

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

**Proceedings of the Society at Barrow Court, Chew Stoke,
Chew Magna, Stanton Drew, Whitchurch, Burnett**

1938, Vol. 60, 1-4

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THE SPRING MEETING

9 May 1938

With the exception of Stanton Drew all the places chosen for the meeting were visited for the first time by the Society and a large company was present.

BARROW COURT, FLAX BOURTON

visited by permission of Lieutenant-Colonel W. O. Gibbs, is a late Elizabethan house built on the site of a Benedictine Nunnery (1200-1536), the stones of which were used in the building. The only parts of the nunnery remaining are a portion of the chapel and the tithe barn. The Priory of Barrow Gurney was founded by a Gourney connected with the Fitzharding family. In 1283 the Berkeleys were patrons. It was established *c.* 1200, and grants of land were made by various benefactors in the 14th century. The nuns appear to have been of good families, but their behaviour seems to have required regulations drawn up by Bishop Drokensford, who in 1315 wrote to the prioress enjoining her that she should for the future cease to interest herself with worldly and secular matters and give more attention to the government of her sisters. The nunnery was dissolved in 1536 and the house granted to John Drew of Bristol, who in Leland's words converted it into 'a fair dwelling place'.

Barrow passed to several owners, and its rebuild in Tudor and Jacobean days is attributed to Dr Francis James and his son, who sold it to Sir Francis Dodington, from whom it went in 1659 to William Gore, in whose family the property remained for some 150 years. The

building fell into decay, but on its purchase in 1884 by the late Mr H. Martin Gibbs it was restored to its present excellent condition. Barrow Court is noted for its fine gardens, and yew hedges.

CHEW STOKE

The church of St. Andrew is mainly 14th century, being built by a member of the St. Loe family, but has been much restored. The 15th century tower is typical of the Somerset school. The rectory house is of the 15th century so far as the exterior is concerned, and bears armorial shields.

Two carved stones in the churchyard wall are ascribed to Anglo-Saxon date by Mrs D. P. Dobson, who has given details of them in the *Antiquaries Journal* for April 1938, with an illustration.

CHEW MAGNA (St. Andrew)

The manor of Chew Magna was a possession of the Bishops of Bath and Wells, who had a house to the east of the church. The church has some signs of very Early English work, and the arcade on the south justifies dating it to that period. The first vicar was appointed in 1215.

The aisles and chapel were added in the 14th century; the south arcade may be a little earlier. The fine tower is of four stages, with a turret in the north-east corner. The north chapel was the burial place of the St. Loe and Strachey families of Sutton Court, and the south chapel that of the Babers, who held the manor in the 16th century. The south chapel was divided into two floors, and connected with the manor house by a gallery, now destroyed. There are some interesting monuments, notably the wooden effigy which has been ascribed to Sir John Hauteville, but from the period of the armour is now accepted as of later date, and to be John Wych, lord of the manor of Norton Hauteville in 1328, who died

in 1346. This is the opinion of our late member, Dr A. C. Fryer, who gives a careful description of the monument with illustration in his *Wooden Monumental Effigies* (1924), and his reason for believing it to represent John Wych. The fine monument of Sir John St. Loe, the founder of the north aisle, is illustrated and described by Dr Fryer in the Somersetshire Society's *Proceedings*, vol. 70.

STANTON DREW

was visited by the Society in 1913 (*Transactions*, xxxvi, 27-29). A plan of the megalith was prepared and published by Mr C. W. Dymond in 1896, with a description of the circles, and a bibliography of printed references from 1664 to 1893. Mr Dymond's first account was printed in the *Proceedings* (xxiii) of the Somerset Archaeological Society. His plan was modified by Professor Lloyd Morgan, who in the same Society's *Proceedings* (xxxiii, 37) presented his views on the nature of the rocks of which the stones are composed, and the districts from which they came. His conclusion is that they were brought from the Harptree District, and from Leigh Down, near Winford.

WHITCHURCH

The church of St. Gregory (now St. Nicholas) is an enlargement of an aisleless cruciform plan, with the tower between the nave and chancel, *c.* 1200, and possibly was on the site of an earlier building. The chancel was rebuilt and lengthened in the 13th century, and the south aisle added in the 15th century. Dr Hamilton Thompson (*Proceedings* Somerset Archaeological Society, vol. 70, p. xxxii) points out the interesting feature of the carved corbel-shafts springing from the four tower-arches, which he dates *c.* 1190-1200.

BURNETT

The visit to Burnett was made a very pleasant one for our members by Mr and Mrs Wilfrid Leighton, who did everything possible for their interest. Mr Leighton described the little church of St. Michael (late Perpendicular) which is close to the Manor House, and has features of interest in the brass to John Cutt, 1575, and inscriptions to other persons connected with the village. Mr Leighton has written for the *Transactions* (LIX, 243-85) a very complete account of the history of Burnett, which he traces from Roman days. It has an interesting association with the city of Bristol through John Cutt and John Whitson, both merchants of standing there, the latter having lived in the manor house, which with the lands adjoining still forms part of the endowment of the Red Maids' School, founded by Whitson in 1634.

Before leaving Burnett Mrs Wilfrid Leighton most kindly entertained members to tea.