

**"Our Village" Series
Goes to Town**

PAINSWICK

— Queen of the Cotswolds

- ★ *The Fued with the Berkeleys*
- ★ *When Roundheads Barricaded The Church*
- ★ *King Charles spent the Night*
- ★ *Illegal Cockfighting goes Underground*

TALL, blonde-haired Celts who lived on the Beacon were the first Painswick inhabitants of whom anything is known.

Goaded by fear, they built enormous ramparts round the Beacon's summit to keep out hostile neighbours and the dreaded wolf packs that howled through the forest, which then covered the entire Parish—and all England—except for a few open hill tops.

Four Roman Legions and the Emperor Claudius in person crossed the Channel in 43 A.D. to add England to the Roman Empire. Advancing westwards into Gloucestershire, they met scant resistance from the local Celts. They built a camp at Cirencester, marched on past Birdlip and built another at Gloucester, where they bridged the Severn. They also linked Cirencester to Gloucester by a dead straight road.

Gloucester became a red brick city, laid out exactly on the plan that remains today—four main streets meeting at the Cross. Stone quarried from Painswick Beacon supplied the tall columns of its public buildings and of its temples.

FINE VILLA

Some Roman-British potentate built a fine villa on the spur at Ifold (where today stands the splendid Cotswold farmhouse of that name). This Roman family with their Celtic servants, cleared the forest and farmed the land at Ifold and towards Spoonbed

summoned the Saxon Parliament to Gloucester. And Earl Godwin called out the freemen of Wessex in arms and threatened the King from the heights of Painswick Beacon and Cudhill. Godwin's name—handed down through the centuries in Painswick—has been fixed to a house below the heights on which he camped.

Walter de Lacy—one of the Norman barons who fought for William the Conqueror at Hastings—was rewarded with the gift of Wicke and several other manors.

The Domesday Book recorded the adult population of Wicke in 1085 as 70 strong, including one priest and three riding men of de Lacy's.

KING'S SHERIFF

Wicke eventually passed to Pain Fitzjohn, who was one of several able officers invited over from the Continent by King Henry I, to enforce the royal will throughout the realm. As the King's Sheriff he also collected the royal revenues so necessary to the law-enforcing rule of King Henry.

Pain built a small castle on the site of what is now Castle Hale. And the Wicke came to be known as Pains' Wicke—or Painswick.

Pain had good need of this castle when his master King Henry died in 1135 and strong government collapsed into bloody anarchy, as Henry's daughter Matilda and her cousin Stephen, battled for the Crown for 19 years—"nineteen

But it was the Jurymen chosen by their fellow Commoners at the Court Baron who decided, in consultation with the lord, all matters affecting the Common lands where the Commoners grazed their geese, pigs, sheep and beasts.

GREAT AGRICULTURALISTS

The De Munchensi were great agriculturalists and sportsmen—Sheepscombe still primaeval forest filled with wild boar and red deer, was their favourite hunting ground.

A public well was sunk in Friday Street, and in Bisley Street—then the main street of the village—stood a High Cross round which four times a year was held a lusty three-day fair.

Ale was plentiful and cheap in the inns, and an elected Ale Taster—no doubt a coveted appointment—kept the innkeepers' standards up to the mark.

In the 14th century the Talbot family proved splendid lords of the manor. The best loved of them all in Painswick was that dauntless veteran of 40 pitched battles with the French, John Talbot.

To him the Commoners owe their principle rights, and his name has been handed down in Cranham and Painswick as "King Talbot".

STUBBORN CAMPAIGN

Eleven of the sixteen Painswick men who followed him to one stubborn campaign of the French wars were killed in action, and out of respect for their gallant service he granted considerable privileges.

He held a famous Court Baron on his return to Painswick from this campaign in 1442. The usual 20 Jurymen were elected—including eight citizens of Painswick Town.

John Talbot agreed to the abolishment of the charge levied on beasts and sheep grazed on the Common. Hitherto the widows of Commoners had only been allowed the use of their late husbands' ration of Commonland grazing provided they remained "unmarried and chaste". Now they might remarry and still enjoy that ration. John Talbot also let out to tenant farmers the land in Painswick which he had farmed himself—then and there sealing the leases with his own hand.

TRADE BOOMING

Wool and the cloth trade were booming, and most unmarried women were now "spinsters". A fine new street—New Street—was built in



Painswick—a "Stroud News" aerial photograph.

and settle their quarrel in a pitched battle. The Berkeleys answered, telling Thomas to meet them next day at Nibley Green, where the truth shall be shewed by the mercy of God".

Of the details of this battle—the last ever fought in England between two private armies—we know little. Casualties were high—for a vast communal grave has been uncovered close to Nibley Church, containing

Commoners at the Court Baron felt compelled to ration out the Commonland grazing. Two of the Cooke family, a Whitting and a Gardener were among the Jurymen elected at a Court Baron held in 1548, when they decided that "no dogges shall be loosed on the Beacon" so as to stop "the worrying of sheep pasturing there".

WARNED

rain the Royalist army withdrew from their trenches around Gloucester at the approach of a Roundhead army from London. They spent a miserable storm-swept night on the summit of Painswick Beacon, sleeping in the ditches between the old Celtic ramparts. The boy Prince of Wales asked his father if they could now go home. And the King answered: "My son, we have

farmhouse of that name). This Roman family with their Celtic servants, cleared the forest and farmed the land at Ifold and towards Spoonbed.

So for some 350 years Painswick formed part of a civilisation and an Empire that stretched from Wales to Damascus and Jerusalem.

A grim fate awaited the Romanised Celts of Painswick when around 400 A.D. the Roman Emperors were forced to withdraw from Britain the protecting Legions. The Celts were now no match for the Saxon pirates who poured across the North Sea from Germany and swarmed westwards through England—killing looting and burning.

Ifold's looted villa was left silent and deserted. A band of Saxons, who had brought with them their Saxon women, cleared the forest from an area around what is now St. Mary's churchyard. Painswick and built a small "Wicke"—the Saxon word for village.

SACRIFICED

With the coming of Christianity, they built a church on the site of our present parish church—the site where they had formally sacrificed to Wotan, to Thor the god of thunder and to all the warrior gods.

Wicke's last Saxon thegn was a loose and riotous liver called Ernisi, who in old age turned monk. His chieftain was the great Earl Godwin of Wessex, whose son Harold was to be the last Saxon King of England.

A bitter quarrel broke out in the summer of 1051 between Earl Godwin, champion of the native Saxons, and King Edward the Confessor. Edward

governments collapsed into bloody anarchy, as Henry's daughter Matilda and her cousin Stephen, battled for the Crown for 19 years—"nineteen long winters when men said Christ and his Saints slept".

Pain himself was shot dead by a Welsh archer while besieging a Welsh tribal stronghold in 1137, and Painswick passed to his son-in-law, Roger FitzMilo. He spurned Pain's daughter, Cecilia when she bore him no children but his stormy life ended as an Augustinian monk of Llantony abbey in Gloucester.

OUTLAWS

Outlaws stole out of Cranham forest one night in 1204 and broke into and ransacked the house of one Geoffrey of Painswick. To leave no witness, they murdered him, his wife, his mother and his three children. Richard of Rudge Hill was more fortunate. He and his whole family were robbed in their home by night in the same year and left trussed up.

Luckily for Painswick, Agnes—Pain's younger daughter—had brought the manorship into good hands by her marriage with Warine de Munchensi, who proved a most able lord of the manor.

Four policemen—known as "tithingmen"—were elected by the Commoners of Painswick at the Court Leet of the manor held by De Munchens. Accused were brought before the jurymen elected at the Court Leet. Those found guilty were sentenced by the lord. Men were fined for fouling springs, diverting streams, encroaching on highways and one for an ill conducted ale house.

wool and the cloth trade were booming, and most unmarried women were now "spinsters". A fine new street—New Street was built in Painswick around 1428.

John Talbot had married as his second wife a most formidable and strong-minded lady called Margaret, who claimed she, and not her cousin Lord Berkeley, was the rightful owner of Berkeley Casile and its manors.

A certain David Woodburne of Painswick was unlucky enough to be chosen by Margaret to deliver a summons on Lord Berkeley, summoning him to a legal court action. But Lord Berkeley forced Woodburne to chew up and swallow the summons—wax seal, parchment and all.

Now it was open war. Painswick was plundered by a Berkeley raiding party. And the son of John and Margaret—who had been created Viscount Lisle—set fire to the town of Berkeley outside its castle's ramparts. At one point in the long quarrel Lisle took possession of Berkeley Castle and Margaret went to live there.

Lord Berkeley, however at 63, brought off a stroke of genius. He succeeded in marrying Joan Talbot, John Talbot's daughter by his first marriage. This marriage paid Lord Berkeley most handsome dividends. He recovered his liberty and his Castle, Margaret—with what dignity she could—was forced to leave Berkeley Castle, taking her grandson Thomas Talbot with her.

Thomas Talbot sent the Berkleys a written challenge on March 19, 1469, taunting them to come out of Berkeley Castle

between two private armies we know little. Casualties were high—for a vast communal grave has been uncovered close to Nibley Church containing 150 skeletons. At one moment in the battle Thomas Talbot raised the visor of his helmet. And in that moment he reeled from his horse with an arrow quivering in his cheek, to be stabbed to death by a Berkeley retainer as he lay helpless in his heavy armour. The shock was too great for his young bride and 16 days later she had a miscarriage.

IMPOVERISHED

Much and ever increasingly impoverished, Thomas Talbot's sister and her daughter, Elizabeth, lived on at Sheepscombe in the hunting lodge that is now the Lodge Farm. Hopelessly in debt, Arthur and Elizabeth were forced to sell out in 1539, they sold to Henry VIII's minister Thomas Cromwell, on the strict understanding that Kingston of Miserden was never to have the Manor. Next year Thomas Cromwell was beheaded on Tower Hill, and King Henry VIII gave the manor of Painswick to the Kingstons.

Kingston—as Provost Marshal of the Crown—ruthlessly suppressed the Roman Catholic uprisings in Devon and Cornwall in 1547, hanging the Mayor of Bodmin. As a warning to local Catholics he erected a brand new gallows on the green at Sheepscombe, the stump of which was still visible in 1800.

Sheep—whose wool was the cause of Painswick's prosperity and of her splendid streets and farm houses—were now being bred in such vast numbers that the Jurymen elected by the

worrying of sheep pasturing there".

WARNED

John Ireland, the town's butcher, was told by the Court to stop throwing dung out into Friday Street, and was warned that if he ever again washed pigs' entrails in Tibbywell, he would be fined 6/8.

Friction between King Charles I and a small majority of the House of Commons blazed up into the great Civil War in 1642. Gloucester City declared itself for the Roundhead cause, Painswick for the King's.

Sir Ralph Dutton, to whom Jerningham, Kingston's son, leased the manorship in 1636 was a devoted Royalist. With a drummer riding behind him to attract a crowd, he set out from Sheepscombe to raise a regiment for the King. Gloucester City sent its Under-Sheriff and 10 Cavalry troopers to arrest him. Cornered by them beside the Severn, Dutton rode his horse into the water and—swimming it right across the river—escaped.

Dutton led the Royalist assault on Bristol in July, 1643 and Bristol taken, King Charles next moved against Gloucester. On August 7 he slept at Berkeley Castle, on August 8 at Cirencester.

On August 9, King Charles reached Painswick, where he spent the night and issued a proclamation to his army—signed with his own hand—reminding them that the penalty for any act of looting was death. Next day he rode down the Portway to direct from Matson House the siege of Gloucester.

Sixteen days later in driving

asked his father if they could now go home. And the King answered; "My son, we have no home".

So the Royalist column wound its way through Cranham forrest—marching to its head-on encounter with the London Roundheads near Newbury.

Roundhead cavalry from Gloucester looted the corn from the great barn at Holcombe and carried off two tenant farmers, whom they declared to be "malignants" as the Roundheads called all Royalists.

Royalist infantry, some 2,000 strong, were then sent to Painswick to prevent her against such raids and to deny the Gloucester Roundheads the food from her farms. On Monday, February 5, 1644, a Roundhead force issued out of Gloucester through Brookthorpe, and climbed stealthily up the hill from Bachus Farm, and on by the disused and overgrown lane that runs across Edge Farm and Holcombe Farm, to launch an attack into Painswick. The alarm was given, the drummers beat the Royalist garrison to arms and the Roundheads were driven pell mell back down the lane, throwing away in their flight "150 very good fire Armes" and leaving 80 dead and some 20 to 30 prisoners in Royalist hands.

DEMANDS

Demands elsewhere soon after forced the Royalists to withdraw this garrison. And Gloucester promptly placed Painswick under military government. Roundhead infantry occupied St. Mary's Church and the neighbouring houses—linking