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Bristol Archaeological Notes For 1910

by J. E. Pritchard
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XI.

By JOHN E. PRITCHARD, F.S.A.

“ A little chink may let in much light.”

THE visit of this Society to Oxford last August afforded those of us who joined that summer meeting the opportunity of once again gazing upon the richness and variety of its architecture. The occasion also afforded the rare opportunity of hearing from the lips of its Vice-Chancellor, our President for the year, some of the interesting connecting-links between the two cities; and it gave us, too, Mr. Madan's fascinating story of Oxford's growth from the days of an early settlement, of which the museums there have ample evidence. Both Oxford and Bristol were doubtless old settlements, the latter probably far older than the former.

As to Bristol, remains of an early period have been brought to light almost year by year, for many years past, as you are aware; and again to-night I am exhibiting some freshly-discovered remains belonging to those periods of uncertainty, which always create so much speculative interest.

In passing to the Tudor period, we found that Oxford made little progress during the years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and we saw but few domestic architectural examples in our rambles. On the other hand, it is generally known how Bristol then forged ahead, and we naturally cling to the remaining specimens of that period.

¹ Read at the Bristol Evening Meeting, January 18th, 1911.

The wealth of the Bristol burghers, who occupied these dwellings, vied with any in the land, and these old merchants showed themselves to be men of strong character. If we want to know more of them we have only to peruse Latimer's *Annals of Bristol in the XVIIIth Century*, a volume assuredly more fascinating than any novel of our time; or read the last papers¹ he wrote on the Corporation of Bristol in the olden time—really a review of the sixteenth century—and we begin to learn something worth knowing of our city in the great Tudor and Stuart eras.

These notes for 1910, which cover these periods, record those events that have transpired since our meeting a year ago, of course only as far as they have come under my own notice.

The first whisper of an archæological discovery in 1910 told of the disinterment of a number of *skeletons* on the summit of Tytherington Hill, Gloucestershire, whither I made a pilgrimage on the 29th of January.

The village of Tytherington is situated on the Yate and Thornbury Branch of the Midland Railway, about twelve miles from Bristol and three from Thornbury, and quarrying employs the majority of the folk resident in that quiet spot.

The site of the burials lies high above the church, at an altitude of about 100 ft. on the opposite side of the cutting through which the railway passes to the British or Roman Camp, known as Castle Camp.

Lying in the channels of the limestone strata, at the top edge of the grand cliff, which is clearly seen on the right side of the railway as you approach the station from Yate, some twelve burials were disturbed during the month of January. What remained of the numerous skeletons was found lying apparently in two rows at an approximate depth of 2 ft. below grass level, all heads pointing to the west.

Mr. Hardwicke Lloyd-Hardwicke, who owns the great

¹ Republished by Mr. J. W. Arrowsmith in 1908.

limestone quarries and much of the adjoining land, most kindly escorted me to the diggings on the summit of the hill, and showed me the site of the graves. He informed me that during the progress of the cutting very little notice was taken of the early interments, and not much care was shown for the skeletons as they were brought to light. Unfortunately, the crania were all badly broken, probably owing to the nearness of the surface when found; but I was courteously allowed to bring away the principal portions of two of the skulls, in order that our eminent member, Dr. John Beddoe, F.R.S., might examine them. It was a very singular coincidence, and most unfortunate, that not a vestige of anything was found with these remains that could throw light upon the matter, and thus assign an approximate date to the burials.

Dr. Beddoe's report is interesting, though technical, but it concludes unfortunately with this sentence: "I find nothing whereon to remark in these bones except the peculiarities of dentition."

No reason has yet been suggested in explanation of this extraordinary find. A dozen skeletons lying full length, apparently most carefully interred, on the summit of such a hill, seems almost incredulous. Upon the evidence of Dr. Beddoe, we must, I think, dismiss the idea that these burials had any connection with the early camp close by, which was visited by this Society in 1887, when our member, Mr. G. B. Witts, described it as "one of a line of camps extending from the Severn at Aust on the west to The Wash on the east."¹

My thanks are due to Mr. R. D. Hay, of the Hardwicke Estate Office, for kind help over the identification of these remains. He now writes to say that during the coming summer it is likely that a large area of the quarry where the burials appear to be most numerous will be uncovered. We must therefore hope for further enlightenment.

¹ See *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xii. p. 323.

A small oval cornelian *intaglio* was brought to me in July last, and was reported as having been dug up in a garden at St. Anne's Wood, Brislington, close to the side of the Roman Villa discovered in 1899, of which numerous remains are in the Bristol Museum. This engraved gem represents an old rustic, accompanied by two dogs, who makes a gesture of worship at a wayside shrine.

In returning to our particular area, let me at once say that nothing great has happened during 1910; yet I think the few unimportant events, of which I now have to speak, are worthy of record; they, at all events, are destined to build up local history.

On the site of the warehouse premises in Colston Avenue long occupied by Messrs. Jonathan Smith & Co., and recently acquired by the Sun Assurance Company for extension, in deep digging for foundations, a number of early *relics* turned up from the alluvial deposit, for that spot at the foot of Clare Street was close to the bank of the River Frome. I watched the work all through July, and identified numerous bones of the early British ox, the boar, the goat, and other animals. Numberless sherds of glazed pottery were found, mostly of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries; all showed the usual character in potting, and none bearing fresh ornamentation. An iron key, with an interesting ring bow, of the eighteenth century also turned up.

The result was disappointing, as it was fully expected that much more of interest might be found.

On the opposite side of Colston Avenue, facing Small Street, and adjoining Zed Alley, on the site recently purchased by His Majesty's Government for the erection of an important block of offices, a few *relics* were discovered during October in the course of preliminary probing for foundations. The principal object found was a portion of what was probably a small octagonal stone *domestic mortar*.

These are always regarded as of uncertain date, and this specimen may be of any period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century; but the shape, coupled with the fact that the mortar has side lugs, is quite unusual in this district. An Abbey Piece and several seventeenth-century tobacco pipes were found. Two of the pipes carry the makers' initials on the heel—W.C., evidently William Chearington (*circa* 1660), and P.E., probably Philip Edwards (*circa* 1680). Both these makers were freemen of Bristol, each having served an apprenticeship with a freeman.

We now pass to John Street and the long-expected demolition of St. John's Almshouse. This has at last been carried out, and the site has already been covered by the end section of Messrs. Fry's splendid red-brick pile, which now extends from the Pithay to St. John's slope.

The almshouse, as we knew it up to August last, a distinctly gloomy structure, was erected in 1721 upon the ruins of an older house, founded probably in 1491.¹ Several years ago the site was secured by the great chocolate house, and the inmates were duly transferred to a more suitable home at St. George.

As soon as the extension could proceed the necessary digging for deep foundations commenced. This work brought to light at a depth of 40 ft. several huge trunks of oak trees, quite black when found, and which appeared to lie upon the ancient bed of the River From, running close by.

Some unimportant fragments of mediæval pottery turned up, in addition to tusks of the boar and horns of the goat; and at a depth of over 20 ft. in the corner shaft was found a short piece of *rudely-shaped bone*, which has a square end measuring about $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. in length. Though not quite perfect, it is almost similar to another specimen discovered

¹ See "The Almshouses of Bristol," by W. A. Sampson, *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xxxii. p. 102.

at the foot of the Pithay in 1907,¹ but as to its age or use it seems difficult to conjecture.

Below the cellar floor of the almshouse two unusually large *red pottery vessels* were found in digging out the central portion of the site. The pots were apparently most carefully imbedded in an upright position in the midst of lime mortar and masonry, but both had been fractured at the mouth.

They were potted very thickly and lead-glazed inside. The larger one measures 24 in. across, outside measure in the widest part, and it has a base of 12 in. in diameter, and stands 2 ft. 7 in. high to the topmost fracture, where the opening is 18 in. Beneath the moulded grip or handle are the raised letters I.N., presumably representing a merchant's name, with a small ornament above and below. Vertical lines of white paint are visible on the pot, which seems to indicate some mark connected with shipment.

The second vessel is slightly smaller, and bears the incised letters $\begin{matrix} \text{G.S.} \\ \text{C.} \end{matrix}$ within a circle. This pot has also some trade markings in white paint.

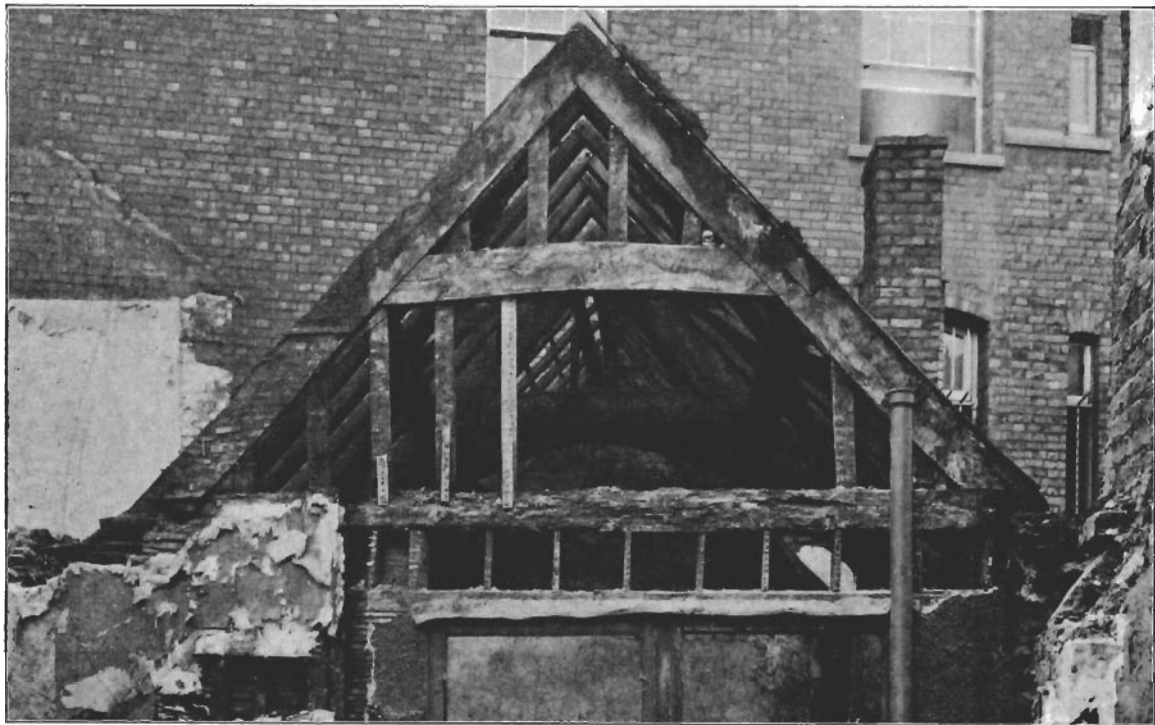
These jars were undoubtedly used as oil jars for bringing home the famous "Lucca oil." They were probably made in the East, and are possibly of seventeenth or early eighteenth-century date.²

A glance at Jacobus Millerd's large, original plan of the city, issued about 1670, which I exhibited last year,³ will show you that just below St. John's Gate, at the corner of Quay and Christmas Streets, stood several houses; and a hundred years earlier, in the first measured plan of Bristol by William Smith, in 1568, similar buildings were depicted at the same spot. But how long before the middle of the

¹ See *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.* and illustration, vol. xxx. p. 227.

² One vessel has been presented to the Museum by Mr. Claude B. Fry.

³ See *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.* and plan, vol. xxxii. p. 330.



Photo, C. H. Horton.

"SHIP INN," CORNER OF QUAY AND CHRISTMAS STREETS.

OLD ROOF—FROM EAST TO WEST. DEMOLISHED 1910.

sixteenth century any houses existed, there it is difficult to ascertain, for there is no plan of an earlier date known.

Returning then from the slope below St. John's Arch to the spot just described below St. John's Gateway, you will be interested in hearing that quite recently, during the demolition of the small licensed corner property, known as the Ship Inn, facing the church, some ancient features have come to light; for in pulling down this building, which internally was as largely poor in construction as the exterior betokened, a portion of a *mediæval open timber roof*, a relic evidently of an earlier house,¹ was discovered above the plaster ceiling of one of the rooms on the first floor.

This fragment was not in a good state, though many of the oak timbers were quite sound, and it is strange that it should ever have been preserved. It was apparently severed from the western end, which had to be removed for the erection of the adjoining warehouse,² over thirty years ago.

The purchase of the corner site by Messrs. J. S. Fry and Sons was carried out to complete the pile in Quay Street.

The architect's plans connected with that modern building erected about 1875 cannot be traced, so there only remains this small fragment to tell the tale, and now all that remained up to a few weeks since has been entirely swept away.

We have now to ask what was the building and who was the builder?

(1) As to the original structure, this interesting relic was all that remained of a late fourteenth or early fifteenth-century

¹ Mr. Robert Hall Warren, F.S.A., possesses a small deed of the early part of the fourteenth century (1313) which refers to a house situate in the suburb of Bristol, in "ffrombruggestret," opposite the Church of St. Laurence, and as this church lay to the west of that of St. John the Baptist, with the tower common to both, the site of the tenement is fixed as that now occupied by Messrs. Fry's factory in Quay Street.

It is probable that this deed refers to the same dwelling, though the roof itself cannot be assigned to so early a date as that document.

See Mr. Warren's paper in the *Proceedings of the Clifton Antiquarian Club*, vol. iv. p. 12.

² Built by Messrs. Flook & Son about 1878. Architect, Mr. Henry Masters.

collar-beam roof of a small hall, probably of one of the minor houses of a rich burgher living just without the city gate.¹

The house had been so very much altered from its original state that it is quite impossible to give the minutest description of it. The room over which the old roof spanned, above the plain ceiling, was about 16 ft. wide and in length about 17 ft., and everything was in the most dilapidated state. The original proportions of the apartment may probably have been about 12 ft. in width and 24 ft. in length, with a height to the ridge of roof from ground level of probably nearly 30 ft. The floor of the recently-demolished apartment, however, was about 8 ft. 6 in. above street level.

Two bays only were left of this simple but effective open timber work, with principal rafters, collar-beam and chamfered wind-braces, and only one moulded arched rib remained at the west side. The original half-timber work at the east end clearly showed the pitch of the roof, the position of the three windows, and the general character of the building. Photographs of the old roof were taken on November 15th, and the ruin was finally demolished six days later.

(2) As to the builder, I fear his identity is lost in obscurity.

It is now necessary to refer to the adjoining property, known as No. 2 Christmas Street, which had been formerly for about thirty-five years occupied as a hosiery shop by Mr. W. E. Hansford, and acquired by Messrs. Fry in 1909. This was partly demolished in May last, and in pulling down the walls on the first floor some portions of a carved stone fireplace, showing strap-work ornamentation, were found built in, which confirmed the existence of a seventeenth-century house on that spot. The discovery at the present time of the remnant of the old roof at the Ship Inn site recalls the original state of Mr. Hansford's property when he entered into possession about 1875.

At that time there existed some traces of a mediæval roof at the rear, comprising one bay with two principal rafters

¹ Messrs. Oatley and Lawrence kindly presented this Society with a measured drawing of these remains.

and semi-circular wind-braces, very similar in design to the relics already described.

It is to be regretted that this early woodwork was not recorded when extensive alterations were made by Mr. Hansford at the back of his shop about twelve years since. Though the early roof was demolished, it is some satisfaction to know that two carved *stone corbels* were allowed to remain until 1909, when Mr. Hansford presented these examples to the Architectural Court at the Museum.

The corbels are carved from Dundry stone, and are typical examples of probably fifteenth-century work. They were cut off from the large blocks of stone when first disturbed for the enlargement of the premises, and were built into the wall at the lower point and thus preserved. The heads undoubtedly represent a civilian and lady of the fifteenth century. The civilian is clean shaven with long hair, and is wearing a low-crowned felt hat with narrow brim. The carving of the lady seems slightly cruder, and may be earlier work; she is apparently wearing a string of pearls or beads.

From these scanty facts it is impossible to say anything definite about the building. It may, of course, have been a small private chapel connected with the burgess's dwelling adjoining.

It is curious to find in a quaint book of VERSES by John Frederick Bryant, late tobacco-pipe maker at Bristol, published in 1787—

A SONG

*Written for a Club of Convivials,
Held weekly at the House of Mr. Bush, the Sign of The Sun,
in Christmas Street, Bristol.*

Amongst the lines we read that—

“Near St. John's sacred mansion,¹ pleas'd, she finds,
Above the Worlds,² a mansion to our minds;

¹ St. John's Church, within a few yards of the house.

² Two public-houses a little lower down the same street, each having the sign of the Globe, distinguished by the names of the Old and the New Globes.

Where fountains with nectareous liquids flow,
 And plants of mirth to fruits of friendship grow ;
 Where Sol¹ perpetual sheds his golden rays,
 And Johnny Bush the rent and licence pays ;
 Who has provided us this ample room,
 To which, at length, I thank my stars, I 'm come."

It seems to me not improbable that this corner property lately known as the "Ship" was formerly the "Sun" referred to in this local effusion, the name having been changed, as frequently happened in days gone by.

As usual in the heart of the old city, it was necessary to make some very deep excavations on this site, where the two small buildings had stood, for the massive foundations, and in sinking the shafts to a depth of over 32 ft. a number of *mediæval* and other *relics* were found. As the River From flowed just below this spot, there was naturally a good deal of blue alluvial to be cut through, and this was reached at about 12 ft. below street level.

The objects discovered in the upper soil included :—

Fragments of a blue and white Delft bowl.

Fragments of glazed mediæval pottery.

An iron key with ring bow.

Part of a bone needle case and a thimble.

But the most interesting and unusual specimen was a *carved wood bobbin* of a dark green colour, bearing the initials and date ^{T.A.} 1686. It is also decorated by a fleur-de-lis, a swan, several stars, and possibly a rose or Maltese cross; and measures 4 in. long.

The *New English Dictionary* defines a bobbin as "a small piece of wood with a notch to wind the thread about when women weave lace," and bobbin-lace is lace made on a pillow with a bobbin.

The origin of lace is said to be still unknown, and the

¹ Alluding to the sign of the house.



CARVED WOOD BOBBIN.

(Drawn by S. Loxton.)

actual introduction of pillow-lace-making into England appears also to be enshrouded in mystery; but it is believed to have been introduced here by refugees from the Netherlands; and Buckinghamshire and Devonshire were the two great centres in our country.

As to bobbins used in this industry, they have been made in an endless variety of patterns in the different countries, and from various materials, largely from bone; but bobbins of the type now exhibited are known to have come from Devonshire, where they appear always to have been made of wood.

The interest in the specimen recently discovered lies in the ornamentation and particularly in the date¹; for though pillow-lace-making was doubtless known here long before the reign of James II, the figuring upon Devonshire specimens is unusual. That general statement made by those who have studied this industry, or have taken part in collecting bobbins—for that is one of the recent crazes of the day—cannot, however, affect the present find; for this object was discovered in digging out the debris below the cellar level of the Ship Inn, or some 12 ft. below the street level, when other small things of a contemporary date were found, including a William III farthing of 1697.

This is a distinctly interesting find. It is associated with one of the most delightful and attractive occupations amongst intelligent women, which has produced marvellous results, for all must admire the lace of the late Tudor period and the falling collars and cuffs of the Stuarts depicted in the portraits in our national collection.

The owner of this bobbin—T.A. by name only—may have been a Bristol girl or woman who had acquired the skill of lace-making in the West Country, or the bobbin may possibly

¹ The Board of Education of South Kensington, who have examined this find, state that they are unable to refer me to any specimen bearing a date so early as that carved upon it. This fact makes the find particularly interesting and unique.

have belonged to a Devonshire girl visiting this ancient city. Our only regret is that we cannot admire any of her work.¹

Amongst the *antiquities*² found upon the same site in the blue alluvial deposit, more than 12 ft. below the surface, extending to the red marl bed, at a depth of about 32 ft., were the following:—

A finely-pointed bone needle, $3\frac{7}{8}$ in. long, at a depth of 16 ft.

A portion of a red deer horn, showing brow and two upper tines, at a depth of 16 ft.

Various fragments of black pottery similar to what has been found elsewhere in city excavations, probably twelfth century, at a depth of 18 to 24 ft.

A finely-pointed bone needle, $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. long, which is slightly split above the eye.

Another bone needle, much finer, $2\frac{7}{8}$ in. long, but broken at eye.

A roughly-worked bone borer, double pointed, 5 in. long.

And a fragment of a small grey pottery turned spindle whorl, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter, showing signs of rubbing on the fracture;

all these found at a depth of 16 ft.

These bone needles and implements certainly indicate very early occupation, but are of uncertain date.

A roughly-shaped stone shot;

A fragment of a large stone spindle-whorl; and

A copper dowel pin, 6 in. long, very corroded, were also turned up at considerable depth.

A *skull of a horse* was discovered at a depth of 20 ft.

¹ A very fine painting, entitled "The Lace Worker," by that eminent Dutch artist, Caspar Netscher (1639-84), can be seen in the Wallace Collection.

² My thanks are again due to Mr. Moline for kindly photographing these relics, as shown in the illustration.



Page 76.

BONE IMPLEMENTS.
DISCOVERED IN BRISTOL EXCAVATIONS, 1910.

I sent this unusual skull to Mr. Herbert Bolton, F.R.S.E., at the Museum, who was so interested in the specimen that he submitted it to Professor J. Cossar Ewart, M.D., F.R.S., etc., of Edinburgh, the recognised authority on the subject. From notes in his paper he points out that the skull belonged to a small slender-limbed horse or pony of the "plateau" type of Professor Cossar Ewart. Slender-limbed horses of apparently similar type occurred as wild species during Pliocene times in Italy and France, and others lived in Europe during the Neolithic, Bronze and Le Tene periods.

Remains of slender-limbed horses have been found in Kent's Cavern, Torquay, and a nearly complete skeleton of the "plateau" type was found in the Roman fort of Newstead, near Melrose. It is probable that the nearest relatives of this Bristol skull amongst living horses is the Celtic pony.

This skull is so interesting, that Mr. Bolton wishes to retain it for the city collection at the Natural History Museum.

A valuable addition to the Architectural Court at the Museum was made early last year by Mr. Norman Wills, who presented two oval moulded *plaster panels* which have long been known to exist in the ceiling of a warehouse at the rear of the Castle Green colour works.

The apartment in question was undoubtedly one of the rooms of an important house on the site of the castle, but no documentary evidence exists to prove what building stood on that spot, nor is there in existence any contemporary plan of any part of that stronghold which would help one in arriving at the date of its erection.

The principal oval measures 5 ft. 3 in. by 4 ft. 3 in. It has a heavy fruit border, and contains the Royal Arms upon a tablet in the centre, with the initials C.R. at the sides, a fleur-de-lis being placed above and below. The second oval, measuring 5 ft. by 4 ft., has a leaf border, with a pelican, heraldically treated, occupying the centre, the small ornaments around comprising Tudor roses and bosses.

These ovals in the original ceiling were divided by a moulded beam with plaster ornamentation, the outer ground of the ceiling being composed of fleurs-de-lis, roses and choice Renaissance work, the entire design being most effective.

As to the mythical tales regarding the occupancy of this apartment by Charles I and also by Cromwell—that it was probably a bedroom or a banqueting-room—it is hardly necessary to remind you that there is not a shred of evidence in their favour. Charles I was entertained at the “Creswick Mansion” on the site of the upper part of the Post Office in Small Street when he came to Bristol during the Civil War.

The dwelling in Castle Green which contained this very interesting ceiling was probably erected soon after the destruction of the castle in 1655.

And before leaving the castle precincts I must record the demolition during December last of the premises known as No. 63 *Castle Street*, at the corner of Castle and Queen Streets, the ground extending as far back as the castle moat.

Although principally a late seventeenth-century building, the house stood on massive mediæval foundations, with considerable cellarage. And at one time there was evidently access to the moat itself; though the openings have long since been filled up, the original arches are visible. In the work of clearing this site, which is still in progress—mildly reminding us of Cromwell's time—several *piers of early masonry* have been identified as part of the castle itself, but as to what portion of the fortress they belonged it would be difficult to decide.

From a ground plan of this site it will be seen that there are six piers. Four of these were set square, and four were set in one line; they measured 2 ft. square, were slightly chamfered at the corners, and stood about 7 ft. 3 in. apart. The openings between these piers were from east to west;

the two lower ones on the south stood 6 ft. 6 in. high, and the others were about 5 ft. There was nothing to indicate the purpose of erection, but these piers were all probably required to carry arches undoubtedly connected with the entrance over the moat, and may have been part of the stabling or stores of the stronghold.

Returning to the house itself, the interior was of little interest; besides, it had been altered from its original design, and the staircase, a late seventeenth-century erection with turned rails, was sold and sent out of Bristol. The principal room, situated over the shop, looked out upon the main street, which was cut through the castle site in 1655. The original chimney-piece had been removed long since, but the *moulded ceiling* remained in situ.

This plaster work,¹ really in two sections, is a good typical example of the period—1660–1680—and may approximately be considered about the same age as the two ovals removed from the other side of castle green. The remainder of the house contained nothing worthy of record.

Of small buried relics there were only a few found, but numberless fragments of slip and combed wares turned up. On one of the walls was discovered a Bridgwater farthing or Town Piece in fine preservation which reads as follows:—

Obverse—*A Bridgwater farthing, 1666.*

Reverse—*The Armes of Bridgwater, A castle on a bridge of five arches.*

But little else was recovered.

At last two of the dilapidated half-timber overhanging tenements in *Castle Mill Street*, oft-times called Newgate Hill, have been demolished. They were pulled down in November last, on behalf of the Vestry of St. John's, having been condemned as unsafe. There still remains one other tenement on either side of this blank site which appears to

¹ This ceiling has been presented to the City Museum by the Lord Mayor of Bristol (Mr. C. A. Hayes).

be in equally bad state. There is nothing further to say about this incident except this, that as soon as our streets are denuded of these picturesque dwellings we ought to pay more attention to architectural styles.

In my notes of 1908 I referred to the repairs of the tower of *Temple Church*, and now it is necessary to record certain alterations and additions to the interior lest they be lost sight of in years to come. For by these "restorations" the old church of the Knights Templars has been greatly changed, and the unusual characteristics so long admired in this edifice—one of the finest churches in the city—have been swept away by the insertion of new work.

Our member, Mr. Gough, the architect to the vestry, has kindly supplied me with a short report on the work carried out, of which the following is a summary:—

The eighteenth-century porch is an anachronism from an architectural point of view. The vestry, however, decided to restore it to its original condition in order to preserve a feature illustrating a period in the history of the church. A new entrance door has been added. New vestries have been built, for hitherto the only accommodation afforded has been an enclosure at the eastern end of St. Nicholas Chapel, probably made in the seventeenth century, and afterwards altered about a century later. On the removal of the floor were found several fragments of an ancient screen or reredos, elaborately carved and gilded, which had been ruthlessly destroyed in the construction of the old vestry. A carved oak frieze, date 1620, which was fixed on the old deal panelling has been repaired, cleaned from paint, and refixed on the oak wall linings of the new clergy vestry.

The eighteenth-century reredos, formerly blocking the chancel east window, afterwards removed to the

Weavers' Chapel, has now been refixed in a corresponding position in St. Nicholas Chapel, which was probably the spot occupied by the ancient Gothic reredos above referred to.

The improvement of the bare and unfurnished appearance of the chancel has been a long-felt want. A new stone reredos has been erected on the foundations of an ancient wall probably marking the position of the original reredos, and the adjacent mutilated piscina has been carefully restored.

The new reredos is elaborately carved. The five niches are filled with figures representing Christ in the centre, and the four evangelists at the sides with their approximate emblems.

One of the chancel side arches not hitherto screened has been made to correspond with the remaining three arches by removing the eighteenth-century metal grille from the tower baptistery, and refixing it on a stone base.

The old tiled floor has been replaced by a marble pavement of various colours.

The Weavers' and St. Nicholas's Chapels have been enclosed at their western ends by stone screens, the south chapel being used as an organ chamber; and the Weavers' or St. Katherine's Chapel has been adapted for occasional services.

To these notes I must add that the two well-known brasses¹ for many years lying on the floor of the chancel have been taken up. The fourteenth-century half-effigy brass of a civilian, with four Latin verses, has been fixed in a recessed panel in the south chancel wall beneath the iron grilles, and the fifteenth-century "palimpsest" brass representing a priest wearing a cope, and a lady a mantle on

¹ See *Monimental Brasses of Gloucestershire*, by Cecil T. Davis, pp. 9 and 58. London, 1899.

the reverse, has been attached in a similar way to the north wall.

It is hoped that the vestry may see their way some day to have this "palimpsest" brass inserted in a hinged frame, so that it may be examined by visitors.

In levelling the churchyard at the time of the alterations an unusual group of seventeenth-century *traders' tokens* was found, which may be described as follows:—

A cast specimen of the circular Bristol farthing, 1652, with the letters I.R. upon the Arms on the reverse, which, though not quite understood, must signify the initials of a private issuer. This token is a rare forgery.

Then by a curious coincidence there turned up two Cork pennies or town pieces, viz.:—

Obverse—*A Cork penny*, 1659, C.C. amidst a scroll.

Reverse—*The Armes of Cork*, a ship in full sail between two castles.

One of these is in a fine state of preservation. Also two Cork half-pennies:—

Obverse—*A Cork halfe penny*, a three-mast ship and castle.

Reverse—C.C. with the date 1656 below, within an ornamental border.

These specimens differ slightly, but are both in good condition.

This little "find" is surely evidence of an Irish connection with the Temple parish. I do not remember having come across a single seventeenth-century Irish token in any other excavation. As specimens amongst collectors these Irish pieces are scarce. Another seventeenth-century token found at the same time was issued by Peter Walter, of Bewdley (Worcestershire), and two Abbey Pieces both well patinated were also found.

Of tobacco pipes a good many were dug up many years ago in Temple Churchyard, but one of the smallest ever

obtained from Bristol excavations was amongst those found last year, in addition to others with small bowls made by Bristol freemen, bearing their names on the heels : John Howell, John Hunt and F.H. (Flower Hunt) ; also P.E., I.F., and R.N. An unfinished china clay tea cup and some china kiln stands were also unearthed.

As we have already considered two examples of seventeenth-century decorated plaster work, I should like to refer to another, certainly one of the most interesting in the city, and yet the least known. It is the small *concave ceiling* in the "bell room" over the entrance of the *St. Nicholas' almshouse* in King Street, which was erected in Commonwealth times. For a long time this ceiling has remained in a bad state, but the vestry last year decided to restore it. The entire design has now been picked out and re-coloured in its original tint, which was correctly ascertained when the many coats of whitewash had been removed. The two flat ends contain panels filled in as follows. In one—

This is Saint Nicholas Alms House, Ano D. 1656.

And in the other—

The Bristol Arms, between the letters C.B., with a crown suspended over.

The concave portion represents the four evangelists in oval panels within an excellent setting of lozenges containing the *Agnus Dei* and other mouldings.

The vestry is to be congratulated on this most satisfactory work.

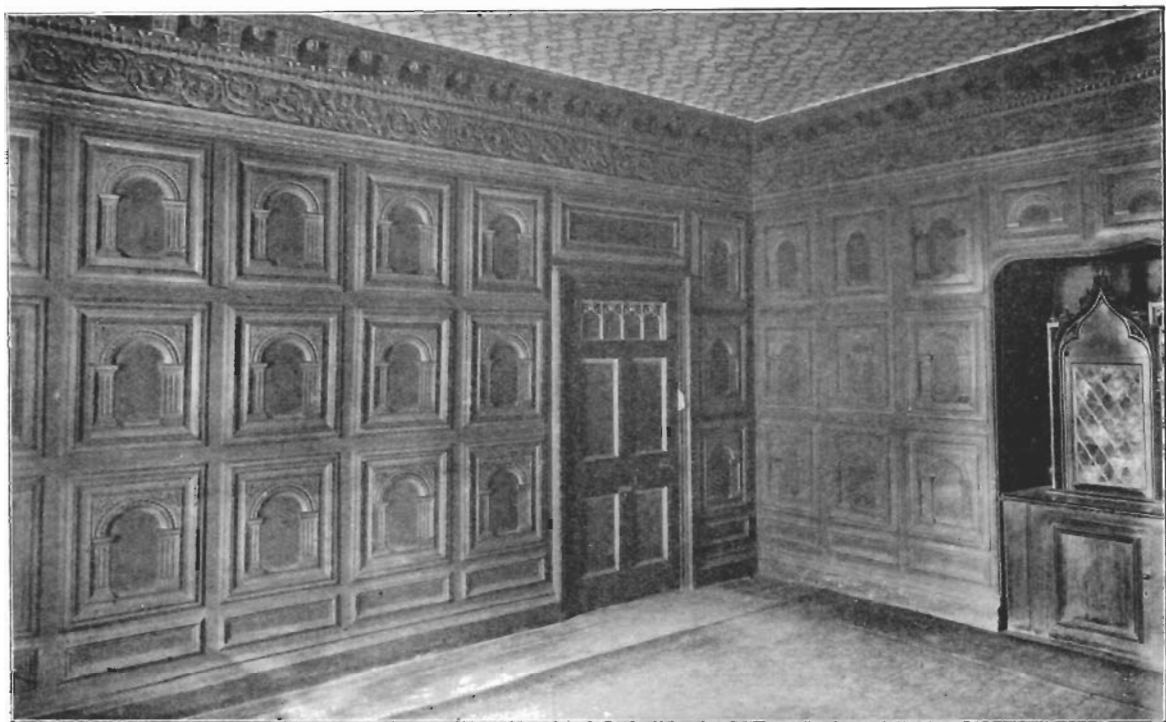
The possibility of alighting upon some traces of the *Civil War entrenchments*,¹ close under the Royal Fort, the home of the Tyndalls, was a genuine speculation when the building operations for the University began ; but not a

¹ A plan of the "Outworks of Bristol in 1644" will be found in *The Bristol Memorialist* (W. Tyson), Bristol, 1828.

vestige of masonry was found, and not a weapon or bullet or pipe. Unfortunately too far afield was the second series of digging near this Civil War fort. It was, as many of us know, upon the green plot of ground in front of the Grammar School entrance that the foundations for the new erections were prepared in September last. The workmen came upon several courses of walling which was all that remained of probably eighteenth-century farm buildings destroyed some time last century. It is curious that so many various small objects were found here, but they furnish fairly good proof of that conjecture as to occupation. There were numerous fragments of eighteenth-century slip and combed wares, as well as some pieces of blue and white delft pottery; and sundry odd coinage turned up, including an Abbey Piece bearing the usual absurd inscription, viz:—George II farthing of first issue, 1731, and second issue, 1754; George III cart-wheel penny, 1797, and halfpenny, 1799; George IV farthings, 1825 and 1826. A Bristol copper penny token of 1811 was also found, which was loaned to a stranger by one of the workmen, but never returned, a small ornamental cross taken from his watch chain as security being forfeited.

How very few have known the *Old Rectory House, St. Michael's*, which is still to be seen against the steps at the lower end of the churchyard, or have ever inspected the interesting interior. Its quaint rooms and passages and its substantial character carry one back fully three hundred years, whilst the handsome *panelled oak room* at the south-east corner has always been a source of pleasure to the antiquary. The house is now vestry property, and owing to certain changes in the use of this oak room and for other reasons, it was decided last year to dispose of the antique woodwork.

By a courteous arrangement on the part of the vestry, the city has secured the fitments of this room for the Architectural Court at the Museum. The woodwork was removed



Photo, C. H. Horton.

PANELLED OAK ROOM, OLD RECTORY HOUSE, ST. MICHAEL'S.

REMOVED 1910.

Page 85.

in September last, and in due time we must hope it will be carefully cleaned and erected to form a complete room, properly fitted as an example of an interior in the early Jacobean period, such as may be seen at South Kensington.

The room in the old house, which was irregular in shape, measured nearly 17 ft. square and 9 ft. 9 in. high. The panels have carved circular heads, which rest on moulded-impôts supported by fluted columns. Carved scrolls fill the spandrels, and a framework of extremely bold mouldings completes the design. A richly-carved oak Renaissance frieze was carried round the room above the panelling, and this was surmounted by a bold carved oak cornice, composed of small brackets of leaf design and fluted ornaments, used alternately, with a final carved border against the ceiling. Two double-arched panels of similar design form a kind of overmantel, and these are fitted just under the frieze with plain panels beneath. Overmantels similarly designed are occasionally met with, but it is most unusual to find an entire room so panelled. The chimney-piece and grate and the entrance door are of a later period.

I have heard it suggested that this woodwork may not have been originally prepared for this house, as some of the panels at the side of the doorway were slightly narrower than the remainder. This may be so, though there is no definite evidence as to this. At all events, we may be safe in claiming the panelling as Bristol workmanship, for in the woodwork at the Red Lodge close by we have an almost similar room.

It will be remembered that the date of this magnificent room at Sir John Yonge's mansion is 1590. The Elizabethan oak work of the apartment is superbly carved, but the frieze and cornice are simpler in character than that example of work at the old Rectory. Taking everything into consideration, however, there can be little doubt that the old Rectory room belongs to the early Jacobean period, say between 1610 and 1620.

At our October meeting I had the honour of presenting the only known portrait of *William Tyson*, antiquary (1785-1851), through our Society, to Alderman Eberle, on behalf of the city, as a gift from our member Mr. Hubert Hickman.¹

The portrait was probably executed between 1845 and 1850, and is especially interesting, as it depicts him associated with an old Bristol deed, with the city seal attached. It is the work of H. S. Parkman, a Bristol artist, who was known for his portraiture at that period.

I should now like to add to, and possibly repeat, what I then said about that early worker in local history, one who knew every corner of this city during the first half of last century; and though Tyson has left considerable literary matter, he seems to be unknown except to the very few at the present day.

He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, an honorary member of the Somerset Archæological Society, and he acted as local secretary on the occasion of the first visit of the Royal Archæological Institute to Bristol in 1851, as by a singular coincidence I had that honour, on the Society's second visit, half a century later.

Tyson was evidently an enthusiastic worker, and was not more contented in a law office in those days than was that wonderful genius Chatterton. Finally leaving the office of Coates, the solicitor, he started as a second-hand bookseller. This was a bold step to take even at that time; but when we realise that his first catalogue, priced one shilling, contained 2,105 lots we marvel at his pluck. This was in 1822, and the volumes were offered for "ready money" at 21 Clare Street. His second catalogue, in the following year, comprised 1,991 lots, and at the head of the title was a reproduction of the ancient Arms of Bristol from Ricart's Kalendar, 1480. The books in each of these lists were unusually miscellaneous in character, and included many early chronicles and rare editions.

¹ See *Times and Mirror*, October 20th, 1910.

Returning to the period of 1816, I ought to mention that Tyson had issued a prospectus of a quarterly magazine to be published in Bristol, entitled the *Bristol Memorialist*, which was to contain, amongst other subjects, "Original Communications Relating to the Antiquities, History, &c., of Bristol and its Vicinity, and reprints of Tracts relating to Bristol," but only three of these quarterly parts appeared. However, six years later, in issuing his first catalogue, this notice was appended:—

"The publisher of this catalogue having been urged to complete the first volume of *The Bristol Memorialist*, which he commenced in 1816, by publishing a fourth number, requests those gentlemen who wish to possess it to send him their names, as it is his intention, besides completing the copies in his possession, to print only as many as may be ordered."

What the response was we hardly know; but in his next catalogue, in 1823, the following statement was made at the foot of the last page:—

"W. Tyson has just published, price 4/—, No. IV. of *The Bristol Memorialist*, embellished with Millerd's map of Bristol, in 1671; a sketch of the outworks of Bristol in 1664, and a wood-cut of the Arms of Bristol in 1480. A few copies of the whole may be had of the Publisher."

Respecting this, the only complete work published by Tyson, I have spoken before, as it contains a good deal of matter that is not to be found elsewhere; in addition, the small volume contains the two rare plans now referred to.

But apart from this, and notwithstanding that Seyer's *Memoirs of Bristol* were issued between 1821 and 1823, Tyson laid the foundation of a new history of Bristol. Writing to Thomas Garrard, Chamberlain of the city in 1825, he said: "I am preparing for publication a local miscellany of history, topography, biography, anecdotes, &c., relating to Bristol," and he then asked for any assistance he may be disposed to give him.

In 1835 he also wrote in a similar way "to the rector and churchwardens of the parish of St. Stephens" as a "native of the parish of St. Stephens and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries." Both these documents, with many original MSS. and other valuable matter, are preserved in two volumes at the Municipal Library in Deanery Road, lettered "Tyson, MSS. Collection for a History of Bristol." A great many very interesting archæological papers appeared in *The Bristol Mirror* between 1825 and 1851 under the signature "T." he being then engaged on the staff of that paper. Amongst his papers is a printed title-page for a pamphlet, entitled—

"Old Christ Church Quarter-Boys. With Historical Notices of the Common or Town Bell, and of the Church Bells of Bristol, by William Tyson, F.S.A. Bristol Mirror Office, 1838."

But no copy has yet been found, nor was the MS. known to Mr. Latimer.

A good portion of the Tyson collection was secured by the late Mr. C. T. Jefferies at the sale of that library in 1852 and 1853, coming eventually into the city possession in 1893. It was collated by Mr. Latimer soon afterwards. But a portion of the Tyson papers was, I believe, destroyed by fire at Messrs. Jefferies' store in Redcliffe Street in 1881.

I advise members to examine his MS. for themselves, and I think this will give them zest for original work.

In perusing the auction catalogue of the Tyson sale of books in 1852, and of the MSS. in 1854, received through the Braikenridge bequest, I was greatly interested in two of the items. For instance, in the first sale, Lot 206 is described as "*Adam's Chronicle*, written in Bristol in the year 1625—very curious." This fetched £24. The marked list does not give the name of the purchaser, but the entry is interesting, in connection with the recent private issue by Mr. F. F. Fox

of a limited number of privately-printed copies for our benefit. We can only assume that Mr. Fox's MS. was the original one possessed by Mr. Tyson at his death.

Then, again, Lot 357. reads as follows: "*Millerds Large Original Map of Bristol, 1671, very scarce,*" which sold for £4 4s. This is absolutely confirmatory of the statement I made a year ago, that there must have been two large plans by Jacobus Millerd, the finished one of 1673 being preceded by a "trial" one, which was practically completed about 1670 or soon afterwards, hence the description "large original" in this old sale list.¹

This trial plan was never fully finished, and it is hardly likely that any copies were sold, for only two impressions are known to exist.

In conclusion, I should like to say that in moving about the old city during the past year, and in preparing these notes, I have felt more strongly than ever that we should individually realise greater responsibility in the guardianship of our historic remains, both in the city itself and in our immediate neighbourhood, for bit by bit we are losing valuable relics which others, far afield, are rampant to possess. May our enthusiasms during 1911 be greater than in the past.

My obligations are due to Mr. Claude B. Fry for his continuous kindness in permitting me special access to all his firm's excavations; and I should like again to thank Mr. Dowling, the able clerk of works to Messrs. J. S. Fry & Sons, for his courtesy at all times—a rare commodity nowadays.

¹ See *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.* and plan, vol. xxxii. p. 330.