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**Proceedings at the Spring Meeting at Chepstow and Tintern  
29th May 1922**

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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE SPRING MEETING AT CHEPSTOW  
AND TINTERN.

*Monday, 29th May, 1922.*

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For the first time since 1914 the Society was able to revert to its old established custom of holding a meeting in the Spring of the year. The occasion was favoured with perfect weather and the beauty of the Wye Valley was seen under most pleasant conditions. Over one hundred members gathered at Chepstow station, where the respective parties from the Bristol and Gloucester districts met and proceeded to

CHEPSTOW CASTLE

which was visited by permission of our member Mr. W. R. Lysaght, who gave special facilities for every part of the Castle to be seen.

Chepstow Castle—Striguil as it was called during the first centuries of its existence—has been so fully described in our *Transactions* (vi, 51-74, with plan) by the late George T. Clark, F.S.A., it is unnecessary to give full details of the fabric. The Castle occupies a prominent position on the steep cliffs on the right bank of the river Wye, with a ravine to the south, known as "Castle Ditch," separating it from the town; on the west a double line of ditch has been quarried in the rock. The principal features are the western gatehouse, the hall, and the great round tower known as Marten's Tower. The buildings comprise work of the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth cen-

turies. The hall and middle ward were built by the two Strongbows in the reign of Henry II, and the barbican and lower ward by the Marshalls in the time of Henry III.

Mr. H. A. Evans (*Castles of England and Wales*), refers to the hall as "One of the most remarkable buildings in the history of British Castles." It is about 100 feet long and 40 feet wide, and dominates the whole Castle. Its walls vary in thickness from 9 feet to 5 feet. Marten's (or Bigod's) Tower, half round in plan and 42 feet in diameter, rises from a square base 42 feet broad by 52 feet in depth. The outer wall is 12 feet thick.

The great hall is principally of Norman work of the twelfth century. Later additions of the thirteenth century are spoken of by Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson (*Military Architecture in England*), as unusually elaborate for military work of that time.

The Castle has been the possession of many great nobles, the earliest of whom was Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford. From him it passed to the Earls of Pembroke, the Marshalls, the Despencers, and Herberts, and then to the Somersets. It is now the property of Mr. W. R. Lysaght.

A very complete history of the Castle was written by J. F. Marsh, in his *Annals of Chepstow Castle* (1883).

Mr. Harold Brakspear, F.S.A., had very kindly promised to meet the Society, and, taking up a position in the ward immediately inside the main entrance, he gave a most interesting architectural description of the Castle. In the course of his remarks he said:—

There has been much misconception in the past as to what a castle of the conquest was like. It must be remembered that the Norman invasion was a military campaign and whatever defences were necessary to protect the invaded country they must have been such that could be made quickly. The Norman castle so dreaded by the Saxons was an earthwork formed by cutting a deep ditch and throwing up the debris into a great mound

which was defended by wooden stockades. A court or bailey sufficiently large to accommodate the invading army was next made by cutting an encircling ditch and throwing up the debris as a bank on the inside, which was also surrounded by a stockade. The deep ditches and the earth banks and mound with a stockaded top was an impregnable stronghold before the introduction of gunpowder. As time went on and the country became quieter those castles which were required for permanent protection of the country had their temporary wooden defences substituted with stone and ultimately all the castle was built in stone. This process of conversion was a lengthy operation, even the royal castle of Windsor was not completely walled until the fourteenth century.

The site of this castle of Estrighoiel or Chepstow was a natural stronghold and there was no occasion to throw up a mound or make a ditch round the bailey, all that was required to make the place impregnable was to cut a ditch across the west end of the site and deepen the side of the natural ravine on the south.

The first building to be erected in stone was the great hall, which was never a keep, in the narrowest part of the site dividing the area into two baileys with a narrow passage on the north side of the hall connecting the two. The western bailey was enclosed with stone walls in the twelfth century and the eastern bailey was walled later in the same century. Westward of the latter is a portion of the castle protected by two ditches which may in the first place have been intended for the mount but if such was ever raised it was levelled down in the thirteenth century and the site surrounded with walls. In the fourteenth century another and large bailey was added at the east end of the site with an entirely new set of domestic buildings.

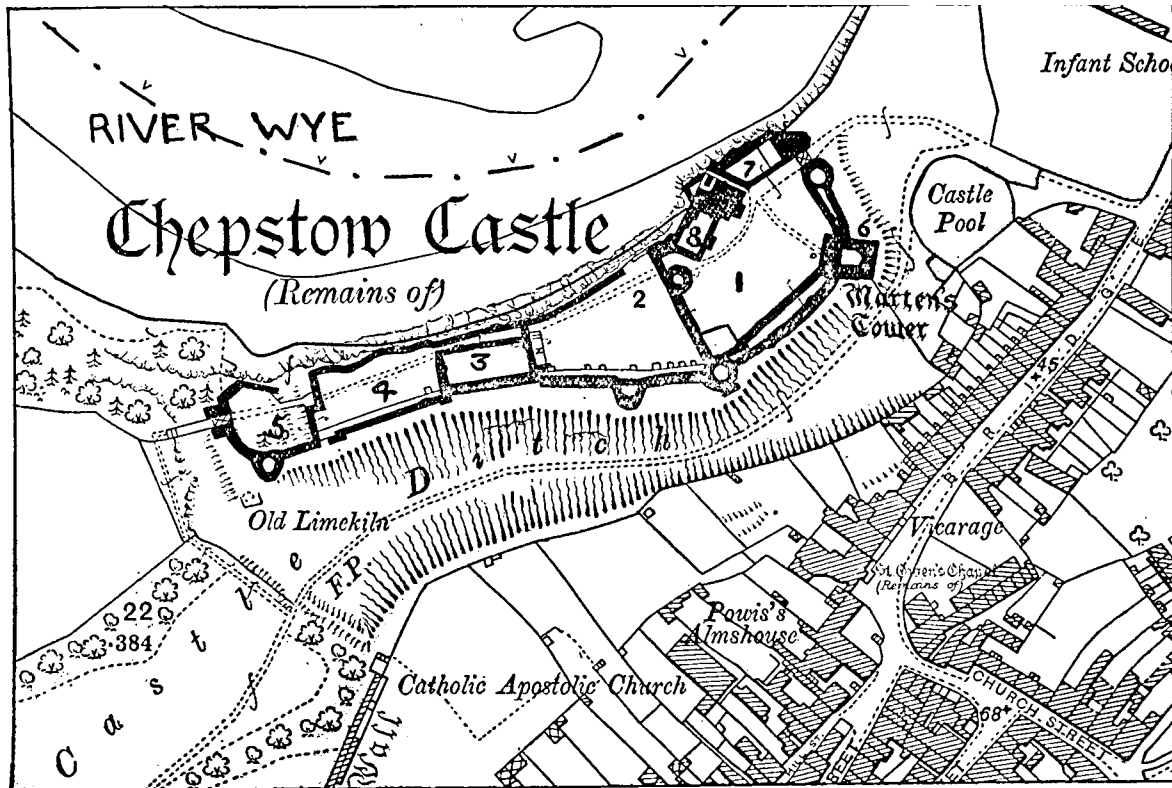
Speaking of the Hall Mr. Brakspear said it was the first stone building to be erected on the site and from its

character there is no reason to suppose it was any later than the work of William Fitz Osbern, the owner of the castle at Domesday. The hall was on the first floor over a cellar and was gained at its eastern end by an external flight of steps. In the south and west walls are series of round headed recesses and externally there are pilaster buttresses dividing it into five bays in length and two in width. In the thirteenth century great alterations were made in the hall and new windows inserted in the south wall. In the fourteenth century the walls were raised and chambers added above.

The west bailey had at the west end an entrance gateway and a guard chamber of two stories to the south. Further westward was the part added in the thirteenth century commonly called "the Barbican" which has a round tower to the south west and a gateway in the west wall protected by a draw bridge over the deep ditches beyond. In the ditch between the barbican and the western bailey is a sally post to the south.

The original east bailey has very strong walls on the south and east and is further strengthened with three round towers. It has a gateway at the north east angle protected by a portcullis and originally had a draw bridge over a ditch which formerly existed outside this bailey on the east.

The party then returned to the lower ward, where Mr. Brakspear reminded them that they had already seen the earlier part of the Castle, the first defensive earth-work, the Norman Hall and the middle bailey added in the 12th century. They now came back to where they started—to the lower bailey, built in the 14th century. It has the main entrance to the castle in the north east angle protected by drum towers. At the south east angle is a large half round tower, commonly called Marten's tower, which contains a complete set of living rooms with a chapel apparently for the use of the constable and his



1. Lower Ward. 2. Middle Ward. 3. Keep. 4. Upper Ward. 5. Barbican. 6. Marten's Tower.  
7. 13th Century Kitchen. 8. 13th Century Hall.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey by permission of H.M. Stationery Office.

household. On the north side of this tower bailey is a set of rooms consisting of a large hall, with a porch-like projection containing a chapel, a kitchen, buttery and pantry which was connected at the east end with the entrance gateway and rooms above. Under the hall is a vaulted cellar with a large door over the river whereby stores could be handed up from barges beneath. When this bailey was added the ditch outside the eastern curtain of the middle bailey was filled in and the space covered in Tudor days by a range of buildings which have been destroyed.

Complete as Chepstow castle appears to be there were two buildings in connexion with the Norman hall of which no evidence of their site now remains and those were the kitchen and chapel without which at that period no building was ever complete.

The thanks of the members for the interesting and clear way in which Mr. Brakspear had described the Castle were expressed by Mr. John E. Pritchard, F.S.A., and an opportunity was then given for a perambulation of the various buildings and battlements.

#### CHEPSTOW CHURCH.

The parish church (formerly the Benedictine church of St. Mary) has suffered considerably from the hands of the "restorer" but still contains distinctive architectural features of Norman period. The nave (c. 1100) has arcades of plain character with low triforium of two-coupled arches and clerestory. The font is fifteenth century. Mr. Brakspear gave a short description of the church and Miss Ida Roper read the following notes on the monuments:—

The monument at the west end commemorates Henry Somerset, 2nd Earl of Worcester, an ancestor of the present Duke of Beaufort. His father was created the first earl in 1514 for distinguished abilities in the French

campaign, and he himself received the honour of knighthood in France during the war; he succeeded to the earldom in 1526 and died in 1549.

His wife, the Countess Elizabeth, lies beside him. She was the daughter of Sir Anthony Browne, knight, standard bearer to King Henry VII, and the Commissioner who authorized the distribution of Tintern Abbey. She was a sister of Sir Anthony Browne, whose monumental effigy is in Battle Church, Sussex. She died sixteen years after her husband, and the monument would probably have been erected under her personal instructions.

Both figures are represented in coronation robes of scarlet cloth lined with ermine and fastened at the throat by the usual cord and tassels, and both have small coronets on the head. These are not of the present form of earl's coronets, which would show eight silver gilt balls alternating with small strawberry leaves, and did not come into use till the time of Henry VIII.

The Earl wears beneath his robe a suit of Tudor armour, and the Countess a simple bodice and gown hanging in graceful folds to the feet, and a tight fitting cap over her hair, arranged in coils on the forehead. She wears a girdle of goldsmith's work to which is attached a large pomander, and both figures have handsome chains of embossed medallions on the shoulders, worn outside the robes.

The lofty Jacobean monument in the south transept commemorates Thomas Shipman, died 1620, and his wife Margaret. After his death she married again and her second husband, Richard Clayton, took the opportunity to have an effigy of himself placed on the same tomb. The twelve children, two sons and ten daughters, represented in relief below, belong to the first marriage.

The husbands are kneeling facing one another, dressed in civilian costume of the time of James I, and long gowns with false sleeves. The lady lies in front of them, in a

large hood or calash. She was the daughter of John Maddock of Woolaston, Gloucestershire. The monuments were restored in 1898 by the Duke of Beaufort.

Two parties were formed for the luncheons arranged at the Beaufort Arms Hotel and the " Wye Not " rooms, and at 2 p.m. members left by motor for Tintern Abbey, which they had the advantage of visiting under the guidance of Mr. C. R. Peers, F.S.A., Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, who is carrying out extensive reparations undertaken by the Board of Works for the preservation of the buildings.

#### TINTERN ABBEY.

*By C. R. Peers, F.S.A.*

Tintern Abbey, founded 1131, is the second Cistercian house in Britain in order of date, and shares with Waverley, the first house to be founded (1128), the distinction of retaining traces of its original aisleless church, a type not elsewhere found in this country.

The Statutes of the Cistercian Order were devised to secure uniformity of observance in all the houses of the Order, and this extended, in the earlier days at least, to the planning and architectural treatment of their buildings. As the Rule aimed at renewing the pristine simplicity of St. Benedict's Rule, so the surroundings of those living by the Rule were to be of the simplest. Ornament and colour, costly buildings and elaborate ritual, were to be avoided, and so effective was the organization of the Order that Cistercian houses built during the first century of its existence are readily distinguished from those of other Orders. There is also a further reason for their difference in the prominence given to lay brothers. Other orders had lay brothers, but the Cistercians organized them into a definite community, inhabiting the same monasteries as the monks, but having their own part of the church for services, their own dormitories and refectory, and holding

their own chapter meetings. The western part of the church was allotted to them, and the western range of the claustral buildings, and since the monks' accommodation was restricted to the other two ranges, the planning of these ranges was modified in a manner which distinguishes a Cistercian cloister from all others. In the earliest Cistercian plans the refectory was set, as in normal Benedictine houses, parallel with the cloister walk adjoining it, thus taking up the greater part of the side of the cloister and leaving no room for the kitchen, except in the western range. But during the 12th century it became the fashion to set the refectory at right angles to the cloister, standing north and south instead of east and west, thus taking up only the space of its breadth and allowing room for the kitchen on the same side of the cloister. This development is well seen at Tintern. The plan of the 12th century cloister, which was smaller than that now existing, has been recovered by excavation, and shows that the first refectory stood east and west. Early in the 13th century a gradual rebuilding and enlargement of the cloister was undertaken, enough of the 12th century masonry being retained to show that the first chapter house was of the same size as that now existing, and that the dormitory was of the same width as at present. Remains of a fireplace in the east wall of the ground floor of the eastern range show that the warming house was at first in this position, but after the rebuilding of the refectory a new warming house, very ingeniously planned with a fireplace open on four sides, was built to the east of the refectory, with the day-stair also at first in the eastern range, between it and the dormitory.

The first church at Tintern remained in use till the last quarter of the 13th century, then it was superseded by the beautiful building which now exists. This was begun in 1269, and was far enough advanced by 1287 for service to be held in it. The old church was pulled down piecemeal

as the new work went up, and the latter, to judge from the detail, was finished in the first quarter of the 14th century. Its window-tracery illustrates the change in the method of securing the glass which took place about 1275-85, grooves in the stonework succeeding the wood frames in which glass had till then been set.

A number of carved stones from the pulpitum, the stone screen at the west end of the monastic choir, are preserved, and show that this part of the church was fitted up early in the 14th century.

To the east of the cloister stood the monastic infirmary, built in the 13th century and remodelled in the 14th. Its original plan was that of a hall with arcades opening to north and south aisles, the beds of the sick being in the aisles; but the higher standard of comfort demanded in the 14th century caused the arcades to be superseded by solid walls, and the aisles to be cut up into rooms with fireplaces in each. A covered walk led from the infirmary to the cloister, and a second walk to the church. The lay-brothers' buildings, west of the cloisters, are much ruined, but having been laid out while the first church was still standing, do not abut on the present church, but are connected to it by a high wall, on the west side of which the staircase to their dormitory was set.

To the west of the church are to be seen the ruins of some of the buildings which stood in the outer court of the abbey, being the offices and guesthouses; they have not as yet been thoroughly cleared and examined. The wall enclosing the monastic precinct is also preserved in a few places, and its line can be ascertained; the gatehouse chapel, a pretty 13th century building, now forms part of a dwelling house.

Mr. Peers was warmly thanked for his kindness in coming from London in order to meet the Society and for the exposition which he had given.

A full and detailed account of the Abbey, by Mr.

Brakspear, with illustrations and plan, can be obtained from the custodian. A paper by Mr. Thomas Blashill on the architectural history, with plans, is printed in *Transactions*, vi, 88-106.

After spending some further time in the Abbey grounds members returned to Chepstow for tea and later motored to "Castleford," the residence of Mr. W. R. Lysaght, who permitted them to see the gardens and also his Natural History Museum, which contains a good collection of birds, a privilege which was appreciated.

The arrangements made by the Hon. General Secretary were carried out with the usual punctuality and gave every satisfaction.

Mr. Francis Were, who was present at the meeting, contributes the following note on Tintern Parva, near Wexford.

On such an occasion as this, it seems right to recall to mind the Abbey of Tintern Parva, near Wexford, in Ireland. Tintern Parva was a votive foundation by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, in 1200, after a perilous voyage from Milford Haven. The Earl brought over a number of Cistercian monks from the mother house here and endowed it with large estates. It acquired afterwards several advowsons, but had to pay annually 10 marks to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In building the ground plan of the mother Abbey was followed, but on a smaller scale, so it looks as if it was designed by the same architect; but with the difference that the Tower, which has withstood all the ravages of time, was evidently built for defence against pudatory Irish. In 1447 it became so dilapidated, that the Abbot rebuilt the house at his own expense, and in consequence he was excused parliamentary attendance. In 1538 the dissolution took place, John Power being the last, and John Torrell the first Abbot. William Seyntlo seems to have acquired and added to his Castle of Rosegarland a goodly portion of the

Abbey estates. In 1552, Edw. VI granted a lease of the Abbey site to Thomas Wood for 40 years, but in 1556-7, the family of Francis Agard possessed it. Anthony Colclough, who had married Clare Agard obtained a fee farm grant of the Abbey and its possessions in 1562. He died 1584, and his monument is in the old chapel. The Colcloughs are still stated to be of Tintern Parva Abbey, the choir principally having been turned into a dwelling house by Anthony, the first possessor, and the place has been well looked after, though there has been no rebuilding.