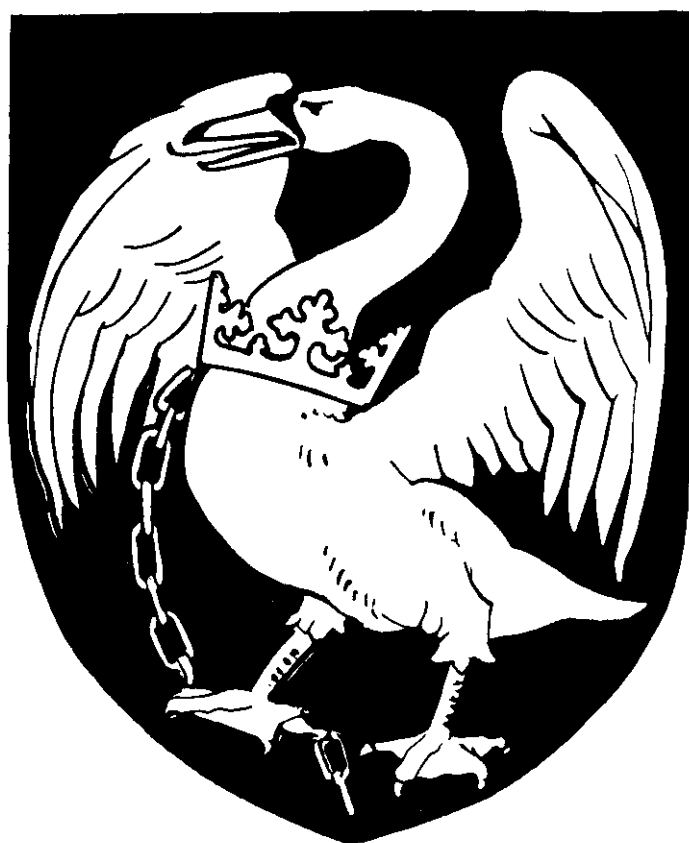


RECORDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



VOLUME XVII • PART 1 • 1961

RECORDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BEING THE JOURNAL
OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY FOR THE
COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM

Edited by
E. CLIVE ROUSE, F.S.A.
ELLIOTT VINEY

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NOTES

IVER: *Larbourne Farm, Thorney*. Mr. M. Bawtree, Hon. Treasurer of the West Drayton and District Local History Society, reports that since last summer many mammalian bones and potsherds have been dredged by the mechanical plant in the course of winning gravel beside the Colnebrook near Larbourne Farm, Thorney, in Iver parish. Following the display of representative series before the annual general meeting of the Thames Basin Archæological Observers Group, steps were taken for the various remains to be identified.

Although it appears from examination that none of the bones really adds to our knowledge of the ancient fauna, much interest attaches to some of the specimens. Thus, there is an exceptionally fine and nobly horned skull of the extinct Great Ox, *Bos primigenius* Boj., and the antlers of Red Deer in the clutch are of a much larger beast than the degenerate modern descendant of the species. So far it has not been possible to date precisely these bones owing to the lack of stratigraphical details and other aids. However, the condition of the bovid bones suggests that they were drawn from the upper part of the drowned flood-plain gravel rather than from a higher bed. Hence they may reasonably be assigned to the end of the Pleistocene epoch. On the other hand, it is likely that the cervid antlers are from the overburden and therefore very much later.

The pottery certainly comes from the capping alluvium. It is meantime of greater significance than the bones. Some of the pieces are of Romano-British ware ranging from the first to the fourth century of our era. Amongst these is the top half of a narrow necked jar, and a small piece of samian with potter's stamp, so far unidentified. Other fragments have been reconstructed as part of a blackish earthenware twelfth/thirteenth-century cooking pot. It can be assumed, therefore, that the sherds came from beds of different ages. In this regard their discovery parallels several comparable finds in the valley of the Lea in south-east Herts and east London. With its tributary channels, late Pleistocene and Holocene (geological Recent) valley deposits, this region has its counterpart in the basin of the Colne between Rickmansworth and Staines. The archæological evidence in both areas, as is now well known, indicates that these late sediments span a great period of time, in fact from the Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic) almost to the present day.

It is hoped that an excavation may soon be carried out at the Larbourne Farm site near the workings to determine the exact order here of the superficial relic-bearing beds that rest upon the gravel.

CHESHAM: *Grove Farm, Ashley Green*. During the work of converting the mediæval dwelling, long used as a barn at this important double-moated site, into a modern house, extensive foundations of very thick walls and other features have been found. These the owner, Mr. Harman, is very kindly plotting on a large-scale plan. And it is hoped to make a full survey of the area incorporating many details not shown on the Royal Commission's sketch plan, which may go far to proving the exact nature of this complex of moats, walls, gate-towers, etc., thought to have been an early fortified manor of the Cheneys, or other early owners.

CHICHELEY: *Mr. John Coales* writes that the monumental brass to Anthony Cave in Chicheley church has recently been examined and found to be palimpsest. It is hoped that further details will be published in the future.

THE MUSEUM

WORK was begun in 1961 on the reorganization of the Museum galleries, and by the end of the year the new displays in the Prehistoric Gallery were completed. Much material has been exhibited for the first time, including most of Mr. J. F. Head's important loan of prehistoric antiquities. In addition, work done on the listing of material from the county in other museums has led to the loan by the London Museum of an iron sword with scabbard and a bronze rapier from the River Thames at Datchet and a re-used tip of a bronze dirk from Langley, and to the exchange with the Cambridge University Museum of Archæology and Ethnology of a bronze rapier from Brickhill. The galleries on the ground floor were redecorated and the interior lighting of the cases improved, which has much enhanced the appearance of the material displayed.

Considerable efforts have been made to build up the archæological collections, and as a result there have been numerous and important accessions of this type of material, particularly from the north of the county, which had hitherto been under-represented. Mention should be made of the large quantity of material found in the Emberton Gravel Pit over a number of years, which has been generously either given or lent by Hoveringham Gravels Ltd., and in particular of an interesting group of twelfth-century pottery and other medieval material which was rescued during the summer from a site which was probably a wharf. It is hoped to publish a full account of this discovery in the next number of the *Records*. A number of bygoners have also been received, and amongst these are an interesting series of drainage tiles and a drainage level given by Mr. E. Bailey.

The number of visitors during 1961 was 18,232 compared with 26,073 in the previous year. This decrease is mainly due to there being no major temporary exhibition of wide popular appeal during 1961 and to the Art Gallery not being available for exhibitions during the latter part of the year.

In the earlier part of the year the Aylesbury Art Society and the Aylesbury Association held their Annual Exhibitions as usual. Other temporary exhibitions were borrowed from the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Arts Council, whilst there were also two interesting exhibitions from local collections: in June a part of Mr. Clive Rouse's collection of Chinese armorial porcelain was exhibited, and in November some of Mr. Hayward Parrott's collection of transfer-printed earthenware.

C.N.G.

REVIEW

A HISTORY OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF CHALFONT ST. GILES

by H. Adams Clarke (8½ x 5½ in. paper covers, pp. VIII + 97. Obtainable from the author, Pierscourt, Beaconsfield, Bucks. 16/- + 9d. postage).

This is a most detailed and learned essay on the history of a parish church and of matters of all sorts concerning parish life. A work on such a scale can only be justified by its being well done; Mr. Adams Clarke has done it very well indeed.

He has produced a well-balanced book, describing the fabric and its development, the fittings and the ornaments. He gives a list of rectors with valuable biographical notes, and notices the parish officers. His work is based throughout on the records, parochial and diocesan, which he has handled with skill and frequently quotes. It is to be hoped that this book will become as widely known as it deserves to be.

G.R.E.

Attention should be drawn to *THE CHILTERNs* by J. T. Coppock (The Geographical Association, 1962, 5s.), which is No. 4 of the series *British Landscape through Maps* and deals with the area covered by the Ordnance Survey one-inch Chilterns map. Following a description of the physical landscape, there is a section on the human geography sketching the development of the rural landscape from the earliest to modern times. There are twelve informative plates, mainly aerial photographs.

THE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held on 25th March, 1961, at the Museum. There were no changes in the officers of the Society. On the same day a visit was made to Doddershall Park, by invitation of our Vice-President, Ivy, Lady Pigott-Brown, who showed a large and appreciative party round her most interesting house; we were particularly glad to have with us that day our senior Member, Sir Everard Duncombe, Bart., who joined the Society in January, 1908.

OUTING

In addition to the Doddershall visit, there was another good gathering on 22nd July, when we went to Dorney Court and Eton College. At Dorney we were shown round by our member, Colonel P. D. S. Palmer, whose family have lived there for 300 years; the church, on which much excellent restoration work has been done in recent years, was also much admired. After lunch we were welcomed at Eton by the Headmaster, who gave a delightfully erudite and witty introductory talk, after which we toured the main buildings in three parties.

LECTURES

Some lectures were arranged early in the year, but due to uncertainty about the availability of the Baker Room, none was held in the autumn; it is hoped to resume regular lectures in 1962, but possibly in other centres apart from Aylesbury.

OBITUARY

The deaths of the following members were notified in 1961:

Rev. A. G. Birch, Mrs. K. C. Challinor, Mr. A. H. Egginton, Mr. G. S. Gant, Mrs. L. M. High, Mr. E. F. Richardson and Mr. E. J. Rowlandson.

Mr. Sheffield Neave, C.M.G., O.B.E., of the well-known Essex family, was Secretary of the Zoological Society, 1942-52, and Director of the Imperial Institute of Etymology, 1942-46.

Mr. Charles W. Ivatts was a well-known and much-respected Aylesbury resident; he was the seventh generation of his family to have run the family shoemaking business in Kingsbury, founded by his great-great-great-great grandfather in 1723 and still on the same site although now in other hands. (See advertisement in Centenary Number of *Records*, Vol. XV, 1.)

E.V.

PARISH REGISTERS

The Registers of the following parishes, beginning in the years indicated, have been deposited with the Society for safe custody.

Chilton, 1690
Dorton, 1694
Grandborough, 1538
Hawridge, 1785

A.V.W.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

THE 1961 season began with a lecture on 21st January given in the Museum by A. C. Christie, B.Sc., of the Forestry Commission, Princes Risborough, on "Trees".

In February an ornithological week-end was arranged in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology and the Middle Thames Natural History Society at Missenden Abbey. This included talks by M. P. M. Richards and Derek Goodwin, a film *Wild Life in Finland* and a film *The Pattern of Bird Life in the Arctic Summer* made by members of the Oxford-Cambridge Expedition to Northern Europe in 1960. Practical work on mist-netting was demonstrated at the Tring Reservoirs.

On 11th March Professor G. P. Wells, F.R.S., gave an illustrated lecture in the Museum on *The Behaviour of Worms*.

A visit was made to the Dancers End Nature Reserve in April. On 6th May Mrs. Brunner gave permission for a visit to the Lake at Wotton Underwood to look at water birds and plants. Also in May members visited Ivinghoe Beacon to look at chalk plants and Downland birds. Flowers on the chalk was the object of an outing in the Tring area on 25th June.

With the co-operation of the Warden of Missenden Abbey a successful week-end was held on 30th June to 2nd July on "Trees". Dr. J. G. Dony, A. C. Christie, J. W. Hill and Sir Edward Salisbury took part and many aspects of trees and woodlands were discussed.

Visits of general interest were made to Bledlow and Marsworth in July and August. Also in July Bernard West conducted a party on an entomologist expedition at Cadsdean. In September Philip Street led a party on a repeat visit to Woburn Abbey to look at the animals; and in October Victor Scott took a party to the Heath and Reach area to look for fungus.

The R.S.P.B. film *Reserved for Birds* was shown at the Grammar School, Aylesbury, on 20th October; the audience was smaller than usual, but there was sufficient profit for Bardsey Bird Observatory and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Trust to have a cheque towards their funds.

As it was thought that the Museum would not be available for lectures in the autumn, the head mistress of the Farmhouse School, Wendover, invited us to hold our lectures in the school. More members than usual were present. We are most grateful for this kind offer.

In the first lecture, Philip Street told us of the preservation of wild life in zoos, with special reference to Heinz Heck's famous Zoological Park in Munich.

In December Lady Barlow talked of her experiences in Prague which she had visited in June 1961 at the invitation of the Academy of Sciences. The lectures were accompanied with slides and were most successful.

It may interest members to know that an unusual vetch was found and photographed at Wilstone; it is hoped that further observations to identify this one and a previously observed vetch near Marsworth will be carried out in 1962.

Some members helped to guard the Military Orchid site in May where flowering was good and depredations nil. It was not a good year for *Pyrola Minor* in the Wendover area, though there was much vegetative growth and formation of new patches. *Assarabacca* continues to flourish in spite of the blackthorn, and it is hoped that steps may be taken to preserve the small area near Halton.

Mrs. Susan Cowdy, who is now on the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology, reports that the year 1961 was another good breeding season for wild birds after a mild winter. Bullfinches,

goldfinches and tree sparrows increased in numbers; large flocks of the two latter species were noted in the county during the autumn on their southward migration. Bullfinches have increased to such an extent that they have now been taken off the list of protected birds in our county, as a result of complaints of damage to trees by fruit farmers in the south of the county.

Chemicals used in seed dressings and insecticides in agriculture were again responsible for many hundreds of bird deaths in our county. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have been researching into the causes of deaths of birds sent for examination and have found in nearly every case death was caused through certain poisons. This year the Government has been working on similar lines, with the result that a voluntary ban has been imposed on the use of certain seed dressings in the spring of 1962. The sparrow-hawk and kestrel have declined alarmingly in our county in the last few years; there is little doubt that secondary poisoning from toxics is the cause.

The Society visited Tring Reservoirs on one or two field days. Great crested grebe remain at about twelve breeding pairs, which is satisfactory. Several species of duck and warblers also had a good breeding season. During the past two years two species in particular have become regular winter visitors: notably the goosander and bearded tit. On 16th January, over 65 goosanders were seen, and up to five bearded tits were watched in the phragmites reeds on 29th February. This latter species is very rare in Great Britain, only breeding in the large reed beds of Norfolk and Suffolk.

A bird which has developed a new habit in recent years is the great spotted woodpecker, which now visits bird tables in towns and villages throughout our county as well as elsewhere in Britain. The green woodpecker, on the other hand, is becoming scarce in some areas and the stock dove has gone into rapid decline in numbers. The collared dove is a new species for the county; somewhat like a turtle dove to look at, it has extended its range in the last two decades from Eastern Europe and now breeds in Great Britain, though has not been recorded as nesting in Buckinghamshire so far.

The British Trust for Ornithology has asked us to help with a census of common birds in our county and Victor Scott is in charge of this.

We have joined the Council for Nature, which is co-ordinating the work of those wishing to protect the countryside, and this entitles the Natural History members to the bulletins the Council publishes.

The work of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalist Trust is also making headway. Various groups have formed a conservation corps, and work is being done to clear scrub from the Trust's Nature Reserve at The Lee. Those of us who are concerned with the Natural History of this area would be interested in the work of this Trust which is intimately connected with our Society. Air Marshal Sir Robert Saundby is the President. The Vice-Presidents are Lady Barlow representing Buckinghamshire, Dr. E. F. Warbury, Oxfordshire, and The Marquess of Willingdon, Berkshire. Richard Fitter is the General Secretary and Mrs. Susan Cowdy the Buckinghamshire Secretary.

I do hope members feel that progress is being made. I would like to thank my Committee, Lady Barlow, Mrs. Cowdy, Mr. Gowing, Mr. Glover, Mr. Grimmitt, Mr. Scott and Mr. Street for their help and co-operation during the year 1961.

J.M.G.

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(as at 31st December, 1961)

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