

# THE VILLAGE OF RANDWICK

## SCATTERED PAGES FROM ITS HISTORY

Randwick, a small but populous village two miles from Stroud, renowned for its beautiful scenery and wooded glades, was anciently included in the parish of Thornbury, and is first mentioned as a separate parish in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307).

How did it get its name? The old historian Rudge declares "The origin of the name Randwick, or more anciently Randwicke and Rendwicke, is supposed to be Saxon—from the Saxon *rendan*, to "divide," and *ric*, "a street," which is a description of the situation of the place—divided from Standish, to which it formerly belonged. Or it may be (as in the case of Painswick—from *wicke*, a dwelling—the dwelling of Pain); so Randwicke, the dwelling of Rand."

There are other local theories, but this seems the most likely.

The village is divided into different sections, Ocker Hill, which may be a corruption of "Orckard Hill" or awkward hill, as this is a fine description of the road which leads to this part. Farthingale, Dunden Camp and Cox Gate, near the Methodist Chapel, are other sections, together with The Lawn, at the back of the National School, the Kesant, the Lager, the Stocks, the Grip, and the Well-lease or Wellays. The stretch of road leading up from Cainscross is known as the Street and the lower portion near Townsend being The Change.

The people of Randwick in olden days were very poor and ignorant, but with the passing of the years a distinct change has taken place. Reference is made in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for January 1860 to a time (about 1804) when the moral condition of the village was "deplorably bad." Few people could read, and the Lord's Day was spent "in feasting and drunkenness." The villagers were mostly employed in cloth manufacture, much of which was done at home. The invention of the power loom by Cartwright in 1781, or rather its local introduction many years later, entirely altered the thriving condition of this little village; in fact, it nearly proved its ruin. At this time many of the young men were forced to leave the village, some sought employment in the local pin mills, others entered the Police Force, and some emigrated to Australia. Probably one of the latter group was Mr. Simeon Pearce, who founded the city of Randwick, N.S.W., Australia in 1844.

Of those who remained in the village some still followed the fortunes of the clothing trade—in the local mills, and others were employed by the neighbouring farmers. The condition of the people is now much improved, though a great many still work in the local mills, making the West of England cloth for which Stroud is famous.

The population of the village in 1700 was 400, in 1770 650, and early in 1800 it was 856, having more than doubled itself in a century. The last census taken in 1931 showed that the population of Randwick was 630; the decrease is probably accounted for by the lack of work in the district or residents moving nearer to their work at the local mills.

"Randwick Church is mentioned in a document in the registry of the See of Worcester (to which Gloucester formerly belonged), as early as 1086, but, however, considered by the