

A NEW HISTORY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

by Samuel Rudder.

In our last Journal we included extracts from the introductory section of Rudder but this year we pick up where we left off in 1973 and continue with our extracts alphabetically.

DEAN or MITCHEL DEAN

The town had formerly some share in the cloathing-trade, which gave way to that of pin making, and this hath long since left it, (for want of proper spirit in the manufacturers) to be fostered under abler managers at Gloucester; so that at present, having no support from manufacturers, and but little from travelling, tho' the turnpike-road from Gloucester to Monmouth leads through it, the town is evidently in decline.

In this place, and in many others about the forest, large quantities of rich cinders have been found, from which our ancestors, for want of more powerful engines, could not extract the iron.

DEAN (LITTLE)

It abounds with excellent coal and iron ore, and great quantities of very rich iron cinders have been dug here. The labouring inhabitants are employ'd in mining, and in a small nail manufacture.

DEINTON or DOINTON

This little parish is within the jurisdiction of the court of the honour of Gloucester. It is pleasantly situated under Lansdown. It produces no rare plants, but there are some veins of lead ore, which are not rich enough to defray the expence of working. The stone of the rocks above mentioned makes an excellent, white, strong lime.

The women and children are employed in spinning woollen yarn.

DIMMOCK

As it lies in the neighbourhood of Herefordshire, so the people here, like the inhabitants of that fine county, cultivate orcharding, and make a rich kind of cyder and perry. And it is very remarkable, that it was from the Ryelands in this parish, that king Edward took the sheep which he presented to the Spanish monarch, from the breed of which we are now supplied with wool for our finest manufactures.

DURSLEY

Leland calls the town a praty clothinge towne, so that if we reckon from his time, it has enjoyed the clothing trade between two and three hundred years, which hath enriched some individuals, and is the present support of the place. The business of making cards for the clothiers has been long settled here, and employs a pretty many hands.

On the south-east side of the church-yard are many springs, which rise perpendicularly out of the ground like boiling water, in so copious a manner, that they drive a fulling-mill at about a hundred yards distance below.

EASINGTON or EASTINGTON

At Framiload, which is a hamlet lying part in this parish and part in Morton Valence, there is a passage over the Severn, leading from this country to the upper part of the forest of Dean, and so on to Herefordshire. The passage-house lies on the south-east side of the river, which at this place is near a mile over at high water. Here the navigable canal from Stroud is intended to fall into the Severn, if the bill for making it, now depending in parliament, should pass into a law.

The clothing business extends itself in the line from Stroud to this parish, which enjoys some share of it, chiefly in the fine way; but the parish produces nothing curious or uncommon in the fossil and vegetable kingdoms.

FLAXLEY

In Domesday-book, this manor is included in the general account of Dene. It was given to the abbey at the foundation of it, by Roger, earl of Hereford. The abbat had a grant of an iron forge, and of two oaks every week out of the forest of Dean, for the maintenance of the forge, of king Henry the Second. But the taking of the two oaks was very destructive to the forest, wherefore the monks had a wood granted to them instead thereof, 42 H.3.

FRAMPTON

At Froombridge in this parish, hath been lately erected one of the largest and compleatest works in the kingdom, for making of iron and steel wire, used in this and some of the neighbouring counties, more especially in the manufacturer of cards for the clothing business. From this work also that valuable branch of our commerce, the Newfoundland fishery, is partly supply'd with steel wire for fish-hooks, to a very considerable amount annually. And at this place also there is a brass-work lately erected.

FRAMPTON COTTEREL

The parish consists chiefly of meadow and pasture ground, with some arable land. The stone is of a redish brown grit, and seems to have a small proportion of iron in it.

Here is a considerable manufacturer of felt hats, which employs a pretty many hands.

St. GEORGE'S

The greater part of the parish lies within the boundaries of the forest, or chase, of Kingswood, and is one of those places (all situated in the neighbourhood of each other) whence the city of Bristol is supply'd with its coal, which is so excellent, for its durable quality, that the very cinders will burn over and over again, 'till they are wholly reduced to vapour and ashes.

Some of the coal-pits are of a prodigious depth. That at Two-mile-hill, belonging to his grace the Duke of Beaufort, is 107 fathoms deep. At this and many others they use a fire-engine, to draw out the water which flows in upon the miners, and would prevent their working.

Here are two copper-works, and a glass-house for the manufacture of bottles. But the principal production of art is a curious hydraulic machine, erected upon the river Avon, and invented and constructed by the late ingenious mechanic and mathematician, Mr. John Padmore, for throwing water into a reservoir, for the use of the city of Bristol. The reservoir is at a little distance, on the top of a hill, whence, by subterraneous pipes, the water is conveyed to the city. There were formerly two machines for the same purpose, at Hanham-mills, in the parish of Bitton, but they were taken down in the year 1720.

HAMPTON (MINCHINHAMPTON)

The town consists of four streets, in the form of a cross, with three market-houses, one of which was built in the year 1700, for storing of wool and yarn, in expectation of establishing a great mart for those commodities, as the town is well situated for that purpose in a great clothing country; but it seems not to have fully answered the design.

St. Mary's-Mill in this parish, was formerly a chapel, famous for a room in it called Friar Bacon's Study, because Roger Bacon is said to have been educated there.

HAWLING

This village, which lies in an open champain country, is said to be one of the highest places on the Coteswolds, and is remarkable for its healthy air, sound sheep, and sweet mutton. Husbandry is the chief employment of the male inhabitants, but the women and children spin wollen yarn for the clothiers.

HENBURY

In this parish are two ferries over the Severn. The uppermost, or Old Passage, is in the tithing of Aust, thirteen miles on a turnpike-road from Bristol ; There the river is above two miles over and the opposite house is at Beachley, in the parish of Tidenham in this county. The other ferry called the New-Passage, is at Redwick, about three miles further down the river, and eleven miles distant from Bristol. There the water is about three miles over; and the opposite passage-house is at a place called the Black Rock, near St. Pierre's in Monmouthshire.

HORSLEY

There are in this parish, more especially where some of the houses are built, several dingles and narrow bottoms, with hanging woods, and verdant steeps, which give it a romantic appearance, not easily to be described. By the highway, towards the top of that part where the houses are, next to Avening, I observed two or three small springs, ouzing out of the side of the bank, pretty strongly tinged with iron mine.

The cloathing business hath encouraged great numbers of families to settle here, but that manufacture declining of late, the poor are very burthensome, for want of employment; but much of their wretched condition is owing to idleness and bad habits.

HUNTLEY

This parish consists of good arable and pasture land. Part of Yartleton-hill lies within it, and is esteemed the highest ground in the Forest division. It affords plenty of iron ore, intermixt with shining particles of a white and yellow colour, vulgarly supposed to be silver and gold, but I never heard that either of those precious metals have been extracted from the ore.

KEMPLEY

Here the arable lands are planted with rows of fruit-trees, with large intervals between; for the soil of these parts produces a rich and pleasant cider, which is a principal object with the farmer.

The air is said to be pure and healthy; and it is remarked, in Dr. Parsons's account of this village, that no native had ever been known to have either gout or stone; and that no person had died in Mr. Pindar's house within the memory of man, notwithstanding there were near fifteen or twenty in family great part of the time, to the year 1703. Perhaps cider, which is here the common liquor, may be a preservative from the above-mentioned disorders.

LEACHLADE

The river Thames is navigable at this place for barges of forty or fifty tons burthen, but the want of water one part of the year, and long continued floods at other times, render the navigation extremely uncertain, and notwithstanding it leads to the metropolis, 'tis not so beneficial to the town as might be supposed, because it cannot be depended on for the general conveyance.

The junction of this river with the Severn has been long talked of, but the execution of that project, on a good plan, is rather to be wished than expected. A late application to parliament on behalf of the Stroud-water canal, brought this scheme anew into contemplation, and the country was slightly surveyed in the year 1775, in order to extend the canal from Stroud to Cricklade, where the Thames is first navigable; but what purpose can such a junction answer, unless the navigation of that river were improved?

The great road from London to Cirencester, and other places westward in that line, leads through the town of Leachlade, and is very much travelled. That part of it which was formerly obstructed by floods, about a mile eastward of the town, is now so much raised and improved, that travellers may pass commodiously at any time.

LIDNEY

To what has been said of the soil of the parish, and produce of the ground on the surface, should be added, that below it are inexhaustible treasures of iron ore and cinders, pit-coal, red and yellow ochre, lime-stone, and other fossils; and Mr. Bathurst has a large furnace for smelting the iron ore, and several forges for manufacturing of iron.

Not far above Mr. Bathurst's house, there is a cavern in the wood, called the Scowls, the entrance to which is between very long unwrought stones, serving as pillars to support a rocky roof, on which several large trees are now growing. The space within is about sixteen or eighteen feet broad, and nine or ten deep, and beautifully lined with moss which grows spontaneously to the thickness of two or three inches. Tradition is intirely silent as to this place, and no traveller has taken notice of it. Perhaps it is nothing more than an old mine.

Sir William Wintour, vice admiral of England; who, with great valour and success, opposed the famous Spanish Armada, and was well rewarded by the queen. He built a stately house at Lidney called the White Cross, which was begun in 1588.

Sir Edward Wintour, son of Sir William, succeeded him, who married Anne, daughter of Edward earl of Worcester. Sir John Wintour, son and heir of Sir Edward, was eminent for his loyalty to king Charles the First, throughout the whole civil war. He fortified his house at Lidney, and made it almost inaccessible, to oppose the garrison at Gloucester. At length he was put to flight, and, if you will believe a wonderful story, made a wonderful escape, by leaping down from the rocks at Tiddenham (mentioned in Dr. Parson's MS. to be near 200 yards high) into the river, which has given the name of Wintour's Leap to a place there. But tho' it may be true that he escaped by taking the water, it is nevertheless impossible to be as related. The White Cross house was afterwards demolished, and turned into buildings for an iron furnace.

LONGBOROUGH

The greater part of the parish is arable land, which furnishes husbandry business for the men, whilst the women and girls employ themselves in winding of silk for the throwsters at Blockley.

LONGNEY

I have had frequent occasions of mentioning the cheese made in these parts with the commendation it deserves; and with pleasure I take this opportunity of recommending a particular fort of cyder, of good strength, colour, and excellent flavour, made in this parish and its neighbourhood, from an apple which, being originally cultivated here, is called the Longney Russet.

MANGOTSFIELD

This village is one of those places in the neighbourhood of the city of Bristol which abound with a very lasting kind of coal, already mentioned in the accounts of Bitton and St. Georg's.

MARSHFIELD

The town of Marshfield stands near the middle of the parish, and consists chiefly of one street, near a mile long, through which a turnpike-road leads from London to Bristol. The business of making malt to supply the cities of Bath and Bristol was formerly very great here, for which the town is conveniently situated in a corn country; and although it has been for some time declining, yet it is still pretty considerable.

MINETY

Minety is situated in a vale, and consists chiefly of rich pasture land, some wood land, and very little arable. Here they make very good cheese, as they do also in most parts of North Wiltshire, with which this parish is intermixt. But the most uncommon and remarkable of its natural productions is a kind of fibrous talky substance, white, opake, and laminated, called by some the Silver Mica, by others the Fibrous Plaister-stone. It is found in many parts of the parish, at the depth of nine or ten feet from the surface.