

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Local History Bulletin

SPRING 1976 — No. 33



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
EDITORIAL	2
MICKLETON MANOR — Marguerite Darvill	2
TODDINGTON AND THE TRACYS (Concluded) — Lord Sudeley ..	4
GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE — Gloucestershire Federation of Women's Institutes	5
OVER BRIDGE — Brian Smith	6
NOTES FROM THE COUNTY ARCHIVIST	10
GIBBON'S TRAVELLING COMPANION — Russell Howes	12
ARCHAEOLOGY IN GLOUCESTER — Carolyn Heighway	13
NEWS OF THE SOCIETIES	14
BOOK REVIEW	16

EDITORIAL

EVERY EFFORT IS being made to continue supplying you with the Bulletin at the present price as a positive step in maintaining and encouraging interest in local history. Some Societies, who are indeed thanked for their co-operation, have assisted in making this possible by taking bulk deliveries of the Bulletin for sale or return, thereby reducing the postal charges. Please help in this respect if you are not already doing so.

Here is another practical suggestion to keep travelling costs down, whilst allowing full participation in all available historical occasions: include in your Summer diary the following double bill:

10th July Morning: Visit the major County Exhibition "Discovering Gloucestershire", at the Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery.

Afternoon: Attend the Annual Local History Conference and Social at Gloucester Technical College.

Programme tickets for the latter are obtainable from the Editor.

Hopefully we may hear from you in large numbers which will, of course, help spread the cost: an historically interesting and socially rewarding afternoon with enjoyable refreshments is promised, and all for thirty pence.

Laurie Duirs, Editor.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Mickleton Manor from a photograph kindly supplied by The Women's Institute, Mickleton (see article on Pages 2 & 3). Thanks are also expressed to the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design, and to Mr James Wright, for the line drawing.

APOLOGY

In the Autumn 1975 issue, Dr. Peters was wrongly described as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland. With apologies — this should of course, have read Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Contributions for the Autumn 1976 Bulletin must be in the hands of the Editor by the 15th July, please.

MICKLETON MANOR

MICKLETON MANOR, seen in the cover drawing from the fields beyond the sunk fence, presents the Victorian face given to it after the Georgian portico and library wing, added by Walwyn Graves in the 18th century, had been removed during the years 1887—1891. The stone was taken away in a specially constructed light railway which ran through the Parks behind the Church to the top of Glyde Hill, where it was carefully re-assembled as Kiftsgate Court.

This gabled East wing is probably even older than the North wing where part of the 17th century house remains. The house used to be visible from the road until the boundary wall was raised in 1883.

In the reign of King Edgar, the Manor was in the Crown; the Abbey of Eynsham in Oxfordshire then held it until the Dissolution when it reverted to the Crown for a time, before coming into private ownership in 1594. Towards the end of the 15th century, Richard Porter, a member of a Warwickshire family, leased the house and lands, and the leaseholds remained with the Porter family until 1595. The Charity set up by Richard Porter in 1513 with a gift of land to provide for the care of Mickleton Church, a schoolmaster's salary, and the relief of the poor, still survives. One of his descendants, Giles Porter, while on a mission to Spain about 1560, married a Spanish noblewoman, returning about 1585 to live in Mickleton. Their grandson, Endymion Porter, born at Mickleton Manor in 1587, thus had the advantage of a wider culture during his boyhood, learning Spanish at home and enjoying visits of relatives from abroad. He later became a Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles I, an honourable courtier, entrusted with diplomatic missions to Spain and advising and negotiating in the formation of the Royal art collection. He also gave some support to Robert Dover and the Cotswold Games held in Whitsun week on the hill above Chipping Campden, now known as Dover's Hill.

In 1597 the estate was acquired by the Fisher family, and it is thought that during their time alterations and extensions were made to the Manor House. In 1656 Edward Fisher sold it to Richard Graves of Lincoln's Inn, a member of a Yorkshire family. His grandson, Richard Graves, born at Mickleton Manor in 1677, was a well known scholar and antiquary, and a local historian who collected much material relating to the hundred of Kiftsgate, but unfortunately did not publish the proposed Annals. His second son, also Richard, born in 1715, wrote amongst poems, prose works and translations, 'The Spiritual Quixote: a comical romance' (1773) a gentle satire. His friend, the poet William Shenstone, was often a guest at Mickleton Manor where he landscaped the grounds and planted the avenue leading up Glyde Hill, now, alas, recently cut down.

It seems particularly sad that at the end of European Architectural Heritage Year, another Listed Building, a comparatively small manor house, should be under the threat of a demolition order. Mickleton Manor, in its setting of fields backed by gently rising slopes, with the Church and Medford House as neighbours, is really the heart of Mickleton.

MARGUERITE DARVILL.

Editor's Note:

Mickleton Parish Council are said to be considering the possibility of purchasing Mickleton Manor for use as a Village Centre, but no conclusion can be reached pending Counsel's Opinion on the effect of current and proposed land development legislation.

As the Cotswold District Council are reported to be considering an application to demolish the Manor, one can only hope that all relevant information will be available to the Committee concerned, even if this does mean a delay.

TODDINGTON AND THE TRACYS

(Concluded)

AFTER THE COMPLETION of Toddington, my ancestor was appointed Chairman of the Commission for the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, which selected the present design. Charles Hanbury-Tracy was delighted that Barry's design had been chosen; he was not so pleased however with the alterations which over the head of the Commission were then made to it. In his book "Observations on the Plans for the New Houses of Parliament" (of which I have had a copy made for the Record Office of the House of Lords) he drew attention to what have undoubtedly been unfortunate changes of plan or design. In the original design the Royal Coach, once it has set down the Sovereign for an opening of Parliament, would come out of the building as it had come in. Now, once the Sovereign is set down the Coach must pass through a long tunnel, so low that nobody can drive it. Now the Sovereign mounts a straight flight of steps which are a trifle too narrow. In the old design the steps were much broader, and halfway up the Sovereign was able to rest on a quarter-space, to the great enhancement of her dignity. Now, once she has mounted the steps, the Sovereign is faced by a large pillar which was not to be seen in the old design, and again is not very suitable to her dignity. At the conclusion of his book Charles Hanbury-Tracy added the sensitive observation, that as the Houses of Parliament were lengthened, and the ornamentation made more profuse, so the principle feature of a Gothic elevation was destroyed: that is to say the vertical line. Charles Hanbury-Tracy said of the Houses of Parliament as it is now "it is an open question with the beholder, which line predominates, the vertical or the horizontal."

At Queen Victoria's Coronation, Hanbury-Tracy was made Lord Sudeley as much because, through his wife, he represented the Irish peerage of Tracy, as on account of the work he had done as Chairman of the Commission for the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament. His grandson (my great-grandfather) 4th Lord Sudeley, suffered, like all landlords, from the severe agricultural depression at the end of the last century. If, despite the depression, my great-grandfather had done nothing, the Tracys would still have Toddington. My great-grandfather attempted, however, to speculate in the City (then a novelty for a peer) and got into the hands of sharks, pre-eminent amongst them one Jabez Balfour, a pioneer in building societies. Coming of Nonconformist stock, Balfour was able, through a network of ministers, to collect the savings of the poor. He then pretended to invest these savings in land and houses, so that the poor people might take out mortgages on their own homes. In fact, Balfour put most of the money in his own pocket, and paid the interest by founding fresh building societies through which more money came in. The affairs of all the companies were managed by his own private bank, which he had founded for just that purpose. The bank crashed, and all the companies fell like a set of dominoes. Balfour was imprisoned, and my great-grandfather became a man of sorrow.

After the crash, the clergyman of Toddington said that when the Tracys go back it will be as though they had never been away, there will be no rejoicing. Our Garter King of Arms records in his book "English Genealogy" there is no

other land in England which has passed so long by inheritance, for almost a thousand years, from a period before the Cohquest.

SUDELEY.

It is learnt that two applications are currently before the Tewkesbury Borough Council for change of use of Toddington Manor, one to an hotel and one to a residential school. Whatever the ultimate future, it is the hope of many people that the architecture of Toddington Manor will be preserved for posterity.

Editor.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE

THE FINAL PROGRAMME in a series recently broadcast on Radio 4, assessing the impact and achievements of European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, concluded that whereas on the Continent it was usually the town or some official body that had carried out work of conservation or improvement, in this country it was rather the individual who had been made more aware of the need to take an active part in keeping and if necessary improving, our heritage. It would be good to think that the competition, "Gloucestershire Heritage", had contributed to such a worthwhile achievement. Not that the limited number of individuals so interested is yet large enough to prevent the loss of Listed Buildings; a figure of about 400 demolition orders applied for since January, 1974, 96 of them in conservation areas, has been quoted.

The rather forbidding title, European Architectural Heritage Year, did not have a popular appeal, and indeed tended to inhibit many who would be open to taking an interest because they felt their lack of knowledge of architecture. This factor was a considerable problem to the Committee appointed by the Gloucestershire Federation of Women's Institutes to plan a celebration for EAHY 1975 in which all W.I. Members in the County could take part. They therefore decided to interpret the subject in the wider sense that it is architecture in its setting and as part of our history and way of life that is our heritage. The title "Gloucestershire Heritage" was chosen for a competition open to Members of the G.F.W.I., to awaken interest not only in the vernacular architecture of a locality, but also in its background, good or bad, as for instance the changes in the village, potential improvements, wirescapes and other eyesores, views that are valued and should not be sacrificed in the name of development. Moreover, it would be an ideal opportunity to follow up an earlier G.F.W.I. competition, "The Story of Our Village, 1850-1957" by recording the villages as they stood in 1975. Following upon much valuable advice from Mr Derek Waring, Chief Executive of the Cotswold District Council and a member of the U.K. Executive Committee, and Mr David Verey, it was decided to divide the competition into three classes: (1) Black and white photographs (for record work); (2) An illustrated portfolio (artistic and record value); (3) A co-operative project for schools, groups, families or W.I. Members, to record tombstones in the local, or nearby, churchyard. Entries had to be completed by the 28th July, 1975 and Mr Brian Smith, County Archivist, addressed the delegates from all W.I.'s at the G.F.W.I. Half-yearly Council Meeting in September, 1974, encouraging them to take part in this voluntary contribution

towards building up a photographic record of the County, and to use the resources of the County Record Office for their research.

The judges were delighted by the quality of the entries and found difficulty in deciding on the winners, which was very understandable to those who visited the exhibition of the entries which had been planned from the first. An invitation from the Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery to hold it there, jointly with the Gloucester Civic Society, was gratefully accepted. A reception on the opening night when awards were presented to the winners was followed by a lecture given by Mr Bernard Ashwell, Architect to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral, on "Conservation in Architecture" illustrated with slides showing the work done in the Cathedral, truly a Gloucester heritage. The interest of the large gathering at the reception and the number of visitors to the exhibition during the following weeks, justified our celebration of EAHY 1975 in Gloucestershire. "Gloucestershire Heritage" made us look afresh at what we take for granted and determine to take an active part in caring for our heritage, and it enabled us, as ordinary W.I. Members, to make a contribution to the invaluable work of keeping the records of Gloucestershire.

OVER BRIDGE

THE NEW BRIDGE at Over completed two years ago, was in the news during 1975 because the natural settlement of the embankments had caused 'bumps' in the road surface. Earlier the proposed demolition of Telford's bridge caused widespread controversy, a bridge which had itself been criticised for its insufficiency to carry traffic and the instability of its construction.

Before 1966 the lowest bridge across the Severn was at Gloucester. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a bridge outside the Roman city, when the main arm of the Severn flowed nearer Westgate, but the long causeway and bridge at Over on the site of the present railway bridge was certainly standing by the Norman Conquest. Over Bridge, with its tollhouse and gates, the raised Causeway and in the background the Westgate Bridge and town-gate, are prominent in all views of the city from the west, with an object looking like goal posts by the Maisemore road, which was a gibbet. Over Bridge was rebuilt in 1540 as a stone structure of eight arches. Because of its importance it was one of the few 'County Bridges' repaired at the expense of the county, who were appointing a bridge surveyor before 1762. In 1742 it required extensive repair, recorded in the County Treasurer's first account book. This cost over £668, and the accounts show that most of the expense lay in replacing the 200-year old stonework with new brick.

An attractive and accurate drawing of the old bridge was discovered in September, 1975 in the Cathedral Architect's office, one of whose predecessors, Thomas Fulljames, was also County Surveyor. The drawing clearly shows the Tudor stone piers and arches, the 18th-century brickwork and the piles protecting the piers. The variety of the arches and their hazard to navigation is also obvious.

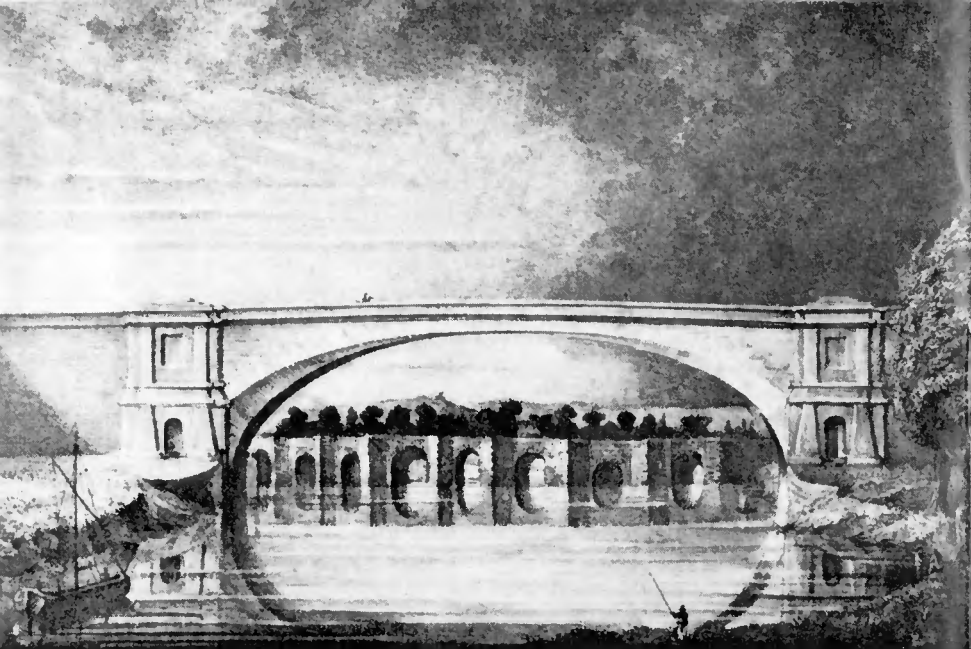
The eastern approach to Over Bridge was in such a dilapidated condition in 1813 that the Surveyor advised the county magistrates to have a temporary road diversion built across the Ham while the narrow Causeway arches near the

turnpike gate were entirely rebuilt. Five years later Over Bridge itself was severely damaged by ice carried down the river during the hard winter of 1812/13. Concerned at the state of the old bridge, the county magistrates commissioned Thomas Telford in 1825 to design a new one. He submitted proposals for either a cast-iron bridge or a single-span stone bridge, and the latter was chosen. This design was based on Jean-Rodolphe Perronet's five-arch bridge over the river Seine at Neuilly built in 1768, and its most remarkable feature is the chamfered arch — both pleasing in appearance and practical in its function of reducing resistance to flood water. The old bridge continued in use until three years after the completion of its successor. At last in 1832 traffic was diverted to the new bridge and a contract signed for the demolition of the old one in 1834. After further delay the contractor was ordered to carry out the work in the Spring of 1836.

The new bridge was sited north of the old one, and Over Causeway had to be re-aligned. The single span of 150 feet is exceptionally long for a stone bridge, and it is the longest surviving one of its kind in the country. The carriage-way between the kerb stones was to be 20 feet, a considerable improvement on the 14-foot width of the old road. Telford drew up specifications for the bridge in February, 1826 and by July a contract was agreed with John Cargill, and work started in excavating for the foundations. At that stage Telford appointed Thomas Fletcher to superintend the work, keeping him and the Clerk of the Peace of the county fully informed with fortnightly reports. By October materials and equipment were accumulating on the site and Thomas Fletcher was able to report that Telford was about to make a personal visit to the Forest of Dean quarries to approve the quality and colour of stone required. Other stone came from quarries up-river near Bewdley. By that time the work-force comprised 14 masons, 12 carpenters, 4 millwrights, 6 blacksmiths and 25 diggers.

In excavating the foundations of the eastern abutment and sinking a well for the contractor's 8 h.p. steam engine, the nature of the sub-soil was discovered. Fletcher reported accordingly that a 12 inch bed of blue lias lay on top of a 24 inch bed of clay, beneath which was more lias stone. Telford was misled into thinking that he had a good foundation for the abutment and as an economy abandoned his original plans for additional piling. This was the cause of all the later troubles and fears for the stability of the bridge.

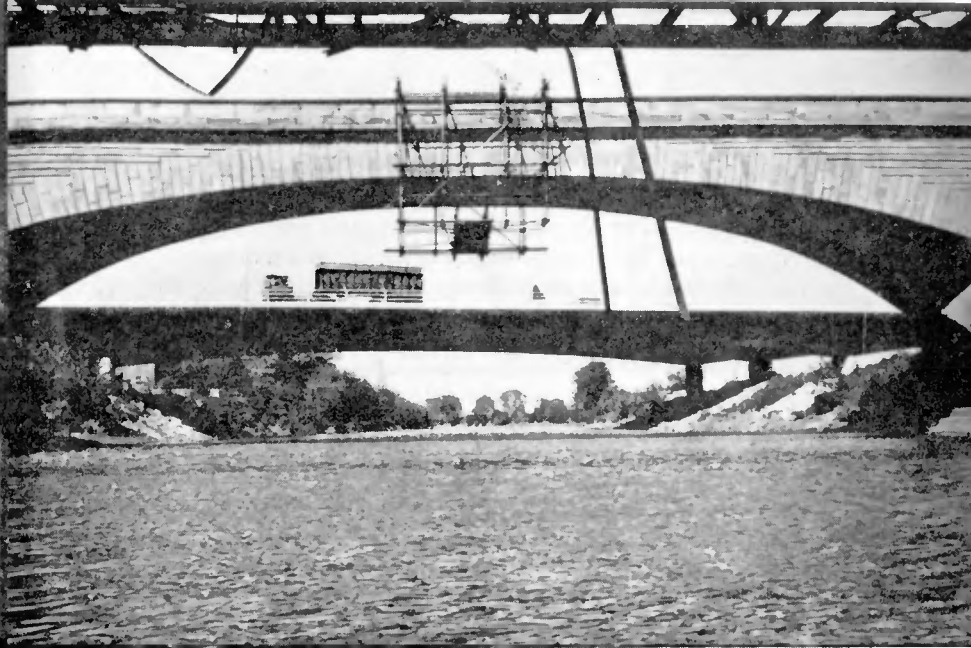
In May 1828 the wooden platform and centres were removed in Telford's presence and for the first time the new bridge stood alone. Telford wrote happily to the Clerk of the Peace 'declaring the whole, as regards materials and workmanship fully equal to anything of the kind in Europe'. Telford's optimism as to the perfection of his new bridge was short-lived, and he had to deny vigorously the criticism of the county magistrates. Within a short time the centre of the arch sank 10 inches and the eastern abutment lurched out of true. Repairs had to be carried out to fill the settlement cracks, raise the keystone and strengthen the cause of the trouble, the eastern abutment. It is interesting to compare his remarks with those of the present-day engineers who anticipate further settlement of the modern road, criticised for its 'bumps'. Continuing doubts about the safety of the new bridge delayed its opening until 1832, and the old bridge was not demolished until the eastern abutments of Telford's bridge were strengthened in 1836. The contractor, John Cargill, whose accounts reveal



THE NEW (1832) & OLD (1540) BRIDGES AT OVER, NR. GLOUCESTER
Reproduced by kind permission of the Gloucestershire County Council Library.

that the bridge cost the county £43,526.9.0d., had no such fears and his confidence was justified. The bridge took the growing volume of modern traffic for 142 years. Just as Telford's design was based on the bridge at Neuilly, so Over Bridge has inspired imitations. One of the masons at Over was David Lennox who emigrated to Australia in 1832, where he built a bridge similar to Over at Prospect Creek, N.S.W. in 1835. Later as a surveyor in Melbourne he built Princes Bridge in 1846—50, closely modelled on Over Bridge.

In 1880 a warning from the engineer to the Great Western Railway Company so alarmed the county magistrates that they called for a fresh examination of Over Bridge. Their consultant engineer was Sir Benjamin Baker, later famous for the Forth railway bridge. In his report he explained the weakness of the foundations of the eastern abutment of the bridge. The Quarter Sessions committee approved the expenditure of £2,970 for urgently needed repairs to seal the cracks that had appeared and support the abutment. They prudently pointed out that his sum was less than the maintenance that would have been necessary had Telford's proposal for an iron bridge been chosen, and that it would ensure the long-term stability of the bridge. Baker was allowed to choose his own contractor, and shafts were sunk preparatory to underpinning the abutment. At once flooding occurred in the shafts and the whole bridge seemed likely to be endangered by further work. Baker sought the advice of his senior partner,



THE OLD (1832) & NEW (1974) BRIDGES AT OVER, NR. GLOUCESTER
*Reproduced by kind permission of the Department of the Environment
(South Western Road Construction Unit).*

Sir John Fowler, whose classic remark 'This bridge Telford considered his monument. If you drop it into the Severn your professional reputation is gone . . . ' is printed in the County Surveyor's report of the time. Modern engineers were prepared to risk their reputation, and recommended demolition after the present bridge was opened in 1974. However, after a vigorous campaign by local and national conservation societies it has been scheduled as an Ancient Monument, and preserved.

The increase in motor traffic and demand for a river crossing below Gloucester strengthened the case for a new Severn Bridge in the 1930s. Part of the County Council's case for this rested on the traffic congestion on Over Bridge, although contemporary photographs submitted as evidence hardly supported the argument! However, as motorists who queued to cross it were aware, the bridge was inadequate for later 20th-century traffic. Meanwhile, the movement and stability of Telford's bridge was closely and continuously checked. The new dual-carriageway bridge and western approach to Gloucester was begun in 1970 and opened in February, 1974. The main contractors for the South-Western Road Construction Unit of the Department of the Environment and the Gloucestershire County Council were Marples Ridgeway Limited and the cost £2,774,883.

B. S. SMITH, County Archivist.

Notes from the County Archivist:

1976 — A YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES

AN UNUSUALLY GOOD variety of historical anniversaries will be celebrated in 1976, and the County Record Office plans to mark each in a series of exhibitions.

Major Exhibition: Gloucester Art Gallery

It is the centenary of the foundation of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, still the County's leading archaeological and historical society. To coincide with the Society's annual meeting in Gloucester, the Record Office and City Museum are mounting a large-scale exhibition at the Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery from the 26th June to the 17th July. The exhibition on "Discovering Gloucestershire" will include archaeological exhibits, manuscripts, maps and paintings, to demonstrate the historical riches of the County and the contribution to knowledge by local historians and archaeologists.

Quarterly Exhibitions: Shire Hall, Gloucester

The 200th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence will be recalled in a small display of historical documents connected with America at the Shire Hall in the summer. The same showcases in the Shire Hall foyer will contain in late autumn an exhibition of documents relating to Sir Mathew Hall, the great Chief Justice whose family came from Alderley; he died in 1676. Nearer the present-day, this is the 50th anniversary of the General Strike and the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the County Record Office. This last event will be celebrated in the Shire Hall display early this year.

THE 1st EDITION 1-INCH ORDNANCE SURVEY DRAWINGS

The County Record Office has recently acquired photocopies of the original drawings made for the 1st edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey map, the Gloucestershire sheets of which were published in 1828-31. The drawings are important for two reasons. They date from 1811-16, in other words not merely nearly 20 years earlier than the published sheets, but considerably earlier than either Greenwood's or Bryant's maps of the County in 1823-4. Only Isaac Taylor's map of 1777 (available in facsimile in the *Gloucestershire and Bristol Atlas*. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society £3) is earlier than these O.S. drawings, which are considerably more accurate than Taylor.

There are, in fact, many mistakes in the original survey, which were put right before publication. Tracings and correspondence concerning the errors are stored now, like the drawings, in the Maps Library of the British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG; a reader's ticket is required to consult them. Many of the errors are mis-spellings of place-names, although the writer noted that not only was the name of his own house incorrectly given, it was also applied to another house situated half-a-mile away.

The second reason for their importance is that they are drawn to a scale of two miles to an inch (in a few parts of southern England to three or in military and naval areas to six miles to an inch). At this scale the surveyors could mark individual buildings, field boundaries, minor water-courses and other details omitted from the published version.

Also, the original drawings are coloured, and therefore clearer to understand than the monochrome published edition and the photocopies in the Record Office.

A new scholarly edition of the original maps is being published, a portion of south-east England having already appeared. It incorporates much editorial material not included in the David & Charles reprints, which were of later 19th century versions of the 1st edition plates on which railways and other features were marked. The editors have expressed interest in the fact that some of Gloucestershire was surveyed by Thomas Fulljames, the Hasfield architect and surveyor who was also part-time County Surveyor. It had been believed that the work was done exclusively by military engineers.

An example of the editorial material that will be included in the new publication and of a matter of some interest to industrial archaeologists is a letter about the Oxenhall Canal tunnel:—

From: Capt. A. W. Robe R.E., to Romley Wright, Esq.

Ordnance Survey Office,
Tower
16th February, 1830.

In F.2 NE Hereford corrected and drawn by you it is observed that the canal Tunnel between Newent and Dymock is expressed by a *Crooked line*. As this is a rather irregular instance, Tunnels being generally carried in straight lines between their openings it is referred to you to know if it is properly shown before the engraving is proceeded with.

A. W. Robe, Capt. R.E.,

Reply to above:

Bewdley, Worcestershire.
17th April, 1830.

I am of the opinion that the Tunnel between Newent and Dymock is crooked for the following reasons:—

- I It is so stated to be by all the neighbouring Gentry.
- II It is impossible from either end to discern the light at the opposite one.
- III The "Wells", "Pits", "Chimnies" or air pipes communicating with the surface, for the sake of ventilation are not in a straight line.
- IV My Geological researches in this part led me to more accurate information than I might otherwise have obtained for conceiving that Tunnel to be a fine section of the Rock.

I, one evening found out a man, who I understood had been employed either in the original cutting of the Tunnel, or in the examination of the work, or else in the actual admeasurement with a chain, and from him I received, if my memory does not fail me, either a ground plan of its course or else information sufficiently circumstantial as effectually to prevent any great inaccuracy or misconception. I ought perhaps to observe that this memorandum was only received this morning.

Romley Wright,

P.S. Several Navigators on the Canal also informed me that the Tunnel was very crooked — and also a very bad one.

BRIAN S. SMITH, County Archivist.

GIBBON'S TRAVELLING COMPANION

WHEN EDWARD GIBBON was travelling in Italy in 1764 he had the idea of writing the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the first volume of which was published just two hundred years ago. William Guise from Gloucestershire was his companion, whose descendants still live at Elmore Court.

In the eighteenth century the grand tour frequently concluded a young man's education and William Guise set off in August, 1772 spending three weeks in Paris and then settling at Lausanne to improve his French. It was here that he met Edward Gibbon, both gentlemen staying with the same landlord and having the same French tutor, Monsieur Pavilliard.



Both William and Edward kept diaries; William's in English, Gibbon's in French, and these record not only the advancement in their studies, but also their social life. Apparently William had a good head, as it is recorded that after a particularly riotous dinner party Gibbon reached home with difficulty, whereas young Guise went on to another noisy gathering. Unfortunately a gun he was carrying (quite normal at that time) accidentally went off, but no-one seemed to have been hurt.

Young William Guise became seriously involved with a woman and a Dutchman challenged him to a duel, which Gibbon managed to avert by persuading his friend to make an apology. Gibbon wrote in his diary "Guise is worthy, honourable and sensible, but he has an impetuosity which is only the more dangerous for being ordinarily repressed".

The two friends set off together in April, 1764 for a tour of Italy, crossing the Alps by the Mont Cenis Pass. Guise rode a mule, but recorded that the future author of the *Decline and Fall* "being no great jockey preferred a chair". In Milan they watched some Austrian Regiments being exercised and Guise (always enthusiastic and readily impressed) wrote "Though I understand little of military affairs, I could not help being struck by the visible superiority of these troops to any I have ever seen. Their steadiness, quickness and exactness in all their motions surprised not only me, but my Friend Gibbon, who has been much accustomed to see different troupes". Gibbon's military experience was confined to three years as a captain in the Hampshire militia; he wrote in his *Autobiography* "the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers has not been useless to the historian of the Roman empire"!

They toured Italy extensively and spent the Summer months in Florence where the British Envoy, Sir Horace Mann, related on his Mother's side to the Guise family, made the two travellers exceptionally welcome. Here they devoted themselves to serious study of Italian and the Arts. Guise continued to keep his diary, describing what he had seen each day, but his judgments were conventional

and often over enthusiastic. Again and again he remarks that the current picture or statue was much the best he had ever seen.

In October they reached Rome and here, Guise ceased to keep his journal, but not before he had recorded his protestant indignation at people going up the Scala Sancta on their knees as "an excess of Bigotry and enormity of Superstition". His last description was of the baths of Caracalla, whose magnificence prompted Gibbon's account in the *Decline and Fall*, of the luxury enjoyed by the Ancient Romans before the sack of the City of Alaric.

The two friends parted in 1765, when Gibbon returned to England owing to financial problems, whilst Guise returned as originally planned via the Rhone and Bordeaux. The friendship thereafter seemed to have lapsed.

While Gibbon won fame as a historian, Guise's career was more conventional. In 1769 his father died, and he inherited the estate and the title. He became one of the members of Parliament for Gloucestershire, sitting in the House of Commons at the same time as Gibbon was member for a Cornish rotten borough. Guise was the owner of Rendcomb when Samuel Rudder wrote his county history and it is fitting that there should be a picture at Elmore Court of Sir William Guise hunting through the fields in front of his house at Rendcomb. Like Gibbon, Guise never married; and when he died in 1783 his property and title passed to a distant cousin, John Guise of Highnam. In his will he made generous gifts to his servants, and left £1,000 to Gloucester Infirmary. John Guise wrote "Our County, nay the Country in General, must lament the Death of a Senator of such abilities and such inflexible integrity."

RUSSELL HOWES.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN GLOUCESTER: ST. OSWALD'S PRIORY, REPORT 1975

A FOUR MONTH'S excavation on St. Oswald's Priory, Gloucester, in advance of housing development, took place in 1975. The Priory is known to have been founded as a secular house in 909 by Aethelflaeda, Queen of Mercia and daughter of Alfred the Great.

The site includes the standing ruins of part of the north wall of the nave of the church. Its architectural detail is mid-twelfth century, but excavation has confirmed that the Norman arches are inserted and that the building is fundamentally of Saxon work. The Saxon church had a Western apse, an unusual feature extant in only two other Saxon churches in the country.

In the thirteenth century a two bay extension was added to the west end of the church, in the place of the western apse which had been demolished some time before. 150 graves, many dated by this extension to the thirteenth century or before, were excavated. One had two ring brooches, one on each side of the skeleton's pelvis: these may be stocking supporters, or the fittings for a cod piece.

The site has also extensive Roman industrial occupation and tiliary waste shows the nature of the industry. The Roman levels will be examined next year, but already 60 tiles stamped RPG with variants have been recovered.

CAROLYN HEIGHWAY.

NEWS OF THE SOCIETIES

The Adult Education Association:

Details of interesting courses on matters Historical, Archaeological and many others, can be obtained from: The County Education Office,
37, Brunswick Road, Gloucester.

Blockley Antiquarian Society

Blockley Antiquarian Society held a very successful open meeting in October, when Dr. E. Launert of the British Museum spoke on the history of perfume. Walter Winton, a Keeper of the Science Museum, London, will give a talk to a joint meeting with the Blockley Discussion Group on March 9th, his subject is "The Revolution in Industrial Museums".

Following the great success of its publication of H. E. M. Icely's "Blockley through Twelve Centuries", the Society plans to get one of the greatest treasures of the Blockley Collection into print this year. This is the autobiography of a great local character, Richard Boswell Belcher, who was born in Banbury in 1818, moved to Blockley in 1847 and wrote his life story in 1898, three years before his death. He was apprenticed to a draper and later became a coal merchant, but it is the record of his voluntary work which makes such compulsive reading. This year is the centenary of his fantastic achievement during a small-pox epidemic, when he and a local builder erected a wooden isolation hospital on his field in a single day! Two years later, he was deeply involved in defending the Blockley rioters.

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

This year marks the centenary of the foundation of the Society. Founded in April 1876, its objects were then as now to promote the study of the history and antiquities of Bristol and Gloucestershire of every period, to encourage their conservation and to publish original records, excavation reports and other historical material. The contribution which the Society has made during this period to historical knowledge, the development of archaeology and the preservation of buildings is an important one and has been due to the energy and enthusiasm of its members.

Although it can no longer, as it did in the past, finance excavations it continues to publish a comprehensive series of archaeological reports. In the field of conservation, it has been responsible for the preservation of Chedworth Roman villa, Arlington Row at Bibury and the Theatre Royal in Bristol.

To mark the centenary, a number of activities have been arranged. On April 8th a dinner will be held in the Council House, Bristol when the guest speaker will be the President of the Society of Antiquaries. The Society is also presenting a volume "Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History" being a collection of essays on a wide range of archaeological, historical and architectural subjects, including the history of the Society. The meetings during the year (as below) will be concentrated on places in Bristol and Gloucestershire with which the Society has been particularly associated. The Annual General Meeting will be held in Gloucester Cathedral on the 14th July; after tea the Society will attend Choral Evensong.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 15th May: | Deerhurst and Tewkesbury. |
| 14th July: | Annual General Meeting in Gloucester Cathedral. |
| 15th—17th July: | Summer meeting which will include Bristol, Hailes, Chedworth, Cirencester and Witcombe. |
| 2nd October: | Supper party at Berkeley Castle. |

The Campden Society

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 17th February: | Lecture: Local History of Chipping Campden and Broad Campden — J. P. Nelson, J.P., M.A. |
| | Summer Programme not yet available. |

Cheltenham Museum

Lunch time Lectures in the Art Gallery on Wednesdays, 1.25—1.45 p.m.
Programme, as submitted, completed in March, 1976.

The Cheltenham Society

Friday, 13th February: 7.30 p.m. at Parmoor House. Illustrated talk by Mr R. W. Paterson on "The Temples in South India".

Friday, 27th February: 7.30 p.m. at The Old Bakery, in conjunction with the Public Library. Three films will be shown touching on all aspects of conservation.

A tour of Cheltenham interiors is planned for late Summer but the date has not yet been fixed.

Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society

Summer Programme not yet available, but disappointingly one fixed booking for 10th July clashes with the Local History Conference and Social.

Forest of Dean Local History Society

Meetings for the first part of 1976:

Coleford Community Centre, 2nd February, 3 p.m. Mr K. E. Kissack on a Selected Subject.

Cinderford College of Education, 6th March, 3 p.m. Miss Barbara Griffiths — Libraries and Local History.

Coleford Community Centre, 3rd April, 3 p.m. Canon Mansfield — "Surnames and their Story".

The Summer Programme is not definite, but will include visits to Ludlow, Stokesay, Claverdon Manor, Snowhill and other visits are being arranged.

Gloucester Civic Trust

The Gloucester Civic Trust is an independent body started in 1972 by a group of local people concerned about the demolition of so many old buildings, and about the quality of new ones being erected. Its aims include making people of Gloucester conscious of their great historical and architectural heritage, to stimulate public interest in the area, to promote high standards of planning and architecture, and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of local features of historic and public interest.

The Historical Association (Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch)

The following items were inadvertently omitted from the Programme details published in the Autumn Bulletin:

11th October, 1975: "The Crisis of the European Aristocracy in the 17th century" — M. L. Bush, B.A., Ph.D.

3rd November, 1975: "The Monastic side of Gloucester Cathedral" — Bernard Ashwell, A.R.I.B.A., F.S.A.

9th February, 1976: John Wesley — The Rev. V. H. H. Green, D.D., F.R.Hist.S.

1st March, 1976: "The Renaissance — one culture or two?" — Peter Burke, M.A.

A Programme of Summer excursions is being arranged.

Nailsworth Local Studies Group

Meetings at 7.30 p.m. on the first Monday of every month in the Mortimer Room, Nailsworth. The season's Programme includes:

October: Flora of Gloucestershire. Lady Ricketts.

November: History of Local Footpaths. David Shale.

December: Medicine Past and Present. Dr. D. I. Reeve.

January: Members' Exhibits.

February: Pond Conservation. A Speaker from Bristol Conservation Corps.

March: Roman Influence in the Area. Mr Chouls.

Spring Meetings: Visits planned to Court House, Athelstan Museum, at Malmesbury and the replica Roman Pavement at Wotton-under-Edge.

BOOK REVIEW

Cirencester: The Development and Buildings of a Cotswold Town.

Richard Reece and Christopher Catling.

Available from British Archaeological Reports, 122 Banbury Road, Oxford at £2 plus postage.

A fascinating and useful pamphlet for anyone with more than a passing interest in buildings and architectural development. The town of Cirencester is covered from its earliest beginnings until 1921. The section headed Past Present and Future contains some interesting critical thoughts on modern development and is thought-provoking on the problems facing those who have to decide whether to restore or redevelop. A classification of architectural styles is developed which should be invaluable to anyone or groups undertaking a local building survey or appraisal of their town/village-cape. While this paper must make interesting reading for those who know Cirencester well it is equally useful for those with no local knowledge.

C.T.R.G.

BOOKS NOTED

The Story of Duntisbourne Abbots. Reprinted 1976 with an up to date chapter from Mrs A. Carver, Daglingworth, £1, plus 11p postage. Also available *The Stories of Duntisbourne Rous and Daglingworth.*

Facsimile Reprints by Alan Sutton, Dursley: Dursley and its neighbourhood £3.90. Fisher's Stroud £5.00. From Booksellers.

Cirencester 1750—1850 by R. W. Jennings. Copies are not available at Bingham Library and County Archives, as the author hopes to publish. The original articles appeared in the *Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard.*

Royal Forest — a history of Dean's Woods as producers of timber. Obtainable from Booksellers, Price £3.75.

Chipping Campden by J. P. Nelson. Fully illustrated, containing a number of maps. from J. P. Nelson, Broad Campden. Price £5, plus 42p postage.

Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History. Contains a wide range of subjects from prehistoric times to the 19th Century. From The Society, 9a Pembroke Road, Bristol. Price £3.50.

The Local Historian. Quarterly Journal of the Standing Conference for Local History published February, June and November. Annual subscription £1.50 to Subscription Department, National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.