



“Notes and Queries”

RELATING TO BERKSHIRE.

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.

Notes.

BERKSHIRE HISTORY.—We have received the following letter from Mr. ALFRED A. HARRISON, of Theale :—

DEAR SIR,—In the notice of the MSS. lately purchased of Miss Thoyts by the Reading Library there is a slight error with regard to the Reading Abbey Charters.

The transcript sold by Miss Thoyts is from the Wollascot MS., which is identical with the Fingal MS. The name Fingal has been given it in recent times, *e.g.* since the Lords Fingal became possessed of it through marriage with the last heir of the Wollascots, to whom it originally belonged. The MSS. concerning Reading Abbey in the B.M. are among the Harl and Cott Collections, viz. Harl, 1708 and Cott, Vesp. e, xxv.

There are a few among these not contained in the Wollascot (Fingal), but there are more in the Wollascot that are not in the Harl and Cott MSS.

At the present time I have the Fingal MSS. in my possession, and I have already photographed 200 of its 260 pages, nearly the same size as the original. I at first intended publishing the fac-simile by subscription, but I find that I am not likely to get nearly enough subscribers to pay the cost, so I shall only make a copy for myself in my leisure.

I have a complete translation of all the Charters relating to Tilehurst and Englefield.

I have offered to the Reading Free Library three sets of MSS., but at present they have no funds to spare, and as I have spent nearly £20 in having the Record Office searched and much of my time into the bargain, I do not of course feel inclined to part with them for nothing.

My collections are for Englefield and Tilehurst and I have not copied from already printed matter (half of which I find is inaccurate), but I have gone to the fountain head and obtained transcripts of Court Rolls, Lay subsidy, and every kind of record from temp. Richard I. downwards. These I have translated *in full*. I have also obtained copies of all the letters known to exist, to and from or concerning Sir Francis Englefield, including those preserved at the English College at Valladolid and among the Eyston MSS.

These two Historics (or rather Collections) fill three vols., *folio*, of about 200 to 250 pages each and are fairly copied for easy reading.

Another Vol. is a translation of Domesday for Berks with a tabulation of values and population under Hundreds and Manors, and an account of the chief and under tenants, or rather of many of them.—Yours, &c., ALFRED A. HARRISON.

ANCIENT CUSTOM AT ALDERMASTON.—The following extract from the *Reading Mercury*, of December 16th, 1893, is worthy of preservation in the *Quarterly Journal*.

C. W. PENNY.

"A large number of the villagers assembled in the Schoolroom on Monday last, on the occasion of the letting of the 'Church Acre,' a piece of meadow land of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres in extent, which was bequeathed some centuries ago to the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish for church expenses. The Vicar (the Rev. F. R. Horwood) presided, and there were also present Mr. C. E. Keyser, Mr. W. Keep (Vicar's Churchwarden), Mr. J. T. Strange (Parish Churchwarden), &c. . . . The letting of the 'Church Acre' for a period of three years was then proceeded with in the following manner, in accordance with an ancient custom. A candle was lighted and one inch below the flame duly measured off, at which point a pin was inserted. The biddings for the rental of the land now commenced and continued till the inch of candle was consumed, when the pin dropped out. The first offer was £5 per annum and this sum gradually rose by subsequent bids to £7 5s. od. Mr. Hunt, of the Furze Bush Inn, Aldermaston, being the last bidder before the fall of the pin, was declared by the Chairman to be the purchaser."

Queries.

WHITEKNIGHTS, EARLEY.—What is the history of the beautiful little chapel at Whiteknights now degraded into a cowhouse? It is surely a shame to Reading, with all its wealth, antiquarian zeal and church spirit, that this should remain thus! What an opportunity for one of her merchant princes.—May there not be some remains here, if not actually the Abbey Chapel of the Holy Ghost. The Hospital of the Abbot Ancherius had a chapel here; also Hofman speaks of the free Chapel of Earley dedicated to St. Nicolas, erected by the Lord of the Manor of Whiteknights.

A. C.