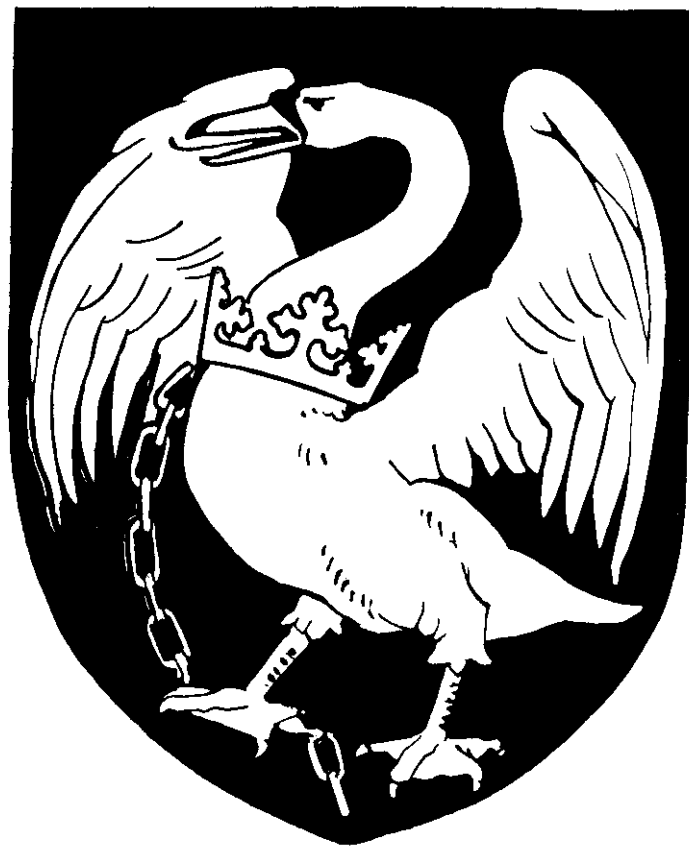


RECORDS OF
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



VOLUME XVII • PART 2 • 1962

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

VOLUME XVII. PART 2
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NOTES

WESTON TURVILLE: DISCOVERIES IN THE CHURCH. During the course of extensive restoration work in the church, a number of interesting discoveries have been made. These include a stone coffin, presumably of twelfth/thirteenth-century date, a stoup, tile fragments, etc., which have been placed in a glass case at the West end of the North aisle.

But the most interesting discoveries were of fragments of wall painting, made during the summer of 1962. I reported on these in the following terms:

In the Nave, above the south arcade, in the two central spandrels, two splendid pieces of scrollwork have come to light. These are roughly contemporary with the arcade, circa 1250. They consist of a central stem with scrolls, leaves, tendrils, and buds in a symmetrical form branching out on each side. They are exceptionally bold in design and rich in colouring, including red, yellow, orange, pink, grey and black. They are broken at the top where the wall was mutilated when the fifteenth-century clerestory was built, and are very similar to the work in Bledlow in a like position.

On the east faces of the tower, flanking the tower arch, which was constructed in the fifteenth century, within the last bay of the existing nave arcades considerable remains of painting in grey-black have been found. I uncovered one area on the south side and the subject appeared there to represent two figures embracing, with scrolls and other unidentified details and parts of figures, suggesting a composition of the Seven Deadly Sins, including Luxuria—Lust or Lechery. On the north side less is visible, but I uncovered a decorative feature looking like a pomegranate. This may well be part of a contrasting painting of the Seven Works of Mercy. The date is late in the fifteenth-century.

On the south wall of the tower a good deal of black and grey pigment has been exposed, and I uncovered a larger area. I could trace no figures or design, and the feature seems to be two superimposed dark-coloured washes.

FULMER: SITE OF THE OLD CHURCH. It is hoped to carry out an investigation in the Alderbourne Valley north of the village of Fulmer on what is believed to be the site of the old parish church on a piece of high ground in the marsh. A few tentative holes were dug on the site in 1929 as reported in *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XII, pp. 202-4. The presence of much building material was established, with some human bones, but no wall foundation could be identified. By cutting a trench north-east/south-west across the centre of the site it may be hoped to strike the foundations of the nave or chancel running east-west; and, if found, one would hope to follow these and establish the plan and dimensions.

E.C.R.

A BEAKER BOWL FROM CHESHAM. A beaker bowl (Plate XIV, Fig. 4), hitherto unrecorded, was found by Mr. Walter Stratford towards the end of the last century when foundations were dug for a wall on the site of an early cottage which had been demolished in Stratford's Yard, Chesham, NGR. 960014. The bowl is of a very hard orangey-brown ware with crude notched decoration. There are traces of a white filling in the

decoration and patches of darker colouring occur near the base and on part of the decorated area, but these may well be the result of the bowl having been used for many years as a container for paint and other substances. Ht. 106 mm.

Mr. H. W. M. Hodges has kindly arranged for a thin section to be cut from the beaker and has made the following report on this: "The body composition is essentially a fine ferruginous clay with deliberately added fillers. The fillers are (1) angular particles of felspar; (2) rather large angular particles of hypersthene. It is clear that these materials are not to be found in the Lowland area of Britain; and indeed it would be difficult to point to a reasonable source in much of the Highland area. At least were the material to come from this country it would have to be to the north and west of the Jurassic zone. It would seem much more reasonable to suppose that these materials are of continental origin and they could be found anywhere within the general context of the Alps or indeed farther east." Mr. David Clarke has kindly commented that he would classify the vessel as a unique (at the moment) beaker bowl, probably belonging to the later class of slim Rhenish bell beakers defined as his group 1/2.¹

This has been lent to the Museum by Mr. A. W. K. Stratford.

TWO SOCKETED AXES FROM PRINCES RISBOROUGH. A single-looped bronze socketed axe (Fig. 1), previously unrecorded, was dug up in the 1930s by the late Mr. Thomas Barnard on the south-west side of Park Street, Princes Risborough, on the site now occupied by a bungalow named "Le Châtelet". NGR. 806029. Axe: L. 90 mm. W. of cutting edge 45 mm.

A second single-looped bronze socketed axe (Fig. 2), noted by Mr. J. F. Head in his archaeological gazetteer,² was also dug up by the late Mr. Thomas Barnard on the same site as that above, but a year earlier. Axe: L. 104 mm. W. of cutting edge 56.5 mm.

A SOCKETED AXE FROM GREAT HAMPDEN. A single-looped bronze socketed axe of waisted type (Fig. 3) was dug up in about 1959 by Mr. W. W. Croxford at Great Hampden. NGR. 865023. The loop was broken off by the finder. Axe: L. 97 mm.

A ROMAN RING FROM STONE. An unusual Roman bronze finger-ring (Plate XV) was dug up in the 1930s by Mr. C. Bull on an allotment at Stone. NGR. 787122. The ring is formed of a thin flat hoop expanding into an oval bezel, with a male bust in relief attached. D. 20 mm. Mr. R. A. Higgins has kindly drawn attention to parallels in the Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan and Roman in the Department of Antiquities, British Museum, Nos. 1300-1302. This has been lent to the Museum by Master Peter Hurst.

C.N.G.

THE LEE OLD CHURCH. Further paintings have come to light in the old church at The Lee, as the result of the removal of a large hatchment of the Plaistowe family, behind which Mr. Michael Fletcher noticed colour and designs.

The area in question is on the North wall towards the West end, opposite the main (South) entrance; and as might be anticipated in such a position the painting consists of part of a large St. Christopher subject, apparently of about 1460-70. The hermit is seen in front of his cell, looking up at the saint, and no doubt originally holding the lantern with which to guide him across the river. The building is of grey-green tone with arched doorway, and low-pitched roof. To the right (East) can be seen the staff

¹ P.P.S. 1962, XXVIII, 378.

² *Early Man in South Buckinghamshire*, p. 163.



CENTIMETRES
INCHES

PLATE XIV. Beaker Bowl from Chesham.

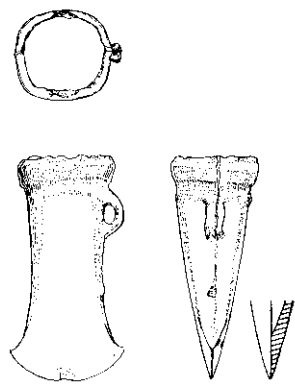
M. B. Cookson



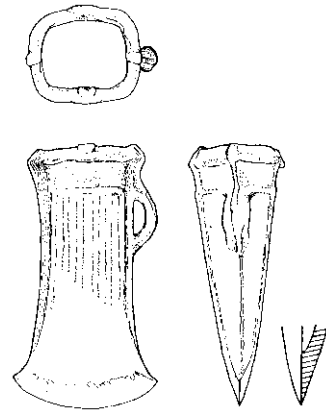
CENTIMETRES
INCHES

PLATE XV. Bronze Ring from Stone.

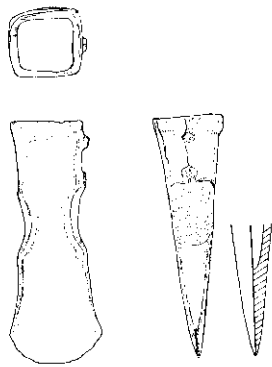
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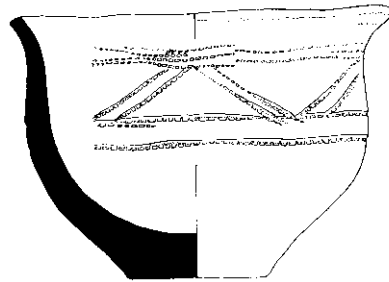
1



2



3



4

H.W.

Figs. 1-2, Socketed Axes from Princes Risborough.
 Fig. 3, Socketed Axe from Great Hampden.
 Fig. 4, Beaker Bowl from Chesham.

(ragged) held by the saint, and part of the cloak going up to the arm and hand holding the staff. The figure has been very large, and was apparently wading Westwards; later structural alterations to the building have damaged it, the top of the wall having been lowered, and a roof bracket placed in front of where the saint's face and the Christ child would have been.

The work is of very good and sensitive quality, and in a wide range of colour, including vermilion and gold. (Gold occurs on the Winslow St. Christopher).

Almost all the other traces of painting mentioned by the Royal Commission in 1910 (*Bucks, South*, Vol. I, p. 229) have now disappeared beneath subsequent lime-washing, except some of the painted panels, frames or dado divisions (visible over parts of the St. Christopher) of sixteenth or early seventeenth-century date.

AMERSHAM: SECULAR WALL PAINTING. In the spring of 1962, during alterations and re-decoration work at No. 23 Broadway, Amersham, evidences of wall painting came to light. The house is that listed as monument No. 57 under Amersham on p. 11 of the Royal Commission's South Bucks. Volume. I was asked by Mr. Pike to investigate on behalf of the owner, Mr. Harry Gilbert. The painting originally occupied the whole of the East wall of a room on the first floor, and probably extended round the room, but alterations to the internal divisions of the house appear to have destroyed the rest. Four good panels between the timber studs survive, and there are traces of painting on the woodwork as well.

The design is on a large scale and is very free in character, consisting of Tudor roses, pomegranates and other floral motifs, some nearly 12 in. across, in a fairly limited colour-range. The work is of Tudor character, probably late Elizabethan, rather than Jacobean, though the Royal Commission dates the house no earlier than early seventeenth century.

Fortunately, the owner is very interested in the discovery, and gave every assistance in the investigation. There is every hope of uncovering and preserving all the painting that remains. It is of interest that Amersham is so rich in examples of Tudor and later domestic paintings, no fewer than six other instances being recorded, some of which still survive. (See *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XII, pp. 368-98, and *Arch. Journal*, Vol. LXXXIX).

E.C.R.

HIGH WYCOMBE: TWO MONUMENTS IN THE PARISH CHURCH. In an untidy recess (actually a blocked doorway) at the west end of the north aisle of the parish church at High Wycombe is a remarkable stone slab, unusually thick (about 4 to 5 inches) and very heavy. In an oval, sunk medallion is an extremely well-carved bust of a man, in low relief: and at the base, where the slab has been broken off, the commencement of an inscription—"Here lies the body of . . ." This piece, though inaccurately described as the *head* of a man, is mentioned in the Royal Commission's Inventory (*Bucks.*, S. Vol. I, p. 196), but without any comment except that it is "apparently part of a 17th-century monument". The costume suggests a date in the first half of the century. There is no mention of it in the lists of monuments given in Lipscomb (*Hist. of Bucks.*, Vol. III, pp. 650-2) or Parker (*Hist. and Antiquities of Wycombe*, pp. 112-29), or by Mrs. Esdaile in *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XV, p. 38. The great thickness of the slab and the fact that it is a plain rectangle makes one wonder if it was ever a wall monument: yet with such deep and unworn carving it can hardly have been a ledger stone. It is possible that it was the top slab of a table tomb, though this would be a very unusual form—there is no knowing, as Wycombe has been notoriously indifferent and careless of its monumental treasures for a century or two.

The use of medallion portraits in low relief is not common, particularly in freestone: and the only example at all like it that I know is the wall monument in Snarford Church, Lincs., to Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick and Lady (St. Paul, widow of Sir George St. Paul) 1618, where both their portraits, in alabaster and coloured, in low relief, are within an oval medallion. This fine and unusual piece at Wycombe deserves a better fate than to be obscured behind old baize hangings and propped against what might be some extremely interesting lead castings apparently dated 1772, which it is crushing.

The other monument, now in seventeen pieces, has been lying in a heap near the parish chest certainly for twenty years or more, becoming filthier and more chipped annually, stained by Cuprinol dropped from the roof and disfigured by cement from wall repairs above, and until recently submerged beneath a pile of broken chairs and old hassocks and other parish junk.

The central panel from this wall tablet was found leaning against the west base of the great Shelburne monument.

It commemorates the Lady Julia Petty, eldest daughter of Henry Earl of Shelburne and Arabella his wife. Julia died in 1719. The monument is not listed in any of the authorities given above: and it is not known where it was originally placed or when it was taken down, and broken up. I suspect it was moved from the North wall where two monuments still remain, largely obscured, when the organ was placed at the end of the north aisle and in the Shelburne Chapel, now the vestry.

It is a charming marble composition with pilasters and classical capitals and a cornice on two levels, divided into three sections, with console brackets to support the base. At the top is a cartouche flanked by swags of flowers (poppy, oxeye daisy, rose, etc.) with the Petty Arms painted on a lozenge surrounded by a gold scroll frame—*ermine, on a bend azure a magnetic needle pointing to the North star or*. The pieces were recently set out and only two parts (one capital and one console bracket) were found to be missing. The inscription is as follows:

Near this place
is buried the Lady
JULIA PETTY, Eldst. Daughter
of y^e most noble Henry Earle of Shelburne
and y^e Countess Arabella his wife
who being pious without Bigotry
modest without affectation
easie without Levity
grave without moroseness
Adorned so y^e short space of her life
that she died worthy of her most noble
Parents, what is above all, a child
of God, on July y^e 23, 1719, And in
the 21st year of her age.

It is to be hoped that it may one day be reconstructed and placed on a wall.

E.C.R.

WING CHURCH. The identity of the lady Aelfgifu, undoubtedly the builder of Wing Church, has not hitherto been definitely established. By her undated will¹ she gave to the Old Minster, where she wished to be buried, Risborough, 200 mancuses of gold

¹ J. M. Kemble, *Cod. Dipl. Aevi. Saxonici*. No. 721.

and her shrine with her relics. To the New Minster she gave Bledlow and 100 mancuses of gold. To her royal lord—King Eadgar—she gave Wing, Linslade, Haversham and Marsworth with other more distant places. To Athelwold, Bishop of Winchester, she gave Tiscote.² The will was made between 966, when King Eadgar, who describes her as related to him by affinity, granted her Linslade³, and his death in 975, for his gift of Marsworth to Ely⁴ shows that it had by then become effective. Her great wealth and the fact that the King states that she was related to him by affinity led Mr. F. G. Gurney to infer that she was the divorced wife of King Eadwig, his brother and predecessor, and this inference has now been proved correct, for in the “*Liber Vitae*” of the New Minster “*Aelfgifu, conjux Eadwigi regis*” occurs in a list of the illustrious ladies whose alms had caused them to be remembered in the prayers of that community⁵.

That Wing church as a whole was built in the second half the tenth century is shown by the double window with mid-wall shaft in the east wall of the nave. It has been suggested that this window is a nineteenth-century restoration: this is a fallacy. When discovered in 1893 upon the removal of the external plaster, it was described by Mr. F. G. Gurney as a “two light window with mid-wall shaft not turned in lathe”. It is certain that he would have commented on it at far greater length had there been any talk of restoration and, as Baldwin Brown says, there are no indications that it is a later insertion. Sir Arthur Clapham was perfectly satisfied the window was original, and dates the church to the tenth century. (*Eng. Romanesque Architecture before the Conquest.*) It is, however, clear that the original plan of the crypt was modified during the building of the church, for the plaster shows that it was constructed within walls which had been carried down to enclose one of a different type. The blocked doorway at the east end of the north aisle may indicate that a semi-subterranean external ambulatory, similar to that at Brixworth, was first planned⁶ but that the idea was abandoned in favour of the existing internal ambulatory. It is altogether unlikely that the crypt would have been built after the translation of the relics to Winchester. When G. G. Scott excavated the crypt in 1880 he found in the west wall of the confessio the remains of a small window. After the Rev. P. T. Ouvry left the parish in 1885 the crypt was extensively repaired⁷ and as this wall was then rebuilt all traces of the window had disappeared before the Rev. F. H. Tatham arrived in 1890. But in 1960 the squint was found beneath the floor at the entrance to the chancel; unfortunately this unique survival was then filled with rubble and thus wantonly obliterated.

In view of the fact that Aelfgifu was obviously well acquainted with Athelwold, it is quite possible that the Bishop, who rebuilt his cathedral at Winchester, was responsible for the designing of Wing church.

As Mr. C. A. Raleigh Radford observed in 1954: “Since Wing was not an old minster it should represent the personal work of some great and wealthy person. I therefore think that the ascription to the lady Aelfgifu is correct and is borne out by the character of the building.”

A. VERE WOODMAN

² Tiscote was formerly accounted a hamlet of Marsworth (*Records*, vol. xvi, p. 267).

³ Kemble, *op. cit.*, No 1257.

⁴ D. J. Stewart, *Liber Eliensis*, Vol. I, No 47.

⁵ W. de Gray Birch, *Register of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey* (Hants Record Soc., 1892).

⁶ An external ambulatory around the crypt beneath the western apse was built early in the eleventh century at St. Michael's, Hildesheim.

⁷ Miss F. M. Ouvry in a letter dated 1938, says “the crypt was repaired and much spoilt after our time”.

REVIEWS

THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, HIGH WYCOMBE, 1562 TO 1962.

by L. J. Ashford and C. M. Haworth. Bucks. Free Press, High Wycombe; 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 126 pp. and four plates; 10s. 6d.

The schools of ancient foundation within the County of Buckingham are so overshadowed by the great Royal foundation of Eton that a little individual history of one that has just celebrated its four hundredth anniversary, though probably existing in some religious form associated with the Hospital of St. John the Baptist long before that, is very welcome.

In spite of its high-sounding title, the Royal Grammar School at Wycombe was "for over 300 years the less favoured part of a charitable trust". And, as the authors show, from sources such as the Trust Records, Governors' Minute Books, Borough records, etc., it was not until 1902, when public funds became available, that any real expansion and modernisation came about. With the notorious indifference of the Borough to the care and preservation of its ancient buildings, the old school, shown in a most interesting photograph of 1875 in Plate 1, was swept away. It is just possible that the Gothic doorway shown, so out of keeping with all the rest, was actually part of the old Hospital, the ruins of which are themselves now threatened with the re-building of the Technical Institute, now that the school itself has moved to the top of Amersham Hill. The authors do not seem to have consulted the plan on p. 648, Vol. III, of Lipscomb's History of Bucks., 1847, which makes this clear. Inevitably in a work of this sort, rather too much emphasis has been placed on domestic matters, of quite recent date, with lists of scholarship awards and assistant masters, whereas no Appendix List of Headmasters is given. But the book is a useful contribution. And one may hope that similar detailed studies may one day be done for Dr. Challoner's School at Amersham, Borlase's School at Marlow and elsewhere, before their buildings disappear completely, to supplement the information in the Victoria County History's valuable section on Buckinghamshire schools. And we must not forget that our own Museum premises occupy the Aylesbury Grammar School buildings of 1718-37.

E.C.R.

THE AYLESBURY RAILWAY

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S RAILWAY

by E. J. S. Gadsden. Bledlow Press, 1962; 5s. 0s., 7s. 6s.

The inauguration and eclipse of some Buckinghamshire railway enterprises are detailed in these two monographs published recently.

In 1836, in order to connect Aylesbury with the recently opened London-Birmingham Railway, the Aylesbury Railway Co. was formed, the chief promoters being Mr. George Carrington of Missenden Abbey and Sir Henry Verney of Claydon. The line, running from the High Street to Cheddington, was opened in 1839. It was an immediate financial success and continued as a private concern until 1846, when it was sold to the London and Birmingham Railway.

With the opening of a station on the other side of the town by the G.W.R. providing a direct and rather shorter route to London, the decline of the Cheddington line began and in February 1953 the last passenger train left the High Street station after over a hundred year's service.

Arising out of the success of this enterprise, the Duke of Buckingham promoted a network of railway systems in the Vale of Aylesbury between the years 1850 and 1869. One section followed another in fairly rapid succession: Bletchley to Buckingham, Claydon to Oxford, Aylesbury to Claydon and Quainton to Brill.

Their successful life was comparatively short, and with the advent of local bus services and, more recently, economies by the railway companies one by one the stations were closed to passenger traffic until only Quainton Road remained and between many once-busy spots grass tracks have replaced railway lines.

The history of these local enterprises and the vision of the major promoters something that might well be forgotten, though only of the fairly recent past, and these monographs with their maps and photographs are a very welcome addition to the history of the economic life of the country.

B.G.P.

THE MUSEUM

WORK continued during 1962 on the reorganisation of the Museum, and the Romano-British Gallery was virtually completed. The main part of this display consists of nearly all the exhibitable Romano-British pottery from the county which is in the Museum, and there are also cases devoted to building materials and small finds. In addition, small displays of some of the pottery and small finds from the Hambleton Romano-British villa site were prepared and it is hoped that during 1963 a representative series of the finds from this site will be arranged.

Once more the archaeological collections have benefited considerably during the year. An important accession was a group given by the Reading Museum and Art Gallery Committee, which included a large collection of flint implements from the Buckinghamshire Thames terraces, two Iron Age A jars and a fine fourth-century A.D. cinerary urn. Mention should also be made of the important collection of archaeological material from the north of the county which was given by Mr. D. Mynard. Amongst the later material a most interesting series of bakery utensils was given by Mr. Newman Cole, whose bakery at Newport Pagnell has been in his family for about 160 years.

The number of visitors during 1962 was 19,909, compared with 18,232 in 1961. This increase was due to the fact that temporary exhibitions were once more held throughout the year, whilst in the previous year the Art Gallery was closed for some months.

The main temporary exhibition held was of Map-making in Buckinghamshire, fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, which was organised to celebrate the Centenary of the Museum. This was opened by Lord Cottesloe at a private view arranged by the Archaeological Society. Three exhibitions were arranged by the Buckinghamshire Record Office, mainly from documents in their possession, and the County Art Organiser arranged an exhibition of art from Buckinghamshire Secondary Schools. Two other local exhibitions were organised by the Wendover Art Society and the Buckingham and District Numismatic Society, whilst, as usual, exhibitions were also borrowed from the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Art Council.

C.N.G.

PARISH REGISTERS. The registers of the following parishes, beginning in the years indicated, have been deposited with the Society for safe custody:

Biddlesden, 1695	Little Hampden, 1672
Chicheley, 1539	Ibstone, 1665
Fingest, 1607	Shalstone, 1538
Great Hampden, 1557	Sherington, 1698

A.V.W.

OBITUARY

EARL OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

John Hampden Mercer-Henderson, 8th Earl of Buckinghamshire of the 1746 creation, died on 2nd January, 1963, at the age of 56. His family, the Hobarts of Blickling, Norfolk, inherited the Bucks. estates of the Hampdens by the marriage of John Hampden's daughter Mary to Sir John Hobart, grandfather of the first Earl. Lord Bucks. was devoted to his estate and was an authority on forestry. For some years he was Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords. As a Vice-President and a Trustee he helped the Society in many ways and was interested in its work as in that of the Bucks. Record Society, of which he was President. He was a bachelor.

SIR BRUCE INGRAM, O.B.E., M.C.

Sir Bruce, internationally known as the proprietor and Editor of the *Illustrated London News* for over 60 years, died on 8th January, 1963, at the age of 85. As Editor he gave archæology a prominent place in his paper and must have done much to stimulate interest in it over the years. He was a notable collector and gave his fine collection of marine paintings to the National Maritime Museum. His home was Great Pednor Manor.

THE REV. F. C. HEWARD

The Rev. Frederick Charles Heward died in the autumn of 1962. He had been in poor health for some time. Mr. Heward became Deacon in 1931 and Priest in 1932, and after serving as Curate in Edmonton and South Croydon, became Vicar of Piddington, Oxon, 1942-46. He moved to Langley Marish, where he assisted at St. Mary's Church, and after his retirement, as far as his health would allow, devoted himself to the Kederminster Library, where his voluntary services were of the greatest value, and resulted in the Library Room and books being kept in better order probably than at any time in their history. The Society owes him a great debt in this respect. In addition, it was he who prepared the first full catalogue of the Library: and subsequently, with Mrs. Heward, made a complete transcription of the *Kederminster Pharmacopolium*, copies of which are much valued in our own and other libraries. His loss will be felt by our Society and in Langley, and latterly in Hillingdon where he finally moved.

MR. J. R. T. TARVER

Mr. Tarver, who died in 1962, was the second senior member of the Society, having been elected in 1908 and had served on the Council. He was very well known in Bucks. as a County Councillor and Chairman of the Education Committee. He lived at Wing, where he was Agent for the Rothschild estate at Ascot.

SIR WILLIAM ELDERTON

Sir William Elderton was a Past President of the Equitable Life Assurance Society and the author of several actuarial and statistical works as well as a keen genealogist. He lived at Chesham Bois.

Other members whose deaths were notified during the year were: Col. N. Shaw Kydd; Mrs. J. F. Parrott; Mr. G. C. Southam, a member of the well-known Wad-desdon family; and Mr. D. C. Wilkinson.

THE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on 31st March, 1962, at the Museum. Lord Cottesloe was elected to the office of President to succeed Sir Alan Barlow, who had guided the Society so successfully in the post-war period. The Society is fortunate in having a man of Lord Cottesloe's gifts and experience as its new President. Later the same day Mr. Rouse lectured on recently discovered wall paintings.

Sir Alan, later in the year, made his term of office even more memorable by making a gift of £500 to the Society to enable some archaeological work to be undertaken in the County; it was not possible to arrange any work in the current year, but plans are well advanced for a "dig" at the hill fort on Ivinghoe Beacon to be conducted by Professor S. S. Frere, F.S.A., in late September 1963.

OUTINGS

Three were arranged and were all well attended. The first was Dorton House and Wotton House on 19th May: at the latter house Mrs. Brunners' recent work of restoration, including the reinstatement of some of Sir John Soane's work, was admired. On 21st July at Great Marlow a series of visits were made including Remnantz, The Old Parsonage, Marlow Place, the Parish Church and Pugin's Roman Catholic Church. Finally on 15th September 60 members were privileged to see Boughton House, Kettering, one of the seats of the Duke of Buccleuch; the magnificent contents of this splendid mansion made a profound impression on those members privileged to attend.

CENTENARY

Mr. Gowing's researches showed that the Society first put its collections on permanent view in 1862; and so to mark the Centenary of the Museum the Society held a reception there on 28th September. Lord Cottesloe welcomed over a hundred members and guests and formally opened an exhibition, "Map-making in Buckinghamshire", which had been organised by the Curator and Mrs. Elvey (who has been appointed Assistant Hon. Archivist of the Society).

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In 1962 members of the Natural History Section, through taking an active interest in the wild life of the county, have assisted in compiling records for several national societies.

The programme for the year has been interesting and varied. An ornithological course was held at Missenden Abbey Educational College in April. William Condry was the resident lecturer, and his theme "Birds in Wales". Also in April a visit was made to the Bristol Zoo. Mr. Greed, the director of the Zoo, with his head keeper escorted the party. Great interest was shown in the animal hospital which is not open to the general public.

Lodge Hill was visited in May after a long interval. We saw the diminishing juniper, early orchids and meadow saxifrage and the interesting fungus, the earth star. The weather was at its worst, the gale making it difficult to stand up.

In June Cockshoot Wood was visited for the first time. Herb Paris, Ground Nut, and five different orchids, including the fly orchid, were seen; also the yellow pimpernel,

The first experimental Nature Trail in the Country was arranged by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust on Coombe Hill on 26th and 27th May. It was one of the coldest and wettest week-ends of the summer. However, a number of people attended. On 12th August this was repeated on a warm sunny day and at least 700 people came and toiled to the top. Members of our committee acted as wardens on both these occasions. Our members were invited to a Rural Studies Conference in Aylesbury at the High School. Professor Alan Gemmel and Mr. J. W. Hill were among the speakers. A new R.S.P.B. film, *Birds in a Hampshire Garden*, was shown.

On a beautiful day in early October the Tunnel Cement Co. at Pitstone allowed us to see their works. The chief chemist and Dr. Bleakley led the party. Various fossils were on display in the reception hall. We were most grateful to the Cement Co. for their courtesy as this was an unusual and successful outing.

In early November a course on "Mosses, Lichens and Fungi" was held in Missenden Abbey. Dr. Warburg, of the Oxford Botanical Schools, talked on Mosses, Dr. Swinscow on Lichens, and Dr. Hora of Reading University, Dr. Roger Smith of Princes Risborough and Derek Reid from Kew told us about Fungi. All had slides. Two rare finds were made in Cockshoot wood, *Stereum sulphuratum*, a bracket fungus first recorded three or four years ago in Britain—prior to that only two or three reports of it from Europe. The other was *Neobulgaria pura* a supposedly rare gelatinous *Discomycete* recently added to the British List.

More people wished to attend this course than could be accommodated. Several requests have been received for another Fungus course. A new departure was a social evening at the Farmhouse School in December. For entertainment there were four ten-minute talks. Lady Barlow spoke on her recent visit to California, the Rev. C. N. White, vicar of Ellesborough, talked about the ghost on Coombe Hill, Mr. Philip Street showed slides on the training of animals for Bertram Mills circus and Mr. Geoffrey Glover showed slides of the natural history on Bardsey Island.

We are grateful to the headmistress for lending a room festively decorated and for bearing the brunt of arrangements for the supper. We also wish to thank Mrs. Clare for the loan of the Schoolroom for the Winter's lectures. The following observations have been given by Mrs. Susan Cowdy on birds and mammals in 1962.

Hard weather in January killed off many birds. Thousands flew westwards only to find conditions there as bad, with the result that wholesale deaths were reported from the West of England and Wales, Fieldfares and Redwings being particularly hard hit. A further spell of hard weather in the early spring caused many birds to desert their young noticeably the tit species, apparently unable to find sufficient food for both adults and young. The Arctic winter set in on Boxing Day when buried hawthorns were "alive" with members of the thrush family throughout the county.

An interesting field day was held in May, when a joint meeting was held with the Middle Thames Natural History Society, in order to survey the status of the Stone Curlew and the Woodlark (two of the declining species in our area). Members separated into groups along the Icknield Way and Chiltern Escarpment between Bledlow and Watlington. Only one of each species was seen. Twenty years ago the Woodlark would have been much in evidence, and at least six pairs of Stone Curlew noted. The decline is put down to the changes in the climate, and also to the changing face of the area which has been affected by forestry, farming and the virtual absence of rabbits which has allowed former open downland to turn into rank grass and scrub. Toxic chemicals may also have taken toll on the Stone Curlew, which are not averse to breeding in cornfields.

1962 was a Crossbill irruption year. It is thought that the birds come from Central

Europe due to a high population and a poor corn crop. An interesting feature is that the birds appeared in some cases in the same localities as the last irruption in 1958, notably at Ballinger in August, and in a larch coppice near Amersham station. The species was widely reported throughout the county and was seen feeding on white-beam berries at Dancers End, an unusual diet.

The Chearsley Furze Heronry only produced two nests, due to felling. The new heronry at Eythorp Park again increased, presumably made up of birds from the former colony. Herons also bred at Foxcote and Tyringham. Very few birds of prey were seen in Buckinghamshire. Even Kestrels were "rare birds". It has now been proved that many species of bird with a hooked beak are being killed off or becoming infertile through a secondary poisoning due to toxic chemicals. (See *Nature Conservancy Report, 1962*.) The largest influx of Woodcock for many years arrived from November until the onset of the cold weather after Christmas. The Curlew is now an established breeding species, keeping in line with other counties to which it has extended in its southward trend. The crow family continue to increase, probably due to the decrease in numbers of gamekeepers and hawks.

MAMMALS

Foxes and badgers continue to thrive. Stoats are now comparatively rare, and hedgehogs appear to be on the decrease. Grey squirrels are increasing again, causing damage to young trees. Rabbits appear in pockets, but myxomatosis also mysteriously reappears when numbers increase. The Muntjac or barking deer which escaped from Woburn Abbey about thirty years ago, are extending their range. The Glisglis or Edible Dormouse, released from Tring Park at about the same time, continue to live as feral animals in a triangle between Berkhamsted, Beaconsfield and Wendover, though numbers trapped by the Public Health Authorities are smaller. Mink is now living in the wild, having escaped from mink farms in the county. This animal is a real killer being able to swim as well as climb, and it is hoped will not be allowed to become another of our introduced mammals as in the case of the Grey Squirrel which has found a niche to the disadvantage of our natural fauna.

J.M.G.

APOLOGY

FOLLOWING the publication in the *Records*, XVII, 1, page 49, of "Pitstone Hill" by J. F. Dyer and A. J. Hales, Mr. Scott of The Tunnel Portland Cement Co. Ltd. wrote pointing out a serious error in the second paragraph of that article:

"I would like to point out that there is a mistake on page 49. The land belongs to 'Tunnel' and not 'Snowcem', which is a brand of cement made by our competitors. However, this Company will go no further than pointing out the error.

"We would also say that we are always pleased to give access to our lands, provided we are formally notified."

We are very sorry about this error and express our regrets to Mr. Scott and his Company.

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