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**An Archaeological Survey-An Archaeological Revival.
Address**

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AN ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY — AN ARCHÆOLOGICAL REVIVAL.¹

ADDRESS BY JOHN E. PRITCHARD, F.S.A., *President.*

You have conferred a particular honour upon me in inviting me to continue the Presidency for a second year, a special distinction which I cannot but appreciate, and for which I must record my sincere thanks. May I add also that it was a generous decision on the part of the Council to make this City the place of meeting on the renewal of our work upon the conclusion of Peace. The selection of Bristol was naturally appropriate, for, as we all know, this was the place of the Society's birth. It is possible, therefore, you may think that a duty devolves upon me to justify that decision, and that I will endeavour to do.

In my address last year I ventured to portray the personality and the enthusiasm of some of the original members of this Society; I spoke of their particular interest in our proceedings, and tried to point out our own responsibilities. I might have taken for my subject to-day a single episode of Local History, such as the life of a particular Saint, or even a Berkeley Hermit; or by way of change the "Dun Cow Rib" of Redcliffe, the Slave Caverns in the Red Cliff, or the Giant's Cave of the limestone rock in the Avon Gorge. It seems more appropriate, however, on this occasion to make a slight "Archæological Survey," in the hope that we may all realise a much-needed "Archæological Revival."

Now as we expect by this meeting to awaken from our lethargy, and to recover—as it were—our archæological activities, which have been unhappily cut off—as by a "smoke

¹ Delivered at Bristol, 22nd July, 1919.

screen"—during the dark period of five years past, I am sure you will permit me to recount some of the work accomplished in days gone by, and call attention to a few of our glorious possessions, happily untouched as yet by the exigencies of civil life, yet unfortunately in danger from within. As an illustration of that assertion let me remind you that the very interesting old house, styled the Manor House, at Redland, containing a magnificent chimney-piece, built in 1658 by Francis Glead, Sheriff of the City in 1659 (who proclaimed Charles II. at the High Cross), to which the members were invited by the owner on the occasion of the first Annual Meeting of the Society held here in 1878, was within a few years afterwards disposed of to a company of building speculators, when the house was entirely demolished, the chimney-piece having been sold to a titled lady living near London.

In this address I am, of course, referring principally to the district in which we are met, for surely it was chiefly to objects of local interest that the labours of the Society were to be directed. In this connection I think we ought to realise a greater fascination for the Archæology of the County, and Bristol in particular: we need to take a wider outlook and make our influence felt, for the future success of a Society such as ours requires the continual addition to our ranks of new members, and fresh investigators in the work of original research.

Enclosed by walls and gates, and protected by its mighty fortress, Bristol may well be spoken of as a Norman town; but it must be remembered that the ancient site, really a peninsula between the rivers Avon and Frome, was used, if not actually occupied, by men of prehistoric times; and many relics, particularly of the late Iron Age, have been discovered during recent years in the course of deep excavations, which are fully recorded and illustrated in our *Transactions*. If, however, careful research had been made in years past, more particularly around the banks of the rivers, problems of

ancient occupation might have been solved ; for it is now realised that the work of the spade in archæological work is of the greatest value.

Then within a very short distance from the centre of the City there are traces of three British Camps, which were probably afterwards occupied by the Romans, as relics of that period have been found ; and owing largely to the efforts of our member, Mr. James Baker, the finest of these, Stokeleigh Camp, was about ten years since secured and handed over to the National Trust by the generosity of Mr. George A. Wills, one of our members.

As few of the Camps in this neighbourhood have been scientifically examined, it may be a fillip to some students to know that finds of beautifully-worked flint implements and weapons have been recorded during recent years from Durdham Down, Combe Dingle, Shirehampton Park, and elsewhere, some of these specimens having been deposited in the City Museum, where a fine prehistoric collection is at last being arranged.

It was never a wonder to the local antiquary that Roman builders should have ignored our swampy site ; and not a trace of masonry has ever yet been found, but a Roman road crossed Durdham Down, of which a section was examined by a few of our members some years ago, as the *Transactions* record. Besides, the remains of a villa were unearthed on Clifton Down, and coins and other objects elsewhere in the district, many years ago ; and a great discovery was made at Brislington, just within the City boundary, at the end of 1899, when a few enthusiastic members had to take instant action, as the ground was all pegged out for the erection of rows of modern houses. Although that was in the day of the much despised private builder, willing consideration was shown to us at that memorable moment. The majority of the finds, of considerable historic value, including the pavements and some rare pewter vessels, may be inspected at the City Museum.

We have yet to unravel the mystery of the site at Sea Mills, where a Roman tombstone was dug up in 1873, and so many miscellaneous Roman relics have been discovered since ; for the somewhat hastily arranged preliminary digging which commenced a few years since was most unsatisfactory. It is hoped that this investigation will be re-commenced at the earliest opportunity.

Following the great Roman period, which has probably left traces yet unknown, a great gap occurs, and the first recorded fact in our history is told us by silver pennies of Æthelred the Unready, struck at Bristol (978 to 1016), of which only two are believed to be known ; but I imagine that even now there is always the possibility of a find. The antiquary is ever expectant !

As to the Castle already referred to, which was not entirely destroyed "according to plan," we actually possess a few remains of much interest, particularly two vaulted chambers, which were inspected by members on the Society's first official visit in 1878. A great effort was made some years ago to obtain possession of these fascinating relics, but largely owing to private interests the purchase could not be carried through. It is to be hoped that some day these historic remains can be secured for the City. A fact not generally known, which it may be interesting to state, is that there is no contemporary illustration in existence of the Castle, and that all views sold to the public are conjectural. The earliest view represents only one of the towers of the stronghold, which Jacobus Millerd engraved in the border of his large Plan of Bristol, published in 1673, or nearly twenty years after the Castle was destroyed.

During the course of the demolition of a long stretch of the ancient wall between the Pithay and St. John Street—including the quaint archway, known as the Blind Gate—for the erection of Messrs. Fry's new premises, numerous finds of relics occurred, and many of these have been recorded and illustrated in our *Transactions*, throwing much light upon

the manners of the inhabitants. A large unnumber of very interesting fragments of early mediæval pottery, covering several periods, came to light at that time, and since, in other diggings; and it is hoped that some of these may be exhibited before long, for such collections help to indicate the varying changes in the manners of domestic life.

In this sketch no ecclesiastical examples will be referred to, and the only remains of Norman domestic architecture in the City consist of two isolated pillars, with typical capitals, in a warehouse cellar in Nelson Street, and some clustered piers with cushion capitals, part of the arcading of the hall of a great house in Small Street, now incorporated in the buildings of the Law Society. It is interesting that one can also see incorporated in this hall some really good Tudor work, especially two grand, ranges of windows and two fireplaces, though the glorious perpendicular oak roof was destroyed when the Law Courts were built and the street was widened. This happened long before this Society existed, or some of its members might have had something to say on the subject.

In Small Street, also, where the houses of many of the wealthy burghers were to be found, there remained in the County Court offices, up to 1906, two carved stone chimney-pieces, which by order of the Board of Works were to be removed forthwith, and sent to London, an action never explained; but as the result of the pressure from this Society these were retained in Bristol, and eventually erected in the two chief rooms of the new wing of the Post Office.

During the remarkable "Edwardian period" domestic architecture must have made great headway in our midst. Spicer's Hall, the home of that ancient family, situated on the Back, must have been a magnificent example. A part of the roof of the great hall, and some grotesque corbels, remain amidst the modern walls, and may be viewed at any time; but the glorious decorated entrance doorway, taken down in 1885 and buried in the old cellars of the new

warehouse, was rescued by a member of this Society in 1893, and purchased for the city, and this is now erected in the Architectural Court in the Museum basement, forming probably the chief object of interest. It is acknowledged that there is no finer example of the fourteenth century to be seen in any of our national collections.

It is to be regretted that the Great House in St. Augustine's, standing upon the site of the domestic buildings of the Carmelites, and afterwards of Colston's School for Boys, which existed from 1710 to 1861, was not watched during its demolition in 1863, when the site was cleared for the erection of Colston Hall. Systematic Archæology was hardly recognised at that time; but the site of the Chapel, just below the hall, when the later erections were demolished in 1904, produced many valuable relics, including the interesting and valuable collection of mediæval skulls, described by our member; that eminent ethnologist, Dr. Beddoe, at one of our evening meetings. And when some further digging took place at the rear of the Gas Offices, just before the War, in 1914, several mediæval tiles of large size, bearing equestrian designs of mounted men with lance and sword, were brought to light, as well as many other interesting fragments.

The find of these tiles followed very closely upon the discovery of a number bearing the Beauchamp Arms, which were dug up from below the City Rates Office in Broad Street (at the back of the room in which we are assembled) in 1913. These had undoubtedly formed a part of the pavement of the old Church of St. Ewen, which stood at this corner, and they were fortunately secured for the Museum.

The home of Canynges, in Redcliffe Street, in which the first members, who paid a visit in 1878, had their attention especially directed to a "remarkable ancient tile pavement still remaining *in situ*." This floor possessed true historic significance, for it had been beautifully illustrated in Shaw's *Tile Pavements*, and has been frequently recorded elsewhere since, being very widely known. This is the pavement to

which I referred in my address last year; and I think the incident should now be placed on record, as I am convinced very few members knew that the pavement had been removed. I myself was not aware of the loss for some time. May I therefore say that this floor remained *in situ* from the end of the fourteenth century until 1913, when it was sold to a stranger—a London collector—who forthwith exhibited some portion of it at the Exhibition of English Earthenware at the Burlington Fine Arts Club of that year. The name of the purchaser is given in the catalogue, so there is no secret; but I notice that a writer on English Mediæval Tiles in the *Burlington Magazine* a few months ago seemed to suggest an apology for its removal. In that article we are told that Captain Lindsay purchased the whole floor, and removed it “without a qualm,” as it was being deliberately ruined by constant traffic! I think this was a very clever exaggeration to suit the case, as those who know the room could affirm; for the well-known business firm who have occupied the premises for over a quarter of a century past have always shown this pavement with great pride to all visitors. I will only add that had it been known the pavement was “in the market,” I am confident it would have been possible to secure it for the city.

The honourable trading of the merchant princes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—unlike the profiteering methods of the present time—brought great wealth to the city, and whilst making munificent gifts to the churches and charities in their midst, these wealthy burghers built themselves houses of distinction: for the craftsmen of those days were men who had served their apprenticeships and had learned how to build, and how to decorate in wood and stone and plaster.

One of the finest of those early Jacobean interiors was Langton House, on the Back, which we visited in 1906. This was doomed to leave the City at that time, as we know; but fortunately only to be transferred to a house in

Hampshire, specially built and prepared to receive it. It could not be helped—we could do nothing, for it was to be preserved in this country.

Unfortunate as that loss was, the removal of two beautifully carved stone chimney-pieces of the Tudor period from the town house of the Cann family on the Quay, in 1908, without any warning, was really deplorable. An American agent and a cheque book, and those fine examples of interior decoration were gone for ever, though they both carried the Arms of the City, the Merchant Venturers, and the family named. It is in this way that our possessions disappear. Every member must be ever on the alert, for profiteering collectors will creep in without any conscience.

Of St. Peter's Hospital, which nestles behind the church of that parish, we know much of its chequered career—Residence, Sugar House, Mint, and finally the Offices of the Guardians of the Poor. In recent times, actually in 1899, the Court room was very nearly pulled about, but a sudden reminder by members of this Society of the great responsibility resting upon the Guardians caused a change in their plans, and now the entire building is undoubtedly free from all danger.

A house of later date—The Registrar's House—just below the Deanery, possessing an interesting staircase, and a carved chimney-piece, bearing the date of 1664, and the initials N.P., representing Nathaniel Pownoll, Registrar, was saved in 1896 by the strong action of members, though the order to demolish had been given. The house was afterwards repaired, and it has been regularly tenanted since.

Then, as you arrived here from the railway station a few minutes ago, you must have noticed the Old Dutch House, standing at the corner of High Street and Wine Street, which has been specially referred to upon every visit of this Society. It is one of the attractions to visitors, in the centre of the City: it was saved from demolition in the year 1906 by the narrow margin of a single vote in the City Council, entirely through

the determined action of this Society ; and the history of that movement has been duly recorded.

One of the latest cases of demolition in the heart of the City was the pulling down just before the War, in 1914, of three old gabled houses standing in High Street, just beyond the Dutch House, for the necessary erection of more commodious premises for the business house of Messrs. Jones & Co. Though the immediate frontages were modern, much interesting early work was discovered, including the mediæval walls of the burgher's cellars, and the original Tudor panelling of the guest room, bearing the Royal Arms (France modern and England quarterly) as used between 1405 and 1603. The woodwork appears to have been erected in the time of one William Young—who was Mayor of the City, 1555-6—and it certainly indicated a house of great importance. The final destination of this panelling is not yet decided.

It was with regret we heard that Southey House, in Wine Street, was to be demolished ; but it could not be helped, for this and the adjoining structure were not adaptable for present-day requirements. The wealthy purchaser rightly and wisely inserted a bust of the Poet in the cornice of the new building, which marks the site of his birth. It was a strange coincidence that just as this house was being demolished in 1914, the Professor of Poetry of Oxford, and a former President of this Society (Sir Herbert Warren), was unveiling a tablet in Bath, erected upon the house in that city where the poet had lived.

The greatest house to be actually secured for civic ownership is the Red Lodge, in Park Row, which we shall visit this afternoon, according to our programme. It was built by Sir John Young (the owner of the Great House) upon the summit of the Carmelite gardens, and the interior was finished after his death, which took place in 1589. It is a valuable asset to the City's possessions, and was only obtained by the prompt action of a member of this Society—Alderman Fuller Eberle. Its actual use has yet to be

determined. We know, however, that the "Bristol Savages" will principally occupy the building, but we are hopeful that it may be arranged for this Society to have a room assigned to it, where we may be able to hold some of our meetings.

In every case of preservation or reparation to which I have referred, members have taken a very important part, and in some cases have been solely responsible for the success attained, which has often been secured largely owing to the feeling that the influence of the Society has been behind those members.

Reference has been made to the Architectural Court at the Art Gallery, which still means only a basement cellar for the reception and temporary exhibition of the larger specimens of local antiquities. No provision had, unfortunately, been made for such relics at the date of opening in 1905; and it was entirely owing to the pressure brought to bear by members of this Society that the present meagre accommodation was provided.

It is generally admitted that the collection forms a very valuable series of specimens of carved wood and stone of early periods. The members of this Society will continue to influence gifts; but unfortunately full use can hardly be obtained by artist or student in an electrically-lighted apartment. We feel confident, however, that the Authorities will eventually provide the necessary accommodation for what will one day constitute a most popular exhibit. In the meantime we trust the collection will be made more generally known to visitors through booklets and notice-boards than has been the case hitherto.

With the trammels of war at an end, and with the peace celebration of three days since still in the air, it should be instinctively felt by everyone here to-day that this Annual Meeting means the "revival of our work," and that we shall be able to return to a Winter Session to report and discuss upon endless matters. There is still much to be done in this

district, and many relics to watch, whilst there are others to save and collect. It is possible, too, that we might institute an occasional ramble, and thus extend real practical work.

Whilst we in Bristol, for many years prior to the War, had our Annual Archæological Report—which it is possible may be resumed—it would be very helpful to the Society generally if every member in the county would regularly report even the least important find, as well as the greater ones, to the Local Secretary of the district, or to the Editor, so that every item may be recorded for the making of history.

This would, perhaps, begin the proper scheduling ¹ of the many valuable specimens of the Stone and Bronze Ages found in Gloucestershire, which would include some in the possession of the Society ; also lists of all relics of the Roman occupation, which would be of very fascinating interest, and in this way the value and charm of our archæological collections would increase.

In conclusion, I would venture to remind you all that this ancient City, which holds so enviable a place in the history of the country, is in reality a priceless heritage, and we are rightly called upon, as members of this Society, to uphold and protect its traditions and its treasures. I feel sure that will be our determination.

¹ This was commenced by the late Mr. George B. Witts in 1912, when prevented by ill-health from active archæological work, but he died the same year. His friend, Dr. E. T. Wilson, of Cheltenham, who had been assisting him, announced early in 1914 that he would try to carry it on, but he also passed away soon after. As war has raged almost ever since, it is improbable that much progress has been made.