	Sir Francis Bassett granted commission to Mount by Ch1 making him Governor and Commander in Chief.
1645	Lady Anne Bassett[viii]	?	Arthur Bassett Brother to Sir Francis	?	After death of Sir Francis Bassett
1646	Lady Anne Bassett	?	Colonel Hammond Parliamentarian	Captain John St Aubyn	
1647	Lady Anne Bassett	?	Colonel Bennett	Captain John St Aubyn?	
1649	Lady Anne Bassett[ix]	?	Colonel Robert Bennett	Captain Geary[x]	
1657	John St Aubyn		Colonel Robert Bennett	?	
1660	John St Aubyn		None	None	
1684	Sir John St Aubyn Ist Baronet. Son of above.		None	None	

Table of Owners, Lessees, Governors and Captains of St Michael's Mount

[i] Canon Fletcher, *A Short History of St Michael's Mount,* Cornwall 1951, p. 70 mentions Humphrey Arundell as being granted revenues of SMM in 1533 before the dissolution of the abbey.

In 1549, during the Cornish rebellion against Edward VI's enforcement of the use of the Book of Common Prayer in English rather than Latin, the Mount was used by supporters of the crown as a place of refuge. The leader of the rebel forces, Humphrey Arundell, ordered that the Mount be put under siege and the island was stormed and retaken. The rebellion was eventually quashed and Arundell executed for his involvement.[i] The events of the Cornish rebellion were recorded by many sixteenth-century writers including Carew, Foxe and Holinshed, in which they refer to Humphrey Arundell of Lanherne as variously 'governor', 'captain' or 'commander' of the Mount. In Lyson's *History and Topography of Cornwall* of 1814, it is further claimed that Humphrey Arundell was granted all revenues of the Mount after the dissolution of Syon Abbey, however, no surviving state, legal or local document has come to light to confirm this, and it must be assumed that John Milliton's lease was honoured from the dissolution until his death in 1549 when his son, William, inherited the captaincy as laid down in the terms of the lease granted in 1634. Humphrey Arundell's involvement with the Mount must, therefore, have been confined to the rebellion itself. For this reason I have questioned Arundell as being governor or captain of the Mount

[ii] Canon Taylor, *St Michael's Mount,* Cornwall 1932, p. 156.

[iii] From: 'Cecil Papers: 1625', Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 22: 1612-1668 (1971), pp. 204 - 209. Letter written by Thomas Harris to Earl of Salisbury regarding Mount.

[iv] PRO – Ref. prob/11/154 – Will of Arthur Harris. Bequeaths his son, Thomas, featherbeds, furniture etc from Mount.

[v] From: 'Cecil Papers: 1630', Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 22: 1612-1668 (1971), pp. 255 - 260. "According to your letter of direction to me for the placing in of Mr Haniball Newman to be Captain of the Mount, I have on the 20th of Marche last settled hym in that office of Captainshipp, and have taken securitye of hym and my cosen Bassett by bond of 500l to my lords use." They have promised to give further security if this is not sufficient. "I have delivered to Captain Newman only such thinges as Lieutenant Harvey had in that charge with hym." Has ordered the rest of the soldiers to obey Newman.

[vi] The Mount was sold to Francis Basset in 1640 and it is not known whether Newman stayed on as captain of the castle after this date. In 1639 the Earl of Salisbury had already granted Newman a lease for the Brewhouse in the bay at St Michael's Mount which required Newman to pay 40s yearly at the castle, (RIC , *Henderson Papers* HA/8/7) suggesting his position at the Mount had already come to an end before the sale of the island to Basset.

[vii] From: 'Cecil Papers: 1630', Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 22: 1612-1668 (1971), pp. 255 - 260. "According to your letter of direction to me for the placing in of Mr Haniball Newman to be Captain of the Mount, I have on the 20th of Marche last settled hym in that office of Captainshipp, and have taken securitye of hym and my cosen Bassett by bond of 500l to my lords use." They have promised to give further security if this is not sufficient. "I have delivered to Captain Newman only such thinges as Lieutenant Harvey had in that charge with hym." Has ordered the rest of the soldiers to obey Newman.

[viii] From 1646 to 1657 the Mount remained in the ownership of Basset's widow, Lady Ann Basset. The natural death of her husband before the end of the Civil War was fortunate for it meant that the Mount was not sequestered as it belonged to Lady Ann Bassett.
CRO AU32/33 A comment in the St Aubyn archives reads as follows:
"Sir W Steven bevels affidavit that the Mount was never sequestered but allowed to the Lady Bassett for her jointure according to the articles themselves read in Parliament 23rd April 1646 (one week after its surrender) attested by W. Stobull Clerk of the Parliament."

[ix] MS X.d.483 (1-209),Folger Shakespeare Library. Letter from Robert Bennet to the Lady [Ann] Basset, ca. 1650. Draft. His heart cannot go so low as to keep anything of hers...when he shall be delivered from the burden of managing this ancient fortress, [i.e. St. Michael's Mount]. St. Michael's Mount belonged to the Basset family.

[x] *Taylor's Western Voyage to the Mount,* p. 5.

APPENDIX 3

Piers St Aubyn's plans of St Michael's Mount 1862

Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro 2008.
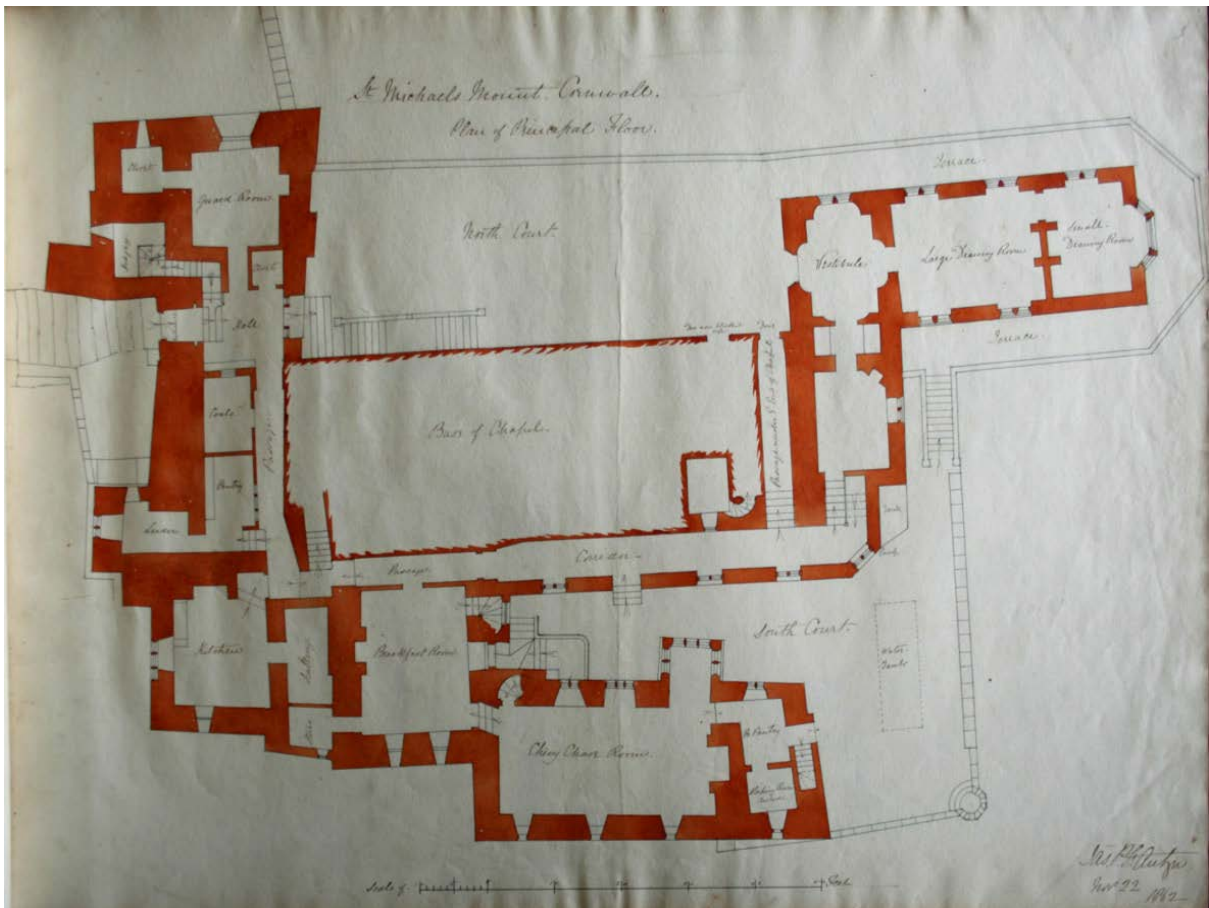
Ground Floor Plan

Piers St Aubyn's plans of St Michael's Mount 1862
Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas, *St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the summit buildings,* Truro 2008.

1st Floor Plan

APPENDIX 4

Devon Record Office
Harris of Hayne – 2527m

W13

Inventory 1629 of goods remayninge at the Mounte

Imprimis

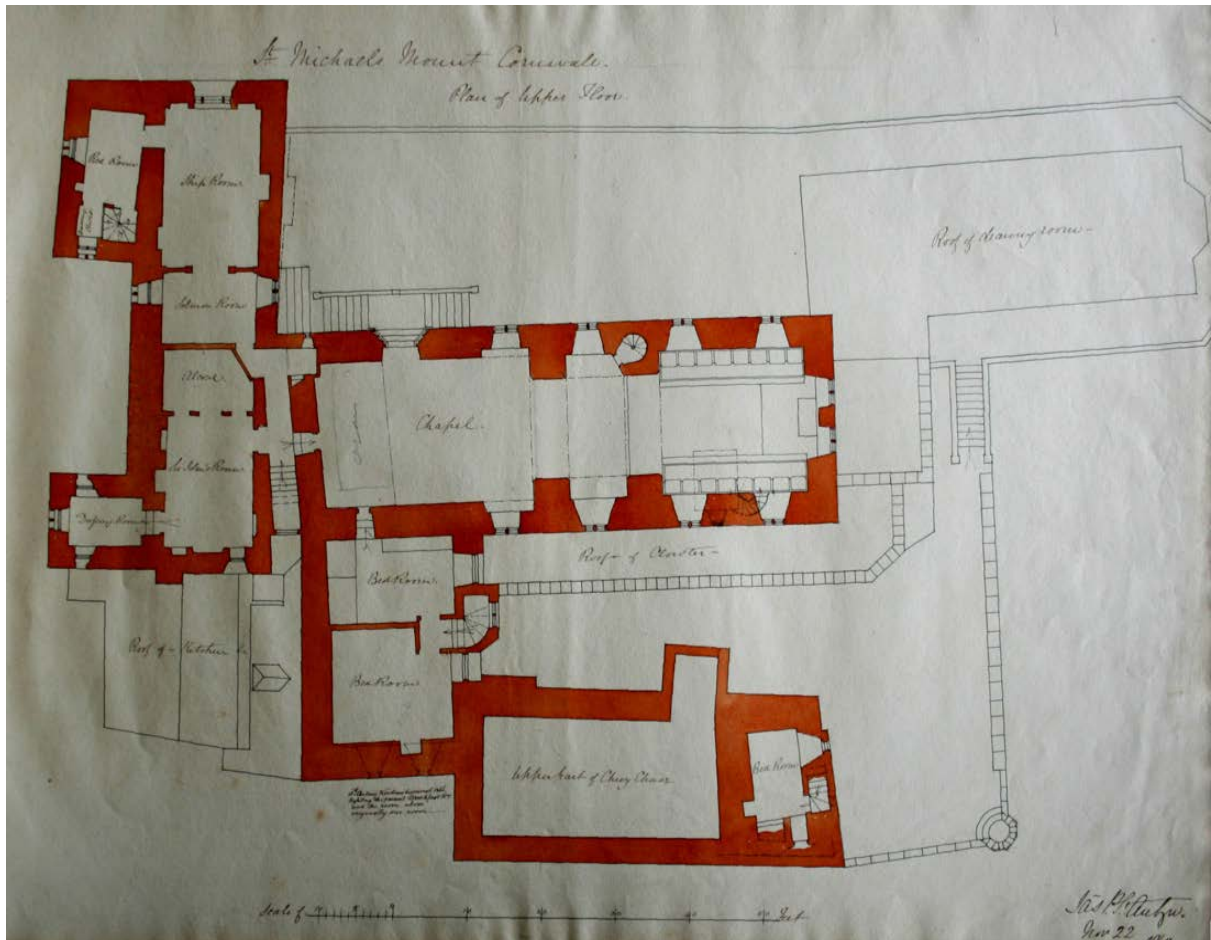|			
Twenty dea'e boards, sixteene Iron hoopes and Six Timbre hoopes	£ 1	2s	8d
Item Twenty Six Lings and 9 Codd	£ 1	6s	
Item two hundred p[?]e [?], one great Chest and two bushells of Salt	£ 1	7s	
Item, Tyle Stones, two – [?], and one paire of Scales and Waights	£ 3	1s	
Item Three quarters of a waighe of Cole	£ 1		
Item fowre [?] nad two Thousand of [?]		10s	6d
Item Five hosheads, three Tubbs, one handbarrowe, 2 potts , and two paire of Tymber		9s	
Item Twenty one beames, mounteninge, Barrell Staves, and other Tymber	£ 3	6s	
Item three pannes, two [?], two Tubbes, one planke, and one ander	£ 4		11d
Item Nyne Barrells – one [?] and two [?]		14s	
Item one Tunne of lead and one [?] of [?]	£11		
Item fowre peeces of blocke wood and ignum		1s	6d
Item five hogsheads, one Barrell and five Tubbes		11s	6d
Item Twenty five [?] bords, and other Tymbers in Tho: Crlls Seller		8s	4d
Item one Boate with 4 Oares and one p[?]e Ca[?]	£ 2	3s	
Item two abnetts, one Minon, one Saker, with Springes and Ladles	£17	4s	

Item one Brasse abnett	£ 6		
Item Sixteene blacke Armor with head peeces and gougetts three White armes two of Flanders, one graven armes and one armor of [?]	£16		
Item two Chests that hold the Armor	£ 6		
Item Tenne Pikes, drumne, twelve halberds and 35lb of Match	£ 3	9s	4d
Item one fflagge, Thirty Five Musketts and 10 halivers	£20	10s	
Item six Pikes 3 Partisans, two halberds and a loadings Staffe	£ 3	16s	
Item one Targett, one Haryubus and 3 old haryubus barrells	£ 1	9s	4d
Item lb of Shott ot therabout and 12 yd of Bandoleers	£ 3	4s	
Item Six bedsteds with feather beds furnished	£19		
Item Platters, dishes and all pewter Implements at the Mounte	£ 2	10s	
Item one Brazen Kettle, two potts and one brasse c[?]en	£ 1		
Item two Cupbord Cloths and one towell		15s	
Item one pestell & morter, a paire of pott hangers, a paire of crookes, a paire of Andyrons, oneSpitt, one drippinge panne, one Chafeing dishe, one grydiron and other implements of iron		8s	
Item two bordclothes, five cupbord clothes, five Towells of holland, sixteene Napkins, Seaven Towells & two bordclothes of Canvas, one dozen of Napkins, one Towell, and one Cupbord Cloth of newe Canvas	£ 1	2s	
Summa	£30	15s	11d

APPENDIX 5

The Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chase

The Persè owt off Northombarlonde,
and avowe to God mayd he
That he wold hunte in the mowntayns
off Chyviat within days thre,
In the magger of doughtè Dogles,
and all that euer with him be.

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:
'Be my feth,' sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
'I wyll let that hontyng yf that I may.'

Then the Persè owt off Banborowe cam,
with him a myghtee meany,
With fifteen hondrith archares bold;
the wear chosen owt of shyars thre.

This begane on a Monday at morn,
in Cheviat the hillys so he;
The chylde may rue that ys vn-born,
it wos the mor pittè.

The dryvars thorowe the woodees went,
for to reas the dear;
Bomen byckarte vppone the bent
with ther browd aros cleare.

Then the wyld thorowe the woodees went,
on euery sydè shear;
Greahondes thorowe the grevis glent,
for to kyll thear dear.

This begane in Chyviat the hyls abone,
yerly on a Monnyn-day;
Be that it drewe to the oware off none,
a hondrith fat hartees ded ther lay.

The blewe a mort vppone the bent,
the semblyde on sydis shear;
To the quyrry then the Persè went,
to se the bryttlynge off the deare.

He sayd, It was the Duglas promys
this day to met me hear;
But I wyste he wolde faylle, verament;
a great oth the Persè swear.

At the laste a squyar off Northomberlonde
lokyde at his hand full ny;
He was war a the doughetie Doglas commynge,
with him a myghttè meany.

Both with spear, bylle, and brande,
yt was a myghtti sight to se;
Hardyar men, both off hart nor hande,
wear not in Cristiantè.

The wear twenti hondrith spear-men good,
withoute any feale;
The wear borne along be the watter a Twyde,
yth bowndees of Tividale.

'Leave of the brytlyng of the dear,' he sayd,
and to your bowys lock ye tayk good hede;
For neuer sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
had ye neuer so mickle nede.'

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede,
he rode alle his men beforne;
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede;
a boldar barne was never born.

'Tell me whos men ye ar,' he says,
'or whos men that ye be:
Who gave youe leave to hunte in this Chyviat chays,
in the spyt of myn and of me.'

The first mane that ever him an answear mayd,
yt was the good lord Persè:
'We wyll not tell the whoys men we ar,' he says,
'Nor whos men that we be;
But we wyll hounte hear in this chays,
in the spyt of thyne and of the.

'The fattiste hartees in all Chyviat
we haue kyld, and cast to carry them away:'
'Be my troth,' sayd the doughetè Dogglas agayn,
'therfor the ton of vs shal de this day.'

Then sayd the doughtè Doglas
unto the lord Perse:
'To kyll alle thes giltles men,
alas, it wear great pittè!

But, Persè, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contre;
Let all our men vppone a parti stande,
and do the battell off the and of me.'

'Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne,' sayd the lorde Persè,
'who-so-euer ther-to says nay!
Be my troth, doughtte Doglas,' he says,
'Thow shalt neuer se that day.

'Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France,
nor for no man of a woman born,
But, and fortune be my chance,
I dar met him, on man for on.'

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
Richard Wytharyngton was him nam;
'It shal neuer be told in Sothe-Ynglonde,' he says,
'To Kyng Herry the Fourth for sham.

'I wat youe byn great lordees twaw,
I am a poor squyar of lande;
I wylle neuer se my captayne fyght on a fylde,
and stande my selffe and loocke on,
But whylle I may my weppone welde,
I wylle not "fayle" both hart and hande.'

That day, that day, that dredfull day!
the first fit here I fynde;
And youe wyll here any mor a the hountynge a the Chyviat,
yet ys ther mor behynde.

The Second Fit

The Yngglyshe men hade ther bowys yebent,
ther hartes wer good yenoughe;
The first off arros that the shote off,
seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

Yet byddys the yerle Doglas vppon the bent,
a captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,
for he wrought hom both woo and wouche.

The Dogglas partyd his ost in thre,
lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde;
With suar spears off myghtt tre,
the cum in on euery syde;

Thrughe our Yngglyshe archery
gave many a wounde fulle wyde;
Many a doughetè the garde to dy,
which ganyde them no pryde.

The Ynglyshe men let ther bowys be,
and pulde owt brandes that wer brighte;
It was a hevy syght to se
bryght swordes on basnites lyght.

Thorowe ryche male and myneyeple,
many sterne the strocke done streght;
Many a freyke that was fulle fre,
ther vndar foot dyd lyght.

At last the Duglas and the Persè met,
lyk to captayns of myght and of mayne;
The swapte toghethar tylle the both swat,
with swordes that wear of fyn myllan.

Thes worthè freckys for to fyght,
ther-to the wear fulle fayne,
Tylle the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprente,
as euer dyd heal or rayn.

'Yelde the, Persè,' sayde the Doglas,
and i feth I shalle the brynge
Wher thowe shalte haue a yerls wagis
of Jamy our Skottish kynge.

'Thoue shalte haue thy ransom fre,
I hight the hear this thinge;
For the manfullyste man yet art thowe
that euer I conqueryd in filde fighttynge.'

'Nay,' sayd the lord Persè,
'I tolde it the beforne,
That I wolde neuer yeldyde be
to no man of a woman born.'

With that ther cam an arrowe hastely,
forthe off a myghttè wane;
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
in at the brest-bane.

Thorowe lyvar and longees bathe
the sharpe arrowe ys gane,
That neuer after in all his lyffe-days
he spayke mo wordees but ane:
That was, Fyghte ye, my myrry men, whyllys ye may,
for my lyff-days ben gan.

The Persè leanyde on his brande,
and sawe the Duglas de;
He tooke the dede mane by the hande,
and sayd, Wo ys me for the!

'To haue savyde thy lyffe, I wolde haue partyde with
my landes for years thre,
For a better man, of hart nare of hande,
was nat in all the north contrè.'

Off all that se a Skottishe knyght,
was callyd Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry;
He sawe the Duglas to the deth was dyght,
he spendyd a spear, a trusti tre.

He rod vppone a corsiare
throughe a hondrith archery:
He neuer stynttyde, nar neuer blane,
tylle he cam to the good lord Persè.

He set vppone the lorde Persè
a dynte that was full soare;
With a suar spear of a myghtè tre
clean thorow the body he the Persè ber,

A the tothar syde that a man myght se
a large cloth-yard and mare:
Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Cristiantè
then that day slan wear ther.

An archar off Northomberlonde
say slean was the lord Persè;
He bar a bende bowe in his hand,
was made off trusti tre.

An arow that a cloth-yarde was lang
to the harde stele halyde he;
A dynt that was both sad and soar
he sat on Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry.

The dynt yt was both sad and sar
that he of Monggomberry sete;
The swane-fethars that his arrowe bar
with his hart-blood the wear wete.

Ther was neuer a freake wone foot wolde fle,
but still in stour dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar, whylle the myghte dre,
with many a balfull brande.

This battell begane in Chyviat
an owar befor the none,
And when even-songe bell was rang,
the battell was nat half done.

The tooke "on" ethar hande
be the lyght off the mone;
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
in Chyviat the hillys abon.

Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
went away but seuenti and thre;
Of twenti hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,
but even five and fifti.

But all wear slayne Cheviat within;
the hade no strengthe to stand on hy;
The chylde may rue that ys unborne,
it was the mor pittè.

Thear was slayne, withe the lord Persè,
Ser Johan of Agerstone,
Ser Rogar, the hinde Hartly,
Ser Wyllyam, the bolde Hearone.

Ser Jorg, the worthè Loumle,
a knyghte of great renowen,
Ser Raff, the ryche Rugbe,
with dyntes wear beaten dowene.

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
that euer he slayne shulde be;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
yet he knyled and fought on hys kny.

Ther was slayne, with the dougheti Duglas,
Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry,
Ser Dauy Lwdale, that worthè was,
his sistars son was he.

Ser Charls a Murrè in that place,
that neuer a foot wolde fle;
Ser Hewe Maxwelle, a lorde he was,
with the Doglas dyd he dey.

So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
off birch and hasell so gray;
Many wedous, with wepyng tears,
cam to fache ther makys away.

Tivydale may carpe off care,
Northombarlond may mayk great mon,
For towe such captayns as slayne wear thear
on the March-parti shall neuer be non.

Word ys commen to Eddenburrowe,
to Jamy the Skottishe kynge,
That dougheti Duglas, lyff-tenant of the Marches,
he lay slean Chyviot within.

His handdes dyd he weal and wryng,
he sayd, Alas, and woe ys me!
Such an othar captayn Skotland within,
he sayd, ye-feth shuld neuer be.

Worde ys commyn to lovly Londone,
till the fourth Harry our kynge,
That lord Persè, leyff-tenante of the Marchis,
he lay slayne Chyviat within.

'God haue merci on his solle,' sayde Kyng Harry,
'good lord, yf thy will it be!
I haue a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde,' he sayd,
as good as euer was he:
But, Persè, and I brook my lyffe,
thy deth well quyte shall be.'

As our noble kynge mayd his avowe,
lyke a noble prince of renowen,
For the deth of the lord Persè
he dyde the battell of Hombyll-down;

Wher syx and thrittè Skottishe knyghtes
on a day wear beaten down;
Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,
over castille, towar, and town.

This was the hontynge off the Cheviat,
that tear begane this spurn;
Old men that knowen t8e grownde well yenoughe
call it the battell of Otterburn.

At Otterburn begane this spurne,
vppone a Monnynday;
Ther was the doughtè Doglas slean,
the Persè neuer went away.

Ther was neuer a tym on the Marche-partes
sen the Doglas and the Persè met,
But yt ys mervele and the rede blude ronne not,
as the reane doys in the stret.

Ihesue Crist our balys bete,
and to the blys vs brynge!
Thus was the hountynge of the Chivyat:
God send vs alle good endyng!

Source:
Bishop Thomas Percy, *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* ed. E Rhys, 1906

APPENDIX 6

The More Modern Ballad of Chevy Chace

God prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all ;
A woeful! hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall ;

To drive the deere with hound and home,
Erie Percy took his way,
The child may rue that is unborne,
The hunting of that day.

The stout Erie of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summers days to take ;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-chace
To kill and beare away.
These tydings to Erie Douglas came,
In Scotland where he lay :

Who sent Erie Percy present word.
He wold prevent his sport.
The English erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold ;
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts arright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran.
To chase the fallow deere :
On munday they began to hunt,
Ere day-light did appeare ;

And long before high noone they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine ;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
To rouze the deare againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure ;
Theire backsides all, with speciall care.
That day were guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,-
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An eccho shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughter'd deere ;
Quoth he, Erie Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere :

But if I thought he wold not come,
Noe longer wold I stay.
With that, a brave younge gentleman
Thus to the Erie did say :

Loe, yonder doth Erie Douglas come,
His men in armour bright ;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight ;

All men of pleasant Tivydale,
Fast by the river Tweede :
cease your sports, Erie Percy said.
And take your bowes with speede :

And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance ;
For there was never champion yett,
In Scotland nor in France,

That ever did on horsebacke come,
But if my hap it were,
1 durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.

Erie Douglas on his milke-white steede,
Most like a baron bolde.
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

Show me, sayd hee, whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, doe chase
And kill my fallow-deere.

The first man that did answer make
Was noble Percy hee ;
Who sayd, Wee list not to declare,
Nor shew whose men wee bee :

Yet wee will spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
And thus in rage did say,

Ere thus I will out-braved bee,
One of us two shall dye :
I know thee well, an erle thou art ;
Lord Percy, soe am I.

But trust me, Percy, pittye it were.
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside.
Accurst bee he, Erie Percy sayd.
By whome this is denyed.

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name.
Who said, I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,

That ere my captaine fought on foote.
And I stood looking on.
You be two erles, sayd Witherington,
And I a squier alone :

He doe the best that doe I may.
While I have power to stand :
While I have power to weeld my sword
He fight with hart and hand.

Our English archers bent their bowes.
Their harts were good and trew ;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.

Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,
As Chieftain stout and good.
As valiant Captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As Leader ware and try'd,
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side.

To drive the deere with hound and home,
Douglas bade on the bent
Two captaines moved with mickle might
Their speres to shivers went.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound :
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground :

And throwing strait their bows away,
They grasp'd their swords so briglit :
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on every side,
Noe slackness there was found ;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

O Christ ! it was a griefe to see,
And likewise for to heare,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet.
Like captaines of great might :
Like lyons wood, they layd on lode,
And made a cruell fight :

They fought untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered Steele ;
Untill the blood, like drops of rain,
They tricklin downe did feele.

Yeeld thee. Lord Percy, Douglas sayd
In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced bee
By James our Scottish king :

Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee.
Thou art the most couragious knight,
That ever I did see.

Noe, Douglas, quoth Erie Percy then,
Thy proffer I doe scorne ;
I will not yeelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne.

With that, there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow.
Which struck Erie Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow :

Who never spake more words than these,
Fight on, my merry men all ;
For why, my life is at an end ;
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Then leaving liffe, Erie Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand ;
And said, Erie Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.

O Christ ! my verry hart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake ;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance cold never take.

A knight amongst the Scotts there was
Which saw Erie Douglas dye.
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percye :

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere most bright.
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight ;

And past the English archers all.
Without all dread or feare ;
And through Earl Percyes body then
He thrust his hatefull spere ;

With such a vehement force and might
He did his body gore.
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard, and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine :
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine ;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree ;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew hee :

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
So right the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-winge that was thereon,
In his harts bloode was wette.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sun •
For when they rung the evening-bel
The battel scarce was done.

With stout Erie Percy there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James that bold barron :

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine.
Whose prowesse did surmount.

For Witherington needs must I wayle.
As one in doleful dumpes ;
For when his leggs were smitten oflf.
He fought upon his stumpes.

And with Erie Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Montgomerye,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foote wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray, of Ratcliff, too,
His sisters sonne was hee ;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
Yet saved cold not bee.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erie Douglas dye :
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres.
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three ;
The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chace,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle ;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares
But all wold not prevayle.

Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple gore,
They bare with them away :
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The news was brought to Eddenborrow,
'Where Scottlands king did raigne,
That brave Erie Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine :

heavy newes. King James did say,
Scotland may witnesse bee,
1 have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee.

Like tydings to King Henry came.
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy-Chace :

Now God be with him, said our king,
Sith it will noe better bee ;
I trust I have, within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee :

Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say,
But I will vengeance take :
I'll be revenged on them all,
For brave Erie Percyes sake.

This vow full well the king perform'd
After, at Humbledowne ;
In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
With lords of great renowne :

And of the rest, of small acount,
Did many thousands dye :
Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,
Made by the Erie Percy.

God save our king, and bless this land
With plenty, joy, and peace ;
And grant henceforth, that foule debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

Source:
Bishop Thomas Percy, *Percy Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* Ed E Rhys, London 1906

APPENDIX 7

DREGS OF DROLLERY OR OLD POETRY IN ITS R A G G E S.

A full cry of Hell-hounds unkennelled to go a King-catching;

To the Tune of Chevy-Chace:

LONDON,

Printed in the year 1660

Poem dedicated:

To his most honoured Friend and Cousin, George Lord, Vicount Poderidge, Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Essex, Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter, Lord General of all His Majesties Forces in the three Kingdoms, Master of his Horse, and one of his most Honourable Privy-Council.

Of Buck-hunting, and Fox-catching
I have heard; But th'Royal Game,
King-catching, nere was heard of yet,
From the shrill Trumpet of Fame.

Yet this unheard of drereful sport,
I sadly sit and sing,
By Rebel Rogues acted upon
As gratious, as great King.

His Judas servants first are they
That for unrighteous wages:
Him shamefully into th'hands betray
Of Jewish bloudy Sages.

To him all things presented are,
Disordered in the Nation;
And therefore must a Parliament,
Be call'd for Reformation.

Pembroke, the wife, his mouth now ope's,
And telleth him that hes nigh ill;
And that there remains no hope,
(As he hath heard from Mighill)

To sage advise his eare bow down,
Unless he shall prove willing;
Lose surely he will, his triple crown,
Call'd alias fifteen shilling.

A monstrous hand is then held forth
Of one of Anak's sons;
With six Fingers, that their design,
Even he may read that runs.

And that strange antick names be not
Wanting to the Dissemblers;
These signally must now be call'd,
Kimbolton and five Members.

These on a roar, the whole house set
Impetuously a crying,
The people's peace can't be redeem'd
Without great Strafford's dying.

Then tumults raise they such, no sound
Is to be heard to ring,
But first we will no Bishops have,
And then wee'l have no King.

And these like Bull-dogs trained indeed,
First fly't the Bishops head,
And never leave their hot pursuit,
Till Cantebury's dead.

Our blessed brethren then, the Scots,
Must come into our aid;
For which their love they must have pounds
Three hundred thousand paid.

Horn'd Essex then into Regiments
Divides his City power;
For which horn'd beasts all still shall be
Upon Record i'th Tower.

And Atkins then with his wide stretch
Doth his great Horse bestraddle,
That of the colour of his Chain,
Eftsoons he makes his saddle.

Then's Edge-Hill Fight, where whil'st is seen
Many a brave soul on the ground,
Stout Wharton with his Morglai keen,
Is in a Saw-pit found.

With more than good speede, then to th'Town
Of Gloster high's our liege;
And with courage like himself,
Layed to it close siege.

Him after Cuckold Essex posts,
And close to work he falls,
And with his Rams Horns, Joshua-like;
He bloweth down the walls.

Thence to Exon come; and there having chear'd,
His Dear, and bless'd his baby;
To Oxon then he hasteth away,
With all the speed that may be.

And now, when Essex had his hire
Of treason, by poison, paid;
And all his valiant traiterous acts,
By th'wall are laid.

Black Tom in this curs'd Cuckold's place,
Being now his Oxcellence grown,
Tamely he hopes the King to seize,
But findes this great Bird flown.

The King is now the Scottish Faith,
For safety, forc'd to sound;
But basely they him deliver up,
For two hundred thousand pounds.

Now, for's possession, to Holmeby brought,
One striveth to out-wit another;
But the Independents here's too hard
For his Presbyterian brother.

Thence to Hampton-Court in triumph led,
He's there put in t'a fright,
B'Horse-regiments, and therefore must
Away to the Isle of Wight.

Cowes Castles first for th'captive King,
Though a convenient warde,
But then, for more security,
Hurste Castle a stronger guard.

To james then first, thence Westminster,
Where he receives his charge,
From more Terrulluss's than one,
Whereon they boldl'inlarge.

Black Bradshaw then in Bloud-red robes,
Old Pontius Pilate acts;
And passeth on our Soveraign Lord,
Sentence for traiterous acts.

To White-Hall last, his Royal Seat,
With strong guards they him bring;
To go forth from his Banquetting-house,
To an Heavenly banquetting

One of's accusers, Doriflaus,
To his place (you know) is gone;
With Hail, his Judge; and what o'th'rest
becomes you'l hear anon.

And that all the Kings Enemies,
May prosper as did they,
All Loyal Subjects of the King,
I'msure, will heart'ly pray.

The Wise man dyeth as the Fool; Eccles 2.16

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES - MANUSCRIPTS & PRINTS

BRITISH MUSEUM

> Series of 5 Hunting Prints by Frank Issac Brun: Hollstein 112-120

> > Bartsch IX.469.99-471.109

CORNWALL RECORD OFFICE

> Bassett Papers: Civil War: 1640-1646: B35

> St Aubyn Papers: 1657-1665: AU/1 - AU/33

DEVON AND CORNWALL RECORD SOCIETY, EXETER

> Transcription of letters and papers of Basset family, 1924, by Reginald Metcalfe.

DEVON RECORD OFFICE

> Abbot Sketchbook, MS 404/B/1

> Harris of Hayne Papers: 2527M

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES

> Hertford Borough Charter, Elizabeth I

> Hertford Borough Charter. James I, 1605

MORRAB LIBRARY, PENZANCE

> Borlase, William: Letterbook 1

> Pengersick Papers: Mor/Hist/59

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF CORNWALL

> Henderson Papers: HA/4/29, HA 8/3, HA 8/4, HA/8/5, HA/8/7,HA/8/9A,
> > HA/14/35, HA/14/40, HA/14/23, HA/15/22, HA/15/23,
> > HA/15/21, HA/15/18, HA/15/19, HA/15/20, HA/4/29,
> > HA/2/5, HA/6/51, HA/14/37

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

> Probate records: Will of Arthur Harris, prob/11/154

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

     British Galleries: T.117-1934 & T.134-1928

     Medieval & Renaissance Galleries: T.204-1957

PRIMARY SOURCES – PRINTED WORKS IN ORIGINAL OR LATER EDITIONS

BERNERS, JULIANA, *The Booke of Hauking, Huntyng and Fyshing,* London, 1546 -1595.

CAREW, RICHARD, *Survey of Cornwall 1602,* Redruth, 2000.

CALENDAR OF THE CECIL PAPERS, ed G. Dynault Owen, Vols. 21 & 22, 1971.

CALENDAR OF STATE PAPERS DOMESTIC:
     Edward VI: Vol. 459 – 1547-1553.
     Commonwealth: Vol CLXXXII
     Commonwealth: 1647-1659

CLIVEDEN CONSERVATION WORKSHOP LTD, *Chevy Chase Frieze, St Michael's Mount,* Maidenhead, 2009.

COCKAINE, THOMAS, *A Short Treatise on Hunting,* London, 1591.

ENGLISH BROADSIDE BALLAD ARCHIVE, Samuel Pepys Collection,
http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu

FIENNES, CELIA, "Through England on a Side Saddle", in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed. R Pearse Chope, Newton Abbot, 1918.

GASCOIGNE, GEORGE, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting,* London ,1595 or 1611.

GESNER, KONRAD, *Historiae Animalum,* 1551-58 @
www.nlm.nih.gov/proj/ttp/flash/gesner/gesner.html

GUIDE TO THE ROBERT BENNETT PAPERS*, 1603-1678,* MS X.d.483 (1-209), Folger Shakespeare Library.

KILVERT'S CORNISH DIARY, Journal No 4, eds R Maber & A Tregoning, Penzance, 1989.

LELAND, J, "The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary 1534-43" in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed. R Pearse Chope, Newton Abbot, 1918.

MATON, W.G., in *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* ed. R Pearse Chope, Newton Abbot, 1918.

PERCY, THOMAS, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* ed E Rhys, London, 1906.

PEARSE CHOPE, R ., *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall,* Newton Abbot, 1918.

POLWHELE, RICHARD, *The History Of Cornwall,* London, 1802.

SPRIGG, JOSHUA, *Anglia Rediviva. England's Recovery 1647,* Oxford, 1854.

TAYLOR, J, "Taylor's Western voyage to the Mount 1649" in *Wandering to see the Wonders of the West,* ed. Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1967.

THOMASON TRACTS COLLECTION, www.eebo.chadwyck.com

TOPSELL, EDWARD, *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents,* 1572-1625, Huntingdon Library & Art Gallery.

SECONDARY SOURCES

AIRS, MALCOLM, *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House, A Building History,* Stroud 1995.

ALMOND, RICHARD, *Medieval Hunting,* Stroud, 2011.

BAILLIE-GROHMAN, W.A., *Sport in Art, Iconography of Art,* Tyrol, 1919.

BALDWIN, MIKE, "Gravitit in Publicke Places & Yet Inwardly Licences", *Devon Buildings group,* Vol 2, 2006, pp. 5 - 28.

BANKART, GEORGE, *The Art of the Plasterer*, London, 1909.

BATH, MICHAEL, "The Sources of John Abbott's Pattern Book", *Architectural History,* 41, 1998, pp. 49 - 66.

BEARD, GEOFFREY, *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain,* London, 1975.

BEARD, GEOFFREY, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660-1820,* London, 1986.

BEAVER, DANIEL, *Hunting and the Politics of Violence before the English Civil War,* Cambridge, 2008.

BELSEY, C., "Classicism and Cultural Dissonance", *Albion's Classicism,* ed. Lucy Gent, London, 1995.

BERRY, E & THOMAS, N, *St Michael's Mount Cornwall, Historic Buildings Analysis and Watching Brief of the Summit Buildings,* Cornwall, 2008.

BIEDERMANN, H., *Dictionary of Symbolism,* New York, 1994.

CHYNOWETH, J., *Tudor Cornwall,* Truro, 2002.

CLIFFE, J.T., *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth Century England,* London 1999.

COATE, MARY, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War,* Oxford, 1933.

COOMBES, KATHERINE, "'A Kind of Gentle Painting': Limning in 16th-Century England", *European Visions:American Voices,* p. 83.

COOPER, NICHOLAS, *Houses of the Gentry 1480-1680,* London, 1999.

CUMMINS, JOHN, *The Hounds and the Hawk,* London, 1988.

CUST, RICHARD, "News and Politics in Early 17th Century England", in *Past and Present,* No. 112, Aug 1986, pp. 60 – 90.

DICKENS, CHARLES, (ed), 'Chevy Chase', *All the Year Round,* 1872 Nov 2 pp. 588 – 594.

DUGAW, DIANNE, 'The Popular Marketing of "Old Ballads": The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth century Antiquarianism Reconsidered', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol 21, No 1, Autumn 1987, pp. 71 – 90.

FLETCHER, J R, *Short History of St Michael's Mount,* Cornwall, 1951.

FOX, ADAM, *Oral and literate culture in England, 1500-1700,* Oxford, 2005.

FRENCH, KATHLEEN & CECIL, "Devonshire Plasterwork", *Transactions of the Devonshire Association,* 1957, Vol. 89, pp. 124 - 144.

GAPPER, CLAIRE, *Ph.D Thesis – Plasterers and Plasterwork in City, Court and Country 1530-1640,* London, 1998.

GENT, LUCY, (ed.) *Albion's Classicism:The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660,* 1995.

GILBERT, C.S., *An Historical Survey of County of Cornwall,* London, 1817.

GIROUARD, MARK, *Life in the English Country House,* London, 1978.

GIROUARD, MARK, *Elizabethan Architecture, Its Rise and Fall, 1540-1640,* London, 2009.

HALES, JOHN, 'Chevy Chase', *Gentleman's Magazine,* Vol. 266, 1889 Apr, pp. 396 – 413.

HALL, JAMES, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art,* St Ives, 1991.

HAMILTON-HAZLEHURST, F., "Wild Beast Pursued: The Petit Galerie of Louis XV at Versailles", *Art Bulletin,* Vol. 66, No. 2, June 1984, p. 233.

HAMLING, TARA, *Decorating the Godly Household,* London, 2010.

HAMLING, T. & WILLIAMS, R.L., (eds), *Art Re-formed,* London, 2007.

HARTLEY, DIANA, *The St Aubyns of Cornwall,* Chesham, 1977.

HENDERSON, PAULA, *The Tudor House and Garden,* London, 2005.

HERRING, PETER, *A report to the National Trust, An Archaeological Evaluation of St Michael's Mount,* Cornwall, 1993.

HILL, O. & CORNFORTH, J., *English Country Houses Caroline 1625-1685,* Suffolk, 1985.

HOWARD, MAURICE, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* London, 2007.

JOURDAIN, M, *English Decorative Plasterwork of the Renaissance,* Edinburgh, 1926

JOURDAIN. M, "A 17th Century Plasterer", *Country Life,* 2 Mar 1940, pp. 222 - 225.

LONGFELLOW, ERICA, 'Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies 45*, April 2006, pp. 313 – 334.

LOVE, H., *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702,* Oxford, 2004.

LOVELL, MARY, *Bess of Hardwick,* London, 2005.

MADINGLEY HALL GUIDEBOOK

MANDLER, PETER, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home,* London, 1997.

MANNING, PETER, *Hunters and Poachers,* Oxford, 1993.

MCRAE, STUART, 'The Literary Culture of Early Stuart Libeling' *Modern Philology,* Feb 2000, 97(3), pp. 364 - 392.

MERCER, ERIC, *English Art 1553-1625,* Oxford, 1962.

O'CONNELL, SHEILA, *The Popular Print in England 1550-1850,* London, 1999.

OLIVER, BRUCE, "The early seventeenth-century plaster ceilings of Barnstaple", in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association,* 49, 1917, pp. 190 - 199.

ORME, NICHOLAS, "St Michael's Mount, Benedictine Priory later chapel of St Michael" (draft) for *Victoria County History,* Cornwall.

NEUBECKER, OTTFIRED, *Heraldry – Sources, Symbols and Meaning,* London, 1977

PENOYRE, J&J, *Decorative Plasterwork in the Houses of Somerset 1500-1700,* Taunton 1994.

PIERCE, HELEN, *Unseemly Pictures Graphic Satire and Politics in Early Modern England,* London, 2008

POOL, PETER, ed, 'The Ancient and Present State of St Michael's Mount, 1762', by William Borlase, *Cornish Studies,* Vol. 3, Cornwall, 1975.

POTTER, LOIS, *Secret Rites and Secret Writings,* Cambridge, 1989.

RAYLOR, TIMOTHY, ' Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue', in *Renaissance Quarterly,* Vol. 52, No 2 Summer 1999, pp. 402 – 439.

ROSE-THROUP, FRANCES, *the Western Rebellion of 1549,* London, 1913.

ROWSE, A. L., Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall,* Exeter, 2005.

SNODIN, M & STYLES, J., *Design & the Decorative Arts 1500-1900,* London, 2001.

SPUFFORD, MARGARET, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England,* Cambridge, 1985.

ST AUBYN, JOHN, *St Michael's Mount, Illustrated History and Guide,* St Ives, 1978.

TANGYE, MICHAEL, *Tehidy and the Bassets,* Exeter, 1984

TAYLOR, CANON THOMAS, *St Michael's Mount,* Cambridge, 1932**.**

TINNISWOOD, ADRIAN, *The Polite Tourist, A History of Country House Visiting,* London, 1998.

TURNER, HILARY, "Tapestries once at Chestleton House", *Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 88, pp. 313 - 346.

TURNER, LEWIE, *History of Hertford,* Hertford, 1830.

WATT, TESSA, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640,* Cambridge, 1985.

WELLS-COLE, ANTHONY, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England,* London, 1997.

WORSLEY, LUCY, *Cavalier – The story of a 17th Century Playboy,* London, 2007.