

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

**Transactions in the Nailsworth District, May 24th, 1899**

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE  
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

PROCEEDINGS AT THE SPRING MEETING IN THE  
NAILSWORTH DISTRICT,

On Wednesday, May 24th, 1899.

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THE Spring Meeting of the Society was held as above, the arrangements having been made by a Local Committee, consisting of the Rev. W. H. SILVESTER DAVIES, Chairman, Messrs. A. J. MORTON BALL, E. BENJAMIN, R. CALCUTT, W. J. CLISSOLD, H. DENNE, A. E. DICKENSON, W. A. EAST, Revs. E. W. EDWARDS, E. W. EVANS, Mr. J. GARLICK, Captain HOLFORD, Messrs. E. KIMBER, W. LEIGH, S. MARLING, H. B. MCCALL, A. PLAYNE, E. POLLOCK, Q.C., Rev. G. M. SCOTT, Mrs. SELBY, Dr. SHETTLE, Messrs. C. H. STANTON, Rev. W. SYMONDS, Miss TABRAM, Major WILLIAMS, Messrs. G. LOWSLEY WILLIAMS, and R. WILSON. Messrs. A. E. SMITH and A. H. PAUL acted as Local Secretaries.

A large party of members and associates assembled at Nailsworth Station at 11.0, where a number of brakes and other conveyances awaited them. Among those present were: Sir JOHN DORINGTON, President; Mr. G. M. CURRIE, Treasurer; Rev. W. BAZELEY, General Secretary; Mr. A. T. MARTIN, Editor of the *Transactions*; General ELLIOT, Colonel ARCHER, Dr. OSCAR CLARKE, Revs. G. S. MASTER, S. E. BARTLEET, D. L. PITCAIRN, Messrs. F. FOX, MORTON BALL, A. E. HUDD, F. TUCKETT, W. SETH SMITH, E. S. HARTLAND, F. A. HYETT, H. MEDLAND, H. W. BRUTON, C. H. DANCEY,

H. KENNEDY SKIPTON, J. BRYAN, W. J. STANTON, E. P. LITTLE, F. B. DE SAUSMÉREZ, most of the members of the Local Committee, and many ladies.

Some little time elapsed before a start could be made, as, owing to the unfavourable state of the weather, several members who had intended cycling thought it more prudent to ride in the carriages, and it was only by dint of great exertions by the General and Local Secretaries that seats could be found for all. At length, all being ready, the lengthy procession moved off, and went by the Bath Road to

#### CALCOT BARN,

in the Parish of Newington Bagpath. The following notes on the places visited were prepared by the General Secretary for the programme of the Meeting: "The barn, according to Bigland, is 130 feet long, and is capable of holding 900 loads of corn. Its principal interest, however, lies not in its great size, but in a stone tablet inserted in the wall, bearing the following inscription—'ANNO GRE MCC HENRICI ABBATIS XXIX FAIT DOM H EDIFICATA,' from which we learn that this barn, which belonged to Kingswood Abbey, was built by Abbot Henry, in the time of Edward I., six hundred years ago. There is another tablet which records that the barn was partly destroyed by fire in 1728, and was rebuilt by John Pill, carpenter, at the expense of Thomas Estcourt, Esq., the lord of the manor. There is also a carved stone, which appears to be the top of a Roman legionary monument, with the figure of a soldier on horseback carrying a round shield, and followed by men on foot."

After various ingenious suggestions had been made with regard to the subject of the carving, the party proceeded to

#### BEVERSTON CHURCH,

where they were welcomed by the Rector, the Rev. E. W. EVANS.

"The church consists of a west tower, a modern porch, a nave 40 ft. by 19 ft., a narrow south aisle, a chapel

at the north-east end of the nave, known as the Berkeley chapel, and a chancel 28 ft. by 14 ft. The church is said to have been rebuilt in 1361 by Thomas, Lord Berkeley, who also restored the adjoining Castle. The tower has two stages, the lower of which is quite plain on the north and west; on the south side are two narrow, round-headed windows, and a piece of sculpture, earlier than the tower itself, has been inserted in the wall. This has been thought to represent S. Andrew. The upper stage is battlemented and pinnacled.

The arcade between the nave and south aisle is Transitional Norman, or late 12th century, and consists of three pointed



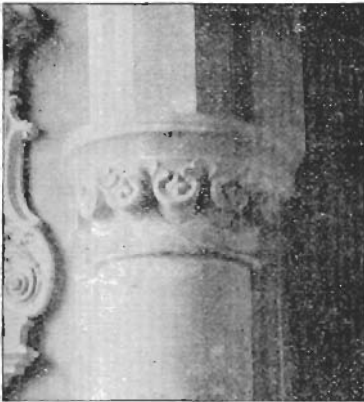
BEVERSTON CHURCH FROM S.W.

arches resting on two round capitals with round shafts, and on two returns of a similar character. The ornamented capitals are excellent examples of Transitional work. The south door belongs to the same period. An arched canopy in the south aisle is unfortunately hidden by the organ. The upper part of the pulpit is Decorated or Edwardian. There is a passage, which, perhaps, at one time was only a squint or hagioscope, connecting the Berkeley chapel with the chancel. On the south side of the chancel

are two very beautiful two-light 14th century windows, with quatrefoil and trefoil cusped compartments in their heads, and hood-moulding ornamented with ball-flowers. There is a priests' door with ogee hood-moulding and crocketed finials. The 15th century piscina resembles a piscina in the lower chapel of the adjoining Castle."

In the course of some interesting particulars about the church, the Rector said that previous to the so-called restoration in 1844, there were some wall paintings visible,

one of which represented the literal transubstantiation of the consecrated wafer into the Body of Christ, with Pope Gregory the Great kneeling in adoration before the altar. This, he thought, was in the chancel. Another represented the Last Judgment; and there was also a picture of S. Christopher. These paintings had been covered over, and the font — originally beautifully carved — had been ruthlessly cut away



WESTERN RETURN OF ARCADE,  
BEVERSTON CHURCH.

by the London architect who took in hand the restoration (?) to make it more *shapely*.

The parish, Mr. Evans mentioned, had been without a resident rector at various times, and it was during one such period that the ancient rood screen was taken down, and eventually found its way, in a very mutilated condition, into the rectory garden, where creepers were trained over it. He had sent a cartload of the wood to Gloucester, where Mr. Frith, under the superintendence of Messrs. Waller & Son, had managed to restore the screen as they saw it, and he thought they would agree with him that the result was extremely satisfactory.

The party, having passed a vote of thanks to the Rector, on the motion of the PRESIDENT, seconded by the Rev. W. BAZELEY, then proceeded to inspect the various features of interest in the church, particularly admiring the careful way in which the screen had been restored.

Arrangements had been made for luncheon in the school-room; but as the party was too large to be accommodated at one time, it was necessary to divide it into two, and while one half refreshed exhausted nature the other proceeded, under the guidance of the Rev. W. Bazeley and the Rev. E. W. Edwards, to

BEVERSTON CASTLE,

which had been kindly thrown open to them by Mr. Garlick.



VIEW OF CASTLE FROM BEVERSTON CHURCHYARD.

“The Castle appears to have been built at two distinct dates—by Maurice de Gaunt, c. 1225, and by Thomas, Lord Berkeley, c. 1356-61,—but there was probably a fortress on

the same site before and after the Norman Conquest. The building, when completed, is said to have been quadrangular, with four towers, a barbican, and a surrounding moat with drawbridge. The remains of a circular tower have been discovered in the rectory garden, outside the Castle moat. This tower may have been part of an outer defence, or may have belonged to an earlier fortress.

At the present time there remain a large tower, which



SOUTH TOWER, BEVERSTON CASTLE.

would have formed the south-west angle, 34 feet long by 30 feet wide and 60 feet high; another tower, set diagonally at the north-west angle, 24 feet square; a curtain or wall connecting these towers, containing various rooms and galleries, about 65 feet long; and a barbican commanding the entrance. The great hall, occupying the south side of the quadrangle, seems to have been used as a dwelling until the beginning of the 17th century, when, Mr. Blunt thinks,

it was destroyed by fire. A farmhouse was built on its site, but this was burnt down about 1791, when the present house was built. According to Bigland, the Castle was also devastated by fire in the latter half of the 17th century. An engraving in his *Gloucestershire Collections* shows the north-west tower with a part of the north curtain attached to it, but no part of the Castle now remains between this tower and the barbican.

The south-west tower, which is entered by a flat-headed doorway on the east side, consists of three storeys. The basement,

probably a guard-room, has a plain 13th century groined roof and an ogee-headed window in very perfect condition. An octagonal turret has been so insecurely attached to the east side of the great tower that it has ; been



GENERAL VIEW OF CASTLE FROM N.W.

found necessary to secure it with bolts and a chain. It contains a newel staircase, by which access is obtained to the upper part of the building. A large room on the first floor, which probably was originally used for domestic purposes, was set aside in the 15th century as a garrison chapel. This is shown by the sedilia and piscina of that date. What remains of the 14th century east window shows



that it must have been exceedingly graceful. Another large room occupies the third floor, and next to it in the curtain is a small chapel, which served for religious worship until the 15th century. This earlier chapel could contain very few worshippers, but a large number of people occupying the adjoining rooms could see the priest through the squints, of which there are two on either side.

From the top of the tower, on which the Union Jack

was flying in honour of Her Majesty's birthday, a good view was obtained of the church, village, and surrounding country.



THE BARBICAN, BEVERSTON CASTLE.

A gallery with a narrow passage on its west side, occupying a great part of the first floor of the

curtain, is now used as store-rooms for the farm. The north-west tower is entered from the courtyard behind the dwelling-house. The room on the basement retains its groining, but those above have lost their floors. Various fireplaces and windows enable one to reconstruct in imagination the rooms which were probably occupied by the lord's family. There are no traces of the north-east and south-east towers, if they ever existed. The barbican commands the

chief entrance and the drawbridge over the moat, its outer and inner walls being pierced for gateways. Near it is a picturesque barn said to have been built to accommodate pilgrims on their way to Malmesbury.

In 1051 Beverston was the scene of a great gathering of the retainers of Earl Godwin and his sons, Harold and Sweyn. After the Norman Conquest Beverston, being a manor dependent on the King's Hundred of Berkeley, was granted to Roger de Berkeley, Lord of Dursley. On account of his devotion to King Stephen, this and most of his other manors were taken from him by Henry II., and conferred on Robert Fitzhardinge. On Robert's death it passed to his third son, Robert, surnamed Weare, who was the ancestor of the Gaunts, Gournays, and Ap Adams, its subsequent possessors. Thomas Ap Adam sold it to Thomas, Lord Berkeley in 1331, and he rebuilt it. From the Berkeleys the manor and Castle passed in succession to the Poyntzes, Fleetwoods, Earstfields, Hickses, and the present proprietors, the Holfords.

The most interesting period in the history of the Castle is the year 1644, when it was besieged by the Parliamentary forces under Colonel Massey, Governor of Gloucester. It held out successfully under Colonel Oglethorpe, its Royalist governor; but a little later on, when Oglethorpe had been taken prisoner, it was surrendered to Massey by its despondent garrison. Colonel Henry Stephens, a kinsman of the late owner of Chavenage, then held it for the Parliament."

When the second division of the party had finished lunch the carriages were again entered, and a short drive brought the excursionists to

## CHAVENAGE HOUSE.

" This interesting manor house, which lies in the parish of Horsley, about two miles north-west of Tetbury, was built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and altered at the end of the 17th and at the beginning of the 19th century. Like many other houses of the same date, it was originally built in the

form of the letter **E**. It contains many windows of 14th century work, which were doubtless brought from Horsley Priory, a cell belonging to the Priory of Bruton, in Somersetshire, which formerly stood on the south side of the parish church of Horsley.

Chavenage was part of the manor of Horsley, which was granted in 1542 to Sir Thomas Seymour, and, on his attainder, to Sir W. Dennys, of Dyrham, whose son Richard



EAST VIEW OF HOUSE.

sold it to the Stephenses of Eastington. The representative of that family in the reign of Elizabeth was Edward Stephens, who married Joan, daughter of Richard Fowler, of Stonehouse. Their initials E.S. and I.S. are to be seen

on the labels of the hood-moulding of the porch, also the date 1576, which is probably the date of the building of the house.

The arms of Stephens, *per chevron azure and argent, in chief two falcons rising or*, and their crest, *a demi-eagle displayed or*, appear in many parts of the mansion. The Fowler arms, *quarterly azure and or, on the first quarter a hawk's lure and line of the second*, may be found on the mantelpiece of the hall.

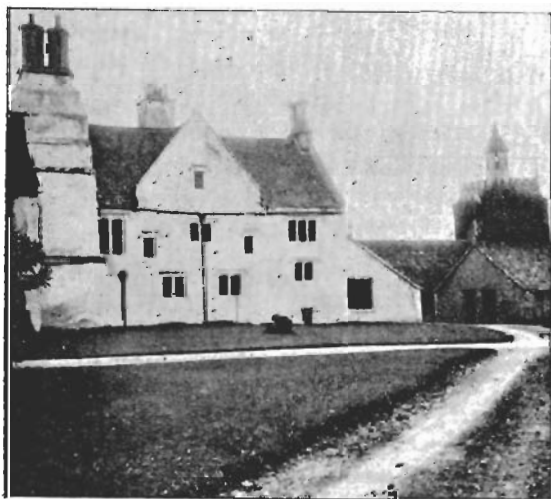
In 1891 Chavenage was purchased by Mr. G. Lowsley Williams, by whose kind permission the Society visited it.

On the party, or rather a portion of it, assembling in the hall, Mr. SETH

SMITH gave a description of the chief architectural features



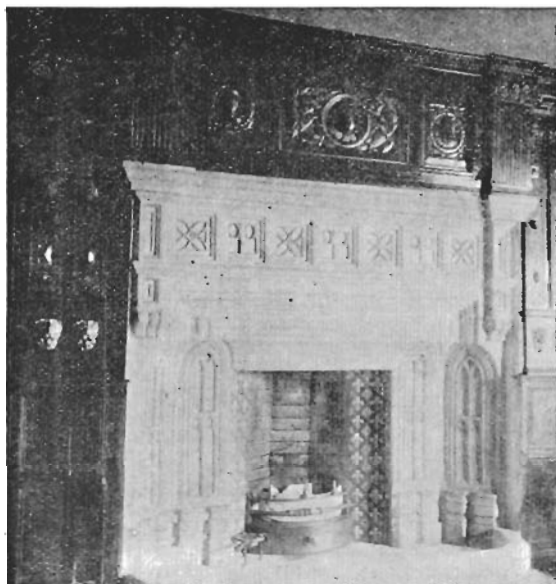
SOUTH VIEW OF CHAVENAGE HOUSE.



VIEW OF NORTH SIDE.

of the house, illustrating his remarks by a plan which he had prepared; afterwards the members dispersed throughout the house, visiting with much interest various

rooms associated with the names of Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Leicester, Oliver Cromwell (this room contains some excellent tapestry), General Ireton, Lord Essex (general



DINING ROOM FIREPLACE, CHAVENAGE HOUSE.

of the Parliamentary forces), Colonel Stephens, Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, Queen Anne and her prime minister, (Harley, Earl of Oxford.) In Queen Anne's room is a beautifully-carved oak bedstead, two

chairs of her date, and some Flemish glass representing Adam and Eve and the Judgment of Solomon.

After spending some time in and around the house, the members betook themselves to their carriages, and after a pleasant drive arrived at

#### AVENING,

where they were courteously welcomed by the Rector, the Rev. E. W. EDWARDS, who asked them before entering the church to sing the national anthem, it being Her Majesty's birthday, a request which was, of course, willingly complied with. The Rev. W. BAZELEY then described at some length the most noticeable features of the structure.

"The Church of the Holy Rood is approached from the north by an ancient bridge spanning the Avon, a streamlet

which gives its name to the parish. A view of the church in Bigland's *Gloucestershire Collections*, taken from this point, shows a road skirting the churchyard wall, and a man with two pack-horses in the foreground, which quite bears out the local tradition that the Bath road originally ran between the churchyard and the Avon.

A valuable report of the church, drawn up by Messrs. Carpenter and Ingelow, architects, will be found in the 14th volume of this Society's *Transactions*.

The church consists of a nave with north porch and north aisle, a central tower with north and south transepts, and a chancel.

The west wall of the church appears to have



VIEW OF CHURCH FROM S.W.

been rebuilt in the 18th century, when the 14th century west door was shortened and blocked up, and a classical west window of two lights was inserted above it.

On the south side the two-light windows, one with a cusped sixfoil head and the other with a quatrefoil head, are Decorated or 14th century; the buttresses and middle window are a century later. There are traces of a south door, which was stopped up when the Perpendicular window was inserted.

The south transept dates from the 13th century. It has a Decorated window at the south end which has lost its original

tracery, a blocked-up Perpendicular three-light window on the east, and a modern doorway on the west. The lower part of the tower is Norman, the upper stage and the battlements are Perpendicular. The original Norman windows of the belfry are seen above the roof of the nave. Three square-headed Perpendicular windows have been inserted on the south-east and north sides of the belfry. There is a staircase leading to the belfry on the south side of the tower, the original entrance to which was within the chancel. The chancel is



VIEW OF CHURCH FROM S.E.

twice as long as it was originally; the western half is the eastern Norman, and Decorated. The latter was probably built as a Lady Chapel when the earlier Lady Chapel was destroyed by fire. A 14th century wall-plate with characteristic ball-flower ornament runs along the whole length of the chancel wall. There is a two-light 14th century window on the south side. The mullions and transoms of the east window are modern insertions. The original sill remains. On the north side of the chancel the foundations of the east wall of the Early English Lady Chapel remain, and a round-headed piscina. One of the original Norman windows appears high up on the north wall, and beneath it is a 14th century window of a flamboyant

character, which was inserted when the 13th century doorway, leading from the chancel into the older Lady Chapel, was blocked up.

The north transept was also built in the 13th century, but has undergone more alterations than the south transept. The beautiful east and north windows were inserted in the 14th century. The tracery of the latter was renewed in 1888, but the hood-moulding with its rose and ball-flower terminations is original. In the west wall of this transept may be seen the remains of a Norman doorway. If this is in its original position, there must have been a 12th century transept or some other building on the site of the present transept.

The porch is of two dates. When constructed in the 13th century it had only one storey, the roof of which was clear of the Norman arch of the north door; but in the 15th century it was divided into two storeys, the upper one serving as a parvise or priest's chamber. A square-headed doorway, having its spandrels filled with delicately carved oak-leaves was inserted in the 12th century arch and a hood-moulding with square terminations, ornamented with foils. The Norman arch fortunately survives the 13th, 14th and 15th century restorations, to say nothing of the many later ones. The capitals, which rest on twisted shafts with circular and square bases, are carved on the east side with two lions, the heads of which appear to merge into a human face, and on the west with the braided work characteristic of Runic or Saxon crosses. The head of the arch is now enshrined in the Parvise. The tympanum is gone and a plain stone occupies its place. In the east wall of the parvise is a doorway with a lintel resting on chamfered brackets. There are no traces of an internal staircase in the porch, and the approach to the parvise may have been from the rood-loft stairs through a chamber over the north aisle.

On entering the church, a curious piece of carved stone is seen in the east jamb of the doorway. It looks like the side



of a Norman font, and contains three pairs of figures. A fragment of this stone is also built into the external jamb.

The main walls of the nave are Norman, but the south windows are 14th and 15th century insertions. The roof has a higher pitch than the ordinary 12th century roof; at the east end above the timbers may be seen the Norman doorway which led from the belfry into the space above the Norman ceiling. On the north side of the nave a mutilated



VIEW OF INTERIOR.

Norman arcade of two round arches, resting on a shaft with a round cap, separates it from a narrow aisle rebuilt in the 14th century. The roof of the aisle was reconstructed in the 17th century. It is evident that there was a rood-screen across the east end of the nave, for the pillars of the west arch of the tower have been cut away to receive it. The doorway at the top of the once existing rood stairs remains. A 13th century pointed arch occupies the place of the

original Norman arch in the west wall of the tower. On the south side of the tower arch is a recess with a segmental Norman arch, ornamented with chevron moulding. Here, no doubt, stood the altar of the Holy Rood, the piscina of which still remains in the south wall.

The groining of the tower is Norman, and has two diagonal square ribs resting on shafts fitted in the four angles, and there are two deeply splayed Norman windows above the north arch. The tower appears to have been built with solid north and south walls, but these were cleverly pierced with pointed arches in the 13th century. The eastern arch of the tower is fairly perfect and consists of a plain segmental head resting on massive capitals with inverted-cone moulding and half-round shafts.

Messrs. Carpenter and Ingelow, in their report, call attention to a square opening, or hagioscope, in the north-west pier of the tower, which was apparently filled in when the Early English arches were pierced in the north and south walls, and also to a low chamfered jamb in the angle of the tower buttress. These, they think, may indicate the existence of a recluse's cell similar to that mentioned on the Clopton brass at Quinton, in this county. (See *Transactions*, vol. xiii. 168.) But for the jamb the opening would have been called a leper's window. It will be seen that the edge of the tower arch has been chamfered to enable the person using the window to see the priest officiating at the altar of the Holy Rood. The roofs of the transepts were altered in the 17th century and the old cross braces removed. The mortices remain.

The south transept has been used as a burial chapel by the Driver family, of Aston, near Cherington. There are four of their monuments on the walls. One of them depicts John Driver, who died in 1687. A pedigree of the family is given in the *Heralds' Visitation of 1682-3*, p. 59. The heraldic bearings of the family were: *Per pale indented argent and azure two lions combatant counter-charged.*

In the north transept is the monument of Henry Bridges, fourth son of John, Lord Chandos of Sudeley, who died January 14th, 1615. Henry Bridges, we learn from Mrs. Dent's *Annals of Winchcombe and Sudeley*, in his early days led the life of a freebooter, "indulging in deeds of lawlessness and robbery almost surpassing our modern powers of belief." He left the county for a time and dwelt in Kent, but he eventually married the eldest daughter of Samuel Sheppard, Esquire, of Gatcombe, lord of the manor of Avening, and

settled down in this retired spot. Sir E. Bridges says that in his time (*circa* 1815) traditions of his maraudings still hung about the Gloucestershire village where he lies buried.

The groining of the chancel is extremely good, the 14th century moulded ribs harmonising well with the round diagonal ribs of the 12th century. The later work has carved bosses at the intersections; the earlier none. A 14th century piscina remains on the south side of the sanctuary, and there are



DRIVER MONUMENT IN S. TRANSEPT.

two blocked-up Norman doorways, one leading to the belfry and another, as has been already mentioned, connecting the chancel with the earlier Lady Chapel.

The belfry is now reached by an external doorway and by a staircase built against the south wall of the tower. A doorway from the belfry leads into the space above the groining of the chancel, which is lighted by a small quatrefoil window in the east wall. It is possible that there was at one time a priest's chamber here as at Elkstone, where

it was converted into a culver or pigeon-house, but there are no traces of floor beams.

There are five bells—three cast in 1628, another cast by Abraham Rudhall, of Gloucester, in 1756, and a fifth with the names of the churchwardens cut out. For a brief time there was a sixth bell, for about 1830 the Avening ringers conceived the bold plan of transferring the treble bell of Cherington to their own belfry to complete their peal, believing that if it were once there it would belong to the church. The theft was successfully accomplished, but the magistrates soon showed them that their law was faulty, for they ordered the bell to be replaced at Cherington, and punished the culprits with six months' imprisonment. In Ellacombe's *Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, pp. 144-6, are two copies of verses on "The Rape of the Cherington Bell."

Avening has had two well-known rectors: Robert Frampton and George Bull. Robert Frampton, who was Dean of Gloucester from 1673 to 1681, and Bishop of Gloucester from 1681 to 1691, held Avening, as well as Standish, with his bishopric till 1685. He was deprived of his bishopric in 1691, after the accession of William III., because he refused to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy. On his resignation, George Bull, rector of Siddington and prebendary of Gloucester, was presented to Avening by Mr. Philip Sheppard. He built a rectory-house, lived amongst his people, and overcame their aversion to his faithful teaching by his loving ministrations. In 1705 he was appointed to the see of S. David's, but died in 1709.

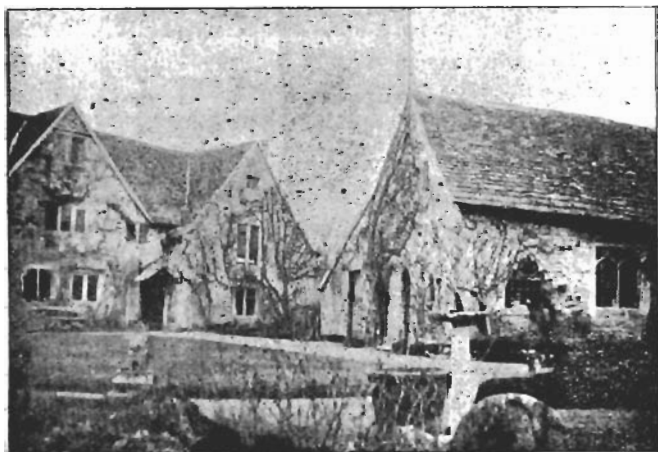
Avening was one of the many manors possessed by the unfortunate Brictric, son of Algar; and it is said in the Domesday Book that he had a hawks' eyry there. After the Conquest Brictric was deprived of his estates and thrown into prison. Avening was bestowed on Queen Matilda, and she gave it to the Abbaye aux Dames which she had founded for nuns at Caen. In the reign of Henry V., when the alien priories were dissolved, the manor of Avening was appropriated to the Bridgetine Convent of Sion, founded by

him in 1414. At the dissolution of the monasteries the manor was granted to Andrew, Lord Windsor, who sold it to the Sheppards."

Before the members left the church, it was mentioned by the Rev. W. BAZELEY that the building was in a somewhat dangerous condition, and that it was proposed to undertake certain repairs, but he was convinced that nothing would be done to destroy its ancient features.

The RECTOR said that the parishioners were proud of this old church, and the necessary repairs would be carried out in a very conservative spirit. They did not aim at such a restoration as was carried out in some churches, where very little was left of the old building.

The party then proceeded to the grounds of the New Rectory to visit, by the kind permission of Mrs. Selby, some pre-historic stone chambers. They were removed there in 1806 from a long barrow, 165 ft. long and 59 ft. wide, which then existed in a field near Avening Court. Two chambers were discovered, in one of which were eight and in the other three skeletons. The circular entrance roughly cut in the two front stones of one of the dolmens is very similar to that



VIEW OF CHAPEL AND PRIEST'S HOUSE, NAILSWORTH.

found in the Rodmarton barrow. See *Transactions*, vol., v. p. 99; and *Archæologia*, vol. xvi., p. 362, where a plan of the interior is given.

A lovely drive down the Longfords valley brought the party to Nailsworth, where, by the kind invitation of Miss Tabram, they inspected the very interesting ancient chapel and priest's house at the Bannuts. Until recently, this part of Nailsworth was a chapelry of Avening, and, no doubt, in mediæval times one of the priests of the Parish Church lived here and ministered to the inhabitants. For many years the chapel has been put to secular purposes, and at one time was even used as a stable! A portion of it is now utilized as a museum of interesting relics, which were collected by the late Mr. Tabram, to whom we are indebted for his care of these ancient buildings.

After tea in the National Schoolroom, lent for the purpose by the Rev. G. M. Scott, the vicar of Nailsworth, the party repaired to the railway station for their various destinations.

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