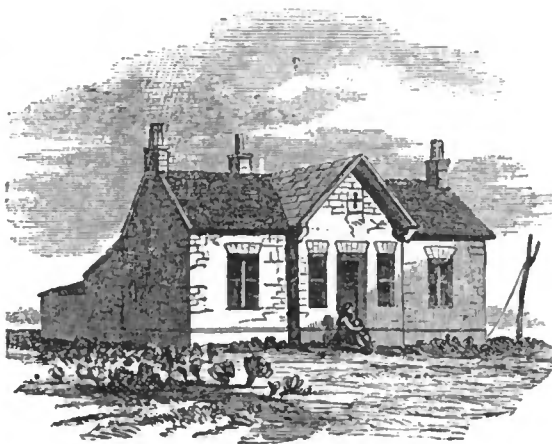


Local History Bulletin

SPRING 1971 — No. 23



HOUSE AT SNIGS END (Front)

See article on page 6

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EDITORIAL

WE HAVE HAD a great many excellent contributions for this edition and, with the illustrations which are a great asset, I am in the happy position of striving to fit it all in instead of supplicating for copy. I have decided to omit the section on lectures and meetings and the news from the Societies as they are difficult to collect. Secretaries who would like news of their societies in the Bulletin have only to send them in by August and February.

Attention must be drawn to the excellent report covering two years of the City of Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery. It is gratifying to learn from it that attendance has gone up by more than 10,000 and that there have been so many interesting additions to the collections.

MERCEDES MACKAY, *Editor.*

Gloucestershire Records Office

LIST OF PRINCIPAL ACCESSIONS 1970

MR BRIAN SMITH, the County archivist writes that 1970 was a very good year . . . "Perhaps the most important are the records of the Dent-Brocklehurst family of Sudeley, and the estate papers, maps etc. of the Cirencester Park and Chester-Master estates. The latter includes a most interesting rental of houses and lands belonging to Philip Green in Bristol in 1498/9 containing the name of Kohn, father of Sebastian Cabot, the explorer."

There has also been an unusual amount of photographs and negatives.

Family and estate: Bathurst of Cirencester: Cirencester Park estate, deeds and papers of N. Cerney, Cirencester, Sapperton, Siddington, also Derbys. and Notts, estates, 17-20 c.; estate maps, Glos., Derbys., (63 boxes).

Chester-Master of Cirencester (addnl.): maps of Cirencester and Ampney estates (60), also including Almondsbury, N. Cerney, Mangersbury, Upper Slaughter and Wick Rissington; estate surveys and deeds, 18-19c., rental, Bristol property of Philip Green, 1498-9 (1).

Dent-Brocklehurst of Sudeley: deeds of Hawling, Sudeley, Winchcombe, also deeds of Broughton, Pershore and Worcester (Worcs.), Ilmington (Warwicks), 1608-1902 (67 bdles. 30 docs.); probate wills and executorship papers of the Dent family, 1811-1901 (14 bdles., 2 vols.); plans of Sudeley estates, 1783-1900 (1 folder, 1 box); account book and papers of Dent and Allcroft, glove manufacturers of Worcester and London, 1781-1853 (2 bdles.); estate accounts, inventories, weather record, sale plans, correspondence, c. 1727-1936 (19 bdles., 29 vols.); Winchcombe Nursing Association accounts and minutes, 1909-1948 (3 vols., 1 bdle.)

Jenner-Fust of Hill (addnl.): Hill charters, 1366-1625 (4); Parliamentary order to Berkeley Hundred, 1645, and Privy Council orders for defence against Charles Stuart, 1743, 1745 (3).

Parish (some addnl.): Adlestrop, Barnsley, Berkeley, Bisley, Blaisdon, Bourton-on-the-Hill, Brockworth, Coates, Eastleach Martin, Eastleach Turville, Ebrington, Flaxley, Frocester, Hartpury, Lechlade, Mangotsfield, Moreton

- Valence, Naunton, Stratton, Upton St. Leonards, Woodchester, Wotton-under-Edge (198 vols., 20 bdles.).
- Nonconformist:** Cinderford Methodist Circuit, circuit schedules, quarterly meeting minutes, church accounts, 1850-1960 (60 vols., 4 bdles.); Ebley Congregational Church, minutes and papers including letters to Countess of Huntingdon, 1797-1954 (47 vols., 6 bdles.); Forest Green Congregational Church, Nailsworth, minutes, 1846-c.1952 (1 vol.); Bedford St. Congregational Church, Stroud, minutes, accounts, papers including records of Stroud Literary Society, 1828-1949 (37 vols., 7 bdles.); Old Chapel Congregational Church, Stroud, registers, vestry books, minutes, accounts, 1712-1954 (11 vols., 1 bdl.); Tewkesbury Methodist Circuit, circuit schedules, quarterly meeting minutes, church accounts, 1799-1964 (52 vols., 2 bdles.).
- Education:** attendance registers, log books, Frocester, Naunton, Chipping Sodbury, Upleadon, 19 - 20 c. (15 vols.).
- Solicitors' deposits:** McLaren, Jeens and Seacome (addnl.): Elmstone Hardwicke copy tithe map, c. 1840 (1).
- Wells, Hodsmen, Crossman & Co. (addnl.): maps and estate plans (mainly O.S.) of Thornbury and area, 19-20 c.; Thornbury Grammar School account book, 1870-1908; wills, accounts, letter books, sale particulars, 18-19 c. (21 vols., 15 bdles.).
- Manorial:** Court rolls and papers of Eastleach Martin, 1764-1854 (1 vol.); Gotherington, 1672 (1); Hill, 1385-8 (1); Prestbury, 1418-1702 (3); Sudeley and Winchcombe, 1736-1903 (3 bdles., 10 docs.).
- Deeds:** 38 Glos. parishes, 1499-20 c. (approx. 500).
- Ecclesiastical:** N. Forest Rural Deanery church inspection note book, 1923-29 (1 vol.); Whitstone Clerical Society, minutes, 1958-64 (1 vol.).
- Business:** Fulljames and Waller & Son, architects, plans, corres. relating to Glos. churches, parsonages, public buildings, mid 19-early 20 c.; plans of Stanley Mill, King's Stanley, 1813 (made 1969) (7); Stroudwater canal, cutters' account, 1775 (1); Tewkesbury Garage, ledgers, corres., c. 1912-1930 (22 vols., 8 bdles.).
- Official:** Mangotsfield U.D.C. minutes, 1927-46 (16 vols.); S. Glos. Drainage Board, minutes, maps and accounts, 1887-1937 (22 vols., 6 docs.).
- Societies:** Duntisbourne Abbots W.I. minutes and accounts, 1924-59 (11 vols.); Stonehouse Brotherhood, minutes, 1913-22 (1 vol.); Stonehouse Subscription Rooms, minutes, 1893-1955 (10 vols.).
- Maps:** Gloucester, Castle Meads, 1756 (1); Turkdean, 1765 (1); Little and Great Witcombe (field names), c. 1950 (1).
- Diaries:** farming and personal diaries of J. S. Calvert of Tothill (Lincs.) and Shipton under Wychwood (Oxon.), 1845-1900 (4 vols.); journal of vicar of Weston Subedge, 1924-40 (1 vol.).
- Miscellaneous:** Alvington and Ashleworth, copy inclosure awards, 1798, 1814 (2); picture postcard photographs of Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud and mid-Glos., c. 1890-1935 (200); misc. photographs and negatives, many Glos. parishes, c. 1930-40 (approx. 1,100); antiquarian notes, Bitton, Colesbourne, Harescombe, Highnam, 1902-70.

ADDITIONS TO STROUD MUSEUM, 1970

UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST interesting group of objects was received from Messrs. Whitbread Flowers Ltd, and consisted of a large quantity of architectural material from nos. 18-20 Wallbridge, Stroud, which has been reported upon elsewhere in this issue. A great deal has still to be done before the importance of this material can be fully recognised.

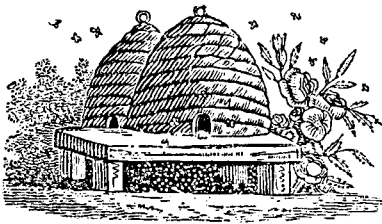
Many more fossils have come to the Museum as a result of work on both the M4 and M5 motorways, and these would have been even more numerous had it been possible for the Curator to continue fieldwork in the area south of Cam.

Apart from a 12th century carved stone head, which may well have come from Bisley Church, little archaeological material has been received. Industrial material has included an example of Budding's Improved Spanner, made at the Phoenix Ironworks, Thrupp, kiln slag from Chaxhill, Westbury-on-Severn, and examples of cloth made by Marling and Co. c. 1900. From Wiltshire, on long loan, has come a Lewis crosscutter. Invented at Brimscombe in 1815 for shearing the surface of fine quality cloth; it is thought that only three of these machines now survive. Craft tools have included coopering and general carpenters' tools, and a hand mill for extruding lead of H section for window glazing. There have been two gifts of dairy equipment, and our already extensive collection of jars and bottles for beer and mineral waters has been enlarged.

Fewer truly domestic articles have been received this year, but this has been more than compensated for by their quality. The finest, brought to us from Leicester, was a 17th century clock by the Stroud maker William Holloway. Dated 1662, it is the earliest known work by this maker.

THE MEDIEVAL BEE HOUSE

VISITORS TO THE Gloucestershire College of Agriculture seeing the recently completed work of re-erection and restoration of the mediaeval stone bee house there have asked about its history. In the first place what is it? We know that



for protection from the elements straw skeps of bees were sometimes kept in "bee boles". These were recesses in garden walls and a few still exist in parts of Britain, some in Gloucestershire. The stone structure which stood for many years at the rear of Nailsworth Police Station was however, a free standing edifice

which, according to Dr. Eva Crane of the Bee Research Association, was a "bee house". It was eight feet high and thirty feet in length and consisted of two horizontal platforms each two feet apart with vertical divisions of some eighteen inches. The base was of flattened arches with the rear closed in with carved panels; the whole being surmounted by a stone roof with perforated crest and ornaments. The edges both horizontal and vertical were ornamented with carved designs.

What is known of its history? In actual fact, very little, but there are some interesting clues. The weathered condition of some of the stone work bears testimony to its great age. In 1842 a noted Oxfordshire beekeeper, W. C. Cotton, published a book which contained an illustration of a similar structure complete with two rows of skeps. Earlier than that, however, William Lawson had described and illustrated a similar structure in "The Country Housewife's Garden" published in 1618. "A frame standing on posts with one floor (if you would have it hold more Hives, two Floores) boarded, laid on bearers and back posts, covered over with boards, slatwise. And although your Hives stand within a handbreadth the one of another, yet will the Bees know their home. In this Framc may your Bees stand dry and warm".

It is interesting to note that in those days women were often the beekeepers. Lawson, in opening his book writes: "I will not account her any of my good Housewives that wanteth either bees or of skilfulness about them." Again John Lovett in "The Ordering of Bees" published in 1634, opens his book: "The greatest use of this book will be for the unlearned and Country people, especially good women, who commonly in this Country take most care and regard for this kind of commodity (although much the worse for the poor bees) because sometimes they want help, sometimes diligence, but most times knowledge how to use them well."

When recently it was learnt that plans were afoot to take down the structure and replace it by a wall, those anxious for the future of such an interesting relic sought the help of the County Architect and Surveyor's Department in its removal for preservation elsewhere. Eventually permission was granted but then came the problem of how a complicated project involving skilled work in carefully dismantling and re-erecting five tons of delicate, and in some cases decaying, stonework was to be carried out. When the proposition was put to members of the Gloucestershire Beekeepers Association several offered help, including one whose expert knowledge of building and masonry was to prove indispensable. The question of re-erection then arose and the grounds of the Gloucestershire College of Agriculture seemed a suitable place and permission from the Governors of the College being forthcoming, the work began in November 1968.

It was at this stage that it was noticed that the stone used in its construction was not a local stone of the Cotswolds but Caen stone quarried in Normandy. Hearing of this Mr E. G. Burt, the historian, realised that here was a possible clue to the origin of the beehouse. The Urban District of Nailsworth is of modern origin having been carved out of the three Manors of Minchinhampton, Avening and Horsley. The bee house can therefore be regarded as having been at one time within the boundary of the Manor of Minchinhampton, and close at hand in the garden of one of the oldest houses in Nailsworth was a pre-reformation chapel. The Manor of Minchinhampton and possibly Avening as well, were granted by William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda to the then newly established Abbaye aux Dames at Caen where their daughter had become the first Abbess. So for 500 years there was a regular link with Caen, and every autumn the Steward of the Manor collected the dues and rents and

set off with a small party to protect him across the south of England to Southampton, when they sailed for Outrisham, the port for Caen, to deliver their dues to their Lady. This commercial link may explain the origin of the stone.

In those days both honey and beeswax were valuable commodities, the latter being used for making candles for the Church. This bee house, however, is an outstandingly fine one. Its elaborate decoration is clear evidence that it belonged to an owner of wealth and rank, and it has accommodation for 24 hives which is far more than any ordinary householder would need. In fact, it is probable that at some time it has been cut down in size, and possibly originally held as many as 36 hives.

*Reproduced by kind permission of MR W. J. ROBINSON,
Gloucestershire Beekeepers Association.*

CHARTIST LAND SETTLEMENTS AT SNIGS END AND LOWBANDS

"FIRST OF ALL came the band . . . playing 'See the Conquering Hero Comes', next came the one-horse fly . . . containing the local leaders of the 'People's Land Scheme', . . . then a waggon-load of workmen's benches for the construction of the new houses at Snigs End, next . . . a cart-load of 'humans', the wives and children probably of the 'Snigs-end settlers'." This is from the *Gloucester Chronicle* report of the publicity procession of the Chartist Land Company officers, workmen and settlers through Cheltenham on 10 January 1848 to take possession of their new estate at Snigs End, Staunton.

Feargus O'Connor came to England as member for Co. Cork in the Reform Parliament of 1832, and became notorious for fantastic schemes. The Chartist leaders discarded him but he continued to use the name of Chartist, and gained a big following among the hungry and unemployed crowds in the industrial cities of the north. The times were very bad. These were the "hungry forties", and in 1843 O'Connor began to develop in his newspaper, the *Northern Star*, an idea of co-operative buying of land, and building houses with two or three acres apiece, and settling unemployed men on the smallholdings. Using the Chartist name and branch organisation, he persuaded five men to act as his staff, and in 1846 set up his Land Company. One share (£2.10s.) qualified you for a chance in the lottery for a house, two acres, and £15 aid money to settle with; 1½ shares for a house, three acres and £22.10s.; two shares for a house, four acres and £30. These Properties would be let in perpetuity to their holders, and the rents would be sold at 20 years' purchase to provide money to buy the next estate. Shares could be subscribed for in 3d. instalments through local Chartist branches, and winning of a house was by lottery, held in public. This lottery, fatal to the success of the Company, was its chief hold on the masses, who knew that they could never qualify except by pure chance.

In March 1846 O'Connor bought the first estate, in Hertfordshire, and in October the second, Lowbands, then in Worcestershire and now in Gloucestershire. Another followed in Oxfordshire, and in June 1847 the fourth, in Gloucestershire at Snigs End, Staunton. The last was at Great Dodford in Worcestershire.

The two settlements in our county remain today clearly identifiable. The houses are all identical, bungalows with low centre gable over the kitchen, bedroom one side and sittingroom the other, and roof sloping steeply at the back to cover the five sections opening from the three front rooms, cow, pony and cart sheds, wash house, and dairy. Short spurs on each side at the back held privy and pigsty, wood shed and fowl shed, and a low wall joined these spurs to enclose a little yard. In the centre gable was a small ornamental design which differed in five varieties, and let air in to the rafters. Estate roads remain 9 ft. wide, as in all the Company estates, and the schools, all similar, stand out as a three-storey house between two long schoolrooms, Boys' and Girls'.

Lowbands and Applehurst farms were bought by O'Connor in October 1846, soon after the Hertfordshire estate at Heronsgate was settled. To find this estate, deeply hidden in fields, trees and hedges, leave Staunton on the A417 and after two and a bit miles turn right and go on till the gentle, snug little houses creep upon your view. In December 1846 O'Connor wrote his editorial in the *Northern Star* to his thousands of followers. He had gone to solicitors at Cirencester to pay his cash for "our second estate. I had a very small lump of co-operation in my fob, which reminded me, every time I thought of it, of your overwhelming power. The size was imperceptible, though it consisted of Eight Bank Notes of £1,000 each, gathered in shillings, sixpences, and pence." Here O'Connor and various staff settled in, and here he laid out 46 holdings and built their houses. Building was easy here compared with Hertfordshire. Water was so plentiful that every cottage could have its well and pump in the kitchen or back premises or yard. Stone quarries were nearby, sand was on the estate, and clay for kilns to burn limestone and clay mix for road materials.

A piece of common called Forty Green made a centre, round which O'Connor laid out the estate. He sited the school at one end, near paths. He cut 9 ft. wide lanes roughly round Forty Green and laid out the holdings along them. Gloucester contractors quoted £230 or £240 for each house, so O'Connor rejected them and organised the work himself. He had an excellent foreman in Henry Cullingham, stone mason in Griffiths, and plasterer in Jones. Seventeen horses hauled the building material "for men that never had a house in their lives", and fifteen in-calf heifers grazed, so that there was a good source of dung for the ground and perhaps a calf for the shed. The school was built facing the Malvern hills across fields, its back to the lane, as you can see it today.

To find Snigs End, go from Gloucester, cross the Severn on the A417, and made straight for Staunton, and a mile from it you will see the houses on each side of the road, with their long plots of land behind them. On the left you will pass the school, now the *Prince of Wales* inn. At the cross, turn right and up Moat Lane for one part of the estate. This lane will bring you past some fine, prosperous four-acre holdings back to the village street again, facing another crescent of 1848 houses called Ledbury Crescent. Between 80 and 90 houses (O'Connor's statements vary widely) were built here and their acres ploughed and sown or planted between January 1847 and June 1848. Location day was June 12. Vans, carts, gigs, packladen walkers assembled at the school and the allottees were taken to their modern equivalent of a miracle. Later on there was

a gathering with speeches, eating, dancing, singing, in the grounds of the school. A procession went to visit Lowbands, established in the previous August, 1947.

Enormous care was given to the first lottery, for Heronsgate in Hertfordshire, but by the second, for Lowbands, the organisation was breaking down and lists were incomplete. At Lowbands, the proportion was roughly 15 from the north, five from the midlands, seven from the south, one from Scotland. At Snigs End it was 20 from the north, 13 from the midlands, 14 from the south, 12 whose origin is not stated, three from Scotland, three from Wales, one from Rouen, France. Three at Snigs End were women, and two men were local, one from Upton-on-Severn, one from Ledbury. Lowbands school was opened as a school but not that at Snigs End. O'Brien, an Irish Chartist from Exeter, and his wife, became the master and mistress.

Understandably, the local people and landowners were reluctant to have in their parishes large settlements of Chartists, who were known to be drilling on the moors outside Leeds and Bradford, and boasting of home-made "rockets". They were also likely to become a burden on the rates. At the Lowbands location day the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* observed that "judging by appearances (the new allottees) are by no means fitted to buffet with the hardships and privations of a country life", and so they mostly proved. Many were nothing like so tough physically as country people, and could not endure outdoor work in wind and cold which did not affect the locals. They crouched over the fire and spent their savings on hiring labour. Many local people took pity on them and ploughed or harrowed for them. Other allottees worked, but ate the crops as they grew, ate the pig as roast pork in times of plenty, instead of smoking him and keeping him for empty plates in winter. Many pined for the crowds and the corner shop. Many were idle, and soon turned to blaming others for every hardship, led by O'Brien. Nobody paid the rent which was supposed to provide a flow of funds for the Company. In all cases it was clear that rates were going to go sky high to pay relief.

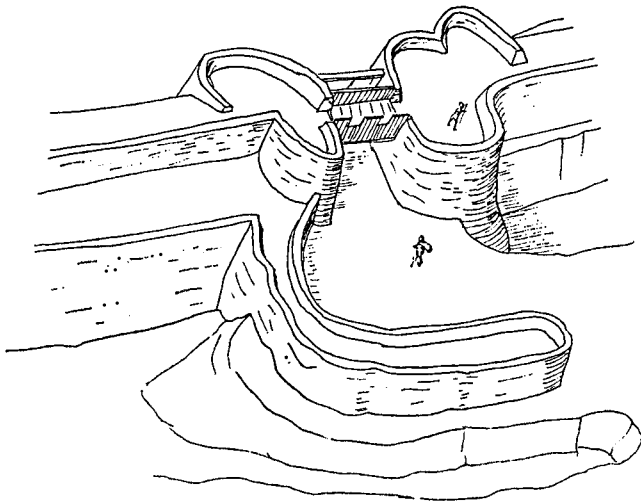
The organisation of the Company broke down completely. Based on a lottery, it could not be registered, and O'Connor held all the estates, paid for by the people. In fact a solicitor, W. P. Roberts, held the mortgages for most of them. By November 1847 the crisis came in popular confidence. On 28 October the Company's receipts for the week were £3,063, on 18 November, £893. They continued to fall. Public opinion was roused and a Select Committee of Parliament examined the Company. Sixty or seventy thousand poor people had paid over £30,000 in hope of a house and land, which money had bought four estates held in O'Connor's name, and housed 250 people. O'Connor was on the way to insanity. The Committee suspended the Company's operation, unless the organisers could re-form it legally and carry on.

They did not do so. In 1851 an Act of Parliament consigned the Company and estates to the Court of Chancery to be wound up. Slowly the estates disintegrated, and the properties were sold off. Messrs. Bruton, Knowles and Co. of Gloucester has many records of such sales. The bulk of Snigs End was sold in 1857, and of Lowbands in 1858. Almost no trace remains in name or registers of the strangers who lived there. In doing the research for my book on the

Company I found people whose ancestors had bought a cottage in early days, and many who went on paying rents to the heirs of W. P. Roberts. Modern times have brought prosperity to the holdings.

Contemporary information, apart from newspapers, is hard to find. I have listed all that I found, including Chancery maps which had not been known before. If any readers know of any letters, diaries, etc., I should be most interested to hear from them.

Alice Mary Hadfield.



EXCAVATIONS AT CRICKLEY HILL 1969-70

CRICKLEY HILL LIES at the edge of the Cotswold scarp about four miles South of Cheltenham. On the top of the hill two ramparts run between cliff edges to cut off that part of the hill which juts out over the valley. The outer of these ramparts is well preserved, standing to a height of about 10 feet above the surrounding ground level; at the North end of this rampart a considerable depression in the bank suggested that here lay the ancient entrance to the fort, and here it was decided to excavate, in order to establish the location and plan of the entrance and, if possible, the history and date of the fort.

The earliest structures uncovered in the entrance area predate the rampart; under the lowest courses of the first building of the defences post holes and stubs of walls indicated the remains of what were probably houses which were demolished before the rampart was built. This rampart was formed with a stone front and back wall, tied together with horizontal timbers which were themselves braced by vertical timbers held in post holes. The space between the two walls was filled in with smaller stones. The entrance was a passage between the ends of this rampart, which was probably held up by a fence on either side of the roadway. In addition to the post holes for this fence, four large circular holes represented the sockets for two double gates, one behind the other. It is interesting to note that of the 71 postholes so far excavated only these four post holes for the gates contained the skulls of animals, two boars, a sheep and a goat.

This first rampart was destroyed by fire: the timbers were turned into charcoal and the rampart, built of the local limestone from the ditch, was turned into a hard white slaked quicklime. Some years appear to have passed, while a build-up of earth formed about the burnt ruins, and then the entrance was rebuilt. Gateposts were inserted into the sockets from the earlier outer gate, and a short and flimsy fence seems to have replaced the earlier fence. At the same time the front wall of the rampart was rebuilt, using the same stones. During the fire many of these had been burnt red, and in the rebuilding the order was, of course, altered, so that burnt and unburnt stones were laid together. It may be suggested that the rather flimsy entrance was only a temporary expedient, a defence during the comparatively lengthy reconstruction of the rampart wall; at all events the entrance area was massively rebuilt, and the lack of weathering on the stones of the new wall suggests that the second rebuilding was not long after the first.

The appearance of the entrance after this second rebuilding is shown in the sketch, which is, of course, only one of several possible interpretations of the excavated remains. The new rampart encased the old burnt one, and so there could be little opportunity for inserting lacing timbers. Consequently the new work was almost entirely drystone building without timber supports. Two bastions, of different sizes and with walls which formed a series of curves, stood on either side of the entrance passage and projected into the line of the old ditch. The gate was set back behind the passage, and posts which flanked the entrance may well have supported a timber bridge between the bastions. From the front of the South bastion a hornwork curved around the approach to the gate. From the top of this hornwork and from the bastions and main rampart, defenders would be able almost completely to encircle an attack on the gate.

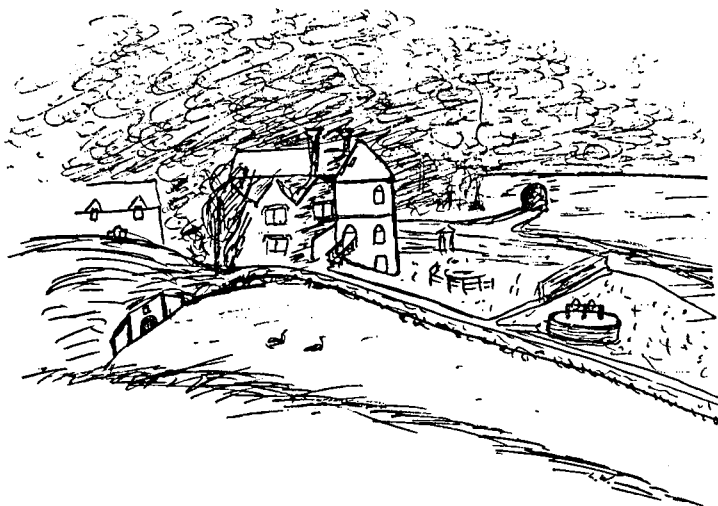
To the South of the entrance the rampart has been drawn in two tiers; the evidence for this is not conclusive, the hornwork, to judge from the amount of stone it contained, cannot have been any higher than shown, and the join between the hornwork and the 'lower' of the two rampart walls would be difficult if the latter were not the same height as the hornwork. The upper rampart wall was the old front wall of the fort reused in the new building. These walls were exceptionally well preserved, and in places still stood to a height of over 3 metres.

Despite the power of the new defences the entrance was destroyed by fire, and the fort abandoned. The pottery from the levels associated with the rebuilt rampart date to the earliest Iron Age, with parallels from Wessex and the Upper Thames. As a rough chronological indicator, the date suggested might lie in the sixth or fifth centuries B.C.

Some sherds of Roman pottery were uncovered in the collapse of the walls. These perhaps represent no more than slight occupation, perhaps even visitors to the site, whose walls may have been visible above the turf until fairly modern times; at present they lie no more than 5—10 centimetres below the topsoil.

After two years digging some of the history of the fort can therefore be interpreted. But what we have found may be typical only of the entrance area, and in future seasons we hope, with the continuing sponsorship of the Gloucestershire College of Art and the permission of the owner, County Councillor Tom Morris, to investigate the interior for habitations and to cut sections in the inner bank of the fort. This inner bank is much eroded, and may even be the defence for an earlier fort, contemporary with the pre-rampart occupation of the outer rampart. Answers to this and some of the remaining problems we hope to obtain in July 1971 in our third season on the site.

PHILIP DIXON.



SOME GLOUCESTERSHIRE ROUND-HOUSES

MENTION ROUND-HOUSES in this county and thoughts usually turn to the watchmen's dwellings beside the Thames-Severn canal, yet there are only five of these — at Chalford, Coates, Cerney Wick, Marston Meysey and Inglesham — while the others are more conventional.

The reason for this peculiar and uncomfortable shape seems to be fashion, for they were built in 1790, when it was not unusual for cottages to be designed for picturesque look rather than utility.

These three-storey buildings were designed to provide stabling on the lowered ground floor, kitchen reached by a few outside steps, with bedroom over. Cramped quarters for a watchman with a family, even with inside diameter of nearly 17 feet, which was bigger than the kitchen of many cottages. Furniture does not fit well into a circular room, but that may have been no serious problem to a man getting nine shillings a week. The fashionable designs of Mr Sheraton were not for him.

Two of these round-houses have, while the others have high parapets and inverted cone roofs, with the water led away from the centre by a pipe. This, with the heavy roof timbers suggests that this unusual design was a device to catch rain-water for household use.

Humphrey Household, in his excellent book on the Thames-Severn Canal, tells how something had to be done a century later when the intended bride of a man applying for the job of watchman refused to marry if it meant living in such accommodation. The horse (if any) was evicted to give a third room, and the toughness of the working man was waning!

Ideas change, however, and the Cerney Wick round-house is now a desirable residence, though well outside the reach of a watchman's pay packet.

A few lodges at the gates of big houses were built in tower shape, no doubt to the satisfaction of the 18th century owners, if not to the occupiers.

The greatest number of round-houses are undoubtedly the pigeon-houses or dovecotes, successors to the Roman columbaria and forerunners of the modern battery units. Here the shape was essentially functional, for though there are many square or octagonal examples these were much less efficient by the standard of the Middle Ages. Nesting holes were incorporated in the walls, and a really progressive pigeon-house was fitted with a potense consisting of a ladder on a central pivot, allowing the attendant to reach all the nests without setting foot on the ground.

Some of the largest dovecotes had 2,000 nesting holes, and a few were equipped with a groove spiralling downwards which allowed water to trickle past all the nests, showing that our hen-batteries are nothing new.

Examples of round pigeon-houses are to be found at Bibury, Badminton, Daglingworth, Arlingham, Farmington, etc.

Yet another type of round-house is the windmill, never very popular in this county. Wooden structures were normally many-sided, but those of stone were circular, which is a more suitable shape from every non-angle.

Isaac Taylor's map (1777) shows at least seven windmills, four of these in the Bristol area. Of these only two seem to have survived in recognisable form — one near the A38 at Falfield, converted and occupied; the other on the east side of Stow-on-the-Wold is only a ruin.

A round-house which puzzles many people is at Woodchester, beside the old main road a clearly seen from the straightened version. Casual travellers take it for a canal watchman's house, without facing the awkward fact that

there is no canal in this valley. It is smaller than the five canal-side houses, and its three narrow openings are not windows but ventilators for the three racks on which teazles were dried over a charcoal fire. Yes, it was a teazle-house, from the days when these were extensively used for combing up the nap on cloth made in the local mills. A few teazles are still used for this purpose, but they are no longer dried in this interesting round-house.

F. W. BATY.

UNIQUE FINDS AT WALLBRIDGE, STROUD

ABOUT TEN YEARS ago, as Curator of Stroud Museum I was invited to one of a group of three old cottages at Wallbridge, Stroud, where an old cupboard was about to be covered over as a part of a modernisation scheme. The cupboard turned out to be of the shell-hooded type forming one corner of an almost unspoilt panelled room. In the course of conversation, it was found that a second cupboard, reputedly used by Wesley when he gave a service there, existed in the next room. The cottages, formerly one house, bore the date 1714, and the two cupboards were correct for this period, but remarkable in that both retained much of their original paintwork.

Many factors led up to the gradual decay of the property, and in February 1970 application was made for its demolition. Inspection revealed that it was past restoration, and becoming dangerous in places. Since it could not be saved it was up to us to preserve anything worth saving. It was also an opportunity to study parts of the building that would never have been available if it was to have been restored. The owner, Whitbread Flowers Ltd., knowing of our interest, very kindly offered to give to Stroud Museum anything of interest we might care to take out. A volunteer labour force was raised and work was done every evening for about two months. Most of this time was devoted to the removal of the two cupboards and the woodwork of the panelled room. Some of the panels were badly rotted in places, but every care was taken, and all the pieces numbered for reassembly. In another room there was a remarkable fire-side speer-seat, and evidence that that room had once been panelled too.

The bedrooms had panelling in the window seats only, but here the interest lay in the 18th century doors and doorframes, pieces of early window glass and blocked up fireplaces. One of these dated from the early 16th century, and had been modernised c. 1714. Probably at the time of a marriage in 1768, a beautiful cast-iron fireplace was inserted with Bristol Delft tiles on either side, and all of these finally covered over and lost from view in the mid 1950's. Both the original fireplace and the ceiling beam had been painted with red ochre — a rare thing to see in this area.

Early wall papers next began to appear. Pieces put up as early as c. 1714 were found in two rooms. They were nailed to the walls as well as pasted, and only survived because they had been covered after hanging, by wooden cornices. One fragment was marked on the back saying it was made in Aldermanbury (London). It is understood this is the only known piece so marked. Although we know it was common practice to mark paper in this way, the name was at the end of a roll on a plain piece normally cut off before hanging. Two walls in another room had large areas of paper, probably by Thomas Bromage of London, c. 1768. These could only be saved by removal, wall and all! Several other pieces were found of various dates from 1800 till 1870, altogether a good sequence covering the evolution of wall-paper manufacture from hand printing to mass production.

Contrary to what was expected, there were few small finds. Under the window seats there were a number of two-piece pins, fragments of leather from the time a shoe repairer lived there, and behind an early fireplace overmantel, some interesting membership and trade cards of the 19th century. Two early Royal Hunt match boxes, both containing their original matches, were found behind panelling under a staircase.

Facts were still coming to light only hours before demolition began. There were some interesting things that could not be saved, notably a 16th century painted fireplace, the 18th century pedimented porch, and some iron railings of 1825. On the other hand we found that the house was built c. 1500, that it was timber framed, and later rebuilt in stone. Much still remains to be done to preserve what was rescued. Woodwork needs treatment and repair. Paintwork will be sectioned to reveal the original colour schemes. Structural notes must be studied in detail with a view to ultimate publication in full. It is hoped that one day much of the woodwork may be displayed as part of a sequence of exhibits to illustrate the evolution of architecture in Gloucestershire.



*Badge of King Charles II, on the Speech House, Forest of Dean,
built in 1680*

Book Review



JOHN WHITSON AND THE MERCHANT COMMUNITY OF BRISTOL

Patrick McGrath

(Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1970), 23 pp., 4s.

JOHN WHITSON (c. 1555-1629) was one of the most famous merchants of Bristol. Like that more nationally famous Gloucestershire-born Lord Mayor, Dick Whittington, Whitson also traditionally rose from obscure poverty, made good in a big city, became its Lord Mayor, leading citizen and merchant, and died bestowing charity generously.

Tradition is rarely entirely truthful, and this booklet by Mr McGrath is welcome for dispersing the worst of the romantic fogs surrounding Whitson's career. He was certainly a very successful self-made man, though it would be interesting to know more of his family's circumstances at Newland. Records traced by Mr McGrath prove the tale of his seduction and subsequent marriage of his master's wealthy widow and the facts make a rather better story than the legend, which relies too heavily on the Victorian imagination of J. F. Nicholls in *Alderman Whitson: His Life and Times*. From then onwards, Whitson flourished — alderman, mayor, and M.P.; foreign merchant, speculator in North American exploration, pioneer in reviving the Society of Merchant Venturers; benefactor to his city in his lifetime and in his will. He founded the Red Maids School in Bristol, a charity for training and teaching poor girls centuries ahead of its time, and left money for Bell's Grammar School at Newland

Mr McGrath is a sympathetic biographer, who leads his readers to understand and condone the self-interest shown in some of Whitson's public and private actions. This is not, of course, the full biography which Whitson deserves, but this eminently readable pamphlet has sent me to the volumes of the Bristol Record Society in which Mr McGrath has published documents about Whitson, and I look forward to his forthcoming edition of one of Whitson's account books as a merchant.

The text is eminently readable, but in the review copy the printer has been over-generous with the ink. Two printer's errors on pp. 6 and 18 have been overlooked, and by the time this review appears the price will be 20p not 4s., as printed on the cover.

B.S.S.



HOUSE AT SNIGS END (Back)
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