



## Proceedings of Societies.

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THE BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—Owing to the war, only one excursion took place during the summer, when, on the 7th September, an excursion was made to Wokingham, Easthampstead, Finchampstead, Barkham and Shinfield. Leaving the Reading Abbey Gate at 1.30, the party drove to Wokingham Town Hall, where they were welcomed by Councillors Sale and Hammond and the Town Clerk (Mr. J. H. Elliston Clifton). Mr. Sale, who received the visitors on behalf of the Mayor (Mr. H. C. Milne), who was in Scotland, said he welcomed them to the ancient borough, in which he was sure they would find many objects of interest. He hoped, he added, that the Society might be able to throw some light on the history of the town, of which most of them, he feared, were scandalously ignorant. The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield thanked Mr. Sale for the welcome he had given them, and also the Town Clerk, for exhibiting the charters, the mace, and other objects of interest belonging to the town. In a lecture he gave some thirty years ago, Mr. Ditchfield proceeded, he thought he was able to show that a very large amount of history clung to that old town. In the charter of Queen Elizabeth, which they would inspect, it was stated: "By all the time whereof no memory of man is to the contrary there hath been enjoyed certain liberties, privileges, customs, as we are credibly informed. One leet have been holden yearly and a Court Baron by our Steward of Sonning in the presence of the Alderman of Wokingham." Therefore Wokingham existed under a regular municipal constitution, which Queen Elizabeth by her charter confirmed to her "good and faithful subjects." The "Alderman" corresponded to the Mayor—he was the "Elderman" of Saxon times. It was probably a Celtic or British settlement, and Captain Gregory found in the glebe field a rude earthenware jar and various flint implements. It was not mentioned in Domesday, but was a "pansall of our Manor of Sonning," of which the Bishop of Salisbury was lord. To the latter grants were made, in 1258, of two fairs, to be held at the feasts of St. Barnabas and All Saints. The charter of James I., which remained in force till 1885, referred to that of Queen Elizabeth, and also of "divers others formerly Kings of England." The charter of 1885 gave the Borough a new Corporation, called "The Mayor, Aldermen and Borough of Wokingham." In the time of Charles I. Wokingham seemed to have been a very little place, but Richard Beaver, a loyal gentleman, raised three troops of horse to fight for their Sovereign at Naseby; and to them there was still in the churchyard a curious and interesting monument. Archbishop Laud had some connection with the town—it was said that his parents lived there before migrating to Reading, where he was born. At any rate, that famous ecclesiastic remembered Wokingham in his will, and a Laud's charity for poor maids was still in existence. The staple industry in those days appeared to have been silk growing, and the knitting of silk stockings, and there were still in many cottage gardens ancient mulberry trees. The open and wild state of the country was shown by the

bequests, in 1664, of Richard Palmer, who set apart a charge upon an estate at Eversley for paying the sexton to ring the great bell for half an hour every evening at 8 and every morning at 4 during the winter months, so that strangers happening to lose their way might receive guidance. Mr. Ditchfield then touched on the bull-baiting which is referred to in the book of reminiscences by the late Alderman W. S. Darter, of Reading, and the last of which was held on St. Thomas's Day, 1832, outside the old Rose Hotel (now Mr. Sale's shop). The foundation of Lucas's Hospital in 1663, and the legend of "Molly Mog" having been referred to, the speaker expressed regret at the pulling down of the picturesque old Town Hall, and the erection in its place of the present useful, but not very architectural building, and then called attention to the very large number of pictures—in the Town Hall and Council Chamber,—some of which are valuable, and others good copies, and had been restored after much evil treatment. The gem is the portrait of George I., by Sir Godfrey Kneller. At All Saints' Church the Rev. B. Long (Rector) met the party. The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield said it was a pleasure to find themselves in that beautifully-appointed and well-cared-for house of God, which had been so beautifully restored, thanks to the devotion of the people of Wokingham, in 1864—a time when it was actually proposed to pull it down! That was by no means the earliest Church, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle had an interesting passage referring to a monastery there, which an Ealderman named Brorda desired Offa, King of the Mercians, to make free; and a Bull of Pope Constantine, 708, referred to the same monastery. The late Bishop Stubbs sent him a copy of this, and when he asked him whether he thought it referred to Woking or Wokingham, he seemed to think it referred to this place. There were, no doubt, difficulties about it, but he had no time to refer to them now. In ecclesiastical matters Wokingham was subject to the Episcopal Manor of Sonning. It was a chapelry, like Hurst, Sandhurst and Ruscombe, which were all dependencies of Sonning. It was, however, "peculiar," and not subject to Episcopal Visitation until quite recently. The Church was richly furnished, until the Reformation, with vestments and plate. The Commissioners of Edward VI. visited Wokingham, and carried away 162 of the sacred vessels, leaving only one chalice. Among the more interesting monuments was one to Thomas Godwin, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who was born at Wokingham and died in the town of age in 1590, the inscription being written by his son, Francis Godwin, Bishop of Hereford. Much attention was paid to the beautiful carved oak chancel screen, which is such a feature, erected by his parents to the memory of Mr. Charles Edward Murdoch, who was born May 12th, 1866, and fell asleep June 24th, 1894.

Leaving Wokingham the members of the Society drove to Easthampstead Park, the seat of the Marquis of Downshire, where in the library the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield expressed great regret that Lady Downshire was, unfortunately, ill, or would have personally welcomed them. Mr. E. K. Purnell had kindly come to describe to them the treasures of the house, and especially the books and the MSS., upon which he had been very busy for some time in preparing a report for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Mr. E. K. Purnell gave an interesting account of the owners of Easthampstead, so many of whom were distinguished in British history, military, naval and political, and then directed attention to the many interesting family portraits in the dining room and library, including fine examples of Romney and Kneller's work; while in the billiard room he had displayed a selection of the more valuable books and documents. The most precious of these is a first edition of Raleigh's "History of the World," presented by the author in 1614 to Mr. W. Trumbull, the first of this

family to own Easthampstead, and bearing the first part of the author's signature, the rest having been somehow torn off. Another precious volume is a Bible printed in Irish characters, and some early Prayer Books. There are also two examples of Wynkyn de Worde, one dated 1517. There is also the impression of the Great Seal affixed to the grant to William Trumbull, of Easthampstead Park in 1628. The present house was built about 50 years ago; the old one, to which many additions were made by Sir William Trumbull at the end of the 17th century, stood by some fine cedars near the stables.

The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, in the absence of Mr. Keyser, said he wished to express to Lord and Lady Downshire their most grateful thanks for allowing the Society to inspect their house, and to see all the treasures of art and literature therein stored. It was a privilege which their Society greatly prized to visit the ancestral homes of Berkshire; and, after an experience of over a quarter of a century, he could say he had always found how readily and kindly they were welcomed by the owners of such mansions as that. Their thanks were also due to Mr. Purnell for his able address, and for explaining to them the contents of that valuable and magnificent library, which was the most important in Berkshire he supposed, with the exception of the library at Windsor Castle. In that library he liked to recall the memory of the poet, Elijah Fenton, a friend of Pope, who came as tutor to Sir William Trumbull—son of Sir William and Lady Judith—and remained on as librarian, dying of "indolence and inactivity," as Pope wrote in his "Letters." It was Sir William Trumbull who suggested to Pope, who then lived at Binfield, that he should translate Homer's works—so that one of the best known pieces of English literature owed its birth to an ancestor of the present owner of Easthampstead. Passing the earthwork known as Cæsar's Camp, the visitors proceeded along the Nine Mile Ride to Finchampstead Church, where the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield said that Sir John Oldrid Scott placed the origin of the church as early as the Conquest, or perhaps earlier. The Rev. gentleman gave an interesting sketch of its chief characteristics.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Hautenville Cope invited the party to spend a short time in inspecting their house (Finchampstead Place), full of interesting prints, etc., and a charming old-world garden. They then moved on to Barkham Church.

The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield here explained that the present church was modern, having been built in 1862. He much regretted the disappearance of the old church. A picture of it was in existence, and was reproduced in one of his (Mr. Ditchfield's) books; it had a timber tower, like several other churches in the Forest. Thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Tyndale Heelas, of Wokingham, he had recovered the door of the old church, which is now placed in the porch, having been for some time in that lady's garden. Many distinguished families had been connected with Barkham, or owned the Manor—of some of whom he gave brief particulars. At Barkham Rectory the Hon. Secretary and Mrs. Ditchfield hospitably entertained the members to tea, and were duly thanked for their kindness. The day's programme concluded with a visit to Shinfield Church, but the failing light precluded any serious inspection of the edifice. The Vicar's Warden (Mr. Henry Goddard, C.C.) welcomed the visitors in the absence of the Rev. H. Ll. Rice, the vicar.

The first meeting of the Winter session of the Berks Archæological Society was held on November 29th at the Abbey Gate, when a lecture was given by Mr. Mervyn Macartney, F.R.I.B.A., F.S.A., on "The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London." The Hon. Secretary received a letter from Mr. E. Ravenscroft, the Treasurer, resigning his position. Mr. Ravenscroft explained that he

was now away from Reading practically all the week. His partner, Mr. W. R. Morris, would, if the Society wished, carry on the work till the next annual meeting. He wished to express his personal thanks to all the members, at whose hands he had always received the utmost courtesy. Mr. Ditchfield said they all very much regretted the resignation of their Treasurer, who had served them so loyally and well ever since his father left Reading. He had rendered the Society great assistance. He was glad to say that Mr. J. Hautenville Cope was willing to act as Treasurer. He was sure that Mr. Cope would do the work extremely well. He was a very keen antiquary and was eager to promote the success of the Society in every possible way. Probably it would be necessary to ask Mr. Morris to transact some of the duties which must be performed by someone on the spot. Mr. Cope had been appointed by the Committee till the next regular period of election.

Mr. Keyser asked the Secretary to convey to Mr. Ravenscroft their regret at his retirement and their best wishes in the work he had undertaken. Mr. Keyser referred to the great trouble Mr. Ravenscroft took in reference to the two-day excursions, and how much he helped to make those excursions enjoyable. The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

In introducing the Lecturer, Mr. Keyser said they were fortunate in securing Mr. Macartney, whose previous lectures would be remembered. Mr. Macartney was the surveyor of St. Paul's for the Dean and Chapter, and no one was so well acquainted with the noble building as he was.

The Lecturer said that St. Paul's had often been compared with St. Peter's, rather to the detriment of the smaller Cathedral. But in some ways St. Paul's had the advantage. It was built by one architect, while St. Peter's had seven; it was completed in 35 years, whereas St. Peter's took 200. St. Paul's was not so large by a great deal as St. Peter's, but its position and proportions were in its favour. Mr. Macartney, in an interesting way, described the earlier churches which stood on the site—the first St. Paul's was commenced in 1087—and mentioned that some lands in Essex had been in the possession of the authorities for 1,300 years. He mentioned how, just prior to Laud's time, greengrocers and others plied their trade at the church, and how in the time of the Commonwealth it was used as a barracks. At the time of the restoration the place was in a most deplorable condition. In 1661 Wren was asked to make plans for the alterations and restoration of the church; at that time he was only Deputy Surveyor-General. The Lecturer gave very full details of the progress of the preliminaries and the effect on the scheme of the Great Fire of London, and said that in 1672 Wren's plans were ready. Then the advanced clerics objected: they said that the choir was not satisfactory. The foundation stone was laid on June 21, 1675, by Thomas Strong, the ancestor of a lady in that room (Miss Strong, of Oxford Road, Reading). Mr. Macartney spoke of the part of the church which Thomas Strong built, and which included the greater part of the dome. No fewer than eight different contractors had a share in the work. Thomas Strong was the principal man, and when he died three years or so after he started the work, he handed it on to his brother Edward and the latter's son Edward, who did nearly the whole of the work on the north side and also the dome and the lantern. The Strongs were the owners of some quarries at Burford and Teynton, and Teynton stone was used in large quantities inside the Cathedral. Inigo Jones had used a great deal of Portland stone. Some of the best of the carving was done by a man named Mayne, while Gibbons did a great deal of the sculpture and the carving. The woodwork was supplied by Hopson,

an ancestor of Hopson, of Newbury. Wren was an extraordinarily gifted man. His father was Dean of Windsor and in charge of the insignia belonging to the Star and Garter. When the Commonwealth came into existence he buried the insignia, and for a long time after the Cromwellian forces got into Windsor they hunted for it in vain. At last they found it, he believed, under the altar of the Chapel. A cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Macartney, which was unanimously carried, was proposed by the Rev. H. Cooper-Smith.

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## Notes and Queries

### RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

*Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the three counties. Correspondents are requested to write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only, with REPLIES, QUERIES and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name of the writer appended to each communication.*

THE Editors express the earnest hope that a larger number of Correspondents will avail themselves of these pages, and thus help those responsible for the publication of this Journal to extend its usefulness. There are several Queries—inserted in the Journals for 1915—still remaining unanswered. It is hoped that some readers may solve them.

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### Notes.

MODEL OF THE WEST FRIEZE OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.—When my husband, the Rev. John Climenson, restored Shiplake Church under Mr. Street's guidance, in 1869-70, on the tower wall was a model of the centre upper compartment of the western front of St. Paul's Cathedral. Of this, Mr. Howman, 50 years Vicar of Shiplake, from 1799 to 1849, in his notebook of a previous restoration of Shiplake Church in 1822, says: "There is every reason to believe that it is an original one, not only from the exquisite perfection of its execution, but from the circumstances of its having been brought from Badgemore House, near Henley-on-Thames, where Mr. Richard Jennings, the master builder of St. Paul's, resided. When the family of Grote quitted Badgemore it was purchased from that house by Mr. J. Plumbe, of Henley, who set it up as a front to a summer house in his garden. Here it remained for two years, but in 1833 was given by Mr. Plumbe to Rev. A. E. Howman, the Vicar of Shiplake. The alto relievo is composed of terra cotta; the rest is wood, which was fortunately preserved during its exposure at Henley by having been painted so coarsely that the flutings of the columns could scarcely be perceived. Their interior had entirely perished, but the decaying wood being removed and the hollows filled in with plaster of Paris, and then the outside paint being removed the work was restored to its original beauty." The representation in the frieze is the conversion of St. Paul. Mr. Richard Jennings, son of Nicholas Jennings and his wife (née Priscilla Salter, of Pangbourne), was master builder of St. Paul's Cathedral under Sir Christopher Wren. He built Badgemore, near