

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Proceedings at Gloucester

1878-79, Vol. 3, 301-304

© The Society and the Author(s)

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society,

1878-9.

PART II.

*Transactions at the Winter Meeting of the Society,
held at Gloucester,*

ON

Wednesday, 5th February, 1879.

THE Winter Meeting of the Society, for reading Papers, &c., was held at Gloucester on Wednesday 5th February, 1879. A Meeting of the Council for the transaction of the general business of the Society, was, with the permission of the Mayor and Town Council, held at the Tolzey in the afternoon, and, according to the usual custom, the members dined together at the "Bell" Hotel in the evening; C. J. THOMAS, Esq., the President of the Society, took the chair. There was a tolerably full attendance of members. At eight o'clock the members assembled in the Lecture Theatre of the "Science and Art Department." C. J. THOMAS, Esq., again presided. Among those present were SIR W. V. GUISE, Bart., President of the Council; SIR DAVID WEDDERBURN, Bart.; SIR JOHN MACLEAN; Mr. W. P. PRICE; Mr. J. D. THOMAS NIBLETT; The Rev. W. BAZELEY; Rev. W. T. ALLEN; Mr. P. HALLETT, General Secretary; Mr. J. WALLER, Local Secretary, &c.

THE REV. W. TAPRELL ALLEN, Vicar of St. Briavels, read a Paper on *The Castle of St. Briavels*, in illustration of which he exhibited a number of plans and other drawings. MR. C. J. THOMAS, also exhibited a beautiful drawing of the Castle, on the back of which is written: "By Lt. Col. Wm. Booth, Rl. Engineers, 76 years of age, 64 years in His Majesty's Service," which Mr. Thomas very kindly presented to the Society.

MR. ALLEN very carefully described the building as it now remains. He stated that it was believed to have been erected by Milo Fitz Waller, about 1131, observing that various additions and alterations had been made from that date down to a recent period. He also traced the history of the Castle, giving many interesting particulars in connection therewith. A discussion followed, in which several members took part. There was also exhibited an ancient MS. Volume, which had formerly been, for many years, in the possession of the keeper of the Castle, but which is now the property of Kedgwin Hoskins Fryer, Esq., Town Clerk, Gloucester.

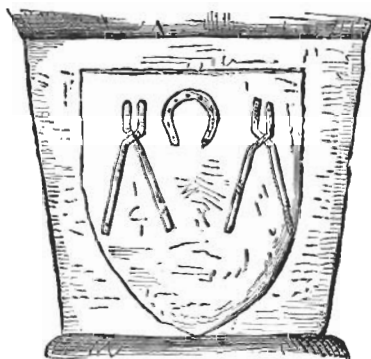
A vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. ALLEN for his valuable Paper, which will be found printed in this volume; and also to C. J. THOMAS, Esq., for presenting to the Society the beautiful view of the Castle, which he had exhibited.

Mr. J. D. THOMAS NIBLETT, F.S.A., exhibited a series of drawings of escutcheons of Arms, from the Church of Abbenhall, in the Forest of Dean, having reference to the *Free Miners* and *Free Smiths of Dean Forest*. He said he was glad to be able to bring before the meeting this evening some facts not generally known, and of special interest to students of heraldry, a science now cultivated in elucidation of history, and often found most useful in establishing dates. He remarked, that in mediæval times there would seem to have been, in the Forest of Dean, Guilds or Fraternities of Free Miners and Free Smiths, and that each had its own distinctive coat of arms. In proof of this he called attention to the drawings which he exhibited, observing that within the tower of Abbenhall Church is an octagonal font of 15th century work, on each face of which, within a quatrefoil, is a shield of arms. The sculptures are very rudely executed, doubtless by some local mason, but, he remarked, the sand-stone of the forest, is, at all times, a very hard and stubborn material to carve.

No. 1, to which he first directed attention, was the Cross of St. George; *or, a cross gu.*

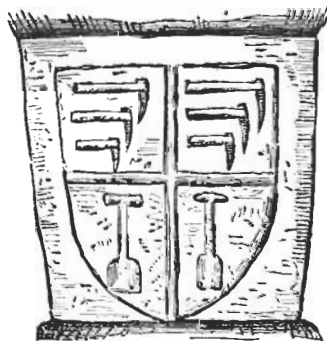
No. 2—Stafford, Dukes of Buckingham, the wealthy and powerful Lords of Thornbury Castle, in this county; *or, a chevron gu.*

No. 3 represents the arms of the Free Smiths. The tinctures, he said, were not known, but he considered the colours, black and



(Fig 31)

white would be suitable, and suggested that the blazon should read: *sa. two horse shoes, between as many Smith's tongs, all pale-wise ar, (See Fig. 31)*

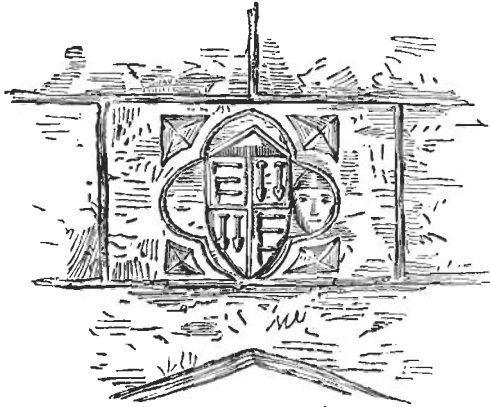


(Fig. 32)

No. 4—Is intended to represent the arms of the Free Miners. They are shewn as in the margin (*fig. 32*), but, perhaps in consequence of the ignorance of the village mason, they are inaccurate, he would defer giving the blazon of this coat until he treated of the tower, on which the shield again occurred in a more correct form.

- No. 5—*Gules a fess between six crosses crosslet*, Beauchamp, Earls of Warwick.
- No. 6—*Or, a fess gules*. Abbenhall, of Abbenhall.
- No. 7—*Argent, a chevron, between three dolphins, embowed, sable*. Serjeant of Hart's Barton, Longhope. He remarked that the same arms occurred in the north aisle of the Church of Micheldean, and that without the information derived from the shield there, the arms at Abbenhall are so rudely cut that they would be unintelligible.
- No. 8—Beauchamp as before.

Adverting to the outer face of the west wall of the tower he said the shield of the Free Miners occurred there again, and with reference to the arms, he observed that no tinctures were shewn, nor, indeed, known, but considering the colour of the mineral earth, he thought we might fitly adopt red for the sake of distinction, and blazon the shield as:—Quarterly, 1st & 4th *Gules*,



(fig. 33)

three miners' picks in pale or, 2nd and 3rd, *or, two shovels in fess, handles upwards, gules*. On the sinister side of the shield, within the cusping of the quatrefoil, appears a human head, wearing a miner's cap, peeping, "he said," "round the corner like Tom of Coventry;" adding, "possibly, it represented Ralph de Abbenhall or one of the family—the Crawshays of their day." (fig. 33.) The arms of the Free Miners and the Free Smiths are engraved in Nicholls' "Iron-making in the Forest of Dean," p. 26, and we are indebted to the courtesy of the publisher, Mr. C. C. Hough, of Coleford, for the use of the blocks.

Mr. NIBLETT further remarked that on the shield of the Free Smiths, on the font, (fig. 31) the horseshoe in base is nearly obliterated but that evidences of it exist; and that the font was painted, as there were traces of it. Mr. GRIGG, the Rector, has, he understood, emblazoned colour upon all the shields, and this quite recently.

In the brief discussion which followed the delivery of MR. NIBLETT'S address, Sir JOHN MACLEAN remarked that he did not see what connection the arms of Beauchamp and Stafford had with the Free Miners and Free Smiths of the Forest of Dean, nor did it appear that these great Nobles were, in any way, connected with the Parish of Abbenhall; and with

respect to the shields charged with the tools, he suggested whether they might not be regarded rather as "trade marks" than coats of arms.

A vote of thanks was given to MR. NIBLETT for his interesting address.

The Rev. W. BAZELEY, Rector of Matson, next read a Paper on the *Earls of Gloucester*. He said, in commencing, that it had originally been his intention to give, this evening, some account of the Dukes of Gloucester, and to speak of the Earls at some future time; but that at the suggestion of two of the leading members of the Society he had changed the order of his procedure, observing that he thought that in order of date the Earls had certainly a prior claim, adding that, moreover, they were more closely connected with the local history of Gloucestershire than were the Dukes. He further observed that the subject was one to which justice could not be done, in its entirety, in the time allotted to him, and that he should, therefore, this evening, confine his remarks to the first, and by no means the least noble, of the Earls after the Conquest, Robert of Caen, the illegitimate son of King Henry I. Having given a very interesting historical account of this great Earl, and of the turbulent period in which he lived, which will be printed in this volume, MR. BAZELEY concluded by expressing a hope that his hearers would agree with him in thinking that it was certainly within the limits of the researches of the Society to collect the scanty records of the great and noble men, who, centuries ago, inhabited and loved the fertile plains and bold uplands of Gloucestershire.

A vote of thanks was given to MR. BAZELEY.

MR. J. H. COOKE, F.S.A., read a Paper on the *Great Berkeley Law-suit of the 15th and 16th centuries*, which will be printed *in extenso* in this volume.

The thanks of the Society were given to Mr. COOKE for his Paper, and on the proposal of SIR WILLIAM GUISE, a similar acknowledgement was made to the Chairman; and Mr. THOMAS having briefly replied the meeting broke up.

It was intended to form a Temporary Museum, but the objects contributed were very few, comprising, chiefly, a number of interesting old engravings of Gloucester Cathedral and Woodchester Priory, kindly lent by MR. CONWAY JONES, of Gloucester, who also exhibited, on behalf of Mr. STEED, a number of "remains," found in the course of excavations in Bull Lane, in Gloucester, including some bones and glass and other vessels.