

Penhow



St. John the Baptist, Penhow.

Scrapbook.

1956

Compiled & Printed by Doris E. Jones

Introduction

Penhow is a small village midway between the towns of Newport and Chepstow. It lies four miles north of the Bristol Channel on the southern slopes of a ridge of high ground rising to 989ft. It covers an area of 1,843 acres, most of which is agricultural land, the higher ground being used for forestry. In 1801 at the time of the first national census the population was 138. Today it is approximately 400, but Penhow remains essentially a rural community.

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## Boundaries and Roads

A survey of the Boundaries of the Parish, made in 1724 on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, was walked by the Minister and Parishioners. It started on the Main Road, went through the Castle Meadow by the mear stones which are still standing, down the brook by a meadow known as Yunnis to Lodge Farm, ascending towards the Knoll along Westlone towards Salisbury Wood. From here it went down to Picked Dene across the Bowdens, up the brook to Chapel Farm, along the lane to Llandeuaude Common, then along the hedge between the lane and the Hundred Acre Wood to a mear stone at Pen-yr-heul at the end of the lane from Pencoed Castle to the Main Road. Then it passed by Hendrew Farm up the brook through Wentwood almost to Bertholey, back down through Wentwood along the brook that runs through Pen-y-worlod Farm back to the Main Road. Another record was made in 1774. The bounds of the Manor, i.e. the Perry-Herrick Estate which included a large part of Penhow and many of the adjoining villages, were last beaten in 1912.

The road that passes through the village is the main South Wales to London road and was first mentioned in records in 1798 during the reign of George III, in an act of Parliament which was passed for the repair of the road from Newport, through Penhow to the Rock and Fountain. One hundred years later conditions were still bad, for the minutes of the Parish Meeting in 1901 called attention to the state of the road, and asked that the footpath be extended from Langstone to Llanuaches. This footpath has never been provided. The work on the new road that starts at Penhow Post Office and carries on into Lanuaches, past the Rock Farm commenced in 1929 and was completed and opened in 1931 by Mr Herbert Morrison, M.P. who was then Minister of Transport. This



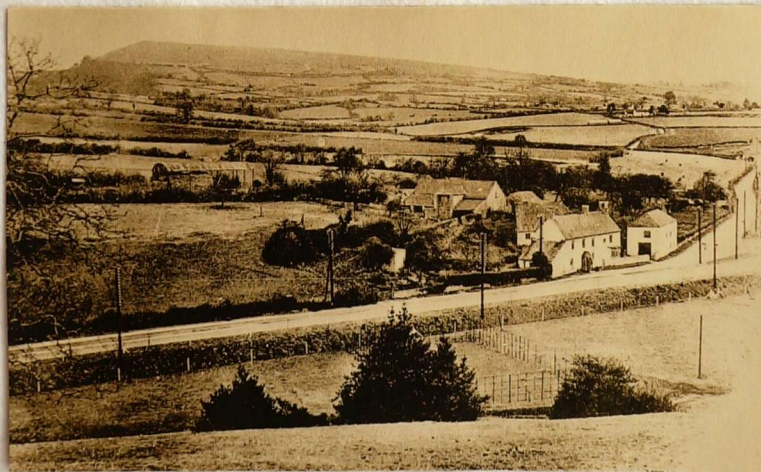
provided work for the unemployed miners during the depression.

During recent years land has been purchased and plans passed for the widening of the Main road from Langstone to Penhow Post Office, also for the widening of the road from the Groeswen Inn to Parc Seymour. It is expected that work will start on this in the near future.



Copy.

The old road from Penhow past the Rock Farm  
(Before the road widening - 1929)



Copy.

The New Road from Penhow past the Rock Farm  
(After the road widening. - 1931).

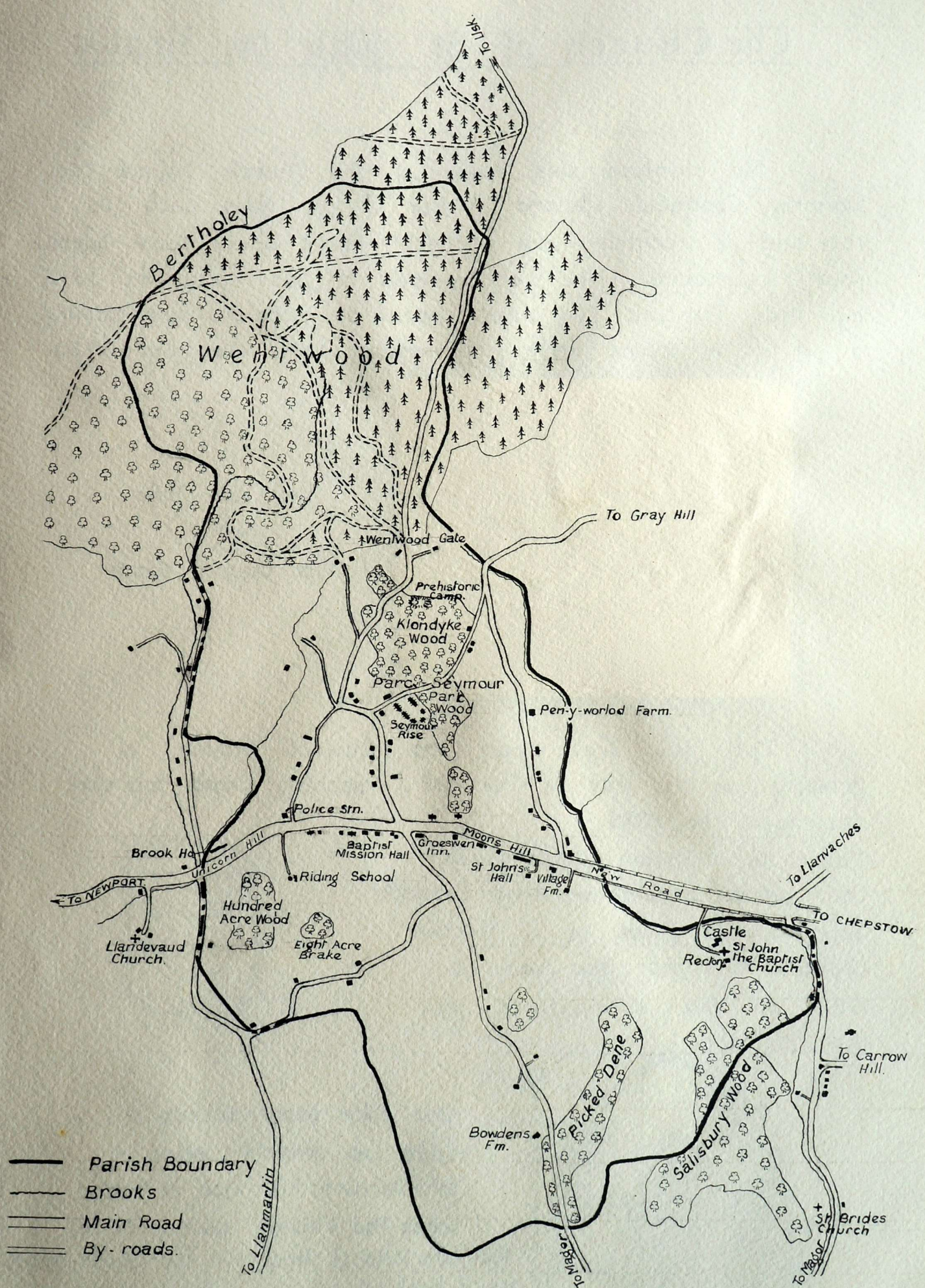












Parish of Penhow.  
 Scale:- 4 = 1 mile.



# The Church of St. John the Baptist.

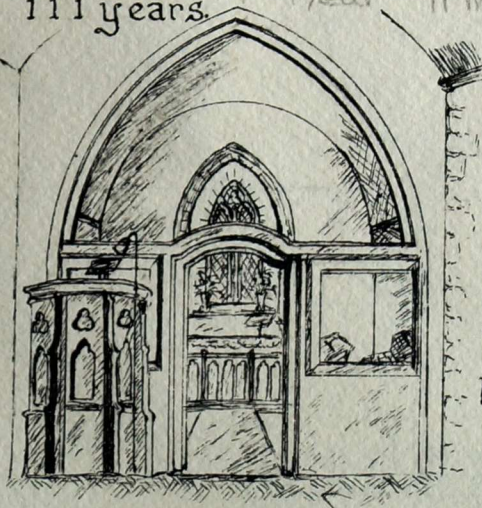
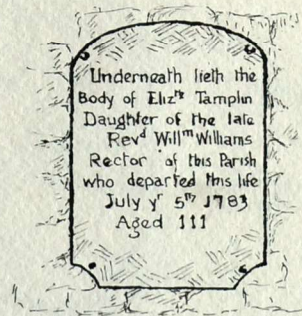
No mention was made of the Church before the Norman Conquest. Record of the Clergy goes back to 1511, and if records are correct there have been twenty-four Incumbents. One was deprived of his living in 1640 by the Puritans. The oldest book of registers now existing, a gift of W. Williams, Rector, commences with the year 1725.



The Yew Tree  
near  
the Church Porch

The Yew Tree near the Church Porch is growing on the site of the old Preaching Cross, that was destroyed in 1700.

There is a Tomb stone inside the porch commemorating Elizabeth Tamplin, daughter of a Rector William Williams. She died in 1783 at the astonishing age of 111 years. *1 year 11 months*



The plain stone Screen is quite an ancient piece of architecture, but was refaced when the Church was restored.

The two Rolls of Honour in the Church record the Sacrifice of five lives during the two Wars.

1914 - 1918

1939 - 1945

T. James

A. Goulding

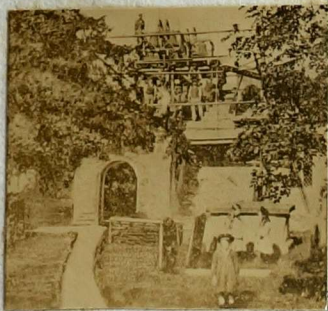
F. Lilley  
N. Vetter.

A. Harman

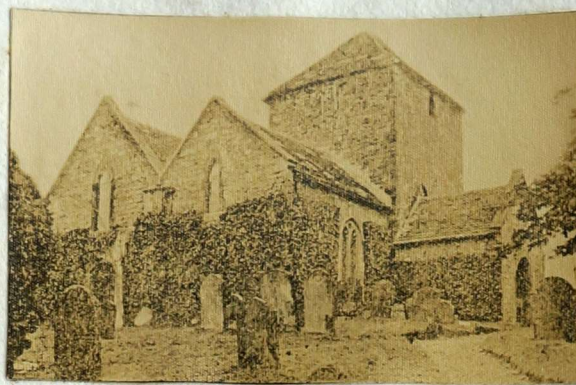








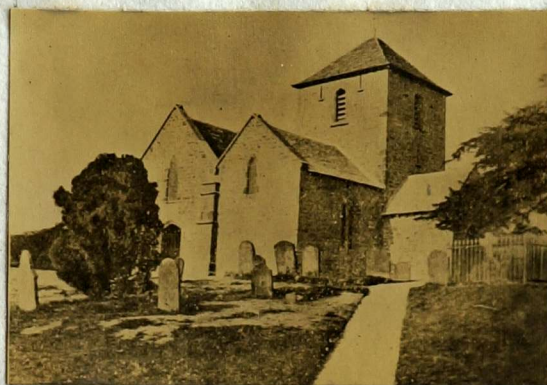
South Side and Porch



The Church  
Before and during the Restoration  
1913.



South side and Porch



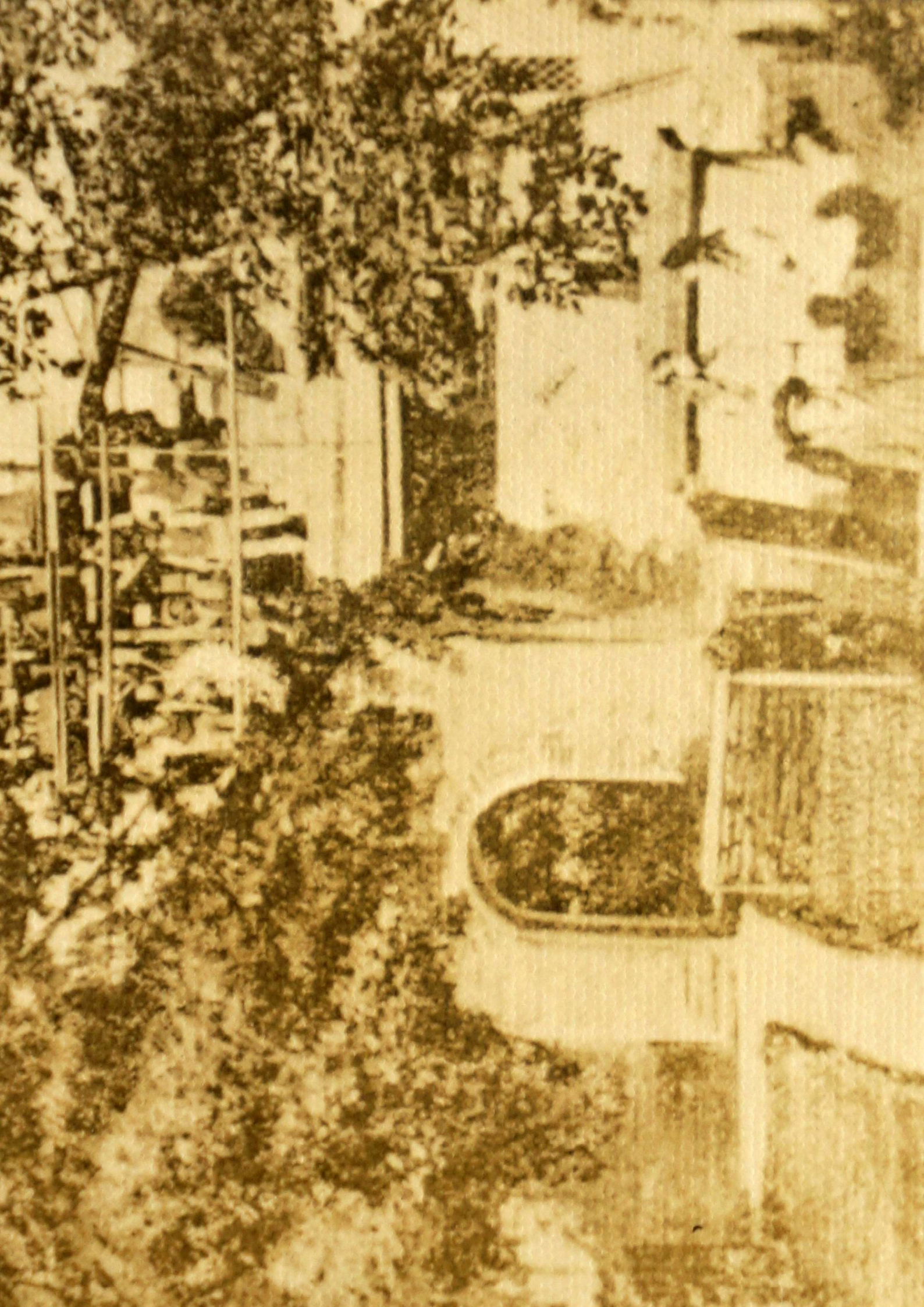
After the Restoration

The Church was restored in 1913, and the following are some of the Items of Restoration taken from a Church Magazine published early in 1915.

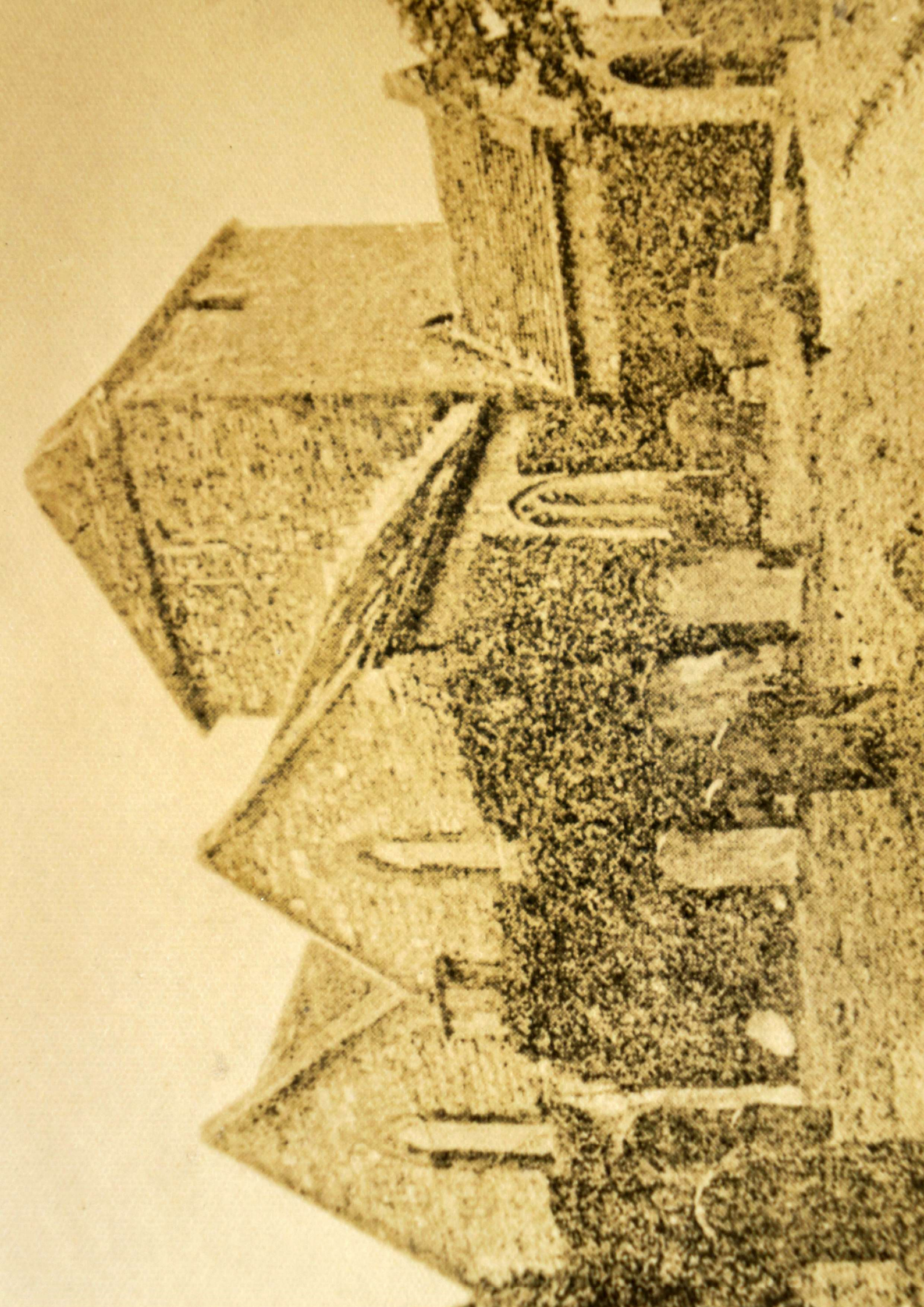
#### Items of Restoration 1913 - 1914

- Entire Church re-roofed.
- Tower almost re-built.
- Porch, S.W. and S.E. Quoins re-built.
- New Vestry built.
- All internal plaster re-faced and coloured.
- New Block Floor laid on Concrete.
- Church re-seated in Oak.
- Oak Choir and Clergy Stalls.
- Windows re-glazed.
- Drains and stone guttering introduced.

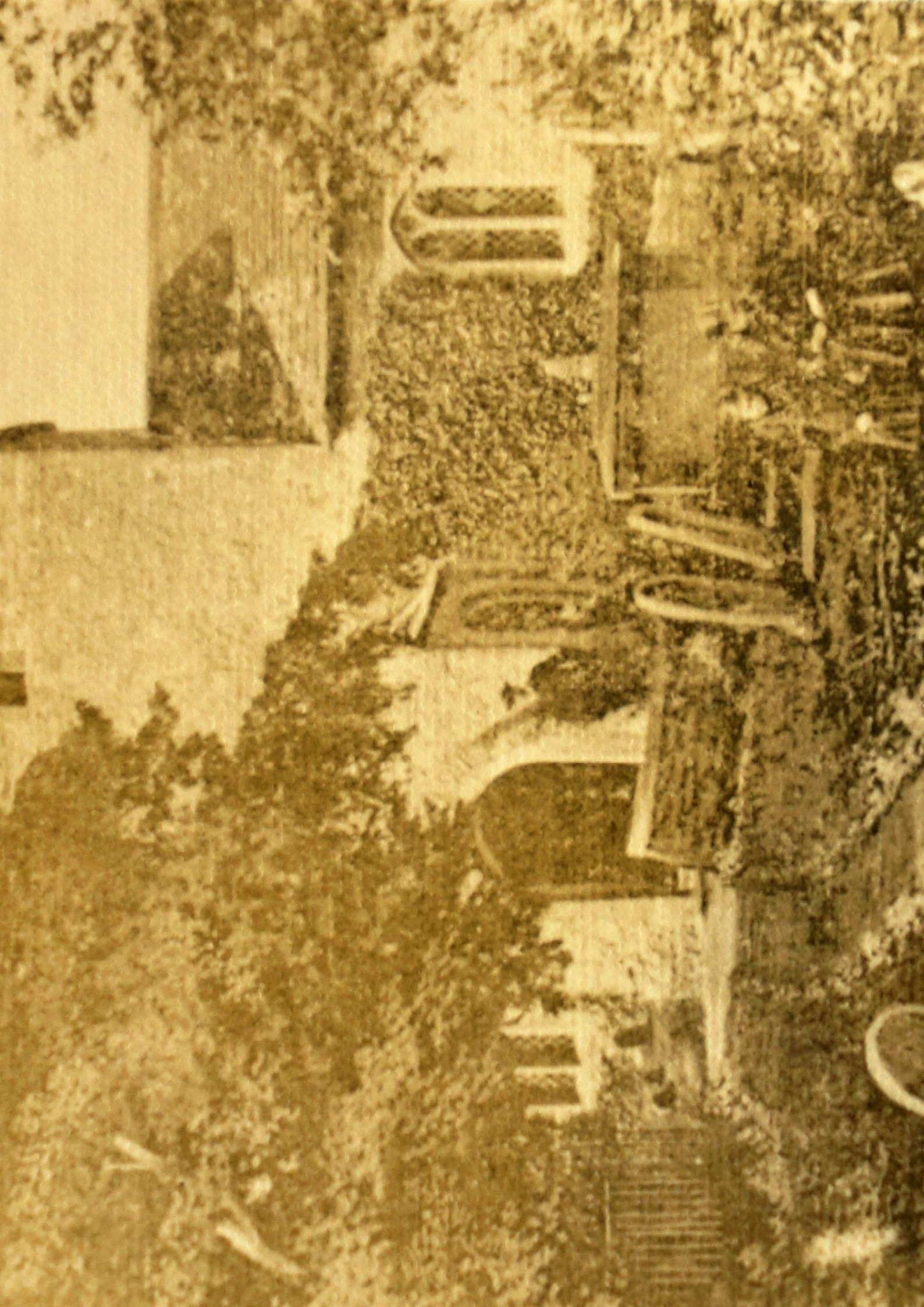




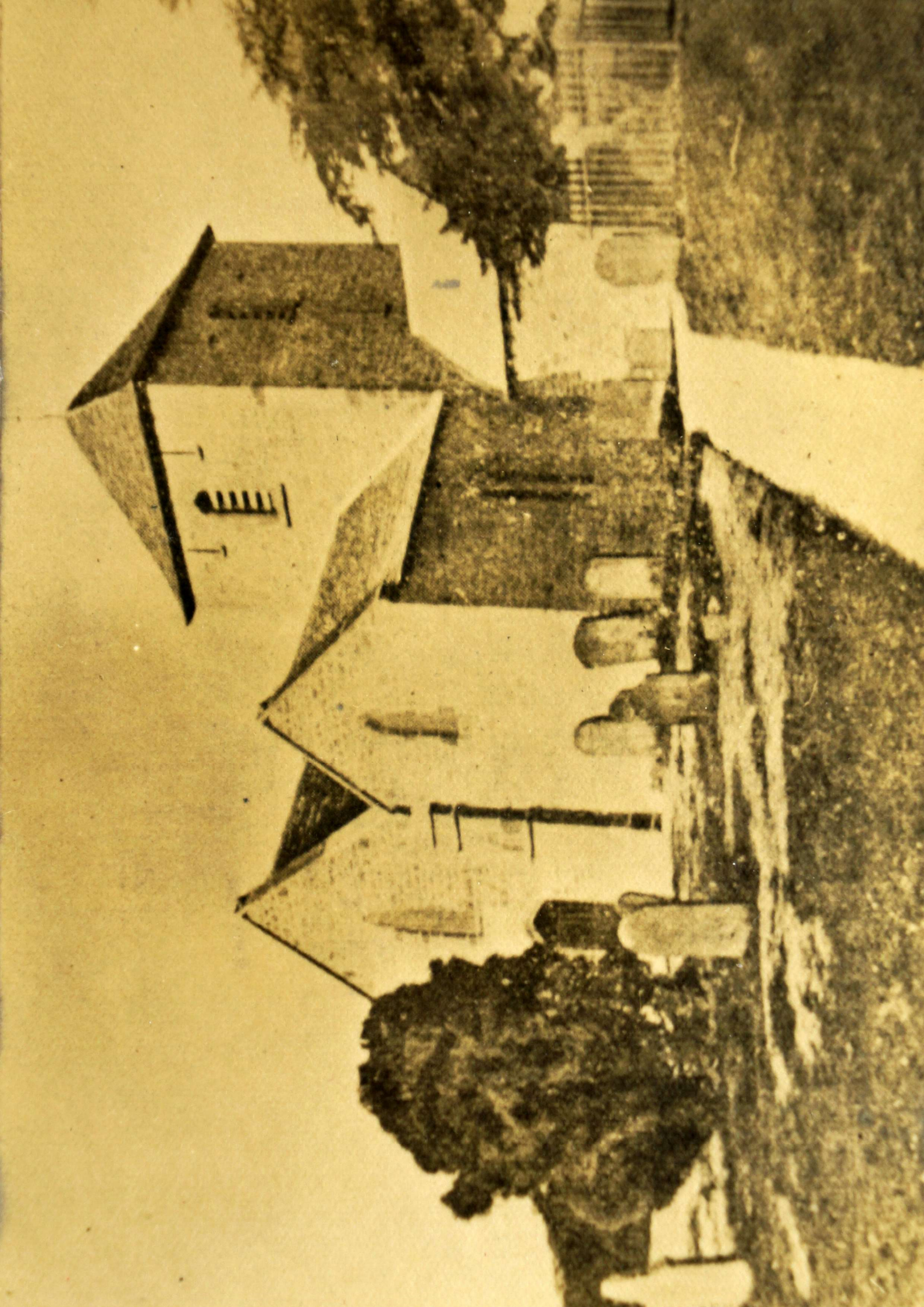














The choir and Clergy stalls were made by the local carpenter from Oak timber taken from the roof of the old Tower.

Also taken from the same magazine were the following details of the Church Plate:-

Church Plate.

An Elizabethan Silver Chalice, standing five inches high, with its Paten cover. The Cup dates circa 1580.

A Silver Chalice and Paten, presented to the Church circa 1886.

A Silver mounted Crystal Flagon, with the inscription,  
"To the Glory of God and in remembrance of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1911.  
Presented to St. John the Baptist, Penhow, by B.T. Harvey."  
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Inside the Church there is a wooden Cross that was brought back from Egypt from the Grave of Trevor James, the only Penhow man to be killed in the 1914-1918 War.

The Bells are also an interesting feature of the Church. Originally there were five bells. They were foundered by William Evans of Chepstow in 1744. The sixth Bell was added in 1928 and was given by the Rev. Thomas in memory of his late wife. At the same time he gave the Lectern and two stained glass windows.

The inscriptions on the five bells are as follows:-

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| (1) | PROSPERITY TO ALL OUR BENEFACT ^{rs} W&E 1744 | (26½ in) |
| (2) | W ^m IONES · CH : WARDEN W&E (Scroll) | (27¼ in.) |
| (3) | EDWARD WATERS GENT W&E 1744 (Scroll) | (28 in.) |
| (4) | MR W ^m COTES M ^r HENRY WATERS W&E 1744 | (30½ in.) |
| (5) | IENKIN IONES RECT'R W ^m EVANS CAST US ALL 1744 | (33 in.) |



The Scroll as on Bells Nos. 2 and 3.



A Team of Five Bellringers
before 1928



A Team of Six Bellringers
1955

The Rectory, built about 1880, is thought to be on the site of a Roman Villa, as fragments of pottery have been unearthed at various times, and ancient masonry discovered there may be of Roman origin. A builder by the name of Williams walked from Redwick to Penhow for two and a half years to build it. He was commissioned to do so by Mrs Perry Herrick and the stone used was taken from the Knoll.

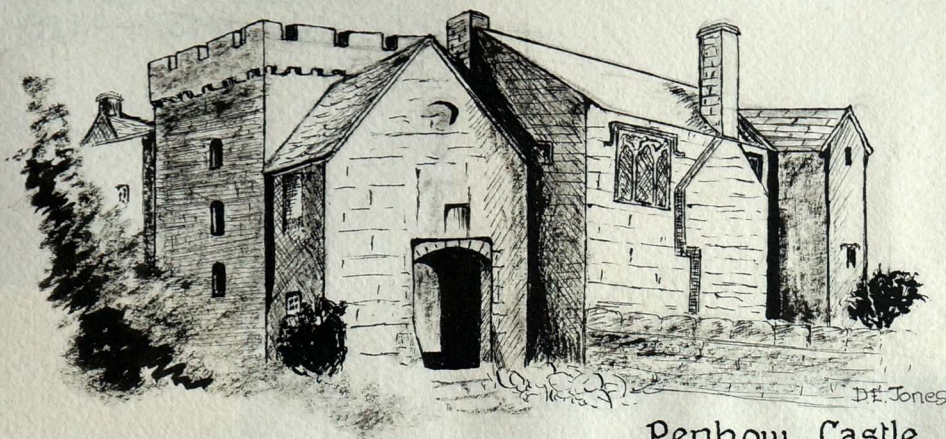


The Rectory.





Ruins and Old Buildings



Penhow Castle

According to records, one of the oldest buildings still standing in Penhow is the Castle. The most ancient part being a rectangular tower of the twelfth century with a projecting parapet. To the south side of this tower was added a forebuilding or entrance porch. An enclosed court completed the dwelling. The next additions were made in the fifteenth century when a hall and other apartments were built along the south side of the court, and lastly in the seventeenth century, probably soon after Restoration, the north-west angle of the court was filled up with a dwelling house, one end which abutted on the north side of the tower. This was one of the Agrarian Castles guarding Wentwood and was then held by William de St. Maur, a Norman Baron whose family name was changed to Seymour, from which Parc Seymour derives its name. In 1538 it passed into the hands of a family named Bowles through the marriage of a daughter. It eventually came into the Somerset family who were related to the Earl of Worcester. After changing hands several times during the years of the seventeenth Century it was owned and occupied by Thomas Lewis of St Pierre. Since 1709 it has been occupied by farmers. There was once a mill at the Castle driven by Nant-clear brook. The course of the brook was changed for this purpose, but after heavy rainfall the

brook often runs its old course.

Another old place of interest was Castell-prin or wooden Castle mentioned in "A History of Monmouthshire" by Sir Joseph Bradney and dated 1567. There is now only the wood of this name and the remains of a prehistoric camp. More recent interest was turned to this wood during the 1914 - 1918 war; two German prisoners escaped from Pen-coed Castle and lived concealed here for over a week. The remains of several old houses, that were standing within living memory are still to be found:- two on the Village Farm, one of these being in Nancy Smith's brake, two ruins in Park Wood and two on Pen-y-worlod Farm.

There were four large farms in the Parish, one being the Castle Farm, which has already been mentioned. Chapel Farm, which is situated on the extreme south-west border of the Parish is reputed to have been an old Presbyterian Church. The shape of the Farmhouse bears out this belief. Pen-y-worlod Farm, which lies to the north side of the main road, extending almost as far as Wentwood was part of the extensive Monmouthshire Estate of R. Jenkins, Esq. who resided at Frenchay Park, Bristol. These two farms were purchased by the Monmouthshire County Council and divided into small holdings of about sixty acres each, Pen-y-worlod in 1921 and Chapel Farm in 1931. Lastly the Village Farm that lies near the eastern boundary of the Village. This farm was originally known as College Farm and belonged to All Souls College, Oxford. The rent being used to maintain the College Library.

Three old houses, in and near Penhow, were originally Inns. Unicorn Inn, on the main road at the extreme west of the Parish and now known as Brook House. The Full Moon, which was later a Coffee Tavern and now a Carpenter's house and shop. The other, adjoining the village and no doubt very much connected with it in days gone by was the Rock and Fountain, an old Coaching Inn now known as Rock Farm. George Borrow apparently

spent some time there on his tour of Wales in 1854, as did Archdeacon Coxe. It is also said that the last man to be hanged for sheep stealing in the country occupied it about 1828.



The Old Groeswen

The only Inn at the present time is the Groeswen. This was built originally as a cottage early in the nineteenth Century, and became an Inn when the Full Moon ceased to function as such towards the end of the Century. It was modernised in 1940.



The Groeswen after being modernised
1956.

Two village pounds can be remembered in use, one adjoining the Post Office, and one near the Baptist Mission Hall. Remains of the walls are still to be found.



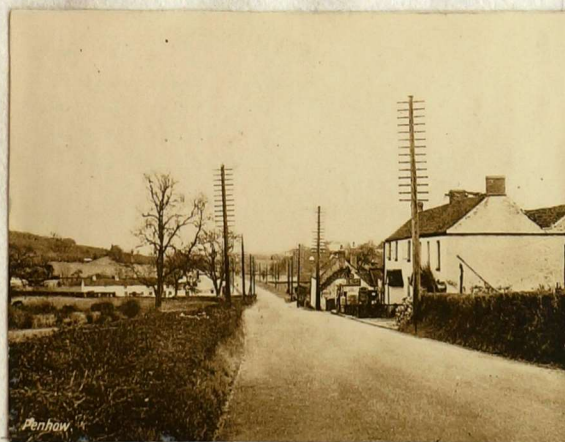


The Post Office which is also the village store, was until a few years ago the local bakery. The unusual wooden roller blind, when it was fitted, aroused great interest and must have been the first of its type in the district, for it is said that people travelled many miles to see it.



The Post Office

There are only two remaining craftsman's premises, that of the Carpenter and the Blacksmith; the latter still carries on the ancient craft of horseshoeing as well as electric welding.



The Carpenters house and shop that was originally "The Full Moon"





Local Activities and Celebrations

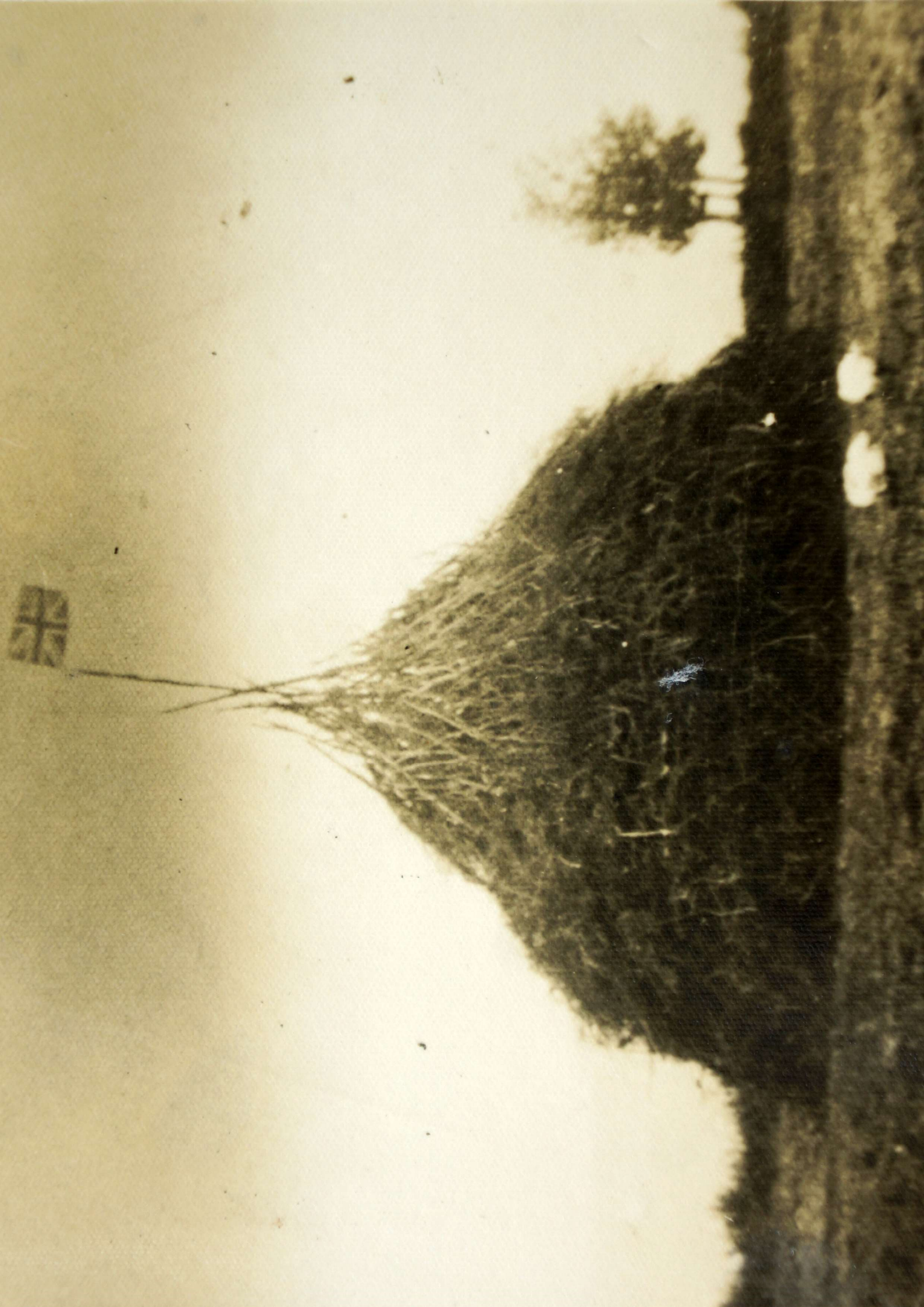
The first Parish Meeting was called on December 4th 1894 and the following are the minutes recorded:-

"At a meeting held at St. Brides Schoolroom on December 4th 1894 Stephen L. Baker was unanimously appointed Chairman. It was proposed by Mr G. Price, and seconded by Mr. A. Roach, that Penhow has a Parish Meeting. An ammendment was proposed by Mr. Thos. Basham, and seconded by Mr. F. Collingbourne, that we should have a Parish Council. Nine voted for the ammendment and thirteen for the original and it was therefore decided to hold Parish Meetings with Stephen L. Baker, Chairman."

The Parishioners of Penhow have always joined in all National festivities in the typical village style. Tea and sports have usually been the programme on all Coronation, Jubilee and Victory days. The Coronation of Her Majesty Elizabeth II., however, had a more modern atmosphere with the introduction of television. Two large sets were installed for public viewing, one in the Church, and the other in the Baptist Mission Hall, in addition to the customary celebrations. Fireworks were a special feature at the lighting of the Bonfire. Also to commemorate the occasion, a red Oak tree was planted in the grounds of the Church Hall by the Rector, the Venerable Archdeacon of Monmouth, S. M. Davies.



A Typical Festive Bonfire
(Actually built for the Coronation of His Majesty King George VI)
May 12th 1937.



As far back as 1907 a Glee Party was formed. Mr. S. Reese was the conductor and rehearsals were held at Brook House.

At the commencement of the 1914-1918 war a number of Penhow Boys joined the forces, and the ladies joined in the activities of the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. Comforts were made for the troops overseas. A Family of seven destitute Belgian refugees were housed and cared for by the Parish. They were maintained until the end of hostilities. A sad thing happened whilst they were here, they lost a young son after an operation and he was buried in Penhow Churchyard. A few years after the war a Social Club was started. This was very successful and a piano, games etc. were purchased for use in the hall. There was also a strong Association football team and an active tennis club. The football team was reformed after the second world war and at present are in the South Monmouthshire League.

In 1937 a Post of the Royal Observer Corps was formed. They went into action on the morning of the outbreak of war in 1939, and the Post was fully manned day and night, throughout the war years. The Corps was temporarily stood down from 1945 until 1946 when it was reformed. Fortnightly meetings and summer weekend exercises are still regularly attended.



The Royal Observer Corps.
1939 - 1945

Another of the National Defence organizations was the L.D.V. that was formed in May 1940 and eventually became G. Company, 2nd Mons. Battalion of the Home Guard. Their duties included motor patrolling, guarding Wentwood reservoir, Newport station and the local Observer Post.



During the war the Women's Voluntary Service had a strong branch in the village. Among their many activities they organised the A.R.P. and First Aid classes, helped with the evacuation of London children, and the clerical work of local Authorities, collected salvage and last but not least pie making. Penhow and Langstone combined for this, and together they made many thousands of meat pies for local parishes. The following report appeared in the South Wales Argus at the time.

" Pie-Making at Langstone and Penhow.

Have you ever seen a pastry-rack nearly six feet long and nearly two feet wide? Neither had I until the day I called to see the pie-makers at the villages of Penhow and Langstone (writes a Special Correspondent.)

Long accustomed by war-time rationing to small quantities in cooking, it made my mouth water to see scores of delicious looking meat-pies newly taken from the electric oven cooling on these large racks. (When I examined the racks more closely, I discovered they were A.R.P. stretchers!)

I was told by the ladies in W.V.S. overalls that their members spend every Wednesday (working in fortnightly turns) making meat-pies for agricultural workers. As there is a lack of British Restaurants in the rural areas, This service is much appreciated.

Since January, 1944, when a demonstration was given by Miss Evers, of Newport Electricity Department, over 50,000 pies have been made. The helpers give their services voluntarily. Most of them are members of the Women's Institutes as well as of the W.V.S.

One old lady of 86 has made it her responsibility to peel and prepare all the potatoes (mixed with meat for filling the pies), and this is her special contribution to the war effort at Penhow. During the snowstorm this year, women who had walked two miles through the snow stuck at their jobs all day and stood on thick mats to keep clear of the water on the flooded floor.

In the early months of the of the scheme the

the pies were made at Langstone Chapel vestry. Penhow W.V.S. made the pies one week, and Langstone W.V.S. the next. By April the demand for the pies exceeded the supply, so it was decided to ask the Church authorities for the use of the hall at Penhow, and this they kindly granted.

The pies are retailed at threepence each, and the profit on each is one farthing. Eventually the profits will be divided between various good causes, such as the Red Cross and Welcome Home Fund."

A meeting was called on December 1st. 1941 to discuss the formation of a branch of the Women's Institute and the first meeting was held on December 8th 1941. One of the first steps taken to get extra amenities for the Parish, was a resolution forwarded to the Secretary of the Monmouthshire Nursing Association, that a District Nurse was urgently needed in Penhow. This resulted in the Village being covered by the Nursing Association. During the war years many functions were held by the Institute to raise money for charities, including the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and Toc H. Over £108 was raised for the Welcome Home fund and two fetes which were held realized the magnificent sum of £408 for the Red Cross. A preservation centre was formed in 1943 by members and over 2,000 lbs of Jam was made under the supervision of the Ministry of food, to supplement the National larder. A canning machine was purchased and much surplus fruit was preserved in this way. The Produce Guild is a major interest of the Institute, an annual Show for preservation and cooking was first held in 1948. A silver Rose Bowl is held for a year by the member gaining the highest number of points. In 1949 the branch first entered the County Produce Guild co-operative competition. They won the Muriel Davies Challenge cup for four successive years and a Replica was presented to the branch as a memento of this achievement. At the Coronation

festivities the children's tea was organised by the W.I. and souvenir spoons were also given to all children of the village. Each Christmas for the past two years members have filled stockings for children in hospital.



Members of Penhow W. I. with the Muriel Davies Challenge Cup.

At a Parish meeting in 1943 it was proposed that a Welcome Home Fund should be started for members of the forces from the village. A Committee was formed to organize money raising efforts, and a total sum of £370 was collected. This was shared among the 38 members of H.M. Forces, and was presented at a special function after the war, by the oldest inhabitant, the late Mrs. J. Price.

A new point to point race course was made in 1953 by members and followers of the Llanguibby Hunt at Penhow. The course of three and a half miles, runs over the Bowdens and Chapel farms. The meetings held each year in the spring have attracted large crowds to this particularly beautiful setting. A Riding school has recently been established in the village, providing many hours of relaxation and pleasure for both children and adults, from Newport and surrounding villages.



Public Services

Prior to a postal service from Magor which started in 1896, the post was carried daily on foot from Caerleon. The first telegraph line was connected to the Post Office in 1898, and the telephone was installed in 1905. A public telephone was first brought into use in 1911, and the exchange was installed in 1927. In 1948, land was purchased and an automatic exchange was built at Parc Seymour. A savings bank office was established at the Post Office in 1900.

In 1894 work commenced on the reservoir at Wentwood and was completed in 1904. This made it possible for houses on the main road to have water laid on, however, it is only recently, that all but a few very isolated houses have been connected.

A gas main was laid through the village in 1938, enabling a few houses to have this amenity laid on. This was followed by electricity in 1939. Schemes are in hand that will supply most of the remaining outlying places, which do not at present receive this service.

A locally owned bus service that was running for a few years before 1921, was then taken over by the South Wales Bus Company, and subsequently by the Red and White Bus Company. At the present time, half hourly bus services run through the village to Newport and Chepstow. In 1949, public subscriptions enabled two bus shelters to be built.

There has never been a school in the village, but the schools of the adjoining villages of Langstone and St Brides, Netherwent, are available to local children under eleven years of age. Over that age they travel either to Chepstow Grammar School, Newport Technical College or Rogiet Secondary Modern School.

The first Police Officer, P.C. Dowden, was stationed at Penhow in 1881. It is interesting to note, that the first member of the Monmouthshire Constabulary to use a bicycle in the course of his duties, was P.C. Hatherall when stationed at Penhow in 1894. He still lives near Abergavenny in his 90th year.

Notable People

In bygone day many notable families resided at the Castle. Among the earliest, mentioned in 1240 was Sir William de St Maur, or Seymour. Later, through marriage with the Seymours, the family of Sir Thomas Bowles lived here, from whom the ducal house of Somerset descends.

Sir Henry Billingsley who was Sheriff for the County in 1599 also resided here for many years.

In the 17th Century the manor, which included the Castle, belonged to Thos. Lewis of St Pierre. His son George lived here and served in the office of Sheriff in 1698. Also in the Parish in the same century, probably at Pen-y-worlod, lived Sir Edward Morgan. He was Sheriff in 1602 and a Member of Parliament 1621-1622.

The village shoemaker in 1841 was Mr Ebenezer Jones who employed several men and apprentice: He used to travel by ferry to Bristol, to buy leather for his trade. There are still many of his descendants living in the village.

In recent years the most notable person connected with the parish was Mrs Perry-Herrick. She was a kinswoman of John Cave of Bristol, who sold the Castle and Estate to her husband William Perry-Herrick of Beaumanor, Leicestershire, about 1861. Outliving her husband by many years, Mrs Perry-Herrick took a great interest in the parish, frequently staying at the Castle when visiting her tenants. She was indeed a great benefactress, especially to the Church, becoming



Mrs Perry-Herrick shortly before she died in 1915.

Pratoness in 1880. The New Rectory was built at her expense. She later provided a sum of £300 for the building and



Twentieth Century Buildings

Early in the Century, in 1909 the Mission Hall was built to commemorate the Centenary of the Bethany Baptist Church, Llanuaches on a site near the old pound given by Mr Thos. Basham. The foundation stones were laid by Mr. H.J. Thomas, Mr Charles Pullin, Mr. D. Roger Evans and Mr. Thos. Basham, J.P. who opened the Hall on completion in 1911.

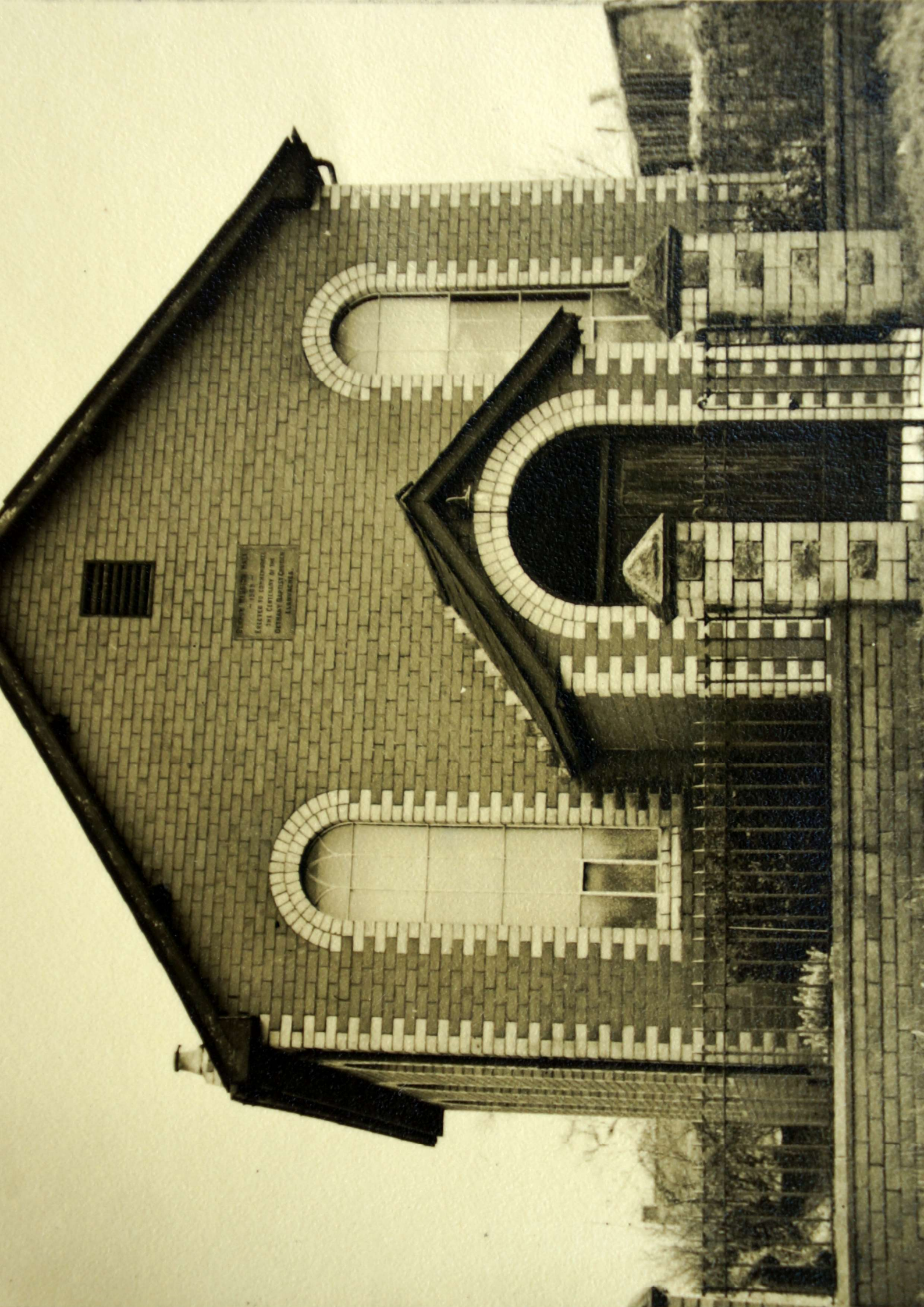


The Baptist Mission Hall.

St. John's Church Hall was built at the same time as the Restoration of the Church in 1913. The whole cost of the erection and furnishing was borne by Mrs. Perry-Herrick and the stone was quarried from the Village Farm. It was built on a site purchased from Glebe Land, just off the Moons Hill. The foundation stone was laid by the Venerable W. Conybeare Bruce, Archdeacon of Monmouth on September 10th 1913 and was opened on December 4th 1913, by Miss E. Radcliffe.



St. John's Church Hall.



EDWIN W. BROWN, M.D.
DEDICATED TO THE
THE CHURCH OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1885



furnishing St. John's Hall. In 1913 she contributed £1,167 for the Restoration of the Church. When she died in 1915 the parishioners in Memory of her kindness and generosity installed a stained glass window above the altar in the Church

At the time of the Restoration of the Church the Rector was the Rev. C. H. Winter, Senior Student, London College of Divinity 1899-1900. He now resides at Grayshott, Surrey, and is over 90 years of age.

Alderman Thomas Dufield, who was born at Penhow Castle in 1851 and resided there for many years, represented the district on the County Council, was chairman of the Newport Board of Guardians, and of the Magor Rural District Council. A prominent business man he founded an Agricultural Stores in Newport, in partnership with Adam Frost, a descendant of John Frost who took part in the Chartist Riots. He died in 1926, and left a sum of money in his will for a stained glass window to be put in the Church, in memory of his Mother and Father.

In 1921, the Rev. A. H. Thomas was inducted to the living of Penhow, and in the same year was appointed Chaplain to the High Sheriff. He married Miss Elenita Llewelyn, sister to Sir Leonard Llewelyn. This family were pioneers in the Coal mining industry in South Wales.

The Venerable Archdeacon S. M. Davies, M.A. accepted the living in 1943 and remained until he retired in 1953. Educated at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, he was a keen sportsman and obtained a blue for running. He was succeeded by the present Rector, the Rev. G. Lewis.



The Induction of the Rev. G. Lewis
with his predecessor the Ven. Archdeacon of Monmouth

The present Councillor, G. T. Weekes, Esq. has represented Penhow on Magor and St. Mellons Rural District Council since 1942, being elected Chairman in 1955.



It was recorded in the minutes of a Parish meeting in 1919, that it be requested that six Council Houses should be built, but as no applications from prospective tenants were received, it was decided to let the matter drop. The matter of Council Houses again arose in 1943, when a letter was read at a Parish meeting from Magor and St. Mellons Rural Council, asking the Parish to submit to them, suitable sites for the building of eight post war houses for the working class.

No other public buildings were erected until shortly before the Second World War, when a temporary Observer Corps Post was built, near the top of the Bowdens lane. This was later demolished, and a permanent post was built in a slightly better position, commanding a view of the Bristol Channel.

The first buildings to be built after the war were the automatic telephone exchange at Parc-Seymour and the Television Repeater Station, situated near the Groeswen.

In the post war development plans, Penhow was allocated eighteen Council houses, on condition that twelve of them were tenanted by forestry workers. A site was purchased by the district council at Parc-Seymour, and the estate named Seymour Rise. This has increased the population during 1956 by approximately 100. Throughout the century private building has gone on steadily and during the past fifty years about twenty five private houses have been built, excluding the two district council agricultural cottages that were built in 1933 and nine houses built by the Monmouthshire County Council, when the two large Estates were divided up into small holdings.



The new housing Estate at Parc Seymour

