

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

LOCAL HISTORY BULLETIN

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Inset Illustrations—chalices and bell marks of Gloucestershire



EDITORIAL

THE PRIZEWINNERS OF the local history essay competition are announced with the Judge's comments on page 4. It was a most satisfactory entry and I much enjoyed reading them. I am glad that an extra prize has been given to Alun G. Sheen, the youngest entrant for his hard walked research into ancient trackways. I was also delighted with the entries for my own competition for an illustration for the cover. Many were so good that the choice became almost agonising, until Mr A. J. Bright, our printer, decided very quickly which picture would make the best block. Our congratulations go to Penny Bullen of Pate's Grammar School. From the block maker's angle a close second came the delightful little sketch of St. Briavels Castle by David Allen of Double View Secondary School, Cinderford, and we hope to use this in a later edition. In fact there are a number which we hope we may use later, since we are happy to say that the response to our sales campaign for the Bulletin has amply justified our continuing to print. Excellent blocks can also be made of R. E. Partridge's lovely old farm buildings, stone walling and all, and I admire the highly professional work from the Central Technical School.

Once again there has been a race between archaeologists and developers in Gloucester, and we have an interesting article on the findings. Finally I want to draw your attention to Volume 1 of "Historic Towns" published by Lovell Johns last December. It contains an account of Gloucester which is said to be a great advance in the knowledge of the city's history. Those who cannot afford five guineas for the book will doubtless want to get it from the City Library.

MERCEDES MACKAY, *Editor.*

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Abbots Court and Odda's Saxon Chapel

The discovery in 1675 of an encribed stone in the orchard of Abbot Court by a certain Judge Powell, drew attention to the possibility that the Chapel dated from Saxon times. It is now thought to have been built by Odda, a kinsman of Edward the Confessor. Odda was given an earldom, and died in Deerhurst on August 31st, 1056, a few months after consecrating the chapel. Odda is buried with his brother at Pershore, and a copy of the stone (the original preserved at Oxford) is in the chapel.

From a pen and ink drawing by Penny Bullen.

LOCAL HISTORY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

A MEETING TOOK place at Rodney Lodge, University of Bristol, on Thursday, January 30th, 1969, between members of the University and members of the Local History Committee of the Gloucestershire Community Council.

After a most valuable discussion, there was general agreement that a serious attempt should be made to establish and develop closer collaboration between the University (primarily through its extra-mural department), the Local History Committee, and the Local History Societies throughout the County.

REPORTS FROM THE SOCIETIES

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

AFTER THE ANNUAL General Meeting the Winter Sessions of the Society have begun with ever increased interest. The November meeting was addressed by Mr F. W. Rowbotham who proved that he is just as knowledgeable and interesting on the subject of Church Organs as he is on his more familiar topic of his beloved River Severn.

The following month Mr Harris, the County Director of the St. John Ambulance Association in Herefordshire, spoke on "Crusader Heritage", the story of the Order of St. John. Mr Harris will be conducting a tour of the Society in the Summer and visiting sites connected with his talk.

After the New Year break, what was probably a record number of members for a Winter meeting filled the Coleford Community Centre to hear Mr J. Neufville Taylor talk on Severn Fisheries.

FRAMPTON COTTERELL & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

THE GROUP WAS first formed in September, 1968. Eleven Members of the Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit area are active members and the Chairman is Mr C. J. Spittal. The first promotional lecture was given on Friday 7th before an audience of about 170 people, which raised thirteen guineas.

The group hopes to publish a local map to be on sale in the early summer, and with the co-operation of the local newspaper, the publication of pictures of historic buildings. The group is also undertaking a wide variety of research activities and field work, which includes taped and shorthand recorded conversation with old village residents, and examination of parish records and geneological tables.

KINGSWOOD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

AT ITS NEXT meeting the Society will have an opportunity of examining the contents of the Kingswood Parish Chest. This should prove to be most interesting. At the March meeting Mrs Vinter will give a talk on the operation of the Poor Law in Kingswood, this will be followed in April by a talk given by Mr W. Street on "The Vital Rays".

The whole day's outing is to be arranged towards the end of May in which month the Annual General Meeting will also be held. A talk on Artists of the West Country is scheduled for the June meeting.

OLVESTON PARISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MR J. H. HITCHEN has now been succeeded as Honorary Secretary by Mr N. Large. During the Summer there will be a field trip covering the Historical Aspects of the Severn Vale and Cotswold Hills.

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AT THE NOVEMBER meeting members gathered to hear, and those who had not already met him to see, the recently appointed Headmaster of Katharine Lady Berkeley's Grammar School, this being his first public engagement following his appointment. The subject of Mr Lee's most interesting address was "Religious Sensibility in Literature", his analysis beginning with Chaucer's "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" and ending with T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" and "Burnt Norton". Four of his senior pupils read selections from various works.

The January meeting was addressed by a past President, Miss E. Ralph, City Archivist, Bristol, who was warmly welcomed. She gave a vivid account of churches and monastic foundations shown on the 17th century map of the City of Bristol. Colour transparencies were used which depicted the architectural and decorative beauties of the exterior and interior of churches now standing.

Forthcoming visits of the Society to places of historical and architectural interest will be selected and it is intended to hold one full day, two half-days, and four evening visits.

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

A MEETING WILL be held in the City Museum, Bristol, at 11 a.m. on April 19th, the subject being "Colloquium": Roman Coarse Pottery in the Bristol Region. A survey and policy concerning the archaeology of the Bristol Region has recently been published edited by Leslie Grinsell. There are also pocket guides describing the field antiquities of the Mendip, Cotswolds, Wye Valley and Bristol Region obtainable from the Group.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 29th March in Gloucester when the President, Mr Patrick McGrath gave his Presidential address on "Gloucestershire and the Counter-Reformation in the reign of Elizabeth I."

SCHOOLS' ESSAY COMPETITION 1968

Judge's Report

There were only four entries in Class B, for group work, and twenty-one in Class A. The youngest entrant was 12 years and the oldest 16 years and the quality of the work of the younger ones was encouraging, although they have not the maturity which helps the best among the older ones. However, it was noticeable that the two best essays were written by those who had some foundation, though not direct help, provided by recent school work. They began more securely and found they were able to discuss their subjects in a historical context. They made use of general secondary reference material and many others failed to appreciate that this was necessary.

Clearly the subjects of the essays generated considerable interest, which led some to make great efforts to find out all they could and record it systematically. The presentation of most essays was thoughtful, often attractive, and many were relevantly illustrated. In spite of the preference for churches, there was a pleasing variety of subjects from trackways to the Beaufort Hunt, and it would be good to think that the interests of the writers have been deepened and broadened by their efforts.

Class A

- FIRST PRIZE — £5 R. Gapper and T. Evans, The Ridings School, Winterbourne.
Subject: "Education in Winterbourne".
- SECOND PRIZE — £3 R. D. Gleed, Marling School, Stroud.
Subject: "The Woollen Industry".
- THIRD PRIZE — £1 J. Howell, Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham.
Subject: "Woodchester".
- SPECIAL PRIZE — 15/- Book Token:
A. D. Sheen, Marling School, Stroud.
Subject: "Ancient Trackways".

Judge's Comments

It was difficult to choose between First and Second Prizewinners. Their essays were so different. I came down on the side of Education in the end as primary source material makes this essay. Both are the product of foundations laid in school work. The Third Prizewinner is the best of a very large group dealing with a subject which is rather unmanageable.

As regards Class B, no prizes are recommended because (a) there are so few entries, and (b) only one came near to being good enough and even here I have some reservations.

E. A. CHRISTMAS.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO GLOUCESTER CITY MUSEUMS

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS given to the Museum in the last few months were discovered in many different ways. One Neolithic stone axe was found in a field at Slimbridge, another was picked out of a collection in Oxfordshire bearing the label "Coberley". A Roman horse-shoe was spotted in a load of gravel from Frampton-on-Severn. A contractor working at Coaley unearthed a Roman stone mortar; another working at Berkeley brought to light a deposit of medieval pottery and iron slag, a relic of the industry mentioned in the Dean miners' "Laws and Privileges". A collection ranging from Bronze-age pottery to an Anglo-Saxon sceatta was the result of excavation by Mrs H. E. O'Neil, F.S.A., at Bevan's Quarry round barrow, Temple Guiting. Even wider in its scope is a collection of surface finds which has been assembled in systematic fieldwork throughout the Cotswolds by Mr D. A. Mears and the staff of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). Such a collection, documented with maps and plans, will compensate a little for the damage caused by deep ploughing on so many ancient sites.

An outstanding gift from Mrs Kathleen Tiley of Bristol is a three-quarter length portrait in wax in high relief of Robert Raikes the younger (1735-1811), the promoter of the Sunday School movement in 1780. The portrait, which has long been in the possession of Mrs Tiley's family, is about five inches in height, truncated at the waist, and executed in coloured waxes. It is exceptionally life-like and shows Raikes as an old man, bald and with rather sharp features, and dressed in the frock coat, low cut waistcoat, elaborately frilled shirt-front and cravat which were fashionable in the early years of the 19th century. Behind the figure are draped green velvet curtains.

The portrait is a typical example of the work of Samuel Percy, an Irishman born in 1750, who came to England as a young man and quickly achieved great distinction for his portraits in wax for which he charged one and a half guineas.

Several additions of local interest have been made to the Art Gallery collections. These include three topographical drawings by Allen Edward Everitt of Birmingham (1824-1882); Castle Street, Cirencester; Westgate Street, Gloucester; and the north end of College Court, Gloucester, as it was when Beatrix Potter saw it and painted it for *The Tailor of Gloucester*.

An interesting loan is the silver chalice and paten from the Church of St. John the Baptist, Great Rissington, deposited by the Priest-in-charge and Churchwardens. The chalice is 6½ inches high and bears the London marks for 1576, but it is of the 'wine-glass' pattern typical of those made in the West of England about 1570-1580. The conical bowl is engraved around the middle with stylised foliage and strapwork, and there is a band of unusual pouncing on the knop and base. The paten, 5¼ inches in diameter, carries the London marks for 1628 and is engraved on the underside with the date 1632 and the initials M.W. and T.M., perhaps those of the churchwardens of the day.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO STROUD MUSEUM

SINCE PUBLICATION OF Bulletin No. 17, yet another interesting fossil coral has come to light, this time from the Great Oolite beds near Miserden. Attention has also been drawn to the number of fragments of the ammonite *Liparoceras* found recently in streams, ditches and ploughed fields in an area stretching northwards from Stanley Downton (Leonard Stanley) through Haresfield and Brookthorpe to Churchdown.

A shortened list of the Gloucestershire prehistoric material in Stroud Museum has been published by the Bristol Archaeological Research Group in their recent Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 3. It is intended that their next issue will contain a list of the more important Roman, Medieval and later material. Since preparation of the Neolithic section, part of a polished stone axe has been found at Nailsworth.

Undoubtedly the most important archaeological find has been a fragment of a Roman glass bangle with a blue and white twist upon its outer edge. Dating from the late 1st or early 2nd century, these occur in Scotland and N. England, but are rare in the South. This specimen was picked up on a Roman site near Bisley, and has been loaned to the Museum by its finder. Roman pottery has also been given from two unrecorded sites at Stanley Downton and Easton Grey.

Domestic material has included an early top hat, scales, a snuff box, a knitting-needle case (an early example of the use of plastics), an ivory fan, etc. From Arlingham has come two straw bee skeps, fruit gathering and cider-making apparatus, and a large number of farm tools and wooden pulley blocks. The latter may well have come from old river craft in that they are rarely found on farms near the Cotswold plateau. From another site came a pair of cider-makers wooden-soled boots, probably worn to protect the trousers from being soiled by the freshly made cider. Other foot-wear given includes barrel washers' clogs, malting shoes, and sundry pieces of boot and shoe-makers' equipment. A most interesting collection of cider jars representing several of the Mid Gloucestershire breweries and spirit merchants has been given, also a large number of ink and mineral water containers dredged from a local mill pond, from which more material is expected to come during the summer of 1969. For those who prefer a different drink, we received a solid block of tea issued to the troops in 1882.

Some objects practically defy classification in a popular report of this nature, for instance a fine engraving of Stroud from a view-point rarely considered, but most effective; or an Aunt Sally, a fine example of folk art if there ever was one, complete with rings and box as supplied; or even a walking stick which upon closer examination turns out to be a measure for calculating the height of horses.

Stroud was once known for its clock and watch makers. Local watches must have been sold in large numbers, but until January when five specimens by different tradesmen were given, there were no examples in our collection. Following the closure of Fromewall Mills as a cloth mill the Museum has received an old sample book and miscellaneous small objects made or used in the mill. From Brimscombe Lower Mill has come a cast iron hopper bearing the maker's name of 'J. FERRABEE, STROUD'. The largest gift has been left till last, a complete water wheel and corn milling machinery dating from 1914. This is to be dismantled and stored for Stroud Museum pending re-erection in the proposed Department of Industry and Folk Life for which the Museum has been planning for several years.

LIONEL F. J. WALROND.

PRINCIPAL ACCESSIONS — RECORDS OFFICE

Mr Brian Smith, the County Archivist writes:—

This has been an extremely interesting year for deposits and probably the most important additions have been to the Blathwayt of Dyrham manuscripts. These are mainly concerned with 17th and 18th century diplomatic and official government affairs, and in many ways they can be considered of national importance.

There has also been an increasing emphasis on the deposit of more modern records. The minute books of county organisations such as the Federation of Child Welfare Centres and the National Farmers' Union will become of increasing importance as time goes by. We feel such deposits to be of equal import with others of a purely 'historical' nature.

- Family and estate: Austin & Hicks of Ashleworth: deeds of Kingswood (Wotton-under-Edge) and elsewhere, 1616-1870; misc. papers of Perry, Jones, Chinn, Austin & Hobbs families of Wotton, 1711-1857.
- Blathwayt of Dyrham (addnl.): diplomatic and official corres. of Secretary William Blathwayt, late 17th cent. — early 18th cent., mainly concerning European and West Indian affairs; includes an order from Oliver Cromwell to convey ships to Florida, 1659, papers relating to the National debt including corres. from William Paterson, founder of the Bank of England; family papers, pedigrees, diaries, corres. etc., 1719-1907.
- Chester-Master of Cirencester (addnl.): deeds, Almondsbury, 1569-1851, Tidenham, 1414 (including Beachley Ferry), Bagendon, Baunton, Cirencester, Preston, Stratton, Tetbury, Sopworth (Wilts.), 16th cent.—19th cent.; estate accounts, rentals, salary books etc. for Cirencester and Almondsbury estates, 18th cent.—20th cent.; maps, Almondsbury, 1700, 1828, Bristol 1752, 1813, manor of Preston 1687, other Cirencester estate maps 1687-1884.
- Gambier Parry of Highnam: Highnam deeds, 1650-1859, farm accounts and corres., 19th cent.—20th cent., estate and tithe maps, 1757-1846; churchwardens' and overseers' accounts for Churcham and Highnam, 1767-1871.
- Walwyn, Sturmy & Stratford of Swindon: deeds of Southam, Swindon, Winchcomb and elsewhere, c. 1230-1758; estate papers for lands in Swindon, Charlton Kings, Bishop's Cleeve and Prestbury, 1666-1814, including 18th cent. veterinary recipes and farming memoranda; papers, corres. etc. for Sturmy and Stratford families of Swindon, Beale of Stoke Orchard, Sunderland and Thorne of Sudeley, Harvey of Winchcomb, Loringe of Prestbury and Morgan of Cheltenham and Hereford, 1633-1818.
- Wykeham-Musgrave of Barnsley: plans of Barnsley Park and estate buildings. c. 1750—c. 1800; estate corres. and accounts including farm yields etc., 1755-1914; papers, wills, accounts, etc. of Musgrave family of Hatyon (Cum.) 19th cent., Blackall family of Gt. Hazeley (Oxon.), 1709-1796, Perrott family of Barnsley, 1737-1781; diaries of Georgina Wykeham, 1854-74; weekly reports on screw making factory in Birmingham 1832, 1882.
- Solicitors' deposits: Gabb & Co.: deeds of Awre and Newnham, 1696-1895; Little & Bloxam (addnl.): antiquarian notes, c. 1860-1900, personal papers, photo' album and 3 diaries (1870-1875) of the Rev. J. Melland Hall, Rector of Harescombe.
- A. E. Smith: Nailsworth Loan Society, 1836-1850, minutes; Nailsworth Parish Formation Committee Minutes, 1888-1891.
- Stallard & Co. (Worcs.), (addnl.): deeds of Blockley, Dymock, Moreton-in-Marsh, Newland, Forest of Dean and Ross (Herefs.), 1623-1902.
- Business: Swell Wold Farm: labour accounts, 1818-1840. Tewkesbury Savings Bank: ledgers etc., 1818-1890.

Official: S. Gos. Coroner: inquest records, 1946-1965. Inland Revenue: working sheet maps for Land Values Duties, 1910-1919. Land Tax Assessments: N. Gos., 1935-1949. Petty Sessions: registers, papers etc. for Horsley, Lawford's Gate, Nailsworth, Sodbury, Stroud, Tewkesbury, Thornbury, 1836-1963.

Dean and Chapter: court rolls of Coln St. Aldwyn, 1755-1827; estate papers of Dean and Chapter of Gloucester, 1755-1865.

Parish: Northleach; Stratton; addnl. deposits from Alderley, Dymock, Minchinhampton, Shorncombe, Somerford Keynes, Westbury-on-Severn.

Charity: Newent Parochial Charities: minutes and accounts, 1895-1963. Gyde Trust, Painswick: minutes and accounts, 1880-1906.

Nonconformist: Cambridge Congregational Church: minutes etc., (1806)-1966. Shortwood (Nailsworth) Baptist Church: minutes etc., 1716-1910.

Education: Bagendon C. of E. School log books, 1873-1907. Winchcomb Grammar: salary agreement, 1642.

Societies: Gos. Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society: reports, 1924-1958. Gos. Federation of Child Welfare Centres: minutes, 1915-1963. Gos. County Nursing Association: minutes, 1904-1966. National Farmers' Union: minutes for various Gos. branches, 1913-1962. Stroud Conservative Association: 19th century election pamphlets.

Military: 2/5 Gos. Regt.: history, 1914-1919. Gos. Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association: minutes, 1908-1963. Lechlade: Invasion Cttee. War Book, 1942. Winchcomb: Volunteers' Roll, 1803.

Miscellaneous: Cowley Manor photographic album, c. 1870. Monmouth and Dean Forest tramway: valuation of lands and accounts for building tramway, 1809-1820. Frampton-on-Severn: plan of the Manor, 1782.



Recorded Humour

From Horsley Register of Marriages, 1732.

"John Pegler and Anna Thomas were half-married. I proceeded no further because they paid me one-half 2/6".

Extracted by Judith Howell
Pates Grammar School

The Editor will be delighted to receive any more such gems unearthed in the course of local history research.

DIVINE MAGIC

SERVING MY FIRST Curacy in a parish in the poorer part of Cheltenham, I called one day on a woman whose child had been suffering severely from whooping cough. "I was at my wits end" she told me "nothing would relieve him until I opened the door one morning to a gypsy. When she heard of my trouble the gypsy told me to pull a couple of hairs from the child's head, fold them into a slice of bread, and give the sandwich to the first dog I saw. I was so desperate" she added, "that I did it, and immediately the child was relieved." I was interested in her story since I realised that the procedure was strictly in accordance with the laws of magic, and the incident encouraged me to collect instances of charms and folk remedies.

A more recent parishioner gave me a charm for stopping bleeding. He said that he didn't believe in it although his father had used it successfully. The patient had to repeat these words: "I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. He was born of the Virgin Mary and was baptised of John the Baptist in the river Jordan. The water was wide and red. He commanded and it stood. So stand ye blood in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Good Lord do this Charity for Thy servant."

Discussing this charm with a doctor I learnt that he had come across something similar. He asked me if my informant had said how many times the charm had to be repeated, and said that in the case he quoted, it was necessary for the patient to say the words over and over again a certain number of times. He continued that he had timed the process and found that it coincided with the time it took in a normal person for bleeding to cease of its own accord. The charm may not have effected a cure but it was certainly good psychology since it gave the patient something to divert his attention while nature did her own work.

Most charms of this kind follow a similar pattern and often make some reference to an apocryphal incident in the life of Our Lord, Our Blessed Lady or perhaps one of the apostles. When a healer used a charm on a patient it was usually muttered almost inaudibly, and the healer would leave without reward or even thanks since that might render the charm ineffective.

It is sometimes difficult to find connection between the incident quoted and the condition which requires charming. Epilepsy was not simply dreaded but held in some kind of awe. The old folk of Churchdown however were ready to counter any tendency in this direction in their children. They were in the habit of taking hairs from the dark cross on the back of a donkey — that distinctive mark given to all donkeys in memory of the one used by Our Lord in His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem — they then sewed the hairs into a black silk bag and hung the bag round the infant's neck as a certain preventive against fits.

St. Anthony's Well in the Vale of Castiard in the Forest of Dean was a favourite place for healing. The water issued from the quartz conglomerate of the Old Red Sandstone and was collected in a pool or bath which had stone steps leading into it from the South side. The water had a high reputation for being a cure in skin diseases, and even dogs were cured of mange by being

thrown into the bath two or three times. It is said that the customary procedure was for the patient to visit the well at sunrise, and that the early days of May were the most efficacious. On the first visit he was to descend the first step, and on subsequent visits he was to go down an additional step each day. Since the well is situated at some distance from the nearest settlement, it might well be imagined that any patient who was sufficiently fit to undertake the pilgrimage and the ordeal — for the water is extremely cold — over a period, should have little difficulty in throwing off the malady from which he was suffering.

The “outward and visible sign” of a sacrament of the Church was always reckoned to have healing powers. At Churcham, after the ceremony of Holy Baptism it was customary to wash the baby’s mouth with water from the font as a specific against toothache, while there was a widespread belief, especially in the days of mass confirmations, that the laying on of hands was “good for rheumatism” and there were those who took every opportunity of kneeling among the candidates for this purpose.

A curious method of healing used locally was advertised in the press in 1793. The advertisement runs as follows: “That infallible remedy for the bite of a mad dog performed by Sarah King of the Bell Inn, Frampton on Severn (only half a mile from the place of dipping) with care, safety and skill.

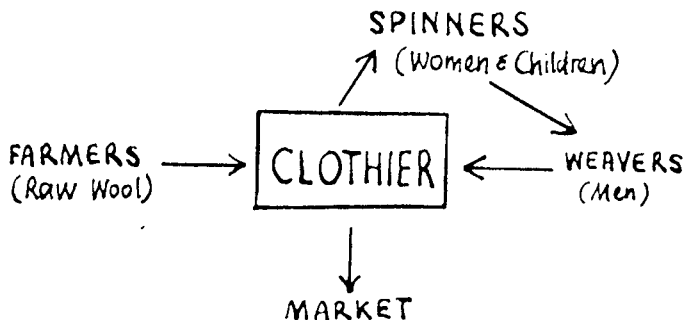
S. King begs leave to observe to the public that she employs a person to perform the operation who has been bred to the practice from his youth; that her house is situated nearer to the water by miles than that of any other person who practises dipping, and that if the person but arrives at her house two or three days before the full and change of the moon, and four days after, they may place the most implicit confidence in a cure.

Neat wines, spirituous liquors and best provisions by the public’s most obedient servant.—S. KING.”

The advertisement is headed “Dipping in the Salt Water” and the recommended times of arrival and sojourn suggest that the curative agent was none other than the Severn Bore.

R. J. MANSFIELD.

THE POWER OF THE CLOTHIER



Illustrated in his essay on the Cotswold Woollen Industry by R. D. Gleed, Marley School.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF THE BELL HOTEL

THE BELL HOTEL, at the heart of Gloucester, occupied one of the richest historical and archaeological sites in Britain. In the interval between its demolition and the erection of new buildings on the site, excavations by the City Museum have been aimed at salvaging as much as possible of its story.

The outstanding discovery has been that of the Roman Forum. This occupied the central *Insula* of the Roman city, covering an area of 2½ acres: in approximate modern terms its limits would be, on the north, Eastgate and Westgate Street, on the west, Mercers' Alley, on the south, Longsmith Street, and, on the east, the rear of the Bell Hotel. The main entrance was at the north end, under the Cross; this led into a spacious paved courtyard surrounded by colonnades on all four sides, with the Basilica, or main administrative building of the city, at the south end. It might be claimed that this was one of the most impressive buildings which have ever stood in Gloucester. Its size can be imagined as roughly equivalent to that of the old Market and it would have been as lavishly decorated as any Roman building in the City. The present excavation covers less than one-tenth of the Forum area, but past discoveries made on nearby sites have helped to make the identification of the buildings possible. Finds within the present excavation have included the remains of three colonnades, part of the courtyard, with the remains of a statue in it, and part of the Basilica. The statue stood on a massive masonry plinth 13 ft. x 10 ft., which had been rebuilt at least once, and the scrappy fragments of bronze found suggest that it was, at least in its later stages, an equestrian statue.

The Forum appears to have been built c. 100 A.D. Unfortunately the evidence for when it fell into disuse is inconclusive, but pottery among the rubbish which accumulated in the courtyard suggest it was in the late fourth or early fifth century.

This, however, is only one chapter in a story nineteen centuries long. Gloucester's military origins survive in the form of several pieces of military equipment found beneath the Forum floors. A succession of two periods of building had already taken place by the time the Forum was built, and work is currently in progress on the problem of identifying buildings belonging to the two layouts.

Perhaps the discovery of the greatest significance to the historian of Gloucester is a negative one, that the site was unoccupied during the Dark Ages and only reoccupied at about the time of the Norman conquest. The evidence for this is an interesting accumulation of sterile soil which covers the Roman levels and it is hoped that specialist examination may tell us more about contemporary conditions, such as what vegetation covered the site.

Reoccupation of the site took the form of the timber dwellings and workshops of shoemakers. Perishable materials, such as leather and wood, have been preserved in the waterlogged ground so that a valuable collection of 11th-13th century shoes and other leather has been found; even lice and beetles among the collapsed thatch from the roofs of the houses survive to give a vivid reminder of contemporary living conditions.

From the 13th century onwards archaeology has only a scrappy story to tell, since the majority of its evidence was removed when cellars were dug in

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is hoped that documentary evidence may here help to fill out the picture so that at least a glimpse may be had of this piece of Gloucester at each stage in its long life.

H. R. HURST.

MEDIEVAL FLOOR TILES FROM BREADSTONE

THE DISCOVERY IN March 1968 of some twenty-seven medieval floor tiles and fragments at Green Farm, Breadstone, was reported in the last issue of this bulletin. These tiles were transferred to the City Museum, Gloucester, for cleaning, drawing and identification. Some of them are now on loan to the Museum and are on display in the entrance hall, while others are on loan to the Stroud Museum and to Berkeley Church.

The tiles were manufactured, probably at the Malvern kiln, between 1511 and 1521 when Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, was rebuilding Thornbury Castle on a grand scale. All building work was brought to a halt when the Duke was executed in March of 1521 on a treason charge, but one wing of the building including the banqueting hall had been completed. These tiles probably formed part of the flooring of this hall, though a large number will have been destroyed over the centuries. It is also possible that some looting of building materials took place after the Duke's death and this might account for the appearance of similar tiles at Littleton on Severn, Alveston and Hill.

The designs on the tiles show the various badges used by the Duke of Buckingham. The seated antelope of the Staffords; the Swan of the Bohuns and the Flaming Axle of Woodstock. A design made up from four tiles shows the Coat of Arms of the Duke surrounded by the motto of the Order of the Garter and illustrating the badges in the corners. Other single tiles show the Coats of Arms of some of the great families allied by marriage to the Duke.

Thornbury Castle was never completed, but it still belongs to the Stafford family, and nearly sixty examples of these tiles are still laid in one of the floors.

R. J. MALDEN.

JOHN NEWTON OF BARR'S COURT AND HIS BARONETCY

Among the well-known — and well-to-do — families in Southernmost Gloucestershire in the 17th century the Newtons of Barr's Court ranked high, and John Newton, who lived there in 1660, although he had no natural heir, determined to make application for a Baronetcy.

Before the Patent came through, however, he found himself in trouble — not only with the law, but needing money, hence this letter (here somewhat abbreviated).

My Deare Brother

. . . . if I could gett money uppon anie account I would never have trobled you if you cannot without prejudice pay in 500l att oure Ladie day I shall intreate you that I may have bills of exchange sent me downe for 300l one favor more I shall desire of you and

that is that you would bee pleased to write upp to London to whom itt concerns that I may have a testimoniall under theare hand or hands that are authentick that the patent is past and sealed for a Barronett my reason for itt is I have Sutes in law and thay goe on in the name of Barronett Newton now if I should bee questioned how I make itt out you know I cannot doe itt and thearfore I must needes bee cast wch will bee a great disgrace to mee withall I have one tryall att Gloster assizes wheare I would not have that disgrace putt uppon mee for a thousand pownds thearfore deare Brother use your endeavor to salve this feare otherways I shall fall into the reproach of my enemies Trulie Brother as to mine and my wifes health I thinke this milde winter hath added little to mine especiallie . . . I am not yett gott out of the Doctors reach but I trust in god in some short time I shall I am verie joyfull to heare of my deare sisters amendment and lett her know I am the least worthy of all her honowrer to have a place in her thoughts Although shee bee soe full of sweetnesse that I cannot dispayre of her affection I beseech god to restore her health and mine that I may att her feete acknowledge how much I am hers to you both & tender my cordiall respects and service and love to all my cosins my wife would doe the same but shee is now att Barsceort and I am howskeeper att Bristoll wheare I hope I shall not bee longer . . . in the meane time I rest

Deare Brother

Bristoll 23th Feb:

Yours unfamedlie

1660

J. Newton

Of this Sir John little seems to be recorded — even his epitaph, which was inscribed on two tablets affixed to his tomb, has perished. A note made by Wm. Barrett of the inscription, however, says that it recorded that

“He was a man of great courage and the greatest loyalty to his Prince, an honour to his country, a credit and noble ornament to his name and family”

He died within a twelvemonth of the date of this letter; his lady survived him many years.

At his desire, the title passed to John Newton of Hador, Lincolnshire, and it became extinct in 1743 with the death of Sir Michael, s.v.p.



*Leonard Stanley
c 1600*

BOOK REVIEWS

SEBASTIAN CABOT AND BRISTOL EXPLORATION

by DAVID B. QUINN — 5/- Bristol Branch of the H.A. 1968

SEBASTIAN CABOT HAS always been regarded as one of Bristol's more famous sons and it is extremely interesting to have this study in miniature of the famous explorer. Despite Bristol's claim to him, Sebastian is rather an odd old boy: born in Venice; thirty years in the service of Spain; head of a Seville pilot school; it is by no means certain (though likely) that the famous voyage of 1508-9 was financed by Bristol or started from Bristol. Yet the Cabots obviously did have a soft spot for the town, for Sebastian returned in 1549 after thirty years of wandering and he tried to raise capital there in the 1550's for further voyages. However, Bristol did not appear to return his confidence, for Cabot in 1549 had to go to London to obtain financial backing and it was some time before Bristol merchants built on his mercantile achievements.

This pamphlet is the twenty-first in a series produced by the Bristol Branch of the Historical Association and the Branch is to be congratulated both on their enterprise in publishing the monographs and in persuading Professor Quinn of Liverpool University to write on Sebastian Cabot. Professor Quinn, who has contributed articles on exploration to historical journals, is known for his deep knowledge and interest in the voyages of discovery. He traces the threads of the careers of John and Sebastian Cabot with great skill, slipping the pieces of the jigsaw neatly into place, so that one can follow the adventures of the tiny ships as they cross the Atlantic.

Professor Quinn tries to answer some of the more puzzling questions about Sebastian Cabot: what part did he play in the voyages of 1502-5; how far north did he sail in 1508-9; how reliable are the narratives of Peter Martyr and other writers of the time; and what stake did Bristol have in the financial and mercantile possibilities of the voyage? In the end there are many questions left unanswered, simply because of the paucity of material. However, what evidence there is expertly assembled and analysed by Professor Quinn. In all, a fascinating piece of detective work.

ALAN JAMIESON.

THROUGH THE SAXON DOOR

by CANON R. G. GIBBON, M.A. — 12/6

LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by scholarly parsons has been a traditional feature of English country life, but there is nothing old-fashioned in this excellent story of Somerford Keynes and Shorcote, near Cirencester. Although the account of manor and church provides the main framework, this book is about people; not only squires and parsons, but peasants, nurserymen and wartime evacuees. The title, incidentally, is taken from the Saxon doorway in the church, probably the oldest Saxon work in the county.

It is among the best of this kind of village histories, based on painstaking and critical research from books, records, local memories and personal observation. The evidence is varied, and its source quoted. Canon Gibbon is inspired by a love of his parish, and he writes in a clear and flowing style. The illustrations are aptly chosen and add to the text. There is a map, perhaps somewhat over-simplified for a stranger. The book is very attractively produced. My one criticism is that there is no index; a book of this length and erudition both needs and deserves one, and there is the space. Anyone proposing to write a local history on this scale should buy a copy to serve as their model.

B.S.S.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

- May 3rd: All Day Tour — “The Vale of Glamorgan”.
- June 7th: “Features of the Coln Valley”. Guide: Mr David Verey, F.S.A.
- July 5th: “Dinmore” and some Herefordshire Haunts. Guide: Mr H. J. Harris.
- September 6th: “Neighbours on the Wye” — A Tour of the N.W. Border of the Forest. Guide: Canon Mansfield.
- October 4th: Annual General Meeting and Elections, 2.30 p.m.
“The Chairman’s Choice” — The Parish of Awre, Mr Bull.
- November 1st: “Coins and Tokens” — Mr Owen Parsons.
- December 6th: “Town and Country Planning — An Historical Survey” — Mr Norman Collins.

BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The following field meetings have been arranged:

- May 17th: Visit to Berkeley.
- July 16-19th: Northamptonshire.

