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TRANSACTIONS OF THE
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society,
IN 1888-9,

PROCEEDINGS AT THE SPRING MEETING AT CHIPPING SODBURY,
On Tuesday, May 29th, 1888.

PART I

THE Annual Spring Meeting of the Society, which was held this day at Chipping Sodbury, was well attended. The arrangements were made by a Local Committee, consisting of FRANCIS F. FOX, Esq., Alderman of Bristol, *Chairman*; The Revs. W. T. BLATHWAYT, Prebendary BARNARD, J. DUMAS, W. H. P. HARVEY, E. HASLUCK, Canon NASII, R. STEVENS, H. L. THOMPSON, Messrs. J. TRENFIELD and J. D. B. TRENFIELD. The Rev. W. T. BLATHWAYT acted as Local Secretary. Among the members present were Sir BROOK KAY, Bart. (*President of the Council*), Sir THOMAS H. CRAWLEY-BEVEY, Bart., all the members of the Local Committee, the Rev. the Archdeacon of Bristol, the Revs. A. PONTIFEX, W. H. BOOTHBY, S. E. BARTLEET, R. W. RANDALL, R. L. CRAWLEY-BEVEY, WM. BAZELEY (*Hon. General Secretary*); Messrs. E. HARTLAND (*Hon. Treas.*), T. S. POPE, W. W. BETHELL, F. A. HYETT, ROBERT TAYLOR, W. J. STANTON, A. E. HUDD, and many ladies.

The party assembled at Yate Station at 11.25, and immediately proceeded in the carriages there waiting to the church of

ST. MARY OF YATE,

where they were very cordially received by the Rev. A. Pontifex, the Rector.

Mr. W. W. BETHELL, of London, architect, was so good as to call attention to the most striking features of the Church, and to make the following remarks:—

This church is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, and consists of a chancel, a chapel on the north side of the chancel and another on the south side, a nave, north nave aisle, south transept, south porch, and a tower at the west end of the nave. The east end of the chancel and chapels are in a straight line. The grouping of the building is most picturesque, especially from the south-east. The earliest visible work is of Norman date, traces of which may be seen on the outside of the east end of the church, the springing of an arch between the chancel and the north chapel, and the greater portion of the south transept. The original Norman church, appears to have been cruciform with a chapel on the north side of the chancel, also, probably, a lantern, or tower, at the crossing. Then came the Early-English work, remains of which may be seen at the base of the tower arch, and the lower portion of the south nave wall between the tower and the south transept.

No work of any consequence appears to have been carried out from this time to the Perpendicular era, when great changes took place. In fact during the 15th and early part of the 16th centuries the whole church was practically rebuilt. The chancel, north and south chapels, with arcades between them and the chancel, the north nave aisle, with arcade between it and the nave, the greater part of the south transept, the upper portion of the south wall of the nave, the roofs and tower.

The two arches of the arcade between the nave and the nave aisle are some fifty years later than the western end of this arcade, and the arcading in the chancel, also the arch opening into the south transept are of this date; and, again, the roof over this portion forms a decided break at its junction with the older part of the nave roof, both inside and outside. The explanation of these peculiarities is, probably, that the Norman piers and arches of the central lantern were not disturbed during the first alteration in the Perpendicular period; but in the beginning of the 16th century this Norman work was removed and the existing arches and roof erected instead. Another peculiarity is the position of the rood loft staircase, the bottom steps of which jutted out into the north-west angle of the north chapel; the entrance doorway to it was moved a few years ago to the east side of the south porch.

The south porch once contained a parvise, but the floor is now gone, and, on account of the plaster on the walls, no sign of the staircase to the parvise can be discovered. The outer archway is formed of 12th century stones.

A sanctus bell-cot still remains on the gable over the chancel arch.

There are also some most interesting fragments of old glass left in many of the windows.

The finest feature of the church is undoubtedly the tower, it is 92 feet high to the underside of the parapet, but it looks higher owing to the church itself being rather low. Its date belongs to the time of Henry VII., and it is highly probable that this King had something to do with its erection, because in the top cornice, round the tower turret, are carved the portcullis, fleur-de-lys, and Tudor rose; also the Tudor rose is carved on the entrance doorway to the tower. The parapet and top of the turret do not at present exist, except a few of the stones of the pinnacles; sufficient, however, remain to give a fair idea what the original design was. The top of the tower evidently became decayed and unsafe, possibly in the last century, and all stones were then removed except those which were considered safe, and the lead in the old cramp holes can still be seen.

A design for the restoration of this parapet has been prepared, but for want of funds has not yet been carried out.

The church was partially restored some years ago, but much more requires to be done to expose many interesting portions now covered up with plaster, and otherwise to restore the building.

The party next proceeded to the Church of St. John Baptist, Chipping Sodbury, where the members were cordially received by the Rev. W. H. P. Harvey, the Vicar. This church has been "restored" under the direction of the late Mr. Street, who, during the operations, discovered a stone pulpit which was not known to exist, so completely was it covered with plaster.

Until this restoration the view of the chancel was obstructed by a great wooden three-decker. Mr. Street was delighted to discover this pulpit, and Archdeacon Denison, who preached from it at the re-opening of the church, expressed his gratification.

The church was then described by Mr. T. S. Pope, of Bristol, architect, whose Memoir *On the Churches of Sodbury* will follow.

Having inspected this church with much interest, the company adjourned to "The Grapes" Hotel for luncheon, at which Sir Brook Kay presided. After lunch they proceeded to the Town Hall, where they were received by Mr. J. Trenfield, who, as Bailiff of the Borough, on behalf of himself and the members of the Corporation, heartily welcomed the members of the Society to Chipping Sodbury.

Mr. F. F. Fox, Alderman of Bristol, whose valuable Treatise on the Ancient Fraternity of Merchant Tailors in that city is well known to our members, read an interesting paper on *The Gilds of Sodbury and Dyrham*, which will be printed *post*.

A paper was also read by Mr. J. D. B. TRENFIELD *On the Ancient Manor, Borough & Grammar School of Sodbury*, which will be enlarged and printed *post*.

On the conclusion of the reading of these papers, Sir Brook Kay, on behalf of the members, tendered a vote of thanks to Mr. Fox and Mr. Trenfield for the information they had afforded on such interesting subjects.

The Rev. W. BAZELEY mentioned that he had inspected the deeds to which reference had been made in Mr. Trenfield's paper, and had found them to be exceedingly interesting. He believed the history of Chipping Sodbury could be traced by the deeds from the time of the Norman Conquest.

The company then inspected the documents, seals, mace, a curious old chest, and other interesting relics belonging to the Corporation.

The members afterwards drove to Little Sodbury, where the Rev. Wm. BAZELEY made the following remarks on the

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

This ancient dwelling, standing on the western slope of the Cottewold range, below the Roman Camp of Little Sodbury, was probably built by Sir John Walshe, of Olveston, who obtained the Manor of Little Sodbury in 1st Henry VII., 1485-6, by marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Richard Forster. Sir John Walshe in 1490, was the King's Receiver for the Berkeley lands, which had been alienated from the Berkeley family by William Marquis Berkeley, and entailed on the King and his heirs male. This appointment of Receiver was a profitable one, and Sir John Walshe, who seems to have died about 1492, left his son and namesake the heir to several manors. Sir John Walshe (the 2nd) was the champion of Hen. VIII. at his coronation in 1509, and was a great favourite with the young King. He married, first, Ann, daughter of Sir Robert Poyntz, who was Steward of the Berkeley lands, and, secondly, Ann, daughter of John Dinley, of Hampshire. He was Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1526-7 and 1535-6. Little Sodbury House owes much of its interest to the fact that William Tyndale

the translator of the New Testament, lived there for a short time as tutor of Sir John Walshe's children, and also because it was visited by King Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, on the 21st August, 1535.

Sir John Walshe died in 1546-7, leaving his son Maurice his heir. Margaret, his only child by his first wife, Ann Poyntz, married Richard Norton; and Ann, Catherine, and Mabel, his three daughters by Ann Dinley, were married to Edward George, George Huntley, and Henry Clifford respectively.

Maurice Walshe, who was 30 years old on his father's death, had a grant from Henry VIII. of the Manors of Old Sodbury and Chipping Sodbury. He married Bridgett, daughter of Nicholas Lord Vaulx, and had many children.

In 1556, whilst he was at dinner in the hall of Little Sodbury Manor House with his family, "a fiery, sulphureous globe" passing from one window to another, killed him and one child, and so injured six more children that they all died within six months. Two sons, however, remained—Nicholas, who succeeded him, and Henry. Nicholas married Mary, daughter of Sir John Berkeley, of Stoke Gifford, and was Sheriff of Gloucestershire, 1561-2. He died 1577-8, leaving Henry son and heir. Henry Walsh was slain in a duel by Sir Henry Wintour, and his cousin Walter, son of his father's brother, Henry Walsh, succeeded him. Walter Walshe was seized of the manor in 1602. Soon after this the three manors of Old, Little, and Chipping Sodbury, were sold to Thomas Stephens, of Lypiatt, Attorney-General to Prince Henry and Prince Charles. The Stephenses seem to have resided in the old Manor House, as various members of the family are described on the pedigree as of Little Sodbury.

In 1728, on the failure of heirs male, the manors of the Stephens family came to Richard Paeker, whose mother was a Stephens; and, on his death, without male issue, they passed to Elizabeth, 2nd wife of David Hartley, D.D., whose descendants still hold them.

Little Sodbury Manor House seems to have been "restored" at the latter end of the 17th century: but it still contains many traces of the original structure such as a beautiful oriel window, a fine porch with hood moulding, and several 15th century windows heavily barred. In the interior, the dining hall, although dismantled, is much, as regards its structure, as it was in the time of Tyndale and Sir John Walshe. The family and their guests sat at a raised dais at the south end, whilst the retainers sat at tables placed along the east and west walls. Part of the old hall has been partitioned off, but the original north end, with its two doors, remains intact. Over the entrance from the kitchen and buttery was the minstrels' gallery, the entrance to which still remains. The lofty roof of the hall with its wind braces and angel corbels is in fairly good condition. On the east side of the dais, high up in the wall, is a mask through which the ladies in the ladies' gallery could watch the revelry below.

About ten yards to the east of the Manor House, and above it, on a small level space, are the ruins of what was once Little Sodbury Church, dedicated to Saint Adeline. The porch with its pointed and Tudor arches

needs some little repair, or it will soon be level with the ground. In a fragment of the north wall which remains may be seen the aumbrey where the sacred vessels were kept. Some care should be taken to preserve this consecrated site, where, probably, the bones of many of its former possessors are lying buried, from the desecration which threatens it.

The Roman Camp was next visited. It is, as usual, rectangular in plan, and contains an area of 12 acres. The west side rests on the escarpment of the hill, the other three sides being defended by a double line of entrenchments, each consisting of a single bank and ditch. There are entrances on the east and west sides, the camp, in all respects, being very perfect in form. It is described in Mr. G. B. Witts' *Archæological Handbook of Gloucestershire*, p. 46, and a plan is given, ante Plate III., Vol. VIII. Fosbrooke,¹ citing Holinshed, states that Edward IV., on his march from Malmesbury, before the Battle of Tewkesbury, encamped here for a short time.

The party next proceeded to Hawkesbury, where they were received by the vicar, the Rev. W. H. Boothby, who conducted them to the Church, and a description thereof was given by Mr. W. Wood Bethell, which will be printed *post*.

A drive of seven miles brought the party to Yate House, the residence of Mr. F. F. Fox, where tea was provided. An inspection of the art treasures, and especially the fine library, formed one of the most agreeable features of the day's proceedings, and subsequently, with thanks to Mr. Fox for his kindness, the party separated.

¹ History of Glouc. Vol. II., p. 29.