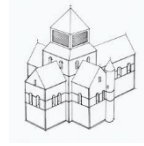
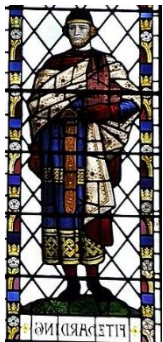


## Portbury Through the Ages

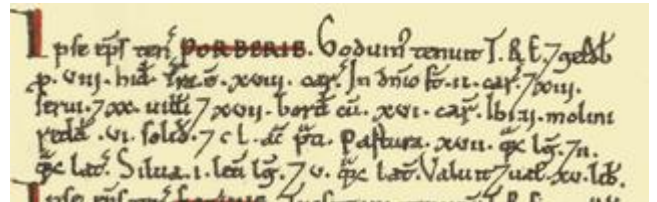
Portbury has been a settled area for many centuries, starting in the pre-historic period. Standing stones are evident from both old, Victorian maps and from physical remains that have been rediscovered in recent times. A long-lost Romano-British settlement preceded the more recent Saxon and Norman occupations. In the 1970's a burial ground was discovered during the construction of St Mary's Primary School which proved to be from Romano-British times. In 2005 further work at the School revealed burial remains that were possibly of Saxon or Mediaeval origin, consistent with the record that suggests the presence of a Saxon Minster at the site of the current Church.



In Saxon times the Hundred of Portbury supported a population that could provide military support to the King of England in the form of a local defence force, or Fyrd. This was part of the legacy of Alfred the Great who defended Wessex against the Vikings by means of this form of levy.



In post conquest times we know of the continuation of Portbury from entries in the Domesday Book in about 1086. Robert Fitzharding, the first Earl of Berkeley was awarded the Manor of Portbury at around this time and it became his main residence. In 1190 the current Church of St Mary the Virgin was founded, possibly standing on top of the existing Saxon Minster.



In 1188 a small Augustinian Priory was also founded. This was part of the Estate of Bromore Priory in Hampshire. It continued to prosper until "the dissolution" and much of the old building remains and is now a private residence.

Portbury's importance waned as access to the sea became more difficult. In about 1607 it is believed that much of the village was swept away in the great flood, possibly a tsunami, which affected the whole Severn Valley at the time. Most of the buildings would have still been wooden and sited on low lying ground around the Church. After the flood the focal point of the Village shifted towards what is now the Village Green area. A Mill is recorded as being active from Elizabethan times, evidenced by the remaining building and the Mill Race.



In the 1840's we find that Portbury has a "rustic inn" and half a dozen small houses. The Blue Anchor Inn was on the High Street and in those days the Mill Race was an open brook that ran across the road and on behind the current Priory Inn.



In 1867 the Railways came, providing Portbury with its own Station, again the building remains and is a private residence.



A bequest in 1892 saw the building of the Village Hall, a much loved and well used local asset. It was extended in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to provide a skittle alley which is still regularly used today.

In the 1960's the M5 motorway was completed and runs close to the Village. A footbridge was erected at this time to ensure continuity of the existing Village settlement. This bridge allows connection with the settlement now known as Sheepway. Royal Portbury Dock was completed in 1977 and provides, to this day, a significant source of local employment.

Much of the housing in Portbury dates from the development of the village after its sale by Lady Smyth in the 1960's. Many older houses were demolished to make way for new, but there remains a good mix of old styles and Portbury retains its "village" feel.



Today Portbury is a well-established Village, with its own Parish Council serving the main settlement near the Village Green as well as the further flung residences in Sheepway, along Caswell Lane and Portbury Lane. The Church of St Mary the Virgin still stands proudly to the East of the Village and has a very active congregation. Linked to it is a local Primary School. There is a very active Social Club at the Village Hall, which stands on the site of the old "Brewery Yard".

