

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

Proceedings at the Annual Spring Meeting at Bristol

1911, Vol. 34, 1-10

© The Society and the Author(s)

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL SPRING MEETING,
AT BRISTOL.

Tuesday, May 30th, 1911.

THE annual spring meeting took place at Bristol. In the morning a large gathering of the members and their friends first paid a visit to St. John's Hermitage, and afterwards went to various other places in the city of antiquarian interest. The gathering was favoured by beautiful weather, which made the afternoon drive to Druid Stoke, Penpole Point, King's Weston, followed by a stroll through the woods to Blaize Castle, and thence to Henbury Manor House, a delightful experience. Valuable archæological and historical notes on the churches, mansions, etc., visited, had been prepared by Mr. John E. Pritchard, and circulated amongst the party. After a short drive from Temple Meads Station, through the courtesy of the Society of Friends, the members were enabled to see St. John's Hermitage, which is situated at the top of the small burial-ground in Redcliffe Pit.

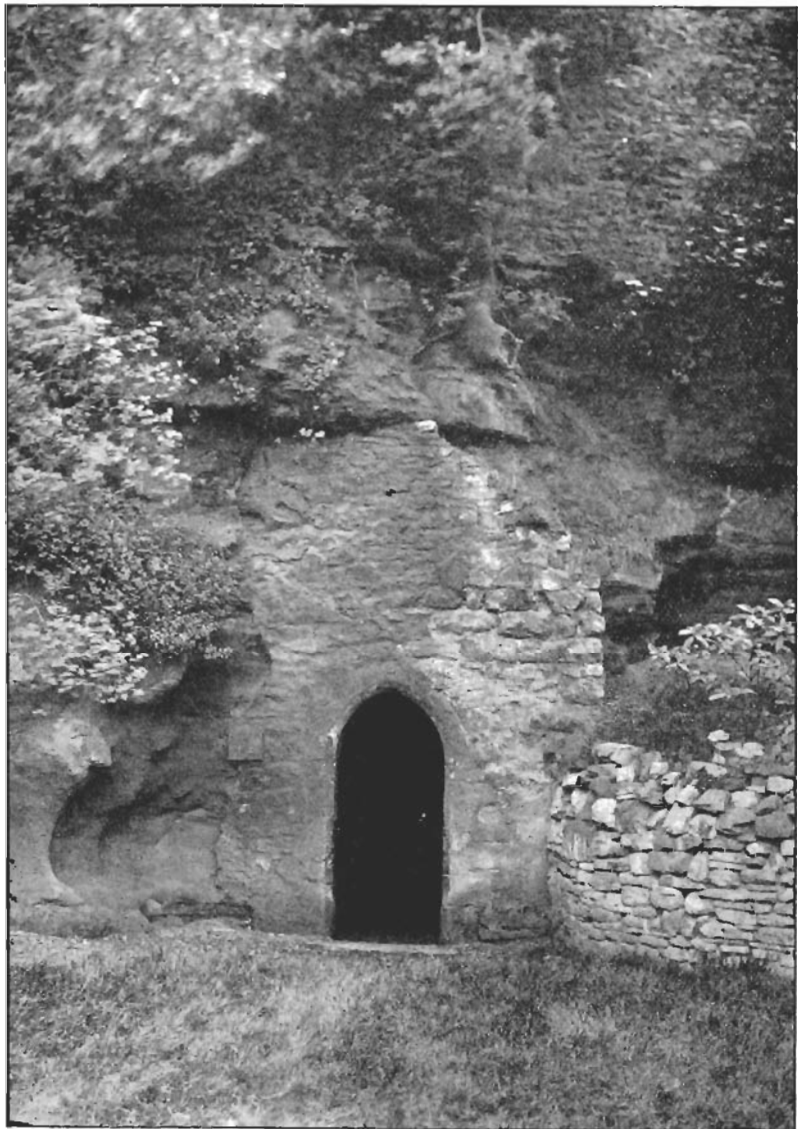
Mr. Pritchard said a visit to that ancient spot was new to most of the present members of the Archæological Society, for he thought that not since 1878 had the old hermitage been included in any of the

Society's itineraries. They had entered that ground by Jones's Lane—which assuredly was a corruption of John's or St. John's Lane, for hereabouts a hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist formerly stood. With regard to that delightfully-sequestered burial-ground, under the shadow of St. Mary's wondrous spire, that land was conveyed to the Society of Friends in the seventeenth year of Charles II, and had been well cared for ever since. The interesting feature of that spot was, of course, the existence of a hermit's cell within its walls, cut out of the solid red sandstone cliff on the south side, the same ridge that ran on and under the Church of Redcliffe. The cell was founded in 1347 by the third Thomas, Lord Berkeley, who placed therein "one John Sparkes, an hermite, to pray for him and his during his life." It was still entered by what was considered to be the original pointed archway, and two roughly-hewn seats might be seen within, one possibly providing accommodation for an occasional visitor. What struck one most was that after nearly six centuries the cell appeared to be in its original state. The mural tablet fixed inside had nothing to do with the hermitage. It indicated the burial of "Christopher the sonn of Christopher Birchhead of this city, Mariner, 16 day of the 2nd month in 1669."

The party then went on to the Church of St. Thomas the Martyr, where they were received by the vicar (the Rev. W. Mann), and the Rev. C. S. Taylor (Vicar of Banwell, and formerly Vicar of St. Thomas), who gave some historical particulars.

Of the old church destroyed in 1789, which was second only to St. Mary Redcliffe in size and beauty, only the tower, which has recently been well restored, remains. The present classic church, opened in 1793, is a good example of its style. The altar-piece (1716), the organ gallery and case (1732), and the oak pews (1752), cut down and made into open seats, are good specimens of eighteenth-century woodwork. The chancel screens were set up in 1879. In the old church the elder William Canynges and his son, John Canynges, ancestors of George Canning and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, were buried, and Sir William Penn, Cromwell's admiral and father of the founder of Pennsylvania, was baptised. Bishop Latimer preached at St. Thomas's Church (and also at St. Nicholas) in Lent, 1533. The "pipe" outside the church at the S.E. corner has an interesting history, having run since 1566.

On tables in the chancel there was ranged a collection of objects of interest such as it is likely that no other church in the diocese, and few parish churches in England, could show. A manuscript Vulgate, dating probably from the early part of the fifteenth century, folio size on parchment, with an illuminated margin representing the six days



of creation ; it has at the beginning a portion of the " pie," or rules, for finding what service should be read, of which the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer remarks " that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out." A study of the " pie " will show that this witness is true. The book has probably belonged to the church from the beginning, at any rate it was kept safely during the destructive times of the Reformation, and was rebound at a cost of 7s. 6d. in 1566. When the old church was destroyed in 1789 the Bible was committed to the care of the vicar, who gave a receipt for it to the wardens. Four enamelled copper candlesticks, two 12½ inches high, and two others 6½ inches ; the two taller form a pair, but the two shorter ones do not. They are supposed to date from the early part of the thirteenth century, and to be probably Limoges work ; also it is likely that they are among the oldest set of church candlesticks now in use in England, if not the oldest of all. (See *Transactions*, vol. iii. 40.) These candlesticks were originally pricketts ; it will be noted that the cups are made of latten, not of copper. A silver-gilt communion cup and cover obtained at St. Paul's-Fair, 1571, together with 19s. 4d. in money in exchange for a chalice and paten sold. Two silver flagons, weighing 36 and 37 oz., the gift in 1630 and 1635 of Thomas Heathcott and Thomas Woodward. Silver communion cup and cover, 24 oz., 1640. Silver salver, one foot in diameter, 1685. Pair of silver candlesticks, 8½ in. high, the gift of John Gibbons, 1717. Silver grace cup, 7½ in. high, the gift of Thomas Sanders to the vestry 1797. All the church plate was placed on the altar at every celebration of the Holy Communion, a custom which probably accounts for the fact that none of it has been lost or alienated. A deed of sale of a shop in Redcliffe Street, dated October 28th, 1334, and witnessed by John Cannynges : this is the first mention of the Canynge-family in connection with Bristol. Also about 150 deeds ranging from 1294 to 1634, relating chiefly to houses which belong to the church, and to others which belonged to the chantries which were taken for the king's use in 1547. A silver seal with figure of St. Thomas the Apostle, engraved by Peter Gee in 1566 at a cost of 19s. The signature of Sir Jonathian Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, one of the seven bishops who were sent to the Tower, to an order for erasing certain uncharitable remarks from the church register. Agreement of John Harris, of London, to build the organ, 1728 ; according to tradition Handel used this organ while composing *Judas Maccabæus*. Sword picked up in St. Thomas's Lane during the riots of 1831, and preserved in the church, which was the only one of the ancient churches in which a sermon was preached on Sunday evening, October 30th, the preacher being the

Rev. C. H. Davis, formerly Vicar of Littleton Drew. Registers dating from 1553. Paraphrases of Erasmus purchased in 1566 at a cost of 15s. Letters Patent of Queen Elizabeth, dated December 11th, 1570, granting the Cattle Market, with the Great Seal of England attached.

At the Church of St. Philip and St. Jacob the visitors were received by the Rector (the Rev. M. E. Thorold), and Mr. C. F. W. Dening described the building.

The tower (with the exception of the top story, which is debased Perpendicular), is Early English, and was undoubtedly a very fine example of the period. The remains of the vaulting to what was probably the principal entrance of the church were inspected. It is to be hoped that before long the work of restoring this and opening up the beautiful archway into the chancel will be put in hand, especially as there is so little of the work of this period in Bristol. The Jacobean pulpit called for attention, and the font cover, dated 1623, recently restored, is a very fine example. It is believed that the plaster ceiling to the chancel and Kemys' aisle conceals open timber roofs, similar to that spanning the nave. On a stone inside the Communion rails, and forming part of the floor at that end of the church, is inscribed: "Here Lyeth the body of Thomas Pytley, symtims keeper of the Queen's Forest, who dyed the last day of October 1596." A dog and a cross-bow, indicative of the calling of the deceased, are portrayed upon the stone in outline. Adjoining it is another label, charged with an Old English inscription, commemorating "John Lytir and Margaret his wife." This appears to belong to the close of the fifteenth century. The Communion plate dates from the period of Charles II, and the registers from 1575.

The party next drove to Trinity Hospital Chapel and Almshouse. The actual date of the foundation is unknown, but it must have been before the end of the fourteenth century. The founder was John Barstaple. He provided twelve chambers and twelve gardens for six poor men and six poor women, together with a priest to officiate in the chapel. His wife is said to have founded the almshouse on the north side of the street. She died about 1412, soon after her husband, who died in October, 1411. They were buried on the right and left side of the high altar in the chapel, which contained two brasses to their memory.

The chapel formerly stood on the opposite side of the quadrangle, and was removed in 1881 owing to its dilapidated condition, and because the site was required for the purpose of widening the street.

In that year the bodies of the founders were re-interred, by order of the Charity Trustees, in a brick grave under the pavement in front of the chancel step. Two Portland stone slabs were then laid, one



TRINITY HOSPITAL CHAPEL, BRISTOL.
BARSTAPLE BRASSES,



Page 5.

FONT AT ST. PHILIP AND ST. JACOB CHURCH,
BRISTOL.

over the grave, and the other in the corresponding position on the other side of the chapel.

The ancient detached brasses were inserted, with the addition of new canopies.

The inscriptions translated are as follows:—

“ Here lies John Barstaple, burgess of the town of Bristol, founder of this place, who died 15th kalends of October, the Dominical letter D., 1411, on whose soul may God be merciful. Amen.”

“ Here lies Isabella wife of John Barstaple, who died in the year of our Lord 14 . . . the dominical letter being . . . on whose soul may God have pity. Amen.”

See *Transactions*, vol. xxxii., p. 91; *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, “ Monumental Brasscs,” p. 28; Wadley's *Wills*, p. 86.

Mr. Way exhibited (by kind permission of Lady Smyth) a licence in mortmain to John Barstaple and others from Henry IV, dated 1411.

In a paper regarding the chapel, Mr. W. A. SAMPSON said it was dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity and Saint George, and was the third built. The actual date was lost, but both hospital and chapel were certainly founded before the end of the fourteenth century. The original foundation provided twelve chambers and twelve gardens for six poor men and six poor women, together with a priest to officiate in the chapel on the south side of Lawford's Gate. The almshouse on the north side was said to have been founded by the wife of the founder. She was a daughter of Walter Derby, who built the tower of St. Werburgh's Church. The chapel originally stood a little farther north-east, towards West Street, from its present position, and was moved when it was rebuilt in 1794, about twenty-five years after the Lawford's Gate was demolished. The removal of the chapel was decided upon in the year 1793: On November 1st the sword bearer waited on the Bishop of Bristol with the compliments of the mayor and the surveyors of the city lands to know whether it would be agreeable to his lordship for them to call on him about taking down Trinity Chapel and erecting a new one on or near the site of the present chapel. His lordship had not the least objection, provided it met with the approbation of the Rev. Mr. New, the Vicar of SS. Philip and Jacob, and the more particularly as it would tend to the improvement of that part of the city. The Rev. Mr. New was not at home on the 1st November, and he was not sought again until the 25th February, 1794, when it is recorded that he too had not the least objection to Trinity Chapel being taken down. It seemed a pity that neither the bishop nor the vicar reserved

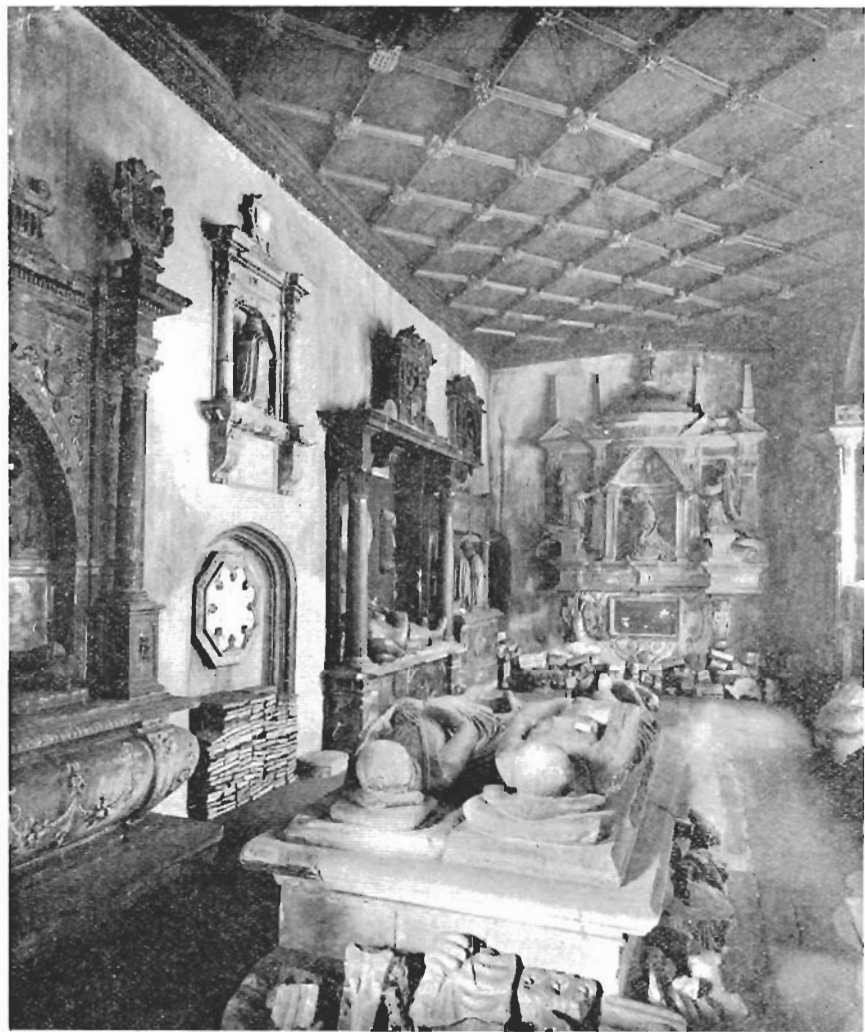
his judgment until he had seen and approved the design. Was there no sketch of the building it replaced? He presumed it was the original chapel, so well cared for in early times, a building which, from the accounts in the possession of the trustees of the Bristol Municipal Charities, was no mean one. The present chapel was erected in 1881-2 on the same site as the second building at a cost of £1,416.

At St. Mark's Chapel the Lord Mayor extended a hearty welcome to the archæologists. The Rev. C. S. Taylor described the building, and Miss Ida Roper gave some details concerning the tombs.

St. Mark's, or the Lord Mayor's Chapel, stands opposite to the Cathedral in College Green, embedded amongst houses. It was the church of a college of Bons Hommes, and was founded before 1229 by Maurice de Gaunt; a fragment of a winged lion of St. Mark, at the corner of Frogmore Street and Pipe Lane behind Colston Hall, still marks the extent of its property. The main walls of the original church are still standing with their grotesque corbels, and the tower was completed in 1487. The fine oak roof is worthy of notice. The altar-piece is said to have been set up by Miles Salley, Bishop of Llandaff, who died in 1516, and who is buried on the left side of the chancel. The Jesus or Poyntz Chapel is a fine example of late Perpendicular work, with its fan-traceried roof, and floor laid with early Spanish tiles. Sir Robert Poyntz, who built it, was buried therein in 1520. After the Dissolution the church became the property of the Corporation, and was used as a burying-place for civic dignitaries, many of whose monuments still remain. The illustration shows the south aisle chapel, or Gaunt's Chapel, and contains amongst other effigies that of Henry de Gaunt, first master of the hospital, who died in 1268. A window representing St. Thomas of Canterbury came, with other glass in the Jesus Chapel and south aisle, from Fonthill.

After the Reformation the church was used for some time by French Protestant refugees, but in 1721 it became the official place of worship of the Mayor and Corporation, and Divine Service is regularly celebrated by a chaplain appointed by the Lord Mayor. The Assize sermons are also preached here.

The interesting effigies are the two fine Purbeck figures in chain mail; two members of the Berkeley family; Bishop Salley, the restorer of the church early in the sixteenth century; an early Bristol merchant; several of later date and some important citizens. The illustration represents George Upton, died 1608, in court armour, and the heraldry proves his connection with the present family at Ingmire Hall, Westmoreland, and locally with Ashton Court.



C. W. Horton Photo, Bristol.

ST. MARK'S OR LORD MAYOR'S CHAPEL, BRISTOL.
THE GAUNT'S CHAPEL.

This church stands nearly north and south instead of east and west.¹

It would seem that parochial service was continued in St. Mark's Church for half a century after the dissolution of the Hospital, for Mr. Latimer² states that John Ellis served there as chaplain until his death in 1558, and that he was succeeded by Thomas Pynchyn, another brother of the House of St. Mark, who survived till 1588, and who enjoyed the additional salary of £2 annually which had been allotted to the Curate of St. Mark's at the Dissolution.

At the luncheon, held at the Royal Hotel, the chair was occupied by the President of the Society, Dr. T. Herbert Warren (President of Magdalen College, and Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford). Dr. Warren mentioned that "no toasts" was the general rule at those gatherings, but this was an exceptional year, and he called upon the Lord Mayor to propose "The King."

The toast having been cordially honoured, the Lord Mayor proposed "The Health of the President," remarking that the removal of Dr. Warren from this city had been Bristol's loss and Oxford's gain. He congratulated the Society upon having such a brilliant man as President. His lordship mentioned that it had been decided to light St. Mark's Chapel by electricity.

After lunch, the party drove by a picturesque route through Clifton and round Clifton Down to Druid Stoke, where the Druidical stones were examined. Mr. F. Were has made a study of the spot, and he explained to the visitors his reasons for believing that the large stone is a tablestone which has slipped from its supports.

Seyer, however, considers this not a *cromlech*, but an upright stone standing in front of three smaller ones. Nicholls and Taylor say it was a tablestone resting on four pillars; two of these at the east end are *in situ*, but partially buried and almost flat; another to the south is shown in the photograph, over which the tablestone has slipped, but its companion on the north has disappeared, though it may be one which has been discovered lately in the middle which has not been excavated. Unfortunately the ownership is in private hands, and until the property can be vested in some suitable public body, no satisfactory care or restoration of it can be expected.³

¹ Annotated copy of Barrett's *History* in the Bristol Library, p. 374.

² See *Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 241; Barker's *History of St. Mark's, or the Mayor's Chapel* (illustrated), 1892.

For the Berkeley Effigies see *Transactions*, vol. xv., p. 89; Monumental Effigies, see *Transactions*, vol. xxvi. p. 252.

³ See Seyer's *Memoirs of Bristol*, vol. i., p. 103, and illustrations; *Bristol: Past and Present*, vol. i., p. 13.

Through the kindness of Mr. P. Napier Miles, King's Weston House and its lovely grounds were next visited.

King's Weston House was for many generations the abode of the Southwells, the immediate ancestors of the late Lord de Clifford, the last of the family who resided there. It was erected from a design of Sir John Vanburgh, and is one of his best, though smaller, works, there being more simplicity, and less affectation than in many other of his buildings. The house is greatly admired for the effect produced by its chimneys, which are connected by an arcade in the centre of the roof.

It was here—but in the older house which stood on this site—that William III stayed the night of 6th September, 1690, having landed at King-road on his return from Duncannon. The King's visit to the City of Bristol is described by Mr. Latimer in *17th Century Annals*, page 459. His host at King's Weston was Sir Robert Southwell, who died there in 1702, and was buried at Henbury. His son Edward built the present mansion, and the following letter from the eminent architect to Southwell, which proves the date of erection, is most interesting:—

“ *Re* KING'S WESTON HOUSE,

“ CASTLE HOWARD,

“ Oct. 23rd, 1713.

“ SIR,

“ I acquainted you some time since I had read with much pleasure the letter you enclosed to me which you had received from Mrs. Henley. I am since obliged with yours from King's Weston of the 13th inst., being much pleased with the house being quite covered in so good season, for, if the weather is with you as in the North, your walls must have dried almost as fast as they went up, and there being no great rain to soak them whilst they were open, the house will be dry a year the sooner for it. In my last I told you I wished you would not go up with the chimneys till I was with you on the spot, to make tryall of the heights with boards. I am glad to find you now of the same opinion, though you had not yet received my letter; for I would fain have that part rightly hit off. I likewise think you in the right to clear off the scaffolds, tho' there be more difficulty in getting up the stones for the chimneys.

“ As to the objections you mention, I can only say, I cannot think as you do, tho' it may be I am wrong. As to the Door being too little, if an Alteration be necessary, I can show you how to do it; but of these particulars, 'tis better to talk than to write. I hope, however, at last I shall see you as well pleased as the Lord (Charles,

3rd Earl of Carlisle) of this place is; who has now within this week had a fair tryall of his dwelling, in what he most apprehended which was cold. For tho' we have now had as bitter storms as rain and wind can well compose, every corner in the house is an oven, and in corridors of 200 feet long there is not air enough in motion to stir the flame of a candle. I hope to find the same comfort in your chatteau, when the North-West blows his hardest; so pray don't think you shall stand in need of a few poor trees to screen you. The post will be gone if I say anything now, than that I am most heartily your humble servant,

" J. VANBRUGH.

" To EDWARD SOUTHWELL, Esqr.,

" King's Weston, nr. Bristol."

After leaving King's Weston members enjoyed a charming walk through the woods to Blaise Castle, where they were received by Miss Harford, and courteously permitted to ascend the tower, whence a splendid view was obtained. The Blaise Castle Gardens were afterwards visited, and here Mr. Lewis Way (Hon. Secretary for Bristol of the Society) gave an account of the old Manor House of Henbury.

Close to the dairy in Blaize Castle garden in former days stood the Manor House of the parish; it is possible that the dairy formed part of its offices. The earliest mention of the Manor House is contained in a deed dated October 7th, 1653, by which Ralph Sadleir leased the Capital Messuage or site of the Manor House to Edward Capell, merchant of Bristol, on lives. After passing into the possession of various persons, it was purchased by Sir Samuel Astry, Knight, Clerk of the Crown in the Court of King's Bench in or about the year 1694. He already possessed a large estate in the parish, and had built for himself the Great House near at hand. At Sir Samuel's death in 1704 his estate passed to his wife Elizabeth, a Henbury heiress, who married secondly, in 1707, Simon Harcourt, Esq., of Pendley, in Worcestershire, Master of the Crown Office. Dying in 1708, she was succeeded by her three daughters by Sir Samuel Astry—Elizabeth (Lady Smyth), Diana (Mrs. Orlebar), and Arabella (Countess of Suffolk and Bindon). The Manor House passed to Lady Smyth, at whose death in 1715 it became the property of her husband, Sir John Smyth, Bart., who left it to his eldest son, Sir John Smyth, Bart., the younger, in 1726. Sir John's eldest unmarried sister, Miss Anne Smyth, rented it from 1730 to her brother's death in 1741, when it became her own property. Here she died in 1760, leaving it to her nephew, Edward Gore, Esq., who sold it in 1762 to Thomas Farr, a rich merchant of Bristol, who built the famous Castle on Blaize Hill. Falling on evil days in twelve years' time, he

sold it to Denham Skeate, of Bath, who in 1789 sold it to John Scandrett Harford, Esq., who built the present mansion in 1798, pulling down the old Manor House on its completion. The property still remains in the Harford family.¹

At the invitation of Major-Gen. Sampson-Way, C.B., the party took tea in the grounds of Henbury Manor House. The courtesy the archæologists experienced during the day was suitably acknowledged at each place visited, and at Henbury the President cordially thanked Major-General Sampson-Way, Captain Fitz Way, and the children who so kindly attended to the wants of the guests.

In preparing the notes of the meeting, Mr. Pritchard wished to acknowledge the kind help received from the Revs. C. S. Taylor, W. Mann, and M. E. Thorold; from Mr. Sampson, Mr. Charles Wells, and Mr. Lewis Way; and as usual from Miss Roper; and to say that the illustrations of St. Philip's Font and the Upton Tomb are from the negatives of our member Mr. William Moline. He wished also to thank Mr. Horton, photographer, of Christmas Steps, for the loan of the fine interior of the "Gaunt's Chapel."

¹ For Blaize, see *Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 14.

For Henbury Church see *Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 16.