

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

Old Arle Court

by A. M. Welch
1913, Vol. 36, 288-314

© The Society and the Author(s)

OLD ARLE COURT.

By ANNE MANNOCH WELCH.

OLD ARLE COURT, an ancient manor house approached by an avenue, was situated in Arle village proper, with a mill close by, and in close proximity to an affluent of the River Chelt.

The site of a chapel, which probably went at the Reformation, can be identified by human bones having been dug up in what was apparently the burying-yard. In a well-watered field adjacent to the site of Arle Court and the chapel there used to be a pond, which local tradition said was the remains of a moat. In old maps it certainly looks larger than when I remember it, shortly before it was filled up. As the old manor house was Elizabethan, and the elm avenue must have been planted at about the same time, one cannot but feel that older and moated buildings must have preceded it, and it is possible that this field may have been the site of these. This idea is strengthened by the fact that the stream has obviously been deflected here, probably to feed the moat, whence it passes on to the mill.

It must be understood that old Arle Court is an estate that has absolutely vanished, and the name has been taken by a new estate on the (new) Gloucester Road. The only value of a paper like this is as an endeavour, by the aid of local knowledge, to piece together the few facts that remain, before all memory of it is finally swept away.

Old Arle Court in its last form as an Elizabethan building, contained much old oak, panellings and a beautiful staircase, also some good tapestry, which on its demolition some thirty-five years ago were removed to the new Arle Court

on the (new) main Cheltenham to Gloucester Road. But it must be urged (for this is a source of endless confusion) that this, the new Arle Court, is not on the site of the old estate, but is a property formerly called "Grove Field," purchased by the late Mr. Thomas Packer Butt, and given the old name. This was unfortunate, as a new Arle seems to be growing up round the house on the Gloucester Road, and hence great confusion is caused to strangers and postal servants. The present owner is Mr. Herbert Unwin, who bought the estate from the Rev. Walter Butt a few years back.

The history of the *old* Arle Court estate is unknown previous to the fifteenth century, when a family by the name of Arle, Arles, or de Arle, was in possession, and had probably lived there for many generations. Apparently they took their name from the place, and Mr. St. C. Baddeley tells me that in 1346 there was a William de Arle. About the same time the neighbouring village of Cheltenham gave its name to a family of eminence, and "Richard de Cheltenham" was elected Abbot of Tewkesbury in 1481.

Arle Court was approached by the (then) main road between Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury. The exact position of old Arle Court may now be identified by the farm which has grown up on the spot, still called "Arle Court Farm," a name which is often a puzzle to passers-by, so entirely has the old place been swept away and superseded by the new Arle Court on the new Gloucester Road, some two miles away.

Arle Court Farm, now owned and occupied by Mr. Frank Brown, is situated in Arle village proper, not far from the gates of Arle House, and is *now* approached by the Arle Road (old name Sandfields), which only came into being about the time of the Enclosures Act (1830). Even as late as 1828 my grandmother, then a bride, used often to have to remove her *sandals* to shake out the sand when she strolled with her husband up the half-made road. This being so,

and there being no Arle Road at that time, the old Arle Court drive gates opened, after a long and stately avenue of elms, on to what we now call the Tewkesbury Road, the continuation of the Cheltenham High Street, north-west.

Cheltenham remained a village with one street, down which the Chelt flowed till the end of the eighteenth century, when the visit of King George III in 1788, and the consequent booming of the waters, laid the foundation of its prosperity. The Promenade emerged from a brickfield about 1818, and soon the town spread towards Montpellier and Lansdown, and a more direct way to Gloucester was needed, and therefore the new Gloucester Road was made.

“An ancient and shaded avenue of trees still exists near Arle Court. There is an air of antiquity about the spot,” says a water-drinking guide-book about one hundred years ago.

Many people still remember this avenue in its decay. Till lately great grassy roots marked the situation, but now the road is merely a cart-track through a field, with two Georgian lodges (very seldom recognised), one on and one near the Tewkesbury Road, both built by the first Mr. Butt at the beginning of the last century.

Very little now remains of the old Arle Court. The back premises form the present farmhouse, which, however, on the *exterior* gives no sign of age, as the whole has been faced with modern bricks.

The old court-house (see illustrations), well remembered by people still living in the village, was a typical manor house, not very large, with low spacious apartments below, and upstairs each room as usual opened into the other. The doors were not furnished with handles, but with little round apertures into which you inserted a finger and lifted the latch, and the floors rather uneven with occasional steps, the windows small with lozenge panes of glass, and in later days at least heavily overhung with ivy.

In the part now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Brown there

is a beam in the sitting-room ceiling which is said to be a complete tree, while a large recess in the hall appears to have been a chimney.

The cellar, foundations, one block of windows, an old brick wall running down to the stream, and a very ancient stone barn, now used as a potato store, are the only other remains, while the gardens, in which coins and buttons and an old ring have been dug up, and which include the site of the chapel and burying-yard, are thickly planted with fruit trees. It is difficult now to reconstruct in thought the former state of things when the old life flowed around, but the close and the pond for fish, so necessary in those self-sufficing days, are there, and the mill, which is mentioned in Domesday, remains as a row of cottages.

As usual with very early properties, old Arle Court was built on a thick, sandy deposit. Owing to difficulties of adequate water supply, sand and gravel were preferred to heavier soils.

The name "Arle" is always said by the village people to come from the "arley" trees, which used to abound here, and there were many round the old moat. Mr. St. C. Baddeley, in "Place Names of Gloucestershire," says the name was taken from a species of alder tree.

Arle Church, of which there are now no remains, formerly existed at the adjacent village of Arle, an ancient hamlet of Cheltenham, and now part of the parish.

In the registers of Cirencester Abbey, collected and published in Prynne's MSS., Arle is designated "Alra," and described as having a church which "was given to the mother church of Chiltham (Cheltenham) by Walter de Bruscella, whose heirs continued long after at Leckington (Leckhampton).

Recumbent effigies and flat grave-stones of the Crusader period, as well as portions of Norman stone-work, were dug up during the last century, and a massive beam, bearing the

sacred monogram in Norman-Latin and the date of 1250, was found in 1803. This probably carried the rood.

I can, however, find no confirmation of this statement, which is given in *Norman's History of Cheltenham*, by John Goding, published 1853 and 1863.

One thing, however, is quite certain, and that is that there was a burying-ground in the old Court gardens. Both my father and Mr. Butt have told me that they have seen human bones dug up, always without any remains of a coffin. That there was a chapel we *do* know, and that, judging by the site of the burying-yard, it must have adjoined the old Elizabethan court-house. Also a market gardener's wife, who lived on the spot twenty-five years ago, tells me that in the cellars, which were left after the demolition of the house, were leaden window frames and bits of coloured glass, which the village people told her came from the old chapel.

A very interesting theory has been advanced by Mr. Martin Rule that the great St. Anselm spent some days of retirement at Arles. If so, it was during the time of his great struggle with William Rufus.

Mr. Baddeley tells me that there is no mention of Arle in the cartulary of St. Peter's, but Mr. Rule's statement is supported by Rudder, p. 143 (date 1779), who obviously quotes from the same source:—

“Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, gave to God and St. Peter of Gloucester, and to the nuns there, twenty hides of land in a village called Alre.”

The story runs thus¹:—

“But William desired him (Anselm) to postpone his departure (from Gloucester). And he retired to Arle, a manor in the parish of Cheltenham, belonging to St. Peter's Abbey at Gloucester.”

A footnote says: “I confess I speak without absolute certainty. The county historians seem to have nothing to say that can help me. The *History of St. Peter's, Gloucester*,

¹ Rule, *Life and Times of St. Anselm*, vol. i. p. 322.

says, 'Ethelbaldus rex Merciorum dedit Deo et Sancto Petro Gloucestriæ . . . viginti hidas terræ in villa quæ vocatur Arle,' but all I can get from Bigland¹ is the following about Arle: 'Attached to the ancient structure was a chapel now destroyed, on a beam of which was a date 1250. Here likewise is a medicinal spring.' "

Mr. Butt has most kindly given me a letter from Mr. Rule, dated February 12th, 1898, which he wrote in reply to an inquiry as to his authority for this statement. Mr. Rule owns he cannot at the moment put his hand on it, but continues:—

" I *think* the passage lurks in one of the minor chronicles comprised in the Rolls Series, and though it *may* be in some other printed book, I do not think I found it in an unpublished MS. I think that had this been the case I should have remembered the fact. It certainly is 'findable,' though possibly at the cost of much time and unexhaustible patience. To the best of my recollection the record was brief enough, and to the effect that the 'villa' where Abbot Anselm was residing when summoned to Gloucester was a place at no great distance of the name of 'Alre.' This was my only clue, unless, indeed, memory has played me false, as it may well have done in the lapse of nearly twenty years.

" To the best of my recollection I took all possible pains to learn what recorded place within, say, thirty miles of Gloucester might fairly be thought to answer to the name of 'Alre,' and came to the conclusion that Arle Court was the only likely candidate for the honour. That the *villa* called 'Alre' should be a property belonging to the Abbey of St. Peter, Gloucester, would seem to be likely enough; for nothing would be more congruous than that Serlo, of all men, should, under the trying circumstances in which his brother abbot found himself, offer him the hospitality of a temporary home suitable to so exemplary a monk as Anselm, and of a seclusion favourable to the literary work on which he was at that time engaged."

¹ *County of Gloucester*, vol. i. p. 312.

“ We know where it was that St. Anselm elaborated the *Cur Deus Homo*. It would be interesting to find with certainty the spot on which he elaborated the *De Incarnatione Verbi*.”

Mr. St. Clair Baddeley tells us Arle was originally a manor, but together with Redgrove soon got merged into Cheltenham. It is seldom mentioned, but we read in Rudder, “ John Cheltenham died seized of lands in Cheltenham near Arle ” 33 Edward III, and we observe that in 1692 its contribution towards the Royal Aid was about half that of Cheltenham.

		CHELTENHAM.		£	s.	d.
1692	To the Royal Aid	..	..	145	13	0
1694	„ „ Land Tax	..	..	226	7	0
1694	„ „ Poll Tax	..	..	130	19	0
		ARLE.				
1692	To the Royal Aid	..	..	78	12	0
1694	„ „ Land Tax	..	..	77	4	4
1694	„ „ Poll Tax	..	..	17	6	0

In 1712 Atkyns tells us that “ Cheltenham had only one seat, e.g. Mr. Justice Dormer’s at Arle . . . The number of houses in the town was two hundred and fifty, and seventy-one in the hamlets, of these Arle and Alstone had thirty each, Westal six, and Naunton and Sandford five.” In the time of the water-drinking fever Arle provided lodgings, as did all the country-side, for the fashionable multitude that flocked in the wake of George III, and for which the tiny market town could provide no accommodation.

Of the manors of Arle and Redgrove no documentary evidence remains whatever, and, indeed, the very situation of Redgrove has been lost so entirely that an advertisement I put a few weeks ago in a local paper as to its exact locality obtained no reply. We know from the way it is mentioned in old documents that it must have been adjacent to Arle. From local knowledge I can only surmise that it included

the districts of "Fiddler's Green" and the "Golden Valley," and this theory is strengthened by the fact that a ditch situated near the (new) Gloucester Road and (new) Arle Court was always considered by the late Mr. Butt to mark the confines of Redgrove Manor, and he would in consequence never have it filled up. Mr. Frederick Ticehurst, steward of the Manor of Cheltenham, also tells me he can find no allusion to Redgrove in the manorial documents in his possession, which go back four hundred years, and that whereas a tithing man is still appointed for Arle and another for Alstone, none is appointed for Redgrove. One more fact worthy of notice is that Redgrove had no voice in the appointment of the five churchwardens for the mother church of Cheltenham, for while two were appointed for Cheltenham, one for Arle, one for Alstone, and one for Westal, Naunton and Sandford, none was appointed for Redgrove. This very ancient and curious custom apparently fell into abeyance early in the last century.

The latest allusions to Redgrove are in Fosbrook, who wrote his guide book in 1807. He says:—

"Sir Fleetwood Dormer obtained it in marriage with Catherine Lygon, and died in 1693, leaving this manor and *that of Redgrove* to his son, the Hon. Robert Dormer, Judge of the King's Bench, who died about 1722, leaving four daughters and coheireses. Catherine Dormer, one of these, who died in 1757, left Arle Court *with Redgrove* to the Hon. John Yorke."

And finally my father always told me that the Arle estate ended at the (new) Gloucester Road, thus tacitly supporting my theory by including what I believe to be this elusive Manor of Redgrove.

Mr. Baddeley writes with regard to these manors: "You see these very small manors, originally equally old estate of the Crown, tended to be identified merely with Cheltenham, which we must recollect was the capital manor of its hundred. Hence they have been obscured."

It is interesting to reflect that we have evidence a few centuries later that this was absolutely the case, and that when the Prince of Wales came into his inheritance an exhaustive survey was necessary. This was in 1625. The point for us to observe being that from local knowledge of names of places still extant Arle and Redgrove were certainly included in this survey of the Royal Manor of Cheltenham.

“ That the circuit of the Manor beginneth at Barbridge, North West . . . and from thence to the outside of Harterfield towards the West and from thence to a house of Reynold Milton's, called the Branyards, and from thence to Old-acre, and from thence to Barbridge aforesaid, which notable places are, and always of antiquity were the limits, or the particular bound marks and meeres of the whole precincts or boundaries of the Manor. The Prince is the immediate and only chief lord of the soil within the Manor of Cheltenham, but of such soil as lieth without the Manor, and within the hundred there are others who are lords thereof, but yet the Prince is lord paramount thereof.”

As this survey of the Royal Manor of Cheltenham happens to begin at the north-west it starts from Arle, and “ Barbridge ” is a local name which constantly crops up in old deeds. It is mentioned in the Lygon deed (see later). Where it is exactly situated I am not quite certain, but I fancy it was an important piece of land near Kingsmead and near the old court-house, and it is always described as “ shooting on the brook.” The survey then works round the confines of Cheltenham and back to the west, where “ Harterfield,” now called “ Arthurstfield,” is still a farm on the limits of the district, which according to my theory is the lost Manor of Redgrove, and not far from the road and row of cottages to which the late Mr. Butt gave the old name of “ Redgrove,” obviously having the same idea in his mind.

One more conclusive piece of evidence is that the parcels of land in Arle, mentioned in the Lygon-Talbot deed, are

definitely described as lying "*in the Manor of Cheltenham*," and since writing this I have come across a handful of documents of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, being manorial certificates relating to surrenders of land and other business done by the Gregory family of Arle when they appeared at courts held by the lord of "*the Maner de Cheltenham*."

As the earliest document is dated 1628, the court is invariably held by one of the Dutton family, who gave lords to the manor for two hundred years, and one or two are signed by Prynne (of Charlton-Kings), to whom we are so much indebted for his compilations and collections of much interesting and antiquarian matter which would otherwise have been lost, and whose orderly hand we see in many documentary indices of the period.

Mr. Baddeley has most kindly sent me some notes on these Domesday sub-manors of Cheltenham.

There were three distinct manors at Cheltenham in 1086 (Domesday Survey) all belonging to the king, and in one (Cheltenham), the largest of the three, a hide and a half belonged to the church, which maintained a priest and two teams of oxen.

With regard to the two smaller manors, which are not mentioned by name, but which he says cannot be any others than Arle and Redgrove—both were cultivated—one contained 120 acres, the other 240 acres.¹

As to Redgrove Manor, this very small one, the site of which has been apparently lost, I own I cannot quite understand how these things were. No evidence remains as far as I can find, but on this point I am absolutely out of my depth. Mr. Baddeley continues:—

"At Arle the lord (King William) held two teams of oxen.

At Redgrove the lord (King William) held one team of oxen.

¹ At the time of the Enclosures Act (1830) there was a quantity of waste land. It is noticeable that the Act for Arle and Alstone was quite independent of that for Cheltenham.

At Arle the acreage was 240 acres.

At Redgrove the acreage was 120 acres.

In Cheltenham and Arle combined there were two mills.

In Redgrove there were three mills.

One priest for all.

Tenants at Cheltenham, 37.

Tenant at Arle, 1.

Tenants at Redgrove, 6—2 villains, 4 bordars.

With regard to the mills Mr. Sawyer writes: "There are still five mills in Cheltenham, though some of them have gone out of use. Following the flow of the Chelt, they are (1) Sandford Mill, (2) Barrett's Mill, (3) Upper Alstone Mill, (4) Lower Alstone Mill, (5) Arle Mill." This theory is thus quite upset.

"This seems to show that Arle and Cheltenham were reckoned together at twenty villains and ten bordars, while Redgrove was separate. These manors paid partly in money and also in kind—pigs, cows, honey."

Of the Arle family, whence they came, exactly where they lived, how they got their name, we know nothing. Every vestige of the family has disappeared. One notice alone has been shown me by Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, of John (de) Arle witnessing a transfer of land:¹ "Hiis testibus; Johanne Huggefod, scutifero; Johanne de Arle; . . . et aliis. Datum apud Twenyngge in festo Annunciacionis Beatæ Mariæ Virginis anno regni Regis Henrice Sexti post Conquestum tricesimo tertio." This we infer (and the date bears it out) was the father of the lady who married William Greville, whose brother the judge purchased the old Court from him, and whose daughter and heiress in turn took the estate into the Lygon family.

The earliest landowners we have any knowledge of seem to belong to the "de Hereford" family. On Goding's testimony Walter de Hereford was lessee of the Manor of Cheltenham, 1154-1156. In the Great Rolls of the Pipe we

¹ *Landboc of Winchcombe*, vol. ii. p. 562. Date 1457.

read: " Et Waltō de H'eforð, LII. ðr. ðt. in Chiltehā, 2 H. II (1156)." He was also, we know, lord of the Manor of Dymock, and it was he whom we understand presented some lands in Cheltenham, together with the Manor of Redgrove, to Llanthony Priory at Gloucester, in whose possession it remained till the monastic dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII. This influential family seems to have been great and munificent donors to Llanthony Priory, and in Atkyns, p. 511, we read: " This illustrious¹ Earl Milo, the King's Constable, Founder and Patron of the Church, well satisfied in the religious conversation of those Monks, and how they merited of God, and how prevalent their Prayers must needs be, he and all his Family, his martial Sons and beautiful Daughters endowed this Church with various Gifts and large Possessions." " Walter de Hereford gave certain ' assarts in Chiltenham ' to Llanthony Priory: the Priory is accordingly certified to hold an estate here, called Redgrove and lands in Cheltenham. Accordingly this Manor was granted to Will. Lygon for 6s. reserved rent; *after which it descended with Arle Court.*"

There is one other name associated with Arle of whom we can gather no knowledge. Walter de Bruscella (a Fleming, Mr. Baddeley tells me) gave Arle Chapel to the mother church of Cheltenham. On Goding's authority he and his heirs resided at Leckhampton (Leckington). This I cannot verify.

With the marriage of the (de) Arle daughter and heiress in the late fifteenth century to Robert Greville, a member of the family which owned Charlton Manor at Charlton-Kings, and which originally sprung from the wealthy wool merchants of the name at Chipping-Campden, the more authentic history of Arle Court begins, for Robert Greville keeping the Charlton-Kings estate for himself and his bride, and founding a line there which gave lords to the manor till 1648, sold Arle Court to his younger brother William.

¹ Steward of the Royal Manor of Cheltenham.

This William Greville became the famous Judge Greville, who attained the sergeant's coif in November, 1504, and sat in the Court of Common Pleas from May 21st, 1509, till his death in 1513.

Of the life of this family at Arle Court during the reigns of Henry VII and the early years of Henry VIII we know nothing, but it appears that communication between Arle and Charlton-Kings was kept up, for we note that one of Judge Greville's daughters (not Margaret, who took Arle Court into the Lygon family) married a Greville cousin of Charlton-Kings (Gyles Grevill, of Rushboro), and I find a "Grevile" dies 1717 with lands in Arle.

Mr. Butt tells me that there was an old picture at the house, of no intrinsic value whatever, which tradition declared to be Judge Greville, but that nothing definitely was known about it, and so unfortunately it was sold.

We cannot help wondering, while we are considering the fifteenth-century Arle Court, on which side were the sympathies of John and William (de) Arle¹ during the struggles of York and Lancaster; but we know when again, nearly two hundred years later, armed forces marched down the same road, past this old property, this time to the siege of Gloucester (as before to the Battle of Tewkesbury), that the Lygon family generally espoused the Parliamentary cause.

As usual it is to the parish church one goes when records are very scarce, and the remains of Judge Greville and his family lie near the communion table, with now, alas! no stone to mark the site, for unfortunately St. Mary's has suffered many things at the hands of Victorian renovators, and an Order in Council of 1860 may be responsible for the fact that many of the oldest memorial stones have been swept away. But most happily the Greville brass, the oldest remaining in the parish church, has been preserved,

¹ We know they were alive 1457, and John was doubtless father to the lady who married Robert Greville. Battle of Tewkesbury, 1463.

and has been inserted in the floor near the font in the north porch, and of late years it has been covered with matting to save it from further obliteration. Comparing the present state of the brass with the description given by Bigland in his *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections relative to the County of Gloucester*, date 1791, it is satisfactory to note that no more of the brass rim has been torn off during the intervening 120 years; but unfortunately to "the large, blue flat stone" mentioned by Bigland a coat of arms in brass, of substantial size, and belonging to a totally different family, has been attached.

Bigland, 1791, page 314, thus describes the brass:— "In the Chancel: On a large, blue flat stone, the effigies in Brass, of a Man in his Judge's Robes and coif, his Wife, three Sons and seven Daughters; Inscription round the margin remaining . . . Slughter, whiche William decised the 11 Daye of Marche, in the 1111 yere of the Reigne of Kinge Henry VIII." A footnote explains: "This memorial was placed for William Grevil, of Arle Court, in this Parish, who was one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas in the reign of Henry VIII."

The following is the description of the Greville brass as given by Mr. Cecil Davis in *The Memorial Brasses of Gloucestershire*. Size of Brass, 4 ft. 2 in. by 2 ft. 8 in. As it is an important brass I give his description at length.

Description.—"In this county are four brasses commemorating judges. This brass is so much worn, that it is with great difficulty that the various lines incised on its surface can be determined. On his head Sir William wears the coif which became a distinguishing feature in the costume of a serjeant-at-law. But the Judicature Act has extinguished that order, and all judges created since 1873 have their white wigs unspotted with that circular black patch, which was one of the relics of the Middle Ages.

"Following the custom of the times, Sir William's hair is long, reaching to his shoulders. Round his neck is a tippet,

and he wears a long robe with narrow sleeves, and over it a mantle fastened on the left shoulder. The shoes are large and round-toed. There seems to be a gibecière, but the brass is too much worn to distinguish it plainly. His lady wears the then fashionable pedimental head-dress, a long, close-fitting gown, tight sleeves with deeply-reflexed fur cuffs and a loose hip girdle.

“Under Sir William are three sons in long tunics with large bell sleeves. The hair is reaching the shoulders, but cut to form a fringe across the forehead. The shoes are wide.

“Beneath the wife are eight ¹ daughters, dressed somewhat similarly to their mother, but the robe is not so long, and thus it may be noticed that the girls, as well as the boys, wore wide-toed shoes. All the figures are erect, with hands clasped in prayer. Sir William is turned to his left, to look towards his wife, who is turned to her right. In like manner the sons are turned to their left, and the daughters to their right.”

Mr. Davis also quotes from Foss's *Judges of England*, p. 311: “William Grevil, son of Richard Grevil, Esq., of Ilmington, in Gloucestershire, attained the serjeant's coif in November, 1504. He was made a Judge of the Common Pleas on May 21st, 1509—1 Henry VIII—and so remained till 1513, when he died, and was buried in Cheltenham Church.”

When Goding wrote his history of Cheltenham (1853, and republished in 1863) the brass was evidently in its original position in front of the Communion Table. He writes thus:—

“The oldest memorials are the flat stones covering the vaults, which form the floor of the church. The continual tread of footsteps has defaced these to a great extent, but here and there the name and heraldic distinction of the once

¹ Most historians say seven. I have counted them carefully and I make out eight heads, but there are only twelve feet, but the brass is so terribly worn it is very hard to distinguish any details whatever.

great and noble are decipherable. Will. Prinn and members of that celebrated race have their last resting-place denoted by a recently-restored flat stone nearly opposite the Communion Table. Adjoining is the family vault of the Greville family. This is unquestionably the oldest memorial stone now in the church that is clearly traceable. It is a relic of one of those fine brass mementoes for which this county is justly celebrated. It denotes the burial-place of the renowned Judge Greville, who sat in the Common Pleas during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. . . . They resided at Arle Court, a mansion that yet retains, both externally and internally, marks of antiquity. On the chancel floor is the effigy in brass of Greville, time of Henry VIII."

We may infer that Judge Greville inherited or amassed considerable wealth, for on his death in 1513 he was enabled to leave three daughters coheireses—Margarett, Alice and Elinor. Why out of his family of ten children, including three sons, these daughters alone were chosen to succeed is not clear. Possibly the remaining children died in childhood, for with the appalling rate of infant mortality one cannot fail to be struck in casting the eye down any old register. The only daughter who concerns us is Margarett, for with her doubtless brilliant marriage to Sir Richard Lygon the Arle estate went into the family of the direct ancestor of the present Earl Beauchamp, and for three generations it apparently remained in possession of the head of the family, after that it went to a younger branch. We conclude from the fact that Nash thinks fit to mention the acquisition of "Arles Court, in Gloucestershire," in the Lygon pedigree, together with "Beauchamp's Court," and later "Madresfield," that it was considered a property of considerable importance, and through the old deed which I came across we have some means of judging of what the property consisted, for the extent of the estate is described at length.

From the fact that the family are buried at Malvern we

gather that the Lygons were possibly not resident landlords, though one can well imagine that now and then the family moved to their Gloucestershire property, or that at times it would be lent or leased to younger members of the family, as in the case of Roger Lygon of Fairford (and of Arle Court), and again of Thomas and then to his brother, John Henry Lygon, of whom we really know nothing.

When records are very scarce every item is of importance, and we note that William Lygon at the dissolution of Lanthony Priory rented the Manor of Redgrove at Arle "for six shillings reserved rents." As we know the Manor of Redgrove adjoined his property at Arle, we infer that he took interest in his Gloucestershire estates, though whether he ever lived at Arle Court we have no means of knowing. He died 1567.

In 1554 Queen Mary leased the Royal Manor of Cheltenham to Catherine Buckler and Roger Lygon for their joint lives. To quote from Goding, p. 44: "They jointly were the lessees of the manor until the commencement of the seventeenth century. They resided at the very ancient mansion of Arle Court." And again, p. 60: "Queen Mary, upon taking possession of the manor, let it on lease for a term of years. The lessees were the legal representatives of two ancient resident families—the Lygons. Mrs. Catherine Buckler and Roger Lygon, Esq.; leased or farmed the estate during their joint lives, and they appear to have taken some interest in their property. To them we are indebted for the commencement of a record of events connected with the manor. The roll of the court is in a good state of preservation. The first entry is in the year 1555, the second year of the reign of Queen Mary."

This last statement of Goding is quite true, and Mr. Frederick Ticehurst has them in his care. They are in a good state of preservation, but very difficult to read. They probably contain much information of interest to us, and outside are legibly inscribed with the name of Lygon in

rather large writing. Goding, who was a tax collector, lived in a little house in North Street, and gathered together an enormous amount of information about Cheltenham; but he is surprisingly inaccurate, and the sources whence he gained his facts are often hard to find.

That Roger Lygon and his wife had a beautiful home at Fairford we also know, situated, I am told, on what is now part of the churchyard.

This Roger Lygon is not mentioned in the family pedigree by Nash, but from the date of his death, in 1584, he was probably a younger son of the afore-mentioned William Lygon. In those days of prolific families the historian must have felt that it was quite impossible to include all the younger sons and yet keep the genealogical records to any reasonable size.

In one statement at least we know that Goding was absolutely wrong, for he describes Catherine Buckler as Roger Lygon's "widowed sister," whereas she was his wife, having previously married twice before. This was doubtless once more an alliance of birth with money obtained from the great wool-growing industry, which at this time formed the staple wealth of the country, for this lady was first the wife of Sir Edmund Tame, Knight, of Fairford, in Gloucestershire, who was grandson and heir to the wealthy John Tame, the donor of the celebrated stained glass windows, and the builder of the church to enclose them, and we know that she held Fairford in jointure after her first husband's death. She married secondly Sir Walter Buckle, Privy Counsellor to Queen Elizabeth, and thirdly Roger Lygon.

To quote from *Collins's Peerage of England*, by Brydges: "Roger Lygon, of Fairford, in Gloucestershire, died 1584, having married Catherine, daughter of Sir William Dennis, of Puckleworth, and widow of Sir Edmund Tame and Sir Walter Buckle, Knights. They lie buried in the Church of Fairford, where there is a handsome monument in

stone with two portraitures at length of the said Roger and his wife.”¹

This fine tomb is situated in the north transept, and is well worth a visit. The two recumbent figures in freestone of the handsome Elizabethan gentleman and his lady are in life-size, Roger Lygon clad in armour and his wife in the dress of the period. There is no inscription on the tomb, but heraldic devices surround it, and it is in an excellent state of preservation.

Copied from Nash's *History of Worcestershire*, and then continued from other sources :—

¹ Vol. ix. p. 108.

THOMAS LYGON, Esq.==ANN, second daughter and coheir to Sir Richard Beauchamp, Lord Beauchamp of Powick, with whom he had Beauchamps Court.

Sir RICHARD LYGON==MARGARET, daughter and heir of William Grevil, Judge of the Common Pleas, 2 Henry VIII.
By her he had Arles Court in Gloucestershire.

ARTHUR LYGON,
buried at Malvern,
28 July, 1570.

RALPHE,
born at Malvern,
10 February, 1584.

MARY,
christened 25 July,
1573.

WILLIAM LYGON, Esq.==ELEANOR, daughter of
died 8 September, 1567,
buried at Malvern. Sir William Dennis,
Knight.

ELIZABETH,
buried 4 October, 1590.

RICHARD LYGON,
lord of the manor of Madresfield,
died 2 October and buried
12 October, 1584 at Malvern.

==(1) MARY, daughter of Sir Thomas Russell, of Strensham,
Knight, buried at Malvern 14 December, 1576.
(2) MARGARET, daughter of John Talbott, of Salwarp, in
Worcestershire.

PENELOPE,
died 1596.

ANN
born at Malvern.

Sir WILLIAM LYGON, Knight,
sold many manors.

MARGARET
(not mentioned
in Nash).

JOHN
of Arle Court, died
1644 (not mentioned
in Nash), buried in
Cheltenham.

==ELIZABETH, daughter
of Sir Arthur Lygon,
Knight.

CATHERINE==Sir FLEETWOOD DORMER,
died 1693.

ELIZABETH.

JOHN
(Charles II presented him with a
baronetage 1661, extinct 1726).

Hon. ROBERT DORMER==MARY BLAKE, of London.
born 1649, died 1726.

CATHERINE.*

* She left it to Hon. JOHN YORKE, who married a Lygon.

JEMIMA.

This pedigree is obviously incomplete. In the manor documents I find a Thomas Lygon, of Arle, mentioned in 1617, who apparently dies childless, and is succeeded by his brother, John Henry Lygon. I can only conjecture these were brothers to Richard Lygon, the head of the family, who lived at Madresfield. In 1625 Francis Gregory buys land from him, and seems to have died in 1627, for then John Lygon, he of the second marriage of the head of the family, comes into his own, and passes on the property to his descendants. More of him later on.

Obviously about now the interesting question arises which of the Lygons built the old Elizabethan manor house and planted the elm avenue, which so many of us remember, and which has been already described (see photographs). I wrote to Lord Beauchamp, but he knows nothing about it ; yet one cannot help thinking that among family papers records of building expenses, etc., might possibly be found. All we know is that the old Arle Court was Elizabethan, that it was probably not built on the site of the older buildings, which we surmise must have been a stone's throw away, but we know that it stood close to the old chapel and burying-ground, considerations of hygiene not carrying much weight in those days, and that this chapel contained the beam of 1250, since lost.

At this point comes in the only little piece of original information, for a few days ago, looking through an old deed box, I came across a parchment sealed with heavy fleur-de-lis seals, and signed in a clear, cultivated hand, " John Lygon." It turned out to be a deed poll of December 11th, 1630, revoking a previous deed of 1622 between John Lygon, of Arle Court, and members of his mother's family, " Charrington Talbott " and the late " John Talbott," and relating to some fields at Arle.

Two roods at the east end of Kingsmead, five sellions of

land in Itchland (Yeachland), one sellion of land in *Barbridge* Field.

At first I could not understand how the document came into our possession. I took it to Mr. Frederick Ticehurst, who says it is of no value except that of sentiment. I found on further investigation these three identical parcels of land were conveyed next day, December 12th, 1630, by indenture of feoffment to my great-great-great-great-grandfather, Francis Gregory, of Arle. Doubtless the Lygon and Tablot deed was passed on with the land to the purchaser as of no value to the previous owner.

To local people this deed is interesting as it incidentally enumerates the neighbouring villages in which the Lygon family owned land, and we can thus understand what a very large and valuable property it was.

Of the names of the villages mentioned all lie between Cheltenham and Gloucester. Only three I cannot quite identify. They are "Cheltenham, Arle, Elmeston, Aylemondston (?), Uckington, Hardwicke, Staverton, Starton (?), Heydon, Boddington, Leigh, Derehurst, and Ffoyrott (?). We also learn from this deed that John Lygon had a second daughter named Elizabeth, besides his heiress Catherine.

This "John Lygon" (again a younger son, and not mentioned by Nash) is the son of Richard Lygon, of Madresfield, who died 1584, by his second wife, Margaret, daughter of John Talbot. Now for the *first* time the Arle estate goes definitely to the younger branch of the family, and continues there. We gather from Nash that the Lygon family by this time had become by a series of happy marriages extremely rich in land, the only source of income for people of position in those days, for Nash observes in his somewhat discursive pedigree that Sir William Lygon (elder brother to John Lygon, and heir to his father) "sold many manors." Consequently we infer that this important Gloucestershire property might well be spared as provision for this son of the second marriage. From this time also we gather that the owners of Arle Court

were resident landlords, and we know that the old parish church of Cheltenham received their mortal remains. We also fancy that it was probably their only estate, not as so often happens in the case of the owners of Arle Court merely one of many in various parts of the surrounding counties.

Blacker, in his *Monumental Inscriptions of the Parish Church of Cheltenham*, compiled 1877, notes among his "Flatstone Inscriptions": "The following . . . are no longer visible, having been covered with concrete and tiling." "Here lyeth the body of John Lygon of Arle Court, in the County of Gloucester, Esqr., who departed this life the 21st day of Sepr., 1644," and I easily found his name and date of death in the parish church register of 1644.

It is most fortunate that now, when Nash concludes (as far as we are concerned), we have another witness from whence to take up the thread, for what must have been a very fine memorial tablet in the north chancel of the parish church of Cheltenham commemorated "Catherine," the heiress of John Lygon, of Arle Court, and wife to Sir Fleetwood Dormer. With the roll of rich vale lands as her heritage we can well understand the widowed husband's grateful allusion:—

"Maritum si non Patrem, Hæredem scripsit
Hæc illum moriens amplo Patrimonio
Ille hanc amissam hoc Monumento decoravit."

This handsome monument, emblazoned with heraldry (15 quarterings), has been swept entirely away. At what date sacrilegious hands were placed on this interesting memorial we have no means of knowing. During the water-drinking era we are told that the throng and the press was such that galleries had to be erected. I have seen the old document, dated 1775, relating to the gallery in the north aisle, and noted that it was merely 52 feet by 9 feet, but where the old tablet could have been I cannot understand. About forty-five years ago these galleries were taken down

and the high pews removed (see the old picture in the vestry), and the church brought up to date. At such times one cannot but think that often much of deep family and antiquarian interest goes too. It is even possible that the shattered remains of this noble memorial tablet to Catherine Lady Dormer are buried in the corner of the churchyard, where tradition has it many other monumental remains find a resting-place. Unfortunately the old verger died last year, and we have no one left who can explain these things to us.

Lady Dormer died 1678, and her husband in 1693, leaving sons to inherit—Thomas, John and Robert (I think).

In the north transept, on a handsome monument.¹

Arms: "Azure, ten billets, 4, 3, 2, 1. or, on a chief of the last a demi lion issuant sable," for DORMER; impaling, "Argent, two lions passant, gules," for LYGON.

"Hic juxta sita est
Catharina

Fleetwoodi Dormer, Equitis Aurati, Spousa,
Johannis Lygon, de Arle Court, Armigeri,
Ex Elizabethæ Uxoris filia;
Utrius-que Parentis Hæres unica;
Cujus Familia in Agro Wigornienti
per trecentos & amplius annos
Floruit, & adhuc sæliciter floret:
A tanto licet genere oriunda nobilique nupta
Stirpem tamen & conjugem
Utros-que antea illustres,
Morum sanctitate illustriores reddidit.
Maritum si non Patrem, Hæredem scripsit
Hæc illum moriens amplo Patrimonio,
Ille hanc amissam hoc Monumento decoravit.

¹ Bigland, p. 316.

Decessit Febr. 3,

Anno } Ætatis 72.
 } Domini 1678.

Johannes Lygon, supradictus, obiit 1644

Filius unicus Ricardi Lygon,

de Maddersfield, Arm. ex secundis

Nuptiis cum Margareta, Filia."

John Talbott, militis, ex stirpe Comitum Salopiæ

Affinis etiam fuit Baronibus

de Berkly Castro, aliisque Proceribus ;

& per Uxores suas Hæredibus

quorum Insignia Superne

depinguntur.

On the atchievement mentioned in the inscription are the fifteen following coats of arms with the names annexed :—

1. LYGON, as before.
2. "Gules, a fess or, in chief two mulletts argent," for BRACEY.
3. "Azure on a bend or, three bars dancette gules," for MADERSFIELD.
4. "Argent, fretty gules," for HARFLEET.
5. "Or, a cross pierced azure," for TECORS.
6. "Gules, three lions passant argent," for GIFFARD.
7. "Gules, a fess between six martlets or," for BEAUCHAMP.
8. "Parti per pale or and gules, three roundlets counter-changed," for ABBOT.
9. "Argent, on a fess azure, three fleurs-de-lis or," for UFFLEET.
10. "Argent, a bend between six martlets gules a crescent for difference," for FURNEVAL.
11. "Or, a lion rampant per fess gules and sable," for LUFTOT.
12. "Or, a frett gules," for VERDON.

13. "Sable, on a cross within a bordure engrailed or, five pellets," for GREVIL.

14. "Or, a bird rising vert, within a tressure sable," for ARLE.

15. "Argent, a chevron azure, between three garbs or, banded and stalked vert," for SOUTHEY.

Nash (*History of Worcestershire*) tells us, "Lygon entered his pedigree and arms in the Heralds' College A.D. 1569, 1634 and 1683."

From Foss's *Judges of England* :—

"Robert Dormer, a descendant of the Buckinghamshire family of that name, a branch of which was ennobled by James I with the title of Lord Dormer of Wenge, which has flourished ever since, was the grandson of Sir Fleetwood Dormer, and the second son of John Dormer, of Ley Grange and Purston, a barrister, by Katherine, daughter of Thomas Woodward, of Ripple, in Worcestershire. To his elder brother, John, Charles II, in 1661, presented a baronetcy, which became extinct in 1726. Robert was born in 1649, and, having entered Lincoln's Inn, was called to the bar in 1675. He is mentioned as junior counsel for the Crown in several trials in 1680, and was soon afterwards constituted Chancellor of Durham.

"In 1698 he represented Aylesbury, in 1701 the County of Buckinghamshire, and in 1702 Northallerton. In the great question of Ashby and White he opposed the assumed privilege of the House of Commons, which would have prevented an elector from proceeding at common law for the injury he sustained by the returning officer refusing his vote. On January 8th, 1706, he was made a judge of the Common Pleas, and sat there nearly one-and-twenty years, till his death on September 18th, 1726. *His seat was at Arle Court, near Cheltenham.* His marriage with Mary, daughter of Sir Richard Blake, of London, produced him four daughters

only, one of whom married Lord Fortescue of Credan, and another John Parkhurst, of Catesby in Northamptonshire, the father of the author of the Greek Lexicon to the New Testament."

In Atkyns we read (1712) :—

" . . . Mr. Justice Dormer is the present Proprietor, who has a seat in this Place and a very large Estate in the Neighbourhood, and in Buckinghamshire and in other Counties. His Birth and Learning have justly placed him on the Bench of the Common Pleas."

He died 1726.

It is curious to notice that twice in its history old Arle Court is the home of a distinguished member of the legal profession, also how often the estate goes through the female line.

Once more there is no male heir, and four daughters are left, Catherine inheriting Arle Court as her share. Apparently she never married, and on her death, in 1747, the estate is willed¹ to the Hon. John Yorke, third son of the Earl of Hardwicke (extinct peerage), whose wife was a member of the Lygon family.

In 1795 the old Arle Court was sold to T. Butt, Esq., of Minchinhampton, but much of the land seems to have been in the ownership of the Welch family² of Arle, by marriage with the heiress of the Gregorys, 1773.

¹ Some say sold, but this does not seem likely.

² Also of North Shoebury and Southchurch, Essex, by marriage with the heiress of the Whites at Alstone, 1797.