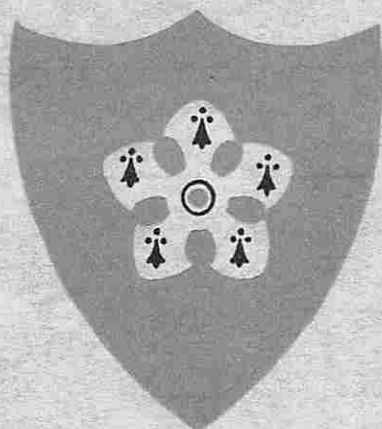


# NEWARKE SCHOOL CHRONICLE



**Fortiter et recte**

**THE NEWARKE GIRLS' SCHOOL  
LEICESTER  
1938**

## GLASTONBURY

DURING one of my holidays I went for a week with my parents to Somerset. Perhaps one of the most beautiful and interesting of the places we visited was Glastonbury, and while we were there we saw and heard many wonderful things.

This small town has many historical associations. It was once an island, but is now a peninsular surrounded on three sides by the river Brue. It was called the Isle of Avalon and is one of the most picturesque places in Somerset. Tennyson speaks of

“The fair island valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow  
Or ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns,  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound”.

These were the last words of King Arthur as he sailed away in the barge with the three Queens.

Glastonbury is still sometimes called the Isle of Avalon. It had a well advanced civilization 300 to 500 years B.C. Many wonderful specimens of arts and crafts were found there belonging to that time. To-day these specimens are to be seen in the museum which stands in the Market Place at Glastonbury.

One morning we climbed the Tor, a familiar landmark for many miles around. Beneath us stretched the vast plain of Avalon and in my imagination I pictured the plain, peopled with the Knights of King Arthur's court holding their tournaments, or riding forth to win renown with their deeds of valour and bravery, in the misty distance where the chain of Mendip hills tower above the plain, windswept and defiant.

Hidden among the trees, clustered at the foot of the Tor, lies the village itself, well protected from the fierce winds which often sweep the heights. There, close to the hill, is the Holy Well, which we discovered after we had descended the Tor. This is especially interesting, and, wondering, we followed the lady who admitted us to a house and into a beautiful old-world garden. It had never been disturbed or altered in any way. Roses and mignonette, hollyhocks and musk, grew in wild profusion, and gnarled fruit trees bent their laden boughs earthwards as if inviting one to pick the ripe fruit. Down the centre ran a long path of crazy paving, and in between the stones grew moss and small creeping plants. There was an old rustic arch covered with climbing roses and honeysuckle. In that beautiful garden, where everything was mellow, old, and sweet, there was a calm which was only broken

by the song of a bird. It was so peaceful and quiet, so far from the bustle of everyday life, that it was very easy to imagine the garden peopled with the simple folk of long ago to whom Christianity was a new faith.

We walked slowly up the path to where, sheltered by the Holy Thorn, was the Well. It had a round wooden lid with a pattern of leaves and flowers in iron upon it. The lady unlocked the heavy lid and pulled it up. As we looked down into the wondrously clear water, we heard a tremendous rushing sound. We were told that it was the water, and many gallons rushed by every minute and it had never been known to vary its supply or to change in temperature at any time.

It was here by the side of the Well that we heard the lovely old legend of Joseph of Arimathea, who, having once brought Christ to the island in his youth, returned after the Resurrection. Joseph brought with him the Holy Grail from which our Saviour and His Disciples were supposed to have drunk at the last Supper. He landed on the Isle and thrust his staff into the ground on Worrall Hill. It miraculously grew and blossomed at Christmastide. Here he built the first English Christian Church. He buried the Holy Grail somewhere near the source of the stream by which the Well is fed. Ever since then there has been a streak of red in the water.

Many times people have sought for the Holy Grail, not simply in the stories of King Arthur but in actual fact, but neither the Cup nor the source of the stream has ever been found, although it is supposed to be somewhere in the Mendip Hills.

There it stands in the heart of Somerset, Glastonbury, famous in history and legend; once the fair Isle of Avalon, where Christianity first came to England.