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**Proceedings at the Spring Meeting at Micheldean, Goodrich,  
English Bicknor and Newland, 4 May 1931**

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PROCEEDINGS \*

AT THE SPRING MEETING AT MICHELDEAN, GOODRICH,  
ENGLISH BICKNOR AND NEWLAND

*Monday, 4 May 1931*

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The Spring Meeting of the Society made Goodrich Castle its principal object, with the addition of other places in and near the Forest of Dean. Some 140 members assembled at

MICHELDEAN.

The church was last visited by the Society as long ago as 1881, when it was described by the late Prof. J. H. Middleton.<sup>1</sup> On the present occasion this duty was undertaken by Mr Thomas Overbury, F.R.I.B.A., whose remarks are embodied in the more detailed paper by him which will be printed in the next volume.

Mr Rushforth called attention to the remarkable painted tympanum which, there being no chancel arch, forms a horizontal division within the nearly semicircular ceiling above the rood loft. This adjunct of the Rood,

\* The reports of the itineraries of the Spring and Summer meetings were prepared by Mr G. McN. RUSHFORTH, F.S.A., and Mr W. H. KNOWLES, F.S.A.

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions*, 1882, VI, 261-4, 269-79 with a plan of the church and diagram of the painting over the chancel arch.

which was sometimes set directly against it (as at Dauntsey and Wenhaston),<sup>2</sup> has rarely survived in so perfect a form as here. Unfortunately the paintings are so darkened that the subjects are now almost unintelligible, and we must trust to Prof. Middleton's description. There are two tiers of panels, in the central upper pair of which is represented the Doom, which was the usual subject of these tympana. The four lower ones have two scenes each, one above the other, with the story of the Passion, except the Crucifixion, which was of course represented by the Rood itself. The first has the Betrayal, with Christ before Pilate above; the second, the Scourging and Crown of Thorns; the third, the Deposition and Entombment (?); and the fourth the Resurrection (probably, though Middleton gives the Harrowing of Hell) with the Ascension above. Turning to the remains of painted glass, the big 15th century windows of the north aisle must, to judge by the scanty fragments, have presented a gorgeous spectacle. There were angels with peacock feather wings, part of a figure of Moses (from a set of prophets) pointing to the Tables of the Law, and borders with the letters T and M, perhaps the initials of donors. The figures from the brass of Thomas Baynham (1500), now displayed on a painted wooden tablet against the inside wall of the tower, are interesting because his two wives, who belonged to different generations, are represented in the fashions of their own times; the first, Margaret (Hody) who died in 1477, having the butterfly head-dress of her period; while Alice (Walwyn), the second, who lived till 1518, wears the pedimental head-dress of the early Tudor time.<sup>3</sup>

From Micheldean the route led through typical Forest scenery to the valley of the Wye, which was crossed at

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions*, 1928, vol. 50, p. 55. Bligh Bond and Camm, *Rood Screens and Roodlofts*, 1, 93 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Visitation of Glos.*, Harl. Soc., XXI, 14. *Transactions*, vi, 131 (plate), and 181. Mill Stephenson, *Brasses*, 152.

Kerne Bridge ; and passing the remains of Flanesford Priory, the party reached

### GOODRICH CASTLE

The members assembled at the southeast corner by the side of the deep ditch cut out of the solid rock, where an excellent view of the building could be obtained. The President, Mr W. H. Knowles, here gave a brief outline of the development of English castellated architecture, and afterwards conducted the party over the castle.

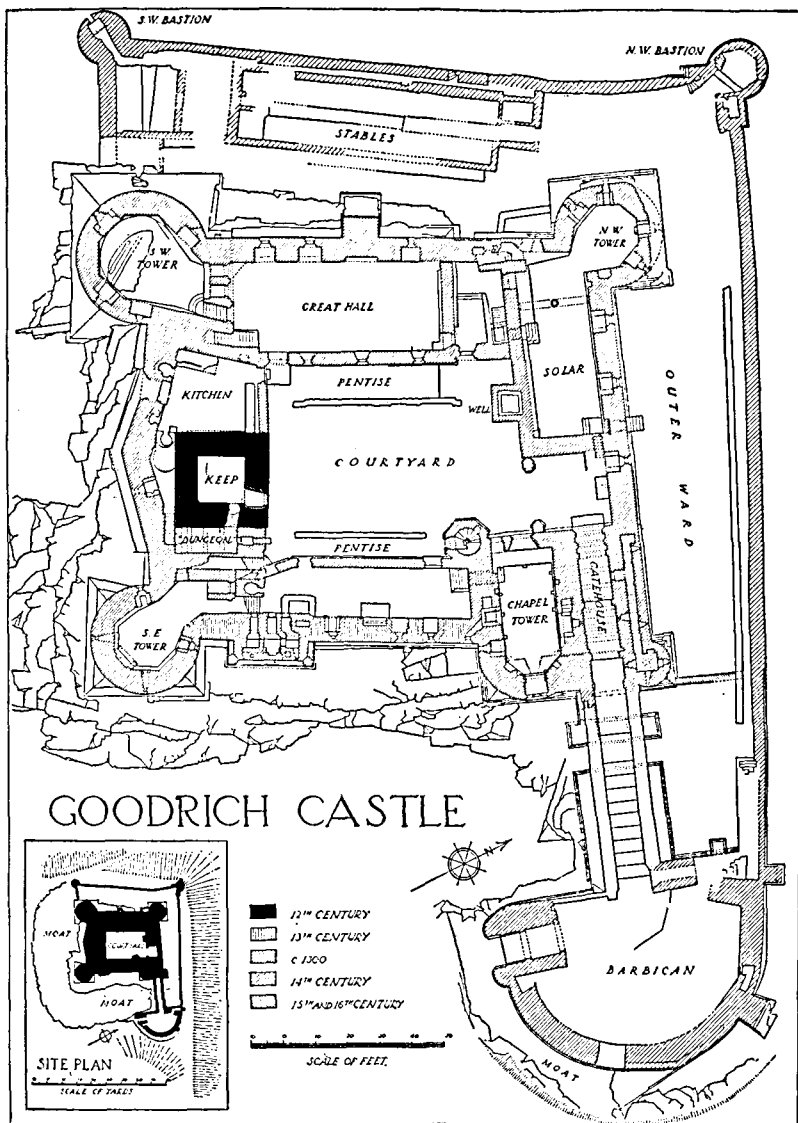
The castle stands on an eminence above the river Wye, whose sinuous course is variously bordered by broad rich meadows and lofty heights of massive rock, from which charming views of the country and river may be obtained. It is situated between Ross and Monmouth, forming a second line of defence against Wales. Immediately in advance of it are 'the three castles'—Grosmont, Skenfrith and Whitecastle.

Goodrich was not a castle of the first importance in point of size and the extent of its fortifications, but it is the most extensive and outstanding example of its class in Herefordshire. It is an excellent specimen of the military architecture of the period, which may today be viewed to greater advantage than has been possible since it was 'slighted' in the Civil Wars. Now the castle is in charge of H.M. Office of Works, who have been engaged for a number of years on its restoration, the removal of noxious growths and the accumulated rubbish of centuries. They have treated the subject in a skilful and sympathetic way, and the long hidden features, including the great rock-cut moat, have been revealed and restored in a manner which should constitute the work a model of the methods to be employed in conducting such restorations.

The castle occupies the northwest corner of a long sloping site which falls to the village from which it is approached. On the north and west the outer ward of

the castle skirts the verge of rocks which descend precipitously to the river, and on the southeast is protected by a wide and deep moat hewn out of the rock, the stones from which furnished the material of which the castle is built. The buildings, with massive round towers at the external angles, are arranged about an open rectangular courtyard. The entrance gateway, incorporated in the eastern range, is at the northeast angle, approached by a long causeway and bridge, and covering the latter is a large open barbican of semicircular plan having a small gatehouse at its southwest angle, with a passage through it at right angles to the direction of the causeway. There is an outer ward at a lower level on the north and west sides which was occupied by stable buildings.

The castle gatehouse takes the form of a long narrow vaulted passage strengthened by drawbridge, portcullis and gates. It is flanked by half-round towers. The chapel occupies that on the south side, and in that on the north is a long vaulted passage, at the end of which is a small vaulted chamber. On entering the courtyard a massive keep built in the second half of the twelfth century will be observed at the south end. It is of three stages and was entered at the first floor level. The great hall of the castle (*c.* 1300) occupies the west side of the courtyard; it was lighted by windows overlooking the river and warmed by a fireplace with a corbelled hood. Approached from the north end of the hall are the solar and withdrawing rooms including the northwest tower. At the south end are triple doors leading into the southwest tower, and adjoining it on the east side the kitchen. Beyond the keep already mentioned is a dungeon and apartments including the southeast tower. On the east side of the courtyard are chambers with windows and fireplace, and projecting from it a garde-robe tower. The chapel occupies the intervening space between the last and the gatehouse. It is oblong on plan with a rounded east end, *sedilia*, *aumbries* and *piscinae*.



From 'The Inventory of Historical Monuments in Herefordshire', vol. I,  
prepared by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments

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In the male line the descent of the owners of Goodrich has been strangely interrupted. It seems to have been held in early Norman times by the de Clares, of whom Gilbert was created Earl of Pembroke in 1138. In 1176, on the death of Richard de Clare ('Strongbow'), who is credited with the conquest of Wales, the earldom became extinct; but was revived in the person of Sir William Marshal who had married, in 1189, Isabel, daughter and heiress of Richard. To them were born six sons and five daughters. Yet singularly the whole of the sons (five of whom succeeded to the earldom between 1219 and 1245) died either childless or unmarried, and again the earldom became extinct and was again revived (? 1265) in William de Valence, who married Joan de Monchensy, the daughter of one of the Marshal co-heiresses. Their third son Aylmer de Valence inherited the title and estates, and although married three times died without lineal offspring. In 1324 the property was divided among the sisters, one of whom, Elizabeth, married Sir Richard Talbot, knt., a man of considerable power and importance who was steward of the household of Edward III, served for a considerable time in France, and is said to have amassed great wealth during the wars. He was the founder of Flanesford Priory, which stands below the castle. Doubtless to the de Valences and to Richard Talbot we owe the major portion of the castle buildings. During the Civil War Goodrich was first held for the parliament by Captain Kyrle, and afterwards for the king by Sir Henry Lingen, who in 1646 capitulated together with 50 gentlemen and 120 officers and soldiers. The castle was afterwards 'slighted', and has since remained in ruins.

The best description of the castle is in the *Inventory of Historical Monuments in Herefordshire*, I, 74-8 with plan and illustrations. (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, 1931).

Some time was spent in examining the different parts

of the castle, and admiring the striking view over the sinuous course of the Wye, bordered by broad rich meadows or lofty heights of massive rock. After lunch at the 'Hostelrie' Hotel, Goodrich, the party recrossed the Wye, and proceeded to

#### ENGLISH BICKNOR

which had not previously been visited by the Society. The church stands within an early earthwork, which comprises a mound surrounded by a rampart and ditch. Standing in the southwest corner of the churchyard the President remarked that in the district are numerous prehistoric and medieval defensive earthworks of different periods.

The nearest camps to Bicknor are Symonds Yat, fortified at its eastern end by five earthen banks, and Coppel Hill, afterwards adapted by the Romans. Bicknor is later in date than these examples. It is unlike prehistoric camps, which are invariably isolated and to be found on promontory or hill-top positions intended for tribal defence; unlike also to the camps of Roman origin easily recognized by their rectangular form and details; and again unlike the Saxon burh, an enclosure erected by a community for protection against the Danes.

In contrast to these fortifications the early Norman stronghold, common in France and Normandy in the 11th century, was the private castle of an individual, comprising an earthen moated mound crowned by a wooden tower, within a bailey having an earthen rampart and timber stockade as depicted in the Bayeux tapestry, somewhat similar in plan to the later stone keep and stone enclosed wards, and generally placed near to roads or by the side of rivers when easily forded.

From analogy it is evident that English Bicknor may be confidently described as of the 11th century motte and bailey type of castle introduced into England by Edward the Confessor and his Norman friends, of which



Ewyas Harold and Kilpeck castles in Herefordshire are excellent examples.

The site is approximately circular, and over 150 yards in diameter, with a motte within a bailey, and to the north a further enclosure or outer bailey. The motte, circular on plan, is situated on the southwest where the ground falls westwards from the site. It is surrounded by a ditch which separates it from the kidney-shaped inner bailey. It abuts on the bailey rampart and ditch, here common to both motte and bailey. The ditch and rampart of the bailey and outer enclosure are easily recognized, although the ditch is now largely filled in ; and the motte has been overbuilt by school buildings. The approaches are not discernible, but in the middle of last century there was a bridge across the ditch giving access to the church, which may have indicated the position. In 1880 a stone chamber 12 ft. square was disclosed on the site of the motte, but was unfortunately destroyed ; possibly the remnant of a later stone keep.

Sir John Maclean has recorded in our *Transactions*, vol. 4, much of historical interest in regard to the district.

#### ENGLISH BICKNOR CHURCH

Mr Knowles, who described the building, said that it is of peculiar interest in consequence of the unusual features embodied in the structure.

The church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and consists of a long chancel with side chapels, a clear-storied nave with north and south aisles, a porch and west tower. The nave, five bays in length, is of 12th century date. On the north side are four open bays, the fifth, the eastern bay, being occupied by some walling wherein is an ornate arch of moderate dimensions, which is the earliest feature in the building. In the 13th century the chancel was extended, and on either side a chapel added opening into it. Then also the tower as to the three lower

stages was erected. In the 14-15th centuries the nave received a clearstory, and the tower a belfry stage.

The arch occupying the position of the eastern bay of the north arcade is very rich in detail, the jambs having semicircular responds in the centre of the thickness of the wall, over a moulded base with griffes at the angles, and scalloped capitals having a chamfered and quirked abacus carved on the square face over the chamfer. The arch is of two orders, the outer with an angle roll and star ornament, the inner with chevron and muzzled beast-heads. The inner moulding has a quirked chamfer on the inner edge and a bead on the square face. The position of the arch is exceptional, unless it was the opening to a chapel which preceded the contiguous arcade but a few years in point of date. It cannot be a reused chancel arch, as the present one is of the 13th century.

The four open bays of the north arcade, possibly a little later in date, have circular piers with moulded bases. The two easternmost piers have scalloped capitals, the third a convex bell, and all have square abacus with a quirked chamfer. The arch is of a single square order. The south arcade, again only a few years later than the north one, is of five open bays, with circular piers, the capitals of one being scalloped, of another of incurved scallops and the two others slightly carved with rude volutes at the angles. The arches are of a single square order.

In the 13th century the chancel was lengthened. Its arch, a pointed one, is of two chamfered orders springing from brackets. Then also the three lower stages of the tower were erected: the arch to the nave is a pointed one of two chamfered orders, over a half round respond on the south side, but triple shafted on the north, with ill-fitting capitals.

In the 15th century, a clearstory was added to the nave, whose two-light windows are without cusping. And a fourth stage was added to the tower. Its walls are

battered, and its belfry windows are of two traceried lights.

There are remains of a wooden screen enclosing the south chapel, and three effigies in fair condition, two of female figures, *c.* 1300, and one of a priest *c.* 1340, all described at length in Miss Roper's *Effigies of Gloucestershire*, 434 ff.

The church has been sadly treated during the ages ; in neither nave nor chancel is there an ancient door or window.

From English Bicknor the route lay over high ground of the Forest, descending sharply to

#### NEWLAND

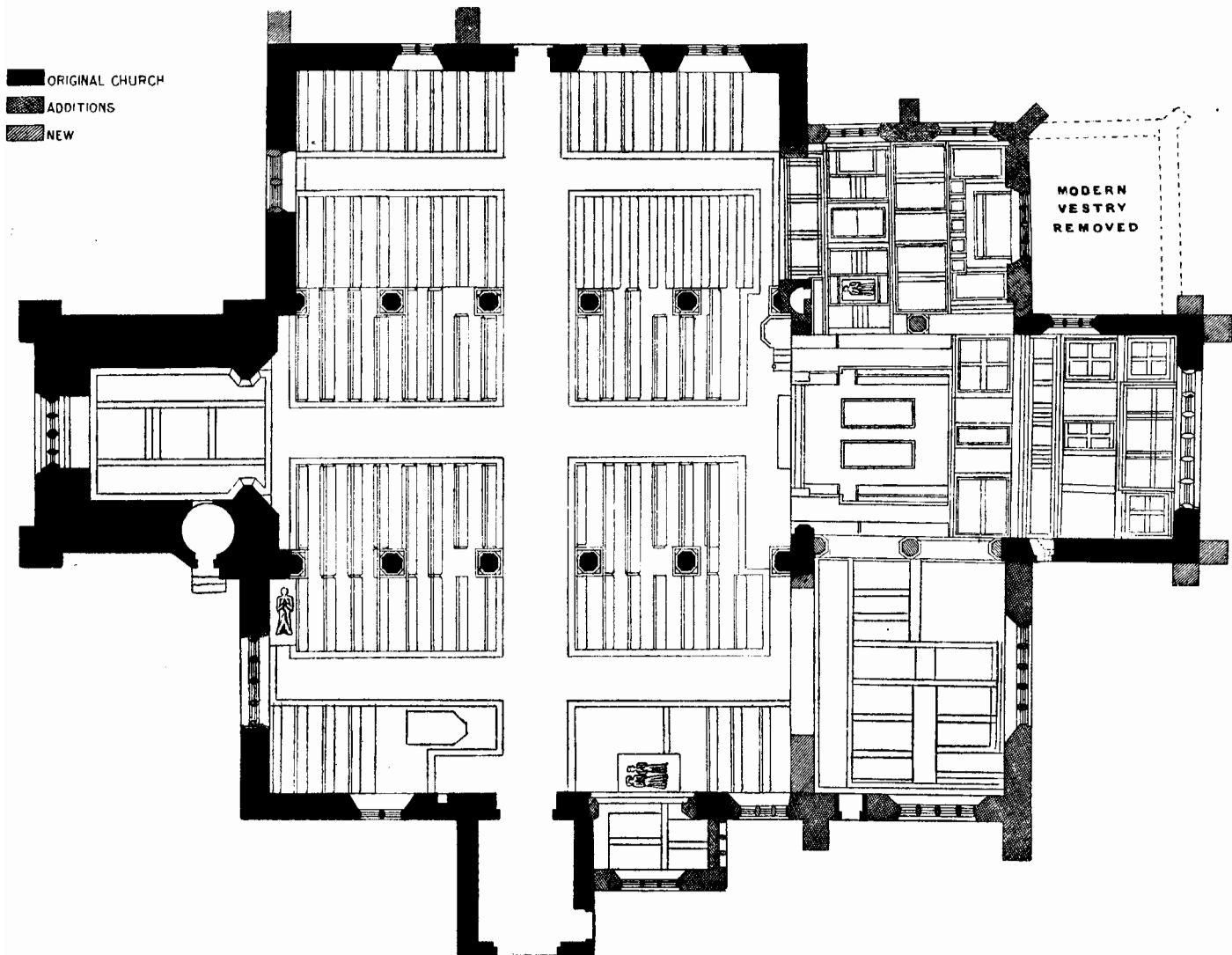
where the church, not visited since 1896, stands in the centre of an unusually spacious site, from which every part of its stately proportions and the uniform excellence of its details may be viewed. Before entering it, Miss Roper in the churchyard described the tomb and effigy of Jenkin Wyrrol (1457), forester-of-fee, represented with the symbols of his office, a hunting-sword and horn. A fragment of the iron horse remains. Another effigy (17th century : also perhaps a Wyrrol) holds a bow and arrow as bow-bearer to the king.<sup>4</sup>

In the almost surprisingly spacious interior the party was welcomed by the vicar, the Rev. J. Griffin, and Sir Charles Fortescue Brickdale, who has had researches made at the Record Office in connexion with the early history of the church, some of the results being displayed on cards. The building was described by the President, who remarked that the beautiful church in which they were met is one of the most striking in the county, being regarded as ' the Cathedral of the Forest '.

The plan, on a large scale, comprises a chancel flanked

<sup>4</sup> Roper, *Effigies of Gloucestershire*, 450, 454. *Transactions*, XVIII, 265, 267.

NEWLAND CHURCH  
Plan after restoration (published in 1863)



by aisles of two bays, a fine clearstoried nave of five bays, with north and south aisles of unusual width ; a south porch, and a noble west tower capped by a traceried parapet with richly panelled and crocketed pinnacles at the angles.

There are records of grants and other references during the 13th century to the church, which appears to have been then started, and, excepting the chancel aisles, completed by the middle of the 14th century. But it must not be assumed that the plan of the church as now existing was so conceived at the outset. On entering the church, the great width of the aisles (24 ft. 10 in), very little less than that of the nave (27 ft. 6 in.), occasions surprise, and induces the opinion that they do not pertain to a 13th century church, and this is confirmed on closer examination. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the earliest church comprised merely a nave, chancel, and west tower. Proof of this is afforded in the existence of an external corbel table to the nave, below and within the roof of the south aisle, indicating that the nave walls were of that height. Probably the nave was without aisles, or if with aisles, then narrower than the present ones, and covered with a steep sloping roof approximately in continuation of the nave roof. Again, the lowest stage of the tower with its boldly splayed plinth, and square shallow buttresses clasping the angles, is of earlier character than the upper stages from which it is separated by a deep splayed offset, where also start diagonal buttresses of unusual arrangement. Even so the nave-chancel-tower plan was designed on noble lines, and must have been soon followed by a revised plan of greater pretensions. Yet the progress of the work was not speedy, inasmuch as the arcades which appear alike are not really so, there being a difference in height of piers and arches, and in the details of the mouldings.

The details of the wide aisles, and the original windows and doors, are consistent with the arcades in point of date,

as also the tower arch and window which must have been enlarged, if the suggestion of an earlier date for the lowest stage of the tower be admitted.

The chancel has undergone much restoration (1863) including the rebuilding of the east gable, where a modern window was inserted instead of the preservation of the old one. A like remark must be made in reference to the rebuilding of the clearstory, which also is not on the lines of the medieval one.

Miss Roper described the monuments and effigies in the church, the most notable being the mid-14th century tomb of Sir John Joce and his wife,<sup>5</sup> and the brass of Robert Greyndour (1443), on which is a crest representing a miner with his candle, bag and pick, perhaps belonging to Sir Christopher Baynham (d. 1557), for whom the slab was used again.<sup>6</sup> Near this, in the south chapel, are a number of floor tiles of Malvern patterns.

From Newland the well-known Speech House of the Forest was reached, where tea was served in the large room. Afterwards the Rev. T. A. Ryder read an interesting paper on the Forest of Dean, referring to its use as a Chase; its earliest inhabitants; the British tracks and Roman roads; its antiquities; and the mining industry carried on for so many centuries.

<sup>5</sup> *Effigies of Gloucestershire*, 444 ff. *Transactions*, ix, 66; xvi, 117.

<sup>6</sup> *Transactions*, vi, 343; vii, 119. Mill Stephenson, *Brasses*, 153.