

A NEW HISTORY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SAMUEL RUDDER

A continuation of extracts of
Industrial Archaeological interest
from Rudder's History of the County.

OXENHALL

The church and tower are chiefly built with a red kind of sand stone, very hard and durable, if kept dry. This stone lies in one intire stratum, and may be dug on the spot, of any size or shape at pleasure. It is ponderous, and full of shining particles, which I take to be iron: About fifty years ago, upwards of twenty tons of that metal were cast weekly at a furnace here, which has been out of blast for some time.

PAINSWICK

The clothing manufacture has been long established in these parts, by which many have acquired large fortunes. It is still considered as a lucrative and genteel employment, capable of any extension; and it certainly deserves the greatest encouragement, because it furnishes labour for the poor of both sexes, and all ages, who derive from it the necessaries of life; and the air of this parish, which is remarkably salubrious, gives them a great share of health to enjoy them.

ST. PHILIP'S AND ST. JACOB'S (Bristol)

This district is bounded on the east by St. George's, lately taken out of this parish; and on the west by Laford's gate, and the city of Bristol. It extends about three quarters of a mile eastward of that gate, a great part of it consisting of several streets of good houses, like the city; which were most of them built in the last century, occasioned by the resort of considerable

numbers of French and Flemings, who came over to carry on a manufacture of woollen-stuffs. Not being allowed to settle within the city, they took up their residence as near to it as possible, at a place just without Laford's gate, where they continued many years; but at length the stuff trade declining, this part of the parish is now occupied by tradesmen of every denomination.

..... In this district there are several large works carried on by the wealthy citizens, such as ironfounderies, glass-houses for making crown glass, and glass bottles; a work for making of white lead, one for smelting lead ore, and particularly a very large one at Baptist-mills for transmuting of copper into brass. Formerly brass kettles and other utensils have been made there, chiefly, in its first institution, by Germans; but that part of the business is now performed at the battery mills in the parishes of Siston, Bitton, and elsewhere.

PUCKLECHURCH

This parish consists chiefly of pasture ground, but, below the surface, it is full of a very bituminous kind of coal, which all the country abounds with, from Toghill and Lansdown westward, as far as the city of Bristol; and most of the poor inhabitants are employ'd in the coal-mines, and in a small manufacture of felt hats carried on here, and in some of the neighbouring villages. Here are quarries also of a coarse kind of black marble, used for chimney-pieces and grave-stones; and plenty of marle, which in some places would be highly valued, but the use of it is here intirely neglected.

QUEINTON

(About six miles south from Stratford upon Avon)

There is no kind of manufacture carried on at Queinton, but the women and children are chiefly employ'd in spinning linen-yarn.

QUENINGTON

The church and the principal houses are situated on the bourn, where there is a mill for making of writing paper, which furnishes employment for a few hands; but the bulk of the people are engaged in husbandry business.

RANDWICK

The whole parish... is very populous, chiefly inhabited by poor people employ'd in the woollen manufacture.

RISSINGTON (WICK)

It lies on the slope of an easy hill, which bounds a pleasant valley to the southward of it. This part of the country being at a great distance from any coal mines, has induced several gentlemen to bore, and sink pits in their estates in search of that necessary fossil, and particularly the late Mr Dickenson

persevered for three years in experiments of that nature. The attempt was laudable, but the business terminated in disappointment to himself and the whole neighbourhood.

RODBOROUGH

The beautiful villa or seat of Sir Onesiphorus Paul, baronet, called Hill-house, erected a few years ago by his late father, is situated on an eminence in this parish, with a pleasant prospect of the river which runs from Nailsworth, of the village of Woodchester, and of the populous country towards Stroud and Painswick. This gentleman's father, the late Sir Onesiphorus Paul, was appointed high sheriff of Gloucestershire; and knighted, in the year 1760, and on the 3rd of September, 1762, was created a baronet of Great Britain. *

Near the summit of Rodborough-hill, facing the west, stands the Fort, a pleasure-house, built scarce twenty years ago, after the manner of a castle, by George Hawker, esq; the present proprietor. From this place there is a most agreeable prospect of the river Severn, and parts of the vale through which it passes. There is a large tract of rich country in the foreground of the landscape, interspersed with good houses, gardens, and highly cultivated plantations and inclosures; and these are improved with the beautiful colouring of clothes on the tenters, accompanied with a variety of other objects peculiar to the clothing country. Here the fancy glows, and agreeable ideas rise of the benefits and extensiveness of trade and manufactures, which flourish most in free countries; and of the affluence and riches which are at once incitements to, and the rewards of integrity and industry.

Mr James Winchcombe, an eminent clothier, has built a good house at a place called Bownham's, situate on the brow of the hill northward, where he enjoys a fine healthy air, and a pleasant prospect of a well inhabited valley, extending several miles along the Strous river from the Golden Valley in Chalford, and gradually opening as it approaches the vale below Stroud.

RUERDEAN

It is called Ruerdean, (supposed to be a corruption of Riverdean) because it is situated upon the river Wye, and to distinguish it from the neighbouring places of Mitchel Dean and Little Dean. All these places abound with pit-coal and iron ore, of which more is delivered under the general account of the Forest. **

* The Paul family were traditionally connected with the clothing trade. Sir Onesiphorus Paul was a leading clothier of the district, with a flourishing business at Southfield Mill, Woodchester. Editor.

** See G.S.I.A Journal 1974

SANDHURST

..... there is a spring of medicinal or purging water, like the Cheitenham spaw, but it is sometimes dry in the summer. And there is also a salt-spring, upon the discovery of which, about twenty years since, a pit was opened to a considerable depth, with an intention of erecting a salt-work; but not proving so strong as was expected, that project was then dropt, and the mouth of the pit stopt up with bricks to prevent accidents.

SISTON

This parish constitutes part of the forest of Kingswood, where coal is found in the greatest plenty; and I have it on the authority of Dr. Parson's Manuscript Collections, which he finished about the end of the last century, that at a place called Berry, in this parish, there was then lately discovered a vein of tin-ore, intermixed with grains of silver. I made some enquiry concerning this matter, without being able to get any further information from the present inhabitants, who knew nothing of it; and therefore I conclude, that the vein was very inconsiderable, and either exhausted in working, or would not bear the expence of it, and so became neglected and forgotten.

There is a large work, in the hamlet of Warmly, for converting copper into brass. They fetch the Lapis Calaminaris used in that process from Mendip-hill, in Somersetshire. There are also five or six furnaces for making of Speltre. This work now belongs to a company in Bristol; but it was carried on, 'till lately, in a more extensive manner, by gentlemen, who, about the year 1770, sold it to the present proprietors. Under the first masters, the machinery was put in motion by water, and there was a fire engine to return into a pond that water which had passed thro' the works. But the engine is now taken down, and part of the manufacture carried on at the adjacent works in the parish of Bitton.

SODBURY (CHIPPING)

There is a great deal of travelling through the town to Bristol, and wagons are continually passing through it to the coal pits, which lie two or three miles further westward, whence many parts in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and even some places in Berkshire, are supply'd with coal. And the whole tract of country from Sodbury and Lansdown hills westward, as far as the city of Bristol, seems to be full of that necessary fossil.

Here also, is an excellent sort of lime stone, called the White-lays, of a blue cast, very compact and ponderous, and burns into a strong lime, as white as snow. Considerable quantities of this lime are sent into various parts of the country, not only on account of its goodness, but it is rendered cheap, also, from the low price of coal.

Here is no prevailing manufacture at present. One master clothier employs a few hands, but the women and children have sufficient spinning-work brought them from other parts.