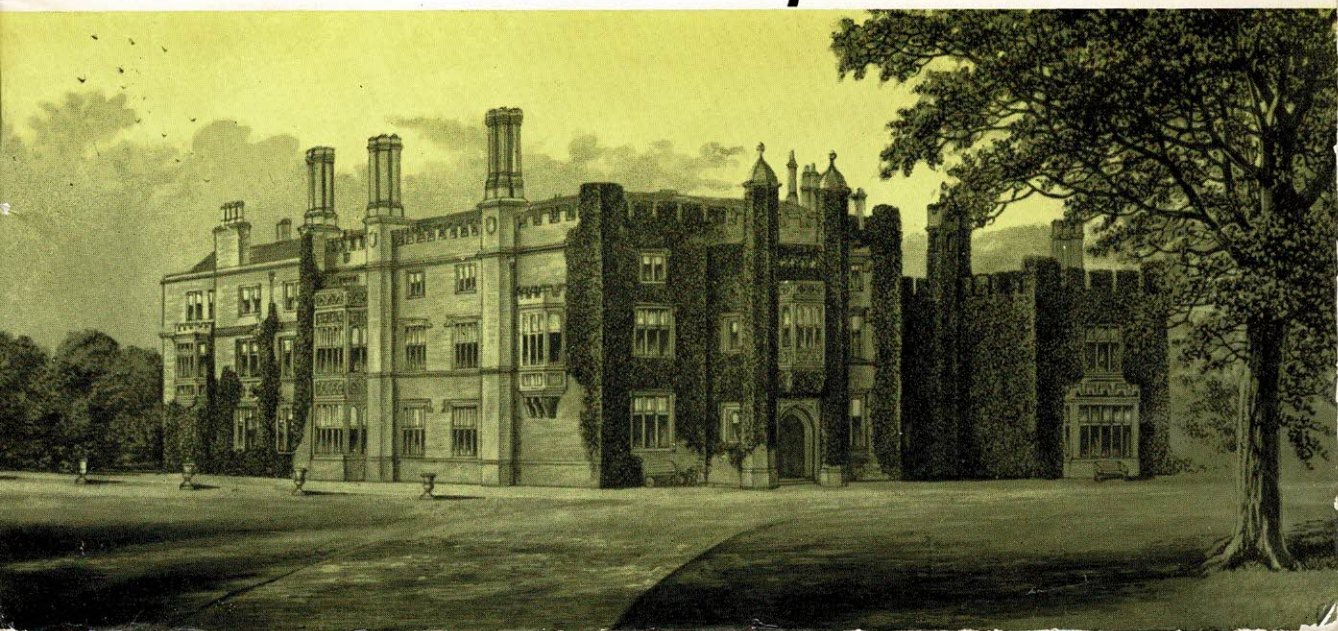


The story of Drakelow



foreword

It is my privilege and pleasure to have been asked by the author to write the foreword for this booklet.

It is right and opportune that this condensed history of Drakelow should be written now, and there is no one more qualified than the author to write it.

So many of our stately homes have vanished and are vanishing, leaving no trace, without even being fortunate enough to have someone interested or able to write their histories for posterity.

This booklet gives the reader all he needs to know from the earliest known records up to the present time. It traces the establishment of the Gresley family at Drakelow up to the zenith of their existence and follows events faithfully through the fortunes of the family to their final departure.

The reader is then taken through the declining years of Drakelow as a privately owned estate.

The turn in the tide so far as the future of Drakelow is concerned occurred when the British Electricity Authority—as it then was—purchased Drakelow Park from Sir Clifford Gothard in 1948, for the erection and development of an electric power station.

Drakelow Park has therefore an assured future and a part to play in the present day life of the community every bit as important as that played by the Gresley family in a day and age most suited to their way of life.

Under the ownership of the Central Electricity Generating Board every relic and feature of the past where possible will be carefully preserved and in some cases improved.

Like “Phoenix” arising from the ashes, and in the words of the poet Tennyson:—

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
and God fulfils Himself in many ways”.

H. GREENWOOD,
Superintendent
Drakelow power stations
1953—1966

The story of Drakelow

by H. J. Wain

Drakelow is first recorded as Dracan Hlawe in a grant of land made by King Edward in 942 A.D. The place-name means "Dragon's Mound", indicating a burial place with a guardian spirit.

No trace of an early burial was found until January, 1962, when workmen, with a mechanical digger, were excavating gravel to make concrete for the construction of 'C' power station.

The site was in an orchard adjoining the former Warren Farmhouse (SK.227.201) and the "find" consisted of a small jar or bowl, globular in shape, with a base diameter of 1½ inches, and a height of 2½ inches. Made of well-fired grey-brown ware, it had a stamped decoration of horse shoes around the neck with incised chevrons and square stamps enclosing a cross, on the body.

This small pot is a good example of a vessel containing a votive offering and is usually

associated with a skeleton, but of the latter there was no trace.

The date of this vessel has been fixed at c550 A.D. and it is an interesting example of Friesian-Anglo-Saxon design. It is now in Derby Museum.

The founder of the family

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Drakelow was held by an Anglo-Saxon named Elric. When this country was invaded by William the Conqueror in 1066 he was accompanied by the brothers Ralph and Robert de Toeni, who claimed descent from the Dukes of Normandy, with a pedigree extending back to Norse mythology.

Ralph, the elder, was hereditary Grand Standard Bearer to the Duke, but asked to be relieved of this duty so that he might fight

in the battle of Hastings. He was rewarded with several manors in Norfolk and elsewhere, but spent most of his time on his ancestral estates in Normandy. Robert was given 81 manors in Staffordshire, 26 in Warwickshire, 20 in Lincolnshire and four elsewhere, and he adopted the surname of "de Stafford".

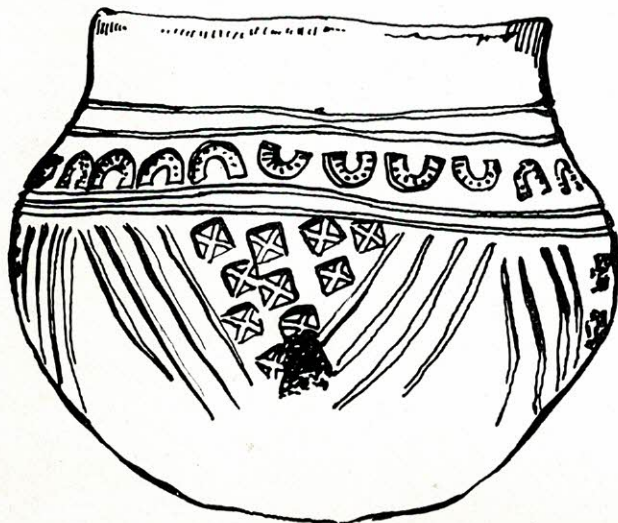
Nigel, a younger brother or possibly a son of Robert, also assumed the surname of "de Stafford", and held 13 manors in Staffordshire, 11 in Derbyshire, four in Leicestershire and one in Warwickshire. Among the Derbyshire manors held by Nigel at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 were those of Drakelow, Heathcote and Swadlincote, together with a pasturable wood 2½ miles long and 2 miles wide. There is no mention of Gresley in the Domesday Book.

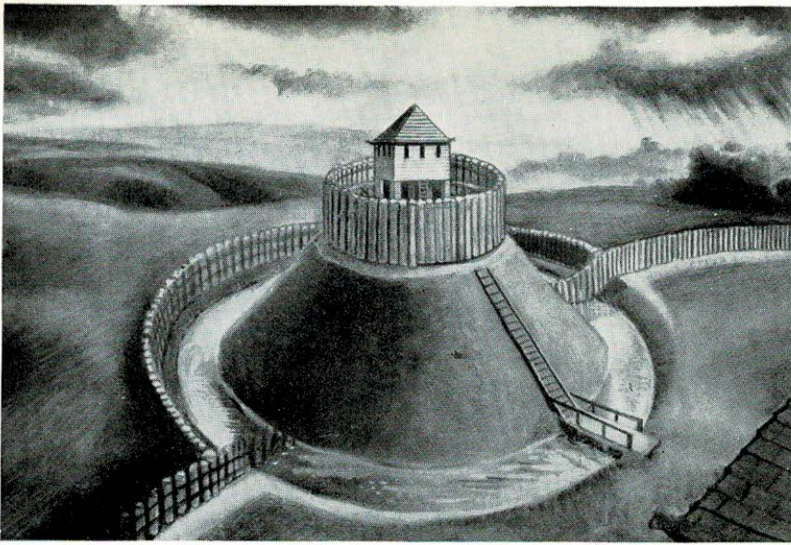
When the devil came to Drakelow

Somewhere about the year 1090, Drakelow was stricken with pestilence and an account of this happening was written by Geoffrey, Abbot of Burton (1114-1151). Two of the Abbey servants living at Stapenhill fled to Drakelow desiring to live under the protection of Roger, Earl of Poitou, at that time holder of the great fief of Lancaster which included the manor of Drakelow.

The Abbey officials seized the seed corn of the servants, hoping this would induce them to return, but the Drakelow retainers came to Stapenhill and carried away all the seed corn in the Abbey barns. The Abbot refused to use armed force but went on naked

This small pot, estimated to be 1,400 years old, was found in 1962 during excavations for Drakelow "C" power station.





This is how Gresley Castle may have looked nine hundred years ago. The typical Norman motte and bailey castle was occupied by Nigel de Stafford.

feet to the shrine of St. Modwen in the Abbey Church to pray for guidance. It is recorded, however, that ten of the Abbot's retainers met 60 Drakelow retainers at the "black pool by the Trent" and a fight took place (as this account was written by the Abbot it is possible the contestants were more equal in numbers).

The steward of Drakelow was killed and the offending servants were stricken with a mortal sickness. After their burial, horror upon horror fell upon the quiet village of Drakelow. Night after night the dead servants rose from their graves and rushed about the fields carrying their coffins on their shoulders and banging them on the walls of houses. Finally all the villagers were stricken with sickness. The Earl made repentance to the Abbot but the ghosts were not laid until the bodies of the offending servants had been dug up and burned "when an evil spirit in the form of a large black crow flew up out of the smoke and disappeared from view. Thereafter the village of Drakelow was forsaken and desolate, the surviving inhabitants fleeing to the nearest village which is called Gresley".

It would appear that between 1086 and 1090 a motte and bailey castle of the usual Norman type had been built in a clearing in the large wood mentioned in the Domesday Survey, and that Nigel de Stafford was in residence there. Of 51 of these Norman structures, 36 were built in places insignificant before the Norman Conquest. These strongholds were erected to over-awe the Anglo-Saxons, and to serve as a place of refuge in case of any uprisings.

A wide ditch of considerable depth was dug in a circle, the earth being thrown inwards to form a lofty mound, advantage being taken of a natural mound if this was available. On the flattened top of the mound, or "motte", a wooden tower was erected to serve as a residence for the lord and his family.

In addition to the ditch, which was crossed by a drawbridge, the mound was protected by a wooden stockade. Outside the ditch a "bailey" or courtyard, of varying extent but usually of half-moon shape, was surrounded by a further ditch and also protected by a stockade. Within this space, huts, barns and cattle shelters were erected for labourers attached to

the manor. As the structure and palisades were of wood there are no visible remains except the mound which is now known as "Castle Knob". It is from this "motte and bailey" castle erected in a "grassy lea" in the large wood that the place-name of GRESLEY is derived.

Church Gresley

Nigel de Stafford, who retained that name all his life, had two sons, William and Nicholas. The latter married an heiress of the Longford family and went to reside there, but William, the elder son, remained at Gresley. His name first appears in a deed in 1129 and he died in 1166. In various deeds and charters he described himself as William, son of Nigel of Gresley, and this became the family name.

Somewhere about 1130, William de Gresley built a small priory dedicated to St. George for the use of canons of the Order of St. Augustine. Known as the "Black Canons" from their dress, these monks grew beards and wore little caps or birettas. They carried out the duties of parish priests but lived together on monastic lines.

The site of this priory was on another hill in the same large wood as the "motte and bailey" castle, and in the course of time the two settlements became known as Castle Gresley and Church Gresley. The present parish church of Gresley is on the site of the old monastic church, on the south side of which were the priory buildings.

Gresley Priory

That the Priory of Gresley was a small foundation is borne out by a grant which was confirmed by the Bishop of Lichfield in 1309



The drawings on these two pages are from the *Ridware Chartulary*, an early collection of deeds and other documents.

Above, William the Conqueror ordering Nigel de Stafford to let Atsorus, an Englishmen, hold his land as his father previously held it.

Below left, the Prior of Gresley granting to William de Ridware a wood in Great Seile.

Below centre, fish from the River Trent.

Below right, Queen Matilda, wife of William I.



which states:—"Although the Prior and Canons of Gresley are bound to perform divine worship by day as well as by night, and are compelled to exercise the burden of hospitality, yet from the fewness of the brethren which consist of only four in number, together with the Prior, and from the mean estate of the house and the barrenness of its lands, and divers oppressions which daily gain strength as the malice of the world increases, they are unable to bear as is fitting the yoke of the Lord. So to augment the number of brethren we bestow upon them the parish church of Lullington, so that the aforesaid monks may increase their numbers by two canons".

The Assize Rolls of Edward III contain an account of an unusual fatality which occurred in the Priory. "In the 14th year of the reign of the King's father one William de Jorganville was sitting by the fire in the kitchen of the Prior of Gresley when suddenly his clothes caught fire and he was burned so badly that the third day afterwards he died. No one is suspected of his death. Verdict—Misadventure".

The return to Drakelow

William de Gresley's grandson, also named William, returned from Gresley to Drakelow at the beginning of the 13th century. In a deed dated 1201 he is mentioned as holding Drakelow from King

John by service of a bow, a quiver, and twelve arrows yearly, the bow to be unstrung, the quiver of Tutbury make, and the arms feathered, with the addition of a bozo or broad-headed shaft.

William died in 1220 and was succeeded by his son, Geoffrey, who became steward to the powerful William de Ferrers, 4th Earl of Derby and Constable of the High Peak. The Gresley arms which appear for the first time on Geoffrey's seal are an adaptation of the Ferrers coat of arms.

Geoffrey's grandson, also named Geoffrey, supported Simon de Montfort against Henry III and had to pay a large sum to redeem his forfeited estates. This Geoffrey de Gresley appears to have been of a turbulent disposition for he was accused several times of rioting and was fined for wounding Ralph le Messer at Lullington. He subsequently fought in France and Scotland and was knighted by Edward I and summoned to Parliament. He successfully claimed the right to erect a gallows at Drakelow for the execution of felons.

A turbulent family

Sir Geoffrey had three sons, Peter, Robert and William, all of whom inherited the turbulent qualities of their father. Robert and William were outlawed for murder in 1293 and Peter, the eldest son, followed the example of his father by joining the army



after many misdemeanours. He was knighted in 1307 and died in 1310.

Sir Peter's wife, Joanna de Stafford, by whom he had six sons, was also not averse to violence. After her husband's death she was forcibly abducted from Drakelow and married to Sir Walter de Montgomery. The abductor was pardoned but in 1323 Joanna and her sons Robert and Peter de Gresley, were accused of the murder of William de Montgomery, Sir Walter's son by an earlier marriage.

The murder took place on "the high road in Overseale", the fatal wound being inflicted by a "sword of Cologne worth 6/0." All three persons accused were arrested—and acquitted.

In 1333 Joanna was accused of another murder and acquitted. Her eldest son, Peter, after robbing the parson of Walton and attempting to murder John Green, was slain a few years later. His brother Robert was accused of ten crimes including three of robbery and four of murder but he joined the King's army in Scotland and fought so well that he was granted a free pardon for all his crimes, was knighted, and represented Derbyshire in Parliament.

When the seal was lost

In a deed executed by Peter's grandson, John de Gresley, in

1394, it is stated: "Be it known that I, John de Gresley, have not had the use of my seal for a whole year. I therefore notify that, being of good memory and sound mind, I contradict and deny in all things any sealed writings until my seal is restored, and I have set to this deed the seal of the Dean of Repton".

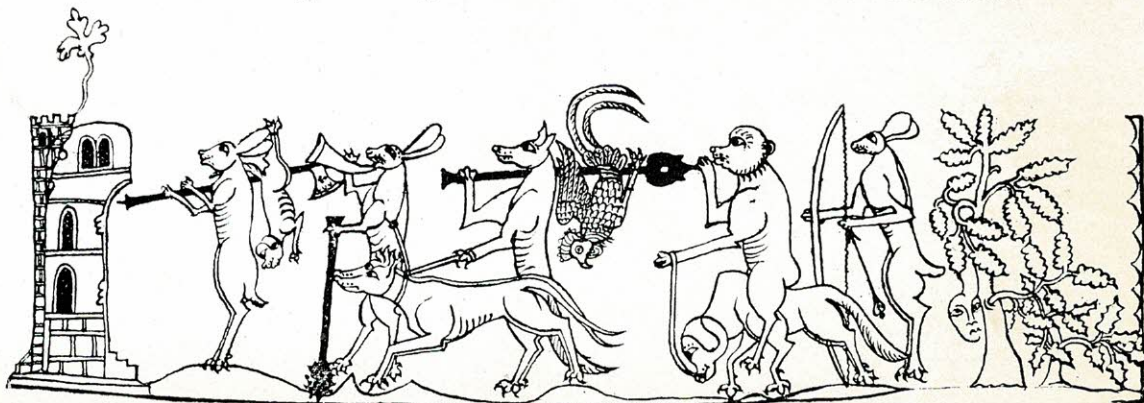
Sir John had married as his second wife a wealthy heiress, Joan de Wastneys, but they had no children. Nicholas, the son of his first marriage, died in 1390 and it appears that Sir John's grandson, Thomas, was afraid the Wastney's inheritance might go astray. A complaint was made by Joan to the Lord Chancellor that, while she and her husband were in possession of Drakelow, Thomas Gresley came there with 24 armed men and ransacked the chambers and chapel, breaking open 25 chests and carrying away £264 in gold as well as the silver seal of arms belonging to Sir John and a quantity of linen and woollen clothes, furs and skins, worth £100, together with four score charters and muniments.

She went on to say that Sir John, in great infirmity (he was 80 years of age), was detained by Thomas and his people by main force so that she could not, and dare not go to his aid. The cause of the trouble was that Sir John had made her his executrix in place of Thomas, and with the family seal in his possession he might do as he liked. But Thomas



Above, William Ferrers, Earl of Derby, overlord of Drakelow in 1201, showing the coat of arms adapted by William de Gresley.

Below, a mediaeval representation of the world turned upside down. Coming home from the hunt, a hare carries a hound, another hare blows a horn, a fox carries a cock and leads a brace of greyhounds, a bear rides upon a hound and another hare carries a bow and arrow.



eventually succeeded to all his grandfather's property including the Wastney's inheritance.

To France with Henry V

In the difficult times of the Wars of the Roses many wealthy landowners were ruined but the Gresleys contrived to keep their estates intact. Sir Thomas Gresley, a staunch Lancastrian, was knighted by Henry IV and at different times was Sheriff of Derbyshire and Staffordshire. He represented one or other of these counties in Parliament on no less than seven occasions.

Both Sir Thomas and his son John took part in the French expeditions of Henry V, Sir Thomas furnishing three men-at-arms and nine archers, while John contributed two men-at-arms and six archers. Among the family papers was an interesting indenture between Sir Thomas and John Bette, a yeoman of Rosliston, whereby the latter agreed to serve, follow and guard Sir Thomas in France for a wage of 6d. per day, and to be well mounted for service in the war.

On the death of Henry V, Jane Gresley, daughter of Sir Thomas, was appointed nurse to the infant Henry VI, then a few months old. On relinquishing her duties she was awarded a pension of £40 p.a. (equivalent to more than £2,000 p.a. today) and her successor, Dame Alice Botiller, was given permission by the Privy Council "reasonably to chastise the child from time to time as the case may require". To have struck the King without such permission would have been a treasonable offence!

The price of bad behaviour

Sir John Gresley, a grandson of Sir Thomas, appears to have

trimmed his sails to the prevailing wind. At one time a Lancastrian, he afterwards supported Edward IV and accompanied him to Scotland. He attended the coronation of Richard III and subsequently accompanied Henry VII in his triumphal progress to the north.

Sir John had several disputes with the Abbot of Burton about fishing rights in the river Trent, and quarrelled violently with Sir William Vernon who owned land at Seale. This resulted in a fracas and the disputants were bound over to be of good behaviour, the following terms of compensation being fixed:—

"For a sore wound on head or face 13/4d., an ordinary stroke 6/8d., a sore stroke on the leg if the bone was stricken asunder 40/-, a stroke on the foot 20/-, but if it results in maiming the compensation is to be 100/-, the latter amount also to be paid in respect of maiming hand or thumb".

Sir John became Sheriff of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and represented Staffordshire in Parliament.

A disputed succession

John's grandson William, married a granddaughter of Sir William Vernon, thus uniting the disputing families, but they had no children. Sir William Gresley, however, had four sons by a lady named Alice Tawke, all of whom assumed the surname of Gresley. She afterwards married Sir John Savage and on Sir William's death in 1521 she disputed the succession of Sir George Gresley (William's brother) to the family estates.

The dispute was referred to Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal Archbishop of York, who decreed that Sir George should have possession of the family manors "as the rightful heir of his brother Sir

William Gresley who died without lawful issue of his body begotten". The documents were endorsed. "The decree against Lady Savage and her bastard sons for all the Gresley Lands".

During the troublesome times of the Reformation the Gresleys managed to avoid persecution and forfeiture of their lands. Sir George was knighted by Henry VIII at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, and his son William was knighted by Queen Mary Tudor on the occasion of her accession, while William's son, Thomas Gresley, was appointed Sheriff of Staffordshire by Elizabeth I and knighted by James I.

Trouble with Mary Queen of Scots

Thomas Gresley was appointed Sheriff for Staffordshire in 1583. This was an eventful year, for Mary Queen of Scots was moved from Sheffield to Wingfield and thence to Tutbury. The latter place was cold and damp, and Thomas Gresley, as Sheriff, was ordered to take an inventory of the goods belonging to Lord Paget at his house in Burton. Lord Paget, a Roman Catholic, and a suspected supporter of the Scottish queen, had fled to France. On receipt of the inventory the Sheriff was ordered to take some valuable hangings from the walls of Lord Paget's house to render Tutbury Castle more comfortable.

It appears, however, that Thomas Gresley had sold some of the hangings and also some beds, and when Queen Mary complained of the cold at Tutbury he received an emphatic order that these hangings should be recovered and sent to Tutbury. Matters were adjusted, not without difficulty, and when the Scottish queen was removed to Fotheringhay, Thomas Gresley, as Sheriff, was ordered to attend her. The fact that he was present at

her execution, however, did not impair his relations with her son, James I, who rewarded him with a knighthood on the occasion of his progress from Scotland to London.

A local witch

Thomas Gresley took an active part in county affairs and was one of the signatories to a protest against a forced loan levied by Queen Elizabeth in 1590. Six years later two suspected Stapenhill witches were brought before him in his capacity as Justice of the Peace. A boy named Thomas Darby was suddenly attacked by fits and was supposed to have been bewitched either by Alice Gooderidge or her mother, Elizabeth Wright. The two unfortunate women were arrested and taken to Drakelow where they were searched for "witch-marks", i.e. any blemish on face or body. These were found and a witness named Michael testified that when his cow was sick Elizabeth Wright cured it on payment of a penny fee.

Alice Gooderidge confessed she had bewitched the boy and was sent to Derby gaol. She was tried and condemned to death but died in prison before the date fixed for her execution. Three years later the boy confessed that his fits were frauds and he had never really been ill, adding "I did it to get myself a glory thereby".

The first baronet

Sir Thomas was succeeded by his son, George, who continued in high favour with James I and was included in the first list of baronets created by that monarch in 1611. Each applicant for this hereditary title had to provide thirty foot soldiers at 8d. per day

for three years for the settling of Ulster, or compound for this by a single payment of £1,095. The original number of baronets was 200, and they ranked above all knights except Knights of the Garter.

Sir George spent most of his time at Drakelow but was a member of the short-lived Parliament of 1628-9. Possibly this brief session shook his confidence in Charles I, for when the struggle between King and Parliament began in 1642, he took up arms on the latter side. This was a brave thing to do for Sir George was the only "gentleman of quality" in South Derbyshire to join the Parliamentary forces at Derby where he commanded a troop of horse under Colonel Gell.

There were Royalist strongholds at Tutbury, Lichfield and Ashby de la Zouch which plundered and laid waste his estates including Drakelow, so that in 1644 Sir George had to apply to Parliament for financial assistance and was voted £4 per week. Although the Parliamentary forces were eventually victorious, Sir George suffered heavy losses and was the first of his line to sell some of his estates including the manors of Colton, Rosliston and Seale.

The Civil War

The following extract is from a MSS of Sir George Gresley formerly preserved at Drakelow. It is entitled "A true account of the raising and employing one foot regiment under Sir John Gell".

"Now let any indifferent and impartial man judge whether our single regiment of foot hath been idle Prince Rupert with his army came once against us, the Earl of Newcastle in person twice, and the Queen when she lay at Ashby earnestly pressed

the plunder of this town (Derby) as a reward to her soldiers, and yet we are safe.

"Let wise men consider if this town had been lost and malignant lords and gentlemen in possession of this place what would have become of our neighbour Counties?"

"That the world may know we neither undertook this business with other men's money nor have since employed any man's estate to our profit. We had no advance money either from Parliament or our Country, or from any other man or woman, but went upon our own charges. Our Colonel hath since sold his stock, spent his revenue, and put himself into debt in maintenance of this cause. We are out of pocket many hundreds of pounds spent only on this business, not that we are weary of the cause but are absolutely resolved to continue and persevere so long as God shall give us lives to venture and estates to spend".

The Netherseale branch

The Manor of Seale was purchased from Sir George Gresley by Gilbert Morewood, a London merchant and friend of Sir John Moore, who built a school at Appleby in Leicestershire. Seale derives its name from SCEGEL = a small wood. This wood divided the manor into two parts — upper and lower, now known as Overseale and Netherseale.

This manor was soon restored to the family by the marriage of Gilbert Morewood's daughter to Sir Thomas Gresley, the second baronet, and in due course it was settled upon the second son of the marriage. By this means a branch of the Gresley family became established at Netherseale and when the main line of the family died out in 1837 with the death of the 8th baronet, a descendant of this branch suc-

ceded to the title and the family estates.

Frances Morewood, Lady Gresley, appears to have been a forceful character. In a letter to Sir John Moore concerning Mr. Waite, a schoolmaster who lived within a mile of Drakelow and had been recommended for the head mastership of Appleby School, she remarked that Sir John was right not to appoint any one to that position for life but only while of good behaviour, adding that Repton School had been ruined by the opposite principle. In their old age Frances and her husband acquired the reputation of being miserly and a tradition arose that large sums of gold and silver were hidden in Drakelow Hall—but none was discovered when the mansion was demolished in 1936.

When Drakelow paid no rates

One effect of the dissolution of the monasteries was to throw the burden of poor relief upon churchwardens and overseers of the poor and it was ordered that a general

assessment for the relief of the poor should be made in every township.

In 1682 an appeal to the Quarter Sessions was made by the inhabitants of Church Gresley, Castle Gresley, Swadlincote, Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe, and parts of the parish of Gresley, that they were not able to raise enough money for the relief of the poor in their hamlets, but Sir Thomas Gresley and the inhabitants of the hamlet of Drakelow, having no poor, had claimed exemption from the rate and had paid nothing towards it. The Court ordered that Sir Thomas and the inhabitants of Drakelow should show cause why they should not be assessed for tax.

At the following Sessions it was ordered that as the manor of Drakelow of the yearly value of £400 is not charged with any poor, Sir Thomas Gresley will pay a third part of the levy, i.e. if the levy be fixed for £24, Sir Thomas shall pay £8, and the same rate for a greater or lesser amount to be paid to the overseers and churchwardens for the relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such others being poor and unable to work.

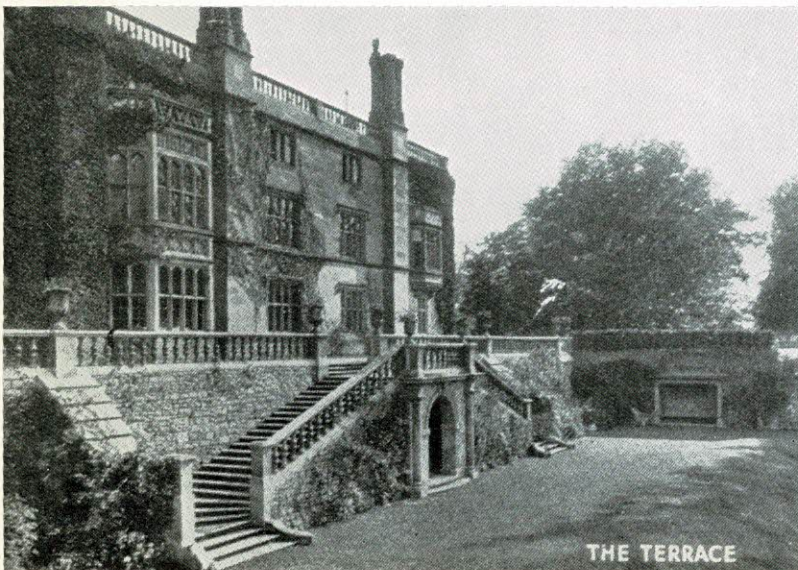
How Squire Bill took a wife

Sir Thomas Gresley, the second baronet, had 14 children, two of whom made unusual marriages. Dorothy, the fourth daughter, eloped with one of her father's servants at 1 a.m. on June 18th, 1681, and was married by licence at Tutbury Church eight hours later. She was never forgiven by her mother.

The eldest son, William, at the age of 35, decided it was time he took a wife. So he journeyed into Shropshire and proposed to an heiress who refused him. Having made up his mind not to return without a wife he proposed to her eldest sister who accepted him. But the news did not please his parents when they learned that she was a widow with seven children.

However, "Squire Bill", as he was known, declared he would have her "and that quickly too, for hunting is coming and then no time!" He also threatened to shoot his mother if she did not agree and she fled to Burton. But a reconciliation took place when his family learned that the widow had an income of £250 p.a. and invested funds worth £2,000, the children of her first marriage being otherwise provided for. Squire Bill, a man of few words, afterwards declared her "best wife in world", and she presented him with three more children.

The terrace of Drakelow Hall.



A memory of 1745

Sir Nigel, sixth baronet, grandson of Squire Bill, succeeded unexpectedly to the title and family estates when his elder brother died from smallpox at the age of 30. Nigel was a Captain in the Royal Navy and it was in his

ship that Flora Macdonald, who aided the escape of "Bonnie Prince Charlie", was conveyed to London after the abortive rebellion of 1745. As a reward for his kindness and courtesy, she presented him with her portrait which was hung in Drakelow Hall. An inscription on the back stated "This portrait of Flora Macdonald was given by herself to Sir Nigel Gresley, Captain in the Royal Navy, who captured her in her flight from Scotland to France and from whom she experienced every courtesy and as a mark of her gratitude presented him with this picture in 1747".

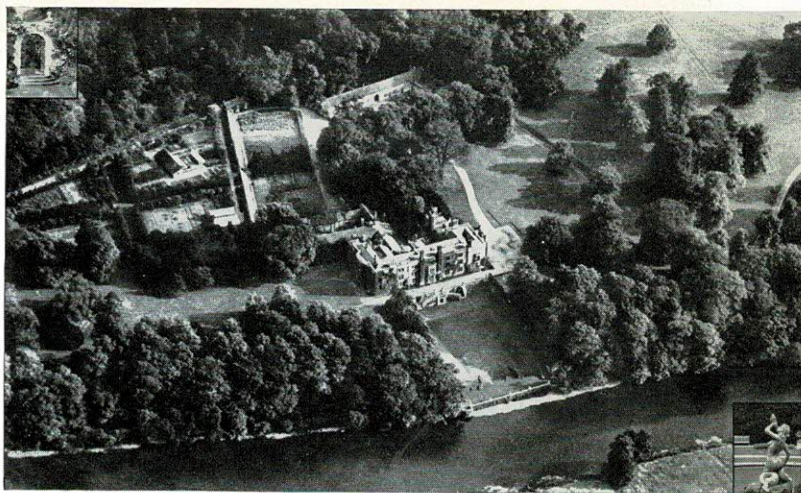
Sir Nigel inherited extensive property in Staffordshire from his mother, a daughter of Sir William Bowyer, and became a patron of James Brindley, the engineer. With his aid the "Gresley Canal" was built—nine miles in length—to convey coal and ironstone from mines at Apedale to the Grand Trunk Canal at Newcastle-under-Lyme, on condition that coal should be supplied to the inhabitants of the latter place at 5s. per ton.

Sir Nigel was a good-natured man of great size and an old inhabitant of Netherseale described him as the biggest man he ever saw in his life "except a giant in a show". When he worshipped in Netherseale Church it is said he had to wriggle sideways into the Hall pew!

Gresley china

Like his father, Sir Nigel Bowyer Gresley, the seventh baronet was interested in the improvement of his estates, and he endeavoured to improve the quality of local pottery.

At that time the pottery produced in Gresley and Swadlincote was a coarse brown earthenware made from a bluish-white superfine clay. In 1795, Sir Nigel, in collaboration with a relative, Mr. C. B. Adderley of Hams Hall,



An aerial view of Drakelow Hall at the time when an attempt was being made to turn it into a country club.

established a porcelain factory in buildings erected about fifty yards from Gresley Hall. The services of William Coffee, a modeller from the Derby china factory, were secured, and Sir Nigel's daughters are said to have painted some of the patterns. But most of the pottery cracked in firing and the experiment proved a failure.

An order for a magnificent dinner service was obtained from Queen Charlotte through her Chamberlain, Col. Disbrowe, of Walton Hall, but it was never completed as the china came out of the ovens cracked and crazed. So far as the writer is aware Gresley china bore no distinctive markings. Specimens were preserved at Drakelow Hall and others can be seen in Museums at Derby and Birmingham. In the possession of Lord Gretton at Stapleford Hall, is a dessert service comprising 34 pieces with flower sprigs in colour on a yellow and gold background.

The last of the main line

Sir Roger Gresley, eighth baronet, succeeded to the title when eight years old. He grew

up to be a man of many parts, a politician, a dandy, an author, a virtuoso, a sportsman, a country gentleman, and an antiquary. He became High Sheriff of Derbyshire and a Captain in the Staffordshire Yeomanry. Sir Roger fought several Parliamentary elections and incurred considerable debts thereby. In 1828 he sold the site of the Priory at Gresley, as well as Castle Knob and Gresley Hall. In 1836 he sustained severe injuries by a fall from his horse and died from the effects a year later.

Sir Roger, against his mother's wishes, married Sophia, youngest daughter of the Earl of Coventry, and their only child lived only a few weeks. So, on Roger's death, the title and family estates passed to his cousin, the Rev. William Nigel Gresley, Rector of Seale, with the exception of a life interest in Drakelow which passed to Roger's widow.

Lady Sophia married as her second husband Sir Henry des Voeux Bt., who lived with her at Drakelow Hall, and as she did not die until 1875, the ninth and tenth baronets never resided there,

Concerning Sir Henry des Voeux while living at Drakelow, there are two good stories told.



The fountain above was a feature of the circular garden at Drakelow Hall. During the construction of the power stations the original was lost, but a reproduction was obtained. Today the reproduction stands at the foot of the rock garden near the station canteen, as seen in the photograph below.



When Swadlincote market hall was built by public subscription in 1861, the money was insufficient to install a clock and the Vicar, the Rev. J. R. Stevens, undertook to ask Sir Henry for a donation. Unfortunately, Sir Henry, suffering from gout, had just received news of the loss of a lawsuit, so the Vicar's request met with a curt refusal. On second thoughts however, Sir Henry added: "You can have your clock if these words are placed beneath it, 'TIME THE AVENGER'. I'll beat these lawyers yet".

The other story was related to me by the late Charles Hanson, a noted local sportsman (1836-1931). Sir Henry gave him permission to shoot wildfowl on the Trent at Drakelow provided certain ducks were left alone. But when one of these birds suddenly rose before him he brought it down with a quick shot. Unluckily Sir Henry saw this happen and summoned him to the Hall. On arrival the butler warned him Sir Henry was very angry. As he entered the room he was greeted by the words "What the devil do you mean by shooting that duck, you will not shoot here again". After this wiggling he was dismissed and met the butler on his way out. "What did the old man say?" he queried. "Oh it's all right", was the reply "he told me to ask you for a drink!"

Some time later Sir Henry said to the butler "Has that young devil gone?" "Yes, Sir Henry", was the reply, "and I gave him a drink as instructed". This amused Sir Henry so much that he sat down and penned a letter restoring permission to shoot on the estate again.

A rector of Netherseale

The Rev. Sir William Nigel Gresley, who succeeded his cousin Roger as ninth baronet, had

followed his father as Rector of Netherseale in 1830 and spent the remainder of his life there. To pay Sir Roger's debts the manor of Lullington was sold to C. R. Colville for £98,000.

Devoted to hunting, Sir William was forced to give this up owing to ill health and on his death in 1847 he was succeeded by his son Thomas as tenth baronet, who was at that time a Captain in the 1st Dragoon Guards and an aide-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

More of the Gresley inheritance was sold by him, including Coton Park and land at Church Gresley and Linton. He was elected to represent South Derbyshire in Parliament in November, 1868, but died a month later. As Drakelow was still occupied by Lady Sophia, he resided at Caldwell Hall, lent to him by Sir Henry des Voeux. Sir Thomas was succeeded as eleventh baronet by his son, Robert, who was then only two years old.

The last Gresley at Drakelow

On the death of Lady Sophia des Voeux in 1875 the Drakelow estate came into the possession of the new baronet. As he was still a minor, Drakelow Hall was let for a time to John Gretton, the brewer, who came there with his family from Bladon House, near Burton-on-Trent. The family included John Gretton junior (afterwards the 1st Baron Gretton of Stapleford Park) and his brothers Frederick and Rupert and his sister Katherine.

On attaining his majority Sir Robert Gresley took up residence at Drakelow and in 1893 he married the eldest daughter of the eighth Duke of Marlborough. A Deputy Lieutenant for Derbyshire and later High Sheriff, he took an active part in county affairs.

Sir Robert made many improvements in the mansion and gardens at Drakelow and was responsible for the construction of the terraced river frontage of the hall. He was one of the best shots in England and reared game on a large scale, but increasing taxation and dwindling resources finally compelled him to sell the estate of his ancestors of which he was so proud.

He died in 1936 and was succeeded by his eldest son Nigel (b.1894) as the twelfth baronet. The heir to the baronetcy is Sir Nigel's brother Laurence (b.1896).

A noted Antiquary

A notable member of the family was the Rev. John Morewood Gresley, the son of the Rev. William Gresley and half brother of the ninth baronet. Educated at Appleby Grammar School and Harrow, he graduated M.A. at Oxford and took Holy Orders, becoming Rector of Seale and subsequently Master of Etwall Hospital. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and an archeologist of some renown, he married a great granddaughter of Dr. William Stukeley, the celebrated antiquary.

The Rev. J. M. Gresley was a founder of the Leicester Archaeological Society and of the Anastatic Drawing Society. In 1861 he carried out an extensive and systematic excavation of the foundations of Gresley Priory. He also compiled "Stemmata Gresleyana" and gathered together a large number of family papers which were extensively used in the compilation of "The Gresleys of Drakelowe" by F. C. Madan in 1899.

During the course of a Parliamentary election at Ashby de la Zouch in 1865 he imprudently drove into the town with his horses and carriage decorated

with blue ribbons. These Conservative colours infuriated some people so much they surrounded his carriage and followed him into a house in Wood Street where he was handled so roughly that he died a few months later.

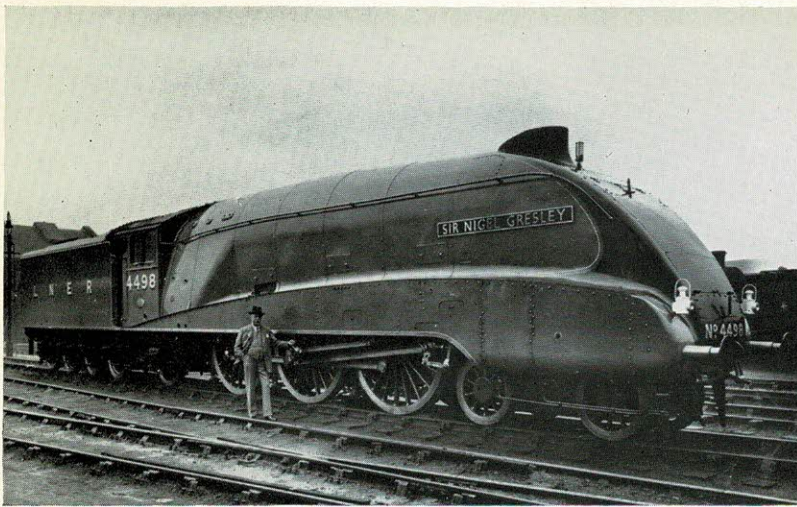
A famous engineer

Another notable member of the family was Sir Herbert Nigel Gresley, C.B.E., D.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.MECH.E., M.I.E.E. Born in 1876, he was the fourth son of the Rev. Nigel Gresley (9th baronet) and nephew of Sir Thomas Gresley (10th baronet) and cousin of Sir Robert Gresley (11th baronet).

Sir Nigel, as he preferred to be called, was educated at Marlborough and early evinced an interest in railway locomotives, sketching them at the age of 13. After serving as an apprentice in the railway works at Crewe, he entered the service of the L. & Y. Railway at Horwich, and in 1905, at the age of 31, was appointed carriage and wagon superintendent of the G.N. Railway at Doncaster. In the autumn of 1911 he was appointed locomotive engineer, being then in his thirty-sixth year.

During the 1914/18 war he was responsible for the design of armoured trains and held the rank of Lt. Colonel in the Royal Engineers. On the grouping of the railways he became chief mechanical engineer of the L.N.E. Railway and had the task of integrating the technical staffs of the constituent companies into one team. For over 30 years he exercised an influence over the design of British locomotives in a career which has no parallel.

He designed the silver jubilee trains of 1935 and on November 26th, 1937, the name-plate "Sir Nigel Gresley", affixed to his 100th "Pacific" locomotive, was unveiled by the chairman of the L.N.E. Railway—a tribute never



Sir Nigel Gresley was one of Britain's most distinguished locomotive engineers. He is seen in this photograph with the 100th Pacific locomotive, which was named after him.

before paid to any living locomotive engineer.

Sir Nigel was created C.B.E. in 1920 and knighted in 1936. He died in 1941, three months before he was due to retire, and is buried in Netherseale church near the home of his ancestors.

Arms, seal and motto

The Gresley Arms are "Vaire, ermine and gules" (i.e. silver and red). Armorial bearings came into use during the last quarter of the 12th century and it was not unusual for a tenant at that time to adopt the arms of his feudal lord.

It is therefore probable that William de Gresley, who was exempted from all but nominal service to his feudal overlord, William Ferrers, 4th Earl of Derby, in 1200, assumed the Ferrers Coat of Arms "Vaire or and gules" (i.e. gold and red) with a change of tincture.

These arms appear for the first time on the family seal of Geoffrey de Gresley circa 1240. With the

creation of the baronetcy in 1611, the badge of Ulster was added to the coat of arms borne by the head of the family.

The family crest is a "lion passant, ermine, armed, langued and collared gules" and first occurs in 1513.

The family motto is *meliore quam fortuna* — "More faithful than fortunate"—but this appears to have been an invention of the 18th century.

Gresley Hall

On the dissolution of Gresley Priory in 1543 the buildings were sold to Henry Criche, a speculator in monastic properties. Thirteen years later they were purchased by Sir Christopher Alleyne, son of Sir John Alleyne, twice Lord Mayor of London. Sir Christopher, who had property in Kent, married a daughter of Sir William Paget, who had acquired the monastic properties of Burton Abbey, and possibly this influenced his purchase of Gresley Priory.

He pulled down the Priory buildings, except for the church, and used the material to build a residence known as Gresley Hall. There is no foundation for the belief that the Hall was connected to the Priory by an underground passage.

It would appear the Hall was rebuilt in the Flemish style in the early 18th century and it has some interesting architectural features which have been carefully preserved.

On the death of Samuel Alleyne in 1734 the property passed into the possession of the Meynell family. It was purchased by Sir Nigel Gresley in 1775 and the outbuildings were converted into a pottery in 1794. Gresley Hall was sold by Sir Roger Gresley in 1828 and was converted into a farmhouse and subsequently became a tenement building.

After changing hands several times it was purchased by the National Coal Board in 1953 and converted into a Miners' Welfare Club. In 1957 the premises were extended to cater for five collieries in the district.

Gresley church

That there was a chapel at Drakelow in the 12th century is proved by a grant to Burton Abbey of the 'vil' and church at Stapenhill together with the chapels and tithes of Drakelow, Heathcote and Newhall. This grant was confirmed by Pope Lucius III in 1185. The sites of these three chapels are not known for none was in existence in the 16th century.

In 1650 a Parliamentary Commission stated that:—"Drakelow supposed to be a member of Stapenhill is lately united to Gresley and fit so to continue". The Gresley family always maintained a close connection with

Gresley priory from the date of its foundation and the nomination of the Prior was in their hands.

After the Dissolution the Priory buildings were demolished and the nave of the monastic church became the parish church of Gresley and the family association was continued. Although Gresley Church has undergone considerable alterations at different times, it still contains many memorials of the Gresley family, the most notable being an ornate alabaster tomb erected to the memory of Sir Thomas (second baronet) who died in 1699. Under an arch in the centre kneels a life-sized figure of the baronet and round the tomb are impaled the arms of every marriage of his ancestors.

Following the establishment of the Netherseale branch at the beginning of the 18th century, several members have been Rectors of Seale and there are various family memorials in that church. Sir Robert (11th baronet) worshipped at Caldwell Church and is buried there while Sir Nigel, the L.N.E.R. engineer, is buried at Netherseale.

An early mansion

The site of the earliest mansion or castle at Drakelow is unknown, but there is evidence of an early structure at the junction of the Walton and Rosliston roads (SK 244199). The site of the moat is clearly visible and it enclosed an area measuring 75 yds. by 75 yds. This site was outside Drakelow Park, which was enclosed at a much later date. Excavation would probably reveal traces of foundations of a structure which may have been built by William de Gresley on his return from Castle Gresley in 1201.

It was notable that this piece of land was excluded from the sale of the Barn Farm, of which

it forms part, in 1933. At the final sale of the remainder of the Drakelow Estate it was purchased by Mr. J. Hulse, of the Barn Farm, who felled the trees growing on it and eventually sold the land to Sir Clifford Gothard the present owner of the farm.

At present the land is covered with a thick growth of scrub but it is hoped that at some future date a systematic excavation of the site may yet take place to throw some light upon its past history.

Drakelow Hall

Concerning the late hall in Drakelow Park, Sir Robert Gresley (eleventh baronet) stated that the date of foundation of this structure was not known, nor was it easy to determine from the available evidence. Described in the sale catalogue as "Elizabethan", it may have contained some earlier work, but during successive centuries considerable alterations and improvements had been effected.

The greater part of the mansion was apparently rebuilt by Sir William Gresley (fourth baronet) in 1723 for this date appeared on several leaden waste-pipe heads.

Sir Roger Gresley (eighth baronet) altered the west front considerably and built a billiards room with bedrooms above it c.1830. Sir Robert (eleventh baronet) also effected some alterations and improvements both in the mansion and the gardens, the most notable being the construction of terraces leading down to the river front which were completed in 1902 in memory of his mother.

The sale of the contents

The contents of Drakelow Hall were sold in July, 1931, and with

the consent of the auctioneers I had the privilege as president-elect of Burton Natural History and Archaeological Society, of taking a party of members around the Hall before the sale took place.

There were many panelled rooms with antique furniture, china, etc., and also a tapestry room. Five oaken beds dated from the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and James I, while two early 17th century ebony beds were probably brought back from Spain by Walsingham Gresley (1585-1633) who was attached to the British Embassy in Madrid.

There were several pieces of armour and various weapons and a notable exhibit was a contemporary model of a 74-gun ship of the early 18th century, possibly the model of a ship in which Sir Nigel (sixth baronet) served. A valued heirloom was the Gresley Jewel, a fine specimen of 16th century work in the form of a pendant, presented by Elizabeth I to Catherine Sutton, daughter of Lord Dudley, on the occasion of her marriage to Sir George Gresley, K.B.

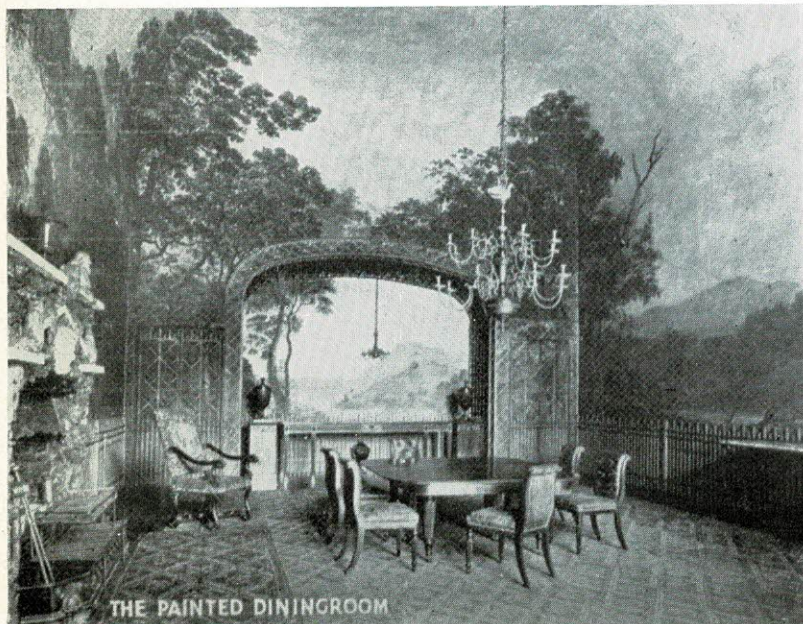
There were many family portraits from the 16th century onwards as well as numerous other paintings. Many of these portraits are reproduced in the "de luxe" edition of "The Gresleys of Drakelow", by F. C. Madan (1899).

A proposed country club

Following the sale of the contents of the Hall, an attempt was made to turn the Hall and park into a country club under the auspices of the Automobile Racing Association. It was proposed to open a "junior" road circuit of about three miles in the park by Whitsuntide, 1932, a further eight-mile circuit to be established later for motor racing.



Two views of the painted dining room.



The Hall was to become an A.R.A. country club house, the existing gardens and woodlands to be preserved in their original state. Tennis courts, a bowling green and a bathing pool were to be constructed while there would be boating and fishing facilities on a $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile stretch of the River Trent with rights over a further $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the river, giving a total stretch almost equal in length to the Boat Race course, where races and regattas could be held.

The mansion was to be altered to provide dining rooms, lounges, billiards rooms, card rooms, writing and reading rooms, a cocktail and other bars, tea rooms, dressing rooms, a gymnasium with skilled attendants of both sexes, and hairdressing salons.

There would be residential facilities, for there were already 14 bedrooms and nine bathrooms, in addition to those reserved for the staff.

A scheme which failed

Some of the stabling was to be retained for use as a riding school and two coach houses would be turned into squash racquet courts. The construction of an indoor lawn tennis court in the stable yard was under consideration and it was proposed to lay out an 18 hole golf course in the park.

For all these facilities ordinary membership would cost £5 5s. 0d. p.a., while life membership could be purchased for £52 10s. 0d. An associate membership however, would cost only £1 1s. p.a.

The official opening of the club was arranged to take place on Whit Monday (May 16th) 1932, and the attractions included a motor cycle dirt-track of 1,000 yards on which "Cannon Ball" Baker would set up the first record. A motor cycle gymkhana was to be arranged by the Burton Motor Cycle and Light Car Club,

and there were equestrian competitions and a boxing display.

The grounds and Hall were open to the public on payment of 1s. 3d. But Whit Monday, 1932, proved to be a very wet day. The attendance was poor and the scheme proved a failure, the "Country Club Company" being evicted from the premises on 16th July, 1932.

The final sale

The outlying portions of the Drakelow Estate (707 acres) were sold on 19th January, 1933, and the remainder, including the "stately Elizabethan Mansion and magnificently timbered deer park" was offered for sale at the Queen's Hotel on December 19th, 1933. The auctioneers stated that the Hall, though mainly Elizabethan in character, had been altered and restored at different periods but never actually rebuilt.

The accommodation on the ground floor included an entrance hall, 45 ft. by 18 ft., with oak-panelled walls and a marble fire place, a tapestry room, 38 ft. by 17 ft. 6 ins., with mullioned windows and a corridor to a china lobby with Jacobean oak panelled walls. The windows of the breakfast room contained coats of arms in stained glass and the oak panelled walls were enriched with armorial bearings. The music room, 32 ft. by 18 ft., had pine panelled walls and doors of walnut with walnut burr panels. The walls of the drawing room were covered with fine green silk damask and there was a superb mantel piece of white marble and Blue John. There was also an oak panelled study and billiards room with mullioned bay windows containing glass coats of arms.

The painted room

The most interesting feature of Drakelow Hall was undoubtedly

the dining room known as the "Painted Room". This was a room painted in the 18th century with a continuous landscape to create the illusion that the visitor was not in a room at all but outside, surrounded with picturesque scenery. A cornice was replaced by a coved ceiling which enabled the artist to run his trees up into an open sky, and real trellis work was set around the room and its apertures while the fireplace was disguised as a grotto.

The paintings represented scenery in the Peak district and were attributed to Paul Sandby. Anna Seward, the "Swan of Lichfield", who visited the Hall in 1794, thus described her impressions: "Sir Nigel hath adorned one of his rooms with singular happiness. One side is painted with forest scenery whose majestic trees arch over the coved ceiling. The opposite side represents a Peak valley, while the front shows a prospect of more distant country. The chimney piece represents a grotto formed of spars, ores and shells. Real palings, breast high and painted green, are placed

a few inches from the walls and increase the deception. In these are little wicket gates that half open, tempt the visitor to ascend the forest banks".

It is pleasing to add that this room is now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Other rooms and outbuildings

An old oak staircase rising in two flights and lit by a lofty arched window containing stained glass coats of arms of the Gresley family led to ten principal bedrooms, five bathrooms, a boudoir and dressing room, all of which were on the first floor. There were also 14 bedrooms and two bathrooms on the second floor.

The domestic offices on the ground floor included a large kitchen, scullery, butler's pantry, butler's bedroom, housekeeper's sitting room, kitchen maid's room, two valets' rooms, bathroom,

The drawing room at Drakelow Hall.



larder, game larder, two still rooms, laundry and dairy.

The outbuildings included store rooms, game larders and brew-house, while a detached block of stable buildings comprised three loose boxes, stabling for 21 horses, a saddle room and a heated garage, together with a gardener's cottage.

The estate was purchased by Sir Albert Ball, of Nottingham, in conjunction with Messrs. Marshall Bros. (Timber Merchants) Ltd., for £12,500.

The pleasure gardens

The extensive pleasure grounds adjoining the Hall were surrounded by a protective belt of trees and some of the hollies and yews were trimmed to a height of thirty feet. There were several separate small gardens and pleasaunces which were probably laid out in the 18th century.

Of these the most notable was the round garden, in the middle of which was a circular stone-edged basin with a central fountain in the form of a mermaid blowing water through a conch or shell. This old garden was improved by Sir Robert Gresley (eleventh baronet) who placed the fountain there. There were also several large stone vases filled with flowering plants.

In another garden, four wide grass walks converged upon a small stone basin also ornamented with a fountain. There was also a long box garden and a walled rose garden laid out in the reign of William III. The "temple" at the end of the rose garden was built from the designs of Reginald Bloomfield, author of "The Formal Gardens of England". Paintings of these gardens by Beatrice Parsons (1905) are still in existence. All the gardens were quite separate and at one time a staff of 30 gardeners was required for their maintenance.

The deer park

In 1540 Leland wrote:—"Sir George Gresley hath upon Trent, a mile lower than Burton, a very large manor place and park at DRAEKELO". Concerning the park, Sir Robert Gresley (eleventh baronet) wrote:—"This park, including the pleasure grounds and that part called the Warren (in older times known as the Hare Park), is 580 acres in extent of which the deer park comprises 297 acres". It may be of interest to note that the coneygreave or rabbit warren is mentioned in a deed dated 1328.

The deer park was well wooded and contained some fine old trees, a notable feature being the "one mile avenue", a double row of trees leading to the Hall from a thatched entrance lodge on the Walton road. There was a large pond in the park and a curious castellated cottage occupied by a gamekeeper.

In addition to a number of Galloway cattle there was a herd of 160 fallow deer, the average weight of a buck being 84 lbs. When the timber was felled in 1934 the remaining deer escaped to the woods where they were eventually killed off.

Burtonians of an older generation will remember with delight the pleasant walk by the riverside from Stapenhill which crossed the Burton-Leicester railway and continued through a meadow into a spinney over a brook crossed by a narrow wooden bridge. Thence a path through the Park led to the lodge on the Walton Road.

The new owner

In January, 1934, Drakelow Park and the Warren Farm were purchased from Sir Albert Bal.

and Messrs. Marshall Bros. by Mr. C. F. Gothard of Bearwood House, Burton-on-Trent, who as a boy had been permitted by the Gresley family to ride in the park and fish the river Trent where it passed through the Drakelow estate of which he thus acquired pleasant memories.

The hall was carefully examined to see if any part of it could be modernised and made habitable, but acting upon expert advice it was decided that the mansion would have to be demolished and this was done.

Mr. Gothard also purchased separately the Barn Farm and the Grove Farm with outlying woods and other land, so that with his purchase of the park, Warren Farm and adjacent woodlands, almost the whole of the former Drakelow estate as it stood after the first World War passed into his possession.

Extensive stabling premises and other outbuildings forming the coach yard of the hall were left standing and part of this block, comprising mainly some of the harness rooms, was converted into a farm house by the new owner who was interested in farming, the preservation of wild life and also in game and wildfowl shooting. In course of time he hoped to take up farming on a larger scale, to build a small modern house near the site of the hall, and to beautify the banks of the river with flowering trees and shrubs. He farmed the whole of the park during the 1939-45 war, but unfortunately the prospective development plans did not come to fruition and after protracted negotiations Drakelow Park and Warren Farm were compulsorily acquired by the British Electricity Authority in 1948.

Sir Clifford Gothard O.B.E.

Born in 1893, Clifford Frederic Gothard is the elder son of

Frederic Gothard, a director of Worthington & Co. Ltd. He was educated at Burton Grammar

School and Birmingham University where he obtained the degree of B.Sc. (Mechanical Eng-



Above, another interior view of Drakelow Hall. Below, the cover of the sale catalogue for the auction which preceded the demolition of the hall.

FIXTURES & FITTINGS



which will be
SOLD FOR DEMOLITION
 by AUCTION on the Premises, on
Monday & Tuesday, 19th & 20th March, 1934,
 Commencing at 11 o'clock each day.

ineering). During the 1914-18 war he served in France and Belgium, taking part in many of the major engagements during the last two years of the war with a mobile brigade of medium heavy artillery and attaining the rank of captain.

On returning to civil life he passed the examination of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and after two years became sole principal of Coxon, Bannister & Gothard. He is chairman of Marston, Thompson & Evershed, Ltd., and Burton Daily Mail Ltd., president of the English Grains group of companies and director of numerous other companies. A founder member of Burton Chamber of Commerce, he has served on several national and international committees connected with the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and has been elected a Life Member of the Canadian-British Chamber of Commerce (Incorporated).

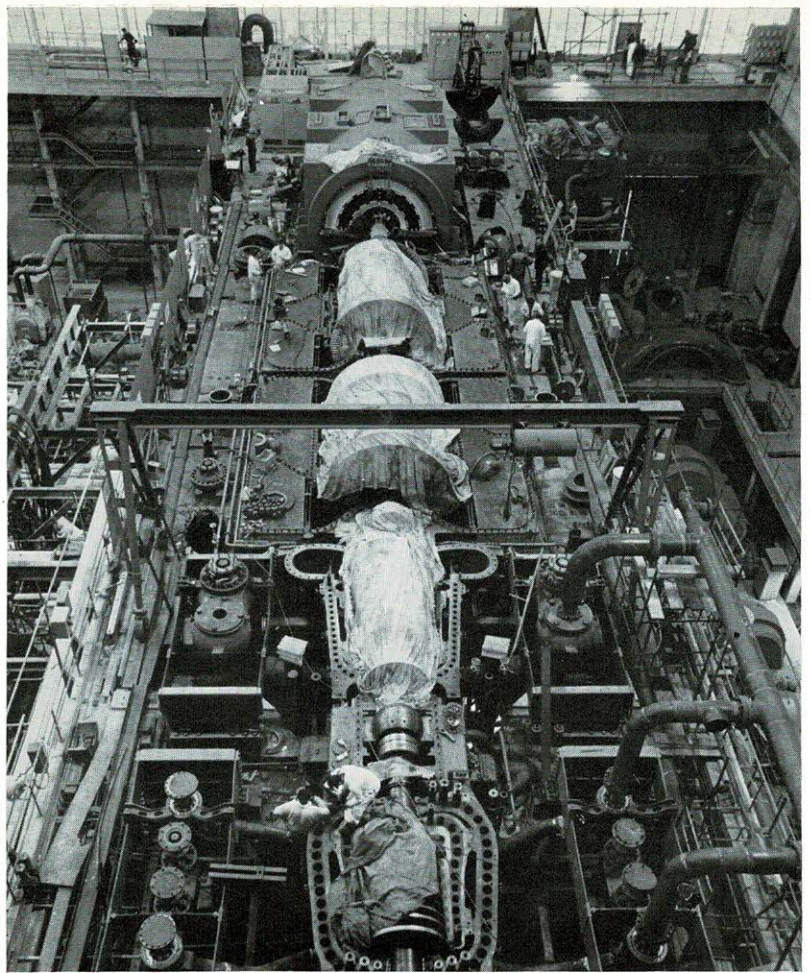
He is chairman of Burton Conservative and Unionist Association and has taken an active part in politics for many years. During the second world war he played a prominent part in the foundation of 351 Squadron Air Training Corps which he commanded and was later promoted to the rank of squadron leader as a District Staff Officer of Midland Command. Appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1940, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1956 and received the honour of knighthood in January, 1959, for his public and political services. He married Margaret Vera Hall in 1961 and they reside at Bearwood House, Burton-on-Trent.

He was elected a life member of the Royal Society of Arts in 1947 and has also taken an active part in church work and education, being a life member of the Court of Birmingham University and a member of the Court of Keele University as well as a governor of Burton Endowed Schools.

Power station plans

To produce electricity at the lowest possible cost to the consumer two factors are essential. One is an abundant supply of fuel, and the other is a never-failing supply of water for cooling purposes. Both of these must be within easy reach of the selected site. These conditions are admirably fulfilled in the case of Drakelow power station which is situated on the banks of the River Trent, adjacent to the coalfields of South Derbyshire.

When the electricity industry was reorganised on a national basis in 1947, plans were already in preparation for the construction of two stations at Drakelow, each of which was to have a capacity of 240,000 kilowatts. The selected site, which covered 746 acres, was bounded by the River Trent on the west, by the Burton-Leicester railway on the north, and by the Burton-Walton road on the east and south. The initial work included the construction of a branch-line from the Burton-Leicester railway running direct into Drakelow Park.

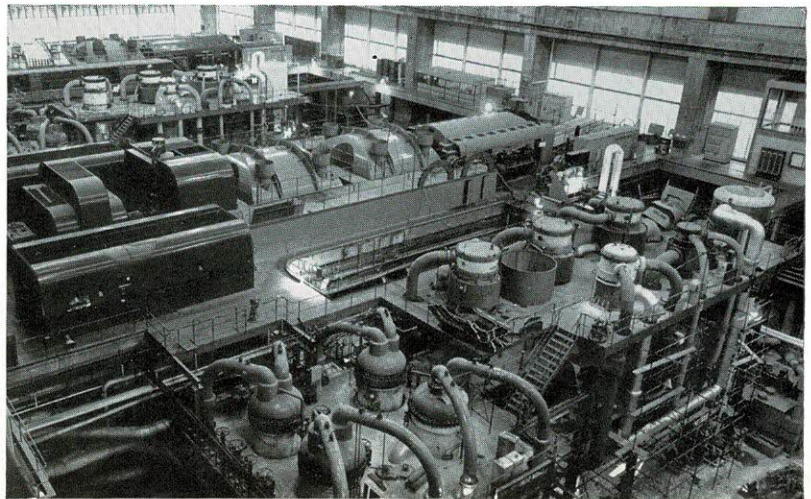


Drakelow "C" turbo-generators under construction.

Drakelow "A" station

Considerable quantities of sand and gravel overlying the site were excavated and most of the material was used in the manufacture of concrete for the station foundations. The geological nature of the site, with marl at a convenient level, was favourable to the construction of solid foundations.

The first stage of development of the site began in May, 1950, and was completed in November, 1955, when the fourth unit of 'A' Station came into commission. The main and auxiliary buildings



were of brick-panelled construction, the boiler house was steel framed, and the turbine room were framed in reinforced concrete. The 'A' station works, comprising four 60,000 kilowatt turbo generators with four 515,000 lb/hr boilers and associated plant, were designed and constructed with many works which would also serve 'B' station when erected. These works included wagon sidings, water treatment plant, river water intake works, control room, welfare facilities and administrative buildings. Stores and workshops were sited centrally between the two proposed stations so as to be equally convenient to both.

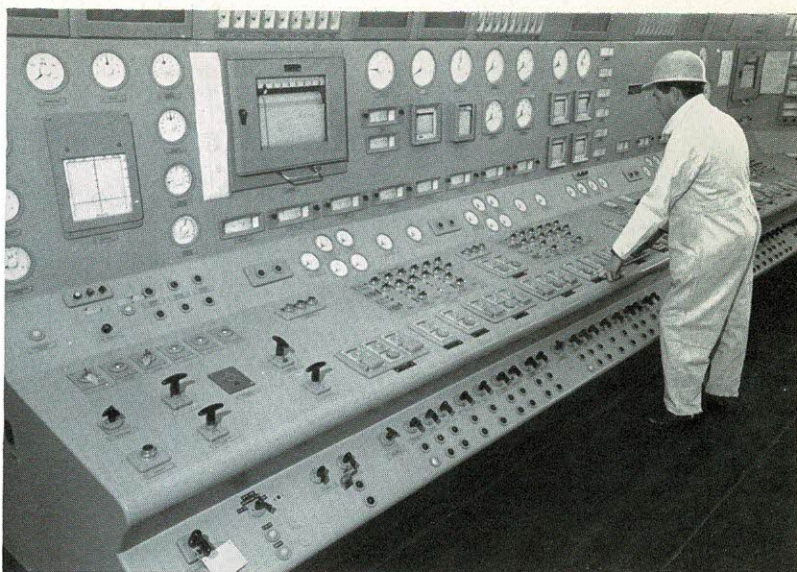
Drakelow "B" station

The second stage of development at Drakelow in the form of 'B' station began with the completion of 'A' station in 1955. This second station being in line with the first and sharing common administrative buildings, was designed to harmonise with 'A' station in its lay-out, cladding, and other architectural features. When completed in 1960, 'B' station housed four generating units each of 120,000 kilowatts capacity. The size of the units in this station reflects the change in design and construction over the years. Each brick chimney is 400 ft. in height and has an internal diameter at the top of 19 feet 6 inches.

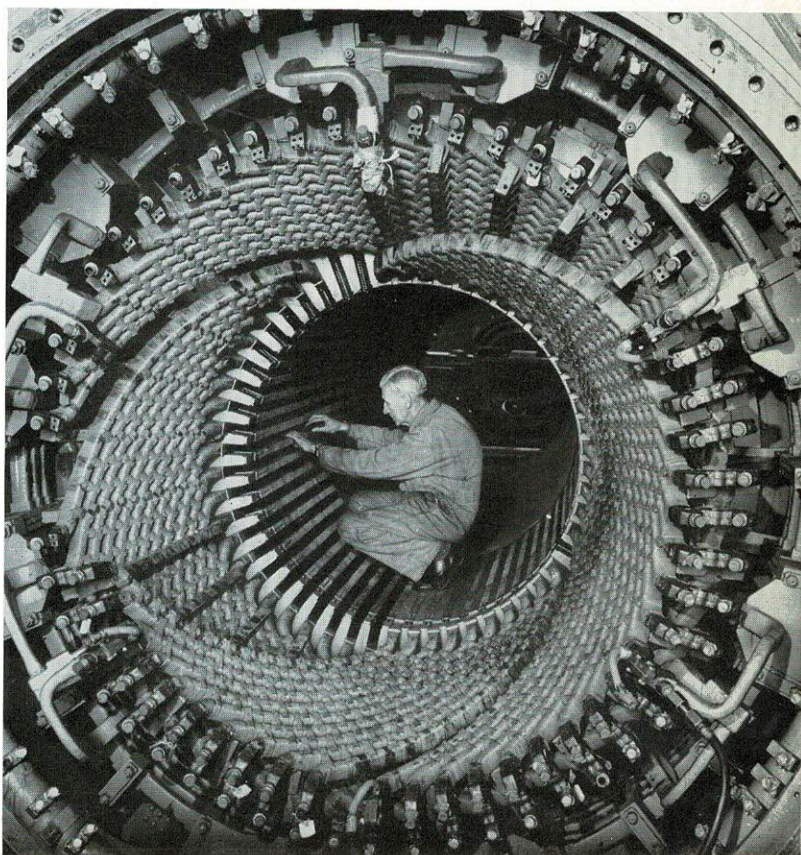
The cooling towers are of ferro-concrete construction and are 307 feet high, their capacity being 3.82 million gallons of water per hour.

Drakelow "C" station

The third stage of development at Drakelow commenced in May, 1960, with preliminary works for 'C' station. This third station,



The control panel for one of the Drakelow "C" generating units (above) and a striking view of the interior of one of the alternators during installation (below)



completed in 1966, is clad with asbestos cement sheathing. It houses two units each of 350,000 kilowatt capacity and two further units each of 375,000 kilowatt capacity.

This was a period of rapid technical progress. If 'C' station had been built to the same design as 'A' station, which was completed ten years earlier, the capital cost would have been doubled and the coal bill would have been 20 per cent higher.

The completion of 'C' station, with a capacity of 1,450,000 kilowatts, made Drakelow the largest concentration of power on one site in Europe, with a total capacity of 2,174,000 kilowatts. With all three stations now in operation much of the original character of the Drakelow estate still remains, woodlands are being preserved and improved and 217 acres of land remain under cultivation.

How the coal arrives

Coal slack with a small percentage of slurry is used as fuel. This is obtained from neighbouring coalfields and the demand for the three stations is $4\frac{1}{2}$ million tons a year. These deliveries are by rail and the wagons are brought from the sidings by locomotives and dealt with by mechanical handling plant. Marshalling yards have been constructed and shunting is carried out by two diesel locomotives. Road-borne coal is discharged either to store or into a ground hopper.

Ash and clinker from the combustion chambers are collected from tippers beneath each boiler and ejected by water jet nozzles and conveyed to the ash sump by further jets. Dust is removed from the flues by centrifugal collectors and dropped into storage hoppers from which it is removed by vacuum, permitting the air-borne solids to mix with the ejector water to form a slurry.

This is transferred to disposal sites comprising exhausted gravel pits at Drakelow and Branston.

Pulverised fuel ash

Pulverised fuel ash is the result of burning coal blown into a power station boiler as a fine powder. This is not a waste product by any means. It is used for a variety of purposes in building and civil engineering. Some of its advantages are ease of handling, speed of compaction, light weight and high strength.

Used largely in the construction of roads, it is so free-draining that work can be continued in the wettest of weather. Large quantities were used in the construction of the Burton py-pass.

In other cases this ash has been mixed with cement and used as a grout to strengthen buildings liable to subsidence. The ash is used in the manufacture of building blocks and bricks and light-weight aggregate. Many hundreds of acres of derelict land have been reclaimed with the use

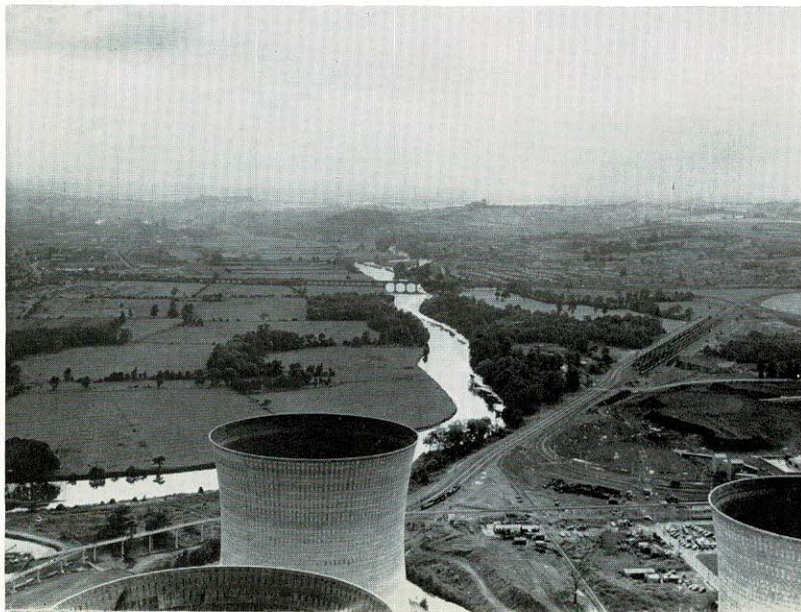
of this ash covered with a layer of top soil. Direct pipe lines have been laid from the power station to waterlogged gravel pits at Branston which are being filled in and restored for agricultural purposes. In some instances school playing fields have been laid out on the top of power station ash.

Preventing pollution

Air pollution from dust and gases emitted by the power station is a matter which receives constant attention by the authorities. It can be definitely stated that coal burned in a power station boiler is burned more effectively and causes much less air pollution than factory chimneys or domestic hearths.

Power stations have the most effective dust-catching equipment in the world and this removes 99.3 per cent of the dust, while tall chimneys with a high velocity discharge disperse the gases high in the air. Results from recording

A striking view from the top of the Drakelow "C" chimney during the station's construction.



stations show that, of the local level of pollution, only 2 per cent of the total comes from power stations.

Cooling water taken from the river is returned in a cleaner state though a little warmer than when extracted, a certain amount of sludge being left in the station's cooling ponds. The C.E.G.B. works to precise standards of heat safety limits to protect fish life.

Preserving amenities

The C.E.G.B. spends a great deal of money in fitting its power stations into the countryside as unobtrusively as possible. Experts in architecture and landscaping are called into consultation and everything is done to preserve local amenities.

Coloured cooling towers at Drakelow and elsewhere help to break up the stark masses of concrete. Tree planting, grassing, the planting of flower beds, all add to the amenities of a power station. A new method of seeding grass has been evolved whereby seed mixed with water and fertiliser is sprayed under pressure from a spray gun, and a mulch of chopped straw is afterwards blown on to the site. On one experimental site grass germinated after five days. In other cases large trees have been uprooted bodily and replanted elsewhere as a screen.

A landscaping consultant pays regular visits to Drakelow where there is a small resident staff engaged in this work. Thousands of young trees are being grown from seed obtained from all parts of the world to see which will flourish best on a foundation of power ash. One area of derelict land has been filled with power station ash and covered with a layer of top soil. Holes have been drilled into the ash beneath and trees planted on the site. This



Trees growing on land restored with power station ash at the Drakelow site.

experiment is under regular observation by a team of students from Leeds University and other areas are being grassed or planted with trees.

The first superintendent

All three of Drakelow's power stations were commissioned under the first station superintendent—Harry Greenwood, a Yorkshireman born at Leeds in 1901. He was educated at King Edward VII School, Sheffield, Salford Royal Technical College and Sheffield University and passed the associ-

ate membership examinations of the Institutions of Mechanical & Electrical Engineers.

His first intention was to become a locomotive engineer but in view of the changing trend he decided that electricity generation held promise of a more interesting career. His interest in the steam locomotive was maintained by the construction in his own workshop of scale model reproductions of some of the most outstanding British locomotives of the steam era.

After serving an apprenticeship at the Trafford Park works of the British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company (sub-

sequently becoming the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company and now part of A.E.I.), he held numerous appointments with power companies and municipalities.

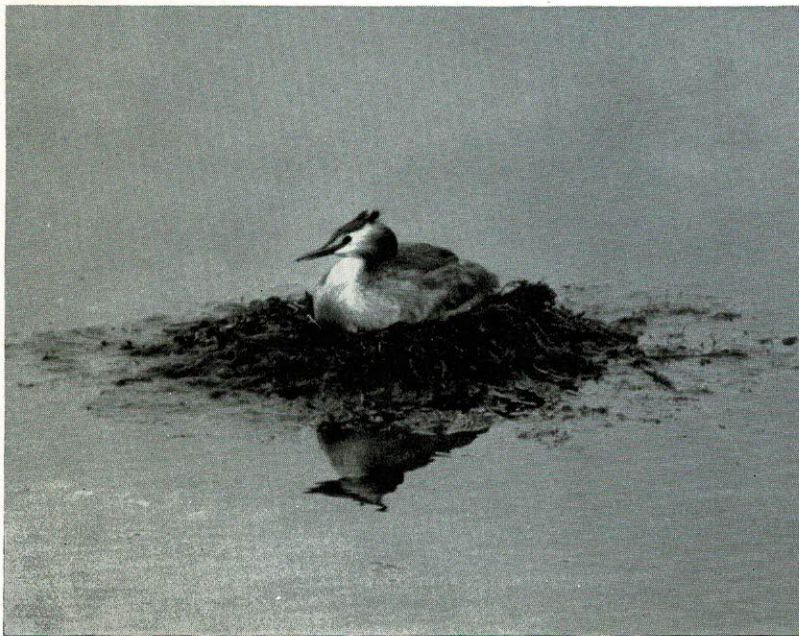
He came from Agecroft power station, near Manchester, to Drakelow on 1st December, 1953, to start up Drakelow 'A' power station. Incidentally, Agecroft had seen a similar sequence of events as Drakelow, the Hall having been demolished and every stone carefully marked for transportation to U.S.A. where it was re-erected and stands to-day just as it did in days long ago but in a new country and new surroundings.

Among Mr. Greenwood's many interests is church architecture, and he is a steward and Life Friend of Lichfield Cathedral. In 1966 Mr. Greenwood was appointed maintenance services engineer for all West Midlands power stations.

Some nature records

When game was preserved at Drakelow the park and woods

A great crested grebe nesting on one of the Drakelow lagoons in the summer of 1966.



provided nesting places for a variety of song-birds, since "vermin" was kept under control. The river and the pool in the park attracted a variety of wild-fowl and occasional seabirds.

In June, 1924, a "hawk" shot by a gamekeeper from an old nest of a carrion crow in a tall beech tree, was described as a merlin, but from subsequent enquiries, was probably a hobby falcon, a rare visitor to the Midlands. The same year a peregrine falcon was trapped in the park. On February 12th, 1926, a bittern was shot in the reed beds by the river. In 1935 an Arctic tern was seen on the river on September 23rd. Three years later a teal, our smallest British duck, was shot on the park pool. Attached to its leg was a numbered ring which had been affixed in Pembrokehire the previous year.

In May, 1945, a curlew's nest containing four eggs was found in a field adjacent to the Warren Farm. This was the first record for this part of the Trent Valley. In the same year, late in the evening of August 5th, a large concourse of swallows, estimated

to number at least 100,000 birds, was observed circling between the pool and the river, evidently seeking a roosting place in the reed beds. Two cormorants were shot here in September, 1946.

Wild life on the station

For the following observations made in the area covered by the power station and the adjoining gravel pits during the period September, 1963, to September, 1965, I am indebted to Mr. T. Cockburn who kindly placed them at my disposal.

A badger and several hedgehogs were killed by passing traffic while crossing the Walton road near the power station, and the following mammals have been observed in the area:—fox, stoat, weasel, hare, rabbit, brown rat, water vole, grey squirrel, mole, shrew, pipistrelle and long-eared bat.

The gravel pits are allowed to flood and are subsequently used as discharge ash pits or settling ponds. When the ash is solidified it is carried away and the muddy or gravel bottoms provide excellent feeding grounds for migrant waders.

Birds which bred there during that period include:—little grebe, mallard, tufted duck, mute swan, red legged partridge, common partridge, pheasant, moorhen, lapwing, little ringed plover, black headed gull, woodpigeon, barn owl, tawny owl, skylark, swallow, sand martin, carrion crow, jay, magpie, great tit, blue tit, marsh tit, willow tit, wren, mistle thrush, song thrush, blackbird, whinchat, robin, reed warbler, sedge warbler, spotted flycatcher, hedge-sparrow, meadow pipit, pied wagtail, yellow wagtail, starling, greenfinch, goldfinch, bullfinch, linnet, chaffinch, yellow hammer, corn bunting, reed bunting, house-sparrow and tree sparrow.

Some bird visitors

In addition to birds which bred there during the summer months, many other species have been recorded in this area throughout the year, for as Mr. Cockburn remarks, the gravel pits form excellent feeding grounds for migrant waterfowl and waders.

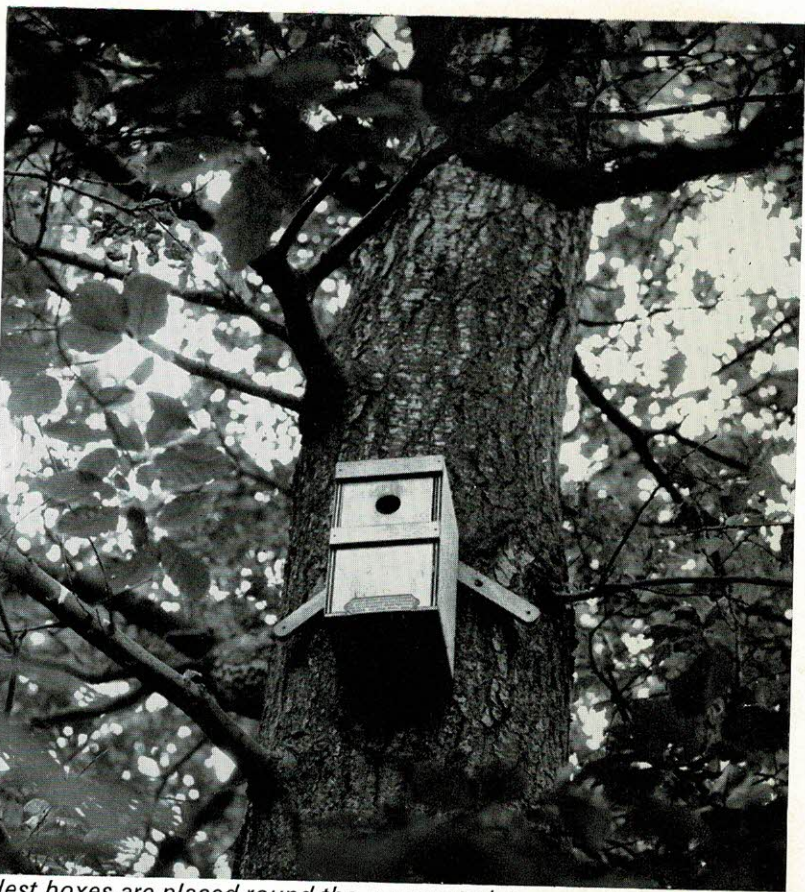
His list includes:—great crested grebe, garganey, wigeon, shoveler, pochard, teal, shelduck, pintail, redbreasted merganser, smew, grey lag goose and a flock of 160 canada geese, 68 mute swans, whooper swan, coot, oyster catcher, ringed plover, golden plover, turnstone, snipe, jack snipe, curlew, green sandpiper, common sandpiper, redshank, spotted redshank, greenshank, knot, little stint, dunlin, curlew sandpiper, sanderling, ruff, lesser blackbacked gull, herring gull, common gull, common tern, black tern, collared dove, swift, great spotted woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, housemartin, rook, jackdaw, coal tit, longtailed tit, treecreeper, fieldfare, redwing, wheatear, stonechat, redstart, chiff-chaff, white wagtail, grey wagtail, kestrel, stockdove, turtle dove, cuckoo, and lesser redpoll.

These lists of breeding birds and visitors are most impressive and Mr. Cockburn has also furnished me with a list of over 150 wild flowers he has observed in this area.

Undoubtedly Drakelow power station, with its adjacent woods and gravel pits, has great potentialities as a nature reserve.

A final note

This history of Drakelow, which covers more than a thousand years, can be paralleled by few



Nest boxes are placed round the power station grounds to encourage bird life.

Groundsman Bob Vernon and his enthusiastic staff are responsible for estate management and find many rare species of shrubs and trees flourish at Drakelow.



places in Britain. No less than 28 generations of the Gresley family resided here from the time of the Norman Conquest.

While members of the family never attained great eminence in national affairs they were not neglectful of their duties to King and State. Many of them fought in various wars and were knighted for their valour. Several were elected to Parliament while others were appointed High Sheriff and Justice of the Peace. During such troublesome times as the Wars of the Roses, the Reformation and the Civil War, the Gresleys managed to preserve their estates so that Drakelow remained in their possession for almost nine centuries.

When an attempt to turn the

Hall into a country club had failed and the estate was sold, the mansion was demolished and the intention of Sir Clifford Gothard to preserve and beautify the park was defeated by the Electricity Authority who acquired it for their purposes.

It is pleasing to add that the Central Electricity Generating Board is fully aware of its responsibilities. Drakelow is now one of the largest concentrations of power in Europe and the Board is pursuing an enlightened policy in preserving its amenities and is doing pioneer work in this direction. There is every possibility that in time to come Drakelow will be regarded as a shining example of what can be done in this way.

Acknowledgements

The following works have been consulted during the preparation of this booklet, and while it is not possible to give every reference the fullest acknowledgement is made of their uses:—

- Domesday Book, Derbyshire.
- Victoria County History, Derbyshire.
- Feudal History of Derbyshire—J. Pym Yeatman.
- Charters and Muniments formerly at Drakelow.
- The Gresley Chartulary—I. H. Jeayes.
- The Ridware Chartulary—I. H. Jeayes.
- Derbyshire Charters—I. H. Jeayes.
- The Gresleys of Drakelow—F. C. Madan (“de luxe” illustrated edition).
- The Churches of Derbyshire—Dr. J. C. Cox.
- Three centuries of Derbyshire Annals—Dr. J. C. Cox.
- Proceedings of the Anastatic Drawing Society—Rev. J. M. Gresley.
- Transactions of Burton Archaeological Society—Sundry vols.
- Transactions of Derbyshire Archaeological Society—Sundry vols.
- Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological Society—Sundry vols.
- William Salt Collections for History of Staffordshire—Sundry vols.
- The Reliquary—12 vols.
- Erdeswicke’s Staffordshire.
- History of Derbyshire—S. Glover.
- Story of Ashby de la Zouch—W. Scott.
- Sir Nigel Gresley, Locomotive Engineer—F. A. S. Brown.
- Burke’s Baronetage.
- Dictionary of National Biography.
- “Speed & Sport”—Journal of Automobile Racing Assoc.
- Country Life—Articles 1902, 1907, 1932.

Plans are well advanced for the establishment of a Field Study Centre for local school children on an area of the former Drakelow Park which now forms part of the power station site.

The area includes woodland, a pond and a stream and in addition to biological field studies should provide opportunities for the wider study of the environment — including the effect of the power stations on their surroundings.

The proposal has been received with enthusiasm by the local education authorities of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Derbyshire, who are working on the project with the Nature Conservancy and the Midlands Region of the C.E.G.B.

Mr. H. J. Wain, the author of this booklet, is a W.E.A. tutor in local history, President of Burton-on-Trent Natural History and Archaeological Society and Vice-President of the British Naturalists' Association. At Mr. Wain's request the proceeds from copies sold will be devoted to providing additional equipment for the Drakelow Field Study Centre.

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