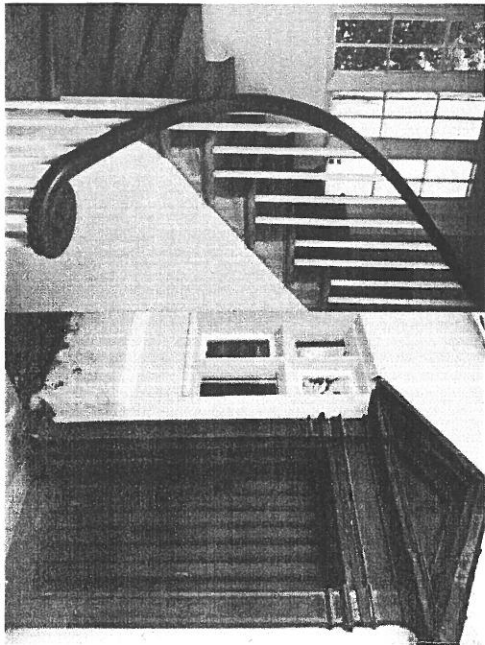


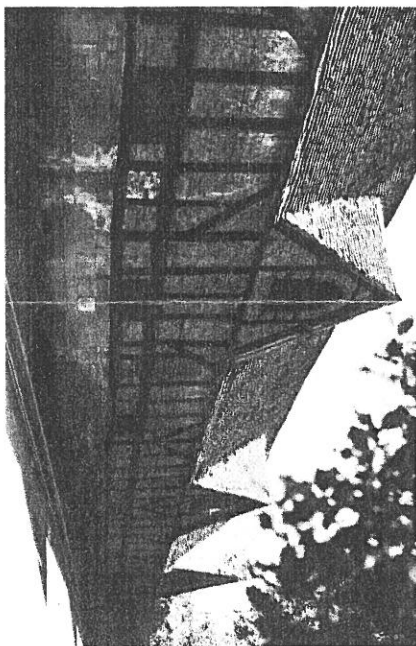
Upper House No. 9

Upper House is situated in the old part of Madeley, across the street from Madeley Hall, and not far from St. Michaels Church. It dates from the 17th century and its appearance is typical of the period, with pointed gables and some of the original mullioned windows still in position. Inside it has been much modernised, but there is a fine Jacobean staircase, and a hiding place, thought to be a priest-hole. The barns and outbuildings of Upper House front the street, forming an interesting group. Upper House is a Grade II building in the Department of the Environment's list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.



Upper house earned a place in history one night during 1651, when King Charles II hid in the barn after his escape from the battle of Worcester. At this time the house was owned by Francis Woolfe, a member of a leading recusant family, who was known to be sympathetic to the Royalist cause.

Following the defeat of the Royal Forces at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, King Charles arrived at Boscobel on 4th September 1651 and there he considered various routes of escape. His first idea was to head for London, but finding that Richard Penderell, who was to be his guide knew no safe houses on the way, he decided instead to try and cross the Severn into Wales and to escape via Swansea or another sea port to France.



As soon as it was dark, the King and Penderell left intending to pass over a ferry half way between Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury, probably near what is now Coalport or at Madeley Wood. They travelled towards Madeley by Eyeilth where they were heard passing Evelith Mill by the miller who was sitting at his door. The miller called out asking who they were and Penderell told him that they were neighbours. The miller told them to stand still if they were neighbours or else he would attack, so they both ran away as fast as they could for as long as they could keep going. They were pursued for some time but eventually hid behind a hedge and when they listened, the miller had given up.

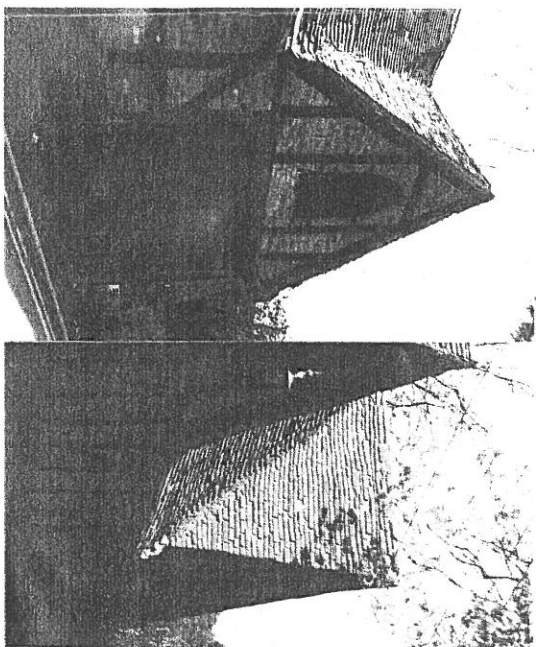
They then continued to Madeley where Penderell told the King that Mr. Woolfe of Upper House would hide him. The King would not go to the house until Penderell had asked Mr. Woolfe if he would receive "an English gentleman of quality" and hide him throughout the next day.

Francis Woolfe told the King that the troops in the town were guarding the ferry and also that they had discovered the hiding places in his house, so the King would have to hide elsewhere. After a meal of cold meat, the King and Penderell hid in the barn belonging to Upper House behind the corn and hay and stayed throughout the next day. In the evening, Mr. Woolfe and his son brought food to the fugitives and advised them against making any attempts to cross the Severn into Wales. The King decided to attempt to return to Penderell's house at Boscobel and make for London.

At about 11 o'clock at night Penderell and the King set forth again. They carefully avoided coming too close to the mill again and arrived the next morning at Boscobel where the King spent the day in an oak tree. Two days later he left for Mosely Old Hall and from there made his way to Bristol and Brighton from where he sailed for France on the 15th October, 1651. He remained in exile until his restoration to the throne in 1660.

After the restoration King Charles is supposed to have given a silver tankard to Francis Woolfe, and an early 18th century copy of the tankard still exists although the original seems to have disappeared. The tankard is inscribed 'Given by Charles II at the restoration, to F. Woolfe, of Madeley, in whose barn he was secreted after the defeat at Worcester, 1651'. The King also increased the armorial bearings of the Woolfe family by adding a crown resting on a wolf's paw to the hereditary crest.

In the 18th century, the barn of Upper House and adjoining buildings were used for the market house for Madeley and the butchers shambles were still discernable in 1880. In 1883 John Randall wrote that 'the upper portion was rebuilt or cased a few years ago but the old timber skeleton remains'. Upper House is now used as a Magistrates Court.



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