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**Proceedings at the Annual Spring Meeting. at Chepstow, St.  
Briavels and Tintern**

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# Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

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## PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

AT CHEPSTOW, ST. BRIAVELS, AND TINTERN,

*Tuesday, May 29th, 1906.*

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STARTING from different points—Bristol, Bath, Cirencester, Stroud, Cheltenham, and Gloucester—the party by different routes reached Chepstow, whence they journeyed together to St. Briavels and Tintern. It is some years since the Society made Chepstow its head-quarters, but no doubt the elder members can recall an agreeable three days' gathering there in 1881, under the presidency of the late Sir John Maclean. On that occasion the excursions embraced some places away from the localities now selected, though Tintern, as might be presumed, was included in the spots visited. The Forest of Déan was then the selected neighbourhood for most of the sight-seeing, Lydney Park (at the invitation of Mr. Bathurst) and the Speech House coming in for attention, while the inaugural address of Sir John specially concerned the Forest district, a circumstance not to be surprised at when his official connection with it is recollected. At that meeting the well-known archæologist, Mr. G. T. Clark, of Dowlais, delivered an address on Chepstow Castle, and a carriage excursion was taken to Beachley and Sedbury Park, in order to inspect Offa's Dyke. Time was also found to see St. Briavels. Some years after the Society paid another visit to Chepstow.

The weather proved propitious for the excursion, and there was a large party, about sixty from Bristol and seventy from Gloucester and other places in the northern part of the county. Among those present were Mr. F. F. Fox (president of the council), the Rev. C. S. Taylor (hon. editor), Canon Bazeley (hon. general secretary), Mr. John E. Pritchard (hon. secretary for Bristol), Mr. G. M. Currie (hon. general treasurer), and others.

The drive along the left bank of the Wye was delightful—the finely-wooded hills, looking at their best in their varied tints of green, and the coppices filled with blue-bells and ferns, charmed the eye. At Woodcroft a short stop was made to see the magnificent view obtained from this point of vantage. In ancient times it would seem that all the woodland enclosed by the Severn, the Wye, and the Leadon, and bounded on the north by a line drawn from Goodrich to Newent, was king's forest; but before the Norman Conquest many parts of this area had ceased to be Crown land and were held by private owners. It is likely that in 1086 the eastern and southern boundaries of the forest were very much what they are now; but Newland and Staunton certainly, and very probably English Bicknor, were clearances from the forest at some later date. Under Kings Henry II., Richard, and John, large tracts of country were brought under the range of the forest laws, but by the Charter of the Forest, 1217, the afforestations made by the two latter kings were at once disafforested, and those made by Henry II. were disafforested, if they were to the injury of landowners and outside the royal demesne. Finally, after a series of perambulations the limits of the afforested districts were brought back to very much what they had been at the accession of Henry II. by a confirmation of the charters by Edward I. in 1301. The Forest of Dean is not mentioned by name in the Great Survey of 1086, but we are told that certain tenants at Dene held their land by the service of guarding the king's forest, and that by command of King William the manors of Hewelsfield and Wyegate were afforested, also that ships going to the forest paid toll at the Castle of Estrighoiel. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his "Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales in 1188," speaks of "the noble Forest of Dean" as supplying iron and venison to Gloucester.

In Anglo-Saxon *den* or *denu* signifies a valley, and also a forest; and we find the word used as an affix in other parts of England in which woodland abounded: in Arden (in Warwickshire) and in Tenterden and many others dens (in Kent). As long as the older English alone was spoken it would be the king's "den" or "dene." When Norman-French was transforming our national tongue it would be called the "Forest (forêt) of Dean."

Although we scarcely entered the confines of the forest, every village we passed through abounds in forest lore. Specially is this the case with St. Briavels, where dwelt the King's Constable, the *ex-officio* Warden of the Forest. Parallel to the roads along which we drove on either side of the Wye runs the dyke or boundary line, which one of the Mercian kings constructed more than eleven hundred years ago to mark the western limits of his conquest. If little is told us by British, Roman and English chroniclers of this land between the Severn and the Wye, the materials are ready to hand for reconstructing its early history in its earthworks, its rude stone monuments, its paved roads, its iron mines and cinder heaps, its churches and its ruined chapels, hermitages, wells and castles. Moreover the pickaxe and the shovel have recovered for us coins, ornaments, and tools, which bear the impress of those who have ruled or worked in its secluded depths.

The name of Chepstow does not appear in Domesday. In the Conqueror's time Earl William FitzOsbern built a castle here, which was known as Castellum de Estrighoel and later on as Striguil. At Hardwicke, on the right bank of the Wye, near its mouth, are some ramparts, called the Bulwarks, constructed probably as an outwork of the ancient town called by the British Caerwent and by the Romans Venta Silurum. These lines of earthworks were no doubt intended to command the entrance to the river and also a ford, a mile above the present town, where the Roman road from Glevum (Gloucester) to Caerwent crossed the Wye. It is likely that they were occupied by King Alfred's forces when the Danes were blockaded at Beachley and starved out in 894.

Chepstow Castle is protected on the north by a high cliff rising out of the deep and rapid stream, and on the south by a ravine, which separates it from the town. On the west, its weakest point, a double line of ditch has been quarried in the rock. It does not appear that there are any traces of fortifications here earlier than the eleventh century, but it seems improbable that the earlier inhabitants would leave a post of such natural strength and importance unprotected by rampart and pallasade. The castle consists of a keep and northern gallery, on either side of which is a ward or fortified court; to the west of the inner court a barbican has been constructed as an additional defence on the land side, whilst to the east of the middle court is another ward strongly defended by a wall or curtain and four towers. The gateway or main entrance faces the river, where it sweeps round towards the south. The principal Norman possessors of Striguil Castle were Earl William, Gilbert FitzRichard, Earl of Pembroke, and the Earls Mareschal. In 1306 it passed into the hands of the Crown. Edward II. granted it to the Despencers. The Dukes of Norfolk held it in the fifteenth century till the reign of Edward IV., when it was given to the Herberts. A daughter of that

house brought it in marriage to Charles Somerset, and his descendant, the Duke of Beaufort, now holds it.

An exhaustive paper on Chepstow Castle, with an excellent ground-plan, by the late Mr. G. O. Clark, will be found in the *Transactions* of this Society, vol. vi., pp. 51-74.

The parochial, formerly the Benedictine Church of St. Mary, at Chepstow was originally a magnificent eleventh-century structure, with choir and choir aisles, central tower with transepts, and nave with north and south aisles and north doorway. It has, alas! undergone barbarous ill-treatment on three occasions, the last being the most wantonly destructive. The choir, with its aisles, was destroyed by Henry VIII.'s Commissioners as unnecessary, the rest of the church being made parochial. Late in the seventeenth century the tower fell, as many Norman towers have fallen, destroying irreparably the transepts; and the restorers of 1705-6 blocked up the western arcade of the nave, building over it a western tower, and carrying up the beautiful west front to form its western wall.

But the Norman nave remained fairly intact until 1841 with five of its original arcades on either side, north and south aisles, and a north porch, within which was a beautiful Norman arch and a niche. The restorers of 1841 took down the eastern pair of arcades, thus reducing the six original arcades to four; they destroyed the aisles and also the porch, and they only preserved the Norman arch of the north doorway by inserting it in the belfry. The niche they placed on one side of the altar and made an imitation of it to match it on the other side. There remain only the massive square pillars and round arches of four arcades with triforium and clerestory above them, and the west front of the nave, bereft of its gabled aisle ends and disfigured by the early eighteenth-century addition. Later builders in better taste have done their best to minimise these losses, but the church has suffered too terribly to be capable of true restoration.

The church, we know from a charter of Henry II., belonged in the reign of his grandfather, Henry I., to the monks of Corneilles in Normandy. It was probably built by Richard FitzGilbert, Earl of Hertford, and given by him to Corneilles.

An architectural account of this church, by the late Mr. E. A. Freeman, will be found in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, N.S., vol. ii., and the facts given above relating to the changes made in 1841 are taken from some valuable notes by the late Dr. Ormerod in *Strigulensia*. The Rev. G. T. B. Ormerod, his grandson, has kindly allowed us to reproduce the illustration of St. Tecla's Chapel from that valuable collection.

On a rocky islet at the confluence of the Severn and the Wye, two or three miles below Chepstow, are the ruins of an anchorite's cell, which

William of Worcester calls "Rok seynt Tryacle," the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* "Capella sancti Triaci," and Leland "St. Terendaca's Chapel." The name of this saint does not appear in our Calendar, though in the Calendar of the Old English Church St. Thecla, virgin and martyr of Iconium, was commemorated on September 23rd, and her name also appears on that date in the Calendar of the Latin Prayer Book of 1560. Some, however, have thought that the name of the island is connected with the old name of Chepstow. Many such hermitages existed in the Severn Vale in olden days. They are relics of a Christianity distinctly Celtic, and mark a later development of the British and Irish Church, when men and women had ceased to dwell together in the same monastery under the rule of an abbess, when even the schools of the prophets had failed to satisfy the growing taste for a life of greater austerity, and holy priests and laymen preferred to dwell alone in desert places, existing on herbs and water, and preaching the Gospel of Christ to all who would hear them. Here on Tecla's isle the hardy fishermen of the Wye and the mariners of the Severn have bent the knee in prayer and received the blessing of many a forgotten saint.<sup>1</sup>

To the east of Chepstow, in Sedbury Park, where Offa's Dyke crosses the isthmus to reach the Severn cliff, is a formidable line of earthworks, which appears to be of Danish origin. This was the scene of Alfred's last victory in 894, when West Saxon, Hwiccian, and Welshman combined to crush the pagan pirate in his lair.<sup>2</sup>

There are three great boundary lines in Gloucestershire and the adjoining counties. (1) *Wansdyke*, in Somerset and Wilts, was constructed possibly by the Belgæ, the last of the Celtic invaders of Britain, to mark the limits northwards of their conquest. More probably, perhaps, by the West Saxons in the seventh century as a protection against the Mercians, who were encroaching on their northern frontier. (2) The *Red Earl's Dyke*, which runs along the summit of the Malverns from the Ragged Stone Hill to North Hill, was made by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Hertford and Gloucester, "the red earl," to tell the huntsmen of the Bishop of Hereford that they might come so far and no farther in pursuit of their lord's deer. (3) Between these two, as regards date, comes *Offa's Dyke*, which was constructed in the eighth century by the Mid-English, the men of the marches. The earliest document extant in which this dyke is mentioned is a grant of King Eadwig to Wulfgar, Abbot of Bath, of land at Tidenham, between the Severn and the Wye, in 956.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested by Canon Bazeley that it was an anchorite dwelling here who was consulted by the Welsh bishops before they crossed the Severn in 603 to hold a conference with St. Augustine at Aust.

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew of Westminster*, ed. 1601, p. 179. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 894.

<sup>3</sup> *Cartularium Saxonicum*, Nos. 927, 8.

Offa, whose name it bears, became King of the Mercians at a time when, after a series of military disasters, they had lost their supremacy over Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, and the earlier years of his reign were spent in its recovery. But in 779 he attacked the Welsh, who had availed themselves of their neighbours' troubles to make forays into their territory. Offa carried his victorious arms beyond the Severn, the original borderline of Mercia, and added to his dominions all the country which lay between it and the Wye. Then to mark the limits of his conquest he began to make the dyke which bears his name. This dyke, which has a political and not a military value, runs southwards from the mouth of the Dee through the present counties of Flint, Denbigh, Salop, Montgomery, Radnor, Hereford, and Gloucester, to the Wye. Camden says concisely; "A Devae ostio, usque ad Vagae." It has been carefully traced by Pennant and other antiquaries from the estuary of the Dee to Bridge Solers; and the Gloucestershire or southern extremity has been traced by Fosbroke, Lysons, Ormerod, Sir John Maclean, and other local authorities, from Bishop's Wood, where the Wye reaches Gloucestershire, to Sedbury, where it joins the Severn, the dyke runs fairly parallel to the left bank of the river, either on the summit of the cliffs, where little of it is to be seen, or half a mile inland across the valleys which intervene. As might be expected, where the ancient woodland remains untouched by the plough the dyke is nearly perfect; where the ground has come under cultivation the tendency has been to obliterate it. The strip of land between the river and the dyke was no doubt neutral ground; the Welsh fishermen could land there in safety, and Welsh and English would meet and barter their wares. Chepstow derives its present name from the Saxon *Cēpe* or *Cēping* and *Stowe*, and signifies a *market town*. In 1881 our late editor, Sir John Maclean, accompanied by our old friends, Mr. Bagnall-Oakeley and Mr. Taprell Allen, followed the course of the dyke from Sedbury to Bishop's Wood; and he gave an account of his researches in our *Transactions*, vol. xviii., pp. 19-31. The dyke may be seen at the following points near our route from Chepstow to Bigsweat:—At Lancant, Madgets (Modesgat), St. Briavels Common, where it is called "the devil's ridge" (there is a devil's dyke in East Anglia; in such matters the devil was the lineal descendant or substitute of Woden), Hudnol, Redhill Grove, St. Margaret's Grove, and Fencewood, where we examined it on our way to Bigsweat.

On arrival at St. Briavels the members were divided into two parties, the Rev. Canon Bazeley being in charge of one, and Mr. J. E. Pritchard of the other, and the castle and church were visited in turn. The Rev. Canon Bazeley mentioned that the tenant of the castle, the Hon. Mrs. Ronald Campbell, had written regretting her inability to be present to meet the members. He thought they owed the lady a great debt of

gratitude for allowing them to inspect the place just as she was moving in to take up her residence there. The property belongs to the Crown, who are carrying out extensive alterations to meet the requirements of a modern residence, and the builders were at work there when the party visited the castle. St. Briavels Castle stands nearly on the summit of a hill which rises up from the Wye Valley to the height of 800 feet. On all sides save the south, where the ground in the rear is somewhat higher, there are fine views of the surrounding country. On the west and the north-west are seen Trellech Beacon, the Sugar Loaf, and the Skirrid Mountains; on the north the Kymin, Buckstone, and Staunton Hills; and farther away to the north-east May Hill, the most conspicuous feature in our Gloucestershire landscape; on the east and south-east are the Forest of Dean and the Cotteswolds above Dursley.

Giraldus tells us in his *Annals* that St. Briavels Castle was built by Milo FitzWalter to maintain the royal authority over the rough denizens of the forest and to check the inroads of the Welsh. This was probably about 1131, four years before the death of Henry I. In most cases the Norman builders selected the sites of earlier fortresses for their strongholds, erecting keeps of stone and curtained wards on artificial mounds which Briton or Saxon had defended with ditch and pallsade. The Welsh would naturally be indignant at the loss of the forest with its mineral wealth and wellnigh impregnable fastnesses, and would be ready at any moment to avail themselves of any Mercian disaster or weakness to cross the hated dyke and attack their hereditary foe. So Offa, or one of his successors, constructed a frontier fortress here, where the ancient trackways from Brockwear and Bigswear to the forest met, and garrisoned it with his trustiest followers.

St. Briavels is not mentioned as such in the Great Survey of 1086. It appears under the name of Ledenei, and was probably included in the grant of lands at Lydney by the Conqueror to William FitzOsbern. These lands escheated to the Crown in 1074, on the rebellion of Earl Roger, William's son, and in 1087 were held by William FitzBaderon. The name of St. Briavels seems to have been appropriated from the hamlet of St. Briavel—Stowe lying about a mile to the north of the road from Bigswear to the iron mines of Clearwell. Here, it is said, before the days of King Offa, a British prince, Briavellus, who ruled Cantref Coch (the Silurian name for the Forest of Dean) had his stronghold, still known as the Castle Tump, and, building for himself an anchorite's cell hard by, lived and died a saint.

Milo FitzWalter, the builder of the castle, was Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1131, and hereditary Constable of England. In the civil war that ensued on the death of Henry I. Milo espoused the cause of Matilda, and she created him Earl of Hereford. He was killed by accident in



1145, whilst hunting in the Forest of Dean, and Flaxley Abbey was founded by his son Roger to commemorate his fate.

A list of the Constables of St. Briavels is given in our *Transactions*, vol. iii., pp. 360-3. The office was absorbed in that of the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests in 1838. The Society is greatly indebted to the Rev. W. Taprell Allen, a late Vicar of St. Briavels, and a distinguished member of this Society, for his careful researches into the history of his parish, and the papers on the castle and church which he has contributed to our *Transactions*.<sup>1</sup>

The remains of the castle at the present time are only a fragment of what existed in mediæval times.

The outer walls, forming an irregular figure of seven unequal sides, enclose a space of about an acre. At their base an embankment slopes down to what was once a deep moat. This was filled in about fifty years ago, the only part remaining being the castle pool on the north-west. The castle is now under repair, being adapted to the requirements of a modern residence. When the work has been completed the internal appearance will be very different from what it was when Mr. Taprell Allen described it in 1878. None of the actual work of Milo FitzWalter remains. The Norman square keep of Henry I.'s reign, which protected the enclosed space on its south side and was about 100 ft. high, fell down in 1752, and was destroyed in 1774.<sup>2</sup>

We approach the castle on the north side by a permanent causeway, which superseded a drawbridge, and find ourselves in front of a gateway with a double arch, above which is a crenulated curtain pierced by one window. The portcullis protecting the heavy gates must have had long iron spikes, for the groove terminates at the spring of the arch. Flanking this entrance are two semicircular towers, rising from octagonal bases and strengthened by triangular buttresses. The eastern tower, which was roofless in 1752 and a ruin in 1783, was subsequently restored. Cellars or dungeons occupied the lowest floor. Above these were chambers which were lighted by loops. The first or outer court measured 15 ft. by 10 ft. In both towers spiral staircases ascended to the upper floors, but on the east side only the original stairs remain. At the foot of these was a guardroom with a chamber above it. An inner archway with a portcullis led from the outer court to a second (21 ft. by 9 ft.), which had two floors over it. On either side two doors, each defended by a portcullis, led into the towers. On the right is a room which has served for many generations as a kitchen. The fireplace is of the date of Charles I., and there is a turnspit wheel *in situ*. On the second floor is a room which was used as a debtors' prison; this was visited about 1778 by John Howard, the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. 325-67, vii. 318, ix. 72-102, and x. 304-12.

<sup>2</sup> Plans of Castle, *Transactions*, iii. 332, 333.

prison philanthropist. This and the adjoining room have Early English fireplaces. There are attics above. The gate-house appears to have been built in the middle of the thirteenth century, and is similar in style and arrangement to the corresponding part of Rockingham Castle, which was built at that period. An inner archway, with a portcullis groove, leads into a third court, known as the Chapel Court. The group of buildings adjoining this court are more than half a century older than the gate-house, and were probably built by one of the early De Bohuns. On the right, above a cellar, was a room (40 ft. by 20 ft.) thought to have been the state apartment. It had an Early English and Perpendicular window on the west side, overlooking the Wye Valley. These have been destroyed. At the north end is an Early English window, which must have been blocked up when the gate-house was added. On the east side were two windows and a fireplace. In the south-east corner is an arched doorway which led to the chapel, converted in Queen Elizabeth's time to a court-room. This room has a piscina, showing its former sacred use. To the south of the court-room is the jury room (24 ft. by 20 ft.), with an Early English fireplace, having shafts, capitals, and lamp brackets. The graceful chimney which surmounts this fireplace was removed from the east side of the castle enclosure in the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the summit is a forester's horn, a badge of the Constable of the Castle as *ex-officio* Warden of the Forest.

In the church the party was received by the Vicar (the Rev. J. C. May), who gave some details with regard to it.

The church of St. Briavels is much older than any remaining part of the castle, as will be seen by the Early Norman character of the south aisle of the nave with its deeply-splayed clerestory.<sup>1</sup> Whether there was a chapel at St. Briavels in pre-Norman times does not appear, but it would seem probable, from the fact that William FitzOsbern, Earl of Hereford, who died in 1071, gave the tithes of Ledenei Parva (the Domesday name of St. Briavels) to the abbey of Lire in Normandy, which he founded in 1046. One of Earl William's successors gave tithes in the same vill to the abbey of St. Florent, Saumar, and a dispute arose between the two alien monasteries, which was settled by Roger, Bishop of Worcester, about 1163.<sup>2</sup>

After this the church, which seems to have originally consisted of a nave, with aisles and a small apse, was enlarged by the addition of central tower, with choir below, transepts, and chancel, and was consecrated under the name of "Capella Sancti Briavelli" in 1166. The Transitional Norman work would be of this date. Late in the thirteenth century the

<sup>1</sup> See illustration at page 198 in a paper by the late Rev. G. Ormerod on the Chapelry of St. Briavels, in the *Archæological Journal*, xvii., 194-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 195.

north aisle, which up to that time had probably been Early Norman, was rebuilt in the Decorated style, with lofty pointed arches resting on moulded capitals and octagonal pillars. The arches connecting the aisles with the transepts are Early English. A dragon's head, characteristic of Norman work, terminates the hood-moulding of each of these arches. In the fifteenth century a fine Perpendicular window was inserted at the west end of the nave. As Mr. Taprell Allen tells us in his excellent paper on the church, the sacred building has suffered sadly from injudicious nineteenth-century restoration, a story far too common.

The tower was taken down and rebuilt on the site of the south porch in 1830. The chancel, which is now entirely modern, was rebuilt in 1861, and the west window of the nave was taken out.

Few monuments of interest remain, and these are mutilated. An early fourteenth-century slab, bearing a triple cross with oak and laurel leaves, once covered the tomb of an ecclesiastic, perhaps an abbot of Lire; but not long after it was carved the wimpled head of a lady was inserted.<sup>1</sup>

A costly monument to William Warren and his wife, Mariana Catchmay, was erected in the chancel in 1573. Atkins also speaks of a raised tomb in memory of Mrs. Warren Gough, who died in 1636, and of a monument with the effigies of a man, woman, and three children of the James family of Sutwell. Effigies and fragments of tombs lie scattered about the church in hopeless confusion.<sup>2</sup>

There is a plain Norman font. The altar frontal is of pre-Reformation date, and retains all its original beauty. The staircase leading to the rood loft has been allowed to remain in the south aisle. The piscina, used as a credence, belongs to the chantry chapel of St. Mary the Virgin in the north transept.

The following account of the heraldry which once existed in St. Briavel's Church has been kindly contributed by Mr. F. Were:—

"Sad indeed is the havoc that has been wrought with the heraldry that existed in St. Briavel's Church even in Bigland's time: a perfect blotting out of all, except a partial daub of one shield that belongs to the James family. This now is 'Sable a chevron argent' with in base, what looks like a large grey beetle, intended to represent '(Argent) a chevron between three millinks (sable),' as Bigland read it. But it is yet sadder to see on the mock Norman capitals of the porch doorway, 'Saint-Briavel's,' as if it were a suburban villa that one was entering. It seems almost an unnecessary labour to point out what has entirely disappeared, except that it might prove a stepping-stone to some kind spirit who disapproves of such sacrilege. The two effigies on the floor against the north wall of

<sup>1</sup> See illustration in Mr. Taprell Allen's paper, *Transactions*, ix. 76.

<sup>2</sup> See the report on the effigies, by the late Mrs. Bagnall-Oakeley, in *Transactions*, xxv. 165-7.

the chancel have come off a tomb of which Bigland has given an engraving quite good enough to be reproduced from, provided its position can be fixed; it is that of William Warren and Marianna Catchmay, his wife, the former's arms, 'Chequy or and az.,' being at the back, though hers do not appear. Now over a monument to William Catchmay, 1743, Bigland gives a shield which even in his time must have been removed from some monument; yet it is a flat stone, showing the arms not of Catchmay, but of Ingler, '(Or) 2 bars (az.) on a canton (sa.) 5 billets in saltire (arg.).' *Surrey Visitation* says Thomas Hoskins, of co. Monmouth, of which county the Catchmays were, married Jane, daughter of (Thomas) Catchmead, of co. Gloucester, and their son Charles married Ann, daughter of Thomas Ingler, of Reigate, Surrey. There is yet another shield connected with the Catchmays, '(Argent) on a chevron (sable) 3 chess rooks (of the first) between as many rooks (proper),' and crest, 'Dexter arm (in armour) embowed (proper) holding a pistol (or),' for James Rooke, 1773, who married Jane, daughter of Tracey Catchmay and Barbara Bray. Again, there is the early coat of Warren Gough, 1625, showing his descent from the effigies, given by Atkyns and Nayler as 'Azure 3 boars' heads coupéd 2 and 1 argent,' he being, as given in *Glos. Vis.*, 1623, p. 67, the second son of George Gough, of Hewelsfield, and Mary, daughter and coheirress of William Warren, of St. Briavels. The *Visitations* show that the Warrens, Catchmays, Goughs and Bonds were all connected both with St. Briavels and Hewelsfield, of which places William Warren was lord of the manor. Curiously enough, there is no coat of the Catchmays in Bigland's list, so there must have been great destruction before his time, unless they have been removed elsewhere. Also the quarterly shield of Carpenter, 1 and 4: 'Paly of six gules and argent (really arg. and az.) on a chevron azure (really gu.) 3 crosses croslet or.' 2 and 3: '3 estoiles and a chief vairé——' (? a variation of Bayley)."

St. Briavels was a chapelry of Lydney till 1850, when it was made a separate parish. The Dean and Chapter of Hereford are the patrons, and must be held partly responsible for the havoc wrought by so-called restorers.

After luncheon the party re-entered the vehicles and left St. Briavels for the Scowles, ancient iron workings at Sling, near Clearwell, which they viewed by permission of Mr. Williams and Mr. Rees. A walk down a hill and through a small coombe brought the members to the mine, in a deep fissure of the rock. Mr. W. H. Fryer gave the party an instructive address, which by his kindness is printed in this volume of our *Transactions*.

As iron has been dug here from pre-historic times, probably in the Iron Age of Britain, most certainly by the Romans, and with few intervals ever since their departure, it is needless to say these workings are varied in

appearance and character. Very little is known of their history, and, if we except Roman coins, ornaments, and cinder heaps, the relics of those who laboured here in distant ages are very scanty and of uncertain date; there is therefore ample room for surmise and discussion.

Sometimes these *scowles* take the form of caves, as at the Great Doward, on the Wye, where in King Arthur's Cave, Camden tells us, was found a human skeleton of gigantic dimensions. Nicholls<sup>1</sup> thinks that *scowl* is the corruption of a word of British origin, *crowll*, meaning cave. If this be so we have here probably the most ancient form of mining. Mr. C. E. Cardew has, however, pointed out that the derivation of this word was considered in *Notes and Queries* for 1885, and that the discussion seemed to favour a derivation from the old English word *scopl*, a shovel, the *scowles* being places which are "shovelled out."

Sometimes, as at "the devil's chapel" between Bream and Lydney Park (the finest example of scowles in the forest), they are wide and deep quarries. At Sling, Perry Grove, and elsewhere they are narrow passages, tunnelled in the hard rock, open to the heavens above, over-hung with trees, mantled with ivy and ferns, and carpeted with the broad-leaved ransom, fair enough to the sight but pungent and repulsive to the scent if we crush it beneath our feet. Mr. Wyrrell, whose MS. on the iron works of the forest, A.D. 1780, has been printed in the second volume of our *Transactions*, pp. 216-22, says: "There are, deep in the earth, vast caverns scooped out by men's hands, and large as the aisles of churches; and on its surface are extensive labyrinths worked among the rocks, and now long since overgrown with woods, which whosoever traces them must see with astonishment, and incline to think them to have been the work of armies rather than of private labourers. They certainly were the toil of many centuries, and this perhaps before they thought of searching in the bowels of the earth for their ore, whither, however, they at length then naturally pursued the veins, as they found them to be exhausted near the surface." In vol. vi., pp. 107-22, Mrs. Bagnall-Oakeley has given us a list of Roman coins which from time to time has been found in the forest, in scowles, in cinder heaps, and elsewhere. These cover in date almost the whole period of the Roman occupation of Britain.

An illustration is given in vol. xx., p. 156, of some old mining tools found in the Westbury Brook Mine, and supposed by some to be of Roman origin. We reproduce the plate, and the tools themselves were on view at Sling. They are exceedingly rough, utterly unlike anything the Romans would have been likely to use. Mr. T. F. Browne was probably right in attributing them to mine poachers of the Cromwellian period.

The drive from Sling to Tintern was through splendid scenery, and the site of Castle Tump, and also the ruined chapel and hermitage of

<sup>1</sup> *Iron Making in Olden Times*, by the Rev. H. G. Nicholls, B.A., 1866.

St. Briavels, were passed. A short stay was made at St. Margaret's Grove to inspect a fine stretch of the famous dyke which Offa constructed more than eleven hundred years ago to mark the western limits of his conquest. On our way to Tintern, as we began to descend into the valley of the Wye, we saw on our left, near a quarry, a British camp which Mr. G. B. Wits has described thus in his *Archaeological Handbook*: "Three miles south of Coleford, in the parish of St. Briavels, there is a very small camp, circular in form, known as Castle Tump. It stands on Bearse Common and is defended by a strong, high mound. The ditch outside the bank is slight. The defended area is only 35 yards in diameter." It has been sadly injured by quarrying on its west side. Mr. Wakeman's suggestion that a British prince had his stronghold here and became a hermit has been alluded to. The ruined building at the back of Stowe Grange, said to be the remains of a chapel, bears no traces of sacred use, and no more can be said of a round fireplace with calcined stones which tradition says was part of the anchorite's cell. St. Briavels Hermitage is mentioned in the Pipe Roll of 31 Henry I. (1131), and we are told that it was given to the abbey of Grace Dieu, near Monmouth, in 1227. This abbey had been founded in the previous year by John of Monmouth, who was Constable of St. Briavels Castle from 1216 to 1224. The monks had at first to say mass every day at the hermitage for the souls of the king and his ancestors, but permission was given them later on, on account of the depredations of wild beasts from the forest, to perform the service at the abbey instead. The name of the farm, Stowe Grange, shows that it belonged to a monastic house. There does not seem to be any evidence of a hermit residing here after the gift of the buildings and lands to the abbey of Grace Dieu.

At Morke, which Sir John Maclean thought to be a corruption of March, a boundary, was a chapel, dedicated to St. Margaret, with a wood attached to it called St. Margaret's Grove. It is mentioned in the Parliamentary Survey of Lands of 1651 as belonging to Charles I., his Queen and the Prince of Wales. In 1884 it formed part of the Lindors estate.

After tea the members visited Tintern Abbey, which is regarded by many as the most beautiful ruin in the country. The party had the pleasure of being received by Mr. Philip Baylis (Deputy-Surveyor of the Forest of Dean) and Mr. F. W. Waller (the architect), who pointed out the chief features of the celebrated Cistercian abbey. They were able to tell the members the interesting fact that recent excavations had brought to light traces of a more ancient building, a circumstance which is of great archaeological importance. An able paper on the architectural history of Tintern Abbey, with ground plans of the conventual church and domestic buildings, and drawings of architectural details, by

Mr. Thomas Blashill, will be found in our *Transactions* of 1881-2, vol. vi., pp. 88-106. Tintern was founded in 1131, and therefore its earlier buildings must have been Norman in style. Mr. Blashill says that no traces of the conventual church of this period remains, but he suggests that it occupied about half the area of the present church, and that its chancel stood very nearly on the site of the north transept. (See plan, vol. vi., p. 106.) In the middle of the twelfth century Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, who had inherited the lands of Walter de Clare, the founder, determined to rebuild the abbey, and he appears to have commenced with the domestic portions, as they are earlier in style than the church. The church was begun in 1269, and the high altar was first used in 1288; so the building went on during the period in which the Early English style of architecture was passing into Decorated or Edwardian. When perfect the church consisted of a nave with aisles, a choir which extended one bay into the nave, north and south transepts each with two eastern chapels, and presbytery with aisles. In the remaining southern arcade of the nave we see traces of the screen which ran from east to west, connecting the pillars and shutting out the chancel and nave from their aisles. This was a Cistercian arrangement.

Mr. Dugdale has very kindly allowed us to reproduce four of his beautiful photographs giving details of the conventual buildings, and it may be helpful to mention very briefly their names and uses.

In the north-west angle of the north transept is a flight of stairs which led by a passage over the chapter house and slype to the monks' sleeping-room. They used these stairs for the midnight and early morning services: in the daytime they entered and left the church by the door at the east end of the north aisle of the nave opening into the cloisters, where the monks spent much of their daily life in reading and copying manuscripts. In the east walk they had usually their cupboard for the books in common use and the materials for writing and illuminating, and the sacrist had a room for the sacred vessels and service books. At the north end of the north transept was a room divided into two by a strong cross-wall. The outer room was perhaps the library, and the inner the sacristy. The Early English doorway, which has been lately repaired, is of very chaste design.

The next building was the chapter house, which derived its name from the little chapter, or portion of the rule of St. Benedict, which was read to the assembled monks after Terce. Here the business of the abbey was transacted and discipline was administered.

Adjoining this was the parlour, where the monks were permitted to converse in the presence of the prior, or another officer. Silence was the usual rule, whether in church, during meals, or at work in cloister and elsewhere.

Next to the parlour was the slype, a passage leading to the infirmary, where the aged or sick monks had their own dormitory, refectory, and kitchen.

At Hayles Abbey the slype passes under the dormitory, but it is doubtful whether it was so at Tintern, for the next room is only a lobby leading to the undercroft of the monks' sleeping apartment, now generally called the dorter. It is a mistake to call this sub-dorter a day-room. There is no evidence whatever that the monks spent any of their time here. The south cloister walk was to all intents and purposes their ordinary living room. The sub-dorter was probably used for storage. It had no fireplace after it was rebuilt in the thirteenth century,<sup>1</sup> and the windows were unglazed. A doorway in the east side led to the latrines or rear-dorter.

We will now briefly describe the buildings adjoining the north walk. In the first room, or passage, stairs led up to the dorter, on the right, and to what has been thought to be the prior's lodging on the left. Sometimes the muniment room of the abbey was here, and the heavily-barred window seems to suggest this use for the narrow room opening out of it.

Below this room, on the ground floor, was the warming-house, sometimes called the calefactory. There were two generally enormous fireplaces in this room (there is only one at Tintern), where the monks might thaw their frozen fingers in the depth of our old-fashioned winters.

Behind the warming-house was a courtyard with a store for wood and other fuel, and perhaps a gateway leading to the river.

The dining-room or refectory of the monks comes next; they called it the frater. In Cistercian houses it always stood north and south, with its end against the cloister, whereas in Benedictine, Cluniac, and Augustinian houses it stood east and west, as at Gloucester, with its side against the cloister. On the left is a recess, which contained the wall-pulpit and its stairs. Whilst the monks eat in silence one of their number read aloud the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, or some other devotional work. Mr. Dugdale's photograph shows the beautiful Early English windows on the east side overlooking the court of the warming-house. In the north wall of the cloister walk are the lavatory and towel recess. In the S.E. corner of the frater is a vaulted chamber with a locker, which was perhaps a pantry. In the S.W. corner is a buttery hatch, showing that beyond it to the west were the kitchen and other domestic offices.

The long range of buildings on the west side of the cloisters will have special interest for us, because they have lately been very carefully cleared

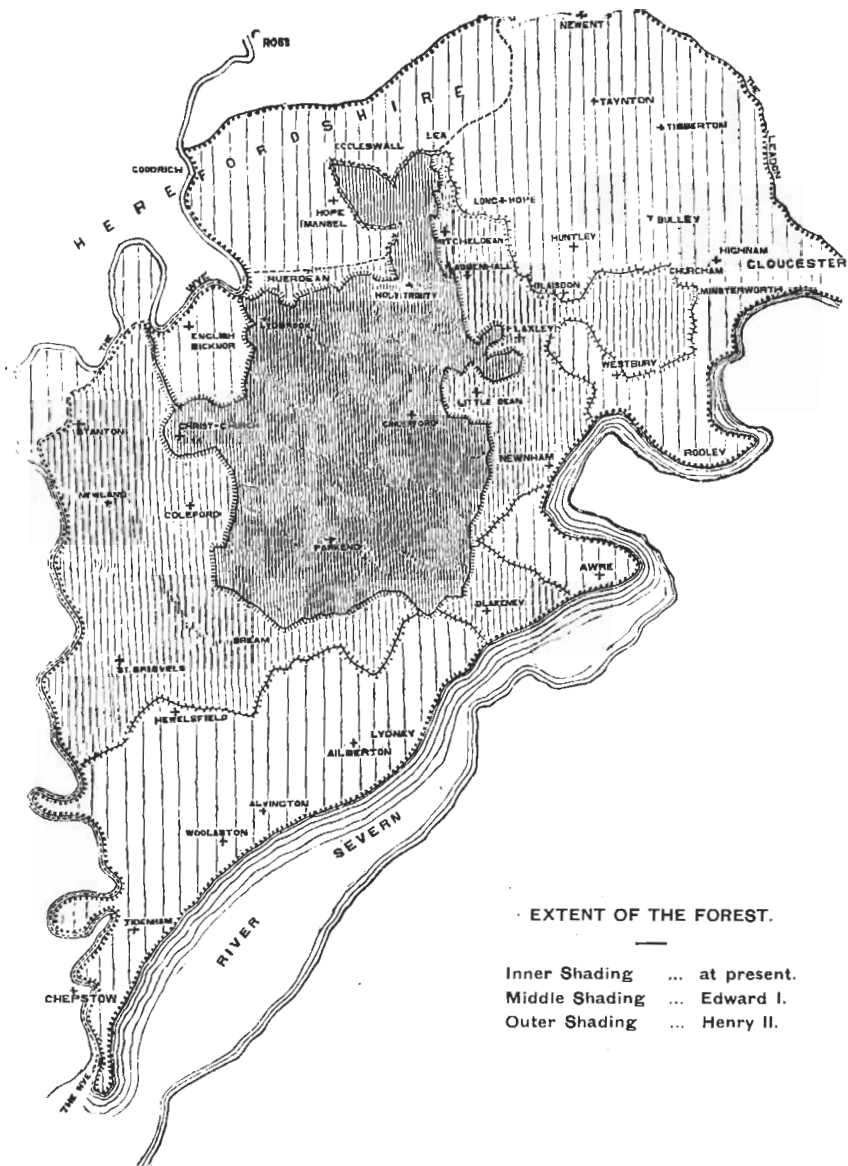
<sup>1</sup> An earlier fireplace has been lately discovered in the east wall. This must have been walled up about 1260.



from all modern accretions. This was the cellarium where the *conversi* or lay brothers dwelt, under the superintendence of the cellarer, and attended to the secular and external affairs of the monastery. They had a frater, dorter and infirmary of their own, and attended some of the daily services in the church, worshipping by themselves in the north aisle of the nave. After the fourteenth century the *conversi* seem to have died out, and we shall have to ask ourselves to what purpose these noble rooms were assigned in the later days of the abbey. At Hayles the cellarium became the Abbot's Lodging.

After leaving the abbey the archæologists hurried to their vehicles, and on arriving at Chepstow Station the two sections separated, the trains for Gloucester and Bristol enabling all of the party to reach their homes at an early hour. The day's engagements were altogether enjoyable, and to the exertions of Canon Bazeley and Mr. John E. Pritchard a great deal of the success of the excursion is due. We were also greatly indebted to Mr. Murray for the loan of the blocks of the map and of the castle from Nicholls's *Forest of Dean*, and to Mr. R. W. Dugdale for his beautiful photographs, which he had taken expressly for this meeting, and has allowed us to reproduce.

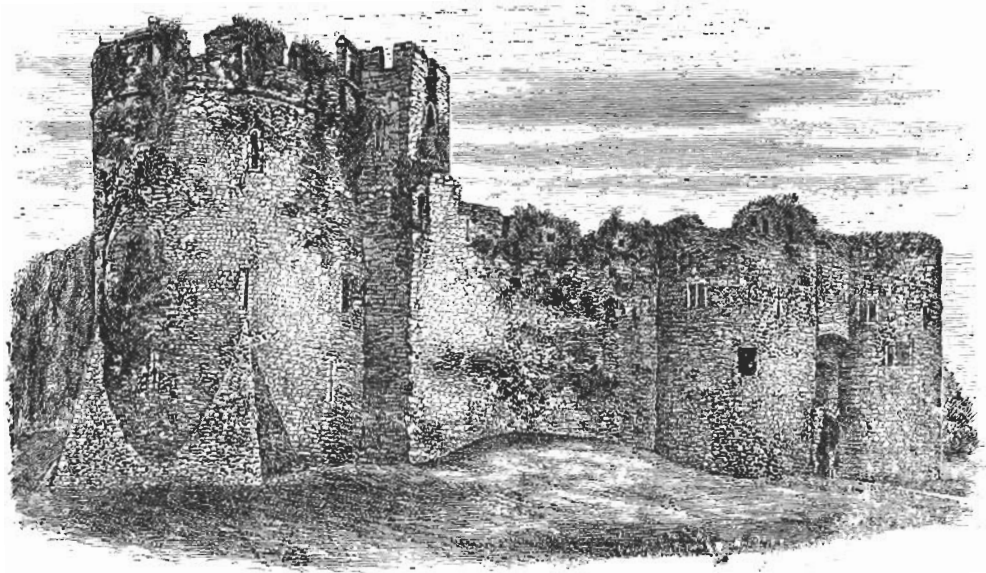
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Kindly lent by Mr. Murray.

PAGE 2.

MAP SHOWING THE EXTENT OF THE FOREST OF DEAN  
AT VARIOUS TIMES.

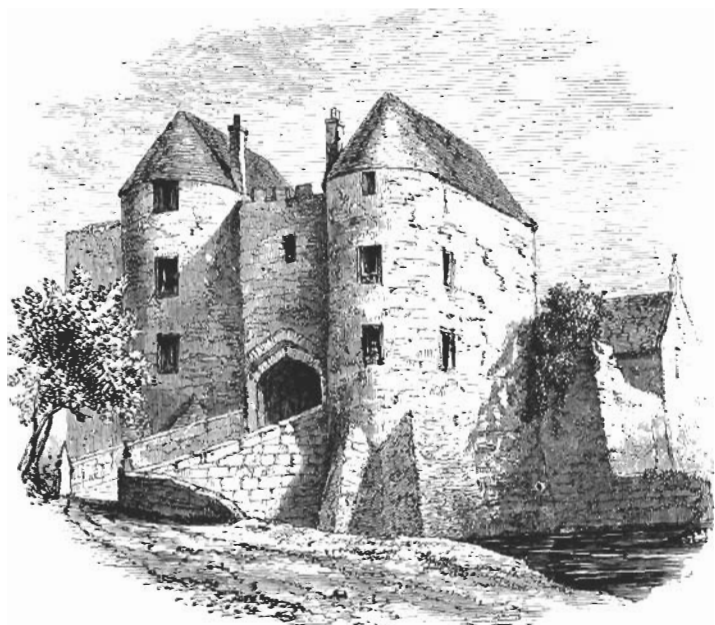


CHEPSTOW CASTLE.



ST. TECLA'S RUINED CHAPEL.

PAGE 4.



*Kindly lent by Mr. Murray.*

ST. BRIAVEL'S CASTLE.

PAGE 7.



*R. W. Dugdale, Phot.*

PAGE 9.

EARLY ENGLISH FIRE-PLACE IN JURY ROOM.



*R. W. Dugdale, Phot.*

PAGE 8.

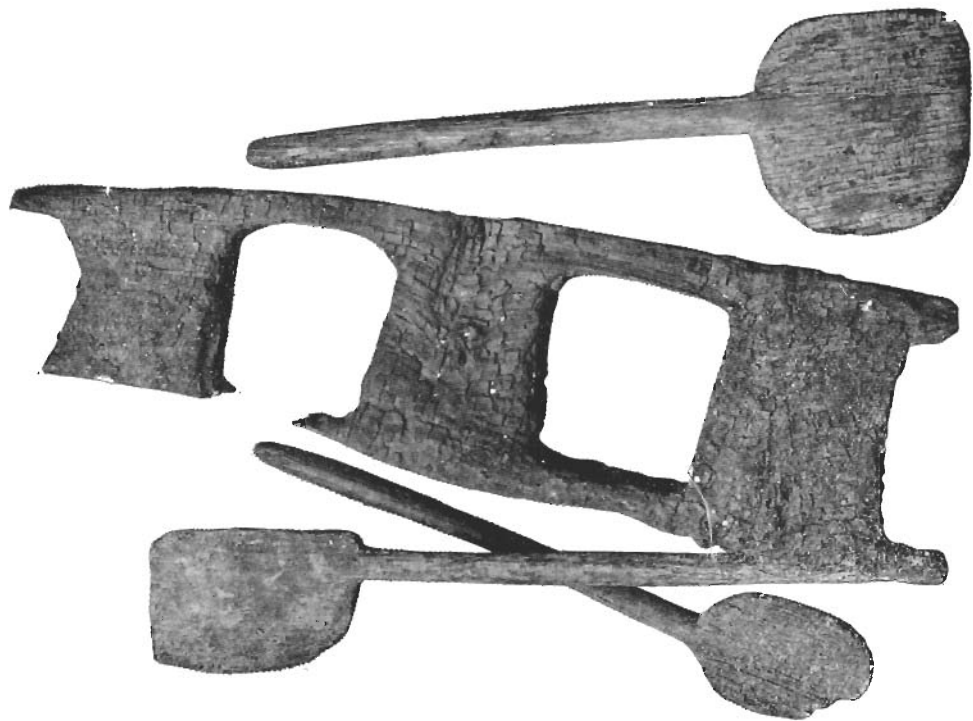
TURNSPIT WHEEL IN KITCHEN.



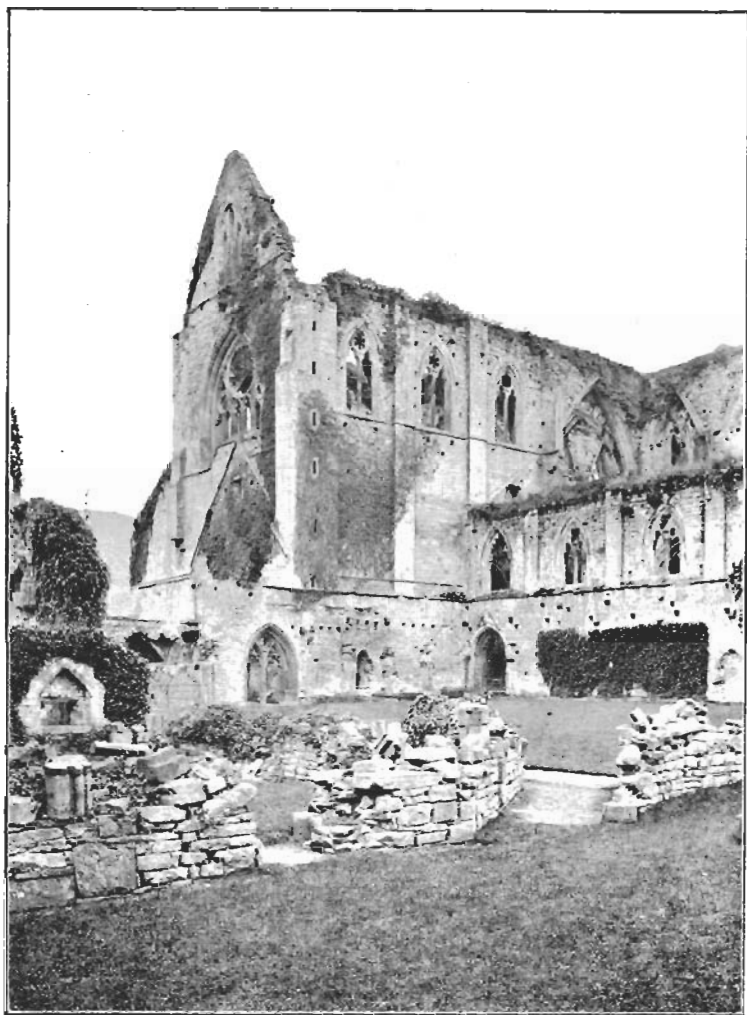
*R. W. Dugdale, Phot.*

ANCIENT IRON MINES AT SLING.

PAGE 12.



OLD MINING TOOLS.

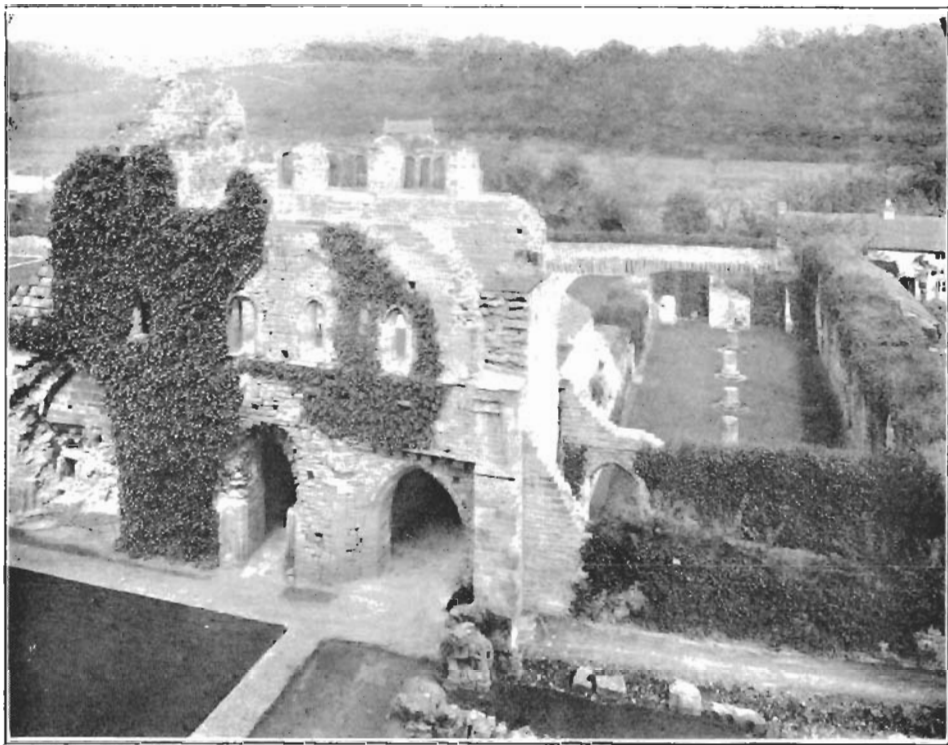


*R. W. Dugdale, Photo.*

PAGE 15.

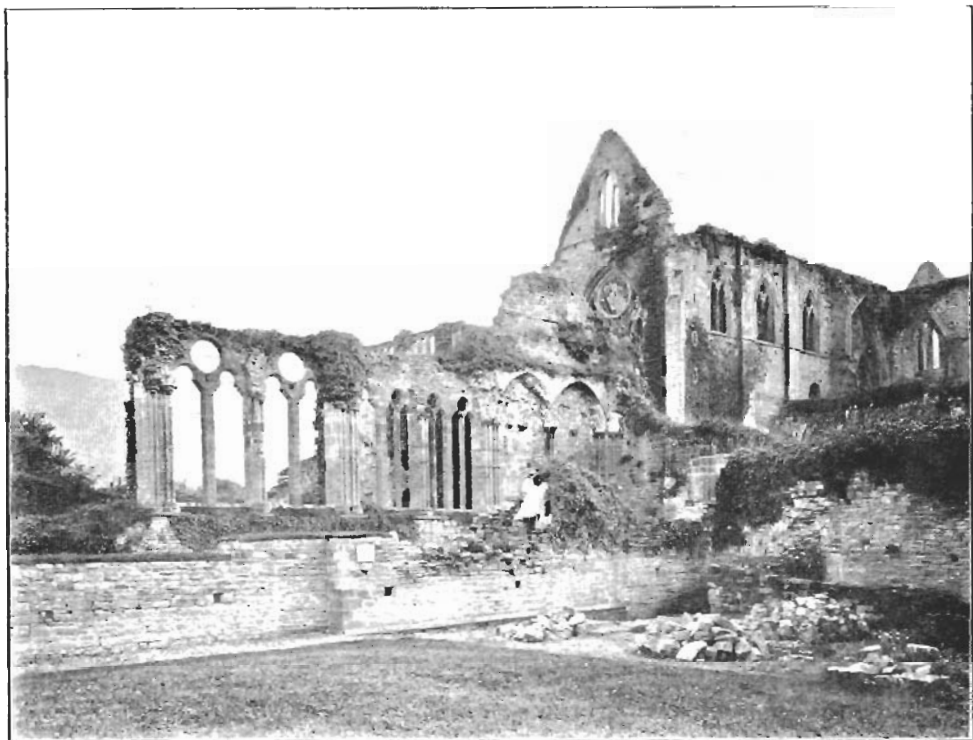
NORTH TRANSEPT AND CLOISTERS, TINTERN ABBEY.





*K. W. Dugdale, Phot.*

PRIOR'S LODGING AND SUB-DORTER, TINTERN ABBEY.



*R. W. Dugdale, Phot*

FRATER, TINTERN ABBEY.



*R. W. Dugdale, Phot.*

PAGE 16.

THE CELLARIUM AND WEST FRONT OF NAVE,  
TINTERN ABBEY.