



## “Notes and Queries”

RELATING TO BERKSHIRE.

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### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the County. All Literary Communications should be sent to the EDITOR, Barkham Rectory, near Wokingham, written on one side only of the Paper.*

*It is requested that all MSS. intended for printing should be written on foolscap paper, in an orderly manner, with REPLIES, QUERIES, and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name or initials of the writer appended to each communication.*

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### Notes.

NOTE ON “THE FAIRFAXES, OF HURST.”—In the July number of this Journal was printed a short paper on the “Fairfaxes, of Hurst.” It will be remembered that towards the end of it I gave the inscription of the gravestone over the remains of “Fran.” Fairfax, and pointed out that it was impossible, if the inscription was accurate, to assign any place to this member of the family in the Fairfax pedigree. I therefore left it as an unsolved mystery. If “Fran :” Fairfax died, as the inscription testified, “Septbr. ye 15th, 1678, *Ætatis suæ* 56,” he (or she) could not be the grandchild, as the gravestone also stated, of Henry Fairfax, the elder, who was born in 1601.

I may say that I took pains, by visiting Hurst Church, not once or twice, to verify the accuracy of my transcript of the inscription. I referred to both editions of Ashmole’s *Antiquities*, the octavo and the folio, and found the age in both to be 56 years. Moreover, after writing the paper I found a very complete pedigree of the Fairfax family in the “*Herald and Genealogist*” for September, 1871, and was curious to see how the author of it solved the difficulty. He assumes the correctness of Ashmole’s inscription, but refers the words “*Ætatis suæ* 56” to the father, Henry Fairfax, the younger, instead of to his child “Fran :” whose epitaph it plainly is. This is certainly wrong. And yet the solution of the mystery is quite simple. On visiting Hurst once more on a very bright summer’s morning last July I found the “dim, religious light” of the north aisle of the Church unwontedly illuminated by the brilliant sunshine. Hastening to take advantage of it, I went down on hands and knees and discovered to my astonishment that “Fran :” Fairfax was aged 5 years only when she died. I say *she*, for I have little doubt that the youngest daughter Frances, afterwards Countess of Buchan, was, in accordance with the almost universal

custom, which lasted down to quite recent times, so called after her little baby sister, who thus pre-deceased her in 1678.

It may be asked how could I, and still more Ashmole, who must have seen the stone soon after it was newly laid over her grave, mistake her age as 56, instead of 5 years. Anyone who will make the pilgrimage to Hurst will at once see that the error is due to the clumsy workmanship of the stone-mason who engraved the slab. Having completed the inscription with the words "Ætatis suæ 5," he proceeded to embellish it with an unmeaning flourish, the whirligig tail of which he brought so close to the figure 5 that there is no room for a full stop between them. And the end of this flourish looks for all the world like a figure 6. Hence Ashmole read and printed 56 instead of 5. Since his time the stone has been much worn. In particular, before I saw it, many generations of small hobnailed school children have evidently scraped it thoroughly Sunday after Sunday of late years. By this means what appears to be 6 has become detached from the flourish, of which it was formerly the tail. And I am certain that now everyone seeing the epitaph for the first time would read the age as 56 years.

If this note is not too long, I should like to add that we get one further little peep of this branch of the Fairfax family after it was merged into that of the Erskines, Earls of Buchan, from a comparatively modern quarter, as unexpected as it is recent. The great Mrs. Somerville, author of *The Mechanism of the Heavens*, *Physical Geography*, and other famous works, who died so short a time since as Nov. 29th, 1872, aged 92, left behind her a brief autobiography, which was published in 1873. Her maiden name was Mary Fairlax, and she was the daughter of Admiral Sir William Fairfax, who traced his descent from the same branch of the Fairfax family as the Fairfaxes of Hurst. He was Flag Captain to Admiral Duncan, and distinguished himself greatly at the Battle of Camperdown. At page 62 of her *Personal Recollections* Mrs. Somerville writes:—

"At that time Edinburgh was really the capital of Scotland, most of the Scotch families of distinction spent the winter there, and we had numerous acquaintances, who invited me to whatever gaiety was going on. As my mother refused to go into society when my father was at sea, I had to find a chaperon; but I was never at a loss, for we were somehow related to the Erskine family, and the Countess of Buchan, an amiable old lady, was always ready to take charge of me. It was under Lady Buchan's care that I made my first appearance at a ball."

This amiable old Countess of Buchan was (see *Burke's Peerage*) Margaret, eldest daughter of William Fraser, Esq., of Fraserfield, co. Aberdeen, who in 1771 married David Stewart, 10th Earl of Buchan. The Earl was the eldest grandson of Frances Fairfax, of Hurst, and elder brother of the famous Whig advocate, Thomas Erskine, afterwards Lord Chancellor of England. He was of a very miserly disposition, and is said to have boasted, after his brother's advancement to the Woolsack, that he had been the making of Tom's fortune, by having refused to give him a single sixpence when he was struggling as a briefless junior at the Bar.

C. W. PENNY.

Wokingham.

THE OLD CHURCHYARD OF ST. LAWRENCE, READING.—As my attention was called by Mr. Baker, of the Reading Gas Works, to the finding of some

human remains in the Forbury-road in cutting a large trench in connection with some gas operations, it might be interesting to the readers of our Quarterly issue to state shortly some account of the find, although from particulars which have since reached me there appears to be nothing remarkable in the discovery. The remains were evidently such as would be found in any ordinary churchyard which was in existence in the middle ages. From the position of the graveyard in relation to the Abbey it might be inferred that it was used as a place of interment of the domestics of the Abbey, as Mr. Guilding informs me that the site embraces part of the old churchyard of St. Lawrence's Church, in the 15th century; and it is his view that some of the inmates of the Abbey might have been buried there. Altogether portions of about ten bodies were met with; and the remains were returned to their resting place when the trench was finally covered in. The skulls and other remains were in the care of Mr. Herbert Baker, deputy gas manager, with whom I had several opportunities of looking them over. The bodies were observed to be lying west and east; and the crania, when in sufficiently good condition for examination, were of the broad type, with fairly good frontals and straight faces, with softened outlines; one exception appeared to carry more the characters of the Celtic race. They were about such as would meet their equivalents in average crania of the present time. It was curious to observe in the past operations in the roadway how near the remains had been reached, as in measuring with the assistance of Mr. Baker not more than 15 inches of the original soil of the graveyard intervened between the skeletons and the overlying moved soil, which was about four feet in depth. There is no doubt that at the time of their burial the ground in the natural slope of the valley must have stood some six or seven feet above the present plane of interment. Of six of the crania measured on the spot it was found that the average largest circumference was 20·4 inches; two measuring 20 inches, and the two largest 20·6 inches. Comparing these with six Anglo-Saxon skulls, taken indiscriminately from Davis's *Crania Britannica*, the measurements averaged 20·11 inches; while six British skulls from the same work measured 20·7 inches. Romans, as registered in the same volumes, averaged somewhat larger. It is in accordance with fair usage, however, to state that Saxons or Britons from tumuli were often of higher caste, and therefore likely to embrace men of larger cranial capacity; and circumferential measurement alone is not to be considered a complete test. Bearing on date it is interesting that what appeared to be an Abbey token was found in the soil at the same level, if not in actual contact with the human remains; and as the coin bore on its *obverse* and *reverse* symbols similar to those on the coins of the Edwards it may be considered as appertaining to about the 14th century.

It appears in Coates's History, as also in that of Man, and repeated in Kerry's History of St. Lawrence's Church, that the present churchyard of St. Lawrence was granted by Philip and Mary in 1557 (Mr. Kerry says 1556, which is immaterial), the deed stating that the ground was granted in recompense to the inhabitants of the Parish of St. Lawrence "for another church-yarde belonging unto the parish, lying nexte unto the churche of the late monasterie there, *and from the said inhabitants taken.*" The italics are mine; but it is evident from the wording that the old burial ground belonged to the parishioners of St. Lawrence, and not to the Abbey. Whether the Abbey had a separate graveyard is not

stated, but, from what Mr. Kerry writes, it is likely that the ordinary inmates of the Abbey were laid in the same ground with the parishioners.

Mr. Kerry states that there is an entry in the churchwardens' accounts of 1557 that the burial ground lay on the north side of the Abbey, and far away from the parish church. This points unmistakably to the place where the present remains were found. He further writes that this is very unusual, and to meet it he considers that we have to look to a period anterior to the foundation of the Abbey. The Abbey Church, he says, to which the *parish* burial-ground was contiguous, was *never* the parish church, and as the parishioners from the remotest times had no other place of general interment, it is his view that the old parish church of St. Lawrence, before the foundation of the Abbey, stood *within* or near this ancient *parish* cemetery; in fact, it stood in the heart of the old Saxon Burgh, as the situation of these early graveyards was regulated by the position of the church, and not the opposite. He regards it as a certainty that if the parishioners of St. Lawrence had not possessed the right of interment there *before* the foundation of the Abbey by Henry I., they would not so easily have obtained the right afterwards, because the precincts of the Abbey were extra-parochial. The old parish church, Mr. Kerry thinks, was demolished by Henry I. in 1121, to make room for the Abbey Church, which was probably erected on its site. The old Saxon church would be used generally by the inhabitants of the Burgh and the members of the Convent of Seveva. The old churchyard therefore contains the remains of the first Christian population of Reading, and it might contain the dead of the pre-historic population also, as the sites of heathen temples were often selected for the erection of Christian churches, and Christian dead were placed near the ashes of their pagan predecessors.

This suggestive summary on the part of Mr. Kerry is borne out by discoveries not infrequently made in churchyards in England, sometimes in the shape of stone implements and rude pottery, in others relics of the Roman or Saxon periods. Leaving these matters, however, there can now be very little doubt that some portion of the old churchyard of St. Lawrence now lies beneath the Forbury-road. The site fills the requisite conditions in lying on the north of what was once the Abbey church, and at a considerable distance from the present parish church; and the place is thickly peopled with the dead, as in addition to the bodies already discovered, it is reported to me that others have been taken out or left undisturbed, when probably not in the way, in making necessary excavations along a considerable portion of the road extending westward from the gaol.

JOSEPH STEVENS.

The Museum, Reading, Oct., 1892.

**BRADFIELD AND HORWOOD.**—The Manor or reputed Manor of Horwood, *alias* Stenbury or la Staneburie, in the parish of Preston Candover, Hants, was held by Robert de Wateville at the beginning of the 13th century grant of land by him and others—Walter de Passeflamberd, William Escolandi to the Priory of St. Mary Son Murck, Hants, in connection with a Chapel in the court of La Steneburie. In 1322 by Inq: post mortem John de Somery was found possessed of many manors in Berks, including two carucates of land in Candover held by William de Horewode. Others of the same name (Horewood) held the manor called after him until 1422, when another William de Horewode died possessed of Manor of La Steneburie in Preston Can-

dover, held of the Manor of Bradfield, in Berks, by an annual payment of 12 pence. It had been granted to John Marchaunt and Johanna his wife. In 1473 a Horwood still held lands at Preston Candover. The Warbleton family, related to the Brocas family of Beaurepaire, and of considerable standing in the county, also held lands called Butler Candever, while the Horwood lands were apparently then called Candever Scudland. The Langford family of Bradfield, one of whom was Constable of Carisbrook, Isle of Wight, resided at Chale in that island for many generations, but eventually returned to Bradfield.

Geo. Dabridgcourt, a descendant of Sir Eustace Dabridgcourt, one of the original Knights of the Garter, and Barbara his wife held Horewood, *alias* Stenbury, and a brass to the memory of another wife, Katherine, remains in the chancel of the old Church here.

The Guidott family afterwards bought the property.

W. Guidott, M.P. for Andover, died and was buried here, 1745.

Blackburne, Rumbold, Wyndham, King, Lord Templemore and H. T. Hope, the present owner, are names found among the owners of a manor which has passed through many families. It is desired to know when and how the connection between this Hampshire manor and the Bradfield estate began, and how long it existed. It is not known whether any connection still remains, or at what period it ceased. At present the manorial rights of the parish are vested in the family of the Fitzgeralds, of Shalstone, Bucks, perhaps through their ownership of the manor once called Perkins, but now manor farm; but the owner of Preston House and Horwood Manor claimed also Southwood Manor and Okel or Oakholt Manor in 1760, and the claim was apparently allowed in a trial which took place between Mr. Guidott and Mr. Hall, the purchaser of the Perkins' estate about that date. The Perkins family as well as the Emerys and Langfords, of Bradfield, were, I believe, strangely enough also connected with Berkshire. From the fact that there were six landowners and, it is supposed, five manors connected with Preston Candover in Domesday Book, it is difficult to identify the later manors and landowners with the Domesday tenants. As the Somery family inherited many manors once belonging to the Earl of Arundel, and as "Clerici" held a manor in Preston Candover under the Earl Roger de Montgomery, it is possible that the Manor of Horewood to which a Chapel with tithes was attached may have thus come from the same family.

SUMNER WILSON,

Dec. 19th, 1892.

Vicar of Preston Candover, Hants.

## Queries.

**FARLEY HALL.**—What is known of the history of this house? Lyons gives the following information :—"Farley Hall in this (Swallowfield) parish, now the seat of Rowland Stephenson, Esq., was purchased by him of Mr. Dearsley, and was formerly the property of John Walter, Esq." The ceilings of the halls were painted by Nicolas Lancret, of Paris, who lived 1690-1743, and was admitted a member of the French Academy as a painter of *Fêtes Galantes* in 1719.

J. GRAY.