

LETTER FROM
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Dear Mrs Harborne,

Many thanks for your letter of January 23rd and for its enclosures. I am most grateful, both for the copy of your pamphlet on Rowney Green, and for the 1701 map tracing. The map must have been at St Helen's in my time in Worcestershire, but I am ashamed to say that I never saw it there. Nor had I realised that the bypass had gone through the park last year - I recall the struggle we had back in the early 1970s to prevent the preferred route for the M42 doing the same thing in an east-west direction!

I am grateful also for the reference from the *Leber Abbas* via Dr Gough's thesis. I had looked at James Wilson's English edition of the *Leber Abbas* published in 1920, but this is highly selective and omits many of the documents in the original, including no. 84 quoted by Dr Gough. If I remember correctly, I believe that the first 1200-odd documents from the volume were abstracted on behalf of the Worcestershire Historical Society and published by them in 1919, but I have never worked through this - it might be worth a quick check in case it gives a lead in to anything else useful.

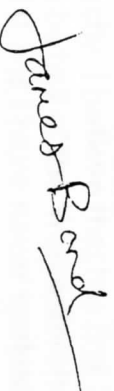
The English Heritage list of historic parks does contain numerous omissions, and I am not particularly surprised that Alvechurch was overlooked. The list has tended to concentrate upon still-extant parks where there is some evidence of conscious landscape design, and is generally poor in its coverage of former medieval deer-parks. While the list has no statutory value as such, nonetheless it has inevitably come to be regarded as statement of what is important, with the unintentional result of downgrading the importance of sites which are omitted from it. It is, therefore, well worthwhile pressing for the inclusion of Alvechurch. The fact that the County Structure Plan includes it as an area of high landscape value should help. It would also be worth making the point that Alvechurch, with its palace, fishponds, gardens and deer park, would provide another very good example of the recently-recognised concept of medieval 'aesthetically-modified landscapes'. This idea has developed as a counter to the traditional view of medieval deer parks, fishponds &c being seen as purely utilitarian producers of food with no aesthetic component. The concept is well discussed in Chris Taylor's paper 'Somersham Palace, Cambridge: a Medieval Landscape for Pleasure?', published in the Norman Quinell festschrift volume, *From Carrumall to Carthness: Some Aspects of British Field Archaeology*, edited by Mark Bowden, Donnie Mackay & Peter Topping (British

Archaeological Reports, British Series, no. 209, Oxford, 1989), pp. 211-224. In view of the parallels, you might find this paper of interest. Other, rather grander, examples closer to home would include Kenilworth and Woodstock. There is no doubt in my mind that Alvechurch Park was more than just a live larder for deer, the presence of a major residence and a spectacularly-engineered set of moats and fishponds within it both point to a strong element of deliberate design for recreational and aesthetic motives.

Finally, please do feel free to make any use of the information I sent however you wish. I remember with affection what the whole area was like 20-30 years ago, and if this will help in any way to protect it from unsuitable development I would be delighted. I've no idea when I shall next get up that way myself, but would be very glad to meet you and have another look at the site if opportunity offers.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Bond". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

C. J. Bond