

Local History Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

ALL LOCAL HISTORY Societies have been asked to participate in a photographic survey to record the changing face of the county. Material for this is already coming in, and it is hoped to compile a list of location and other relative information for the use of Societies who are interested. Arrangements have also been made to hold a County Local History school on the 15th, 16th and 17th of October next. The programme will include field work and is to be held partly at the Shire Hall and partly at Cowley Manor. The theme will be a detailed study of a selected area of the county. On Saturday, October 27th there is to be a social meeting of all members of Gloucestershire Local History Societies in the Parliament Room. Members can exchange ideas, and there will be speakers, and it is hoped that the Societies might provide displays and photographs.

The entries to the Schools' Essay Competition dropped considerably this year, so it has been decided to hold it in abeyance for 1973. The District One-day Schools which are being organised might in fact be an alternative to the competition. I have included the judge's report in full, as well as excerpts and pictures from the two winning essays.

MERCEDES MACKAY, Hon. Editor.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

When Columbus discovered America the New Inn, Gloucester was already in its 40th year. Built by Abbott Thokey to accommodate the growing stream of pilgrims to the Shrine of Edward II, brutally murdered at Berkeley Castle in 1327. Much of the revenue derived from the pilgrimage traffic was used in the building of the magnificent Cathedral. The architecture of this 500 years-old Inn is today very rare and the historical connections to be found here make it unique. From the gallery in 1553 was read to the Citizens of Gloucester the Proclamation as Queen of Lady Jane Grey; in only two other places in England was this fateful document read in public.

The Courtyard illustrated was eminently suitable for staging the plays in the Elizabethan style and was used by the Queen's Players in 1559-60. William Shakespeare was in later years connected with the Queen's Players and the possibility of the Immortal Bard appearing in person at the New Inn makes fascinating speculation.

(By courtesy Berni Inns Limited)

SCHOOLS ESSAY COMPETITION 1972 : REPORT

MY MAIN REACTION to the relatively few entries this year is that, with one exception they are very equal in quality and I have found it hard to come to a clear decision.

I can report best in tabular form thus:

- (1) The number of entries is low but this surprises me as I feel the first prize to be most attractive.
- (2) Only two schools are represented. This is poor, but, perhaps, reflects the interest of teachers rather than pupils.
- (3) I have awarded marks for (a) presentation — design, neatness; (b) grammar and spelling; (c) initiative and especially the choice of topic, use of original sources and field work; (d) lay-out of the text; (e) attempts at original thought, analysis and effort; (f) introduction, references, bibliography.
- (4) Of the above sections (b) grammar and spelling needs more attention. Even the historian must be fully literate. Section (f) introduction, references and bibliography, needs a very great deal more attention for two reasons. Firstly, these are some of the most fundamental features of the historian's skills, and secondly, they are essential if the judge is to question facts contained in the essays. Without references this is an almost impossible task. All the essays were poor in this respect.

Generally, however, the standard is good, the essays interesting, and above all, it is obvious that in most cases a considerable amount of effort has gone into their preparation. For this reason alone, the entrants are to be congratulated.

I do, however, find it impossible to select a clear winner and would ask the Committee to consider awarding the first prize jointly between "Corinium" by G. E. Barker and "A History of Spring Park" by E. C. Thobroe. The consolation prize should be awarded to R. J. Barton for his study of Kingswood Abbey.

A. M. WHERRY, B.A., Senior Assistant Archivist.

PRIZE-WINNING ESSAYS

Extract from "Corinium" by G. E. Barker, Marling School

MOSAICS

There seems to be a fourth century firm of mosaic workers, who had in their designs their own small idiosyncrasies, which enable their pavements to be easily identified. A number are known from the town itself and include the

ne Orpheus pavement from a building at Barton Farm, the similar Orpheus pavement from a building under Dyer Street, and the recently excavated pavements in the garden of Ashcroft House. The firm was also employed by several villa owners and their mosaics are known from a number of similar villas, including Withington, Woodchester and Chedworth. They produced at least 10 pavements which have been identified, and probably more. However, the other mosaics at Cirencester — the Hunting Dogs, The Seasons and a Marine scene are probably second century in date and were not this firm's work.



DYER STREET PAVEMENT

Originally this pavement would have comprised of nine octagonal shapes each with a central motif surrounded by concentric circles of guilloche pattern. The four corner pictures were of the four seasons. Unnamed local deities are in between. Pomona, Goddess of Autumn is pictured in the bottom right hand corner.

Mosaic laying was, as a craft, both skilled and expensive and it took a long time to produce a stone carpet of any size. The mosaicist, with his various cartoons (rather like the modern day carpet folio of various designs) arrived by license in the town and took orders for work while his assistants took stock of the different coloured local stones that would be used as "Tesserae". He would have a stock of patterns (chequers, guilloche, triangles etc.), also mosaics with figures of worship such as the four seasons. Then there were the most costly type of mosaic, that, depicting a legend with decorated borders.

The pavement would either be made at the workshop, rolled up and carried to the house, or the pattern would be drawn out in charcoal on the floor, and then laid in cement. The pavement might be suspended upon small pillars so as to let the central heating of the housing circulate beneath it. The surface of the pavement would always be carefully levelled and polished with stand.

The materials used were always local. White and blue lias, red brick (or sandstone from across the Severn) and of course the yellow colour of polished cotswold stone. Brown variations of these stones were the only other type of stone used. The size of the cubes (tesserae) range from a square 1/16th of an inch, where detail can be used, to as big as 2 inches square for major patterns.

EXTRACT FROM "A HISTORY OF SPRING PARK, WOODCHESTER"

by E. C. Thobroe, Marling School

THE SAXON OCCUPATION of Gloucestershire took place in A.D. 577 and Woodchester was taken and held again as the centre of the district. It is known that skirmishes took place between Celt inhabitants and Saxon invaders as skeletons showing signs of a violent death were unearthed in the digging of the Dudbridge Donkey Railway line below the villa field near Woodchester. Woodchester was put in the state of Mercia and in fact was ruled by Athelbald, King of this state, as he acted as the administrator of the parish. However time had then passed since the invasion and Athelbald held the parish from A.D. 716-743. The Saxon name for the parish was Uuduceastre (no W in Saxon) and the Anglo-Saxon name — Wducestra. When the king died he left Woodchester to the See of Worcester, or the religious sect that lived there. All went well in Woodchester until 896 when the parish made a complaint to the king (Alfred at the time) that a local Thane called Ethelwald, who belonged to the parish of Whitstone, had taken some woods belonging to Woodchester to suit his farming purposes. These woods, however, did not seem to include those in the park as they were further over on Selsley Hill, and included Dark Wood and Pen Woods. After a Witan was held at Gloucester the Thane's son was allowed to keep the woods until his death when they were to be handed

over to Woodchester. Woodchester's history was twice scarred with Danish invasions in the next 150 years although no records state that they ever plundered the village itself. However, in Anglo-Saxon times, Woodchester was no longer kept as centre of the Stroud district as after a while it entered the area known as the Hundred of Langtree, whose centre occurred around Avening, meaning it was of fair size. Each Hundred was divided into 10 tithings occupied by 10 heads of families. In late Saxon days the tithing of which Woodchester was the centre was owned by Godwin, the Earl of Kent alone, although his main seat was at Berkeley. His wife was said to be a Danish princess. Just before the Norman invasion, Woodchester passed into the hands of the mother of Harold II, who fought for her son until she was forced to flee to Exeter, and she therefore involved the men of her tithing in fighting for the Saxon cause. Harold's mother was actually Earl Godwin's wife but she held Woodchester after the Earl's death and until the invasion was under way.

It was the Norman invasion that started the growth of Spring Park from a thickly enforested valley to a picturesque country retreat for nobles in later days. The first Norman Lord to own the area of Woodchester, which was roughly the same as the modern parish, was the Earl of Salisbury. He possessed what was then called the Manor of Woodchester and included the whole parish. The history of Woodchester was much the same as any other ordinary Norman parish, as peasants were given lands by the Lord of the Manor for working in his fields for a certain amount of time. It is probable that some of the Park was ploughed up so as to give more farming area. Edward, Earl of Salisbury, gave the parish of Woodchester to the Travers family for Knight services rendered to him in the 12th century. After one member of the family was connected with the murder of Edward II at Berkeley (he was jailer to the King before his death) the surname was changed to Maltravers, 'Mal' being the French word for 'bad'. The Maltravers held Woodchester until A.D. 1375 when it passed by marriage to a son of the Earl of Arundel, called John Fitzalan.

TREASURE HUNTING

MANY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES including scheduled Ancient Monuments are now being subjected to the scrutiny of metal detecting devices, followed by feverish excavation to seek buried treasure. This equipment is now universally advertised in the national press, and magazines such as "Coins Monthly" and the eminently respectable "The Lady". It is even possible to hire one at 50p for 24 hours. However, a word of warning emerges from a letter published recently in "Current Archaeology";

"If you go 'Treasure hunting', one form of treasure you are quite likely to find is an unexploded bomb. The Daily Telegraph reports the case of a Mrs Diane Smith who bought a metal detector for £25 and went looking for Roman coins along the supposed Roman road in Highgate Woods. When the machine made "a very loud noise", she began digging in the middle, apparently, of a public park; nobody seems to see anything wrong in this. About 9 inches down she found a Sten gun, some bombs, and a land mine!"

(HAMPSHIRE NEWSLETTER—Autumn 1972)

WOODCHESTER ROMAN PAVEMENT

THE WORLD-FAMOUS Roman mosaic pavement which lies under tons of soil in a disused churchyard at Woodchester, near Stroud, is to be put on show to the public later this year. For a seven week period from July 10th—August 27th local historians will have a chance of seeing what is considered to be one of the finest and largest mosaics of the Roman occupation of Britain yet to be discovered. When the pavement last went on show in 1963 some 50,000 visitors from all parts of the world descended on this picturesque Cotswold village.

The pavement has been uncovered only six times since this fine villa was first completely excavated and recorded in 1793 by the Revd. Samuel Lysons, a noted ecclesiastical antiquary of the day. Lysons found that the Woodchester villa contained no less than 65 rooms, it was 500 feet long and 300 feet wide; the 50 feet square pavement is thought to have been the floor of the banqueting hall. Villagers will spend many hours making preparations for the opening and will shortly start to move the tons of soil which have preserved the mosaics for almost 2,000 years. The pavement tells the story of Orpheus charming with his lyre a procession of birds and beasts. Like the complicated geometrical patterns all are in different colours and it is estimated that the pavement once contained one and a half million tiny stones or tesserae. Parts of the pavement have been damaged in the past by grave digging prior to 1793. The pavement will be on show daily including Sundays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. There is adequate free car parking, refreshments and toilet facilities. Admission charges will be 10p for adults and 5p for children.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1606

THERE IS HISTORICAL evidence of the serious flooding of the River Severn on many occasions in the past but it was on the morning of the 20th January, 1606 that "an exceeding great fludd" occurred, perhaps the greatest on the River Severn in recorded history. This flood affected reaches of the Severn from Bristol to Gloucester with the river overflowing to a distance of 6 miles on either side. Not only was Gloucestershire badly affected by the flood waters but also the neighbouring counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan and the coastline as far west as Carmarthen and Cardigan.

There are entries recording this untoward event in a number of parish registers and in those of Arlingham and Rockhampton are vivid accounts of the tragedy which led to the death of more than 500 men, women and children, the loss of many thousands of animals and wide destruction of property. It is traditionally believed that the flood waters rose nearly as high as Frampton Tower which was at least 60 feet above the normal level of the river. The cause of the flooding was not known but from the wide extent of the coastline affected there is no doubt it could be attributed to a major earthquake in the sea bed. In the Harleian Collection is printed a curious account of the event which is here reproduced.

"About 9 in the morning, the sunne being fayrly and bryghtly spred
huge and mighty hills of water were seen in the elements, tumbling one over

another in such sort as if the greatest mountains in the world had overwhelmed the low vallies, to the inexpressible astonishment and terror of the spectators, who at first, mistaking it for a great mist or fog did not on the sudden prepare to make their escape from it; but on its nearer approach, which came on with such swiftness as it was verily thought the fowls of the air could not fly so fast, they perceived that it was the violence of the waters of the raging seas which seemed to have broken their bounds, and were pouring in to deluge the whole land and then happy were they that could fly the fastest. But so violent and swift were the huge waves, and they pursuing one another with such rapidity, that in less than five hours space, most part of the countries on the Severn's banks were laid under water, and many hundreds of men, women and children perished in the floods. From the hills might be seen herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep with husbandmen labouring in the fields, all swept away together, and swallowed up in one dreadful inundation. Houses, barns, ricks of corn and hay, were all involved in the common ruin. Many who were rich in the morning were beggars before noon; and several perished in endeavouring to save their effects.

At one place there was a maid milking who was so surrounded with the waters that she could not escape but had just time to reach a high bank on which she stood secure from the inundation, but without any relief from hunger and cold for two days. Several ways were advised to bring her off but in vain, till at length two young men contrived a raft which with long poles they pushed along and with great labour and hazard fetched her away half-dead with fear rather than with hunger and cold; for strange as it is to relate, the hill on which the maid stood was so covered over with wild beasts and vermin that came there for safety, that she had much ado to keep them from creeping upon her; and though among these there were many of opposite natures such as dogs and foxes, hares and hounds, cats and rats with others of like sort, yet the one never once appeared to annoy the other, but in a gentle sort they freely enjoyed the liberty of life without the least expression of enmity, or appearance of natural ferocity."

Children at school and travellers upon the road were equally involved in the general calamity; if they fled to the housetops or to the tops of hills, they were alike in danger of perishing by hunger and cold, but many were involved before they were aware of their danger. Some escaped miraculously, one man who had been long bedridden had his cottage swept away and himself, bed and all, carried into the open fields where the wind blowing easterly drove him to land and so he escaped. In another place a boy of five years old was held for a long time upon the water by means of his long coats which had filled with air and was at length carried to land. A mother and three children were saved by means of a trough in which the mother used to make her bread.

The King, James I, acted promptly for those times in bringing relief to the stricken areas for by the 20th February, "It pleased the King's Most Excellent Majesty out of his princelie care providence for the preservation of that part of his Kingdome willing that speedy reamedye should be provided in the premises by his Honourable Commission of Sewars under the Great Seale of England bearing date at Westminster the 20th day of February in the Fourth Year of

His Highness's most happy reign, assigning the Right Honourable Robert Viscount Lisle, Henry Lord Barkeley, Crey Lord Chandos and others as Commissioners empowered to commence relief and order repair to the damaged sea walls. In the following months extensive surveys were conducted and land-owners ordered on payment of fines to execute repairs speedily. Lady Mary Stafford and Sir James Harrington who ignored the Commissioners' orders were substantially fined and the money paid to His Majesty's Exchequer.

H.G.B.



ST. OSWALD'S PRIORY, GLOUCESTER

For about six weeks from the end of June until mid-August this year excavations will be carried out on the site of St. Oswald's Priory. This is the first stage of a programme planned to last for several years, after which it is hoped that some of the excavated Priory remains will be laid out for permanent public display. This year and next work will be taking place on the former County Council car park, in advance of proposed development by the City Housing Committee. Here it is expected that part of the Priory's domestic ranges will be uncovered.

The work will be directed by three archaeological and historical students from Southampton University, one of whom, Denys Pringle, has contributed the following outline history of the Priory as an introduction to the excavation.

H.H.

THE HISTORY OF THE SITE

OSWALD, KING OF NORTHUMBRIA: In August 642 King Oswald of Northumbria was slain at the Battle of Masererfelth. His head and arms, struck from his body at the command of the victorious Penda, pagan King of Mercia, were salvaged a year after the battle by King Oswy (or Northumbria),

the head, after a long period at Lindisfarne, being finally laid to rest in Durham. The remainder of the body was later collected by Osthryth, the Queen of Aethelred of Mercia (659—675) and taken to the Monastery of Bardney in Lincolnshire where it lay some 200 years. Bardney was reached by the Danes in 870; but it was not for another 39 years that the body of the christian King of Northumbria was retrieved from the ruins and removed to the comparative safety of a new monastic foundation in Gloucester.

SAXON ST. OSWALD'S: The Church of St. Oswald where the Saint's final resting place was to be, had been founded a few years before 909 by Aethelflaeda, the Lady of the Mercians, and her husband King Aethelred. The church was served by a body of secular canons until the middle of the twelfth century and latterly at least attained the status of free chapel royal. Its connections with royalty were always close. The aula regia of Kingsholm stood nearby and both of the founders of the house were buried in the church. Indeed, for the first century of its existence, St. Oswalds was probably the most important church in Gloucester. Reginald of Durham writes that it was "most ardently extolled and most watchfully cherished by the dwellers there, as the mother and mistress of their city".

THE NORMAN PRIORY: In 1094, however, the formal relationship with the Crown came to an end when William Rufus granted the Minster of St. Oswald to the See of York, in settlement of a dispute concerning the Archbishop's jurisdiction in Lindsey. Indeed, from the time of that other St. Oswald, friend of St. Dunstan, who held both the See of York and Worcester, the See of York had held lands in Gloucestershire. At this time these included former manors of St. Oswald's.

The church was partially rebuilt and aisles added under Archbishop Thurston (1119-1140). But more important changes took place under his successor, Henry Murdac, when the secular canons were replaced by regulars of the Order of St. Augustine (1153). The laxity of administration and discipline was corrected and, at the same time, the priory, as it now was, became more dependant on the Archbishop, who alone had the power of appointing the prior.

Despite Murdac's reform, the priory was never prosperous and by 1231 was seriously in debt. The visitations of Archbishop Gray (1214-1255) once more attempted to correct discipline; but the underlying source of difficulty was the insufficiency of the endowment. It was also at this time (1233-1234) that Henry III granted the Priory 20 oaks from the Forest of Dean "for works on his church", and a further 8 in 1240. The evidence of these building activities may be seen in the two surviving western bays of the present arcade.

Another factor which prevented the Priory from flourishing was the continual conflict between the Archbishops of Canterbury and York over jurisdiction. As a former chapel of the Royal demesne, successive Kings were active to protect St. Oswald's from the encroachments of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Henry II, Edward I and Edward II were energetic in their defence of it. But the excommunications of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, which forbade any trade between the town and the Priory took their toll, and in May 1301 Robert of Kidderminster testified to the Royal justices to the resulting hardship and sickness amongst the canons.

THE BLACK DEATH: The visitations during the primacy of Archbishops Greenfield (1300-1317) and William of Melton (1317-1360) showed the poor state of the revenues and discipline. Under Greenfield the financial system was reorganised but the effect of the Black Death (1349) and successive outbreaks of plague were severe, not only on the Priory itself but more especially on its manors. In 1417 we find the Prior pleading poverty to the Bishop of Hereford, his house ruinous and his profits and rents diminished. In 1462 the house was exempted from the payment of tenths. It was described as "by fate . . . almost destroyed or very much diminished and impoverished."

THE DISSOLUTION AND AFTER: In 1536 the Priory together with the other houses of Gloucestershire whose revenues fell below £200 a year, was suppressed by Henry VIII. Its possessions at this time included the Manors of Norton, Tulwell and Pirton, as well as various churches in Gloucestershire and other rents, the total value of which stood at £90 - 10s. - 2½d. a year. The King granted the site of the Priory to John Jennings Esq. The north aisle of the church, however, became the parish church of St. Catherine. This church was almost entirely destroyed during the great Royalist siege of Gloucester in 1643, and throughout the seventeenth century the citizens seem to have made good use of this convenient source of building material. All that now remains is what is presumed to be the northern arcade of the nave (that is the south wall of St. Catherines). The excavations will establish whether this is in fact correct. However, on this remaining wall at least five phases are detectable (although the wall was heavily restored in the nineteenth century). These are Late Saxon, Norman, Early Gothic, Developed Gothic and Perpendicular.

THE AIMS OF THE EXCAVATIONS: It will be the purpose of these excavations to discover as much of the Priory plan (and its different phases) as possible, and to relate the standing masonry to it. It is also hoped to examine some of the finer archaeological material, such as personal objects and food remains in order to build up, together with the historical documentation a fuller picture of the daily life of the house and its economic relations with the town and its manors. Our purpose is not wholly academic. A large area of the site will be needed in the near future for housing development by the City Council, and the remainder, including the standing northern arcade, the Council wish to preserve as a public monument.

DENYS PRINGLE.

A LOST DRIVE IN THE COTSWOLDS

1799 WAS THE year of the Inclosures in the Chipping Campden district and many requests were received by the Commissioners, Samuel Reeve and Hugh Jackson, among them a curious one by the Earl of Coventry. It must first be explained that the Earl's second home (his main seat was at Croome Court) was at Springhill House, actually in Worcestershire but only a few hundred yards from the Gloucestershire boundary, which was and is the Ryknild Street, and the Broad Campden part of Chipping Campden. Between the boundary and the present A44, then the Turnpike road by an Act of 1727, was an area

known as Furzy Heath, and part of it was still so named on the O.S. map of 1828. One of the old open fields listed in 1660 was called The Hill Furzcn Leyes (as opposed to the Sedgcombe Furzen Leyes) and may refer to this area.

Here is the text of His Lordship's letter to the Commissioners written from Spring Hill, Aug. 11th, 1799:

'Lord Coventry presents his respectful compliments to Colonel Noel and desires to inform him and the Commifsioners acting for Broad Campden Inclosures that the Road leading from his grounds to the Turnpike Road over the Heath has been used by the family for many years. He is far from claiming it as a Road of Right altho as a Road of Sufferance and Permifsion it was granted to him (as is well known) by the late Earl of Gainsborough in the most obliging manner. Lord Coventry is informed that it is not unusual for Commifsioners to grant and allot private and priveleged roads to Persons leading to theii Houses of Residence in exclusion of others but should the Commifsioners be of the opinion that such an award may exceed their powers it is hoped that Colonel Noel may not think it any great disadvantage to his property to allow a Coach Road only through the Allotment to be used & enjoyed exclusively by Lord Northwick to the Occupier of the House at Spring Hill.'

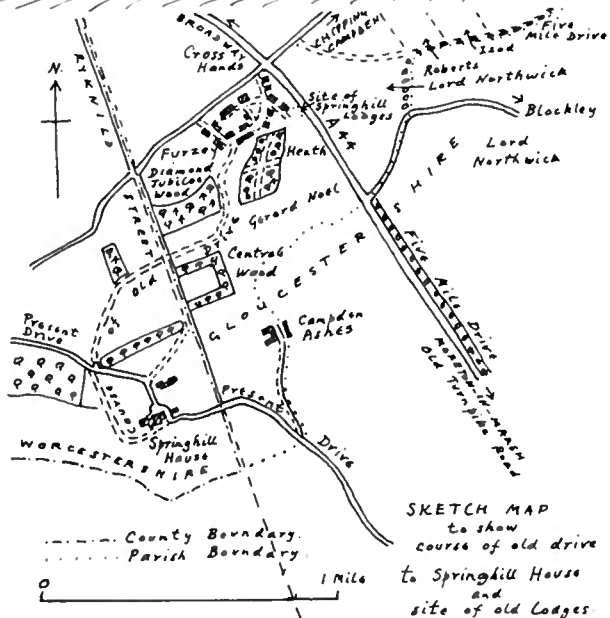
To this the Commissioners replied that they had no authority under the Act to allot a private road, but that a meeting would be held at Campden on 30th Day of September when the allotments would be made known, and application should be made to whomsoever this part of Broad Campden Far Hill was allotted.

It would seem that after the main allotments had been made, the claims of Lord Northwick. Mr Izod and Mr Roberts entitled them to a little more land, and Colonel Gerard Noel was entitled to a larger portion, so all the land, Furzy Heath, beyond the Turnpike road went to Colonel Noel and small areas the Campden side of the road to the other three applicants. I think we can assume that these parcels of land so detached from the main holdings were a nuisance as Roberts and Izod sold their land to Lord Northwick who held land adjacent to the Broad Campden boundary. We must assume too that Lord Coventry applied to Colonel Noel to use his drive and that Colonel Noel did not want this isolated piece of land as he sold it to Lord Coventry in 1804, so there was no longer any problem about the drive. Two small lodges and stone gate posts were built, and, although there were two more drives to Springhill House, this was much the most convenient for going in the Chipping Campden direction.

Just why and when this drive fell into disuse I do not know, but with the kind permission of the present owner of Springhill House, Captain W. L. Hannay, I was able to trace its course and even over a large ploughed field it was easy to see where it had run from the churned up stones. It is not possible to trace the last part where the buildings of the National Assistance Board Hostel were built, but the stone gate pillars still stand, the gap between them being walled in. The lodges, without modern sanitation and water, were pulled down some fifteen years ago but they are still marked on the 2½" O.S. map. The last man to live there, in the 1930's, was called Bliss and used to sell sweets to children.



J. H. McEwen
1972



SKETCH MAP
to show
course of old drive
to Springhill House
and
site of old Lodges.

It is thought that Launcelot (Capability) Brown, better known as a landscape architect, was the architect of Springhill House, but Nikolaus Pevsner is cautious about it and says no more than that "Capability" Brown worked for it in 1763. The Earl of Coventry sold the house to General Lygon in 1830 and he added the two wings.

Another application to the Commissioners acting for Broad Campden at the same time stated 'it is much to their desire and will be more convenient to Travellers on the Turnpike Road to have all the space required by the Act allotted on one side of the raised road instead of both by which means a Summer Road sufficiently wide for two carriages to pass each other may be obtained . . .'. This was signed: Coventry, Thos Phillips, John Hall, Michl. Rufsell, Richd. Rufsell, Wm. Rufsell, Stephn. Blakeman and dated August 1799. Alas, we do not know the answer to this request.

The documents quoted are from the papers of Edward Cotterell, Solicitor, Campden, and they are now in possession of the Campden Society.

J. P. NELSON.

CITY MUSEUM, BRISTOL BRISTOL'S CHARTER YEAR 1973

The City Museum in Charter Year

Together with the Art Gallery, we shall be making a full contribution to the Charter celebrations in 1973.

August 8th, 1973 is the 600th anniversary of the signing of the Charter. From this date we will be showing an exhibition prepared by the City Archivist and entitled "Six Hundred Years of Local Government". This will feature the original Charter and many other treasures from the City Archives.

Later in August, St. Nicholas Church will be opened for the first time as a Museum of Ecclesiastical Art and Bristol History; its display of local medieval history will include an inaugural exhibition of City church silver.

Towards the end of the year, we plan to stage a French exhibition "Bordeaux under the Kings of England". There will also be important additions to our publications bookstall, notably the excavation report on Bristol Castle.

Other activities for this year will be announced when the plans have been finalised.

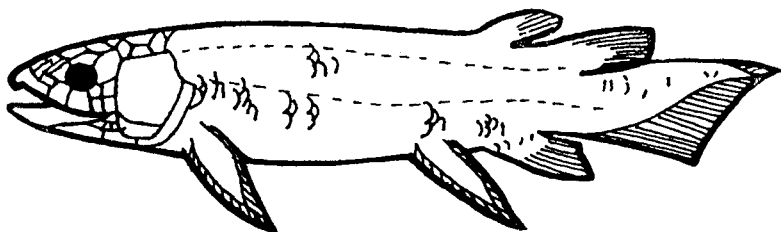
Oldest Bristol

Looking around Bristol today it is difficult to imagine that any buildings earlier than the 17th century could survive in our commercialised centre apart from churches. Yet a recent survey of the area of the medieval city has shown that considerable fragments can still be found in unexpected places. In Redcliffe, the last part of a medieval wall with a pair of square-headed windows survives in a garage workshop. Temple has produced similar walling with pointed windows surviving within 100 yards of the Robinson building. Public houses, warehouses and older buildings are all likely to produce evidence of the older town covered by plaster and rebuilt facades. The Museum would be interested to hear of any such discoveries so that they can be recorded before they are finally forgotten. The 600th anniversary of our charter is a good time to start looking.

Fossil Fish

Six fine specimens of fish from the Middle Old Red Sandstone of northern Scotland have recently been purchased by the Museum. These fossils are preserved in the sediments of a large freshwater lake which occupied Caithness, Orkney and part of Shetland about 370 million years ago. Four species of fish are represented in the collection including the early lungfishes *Dipterus* and *Osteolepis* and the peculiar armoured fish *Pterichthyodes*. These new specimens are a welcome addition to the collections since this part of the Old Red Sandstone does not occur in the Bristol area.

The Museum's collection of fossil fish has also been augmented by the donation of a well-preserved specimen of *Ophiopsis breviceps* from the Lower Purbeck Beds of the Vale of Wardour, near Salisbury, Wilts. The Lower Purbeck Beds were deposited in freshwater lagoons and swamps at the end of the Jurassic Period, about 135 million years ago. *Ophiopsis* is particularly interesting because of its distant relationship with the modern Bowfin (*Amia*) which lives in the freshwater swamps of North America.



Dipterus valenciennesi — a lungfish

Disappointing 'Flints'

Fragments of stone are often submitted to museums by those who hope that they have found axe-heads, spear-heads or other prehistoric tools. Unfortunately, many of these turn out to be natural pieces of limestone which have been weathered to various shapes and have developed a greyish or whitish skin.

Two tests enable one to distinguish these limestone fragments from the silica in the form of flint or chert which prehistoric tools were manufactured. Firstly, limestone is softer and its surface will show a mark if scratched by a steel point whereas silica will not. Secondly if a few drops of dilute hydrochloric acid, otherwise known as spirits of salts, are placed on a clean surface of the rock, a reaction will occur with the production of bubbles of carbon dioxide gas if the rock is limestone but no bubbles will appear if it is silica.

BOOK REVIEW



LOCAL HISTORY — OBJECTIVE AND PURSUIT

H. P. R. Finberg and V. H. T. Skipp

H. P. R. Finberg was the first Professor of English Local History. During his thirteen years of office at the University of Leicester he delivered several public lectures on the meaning and purpose of local history. The principle he expounded had far-reaching effects on the research and writing of other historians. Here he brings together the most influential of his discourses. Two other papers are included in which V. H. T. Skipp states the case for team-work in local history and for the treatment of the subject in schools. *Local History — Objective and Pursuit* offers a stimulating series of ideas which the amateur and even the professional historian will find it well worth while to follow up. *New impression.*

May / David and Charles / £1.95

SUMMER PROGRAMMES 1973

CIRENCESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Saturday, May 12th—12.45 p.m.: Avebury Manor, Museum, Stone Circle (and West Kent Barrow if time).

Saturday, June 16th—12.30 p.m.: Abingdon and Ewelme Churches and Historic Buildings.

Thursday, July 19th—5.45 p.m.: Woodchester.

Monday, May 14th—7.30 p.m.: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, King's Head Hotel.

After the business meeting Miss Holland will speak briefly to members about the early days of the Society.

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

May 5th: "All Day Tour" — Bradford-on-Avon and Lacock.

June 2nd: "Half Day Tour" — Industrial Archaeology in the Stroud Valley.

July 7th: "Half Day Tour" — Croft Castle and Herefordshire Church.

September 1st: "Half Day Tour" — The attraction of Painswick.

October 6th: Coleford — ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS. Speaker: The Chairman's Choice.

November 3rd: Cinderford — "More about Mitcheldean" — Mr Cave.

December 1st: Westbury — "The Cathedral Library" — Canon Daven-Thomas