

## NOTES

HIGH WYCOMBE. *Wall Paintings at 45 Temple End.*

A note on the re-exposure of wall paintings in this house at Temple End, High Wycombe, may not be out of place, as it is possible to add a few comments to what is already known.

*The House.* The house in which the paintings occur is an important one. It is not noticed by the *Royal Commission*, nor in the *Victoria County History*, and there is no mention of it in Parker's *History of High Wycombe*. But, as nearly always, Pevsner is not found wanting, and he lists it on page 168 of his Buckinghamshire volume where he describes Nos. 45 and 47 as an eight-bay structure of early 18th-century date. I would say very early in the century or even circa 1700 on account of the thickness of the glazing bars and the character of one of the staircases and doorway.

*The Paintings.* The paintings were found in 1911 and are described on pp. 311 and 132 of Vol. X of the *Records of Bucks.*, where Mr. Thurlow considers the house to be of the late 17th-century date. The paintings, in a room on the first floor facing the street, were re-exposed during conversion of the premises for office accommodation in February 1975 and my attention was kindly drawn to them by Mrs. L. M. Cassidy of the High Wycombe Society and with the co-operation of Mr. Cooper, the builder doing the work. The removal of wall paper has further damaged the paintings, and few details are now identifiable. Mr. Thurlow, in the note in the *Records* already referred to suggested there were eight or nine "panels" made by arches between classical columns containing figures with a moulded frieze or cornice above. A feature not previously noted is that there is a dado at the base with swags of fruit or flowers, all in grisaille like the rest of the architectural setting, below each figure. I suggest that there were in fact nine such figure subject panels, with perhaps two half-panels flanking the fireplace (recently removed and now blocked up). It is difficult, in view of many alterations, to decide which were the original openings for doors or cupboards, and which are more recent, destroying paintings.

The note in the *Records* identifies four of the figures as representing the Four Cardinal or Moral Virtues—Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude. (To these were later added the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity). Of the first four only Justice, blindfold and with sword and scales in arms extended, is now identifiable.

All the figures are female; and one has to think of other "sets" of subjects, fashionable in the 17th century and early 18th century which might be appropriate. The Nine Worthies (in wall painting in a house in Amersham) are clearly not here, as all are male characters and would be too many when added to the Virtues. Thurlow suggested the Four Elements, or Mars and Diana, both highly unlikely. A set of five which would make up a total of nine, is the Five Senses, as they appear in a house in Faversham High Street. Another set of four would be the Seasons, making eight panels. The Seven Liberal Arts would clearly be too many, as would be the Nine Muses.

*Details.* All that I could see is as follows:

*South Wall.* Three panels approximately 7 ft. 9 in. × 3 ft. 3 in. between thin timber uprights, with a door opening on to the staircase landing and a destroyed panel in the corner. Three female figures in an architectural setting in grisaille, round-headed arches or niches between columns, moulded cornice and oblong dado panels below with swags of fruit and flowers in imitation of stone carving.

The lefthand figure is in a green dress with a pink sash and short sleeves, her left hand extended, her right holding an object with handle that might be a mirror—?Sight. The Centre figure is in a green dress of slightly different tone, red sash, arms extended;

there are unidentifiable objects at the base, possibly shells—?Hearing. The Third figure has a yellow dress, whitish bodice, long green veil or scarf flowing behind, her hands held out together before her. ?Flowers at base—? Smell or Touch.

*North Wall.* Left-hand end, female figure in red dress or robe, blindfold, hair done up on top of head with a bun, holding a sword in her right hand, and scales in her left—Justice. The Centre figure is almost obliterated but the head is inclined in an attitude of modesty—?Temperance. The Right hand figure has a long flowing red veil or scarf similar to the green one on the opposite wall and is in an upright attitude—?Fortitude. A blocked doorway pierces this wall.

On the right of the fireplace is another blocked opening, and adjoining the chimney breast is a half-panel also apparently containing a figure.

The painting is extremely competent, and the scheme when complete must have been elaborate and beautiful. For such a sophisticated piece of work there must have been some kind of original type to work from; and it is unfortunate that its now very fragmentary state (and it was never recorded pictorially in 1911) prevents any hope of identifying the source.

Thurlow describes the paintings as in distemper: I would have thought they were in a size medium or flat oil, which is at any rate fast to water (used to try and bring up what is left of the paintings).

In the course of trenching for drains a hone-stone and some pottery were found. Three fragments are from a coarse red earthenware vessel, a shallow dish or pan with everted rim, and having heavy green glaze on the interior, presumably late 17th century.

E.C.R.

*WOLVERTON. A Note on Recent Changes in the Railway Workshops.*

In two recent papers in the *Records*, I outlined the growth of these workshops.<sup>1</sup> A further recent study analysed their growth in more detail.<sup>2</sup> Since these were written changes have taken place. It is the aim of this note to record recent developments.

Wolverton Works are controlled by British Rail Engineering Limited, whose headquarters are in Bishopsgate, London. The part of the works which can be seen from the railway line were closed as part of British Railways Workshops five-year modernisation and re-organisation plan of 1962-1967. Under nationalisation Wolverton ceased to be a carriage building works and concentrated on an increased work-load of carriage repairs. The modernisation of equipment and facilities led to the concentration of work in a smaller area in 1964, and the staff were transferred to the main works and the surplus buildings sold. There was little or no redundancy.

Mr. Robert Maxwell, through either Pergamon Press Limited or Robert Maxwell and Company Limited, obtained an option for the purchase of surplus British Railway land in Wolverton, and acquired this particular part of the Railway Workshop which he subsequently leased to Dunlop and Ranken, and later sold to the Scottish Widowers and Orphans Insurance Company.

In considering the planning application for change of use, the Council were mindful of the fact that the existing use was in the heavy engineering category, and with the

<sup>1</sup> Richards, P. S. 'The Influence of Railways on the growth of Wolverton'. *Records of Bucks.* Vol. xvii. pp. 115-126. (1962) 'Wolverton: some further notes', *ibid.* Vol. xviii. pp. 173-4 (1967)

<sup>2</sup> Courtman, Moira *Wolverton: a study in Urban Geography* M.Phil., (London) 1968

benefit of that permitted class, a number of things could happen which were not necessarily in the interests of the district, bearing in mind the full employment enjoyed then and for many years previously. In the circumstances, the steel stockholding business of Dunlop and Ranken was not unwelcome in that it brought substantial additional rateable value to the district as to a certain extent diversified employment prospects. In passing it must be noted that the railway workshops as a whole paid negligible sums in rates. Other parts of the workshop acquired by Mr. Maxwell's company were devoted to his publishing interests.

In 1967 Dunlop and Ranken Limited, Steel Stockholders, took over the part of the former Railway Carriage Works that were on the south side of the main road. The firm distributes steel which comes from the British Steel Corporation and Private Sector steel supply. The steel comes in by rail and road, and is sent by lorry all over the south of England.

The attraction of the Works was their geographical location, the ease of road and rail access, and the existing buildings could easily be modified to meet the firm's requirements. There are three buildings and these were joined by crane tracks. Most of the training is on the job, and the employees live in Milton Keynes and outlying areas and the journey to work is mainly by car. Wolverton is a department of this large international Stockholding Company whose presence in the area, as a market for labour, is appreciated. This is proved by the ease with which planning permission was obtained.

P. S. Richards

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

K. ASHBERRY, Esq., Public Relations and Publicity Offices, British Rail Engineering Limited.

B. KEITH, Esq., Deputy Managing Director: Dunlop & Ranken Limited, Leeds.

C. V. REES, Esq., C.Eng., F.I.MunE., M.I.H.E., Director of Technical Services, Borough of Milton Keynes.

*Royal Arms in Bucks Churches.* A provisional list was published in *Records*, XIX, 2, 229 to which the following additions can now be made:

GREAT MISSENDEN  
HANSLOPE George 4  
HARTWELL George 3  
HITCHAM George 3  
NEWPORT PAGNELL  
NORTH CRAWLEY George 3

RADCLIVE Hanoverian  
ST. LEONARDS 1963 Elisabeth 2  
THORNTON Victoria  
UPTON 1716 George 1  
WESTON TURVILLE George 4  
WEST WYCOMBE George 3

## REVIEWS

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREAT BRITAIN (Fifth Edition), Southampton; Ordnance Survey, 1973, pp. ix, 184; 30 text-figures. £1.50.

One of the first results of the appointment of O. G. S. Crawford as the first Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey in 1920 was the appearance in the following year of *Field Archaeology*, a pamphlet of a few pages for the guidance of beginners in archaeological field-work. Enlarged, the notes have continued to be of value. This, the latest edition, is a considerable book. The subjects have been given new treatment, there are illustrations, and a considerably expanded bibliography.

Following an introductory section concerned with the Ordnance Survey and the national maps there are sections dealing with field-work generally, including air-photographs and their uses and advice on the non-archaeological practical aspects. Then following a time-scale the archaeology is treated mainly by periods. But while enough general information is provided as a setting in which sites and monuments are to be better understood, the emphasis throughout is on field-work and in particular on field-work without excavation. This is an approach which should act as an antidote for the attitude which sees archaeology only as a series of holes in the ground from which the archaeologist scarcely raises his head. It has been very much out of fashion in recent years, with references to "Crawford-type field-work" as if it were some kind of esoteric activity practised only by a limited few, whereas in a better-ordered world it would be a regular and essential preliminary to most excavation.

It is interesting to observe that this view is now changing under the pressure of the requirements of "rescue" archaeology, which has produced the need to know by means of systematic field-work what we have before we can decide what we ought to do about it. Field-research may now proceed with a deeper sense of purpose, not to say greater economy. *Field Archaeology* could not have appeared at a more opportune time from this point of view. It should be immensely valuable to all who find themselves engaged in field-work, and not only those who are in this situation for the first time. The north is perhaps somewhat better provided for than the west both in the text and in the bibliography. The book also has value for the interested but non-active reader, who will find it easy reading with useful explanations of phenomena in the landscape which often puzzle him. There will be further benefit if the same reader notes the views of the Survey archaeologists (shared by others) on the activities of the "lining up" enthusiasts who sit at their desks drawing lines between totally unrelated sites. *Field Archaeology* should constitute an antidote to those tempted into such pursuits. But the fact that *The Old Straight Track* is still with us makes repetition of the warning necessary. On a recent train-journey the eyes of this reviewer were confronted by a new paper-backed reprint in the hands of a fellow passenger. Dead it may be; but it refuses to lie down.

One or two further comments. Something more might have been said about parish boundaries and perhaps also about more recent field-patterns: they are important for a number of reasons and particularly for the study of roads. And as to roads, the reader might have been warned that while Roman roads are straight, all straight roads are not Roman, at least in enclosed country. The planned roads of the 18th-19th centuries (and the fields that go with them) retain their straightness, which contrasts with the more erratic behaviour of a Roman road as seen on the ground. The direct line between points survives, but the road itself has suffered too many vicissitudes over a long existence to survive in its original form. Straightness *may* be a sign of youth.

Finally, it is said that the extreme heat required to vitrify the masonry of certain stone-built forts in Scotland (and occasionally elsewhere) is due to the scarcity of oxygen when the lacing timbers of the rampart were fired. Whatever the problems attaching to these structures this cannot be so. Fifth-form chemistry (or is it physics?) recollected in antiquity taught that oxygen is essential to burning of any kind. It might be more likely that the cavities in which the timbers were set acted as flues to create a vigorous draught, thus increasing the supply of oxygen and causing the fire to burn more fiercely.

But such criticisms are of little importance in a book which ranges clearly and succinctly over a very wide subject. In conditions which have not been easy it maintains the high standards of the Archaeology Division of the Survey, and appearing at an opportune time should command a wide public.

W. F. Grimes

THE CERTIFICATE OF MUSTERS FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IN 1522, edited by A. C. Chibnall, Buckinghamshire Record Society, volume 17, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts Joint Publications series, JP 18; Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1973.

It is twenty-five years since Professor Chibnall embarked on the ambitious task of transcribing all the early taxation records relating to Buckinghamshire, now triumphantly completed with the publication of this handsome volume. In their introduction to Volume 8 (1950) Chibnall and the late A. Vere Woodman described the subsidy of 1524-5 as the Kelly's Directory of its time. In fact it was rather the second edition of the earlier general musters, indeed an alternative version in as much as many of the persons listed—the poorest men in particular—are different. It is also a condensed version in that it states only the source of wealth, either land, goods or wages, on which an individual was taxed, in contrast to the earlier survey which purports to itemise his whole substance.

Musters were held frequently during the 16th century, and the renewal of war with France in 1522 naturally occasioned a fresh survey of military resources. War was also expensive, and financing it a perennial headache for Tudor monarchs. Recent subsidies had fallen well short of what they had confidently been predicted to yield, mainly because of the near impossibility of obtaining realistic assessments. In an effort to mend matters the musters of 1522 were expanded into what the 18th-century historian Rapin de Thoyras likened to a new Domesday inquest. The commissioners were instructed to get from every man a sworn statement of the value of the whole of his real and personal property. The work was closely supervised by the government; commissions which complained of obstruction were told to begin all over again using any means, not excluding the malicious gossip of neighbours, to obtain accurate estimates of wealth, while at the same time taking care to reassure reluctant citizens that the sole purpose was to determine their ability to contribute to the furnishing of arms and harness. The catch was that as soon as the survey was complete, by the autumn of 1522, men worth £20 and more (and later those worth £5 as well) were compelled to subscribe to a loan to the King levied at a rate of ten percent.

In reaction to this chicanery, not to mention the enormous sum of a quarter of a million sterling resulting from it, the Parliament of 1523 bitterly opposed Cardinal Wolsey's demand for a general subsidy at twenty percent based on the new assessments and conceded very much less, while the so-called Amicable Grant in 1525 provoked so much resistance that it had to be abandoned. There can be little doubt but that under cover of organising the defence of the realm the government had come disconcertingly near to discovering the real wealth of the nation, close enough to rouse Englishmen to defend their cherished birthright of never being effectively taxed.

So far as known these assessments were never again used as a basis of taxation, and their subsequent history is obscure. Most of the books disappeared. Originally remitted to the Star Chamber, they could well have perished when that Court was abolished in 1641. It is tempting to see in this the hand of some zealous reformer bent on expunging the executive records of an institution which had come to be regarded as an instrument of tyranny—the Decrees of the Court have likewise vanished without trace—in much the same way that Antonio Llorente burnt most of the archives of the Spanish Inquisition. A few volumes found their way into other departments, possibly borrowed for reference, and so survived; copies may have been retained locally in some cases.

The original of the Bucks return went the way of the rest, happily not before it had been transcribed early in the 17th century, very possibly in the course of early antiquarian research. Chibnall argues that the source was a copy preserved among the sheriff's papers which at some stage was annotated by Sir William Fleetwood of Great Missenden, some time Recorder of London, and Francis Thynne, both of whom were founder members of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries. He further suggests that the extant copy was commissioned by Francis, fourth earl of Bedford who was both a student and a friend to literary men. All that is known for certain is that it turned up at a London bookseller's in 1922 and was purchased by the Bodleian Library.

There is every indication that the transcript was made with great care: the scribe notes the apparent tearing out of the leaf which he assumed to have contained the entry for Simpson parish. It is impossible to say for certain whether he overlooked other sections; Caversfield, a small detached parish, might easily have been forgotten in the first instance, while the little townships of Cholesbury and Hawridge might have been lumped in with neighbouring parishes. As to individuals, there is no mention of Thomas Ramsey, lord of the manor of Hitcham, perhaps because the fact of his being a minor in ward to the Crown caused some confusion during the original compilation; he is not recorded in Little Marlow either where he owned the manor of Losemere. But whatever blemishes the book may contain—and most appear to be trivial—it remains almost a unique record. There is a book for Gloucestershire, wanting one whole hundred as well as the city of Gloucester itself, and a complete survey of the tiny county of Rutland. Beyond these only fragments have survived, the largest covering roughly half of Berkshire. The Warwickshire volume, reported by the Historical Manuscripts Commission a century ago, has since vanished without trace.

The Buckinghamshire volume may not quite match up to those for Rutland and Babergh hundred in Suffolk, failing as it does to state the name of the lord of each man as well as his status or occupation, as called for by the instructions governing the survey. Yet in some ways it is the best of the lot, embracing a large area and 7,800 persons, exclusive of the great number of non-resident freeholders listed in many townships. Gloucestershire may be a much bigger county, but although nearly 9,000 inhabitants are returned the lists appear defective in parts, and moreover the subsidy rolls are far more complete. It is here that Buckinghamshire scores heavily since in order to make full use of the musters it is essential to combine them with the subsidy of 1524-5. Despite the shortness of the interval between the making of them there was a very large turnover in personnel, far greater than can be reasonably accounted for by the obvious explanations of death and migration. The conclusion must be that neither was perfect, and hence that they are complementary.

From the paucity of military equipment itemised it is clear that the art of war was neglected, more so even than in a good many other shires. However, it is the meticulous details of wealth and who owned it which makes this document an indispensable

source for the historian of the local community. The reliability of the assessments must of course be open to question, nevertheless the values assigned to the property of the Church closely match those stated in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, while in a few cases assessments of lay-owned land can be checked with broadly satisfactory results. Figures given for goods and chattels must in general be accepted at face value, although the occasional surviving probate inventory tends to confirm their basic veracity. Perhaps the most revealing feature is the very large number of persons said to own no goods at all; in practice this should be taken as meaning "less than one pound", a category defined in the Subsidy Act of 1523, in accordance with which a good many were in due course taxed on wages. This was the only attempt to record the whole of the population during the 16th century, and not until the Hearth Tax of the Restoration period were the poor listed again with anything approaching thoroughness. Thus we have the data for reconstructing the social pyramid as it existed before the Reformation and the price revolution. Even more important is the evidence of the distribution of wealth controversy over which raged just as fiercely then as in our own time. The rights and wrongs of the debate on the state of the common weal in the 1540s have often proved tantalisingly elusive to scholars thanks to the failure of the protagonists to quantify their premises. Yet the necessary data had already been gathered, and Charles Chibnall has earned the gratitude of all students of the Tudor age in making this substantial piece of it easily and attractively accessible.

Julian Cornwall

RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY, ed. Philip A. Rahtz, Penguin Books (1974), 299pp. 34 plates. £0.90.

In Philip Rahtz's own phrase, this book is intended as a 'tub-thumper' and opens with a dismal conspectus of the wholesale destruction of large chunks of our historic environment by road construction, urban renewal, extractive industry and, less obviously, agriculture and forestry. But it is a collection of essays written by practitioners not preservationists, twenty authors who accept the reality of destruction and are actively involved in picking up the pieces, and the resulting book is lively, extremely readable and at times even entertaining.

Archaeology has changed drastically with the last decade, largely through the pressure of the rescue situation. Amongst the most striking changes has been the arrival of the full-time excavator and his team in response to realisation that earth-moving on any scale virtually anywhere may destroy important facts about the past and that the past in Britain consists not only of villas and hill-forts, important as they may be, but of countless other traces of man's past activity on the landscape. Inevitably certain essays stand out.

Philip Rahtz, now Senior Lecturer in Medieval Archaeology at Birmingham and among the pioneers in the field of rescue archaeology, gives an entertainingly personal account of his early work as a free-lance excavator working for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. Dubbed a sort of "archaeological tramp" by one academic, his achievements during these years were impressive. With growth of awareness on a wide front of the true scale of the problem, in recent years a number of groups have emerged funded to a great extent by the Department of the Environment and concerned exclusively with rescue work. Some of these are based on *ad hoc* committees, others work from museums, planning departments or Development Corporations.

An interesting account of one team working in Wales is given by Chris Musson. This group of experienced diggers believe firmly that the actual processes of excavation, direction and interpretation are inseparable, and that there is no substitute for doing the work with their own hands, thereby keeping close control over the recovery

of information. They are concerned to advance excavation techniques to the limit and find much in favour of excavation during winter months for instance, when soil differences can often be more easily observed than would be possible during traditional summer digs. Whilst there is little place for the amateur in this sort of close-knit team, Brian Philp has approached the matter quite differently. The achievements of his group in Kent are substantial, the excavation of Faversham Abbey and the discovery and excavation of the fort of the Classis Britannica at Dover to name but two. Having little time for archaeological establishments, he built up over the years a large volunteer group at the same time as insisting on sacrifice, dedication and discipline, also giving (rumour has it) "digger of the month" awards. A sort of General Walker of the archaeological world, under his stern directions "armies of volunteers have travelled thousands of miles to sweat in sun or freeze in snow". Although able to whip up tremendous local enthusiasm, even he has eventually found the formation of a nucleus of permanent paid staff to be necessary.

The contribution of amateurs, or part-time archaeologists as many prefer to be called, will always be vital to Archaeology, but for effective long-term work of high standard in any area skilled permanent staff are clearly demanded, both for the process of excavation and, of equal importance, subsequent publication. A glance at the article by Martin Biddle on Winchester or Peter Addyman's on York will show why this has to be so. Biddle's distinguished work at Winchester is well known, so it might be helpful to indicate the sort of problem which the York Archaeological Unit was created to deal with. Here a well-intentioned ring road aimed at preserving above-ground structures was routed through "six major Roman cemeteries, six Roman roads, at least two Roman suburbs; through areas of possible Anglo-Saxon and Viking occupation; through the centres of three medieval suburbs; across the sites of five medieval churches long since demolished; across one major priory; through the medieval Jewish cemetery; through or near the sites of perhaps six medieval hospitals or similar structures; and doubtless through other yet undiscovered archaeological sites." Since publication of this book and fortunately for the archaeologists' sake, construction of this particular road has been postponed, but continuing piecemeal development within the City will continue to keep the York Unit busy. As a number of the essays show only too clearly, it is time that archaeological survey and, if necessary, excavation be considered a routine part of any major earth-moving operation, whether in town or country, and the proportionately small costs involved built into projects at the estimate stage.

Other essays of particular note include Iain Crawford's highlighting the sad state of archaeology in Scotland and Graham Webster's who stresses that changing times call for a new approach to the training of personnel. David Leigh strikes a cautious note when he reminds excavators that there must be adequate facilities for conservation and storage to match the increased output of excavated material, and last but not least Thomas Arnold stresses the need for publicity and urges archaeologists to communicate the results of their work to as wide a public as possible.

There are a few essays which might have been best left unwritten. Robert Kiln's jolly approach for instance does little to enhance either archaeology or the role of the part-timer. But on the whole it is a stimulating book, well illustrated and a good introduction to one important aspect of archaeological work in Britain today. Inevitably the reader will be drawn to consider the archaeological challenges of our own County and perhaps hope that some day the full cover now available to the Milton Keynes Development Corporation may be matched by similar provision for the remainder of the County.

Michael Farley

A HISTORY OF MILTON KEYNES AND DISTRICT. Vol. 2, 1800-1950, by Sir Frank Markham. White Crescent Press, Luton, 1975 £3.50.

To write the history of a district, particularly one so varied and so recently created as Milton Keynes, is not easy. In his first volume Sir Frank was successful in linking local events and personalities to the national story. In this second and final volume his task is far more difficult as Sir Frank recognises in his preface. To keep the text within a reasonable length he has had to be much more selective in the subjects he chooses to record and this does mean that at times the amount of space given to one aspect of his theme may seem arbitrary. This particularly applies to recent years; Sir Frank has an enviably wide range of acquaintances in the area and makes full and good use of personal reminiscence, but the amount of space devoted to recent parliamentary elections in which he himself was involved for instance does at times seem out of proportion. It should of course be said that his recollections of these contests are interesting and valuable in themselves.

That being said the final result is most impressive. As in the earlier volume Sir Frank has read very widely and has digested a large body of material from which his selection is generally satisfactory. He writes fluently and racily and covers almost every aspect of his subject—transport and the railways, agriculture, schools, chapels, industry and sport amongst them. There is one admirable chapter called *The Parish Pump* where the author writes " . . . But there is a gentler side to history, the history of industrious men coming together fortified by democratic election, who patiently month after month face up to the problems of ensuring good water supplies, sanitary sewage arrangements, paved roads and street lighting. It is the history of the parish pump, of the district sludge cart. But it is not dull history." These are wise words and it is a tribute to the author that he can make even the minutes of a District Council come alive.

The book is illustrated with forty excellent plates, well produced as indeed is the whole book.

E.V.

EXCAVATIONS AT BRADWELL PRIORY, D. C. Mynard, *Milton Keynes Journal* no. 3.

Mr Mynard prints a transcript of the well-known survey of the priory buildings in 1529, and is able to show that most of the buildings survive there at the present day. Mr Stuart Rigold describes the chapel. This important paper is illustrated by four coloured plates.

THE BOOK OF CHESHAM by Clive Birch, Barracuda Books Ltd 1974. 12 × 9 Pp. 160.

The chief praise of this work is that it collects within its covers a large quantity of valuable illustrative material from many sources, each being accompanied by a helpful note. A number of slight but scholarly historical essays introduce the reader to the past of the town and give cohesion to the whole. The series is to continue.

## OBITUARY

DOM ANSELM HUGHES, F.S.A. Humphrey Vaughan Hughes was born in 1889 and died on 8th October, 1974. Educated at Westminster School and Keble College, Oxford, he then went to Ely Theological College and was ordained. In 1915 he became clerical secretary of the Society of the Faith; he was associated with the Faith Press for the remainder of his life. In 1922 he became a monk and joined the contemplative Order of St. Benedict at Nashdom Abbey near Dropmore. He was Prior from 1935-45 and remained at Nashdom until his death. It was at his suggestion that members visited the Abbey at the end of the outing in September 1974. He will be chiefly remembered as a great authority on mediaeval music and his work and influence did much to improve Anglican church music. He was the editor of two volumes of the *New Oxford History of Music*.

SIR HARRY VERNEY, Bart., D.S.O., died on 23rd December, 1975, aged 93. Whilst serving as M.P. for North Bucks between 1910 and 1918, he became Principal Private Secretary to Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland and in 1914 he was appointed Secretary to the Board of Agriculture; he was thus the last survivor of Asquith's administration of 1908-16, which many consider to be the most talented in English history. He later served in the army, reaching the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, winning the D.S.O. and being mentioned three times in dispatches. After living for many years in Anglesey he returned to Claydon in 1955. His enthusiasm for the house and church will be remembered by innumerable visitors. He broadcast on several occasions on his great-aunt Florence Nightingale whom he had known well as a boy. In 1968 he published *The Verneys of Claydon*, a shortened version of his mother's well-known *Verney Letters*, with some new material. He was the senior member of the Society having been elected in 1908.

THE REVD. GEOFFREY C. EDMONDS who died in August 1975 was a keen and talented local historian, and a popular lecturer. In 1964 he published *A History of Chalfont St. Peter and Gerrards Cross*; at the time of his death he was engaged on a study of Milton in Buckinghamshire.

Other deaths recorded are Captain C. W. Clarke of Wendover who was Hon. Assistant Secretary for some years after the last war. G. M. Beckett, Mrs. M. Bennell who left the Society a generous legacy, J. S. Gardner, Mrs. N. G. Hughes, Mrs. M. K. Johnson, Sir Frank Morgan, L. E. Morris, D. W. Plaistowe.

## THE SOCIETY

**MEMBERSHIP.** This now stands at 612, a drop of 5% in the past year. Of this number 93 are husbands or wives of members paying the reduced subscription and seven are Junior members. In addition there are thirteen Affiliated Societies. Eight members live overseas.

During the year Sir John Guillum Scott resigned as a Vice-President on leaving the county. In December Sir Harry Verney died; he was the senior member of the Society having been elected in 1908.

**COUNCIL** met on five occasions during the year under the chairmanship of Mr. Brian Pullen.

**REDUNDANT CHURCHES.** It appears that Foscott (despite opposition from the Society) and Grove will be converted to dwellings. Fleet Marston, Hartwell, and Pitstone are in the hands of the Redundant Churches Board and are under repair. Hardmead, Great Woolstone and Walton are likely to be declared redundant soon; the latter may be taken over by the Open University. The font from Grove has been transferred to Llantrisant, Anglesey and the Grenville brass at Foscott to Maids Moreton.

**CONSERVATION.** Up to 31st March 1974 the Society dealt direct with the County Planning department on all matters of scheduled buildings. Under the re-organisation of local government, district councils become the primary planning authority. Satisfactory relations have been developed with four of the five District Councils in the county and over one hundred cases have been dealt with during the year covering such varied buildings as Railway Cottages at New Bradwell, Great Linford Alms-houses, Grove Farm at Widmer, an 18th-century dated wall at Frieth, Little Missenden church, Gayhurst House and 68 High Street, Newport Pagnell. No serious losses have to be reported.

**ARCHAEOLOGY.** The newly formed Libraries and Museums Sub-Committee of the Education Committee of the County Council (on which the Society nominates three members) has agreed in principle to the formation of a County Archaeological Unit but in the present financial crisis it is unlikely to see the light of day for some time to come.

**OUTINGS.** These have continued to be popular amongst members. Visits in 1974 were as follows:

- 27th April *Bucks.* Missenden Abbey, Hampden House and Great Hampden church.
- 25th May *Warwickshire.* The town of Warwick, Coventry Cathedral and Arbury Hall.
- 22nd June *Surrey.* The town of Guildford, Loseley House and Clandon Park.
- 27th July *Oxfordshire.* Minster Lovell and Swinbrook churches, Chastleton House, Ditchley Park and Rousham House.
- 10th Aug. *Hampshire.* Hinton Ampner House, Pamber Priory and Stratfield Saye.
- 7th Sept. *Bucks Churches.* Iver, Langley Marish, Horton, Upton, Hitcham and Burnham. Tea at Nashdom.

## NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In 1974 a very successful weekend course entitled "Roadside Verges" was held at Missenden Abbey in June. During the year there were six outings to places within the county and five lectures at the County Museum in Aylesbury; these are listed below—

- 19th January Members' afternoon. Displays, talks and slides.  
16th February Andalucian flowers, an illustrated talk given by Mr. Victor Scott.  
16th March Indicator plants—why plants grow where they do. A talk given by Miss Molly Hyde.  
28th April Outing to Velvet Lawn, Ellesborough. Led by Mr. Aubrey Woodward.  
29th June Joint meeting with BBONT to Park Wood, Bradenham.  
28th July A walk in Wendover Forest, led by Miss Dorothy Eyre.  
18th August A walk along the canal starting from Marsworth Reservoir, led by Mr. Aubrey Woodward.  
28th September Fungus Foray at Stockgrove Country Park, led by Mr. Victor Scott.  
26th October An illustrated talk on butterflies given by Dr. Edwards.  
23rd November Some distribution problems in Bucks flora. A talk by Mr. Peter Knipe.  
14th December Birds of the British Isles. Illustrated talk by Mr. Victor Scott.

With the building of new roads, a new city and many new housing estates the shape of the county, and consequently the wild life within it, has changed rapidly in the last few years. The awareness of the need to record and, where possible, to conserve the countryside has become of first importance to the Natural History Societies whose members work voluntarily and with such dedication. It seems appropriate therefore to list below the names of these societies for present and future reference.

### Amersham and District Ornithological Society.

This society was formed in 1973 and quickly grew to such large proportions that it had to be divided into two sections, one for adults the other for juniors. The exact area covered is undefined but field outings sometimes extend into Hertfordshire. In addition to periodic broadsheets a bulletin is issued three or four times a year.

### Aylesbury Grammar School Ornithological Society.

The Society, which dates from 1971, is not open for public membership. Bird-watching visits are made to outside areas but for the last two years the society has been mainly concerned with a survey of birds seen in the school area; a report on the survey has been sent to the R.S.P.B. and local societies. An extension to the school is now being built and will probably make a noticeable and interesting difference to future reports.

The society's annual report goes into the school magazine.

### Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust.

The Trust was founded in 1959 and is the conservation organisation for these three counties. At the present time there are twenty-four Nature Reserves in Buckinghamshire which are maintained mainly by members' subscriptions and from donations. Part of the work of the Trust is recording and research work "for the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences".

There is an annual report and a separate report on the BBONT Nature Reserves; a bulletin is issued three times a year.

#### British Naturalists' Association.

The association was founded in 1905, the High Wycombe branch in 1939. It covers no specific area of Buckinghamshire but most of the field meetings are arranged within reach of High Wycombe and records are sent for inclusion in "Country-side", the associations' journal which is issued three times a year.

#### Buckinghamshire Environmental Education Society.

This is an open society but mainly intended for teachers. Its purpose is to encourage environmental education in schools. Members, drawn from all parts of the county, meet once a month; special projects are undertaken.

A journal is issued once a year.

#### Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Natural History Section.

This section of the Archaeological Society began in 1947 and covers all aspects of Natural History within the county. Meetings are held monthly.

#### Bucks Geological Group.

This is a small but growing group which began in 1972. There are monthly meetings which consist of field outings both local and in nearby counties; there are lectures during the winter. At present there is no bulletin.

#### Chesham and District Natural History Society.

This society has been in existence for eleven years and is a vigorous and active society contributing much to recording in the area. Activities are generally within a five-mile radius of Chesham. A newsletter is issued quarterly.

#### Middle Thames Natural History Society.

This society founded in 1947, covers all aspects of wildlife. Bird records are kept for the whole of Buckinghamshire and for Berkshire east of the River Loddon; flower records are kept for the whole county.

A news bulletin is issued twice yearly and the annual report, containing extensive wildlife records, in the autumn. A special bird bulletin is issued monthly.

#### Milton Keynes Natural History Society.

This society covers north Buckinghamshire and the site of the new city of Milton Keynes. As development of the countryside proceeded much recording was done and full reports were made. One of the most interesting developments has been the man-made balancing lakes—covering about 1,300 acres—at Willen to relieve the flood area of the Ouse valley. Since these lakes were put into use in September 1974 a spectacular number and variety of birds have been recorded on them.

The society issues a monthly and an annual report which includes records of all wild life of the area.

#### The Stowe Natural History Society.

The society has been in existence since about 1925 and was reformed in 1965. Twenty acres of school grounds have been set aside as a nature reserve, the chief function of which is to educate the boys in nature conservation.

An annual report is produced in May.

Eton College, which was part of Buckinghamshire, has a Natural History Society but in April 1974 Eton became part of Berkshire and therefore does not now come within the scope of this list.

Names and addresses of secretaries of these societies can be found in most local public libraries or in the County Museum in Aylesbury.

The following report has been received from Mr. Aubrey Woodward:

The first half of 1974 was unusually dry with little snow or frost but with strong winds; throughout the second half of the year the weather became increasingly wet with winds frequently reaching gale force. Owing to cool spring weather primroses, cowslips and bluebells bloomed well and lasted longer than usual; primrose-cowslip hybrids were observed at Wotton Underwood. In one of the well-known railway cuttings at Wotton the number of Green-winged Orchis (*Orchis morio*) had increased from the usual dozen or so to well over 150. Twayblade (*Listera ovata*), Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and Common Spotted Orchis (*Orchis fuchsii*) were all badly bruised by continuous winds. It was a very good year for Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) which were abundant in some places.

The remarkable feature of the autumn and winter weather was the mildness, flowers not usually seen after October were in bloom till December. Cow parsley and hog weed were seen in some numbers on roadsides at Christmas; aconities and snowdrops were also flowering in some woods at this time.

Some interesting flowers were noted during the summer:

<i>Allium vineale</i> Crow Garlic	Ludgershall Station.
<i>Linaria repens</i> Pale Toadflax	Chearsley.
<i>Lycopsis arvensis</i> Bugloss	Stone.
<i>Cichorium intybus</i> Chicory	Wotton and Bishopstone.
<i>Valerianella locusta</i> Lamb's Lettuce	Wotton and Ludgershall.
<i>Saxifraga granulata</i> Meadow Saxifrage	Stone
<i>Genista tinctoria</i> Dyer's Greenweed	Grendon Underwood.
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> Procumbent Yellow Sorrel	Hartwell.
<i>Impatiens capensis</i> Orange Balsam	Eythrope.
<i>Medicago arabica</i> Spotted Medick	Stone.
<i>Impatiens parviflora</i> Small Balsam	Stone.
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i> Crab-grass	Stone.
<i>Solanum chenopoides</i> Green Nightshade	Gardens at Aston Abbots.
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i> Alkanet	Fine clumps in roadside spinney between Aston Abbots and Cublington.

<i>Allium ursinum</i> Ramsons	Spinney in Aston Abbots (rare locally).
<i>Calystegia sepium</i> Bellbine	Ledburn, roadside.
<i>Datura stramonium</i> Thorn Apple	Stone.
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i> Henbit	Stone.
<i>Lamium hybridum</i> Cut-leaved Dead-nettle	Stone.
<i>Byrus communis</i> Pear.	Lower Hartwell.
<i>Euonymus japonicus</i> Japanese Spindle	Hartwell, naturalised in hedgerow.
<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i> Corn Crowfoot	Stone.
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i> Fly Orchid	Park Wood
<i>Hypericum androsamum</i> Tutsan	Park Wood

Janet Easton

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(as at 31st December, 1974)

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