

## OBITUARY

The Society regrets to have lost by death Viscount Hambleden, whom archaeology has to thank for providing the beautiful little Museum at Hambleden which contains the large number of objects found when the Roman villa at Yewden was excavated.

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Another member more closely associated with the Society's own collection was the late Alderman THOMAS FIELD. It will be remembered that a brief account of the Alderman's various gifts to the Society, some of considerable value, appeared in the RECORDS, vol. XI, pp. 449-450. Mr. Field was always interested in the Society's work, although he did not profess to be a student of archaeology.

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Still another eminent member has been lost to us in the person of Mr. HENRY YATES THOMPSON, of Oving, once known as the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but still more famous subsequently for his collection of illuminated MSS. Between 1919 and 1921 he disposed of his collection at Sotheby's, and the three sales yielded a total sum of £148,139. He was very generous to many public institutions. His carriage and pair, for he never sank to the use of a motor-car, were sometimes seen outside this Society's Museum, which he visited from time to time.

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## ALFRED HENEAGE COCKS, F.S.A.

In Mr. Cocks the Society has lost one whose name will always be honoured as an antiquary of Buckinghamshire. He was born at Great Marlow, and went to Eton in September, 1864, leaving two years later, when he read with private tutors until he went to Christ Church, Oxford, in October, 1869; he was there about five years. He then went to live with his father at Marlow, and began the zoological collection which eventually became a small menagerie. When he went to live at Skirmett he had otters, badgers, wild cats, various kinds of owls and other birds. The difficulties

of procuring suitable food for his animals during the war years made him decrease the collection, and at the time of his death he had only a pair of eagle-owls. The last wild cat died at the end of 1927, having lived 16 years in captivity, which he considered a "record." It was entirely wild to the last, and spat vigorously when the door of the sleeping chamber, in which it spent the day, was opened. He also had a herd of wild white cattle, of the Chartley and Chillingham types.

He was extremely clever with animals, and, as a young man, could pick out any particular rat from a cage containing a score without being bitten.

His active connection with the Society began in 1890, when he joined the Committee; in 1893 he was made honorary secretary as successor to Professor J. L. Myres, who resigned to take up an appointment at Oxford. Mr. Cocks remained as Secretary and Curator of the Museum for nearly sixteen years; but the distance of his residence from the Museum at Aylesbury, caused difficulties, and differences of opinion with the executive caused his resignation in 1908. He contributed no less than twenty-three papers to the RECORDS, spread over volumes V to X. For some years before his death he had been engaged in writing an article upon various objects he had found at Poynetts, the small estate he owned at Skirmett, the spot being adjacent to the parishes of Hambleden, Turville, and Fingest. This paper he intended to publish in the RECORDS, but he withdrew it from the hands of the Editor to revise the dates assigned to flint implements, and the cataract which was affecting his eyesight prevented him from completing it, so far as is known.

In 1897 appeared his monumental work, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*. This vast work of 760 pages is the best account of the bells of any county which has appeared. Without knowing how many copies formed the edition, it is certain that the number must have been considerable, as it is one of the commonest Bucks books in the topographical book-seller's catalogue. The labour which it represents is

enormous; it exhibits one of the weaknesses to which Mr. Cocks was prone. His minute scholarship was procured at the expense of his taste, and he attempted to indicate the different forms of lettering by a great variety of types; this yields a truly hideous page. The same vice is to be found in papers upon the monuments of Great Marlow and Turville Churches which appeared in the eighth volume of the RECORDS, and, in a smaller degree, in the transcript of the *Register of Great Marlow*, printed by the Bucks Parish Register Society in 1904. The eye is merely irritated by the great diversity in type-founts, and any gain in accuracy is paid for by difficulty in assimilating the text.

The number of zoological papers which Mr. Cocks contributed to various learned Societies' Journals was very great—possibly nearly a hundred. He also wrote the "Mammals" section in the first volume of the *Victoria County History of Bucks*.

Mr. Cocks was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1903, and contributed to *Archæologia*, amongst other papers, an account of his discoveries when excavating the Roman villa at Yewden, Hambleton. This was another example of his thorough and laborious scholarship; and he crowned the work by arranging and labelling the articles found in a beautiful museum which the late Lord Hambleton built to contain them close to the site of the villa.

Like many profound scholars who mingle little with the world at large. Mr. Cocks did not gladly tolerate opinions which differed from his own; but in any of the fields of learning which he cultivated it needed a bold and well-informed person to challenge his statements.

The scope of our Society is wide, and in these days of the specialist there is none who can hope to master the entire range, but in such of the work as interested him we have had no more laborious or more accurate member than the late A. H. Cocks.