

# A NEW HISTORY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**SAMUEL RUDDER**

Continuing our series of extracts of  
Industrial Archaeological interest.

## 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.

## MISERDEN

Much of the beech-wood in this parish and neighbourhood, of which there is great abundance, is converted into gun-stocks for Birmingham market, and of some they make charcoal. Here is a very good and durable sort of tiles for covering houses, which are sold at 5s a thousand; but the difficulty of the roads is a great obstacle to the sale of them.

The clothing business is carried on very extensively in the adjoining places to the southward and westward, but there are only two clothiers in this parish, by whom the women and children are chiefly employ'd in spinning woollen yarn.

## MORTON - HENMARSH (Morton-in-Marsh)

.... Morton , in its present state, is no more than a pretty little village, where the women and children are employ'd in spinning of linen yarn for coarse sewing threads, cheese cloth, and linseys.

NEWENT

It appears that iron has been made in or near the town, before large bellows were driven by water, so as more perfectly to extract the metal from the ore, for here vast quantities of rich iron cinders have been dug, and smelted over again at a furnace in this parish, not many years ago, tho' the furnace has been for some time out of blast. In digging for those cinders, the workmen found several coins of Julius Caesar, Nerva, Vespasian, & c. and some pieces of fine Roman pottery, now all dispersed or destroy'd.

It has no manufacture, except a little frame-knitting, nor trade, but with the neighbouring villages for common necessaries. The market, which is held on Fridays, is of necessity small; for the bad condition of the roads makes it almost impossible to reach it, except on the side next Gloucester, where there is a turnpike-road very ill repaired. Here was formerly a little clothing, and the place where a cloth-mill stood is called the Tuck-mill pool, but the trade is entirely lost.

The Tithing of Cugley.

In the common, at the foot of Yartleton-hill, part of which lies in this tithing, there was formerly a glass-house, and the place where it stood it is still called the Glass-house.

NEWLAND

It is the largest parish in the county, with great variety of soil and of produce. It abounds with iron ore and ochre, and with a kind of coal that burns freely, and makes a stronger fire than the Kingswood coal, but is not so lasting.

There is an iron-furnace in this parish, and two copper-works at a place called Red-Brook, but they have the copper ore from Cornwall, and other parts.

NEWNHAM

Tho' the town is extremely well situated upon a fine river, where ships of burthen may safely come to anchor, yet its trade has been very inconsiderable, and almost wholly confined to the exportation of oak bark to Ireland, 'till a few years ago, when Mr. Robert Pyrke, merchant there, built a commodious quay on the side of the river, with cranes and store-houses, for the convenience of shipping and landing all sorts of goods; and from that time the manufacturers at Birmingham and other places have brought great quantities in barges down the river to this town, where they are shipped in vessels from one to two hundred tons burthen, and carried to London.

And of late many ships of large burthen have been built here. This seems to be an auspicious beginning, which time and industry may improve to the great advantage of the town, especially as it lies in a country full of an excellent kind of coal, which is brought hither on horses backs, from the pits two or three miles off in the Forest of Dean, to be sent to other places by water, and may prove an inexhaustible fund of wealth. Besides, the forest and all the country hereabout is famous for fine styre, and other prime sorts of cyder, which liquor finds a ready market here, and is become a very considerable article of commerce to London and Ireland.

Sir Edward Mansell\*, in the reign of King Charles the First, erected here the first glass-house in England, which was work'd with stone-coal, the foundation of which still remains. The glass manufacture has been discontinued a long time, but there is lately a very considerable verdigris work set up in its room, and carried on with a laudable spirit, and the trade of ship-building is much encouraged; from all which circumstances, Newnham bids fair to be a flourishing little town, and is already much improved in its buildings.

#### NIBLEY

...part of the parish lies in the vale, and consists of rich pasture ground, with very little arable. The lands are in dairy farms, and produce excellent cheese. The dairy business is unfavourable to population, yet the inhabitants are pretty numerous, and are chiefly employ'd in rug-making, and in the clothing business.

John Smyth of Nibley\*\*, ancestor to the present proprietor, was very eminent for his great assiduity in collecting every kind of information respecting this county and its inhabitants.

#### NORTHLEACH

There is a small market town within this parish, of the same name. It lies about half a mile on the east side of the Roman Foss-way, in a little valley, and was formerly a thriving place, where several clothiers and merchants of the staple resided,

\* It was Sir Robert Mansell who was connected with the Glass industry, not Sir Edward, who was his father. No evidence has so far been found that the glass house at Newnham was actually the first in England to use pit coal.

\*\* John Smyth of Nibley compiled the register now known as "Men in Armour" in 1608, which not only lists the able bodied men in the county but also lists their trades or professions.

about two centuries ago ..... Here was a public market for wool and cloth, and some of the buildings for stowing of those commodities are now standing, with a spacious area in the middle, and galleries round for a communication. One part of those buildings is now the Lamb Inn. The other parts, no longer employ'd according to the original intention, serve for barns and receptacles of lumber.

From the remains of those buildings, and from several memorials in the church for clothiers, and for respectable persons, denominated wool-men and merchants of the staple, who died about 300 years ago, it appears that this was formerly one of the principal clothing towns in the country. It was conveniently situated for buying the raw materials, in a country abounding with sheep; but on the other hand, it is destitute of water sufficient for driving the machinery used in that trade, and this natural disadvantage is alone sufficient to account for the loss of the manufacture. The town soon felt that loss, and seems to have been declining ever since. Many houses are fallen down, many uninhabited, and the greater part of the rest are going fast to decay. And there are not quite seven hundred inhabitants in the whole parish.

OLEPEN, vulgarly OLDPEN

There is no manufacture carried on here, but the inhabitants are employ'd by the clothiers at Uley, in the different branches of their manufacture.

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