

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

**Transactions at the Spring Meeting at Yate, and Excursion to
Iron Acton, Yate Court, Horton, and Little Sodbury, June 7th,
1898**

1898, Vol. 21, 1-21

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society,

AT THE SPRING MEETING AT YATE, AND EXCURSION
TO IRON ACTON, YATE COURT, HORTON,
AND LITTLE SODBURY,

On Tuesday, June 7th, 1898.

THE Society was fortunate enough to have a brilliant day for the Annual Spring Meeting, and though this was not the first visit of the Society to this district, a large number of members assembled at Yate Station soon after 11 a.m., attracted, no doubt, by the excellent programme arranged by the Honorary General Secretary. Those who were present at the meeting which was held at Bath in 1883 were probably pleased to find that this day's excursion covered fresh ground, and included the interesting remains at Yate and Horton.

After the arrival of the trains from Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath and Bristol, a move was made to the

MANOR HOUSE AT
IRON ACTON,

which was carefully described by Mr. Bazeley.

This ancient residence of the Poyntz family, which has been described by Sir John Maclean in his *Memoirs* of that family, and is figured by Lysons in his *Gloucestershire Antiquities*, 1804, No. XLIV., appears to have been rebuilt in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and to have been considerably altered in the reign



IRON ACTON.
ENTRANCE GATE OF MANOR HOUSE.

of Charles I. The large courtyard on the eastern side of the house is entered by a handsome gateway, in the spandrels of which, in low relief, appears the Poyntz crest, *an arm, the fist clenched, issuing out of clouds*, with oak leaves and acorns, badges of the Actons. This arch was probably erected in the time of Charles I. The House, when occupied by the last of the Poyntzes, in the middle of the 17th century, appears to have consisted of a central building facing east and west, with north and south wings, the former of which remains. On comparing the building, as it now appears, with Lysons' view, we find that the eastern façade has been injured during the present century by the removal of the porch in the centre and of the great chimney stack with its internal fireplaces on the south-west. A hundred years ago a huge buttress was erected to protect



IRON ACTON MANOR HOUSE.

the bulging walls; another has been added lately. The 15th century Perpendicular window, on the extreme left, is said to have lighted the chapel; but there is nothing inside to support the tradition.

On entering the house we find a wide passage running through it from north to south. The large room on the left, said to be the chapel, has been sub-divided by a modern wall, and part of it is now a stable. The room above appears to have been the great hall, and has a parlour, or private dining room for the lord and his family, at the north end. The kitchen and other offices, as shown by a buttery hatch, were towards the north end. On passing round the house we find in the N.E. angle of the quadrangle an octagonal tower with newel staircase and solid oak stairs. Over the doorway of the north wing are carved the Poyntz arms: *barry of*

eight, azure and argent. This wing appears to have contained the private apartments of the lord and his family.

On the site of this Manor House stood the home for many generations of the Actons, the last of whom, Sir John, died in 1344, when the manor and other estates were inherited by his cousin, Maud, the widow of Sir Nicholas Poyntz, of Cory Mallet, Somersetshire, and, on her death, by their son, Sir John Poyntz. John died in 1376, and was buried in the church of this parish. Then followed in direct succession, Robert, who died in 1439, and who, with his two wives, Anne and Katherine, was also buried in the church; Nicholas, who died in 1460; John, who died in 1465; Robert, who died in 1520; Sir Anthony, who died in 1534; Sir Nicholas, who died in 1556; Sir Nicholas, who died in 1585; Sir John, who died and was buried at Acton in 1599; Sir Robert,¹ who greatly altered the Manor House in the reign of Charles I., and died in 1666; and Sir John, the last of the Poyntzes of Iron Acton, who died and was buried in the church in 1680.



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

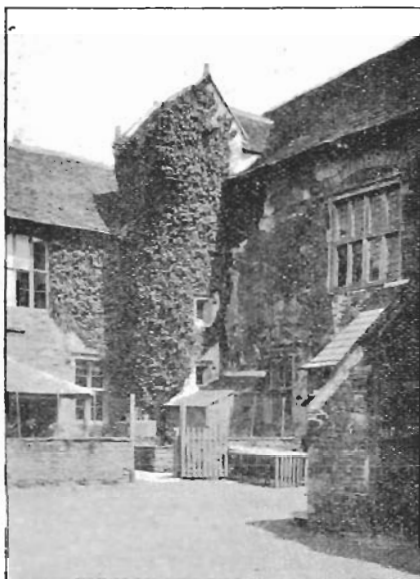
IRON ACTON.
WINDOW IN PORCH OF MANOR HOUSE.

[This window has been removed from some other place to the porch, which is modern.]

¹ This Sir Robert was a contemporary of the Wiltshire antiquary John Aubrey, who in his *Brief Lives* (edited by Andrew Clark, vol. ii, p. 181) says: "Sir Walter Raleigh was the first that brought tobacco into England, and into fashion.—In our part of North Wilts, e.g. Malmesbury hundred, it came first into fashion by Sir Walter Long. I have heard my grandfather Lyte say that one pipe was handed from man to man round about the table. They had first silver pipes; the ordinary sort made use of a walnutshell and a straw. It was sold then for it's wayte in silver. I have heard some of our old yeomen neighbours say that when they went to Malmesbury or Chippenham market, they culled out their biggest shillings to lay in the scales against the tobacco. Sir W. R., standing in a stand at Sir Robert Poyntz' parke at Acton, tooke a pipe of tobacco, which made the ladies quitt it till he had donne. Within these 35 years 'twas scandalous for a divine to take tobacco. Now, the customes of it are the greatest his majestie hath." Aubrey says that this Sir Robert (*Ibid.*, vol. ii, 173), "with whom I had some small acquaintance, was a loyal, sober, and learned person. His study law; chiefly towards the Civil Lawe. Since the King's restoration he published in print a pamphlet about the bignesse of a good playbooke entitled, *The Right of Kings.*" [The real title was *A Vindication of the Monarchy* . . . Lond., 1661]. Aubrey says that the Clifford family was originally called *de Pons*, and that it is identical with the Poyntz family.

The second Sir Robert was an active adherent of the Earl of Richmond, was knighted by him on Bosworth Field, and received him as Henry VII. at his Manor House in 1486. He was buried in the Gaunt Chapel, now known as the Mayor's Chapel, Bristol, to which he had been a liberal patron.

The third Sir Nicholas rebuilt the Manor House, and received Queen Elizabeth here on her progress from Greenwich.



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

IRON ACTON.
COURTYARD OF MANOR HOUSE.

The Poyntzes quartered on their shield the arms of the following families, whose heiresses they had married: Clanvowe, Acton, Fitz-Nicholl, Wydville, Scales, St. Paul, De Beauchamp, and another unknown. Their motto was "*Crainte Refrainte.*"

The Manor passed by sale, on the death of Sir John Poyntz, in 1680, to William Player, then to Sir Philip Parker, from whom it has descended to the Longs of Rood Ashton. The present Lady of the Manor is Miss Castle, of Frome Lodge, Stapleton. The house has been occupied for 200 years by the

family of the present tenant-farmer of the manor, Mr. Nicholls, and the President, in expressing the thanks of the Society to Mr. Nicholls for allowing them to visit his house, said that he hoped that his descendants would continue to dwell there for the same or a longer period.

IRON ACTON CHURCH AND CROSS.

A visit was then paid to the Church, where the Society was heartily welcomed by the Rector, the Rev. J. R. Browne, who pointed out the tithe barn and stables, and the three pointed arches to the west of the church, which are all that remains of the old parsonage. The view of Iron Acton Church, as given by Bigland in his *Gloucestershire Collections*, 1786, shows both the parsonage and the so-called preaching cross. Some remarks on the church and cross will be found in vol. viii. of these *Transactions*, pp. 38 and 39.

The cross stands on a base of three octagonal steps. The lower stage has four clustered shafts, supported by light buttresses, which originally terminated in pinnacles. There was also an octagonal shaft in the centre, the base and cap of which only remain. From this sprang fan-tracery enriched with sculptured oak leaves and acorns.

The upper stage is formed by a square base, on each face of which are two shields, each held by an angel with long drooping wings. Four of the shields are charged with the symbols of our Lord's passion, two are blank, and the remaining two bear: on the south side, the arms of Acton—*quarterly per fesse dancetté argent and azure*; and on the north side, Acton impaling Fitz-Nicoll: *quarterly gules and or, a bend arg.* This base supports a four-sided shaft with cinquefoil panels, each crowned by a canopy with mouldings and finials. Above this was the shaft which bore the cross. The original height was probably about thirty feet. The shield bearing the arms of Acton and Fitz-Nicholl shows that the builder was the first Sir Robert Poyntz, who married, as his second wife, Katherine Fitz-Nicholl. As he does not use his own paternal arms it must be supposed that he had for the time adopted, as he had the right to do, the arms of his grandmother, Maud, the heiress of the Actons, Lords of the Manor of Iron Acton.

As he died in 1439, the date of the cross must be a little earlier.

It will be noticed that the side of the cross which is nearest the Church has no transom.

The Church, which is dedicated to St. James the Less, consists of a western tower, a nave with porch, a south aisle which is continued eastward, and a choir. The church is probably about the same date as the cross; the lower part of the tower is perhaps somewhat older. On the parapet of the tower, looking toward the north, is the half-length figure of a knight in armour, probably removed from the church. The church contains



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

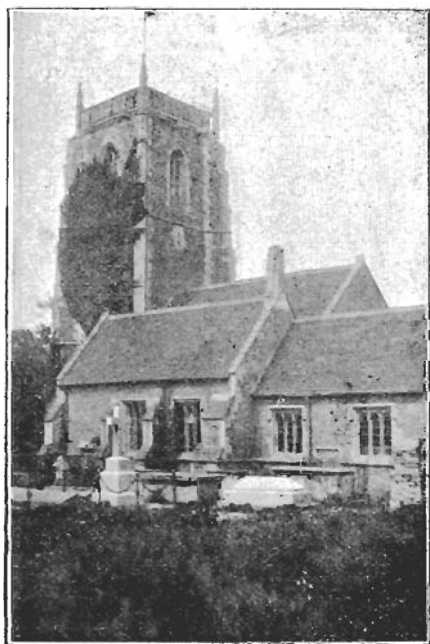
IRON ACTON CROSS.

several Poyntz monuments: the oldest, an effigy of a knight in the armour worn in the latter part of the reign of Edward III., probably represents John Poyntz, son and heir of the first Sir Nicholas Poyntz and Maud the heiress of the Actons. By his side lies the effigy of a lady unknown. Two encised slabs in the burial chapel of the Lords of the Manor commemorate Robert Poyntz and his first wife Anne. The inscription on the former is as follows: **Here lyeth Robert Poyntz, Lord of Fren Acton and thys stepyl here maked who deyde the fyttene day of Junne the yeer of owre Lord MCCCCXX(XX) of whos soule God have mercy, Amen.** On the second slab is: **Here lyth Anne the first wyfe of Robert Poyntz of whos sowle God have mercy. Amen.** On the other side of Robert Poyntz is the tomb of his second wife, Katherine, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Fitz-Nicholl, of Hill. The

inscription is nearly effaced and the stone has been used in the 17th century to commemorate Elizabeth, wife of Robert Poyntz, who died in 1631.

Lysons, who figures the first two slabs on Plate I. of his *Antiquities*, naturally conjectures from the first inscription that Robert Poyntz built the tower; but it is possible that "stepyl" means church or perhaps the churchyard cross. He may well have built the two latter, and the upper part of the tower.

On the south side of the Poyntz chapel is a 15th century canopied tomb, with no inscription and bearing three shields with supporters. Two of the shields are blank, the other bears the *fesse dancetté* of



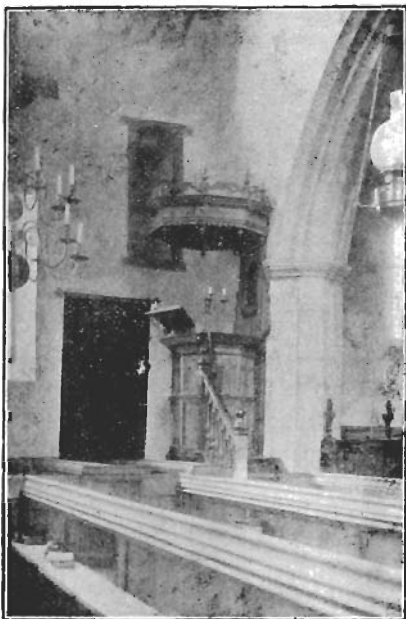
IRON ACTON CHURCH.
(From the South.)

the Actons, thus marking it as a Poyntz monument. A conventional helmet, such as was borne on a bier of a dead knight, is suspended on the east wall together with a spur and a piece of a leather surcoat. These probably belonged to Sir John Poyntz, who died in 1680. On

the tomb of Florence Poyntz, which is also a palimpsest, and on that of Hugh Poyntz, who died in 1598 and 1604 respectively, appear the words: *Juxta computationem Anglicanam* or similar words. There is a suggestion here that the Poyntzes would gladly have used the New Style, introduced in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII. So conservative were the English in this matter that the ten days, then deducted from the Calendar by Italy, Spain, and Portugal, were not given up in England till 1751.

On the north side of the Choir is a nameless Jacobaeen altar tomb, and below it is a slab with an incised chalice, missal, and floriated cross, from which all the inscription but one letter has been effaced. It is possible that the Poyntzes in the 15th century placed this monument to one of the Selwyns of Hill, Rectors of Acton, who were their kinsmen. A more detailed account of the Poyntz family will be found in vol. iv. of these *Transactions*, pp. 73—85.

In the north-east window of the chancel is some fine 15th century glass. The middle light, figured by Lysons, Plate XXXI., probably represents Edward IV., as in the same window is the falcon and fetterlock, a badge of that king. The value of royal badges in fixing dates has been, until of late, overlooked. On the left of the king is an ecclesiastic with a triple crown, and therefore probably a Pope, and on his right a mitred Bishop. Amongst other objects of interest in this Church are the Jacobaeen pulpit with sounding board, the rood-loft stairs, a curious chamber on the north side of the tower often used as a parish lock-up, a handsome Georgian brass Candelabrum, and the Altar railings dating from the time of Archbishop Laud.



IRON ACTON CHURCH.
PULPIT AND ENTRANCE TO ROOD LOFT.

The mosaic pavement, placed in the Choir at the time of the restoration of the Church in 1880, is admirable.

After leaving the Church luncheon was provided at the Lamb Hotel and then a short drive took the party to

YATE COURT,

which, though now a farmhouse, still preserves some picturesque ruins to testify to the strength and magnificence of the ancient buildings. Mr. Bazeley had prepared an interesting and careful description of the architectural features of the house and gave the members of the Society a history of its varied fortunes:

The remains of this ancient fortified dwelling, well deserving the title of a castle, stand within an oval moat, about 100 yards long by 80 yards wide. The deep moat, though narrowed by the *débris* from the falling



From a Photograph by Dr. Clarke.

YATE COURT. THE FARMHOUSE.

walls, is almost perfect. It is very difficult, without long and careful study of the ruins, and comparison of them with strongholds of the same date, to picture the castle as it stood in all its magnificence in the time of the disinherited Lords of Berkeley, who built it and dwelt here whilst Henry VIII. and Edward VI. held Berkeley Castle, their ancestral home. Much more difficult, nay, impossible, would it be to re-construct in one's mind the crenellated Manor House of the De Wyllingtons in the 14th century. Of that earlier period we have remaining a picturesque ivy-clad gate-house, built in the Edwardian or Decorated style of architecture, having two arches, one at its south or external end, and the other leading into a great court on the north. The drawbridge over the moat has long since been superseded by a permanent roadway, but the graceful outer arch with its

characteristic hood-moulding still contains the groove through which the portcullis fell to bar the further progress of a foe who had already crossed the moat. The beautiful window above this arch, with its two principal lights and with quatrefoil and trefoil mouldings in its head, gave light to a large guard-room above the vaulted gateway, the massive fireplace of which still remains. Inside the entrance, one on either side, are two narrow ogee-headed doorways, leading, long ago, one to this upper chamber and the other to the porter's lodging. A barn on the east side of the gatehouse acts as a buttress to preserve it, and long after the rapidly perishing 16th century castle of the Berkeleys has disappeared the early 14th century De Wyllington gatehouse bids fair to survive intact.

On entering the great courtyard, traces of buildings are to be seen on every side, except perhaps on the S.W. curve, which was guarded by a strong curtain, or connecting wall, and a round tower. The principal rooms (including the great hall on the first floor of a massive square tower, with parts of the fireplace yet remaining having a lion-rampant in



YATE COURT. GATEHOUSE.

the spandrel of its Tudor arch) evidently occupied the N.E. curve of the oval court. The present farmhouse, containing a newel staircase similar to that at Iron Acton Manor House, formed part of the castle buildings, which must in their entirety have occupied the north end and half the east and west sides of the courtyard.

The most interesting periods in the history of Yate Court are the 13th and the first half of the 14th century, when the De Wyllingtons occupied it; the first half of the 16th century, when the Berkeleys were here; and the autumn of 1644, when it was occupied by a parliamentary force from Gloucester, who soon after abandoned and destroyed it.

Of these periods and the links which connected them with one another

and with the present time merely a brief outline can be given in these notes, which the Members may fill in for themselves from Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys*, which are full of local interest, from Miss Hodges' account of Yate Court in her *Ancient English Homes*, and from Corbet's *Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester*. Sir Ralph de Wyllington married Olympias, sister and heiress of Milo de Sandhurst, of Sandhurst, near Gloucester, and, probably in her right, became lord of that Manor. In 1207 he purchased the Manor of Yate, and in 1218 he obtained from Henry III. the grant of a market at Yate. In 1223 he was made Governor of Bristol Castle, and had under his charge the unhappy Eleanor, sister of Prince Arthur of Brittany, whom John murdered. About this time he and his wife built and endowed the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Abbey. It was not, of course, the present Lady Chapel,



RUINS OF YATE COURT.

which was built in the time of Edward VI., but an Early English structure, of which very little indeed remains. Ralph was also lord of the Manor of Brownwilly in Cornwall. He died in 1237, and his son, Ralph, who married a Champernowne of Devon, was succeeded by a son, also called Ralph, who also married a west-country heiress. He was succeeded by a son, John, who appears to have been the true founder of Yate Court. He had permission from Edward I. in 1299 to crenellate, *i.e.* to fortify, his manor house, and he it was, no doubt, who built the present gateway. He and his brother Henry accompanied Edward II. into Scotland in 1314, and were taken prisoners on the field of Bannockburn, so disastrous to England. Later on, when they had obtained their release, they conspired against the King and his hated favourites, the De Spencers, and, with

several other Gloucestershire knights, were taken prisoners at Borough-bridge. Henry was executed at Bristol in 1322; John paid a fine of £300 and saved his life. On the accession of Edward III. he was made a Baron. On his death, *sine prole*, Henry, the son of his brother who perished at Bristol, succeeded him; and on the death of Henry's son, John, *sine prole*, the family became extinct in the male line. Through Elizabeth, one of John's daughters and co-heiresses, it passed into the Beaumont family, then to the Bassets and to the Lords Daubeny; but I do not know that it was occupied by any of these owners. The alienation of Berkeley Castle from the Lords of Berkeley by the Marquis of Berkeley's gift of all his possessions to Henry VII. gave Yate Court a new, and, for a brief period, an important, place in our county history.

Maurice, the son and successor of Maurice the disinherited, who married Katherine Berkeley of Stoke Clifford, was made Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1514, and, anxious to obtain a home in Gloucestershire, bought the lease for eighty years of Yate Court from Lord Daubeny. In 1517 he commenced the erection of a new mansion. In 1522 he served under the Earl of Surrey in France, and was made a baron of the realm, a title that he hesitated to accept, because he believed himself to be already a baron by inheritance, though deprived of his baronial estates. He died in 1523 at Calais, and was buried there, having left Yate Court to his widow for her life, and, after her death, to his nephew and adopted son Thomas, the sixth Lord of that name. He married as his second wife Anne, daughter of Sir John Savage of Frodsham, Cheshire, on whose *manly* proceedings Smyth delights to expatiate. Soon after her husband's death, in 1534, she came to Yate Court, and it was there that she gave birth to Maurice's posthumous son and heir, Henry. Smyth tells us of the feud between this lady and her husband's brother, Maurice of Mangotsfield, how he drove her deer parks, well-nigh burnt her in her bed at Yate Court, and broke down the head of Mangotsfield Pool and Mill, which she held as her son's guardian. At last the Lady Anne obtained a special commission from Henry VIII., sat on the bench at Gloucester, tried the offenders, found them guilty of riot and injury, and fined them. In 1553, the Castle of Berkeley and all the great possessions of the Lords of Berkeley reverted to Henry, on the death of Edward VI., last male heir of Henry VII., and the family returned to Berkeley. The remainder of the lease of Yate Court was sold to Sir Nicholas Poyntz, and no doubt he lived there whilst he was rebuilding his own manor house at Iron Acton. At the expiration of the lease of Yate Court we find the Staples family already in possession of the manor of Yate. Alexander Staples held it at the time of his death, in 1590, as the inscription on his brass in Yate Church shows us. From the Staples it passed, by inheritance or purchase, to a Mr. Oxwith, who held it when Atkyns wrote his history in 1712. Later on in

the 18th century it became the property of Sir Francis Knollis, and it has descended from him to Mr. Cator Randolph, the present owner.

After the buildings had been examined, Mr. A. KENNEDY SKIPTON read an interesting paper on "The Berkeleys of Yate," which is printed *in extenso* in this volume (see page 25). A description of the Manor House and Park as it existed in 1548 will be found on page 22.

On leaving Yate Court a pretty drive took the party to

HORTON COURT,

a most interesting Manor House, now in the possession of Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, C.B., who occupies it for a short time in each year. This house has been described by Miss Hodges in *Some Ancient English Homes*. Mr. BAZELEY spoke of the assistance this book had been to him in preparing the following notes:—

The house belongs to two very different eras: to the Norman of the 12th century, and to the Renaissance or Tudor Gothic architecture of the 16th century. The north wing is one of the very few Norman unfortified domestic buildings remaining in England. The Deanery at Gloucester is another example. Mr. J. H. Parker referred to Horton Court in his



HORTON COURT.

account of *Medieval Domestic Architecture in Gloucestershire*, read before the Archæological Institute at the Gloucester Congress in 1860 (see *Arch. Jour.*, xvii. 328; and also Parker's *Domestic Architecture*, 1859, vol. iii., p. 260).

The old Norman Hall originally occupied the whole of this north wing, and was open to the roof. It had a gallery at the west end, which was approached by a newel staircase of stone in the S.W. angle, with a

transition doorway. There is a narrow window high up the wall splayed slantwise to throw light into the gallery. Below the gallery was a passage with two doorways, both in good condition, with zigzag mouldings over their semi-circular heads and zigzag diapered work on their tympana. The pear-shaped shafts and capital are uninjured. The doorway on the south led, as at present, into the courtyard of the mansion, whilst the north doorway was a private way

to the churchyard. Above the outer door is a small shield bearing *gu. on a saltire arg. two annulets interlaced in fesse*, the arms of Robert Neville, Bishop of Salisbury, 1427—37. The Perpendicular buttresses and open-timbered roof belong to that period, and may have been constructed during his rule. Two of the original Norman windows, deeply splayed, but blocked with masonry, still remain. It is much to be regretted that this Norman Hall has been divided into two storeys by a floor inserted from end to end. This is said to have been done by one of the Pastons in the 18th



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

HORTON COURT DOORWAY.

century to provide a chapel for private services after the Roman ritual for himself and his family. Behind the altar in the Georgian panelling was discovered a short time ago a secret doorway leading to a small chamber on the east, from which a passage led to the central part of the house. Near the west end of the Norman Hall, built in the churchyard wall, are two stones, one roughly carved with a bishop's mitre above a shield, bearing a cross; on the other is inscribed *Laus tibi Christe* at the top, T.L. in monogram in the middle, and W. [1492] B. below. Miss Hodges suggests that T.L. stands for Thomas Langton, Bishop of Salisbury, 1483—94, and W.B. for William Burton, a lessee of Horton Court mentioned by Atkins.

The main part of the house was evidently built in the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign on the site of an earlier house. It consists of a central

gable running east and west, and two others running north and south. On entering the house one finds on the left the dining-room with a Tudor fireplace, having the arms of the builder, Master William Knight, Doctor of Laws, *per fesse or and gules, in chief a demi-rose gu. conjoined to a demi-sun in base or, from the top of the demi-rose a demi-imperial eagle sans wings sa.* As a crest, resting on the shield, is a Prothonotary's hat, with cord and three rows of tassels. The hat—unlike a cardinal's hat, which is red and has five rows of tassels—is black. The same arms appear over the doorway, and the following inscription is built into the garden wall: WILHELMUS KNYGHT PROTHONOTARIUS ANNO 1521. On the right is the drawing-room, with a Queen Anne look about it, and a pretty little boudoir beyond.



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

HORTON COURT. JACOBÆAN DOORWAY.

Behind the drawing-room is the ancient kitchen. Miss Hodges thinks that there was originally a small court in the middle of the house.

In the garden, pleasant in summer when the sun shines above the eastern hills, is a garden house or a "loggia" with four medallioned heads of Roman Emperors, and, overshadowing it, a magnificent tulip-tree.

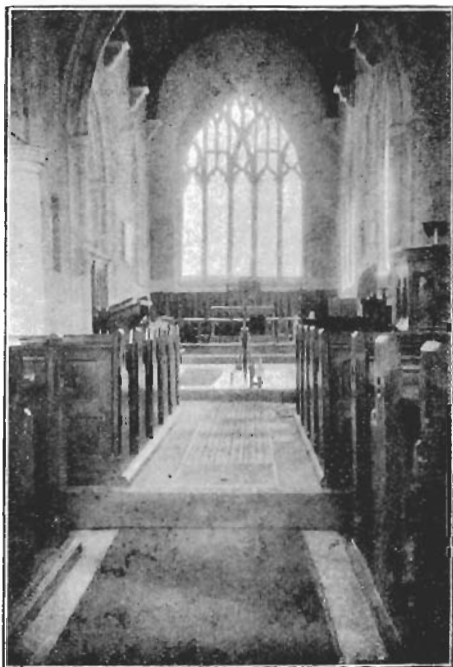
There are no stirring annals of Horton Court. The Manor in the time of Harold belonged to his third son, Ulf, whom William the Conqueror sent to a prison in Normandy when he had confiscated his lands. At the great Survey it belonged to Robert de Todeni. He gave it in dowry with his daughter, Agnes, to Hubert de Ria, and they endowed a prebendal stall with it in Salisbury Cathedral. From that time to the Dissolution, when it was confiscated by Edward VI., it was occupied or let on lease by the fortunate Prebendary who obtained it.

In 1150, Robert de Bella-fago, a great scholar, held it, and Miss Hodges says he was a married man. Robert Morton held it in the time of Edward IV., and Christopher Baynbridge in 1499. But the most noted of

all the Prebendaries was William Knight, whose arms are on the porch and fireplace. His life is given in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He was a scholar of Winchester and New College, of which Society he became Fellow in 1493. In 1527 he was sent to Rome by Henry VIII. to promote the divorce. He was Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1541 till his death in 1547. He was more of a diplomatist than an ecclesiastic, and he won and kept the favour of Henry VIII., which was more than most men did. He retained Horton Court for thirty years, and when his foreign missions were over, he spent his holidays in happy contentment and rest in this old manor house which he had rebuilt and adorned.

The number of his preferments was astounding; but, wise in his generation, when he saw that envy might prove his ruin, he resigned everything except his bishopric into the hands of his royal patron, and lived and died in peace in his Palace at Wells. He was buried in the nave of his Cathedral, near the pulpit he had erected. He also built, with another man's money, the market cross on twelve pillars of stone.

When the Prebend was dissolved, Somerset induced the young king to give it to him; but he lost it ere long, as well as his head, by his treason, and Edward gave it to Sir Clement Paston, the grandson of John Paston, well known in connection with the "Paston Letters." Sir Clement Paston was a distinguished soldier and sailor, and a great favourite of four successive sovereigns. He died



HORTON CHURCH.

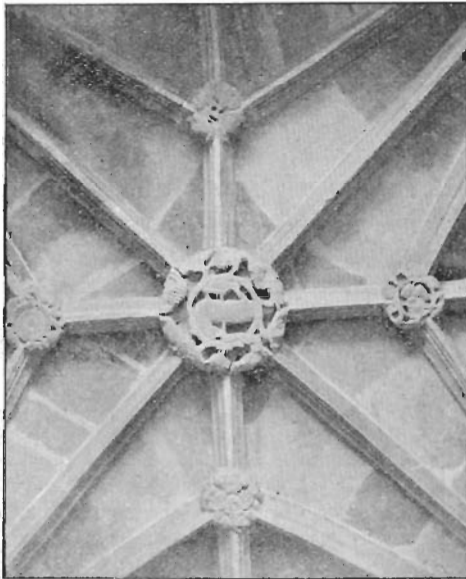
in 1597 *s.p.*, and Horton passed in succession to his nephew, Edward, to William, and to John Paston. The last having lost his Norfolk home by fire in 1707, came to reside at Horton; and from that time it was the family residence. John was a Roman Catholic, and no doubt

he or his son and heir, William, constructed the private chapel in the old Norman Hall. After William Paston's death Horton passed about 1807 into the hands of Mr. Brooke of Chipping Sodbury. From him it has come to the present owner, to whom the Society is indebted for his kindness in allowing them to visit this house.

HORTON CHURCH.

The next visit was to the Church, which lies quite close to the house, and the party was indebted to the Rector, the Rev. A. J. Begbie, for a hearty welcome and a description of the most interesting features.

The Church of S. James, Horton, consists of a west tower of five stages, a nave, south porch with parvise or priest's chamber, north aisle which is continued eastward, and choir. The Church appears to have been erected in the 14th century, and greatly restored in the 15th or 16th century. The porch has a groined roof, supported by four half-detached shafts, ornamented with the figures of two men and two beasts. One of the men is playing the bagpipes. In the centre of the groining is a boss with Agnus Dei, the Lamb bearing a Cross. A staircase



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

HORTON CHURCH. ROOF OF PORCH.

in the south wall leads up to the priest's chamber, and beyond it to the leads of the roof. The nave is separated from the north aisle by a 14th century arcade of three arches, with rounded piers and hexagonal caps. The western respond appears to have been cut down in the 15th century and converted into a kind of elongated corbel terminating in a man's head. The windows are all Perpendicular insertions, being somewhat monotonous in form. Each has a group of four oblong lights in its head; the great

East window has two such groups. A staircase in the south wall, which apparently once led to the rood loft, now forms an entrance to the pulpit. There was a much earlier church on the same site, for the Sarum Registers record the gift of the church in 1219 by Agnes, wife of Robert de Bellafago, to the church of Salisbury *in prebendam*; but I have not yet observed any traces of what must have been a Norman or Transition, if not earlier, building. Bigland says that in his time there were in painted glass figures of ecclesiastics and cherubs holding escutcheons, upon which were (1) *Or, a fesse gules, over all a bend azure*, and (2) *Or, on a bend gules three mullets pierced argent*. If the first coat might be read, *Or, a fesse gules, over all a bend sable*, then it would be the arms of Fisher. The second are the arms of Bamfield. Bigland describes four Paston monuments as being in the Paston Sepulchral Aisle. Lying on the floor of the chapel in the Norman wing of the Court, is a fragment of the one he first mentions: a shield bearing the arms of Paston impaling Lawson. This is part of the tomb of William Paston, who lived in Horton Court, and died there in 1673, and surely it should be replaced in the north aisle of the Church. Another commemorates John Paston, who married Frances Tichbourne, and died 1737, aged 68. A third commemorates William Paston, who married (1) Mary Courtenay and (2) Mary Giles, and died in 1769, aged 69. The arms of the Pastons are *Argent, six fleurs de lys azure, a chief indented or*; their crest *a griffin or*, and their motto, "*De mieux je pense en mieux*."

From Horton the next move was to

LITTLE SODBURY MANOR HOUSE,

which stands, well sheltered from the east, just under the Roman camp which dominates this southern part of the Cotswolds.

Some account of this house has already appeared in the Society's *Transactions* (vol. xiii., p. 3, and vol. viii., p. 33), and reference should also be made to Miss Hodges' *Some Ancient English Homes*, and to Buck's *Historic Lands of England*. Members are also indebted, as usual, to the careful description drawn up by Mr. Bazeley:—

The porch, with its pointed arch, hood-moulding, and stone seats, admits the visitor to a central passage, on the left of which a door led to the hall; on the right is a staircase leading up to a room which is lighted by a fine oriel window. This oriel has been supported by a buttress disfiguring the front of the house. The Great Hall, which is rapidly falling to decay, and must ere long be in ruins if nothing is done to save it, has a fine timber roof, with wind braces and angel corbels. The dais or raised floor, on which the lord and his family sat at meat, was at the south end, whilst along the east and west sides long tables were set for the retainers. At the north end was a screen, and above it a minstrels' gallery. Over the dais, in the east wall, is a hideous mask, through which,

it is said, the ladies of the household and their friends looked down from their gallery on the revellers below. Those were rude times, when boisterous merriment, rough practical joking, and inordinate feasting were sights interesting to ladies of high birth. Two corbels, some nine feet up in the west walls, now removed, were probably intended to hold lamps. Beyond the hall to the north extended a wing containing library, parlour, and bedrooms. These were especially interesting from their connection with William Tyndale, but they have all been swept away. The woodwork and stone-carvings were removed to Lyegrove, the residence of the owners of Little Sodbury.

The west wing, a comparatively modern accretion, containing a ball-room, parlour, and bedrooms, is rapidly falling into a ruinous state, and is



From a photograph by Dr. Clarke.

LITTLE SODBURY MANOR HOUSE.

the abode of domestic fowls and beasts. High up the bank behind the house are the remains of the tower of S. Adeline's Church, where Tyndale was wont to preach sometime in the first quarter of the 16th century. The church has been removed to a spot lower down the hill, where ground could be found for the burial of the dead, and nearer than the old site to the homes of the living.

Little Sodbury Manor House was built or rebuilt by Sir John Walshe, of Overton, who obtained the Manor in dowry with his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Foster. On the alienation of the Berkeley estates to Henry VII., under the will of William, Marquis of Berkeley, Sir John Walshe was appointed Receiver, and Sir Robert Poyntz, of Iron Acton, Steward of the royal manor. Sir John died in 1492 and was succeeded by

his son, Sir John, who was Henry VIII.'s champion at his coronation. He married (1) Ann, daughter of Sir Robert Poyntz, and (2) Ann, daughter of John Dinely. He was Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1526-7 and 1535-6. Little Sodbury Manor House owes most of its interest to the fact that Tyndale, the translator of the New Testament, lived there for a short time as tutor to Sir John's children. In 1526 he took refuge in Holland, and there printed two editions of his work. In 1536 he was betrayed into the hands of Henry VIII.'s emissaries, and was tried and found guilty of heresy. He was strangled and then burnt at Vilfort, near Brussels. The late Mr. Francis Fry published a facsimile reprint of the scarce first edition of *Tyndale's New Testament* from the unique copy in the library of the Baptist College at Bristol.

Some interesting remarks "On William Tyndale and his Forerunners in Gloucestershire, by the late Mr. John Taylor, were printed in these *Transactions* (vol. viii., pp. 35 and 36).

In 1535 Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn paid a visit to Sir John Walshe at Little Sodbury. The following is a diary of their route through Gloucester: Winchcombe and Sudeley, July 21-25; Tewkesbury, 26-30; Gloucester, July 31-August 5; Leonard Stanley, 6; Berkeley Castle, 7-13; Thornbury Castle, 14-24; Little Sodbury, 25-26. From thence they passed out of the county to Bromham, in Wilts. An avant-courier preceded the royal party by a day or two to make preparations for their reception. As he spent August 21st at Bristol and the 22nd at Iron Acton Court, it would appear that the King had intended to pay those places also a visit. In fact, it is said that Henry went in disguise to Bristol; but the plague was raging there at the time, and the Court came no nearer than Thornbury.

Sir John died in 1546 or 1547, leaving Maurice son and heir, then thirty years of age. He married Bridget, daughter of Nicholas, Lord Vaulx. In 1556, while he was at dinner in the hall of his manor house, "a fiery, sulphurous globe" passed through the room from one window to another, killing him and one child, and so injuring six more of his children that they died within six months. Two sons, however, still remained: Nicholas, who succeeded him, and Henry.

Nicholas married Mary, daughter of Sir John Berkeley, of Stoke Gifford, and died in 1577 or 1578, leaving Henry son and heir. Henry was slain in a duel by Sir Henry Wintour; and his cousin, Walter, son of his father's brother Henry, succeeded him. About 1602 the manor was sold to Thomas Stephens, of Eastington, Attorney-General to the two young princes, Henry and Charles. His descendants held it for one hundred years and more. During another terrible storm in 1703 the manor house was again in danger of destruction, and Thomas Stephens and his wife were—the parish registers record—wonderfully preserved from

being burned. In 1728 the estates passed to Robert Packer, of Donington Castle, whose daughter Elizabeth married Dr. David Hartley, the author of *Observations on Man*. The property is now held by his descendants, the Misses Hartley, conjointly.

Again and again have attempts been made to save this interesting house from destruction, but when entreaties are made to repair at least the roof of the hall and patch up the decaying timbers we are met with the sad reply "*Non possumus*." Can no means be found to arrest the hands of the destroyers—time, weather, and neglect?

After visiting the Manor House, some members of the party climbed the hill to the camp, passing in their way the site of the old Perpendicular church, which must have been remarkable for its smallness, as it consisted only of a "nave (about as large as a good-sized parlour), one aisle on the north-east, where was the carved oak pew of the lord of the manor, and a low, square, embattled tower on the south. . . . It had no graveyard—the hard rock of the terrace resisting all efforts of pick or shovel. This necessitated burial at the mother church of Old Sodbury, a mile or so away across the fields; and more than once in winter time, as the mourners were lifting their burden over the ice-coated stiles *en route*, the coffin slipped and fell with gruesome results." (*See Miss Hodges' Some Ancient English Homes*, p. 208.) The site was therefore abandoned and the new church built at the foot of the hill in 1859. Some of the windows and material of the old church were used in the new structure, and the "old bell, too, encircled by its legend of 'God save the Queen and send us peace. A.R., 1707,' still calls the people to prayer." (*Ibid.*, p. 209.)

An excellent plan and description of the camp by Mr. G. B. Witts will be found in vol. viii. of the *Transactions*, pp. 74–78. It appears to have been constructed inside some earlier works, probably of British origin, and is remarkable for the regularity of its plan as well as for the strength of its ramparts and ditch.

This brought the proceedings of a very busy day to a close, and it only remained for the members to enjoy the kind hospitality of the Misses Fox and Mr. Fox, who not only entertained the party on its homeward way with tea at Yate House, but also exhibited some of the many treasures contained in his library.

The following members and friends were present at this meeting:—

The President (Mr. G. B. Witts), Mr. G. M. Currie, Mr. F. F. Fox, Rev. G. S. Master, Major-Gen. Vizard, Mr. F. F. Tuckett, Mr. Chas. Scears, Miss E. Madan, Mr. F. A. Were, Rev. W. T. Allen, Mr. T. Sherwood Smith, Rev. W. T. Blathwayt, Rev. W. E. Blathwayt, Mr. V. R. Perkins, Rev. R. C. L. Blossie, Rev. Wm. Bazeley, Mr. H. K. Cripps, Mr. J. E. Prichard, M.B., Dr. O. W. Clarke, Mr. John F. Perry, Mr. A. J. M. Ball, Mr. Jas. Baker, Miss E. Hodges, Mr. W. T. Alston,

Mr. R. Groves-Morris, Mr. Alfred E. Hudd, Mr. A. E. Smith, Mr. C. H. Low, Miss King, Mr. A. T. Martin, Mr. F. J. Cullis, Mr. H. S. Kennedy-Skipton, Mr. H. W. Bruton, Mr. H. Sessions, Mr. J. Latimer, Mr. C. J. Tinson, Rev. W. H. S. Davies, Mr. D. J. Wintle, Mr. G. H. D. Chilton, Mr. F. Shum, Rev. A. C. Jennings, Mr. Wm. Jones, Mr. J. E. Pritchard, Mr. W. J. Stanton, Rev. T. M. Middlemore-Whithard, Mr. F. J. Tarr, Mr. C. H. Dancey, Miss E. K. Woodward, Rev. S. E. Bartleet, Mr. H. B. McCall, Mr. Chas. Stanton, Mr. E. Harford, Mr. E. Bush, Rev. E. Langley.
