

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## LOCAL HISTORY BULLETIN

Autumn, 1968—No. 18



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## EDITORIAL

IT IS A great pleasure to edit our first printed Bulletin, and we are grateful to our Printers, The Forest of Dean Newspapers Ltd., and Mr A. J. Bright, who have been so helpful with suggestions for cutting down the expenses. We are grateful also to T. W. Cole & Sons Ltd. who have lent us the blocks which illustrate this first edition. Except for the cover illustration from an 1830 map by Pigot, we have not afforded our own blocks for this experimental printed number. Whether we can continue to print the Bulletin in the future will depend on whether we are able to find sufficient sales for it to make it worthwhile. Later, with the approval of the committee, we may be able to introduce a few advertisements, but this again will depend on the sales situation. It is therefore hoped that each reader will make a regular order on the form provided and try to get as many other people and organisations as possible to follow suit. We also welcome any suggestions, letters for publication and original articles, with writers bearing in mind that the deadline is harder and faster, and that if we continue to print, we shall no longer be so elastic as regards length.

Among some interesting articles in this number I am glad to be able to print some of the original research of Miss Gladys Davies, who gets the scent of an historical story and pursues it most indefatigably all over the county on her bicycle. There are very few who know as much about the villages around Gloucester than she does, nor who follow up clues with such tenacious purpose.

Finally it is a great pleasure to announce a splendid response to the School essay competition, for more than forty entries have already been received. Perhaps some of these young historians may find themselves in print sooner than they anticipated.

MERCEDES MACKAY, *Editor*

## REPORTS FROM THE SOCIETIES

### **KINGSWOOD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

AT THE MAY meeting a talk was given by a member on the Vestiges of Antiquity in the Neighbourhood. It was illustrated by slides, one of which showed part of a Roman altar which now serves as a quoin in the church at Compton Dando.

Mangotsfield from the 18th Century was the topic of the meeting in June. It was of great interest, standard history being enlivened by legendary tales and personal memories.

A trip has been arranged for Saturday, July 13th, to Great Chalfield Manor House.

### **THE FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

DURING THE PAST summer, tours have been arranged to Old Sarum and Salisbury where the society was kindly received by local antiquarians, and conducted in smaller parties round Close, Church, and Cathedral. Another tour took us into that little known part of South Herefordshire where a skilful coach driver took us over incredibly winding and narrow roads to Pembridge, Rowlstone, Clodock and Bacton, with plenty to see both on the journey and when we stopped.

Recent talks have included an account of an early Nineteenth century Tramroad by H. W. Paar who has made the study of Dean Forest railways peculiarly his own, and an extraordinarily interesting account of Water Divining by a self confessed converted sceptic.

The catholic nature of the society's interests is illustrated by the titles of forthcoming studies: "Church Organs" in November and "Crusader Heritage" in December, the latter being an account of The Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and some of its local connections. This is to be followed next summer by a visit to a site of buildings once belonging to the Order.

Talks are being arranged on the geology of the Forest district, heraldry in Forest churches, and Severn fisheries as a part of next year's programme, while an "All Day" tour of an interesting part of the Vale of Glamorgan where the Society has at least one keen member, is in process of arrangement.

Members of the society are engaged in research of their own and their findings will certainly be presented to meetings in due course, while a keen watch is being kept on local developments which may affect historical sites. Recently a road widening project involved the demolition of a barn in which Robert Mushet carried out some of his metallurgical experiments. The society was represented in a delegation which met the authorities on the spot when the building was examined and photographed. A decision was reached that there could be no objection to the place being taken down since no relic of Mushet's occupation remained, but the suggestion was made that a commemorative plaque marking the site should be incorporated in the new work, and this has now been done.

The society produces "Occasional Papers" from time to time. Of these, Mr W. J. Shirehampton's survey of Railways and Tramroads in the Dean was in great demand especially before Mr Paar's more comprehensive works appeared. "The Little Hill," the story of Newnham on Severn, has been twice reprinted and Mr Bright's "Charities of William Jones" in Newland and Monmouth is still available.

#### **OLVESTON PARISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

ON 15TH MAY an evening tour of Historic Bristol was arranged under the direction of Mr B. Little. This was followed on 22nd June with a visit to St. Fagan's Castle, Cardiff and the Welsh National Folk Museum.

During May, June and July it was hoped to make arrangements for an afternoon survey of land utilisation on two farms within the parish with members taking an active part. This was organised by Mr G. Daldry.

The Annual General Meeting is arranged for 2nd October and this will be followed by a slide show. On 6th November a talk will be given by Mr A. M. Wherry of the County Records Office, who will take as his subject "The River Severn". Finally on 4th December a members' evening will be held.

#### **BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP**

##### **REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30th APRIL, 1968**

DURING THE YEAR the Group published a further volume in the series of Field Guides. This, No. 2 in the series, describes Roman sites in the Mendip, Cotswold,

Wye Valley and Bristol Regions and was the work of the Chairman and Hon. Secretary.

A series of hand lists of archaeological material in museums relevant to the area of the Group's activities is now being published in the *Bulletin*. B.A.R.G. continued to be associated with the Extra-Mural Department's excavations at the Iron Age and Roman settlement at Row of Ashes Farm, Butcombe and the Bristol City Museum's excavations at Sea Mills. Numerous members are involved in their own research projects, which were reported at the annual Symposium in November. Short reports of papers given at the Symposium are published in the *Bulletin*. The Group also embarked on a programme of winter lectures. A weekend course on Lead Mining on Mendip (in conjunction with the University of Bristol Extra Mural Department) held in October was a great success.

### LOCAL HISTORY SCHOOL

ON 8th, 9th and 10th July, 127 pupils and members of the staff from independent, grammar and secondary schools in the County attended the Gloucestershire Community Council's Local History School in the Parliament Room, College Green, Gloucester. The School is held annually for senior History pupils in the schools and although repeated on three consecutive days the demand for places exceeds availability, and a number of pupils have had to be refused.

The aim of the School is twofold, firstly, to introduce pupils to the study of Local History which they do not have the opportunity to study as part of their normal syllabus, and secondly, to show a small part of the Local History of Gloucestershire, and this was achieved in the theme, taken for the School of "The Severn Crossing at Gloucester". The School was opened on the first day by the Dean of Gloucester, the Very Rev. S. J. Evans, F.S.A., and on the second and third days by the Rev. Canon R. J. Mansfield, Chairman of the Local History Committee, and Mr J. Neufville Taylor, Curator, Gloucester City Museum. This year's speakers were Mr C. R. Elrington, Editor, *Victoria History of Gloucestershire* and Mr A. Jamieson, M.A., Senior Lecturer in History, St. Paul's College, Cheltenham, who took as their subject "The Aims of Local History Research". They explained to the pupils the ways in which they could, themselves, discover Local History, and mentioned the people and organisations who would be of help to them. In addition, both speakers stressed the great variety of sources available to the local historian.

During the School the pupils had opportunities to visit exhibitions of special items arranged relative to the theme by the County Records Office, the City Folk Museum and City Library.

The County Records Office displayed a large number of documents, mostly of the 18th and 19th centuries relating to the crossing at Over. Included amongst them were reports on the condition of the old Over Bridge of 1813, bills for maintenance work carried out in 1780, and several maps and plans showing the history of the Foreign, Westgate and Over Bridges.

One of the most interesting items on show was an original letter, signed by Thomas Telford, the celebrated engineer, who was employed to build the new Over Bridge in the 1820's. This letter was written in 1828 after Telford had

re-examined the newly built bridge for reported subsidence. He wrote, however, that the construction "was fully equal to anything of the kind in Europe", and indeed, he could scarcely have imagined the volume of traffic it has since had to sustain.

Foreign Bridge was situated near the traffic lights at the junction of Westgate Street and Priory Road. This was almost built over by 1811, but in the 18th Century it was still an important bridge for one of the documents exhibited was an order of 1740 for it to be surveyed (together with Westgate, Over and Maisemore Bridges).

Other documents exhibited dealt with the rail crossing at Over, and the history of the Gloucester to Hereford canal which entered and crossed the River Severn just upstream from the present bridges. Fieldwork in the afternoon of each day was conducted at Over Bridge under the direction of Mr Brian Smith, the County Archivist. Finally, a panel of Local History specialists discussed questions put to them on the visits of the day, the fieldwork and other related subjects.

#### **A SHORT HANDLIST OF THE CONTENTS OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE RECORDS OFFICE, 1968**

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE County Records Office has recently produced an invaluable short handlist describing the contents of the Office. This list originally formed part of the Report of the County Council's Records Committee, 1968, but has now been separately published. The purpose of the handlist is to give brief details of the documentary sources of Gloucestershire local history which are freely available to the public.

Prominent among the collections are the official records of Quarter Sessions which were responsible not only for legal matters but until the late 19th Century for nearly all aspects of local government. This included — among a host of other things — responsibility for roads, bridges, prisons, and the enrolment of maps and other documents concerning matters of public interest.

There are also listed a large variety of parish records including registers and the records of Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor. Documents deposited by private individuals and families form a major part of the collections and range in size from single items to collections like the 1,000 deeds of the Gatcombe Park estate, Minchinhampton, or the magnificent Dutton of Sherborne records which include not only a wealth of manorial records but also two volumes of the 13th Century Winchcombe Abbey Cartulary.

Many business records are also deposited and relate to a multitude of industries including paper making, wool and cloth making, brewing, banking and building. Other records include those of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester; Berkeley, Cheltenham, Chipping Sodbury and Northleach boroughs; solicitors and estate agents, schools and colleges.

Copies of the handlist may be obtained from the County Archivist, Gloucestershire Records Office, Shire Hall, Gloucester, price 2/-, or 2/6d. post free.

## RECENT ADDITIONS TO STROUD MUSEUM

IN THE LAST number of the Bulletin reference was made to the bequest of a large collection of 19th century glassware. Certain types were for some reason absent, and we have since been fortunate in receiving, by gift, a number of perfect examples of products not represented.

Industrial items continue to come to light. These range from a rail chair and fragment of tramroad track found in the Forest of Dean, to a graphite crucible dug up at Horsley. The latter had been used in the smelting of non-ferrous metals, and must have been brought from one of the neighbouring industrial sites. Bottle labels from Niblett's now defunct mineral water factory, several cork-cutters trade cards and a large series of photographs of boats made at Brimscombe have been accepted, and clearly demonstrate the difference in character of objects all of them well worthy of collection for future display.

Several Roman coins have been found in the area. From the Kingscote Roman site has come pottery and part of a brooch, to add to the extensive collection from that area given to this Museum in former years. The finding of additional marked clay pipes has added still more to our knowledge of this fascinating subject.

A change of use of an old farm-house at Berkeley led to the discovery of a series of re-used medieval tiles. The Curator was called in, and the tiles were removed to Gloucester for examination. It is expected that some of the tiles may ultimately be displayed in Berkeley Church.

The Museum's fine collection of fossils has been appreciated by experts for many years, recent visitors specialising in this subject being Dr. Bonaparte of the National University of Argentina, and the members of the Geological Association. Central Gloucestershire is not a rich area for the study of fossil corals, and even when found they are usually partially obliterated by prolonged weathering or by a layer of rocky matrix which can be removed only with the greatest of difficulty. The Curator, by great good fortune, has located a small quarry containing large numbers of fine corals, and some of these are now being cleaned prior to identification.

Early this year, a large number of geological and historical books were purchased. Books of reference are given from time to time, but the average visitor rarely realises the extent to which his enjoyment depends upon the Museum's library.

## A SAD LOSS TO OUR COUNTY

IT IS UNDERSTOOD that Rodford Hill Farm, Westerleigh has been demolished to make way for the houses at one corner of the residential area around Yate New Town.

Built about 1560, it was almost certainly the last of the large farmhouses (this one probably had manorial status) in the county to be erected with a central cruck-built open hall. Except for the rebuilding of the service or kitchen end and the insertion of an upper floor in the hall, the building remained unchanged from the time of its erection. The massive roof trusses in both the house and the barn adjoining, were heavily braced and of great beauty, as were

also some of the original fireplaces and the late 17th century food cupboard with its pierced and shaped splats.

Apart from the normal troubles that come to houses that are not occupied, both house and barn were in a surprisingly good structural condition. It was a thing of beauty as well as occupying a unique place among the architectural treasures of our county. Realisation of its importance came too late to save it, perhaps as an inn of character. Let us hope that whatever is erected in its stead may be at least one quarter as attractive!

LIONEL F. J. WOLROND.

### ANTIQUITIES AT OLVESTON

IN 1604 the village could apparently boast of a good school; at any rate the schoolmaster and parish clerk was a well educated man and a latin scholar. The events of that autumn evidently made a great impression on his mind; and in a strange way he linked together an aurora borealis, which had appeared shortly before, the gunpowder plot, and the burning down of the spire, considering all three as especial manifestations of the power of the Almighty God, and direct warning from Heaven. He, therefore, wrote a full account of the storm and its consequences, and addressed it to James I. Copies of this book, the title of which is "Feareful Newes," are now very rare.

The schoolmaster begins:— Most puissant King, my dread and dear Sovereign, in most humble and submissive manner, I, your Highness' most dutiful and loyal subject, do herein present unto your excellent Majesty, the true report of a most fearful accident which Almighty God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, sent among us, your Highness' poor subjects, at Olveston, in the County of Gloucester, on Thursday, being the 28th of November last, whereof I was both an ear and an eye witness."

He then goes on to say, that if the wonderful works of God are profitable for the reverent consideration of ordinary men, above all are they so for kings and persons in high office.

The schoolmaster reflects on the hard-heartedness and blindness of the Olveston people, and concludes his book with many serious reflections and much grave counsel.

In two years the tower was rebuilt, for the date is plainly to be seen on it, 1606. During the 49 years that Ralph Greene was vicar, the registers were most carefully and correctly kept. Many of the names there inscribed are still common in the parish. Some occur as early as 1562. Addis, 1562. Holister, 1569, Dyer, 1590. Pullen, 1590. Hancock, 1592. Boulton, 1590. Champion, Curtis and Cullamore, 1630. R. Greene married three times, and outlived his three wives, the "three" referred to on his tombstone. He married his second wife two months after his first wife's death, and his third wife nine months after the death of the second.

The living of Olveston appears to have been after R. Greene's death, held by Dr. Nicolas, Dean of Bristol, who, however, did not reside in the village, or take any part in the duty, as his name only once occurs in the registers, when, in 1643, he baptized a child, and is especially mentioned as "Dr. Nicolas, our Vicar."

*Extract from Olveston Historical Bulletin by Thomas Haines.*

## A JEWISH BURIAL GROUND IN GLOUCESTER

MOST GLOUCESTER residents know the passage which runs from Barton Street to Russell Street known as Organ's Alley. In former times it was known as Edis Passage or Gardiners Alley. Along its western side runs a high brick wall topped with black blocks of slag from the old Gloucester Glasshouse on the Quay. Behind this wall were two old burial grounds which were used from the late 18th Century to late Victorian times. The ground at the Barton street end belonged to St. Michael's Parish; the other, adjacent to the old St. Michael's School was a Jewish cemetery. It was very small, only about eleven by nine yards, and the bodies buried there were exhumed in 1938 and re-interred in a special plot in the far corner of Coney Hill Cemetery. The Jewish Community of Britain then donated the ground to St. Michael's School as an additional playground.

The first person to be buried there was a little boy, Philip Feiss, son of Jacob the Levite in October 1784; the last Gloucester person was Miss Amelia Abrahams in 1880. She was the daughter of Israel or Isiah Abrahams, the Rabbi of the synagogue which was in Mercy Place opposite the Royal Infirmary. The very last burials were in 1886 and 1887 of two infant children, Michael and Rebecca Shane from Stroud.

In 1890 the Rev. J. J. Fowler, Vicar of Barnwood contributed an article to "Gloucestershire Notes & Queries" Volume 4, page 385. He had visited the Jewish graveyard, measured it by pacing, and recorded and translated the inscriptions he found on the 35 headstones. He had a conversation with the custodian who unlocked the door to let him in, telling him that there used to be a watchman's hut with a fireplace, built against the brick wall. Here Abraham Platt, known as "Plato", used to sit at night to protect newly-buried corpses from the body-snatchers. Plato it seemed, was a fine whist player and probably invited cronies into his hut to share his vigil and while away the hours with a pack of cards.

In May 1966 I obtained permission from the Bristol Glass Company who now occupy the old school, to go into the concreted yard which covers the site of the burial ground. There in the south East corner were traces of the watchman's hut and fireplace still plainly to be seen, and a shallow buttress which probably supported a lean-to roof. A few bricks had once been removed from the wall to make a peep hole for Plato to look into the alley in case body snatchers were lurking there, and this had now been filled with black slag blocks. The original entrance to the graveyard from the alley was an arched doorway in the brick wall. This portion of the wall was leaning badly and was taken down in the winter of 1966/7 and replaced by one of concrete blocks. Fortunately I had sketched the inside of the wall with its relics of Plato's hut so there is one record of this interesting place.

The little triangular Jewish burial ground in Coney Hill Cemetery is enclosed with a hedge. Of the 35 tombstones which Mr Fowler saw in the old burial ground, some must have been too perished to bear moving, others are only fragments, and only nine are still legible. One of these is Plato's. He died on January 13th, 1846. Miss Amelia Abraham's stone is still in good condition,



and it records that she was the last surviving member of the Jewish Community in Gloucester. She died on August 4th, 1880, aged 42, and the text at the bottom of her stone reads: "A good name is better than rubies".

GLADYS DAVIES.

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE TOBACCO

DOUBLE GLOUCESTER CHEESE, Cotswold sheep and Gloster Aircraft are all well known products of the county, but how well known now is Gloucestershire Tobacco? Three hundred years ago many smokers preferred it to Virginian. Smoking was introduced into Europe by the early Spanish explorers of America, and reached England by 1577. Because tobacco growing was the main source of income of the struggling English colony of Virginia, the government forbade its cultivation in this country in 1619, although Virginian tobacco cost up to 9s. a pound, a price that English growers believed they could undercut. In fact prohibition seems merely to have encouraged them.

One of the earliest growers was John Smyth of Nibley, the historian of the Berkeley family, who obtained seed from Virginia in 1619 and two years later actually exported four hogsheads of Gloucestershire tobacco to that colony! Contemporaries do not seem to have been aware of his activities for Thomas Fuller, in his *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), claimed that 'Tobacco was first planted in England about Winchcombe, and many got great estates thereby', and this surely refers to John Stratford. The latter was a Gloucestershire born London merchant, who bought and leased property at Winchcombe and Hailes, near his home at Farmcote, for the purpose of growing tobacco. His first crop was successfully raised in 1622 and in a few years he made a fortune of £20,000. Another grower claimed that in one year alone he had provided £1,500 worth of work for the Gloucestershire poor.

Despite "the great care and cost in planting, re-planting, transplanting, watering, snailing, suckering, topping, cropping, sweating, drying, making and rowling" and the uncertainty of profits which eventually led Stratford to bankruptcy, cultivation of tobacco spread. The area between Winchcombe and Cheltenham was always the centre, but it was grown throughout north Gloucestershire as far as Northleach, in south Worcestershire, and near Bristol. Cultivation was a good investment and it gave work for many poor people, as well as providing cheaper smoking. For by 1630 the habit was so widespread that children took pipes to school and "people even went to bed with pipes in their mouths, and got up in the night to light them." The price of Virginian tobacco had fallen in 1636 to about 5s. a pound, but Gloucestershire tobacco was no more than 3s. 6d., although according to one account it was pretty poor stuff, "basely and unwholsomely compounded . . . by reason of their beatinge of it in morters and otherwise, and thereby incorporating it into a body like Tobacco, for which neverthelesse the Buyers paye excessive Rates."

The success of the Gloucestershire growers alarmed the government, anxious to preserve Virginia's monopoly, and from 1627 there began a series of orders forbidding the growing of local tobacco. In Gloucestershire the orders from Whitehall were ignored. In 1627 Winchcombe officials tore up the warrants,

and in 1631 the sheriff and magistrates refused to act, which occasioned a pained letter from London, beginning "We could not have believed that after so many commands by his Majesty . . . any man would have presumed to have planted or maintained English tobacco." The letter was studiously ignored, and the crop smuggled up to London.

The government proceeded from persuasion to force, but attempts to destroy the growing crops later in the 1630s merely provoked riots. The Civil War saved the growers from further trouble for nearly twenty years but Cromwell was less lenient than Charles I. After further warnings troops were sent in 1658, only to be met by five or six hundred men and women in the fields of Cheltenham supported by two hundred more from Winchcombe. The officer, fearful of causing bloodshed and unsure of the support both of the local militia and magistrates, withdrew his troops.

This uneasy state of affairs continued after the Restoration of Charles II — parish constables refused to act, the sheriff was threatened, and the magistrates themselves grew tobacco — until in 1667 the Guards rode down from London to destroy the crop. Orders against cultivation continued to be made frequently for tobacco was still grown near Cheltenham until 1691, and over 300 acres were destroyed near Bristol in 1692. However, the fear of loss and lack of profit finally killed what was obviously a flourishing Gloucestershire industry, whose only traces are a few field-names like Tobacco Piece at Hailes or Tobacco Close at Winchcombe, and the older clay pipes which we dig up in our gardens.

BRIAN S. SMITH.

### SIR ISAAC PITMAN AND WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN the Bear Street School, Wotton-under-Edge, and a world famous system of shorthand may seem obscure. It is, however, a tangible one. Isaac Pitman, later Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of Pitman's Shorthand, was the School's first master when it was founded 132 years ago.

In the latter half of 1835 the Nonconformists of the town decided to establish a school of their own. To this end they formed a committee whose members included five Nonconformist ministers, and Jacob Pitman, the brother of the man who became the School's first master. At a meeting of the committee Jacob proposed that his brother Isaac Pitman, should be appointed master; and to this the committee agreed. However, the committee members were so doubtful of funds for the school being available, that they made Isaac Pitman responsible for his own salary for a six month's trial period. In January 1836 the new School was opened. Its premises were a room in the Folly, Sym Lane. To begin with, it was for boys only, and was to be run on "British and Foreign" lines; hence the original name, British School.

Isaac Pitman was born on January 4th, 1813 at Trowbridge, and began his working life as a clerk. Deciding that he wished to become a teacher, he studied at the Training College of the British and Foreign Schools Society. On leaving there, in 1832, he became master of a school at Barton-on-Humber. At this point in his teaching career he received the invitation from Wotton-under-Edge.

After ten months as master, Pitman clashed with the committee over his religious beliefs. He had recently accepted the doctrines of Swedenborg (1688-1772), the Swedish mystic. These were unacceptable to the committee, who dispensed with his services.

Pitman opened his own school in Bradley Street, and, wishing to teach shorthand as a voluntary subject, began to evolve his own system. The first stenographic alphabet had been devised by John Willis, who printed his invention in 1602. Other shorthand systems followed; the first on a phonetic basis being that of Tiffin, 1751. Pitman worked on his own system throughout the year 1837, not even stopping to take part in the celebrations marking Queen Victoria's accession. The result of his labours was a small booklet, "Stenographic Sound Hand".

Pitman called his shorthand system Phonography, a term dreived from two Greek words meaning "sound writing". This phrase briefly but accurately describes the system in which spoken sounds are represented by written characters.

The house in which he worked, "Roslyn", is situated in Orchard Street, a short distance from Wotton's main street. A stone plaque, commemorating Pitman's invention there, has been placed on the front of the house, and attracts many visitors.

In 1839, Pitman moved to Bath, publishing a second edition of his system in 1840. In the numerous editions that followed, many improvements were introduced, as a result of stenographic experiments and experience. Thus the Pitman's Shorthand we know today gradually evolved.

Pitman was knighted in 1894, and died on January 22nd, 1897.

J. COLBORN.

### SOME GLOUCESTERSHIRE FONTS

WE ARE ALL familiar with the "Mason's Marks" which are to be found in profusion in many of our Gloucestershire churches and which were stamped on the squared ashlar when completed so that the craftsman who carved it might receive the due reward of his labours.

These marks are often of great assistance to the historian in helping to trace the itinerary of some particular body of masons from church to church in a particular district, for the custom was that when a church was being built or enlarged, skilled craftsmen would come to the site and establish a lodge there where they performed their task which might have taken years to complete before they moved on to another place where their services might be required.

But not every ornament of the church was carved on the site. Even in the great days of churchbuilding certain features were made in the artist's workshop either by order or to a standard pattern. And of these many of our ancient fonts are good examples.

There is, for instance, a series of stone fonts which closely resemble one another differing only in lesser detail. These are the fonts at Hereford Cathedral, Newnham-on-Severn, Mitcheldean and Rendcome, with another at Orleton in Herefordshire which is obviously from the same craftsman although it differs

more than the others. These can all be dated from the early part of the Twelfth century. The Hereford font was damaged in the collapse of the Western portion of the cathedral, that at Mitcheldean was destroyed but replaced by a replica. The Newnham font has been moved several times since the church has been rebuilt more than once, while the Rendcombe font was removed from its original site at Elmore, and after passing some years as a garden ornament, was rescued and placed in the church.

Another series of fonts in which Gloucestershire is rich is the Norman lead fonts. Lead was a fairly normal material for Norman fonts but since the metal was in demand for other and urgent purposes from time to time, many of them have been lost. It is said that there are about thirty-eight original lead fonts of the Norman period remaining in the country, and if this is so, Gloucestershire is well blessed since there are no less than nine of these still in use in the county.

Of these nine fonts a peculiar feature is that six of them seem to have come from the same mould, and two of them originally stood in a single parish. It is not known where they were made but since all of them, possibly with one exception, stood in churches within easy reach of the River Severn they were probably brought in by water transport.

The six identical fonts are decorated in high relief and are full of detail. Bands of foliage surround the top and bottom of the bowl and the main decoration is that common to many Norman fonts, an arcade, each arch of which contains a figure or a design in scroll work. The font at Frampton-on-Severn is a good example of the type and so is the one at Sandhurst.

It was the parish of Tidenham where the Wye and Severn meet, which once possessed the two identical fonts. The one still remains in the parish church of St. Mary, while for very many years the other stood in the chapel at Lancut where the Wye makes its great horseshoe bend. But as worshippers moved away from the riverside river traffic decreased the church at last fell into ruin, and the font was rescued by a member of the Marling family, which once possessed land in the district, and taken for preservation to Stanley Pary at Selsley where it remained until it was placed in the Lady Chapel in Gloucester Cathedral where it has replaced the rather cumbersome Victorian font which once stood immediately within the South entrance.

The three lead fonts of different design are to be found in the churches at Down Hatherley, Haresfield and Slimbridge.

One of our oldest fonts is in the lovely church at Deerhurst, a little bit of Saxon England which has come down to the present day. Carved in Cotswold stone the design is the Celtic trumpet spiral bordered with a vine scroll, the spiral being an ancient form of ornament also found in early Irish manuscripts. Another very fine font is at Southrop which is again of Twelfth century manufacture. It has a tub shaped bowl decorated at the top and carrying a series of arches whose tops are carved to represent the heavenly mansions. Within the arcade stand five figures of human shape depicting the "Five Christian Virtues" Each is armed with a sword or scourge and is trampling on a beastlike creature representing the contrary vice. The names of the virtues are inscribed in Latin above while those of the vices are written in reverse below. The font has eight

panels and the remaining three depict Moscs as Lawgiver with the tables of stone, with his back to a hoodwinked "Synagogue" representing "The Old Law" and gazing approvingly at "Mother Church" who is carrying a pennon and holding a chalice as the representative of "The New Law".

Another attractive font is to be found at Leighterton. This is of Fourteenth century construction and has its bowl adorned with shields which bear the symbols of the Passion of Our Lord. Here we see the seamless robe, the ladder, the spear and the nails together with the sponge and the Crown of Thorns. All of these symbols speak a silent lesson to the newly baptised enjoining him to "follow the example of our Saviour Christ and be made like unto Him."

The font at Northleach may well be a "Benefactors" font since it bears a number of contemporary heads with grave masculine faces with those of a priest and a woman all thought to be likenesses of some of the benefactors of that outstanding building.

One of the most curiously shaped fonts is at Eastington where the bowl is like a huge plant pot, and under a ledge about half way up are carved sixteen scallops.

Almost within the county is the interesting and unusual font at Elmley Castle. The pedestal is of the late Eleventh or Early Twelfth century. It is composed of a square base upon which four writhing dragons support the bowl which is much later. The panels of the bowl are carved with devices common to Tudor fonts since this is dated in the early Sixteenth century. The shields represent the Five Wounds of Our Lord, the Lily of Our Lady, the Tudor Rose, ostrich feathers and the portcullis, all royal emblems or those of families in the district.

Apart from those already mentioned the Forest of Dean is not particularly rich in Fonts. Newland's font is unusual in being dated (1661) and is said to be a copy of the earlier one which, like so many others, was destroyed during the period of the Civil War and Commonwealth.

But there are two churches in West Gloucestershire which have the distinction of having two fonts in each building. At All Saints, Staunton the old font is an ancient square block with a bowl hollowed into the top and decorated with rough adornment. Some people have held that it was originally a Roman altar, but it is much more likely to have been Saxon work at the earliest. The second font at Staunton, and that which is normally in use, might well be passed over as being recent. This is because it has been re-tooled during a restoration, but it is a genuine Tudor example.

The other church with two fonts is Westbury-on-Severn. The one in normal use is a fairly modern ornament, but some time ago attention was directed to a stone basin which was in use as a water trough. Measurements were taken and it was found that the basin fitted a pedestal found in a nearby garden not so long before. The two were placed together and the result was a Tudor font bearing the arms of Queen Elizabeth I with the crowned Tudor rose, the Fleur de Lys, and a portcullis together with a winged Welsh dragon, the last being a fitting decoration for the font of a church on the high road from Gloucestershire into Wales.

R. J. MANSFIELD.



## BOOK REVIEWS

“DISCOVERING STATUES” — MARGARET BAKER

*Shire Publications*

THE AUTHOR GIVES very helpful information on four of Gloucester's most famous effigies . . . Bishop Hooper, Robert Raikes, William III and Charles II.

The oldest, a statue to Charles II, carved by Stephen Baldwin in 1662, is now incorporated in the layout of the Fountain-sq. flats.

The statue apparently disappeared from the City's Wheat Market in the 18th century but was re-discovered in 1945 and re-erected in 1960.

The small equestrian statue of William I over the doorway of the Fountain Inn, Westgate-st., is said to indicate that it was a favourite resort of the Orange faction before and after the Williamite revolution of 1688.

### Raikes replica

Raikes statue in the Park is better known. In 1929 the statue of Raikes which had stood on the Thames Embankment for 50 years was taken to sculptor A. B. Burton's studio and two replicas made in bronze.

One was sent to Canada while the other was erected in Gloucester Park where it was unveiled in 1930 by 40 children from Gloucester Sunday Schools.

Miss Baker tells the story of Raikes foundation of the Sunday schools.

The brutal tale of the burning of Bishop Hooper at St. Mary's-sq. in 1555 is included in the description of the statue, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1861.

The book gives similar information about statues in other towns and cities in southern England, excluding London.

Reform movements of close on two centuries ago seem to share a common form; Professor Peter Marshall's account of the anti-slave trade movement in Bristol is enthralling, particularly the brief section on Clarkson, but the pattern of growth from a burning personal concern to an organised movement, positions entrenched and leading back, on the opposition side to interests barely related by a genealogy of catchphrases is uncomfortably familiar; the conclusion is an anti-climax; the Bristol trade died not of Clarkson and Wilberforce, but of economic slump. This might look like game and set to Marx, but maybe Clarkson's courageous enquiry round the ale houses of the port was a sign of new attitudes; the trade was already doomed in 1787, but the spirit that drove Clarkson was the same that drove Shaftsbury and Charles Booth; and was it coincidence that, almost 200 years later, public conscience prevented the destruction of the arch at Paganhill, Stroud, commemorating Wilberforce's triumph?

ELISABETH VOWLES.

**“DISCOVERING THE GLOUCESTER ROAD” — ERIC RAYNOR**

*Shire Publications*

THIS IS A small paperback which sets out a typical coaching journey from London to Gloucester in the 1830's.

Its 48 pages are packed with snippets of information for modern-day travellers about the countryside through which they are travelling. It traces the brief history of the stage coaches from 1784, when the first mail coach service ran, up until the 1840's when the trains brought about their downfall.

Much of the old route still remains through the outskirts of London to Shipton Solers near Andoversford.

It refers to the now non-existent Bell Inn in Southgate-st., where 40 coaches a day left for Manchester, Carmarthen, Bristol, Birmingham, Plymouth and Sheffield.

*Courtesy “The Citizen”.*

**THE STORY OF DUNTISBOURNE ROUS**

by ANNE CARVER, 6/-

THIS EXCELLENT HISTORY of a small parish is an extremely good example of the detailed research which can reveal so much about otherwise obscure villages.

The booklet is very well illustrated with two pictures of the twelfth century church, and other ancient monuments, and clear maps. The account starts with pre-history, and the Saxon Chief called Dunt who gave the parish its name, and ends with the words of the late Robert Henriques referring to the valley: “you will find a country that is lagging a century or two behind, that in unsophisticated, more primitive, almost savage, as if the shepherds had never left and the binder never entered”.

M.M.

**BRISTOL BRANCH OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

**LOCAL HISTORY PAMPHLETS**

No. 7. *Bristol and the Slave Trade* by C. M. MACINNES. Second Impr.

No. 20. *The Anti-Slave Trade Movement in Bristol* by Peter Marshall. 3/-.

THE TWENTIETH PAMPHLET in this excellent series is devoted to the five years of the local anti-slave trade agitation begun by Clarkson's enquiry of 1787. It's timely companion is the second impression of an earlier study of the growth of the trade in Bristol out of the Bristol merchants' determination to keep the port alive for foreign trade, challenge the African monopoly of Londoners, and gamble for high stakes against heavy odds; it also shows how public opinion moved from anti-slavery into accepting expediency when the profitable colonial plantations were desperate for labour, a change doubtless aided by the fact that the horrors of African slavery were swept out of public sight in the Middle Passage of the round voyages. Professor MacInnes has described previously Bristol's fight to break the London monopoly of foreign trade, and in the matter of Africa he shows the Bristol merchants coming true to form; he also puts the trade into perspective with that of London and Liverpool and with the cleaner parts of the Bristol West Indian trade.

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**THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER BRANCH**

**Autumn Programme 1968**

**Friday, 18th October, 1968**

M. C. Morgan: **LENIN.**

**Friday, 15th November, 1968**

R. J. Knecht, Lecturer in History, Birmingham University:

**FRENCH CHATEAUX OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.** Illust. **SPECIAL GLOUCESTER LECTURE AT THE WHEATSTONE HALL, BRUNSWICK ROAD, GLOUCESTER at 7 p.m.**

**Thursday, 31st October, 1968**

P. V. McGrath, Senior Lecturer in History, Bristol University: **SIR THOMAS MORE.**

**Student Section**

**Thursday, 10th October, 1968**

R. W. Breach, St. Mary's College, Cheltenham. **TWENTIETH CENTURY THEMES.**

**Thursday, 21st November, 1968**

J. W. Wyatt: **VAGRANCY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE, 1730—1834.**

All meetings are at 5 p.m. in the King's School, Pitt Street, Gloucester.

**Spring Programme, 1969**

**January/February, 1969** (date to be announced). Brigadier Peter Young, The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst: **THE EDGEHILL CAMPAIGN OF 1642.**

**Friday, 14th February, 1969.** Professor K. Ingham, Bristol University: **A COLONIAL DILEMMA.**

**Friday, 14th March, 1969.** Dr. J. Scarisbrick, Queen Mary College, University of London: **HENRY VIII AND THE CHURCH.**

**CIRENCESTER ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Winter Programme, 1968/69**

**Monday, 21st October, 1968.** **THE MEDIEVAL ARTIST AND THE BIBLE.** The Rev. Canon Gethyn Jones, O.B.E., M.A.

**Monday, 4th November, 1968.** **THE PATTERN OF EARLY SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE UPPER THAMES AND THE WARWICKSHIRE AVON.** W. J. Ford, Esq.

**Monday, 18th November, 1968.** **THE REMARKABLE STORY OF HARTLEBURY CASTLE.** Mrs L. M. Charles-Edwards.

**Monday, 27th January, 1969.** **THE EARLY HISTORY OF BRISTOL.** Miss Elizabeth Ralph, M.A., F.S.A.

**Monday, 10th March, 1969.** **ENGLISH FURNITURE 1837—1910.** Clive Wainwright, Esq. of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**Monday, 24th March, 1969.** **RURAL LANDSCAPES IN ROMAN GLOUCESTERSHIRE, SOMERSET AND WILTS.** P. J. Fowler, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

**Monday, 14th April, 1969.** **CIRENCESTER EXCAVATIONS, 1968.** Alan McWhirr, Esq., B.Sc.