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**Transactions at Malmesbury**

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE  
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

IN 1891-92.

*Proceedings at the Spring Meeting at Malmesbury, on Tuesday,  
May, 26th, 1891.*

PART I.

THE ANNUAL SPRING MEETING of the Society was held this day at Malmesbury, and, considering the stormy character of the weather, was well attended by members and visitors. Among those present were the Worshipful the Mayor of Malmesbury (Mr. ALDERMAN POOLE); Sir JOHN MACLEAN, F.S.A., &c., and Mr. W. LEIGH (*Vice-Presidents of the Society*), Major DAVIS; The Revs. G. WINDSOR TUCKER (*Vicar of the Parish*), W. T. ALLEN, JOHN EMERIS, W. SYMONDS, D. L. PITCAIRNE, PITT EYKEN, J. M. HALL, S. E. BARTLEET; Messrs. R. TAYLOR, W. FORESTER, C. E. CHAPMAN, J. C. S. JENNINGS, E. S. HARTLAND A. E. D'ARGENT, E. P. LITTLE, STANLEY MARLING, A. G. W. JEFFERIES, J. PLATT, A. H. PAUL (*Local Secretary, Tetbury*), C. J. LOWE, H. MEDLAND, H. W. BRUTON, J. C. GANI, J. W. ADAMS, G. MEADWAY, and many Ladies; also Rev. W. BAZELEY (*Hon. Gen. Secretary*), who acted as guide throughout the day.

The arrangements were made by Mr. A. H. Paul, Local Secretary of the Society at Tetbury, who was kindly assisted by Mr. W. Forrester, Local Secretary at Malmesbury for the Wiltshire Archæological and Natural History Society, and were excellent.

It needs somewhat of an explanation why the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archæological Society held its Spring Meeting this year at Malmesbury. The Society is distinctly a County Society. It was founded specifically to explore and illustrate the history and antiquities of the County of Gloucester and collect materials for a future history of the County, a work which, notwithstanding the labours of Atkyns and Rudder, and Fosbroke, is greatly needed. Though Malmesbury, however, is not in the *County* of Gloucester, it, nevertheless, is not beyond the legitimate range of the Society's operations, for it is a portion of the Diocese of Bristol.

On arriving at Malmesbury Mr. Bazeley conducted the members and visitors to the ruins of the old Abbey Church, and, making a circuit of the venerable edifice, he pointed out, and commented on, the particular features to which he should treat later on in the day in a Paper he should read on the subject. This Paper will be printed *in extenso* in the present volume.

On Leaving the Abbey Church, the party, still under the guidance of the General Secretary, made a perambulation of the ancient town.

Traces of the walls which protected Malmesbury may be seen on every side of the town running parallel with the course of the two streams, the Avon, formerly the Bladon, and the Newnton Water, formerly the Yngelburn, which almost surround it.

The castle built by Roger, Bishop of Salisbury (1130-37) stood near the west end of the abbey, and commanded the narrow neck of land which gave access from the N.W. to the plateau on which the town stands.

A modern villa stands on the site of the West Gate ; the site of the North Gate is unknown. Beyond the tower on the N.W. lies the suburb of Westport, with its ancient chapel of S. Helen, its Guildhall, and its Horsefair.

From the site of the Castle the party proceeded by Gloucester Street to the ruins of St. Paul's Church, the tower of which still remains, and is used as a Campanile for the present parish church. From thence, by passing through the churchyard, the 15th century Market Cross, which is remarkable for its heavy lantern, was reached. Leland, who visited Malmesbury c. 1540, speaks of it as having been built "*in hominum memoria.*" It was restored at the commencement of the present century by the Earl of Suffolk and Lady Northwick. From thence the party went due west by the way which led down through a postern gate in the wall to Burni Vale ; and from the summit of the ancient wall the members looked down on the site of Chapel House and St. Maiddulph's Hermitage. St. Maiddulph was a Scotch monk and philosopher in the seventh century, who, desiring a more solitary life than a monastery afforded, made himself a cell under the ancient Roman walls of Caer-Bladon, near the junction of the Bladon and the Ingelbourn (now the Avon and the Newton water). Here he preached the Christian faith to the Saxons with much success. Aldhelm, one of his converts, became a man of greater renown than his master, and, in process of time, on account of his holiness of life was venerated as a Saint. He was really the founder of the Abbey which was dedicated to SS. Mary and Aldhelm.

From the Postern Gate a pathway called "the King's Wall," (because running parallel with that ancient structure), passes an imposing house of about the date of the early part of the 18th century, having its parapet adorned with the arms of the town and of the first owner. At the extreme S. of the town, not far from the junction of the two streams, the thirteenth century archway of the Hospital of St. John stands between the site of the South Gate and St. John's Bridge, called in early writings Melebridge. This was a Lazar Hospital for men and women, and not, as has been surmised, a Priory of the Knight Hospitallers. Another Hospital stood on Burton Hill, where the road to Chippenham branches off to the south. This was the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene. Part of the buildings standing on the site of St. John's Hospital is used as almshouses, and another part as the court house of the old corporation, who now only exist for the purpose of managing the land, consisting of 700 acres, called King's Heath, granted to the men of Malmesbury by King Athelstan for their valour against the Danes. The municipal functions of the old corporation have recently been transferred to a Town Council, established under the Municipal Corporations' Acts. Here the Society was received by Mr. M. H. Chubb, the Deputy High Steward, (acting in behalf of Colonel Miles, the High Steward, absent through indisposition), who cordially welcomed the Society to the town.

Several members of the old corporation were present, and two pairs of interesting maces and some of the records of the corporation were here exhibited. A conversation respecting the Maces arose, in which Mr. Bazeley

and Major Davis took part, and it was thought that the two larger Maces were of the time of Queen Anne, and the smaller ones earlier. It was, however, suggested that they should be submitted to Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, Assistant Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries, who is a well-known expert in old Plate, and whose opinion would be accepted as conclusive. From St. John's Hospital the party proceeded by St. John Street to Silver Street (*query* meaning because found in so many old towns) and the Cross Hayes where the bull fight took place in the good old days, to the Council Chamber of the Town Council, where the party was formally received by the Mayor, who was accompanied by Mr. Alderman Forrester, the Town Clerk (Mr. M. H. Chubb), and other members of the Council. Here some interesting objects were exhibited by Mr. B. Hale, among them some cannon balls found in the gardens in the town, the result of the hostilities during the Civil War. Mr. F. A. Hyett, of Painswick House, then read the following Paper.—

#### FOUR INCIDENTS OF THE CIVIL WAR.

Mr. F. A. Hyett, who was announced to read a short Paper on "The History of Malmesbury during the Civil War," said he did not propose to attempt a complete or consecutive history of the town during the time referred to, but he would call attention to the four most important events in Malmesbury during that eventful period. Within sixteen months Malmesbury twice voluntarily surrendered and was twice taken by storm. The first surrender was on Feb. 3rd, 1642-3, the first storming on March 20th, the second surrender between March 20th and April 5th, in the same year, and the second storming on May 24th, 1644. Both surrenders were by the Parliamentary party to the Royalists, and both of the captures were by the Parliamentary forces, under Sir W. Waller and Sir Edward Massey respectively. He did not think the town changed hands on any other occasion during that period, for though it was possible it might have done so, he had found no notice of it in contemporary histories. Mr. Ravenshill, in an interesting Paper in Vol. XXI. of the Wiltshire Archæological Magazine, says that the Royalists took possession of the town in the autumn of 1642, but he does not give his authority, and I think he is mistaken in his date, as the town was certainly in the hands of the Parliamentary party in the spring of 1643. Malmesbury, like Bristol, Gloucester, Cirencester, and other towns in this part of England, seemed at the outbreak of the war to have declared for the Parliament, but Prince Rupert having, on February 2nd, 1642-3, stormed and taken Cirencester, under circumstances calculated to spread terror far and wide, Malmesbury the next morning sent its submission to the King, and Lieut.-Colonel Lunsford was appointed Governor. That was the first surrender. The first taking was by Sir William Waller, who early in 1643 succeeded Lord Stamford as Governor of Gloucester, and determined to recover Malmesbury. A detailed account of it is given in a dispatch which was printed by order of Parliament on March 28th, 1643, entitled "A Letter from Sir William Waller to the Rt. Hon<sup>ble</sup> Robert Earl of Essex

of a Great Victory he obtained at Malmesbury 23 Martii in County of Wilts." In this letter Waller described the town as the strongest inland situation he had seen, and only fairly accessible at one point, the West port (where Euclid Villa now stands). On March 22nd, 1642-3, Waller appeared before the town, and after a determined attack Colonel Lunsford and his garrison surrendered on the following morning. The Parliamentary party did not long enjoy the fruits of Waller's victory, for before many days were over Sir Edward Hungerford, to whom Malmesbury was entrusted, surrendered it, as Waller evidently thought, without very good cause. From this second surrender on a summons from the Royal troops it might be inferred either that there was in the town a strong party loyal to the King, or else, as was found in so many cases, the inhabitants were desirous of peace and comfort, and were comparatively indifferent as to the upshot of the war. [Between April, 1543, and April, 1644, it is stated in Aubrey & Jackson's *Wiltshire* that Malmesbury changed hands twice, but under what circumstances I do not know]. We have, however, several accounts of its being taken by General Massey on May 24th in the latter year. On the 23rd he took Beverston Castle, and on the 24th he appeared before Malmesbury and summoned the Governor, "on behalf of the King and Parliament sitting at Westminster," to surrender, threatening the town with fire and sword if he refused. The Governor, Colonel Henry Howard, son of Lord Berkshire, made a spirited reply that he would maintain the town "for the King and Parliament sitting at Oxford." Within two hours Massey had obtained possession of the suburbs and lower town; the attack then languished, but it was renewed next morning, and the town captured, only two of the garrison being killed while Massey lost but one man. The Governor had a narrow escape, three musket balls passing through his clothes. There are two almost contemporaneous accounts of the taking of Malmesbury—the one in a Tract, the short title of which is "Ebenezer," printed June 4th, 1644, and the other in Corbet's *Military Government of Gloucester*. The account in Rushworth's collections seems to have been derived from these two sources. Mr. Hyett, in conclusion, traced the similarity of the two stormings, and showed how curiously alike were the careers of the two generals who took the town, Sir W. Waller and Sir E. Massey.

Taking from the table a copy of Jackson's Aubrey, Mr. Hyett said seven occasions were there enumerated on which the town changed hands, but he had found nothing of the other three there specified, nor were particulars given in the book. [We append the quotation from Aubrey and Jackson: "Malmesbury was occupied as a military post seven times between the summer of 1642 and May, 1644. 1. By Sir Edward Baynton for the Parliament. 2. By the Royalists under Lord Digby, or Col. Lunsford, Feb. 1643, just after the taking of Cirencester. 3. Re-captured by Sir Wm. Waller

on 22nd March in the same year. 4. Abandoned by Sir Edward Hungerford almost immediately afterwards; and again occupied by the Royalists from Cirencester. 5. Re-possessed by the Parliament Forces 20th April, the garrison being wanted by the King at Reading. 6. Re-taken by the Royalists after the victory of Roundway, July, 1643. 7. Recovered by Massey for the Parliament, 25th May, 1644. From this period it remained in the hands of the Parliament, being strengthened by an out-post of cavalry at Charlton Park. Malmesbury was a position of great importance, as it commanded the road between Oxford and Bristol."]

The party then assembled at the King's Arms Hotel, where lunch had been prepared, after which the Abbey Church was again visited. The Rev. G. Windsor Tucker made some remarks on the history of the Abbey. After which the Rev. W. Bazeley read his Paper on the History and Architecture of the sacred structure (which will follow, printed *in extenso*, and after its conclusion he made some further remarks, comparing it with the Cathedral of St. Peter at Gloucester. Mr. Kemys Bagnall-Oakeley (then a layman, but since admitted to Holy Orders), on behalf of his mother, who was unable to be present, read a Paper by her on the ancient and remarkable Sculptures which adorn the South Porch of the Church. This Paper is also printed and illustrated in the present volume.

Mr. J. C. S. Jennings afterwards received the members to afternoon tea, and shewed them the undercroft of his interesting Elizabethan residence. Tradition assigned the site as that of the Abbot's house, but Mr. Bazeley thought that it was more probable the site of the abbey infirmary. Mr. Jennings also exhibited some objects of interest connected with the town and abbey.

Votes of thanks having been passed to Mr. Jennings for his hospitality; to Mr. Bazeley for acting as guide, and for his interesting Paper; to Mrs. Bagnall-Oakeley for her valuable Paper; and to the other contributors to the Proceedings, the members went by Oxford Street and the old Abbey Workhouse to visit the site of the East Gate, which commanded the road from Cirencester to London. Traces still remain of the massive walls and the exact position of the flanking towers of the gateway are discernible. Beyond the East Gate is the Theyn's Bridge, now Holloway Bridge, crossing the Newton Water. The remains of the wall on the East side of the town are better preserved than on any other, and are most picturesque. Across the water to the East was the Abbey Vineyard and the Vineyard Mill.

It was now time to return homewards, and the members proceeded to the King's Arms Hotel, where carriages were waiting to take them to Tetbury.