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**Transactions at Berkeley**

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE  
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society  
IN 1889-90.

*Proceedings at the Spring Meeting, held at Berkeley, on Wednesday,  
29th May, 1889.*

THE Annual Spring Meeting of the Society was held this day at Berkeley, where there was a very full attendance. Among those present were Mr. R. V. VASSAR-SMITH, *President of the Society*, Gen. HALE, Dr. Beddoe, V.P., the Revs. S. E. BARTLEET and J. MELLAND HALL; MESSRS. H. ADAMS, F. N. BAYNTON, W. J. BRACKENRIDGE, B. BONNOR, H. W. BRUTON, E. BUSH, J. B. C. BURROUGHS, C. H. DANSEY, E. A. D'ARGENT, H. DERHAM, R. G. FOSTER, H. MARTIN GIBBS, J. HALE, W. W. HUGHES, H. LLOYD, P. D. PRANKERD, B. MATTHEWS, C. TRUSTED, Rev. W. BAZELEY, *Hon. Secretary*, Mr. V. R. PERKINS, *Local Secretary for Dursley*, and a large number of ladies.

The various sections of the party met at Berkeley station, and at once set out for

BERKELEY CHURCH,

where they were welcomed by the Revd. J. L. STACKHOUSE, the vicar, who read a paper, in the course of which he said that one striking peculiarity which immediately arrests the attention of the visitor is that the tower is separated from the church itself. There are many instances of separate towers, but few cases in which they are so far apart from the church as at Berkeley. In this case the distance is 146 feet. The reason for this separation may be that a tower attached to the church would have been full of peril to the Castle, as archers once established on the top of such a tower would have commanded the Keep. In fact the church itself proved to be a danger to the neighbouring fortress, for it was through the church that the castle fell into the hands of the Cromwellites. The contest was in the north porch; the carnage was frightful, the battle decisive for the besiegers, who immediately set to work to put some small guns on the roof of the church, and the castle surrendered. The present tower dates only from 1753, but it is a fair reproduction of an older tower which stood on the same site. It contains six bells, of fine tone and weight, which have just recently been re-hung and the tower itself restored. The curfew still rings out its ponderous note of warning at the hour of eight o'clock from Old Michaelmas day to the 25th of March. The churchyard is blocked up by unsightly tombs, which are quaint in size and shape, and still more quaint for the inscriptions upon them. He recommended the members to look at an old altar-tomb near the north door,

to the memory of Thomas Pearce. On the west end of it, towards the path, is the following inscription :

Here resteth the Body of  
 THOMAS PEARCE  
 who was five times  
 Mayor of this Town  
 who deceased the 25  
 of Feb 1665 ætatis 77.

And on the north side this :

Here lyeth Thomas peirce whom no man taught  
 Yet he in Iron, Brass, and Silver wrought,  
 He Jacks and clocks and watches (with Art) made  
 And mended too, when others' work did fade.  
 Of Berkeley five tymes Maior this Artist was  
 And yet this Maior, this artist, was but grasse,  
 When his owne watch was downe on the last day,  
 He that made watches, had not made a key  
 To wind it up ; but useless it must lie,  
 Until he rise againe no more to die.

And at another, whereon is an epitaph on Richard Pearcc, the Earl of Suffolk's jester, as under :

Here lies the Earl of Suffolk's Fool  
 Men call'd him Dicky Pearce ;  
 His folly served to make Folks laugh,  
 When wit and mirth were scarce.  
 Poor Dick alas ! is dead and gone  
 What signifies to cry  
 Dickys enough are still behind  
 To laugh at bye and bye.

BURIED JUNE 18TH, 1728, aged 63.

The words, which are attributed to Dean Swift, are more witty than reverent. The exterior of the church gives no idea of the beauty of the interior. The long nave with its low roof, and the absence of a clerestory window on the north side, give the visitor who approaches the church for the first time an impression that the building is deficient in architectural beauty. Passing round the exterior to the west end, he said, you will come suddenly on a grand west front, with a doorway between two blank pointed arches ; the doorway itself has an obtuse arch elaborately foliated, with a detached shaft of Purbeck marble on either side. The old oak door still bears the marks of the battle which took place on 23rd Sept. 1645. There are perforations through which the besieged pointed their muskets at the attacking forces, and there are also many marks of the hostile bullets of the besiegers. Above the west door is a fine Early English window of five lights, which is one of the principal features of the building. Passing into the interior it is impossible to enter this noble church without feeling that it is at once beautiful in its structure, and reverent in its arrangements. The nave and aisles belong to the 13th and 14th centuries, but the south doorway is a very remarkable example of transition from Norman to Early English. The font is a most interesting one of Norman workmanship ; three of the sides

bear marks of rough usage. At the screen there was an altar to St. Mary the Virgin, to whom the church is dedicated, and the piscina of this altar still remains, and on the south side an altar to St. Andrew. These were founded—the first by Thomas Lord Berkeley (the third of that name), and the other by his widow. Their tomb is close by, with their effigies upon it. It is well known that this Lord Berkeley was tried for the murder of his Sovereign, and ultimately acquitted. Close to the screen, on the south side, a Roman tile has been built into the wall, and bears the following letters,



which were scratched upon it whilst still soft, and, probably, indicate that the situation had been occupied by the Tenth Cohort of the 6th Legion, but this interpretation would seem to be very doubtful. The first letter is very indistinct. On the south side of the chancel is the chapel used as the burial place of the Berkeley family. The stone roof is of a most interesting character, some of the carvings being very curious, especially one on a boss on the south side, with the representation of a fox with his paws on the pulpit, preaching to two geese, who are turning their heads away. The reedos is a recent gift to the church by Lady Fitzhardinge, who has placed it there as a memorial to her late father and mother. It represents the four Evangelists and our Lord in the centre. The window above is in memory of the great Dr. Jenner, who was buried in the chancel. The registers of the church go back only to October, 1653, and the ancient ones have been sadly torn and misused, so that they are scarcely legible.

The PRESIDENT conveyed the thanks of the members to Mr. Stackhouse for his paper, which, he said, had invested the subject matter with a new interest. The company having inspected the various details of the sacred edifice, a visit was paid to the vicarage, formerly the residence of the famous Dr. Jenner, and one of the sights of which was a summer-house where the doctor is said to have vaccinated his early patients. After lunch at the Berkeley Arms Hotel, the party proceeded to

#### THE CASTLE,

having got safely under shelter in the Great Hall just before one of many heavy showers fell. They were received by the Hon. Elton Gifford, Lord Fitzhardinge's nephew, Mr. J. Peter, his Lordship's agent, and the latter, with the Revd. William Bazeley, acted as guides to the building. Many documents of interest were exhibited by the former gentleman, and Mr. Bazeley read notes on the History and Architecture of the Castle, collected from the able and exhaustive article on the subject by Mr. G. T. Clark, of Dowlais, F.S.A., on the occasion of the first visit of the Society to the Castle in 1876, printed in the first volume of the Transactions.

On the conclusion of Mr. Bazeley's remarks, the party being very numerous, was divided into three sections, which were conducted by Mr. Bazeley, and Mr. Vincent Perkins, *Local Secretary* to the Society at Dursley, over the building, the chapel, King Edward II.'s reputed chamber, and other objects of special interest in the building. Afterwards the members were invited to ascend to the leads of the castle for the purpose of

seeing from that elevation the view of the Vale of Gloucester and the surrounding scenery. It was, however, somewhat disappointing, the rainy and misty state of the atmosphere tended greatly to obscure the prospect, which, from the inconsiderable height of the elevation, is not very extensive, and the thick foliage of the neighbouring trees greatly intercepted the view. Even the heights of the Cotswold hills, on the east, which bound the vale, could only be imperfectly seen. Mr. Perkins pointed out the sites of the chief places of interest, and read some interesting extracts from Leland, Camden, and from Smith's *Hundred of Berkeley*, relative to the ancient privileges of the Borough of Berkeley which was formerly a small port. These privileges however, have long since ceased, and the borough has dissolved itself and surrendered its municipal insignia to the Lord of the Castle.

The Meeting now terminated, and the parties returned to the railway station and proceeded to their respective homes, having, notwithstanding the stormy weather, spent an enjoyable day.

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