

and acreage. Hamlets. Soil, minerals, stone quarries, sand or gravel pits, etc. Pasturage and arable—chief crops. Parks, commons, village greens. Roads and bridle paths. Railway station and when opened. Canals, ancient bridges, etc. Names of owners of land and their arms. Gentlemen's seats. Principal occupations, trades, etc. Folklore, games or customs. Field names, exceptional and of interest. Antiquities (not to be described). Historical references. Modern history of Manors. Court Rolls (place of deposit.) Fairs or markets. Enclosure award. Tithe map. Any buildings worth describing (only mention). Present patrons of the Living and their immediate predecessors. All monuments in the Church before 1550, mural ditto before 1770. Church Plate. Registers. Churchwardens' accounts, vestry minutes, etc. Charities. District Churches. Chantry Chapels. Nonconformist Chapels. Schools.

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On January 15th, a very interesting lecture illustrated by lantern slides was given by Mr. Peachy, of Brightwalton, on the "History of Book-Plates." He said a book-plate was a label, printed or engraved, heraldic or otherwise, which was intended to proclaim the ownership of a book when pasted inside its covers or added to its title or fly leaves. In short, it was a mark of possession. Sometimes it was called an "ex-libris," included many marks of ownership which were not, technically speaking, book-plates. The interest to be found in book-plates might vary according to the taste of the student or collector. Most of them had their hobby, and he certainly knew of none which, when seriously studied, appealed to so many instincts as did the collection of book-plates. And in introducing the subject that afternoon he was not without hope that his remarks might result in inducing some amongst them to become either students or collectors, and even to enrol themselves as members of the Ex Libris Society. To those of an

historical turn of mind the personal interest came first, and the lecturer then dealt with the book-plates of William Penn, Mr. Horace Walpole, Sam Pepys, David Garrick, Sir Francis Fust, Daniel Fleming, etc. By the heraldic style of most, if not all, plates anterior to about 1830 it was possible to give a date, always proximate if not precise, as to the time at which the plate was designed and the owner lived. By recognition of the arms an anonymous plate could be identified; and, if one might believe in the symbolism of heraldry, the very arms themselves might point to the character and occupation of the man who first assumed them on his coat of armour. He knew of no records which showed at a glance so comprehensive a survey of the changes which had occurred in heraldic style as a collection of book-plates. The largest collection of book-plates ever made was that of the late Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, for many years Keeper of Antiquities to the British Museum. He possessed 150,000 separate plates, which he bequeathed to the nation, and these were now being arranged and catalogued by a book-plate expert, and would shortly be on view. Some people collected one sort of plate and some another, but he urged would-be collectors to master the subject before commencing to buy, and not to buy until they had fully decided upon what their speciality should be. A subject which he would suggest—and which, so far as he knew, was at present unappropriated,—was the plates of Berkshire families. Anyone taking the hint would commence by acquiring any plates inscribed with a Berkshire address such as the plate of Bowles of Hanney, Thomas Wilder of Speen, etc. By studying “Burke’s Commoners” one would soon get a list of families originating in or settling in Berkshire. Then he would easily ascertain the names of Berkshire peers and baronets, and so on. The lecturer then dealt with the history of book-plates, their rise in fashion, and the changes of the heraldic style and decoration which they exemplified. He said the earliest book-plates, like the earliest printed books, came from Germany, and it was reasonable to suppose that the use of book-plates originated in that country. Three undoubted examples of German plates printed from wood blocks had come down to them from the 15th century, the oldest bearing the date 1450. Mr. Peachey then described the different varieties and changes in book-plates from the 15th century down to the present time, and at the close exhibited on a sheet a number of plates from his collection.

On February 26th Mr. Harold Peake delivered a lecture published in this number on "Our New County History."

On April 2nd his Secretary will lecture on "English Village Life, Past and Present," and exhibit a collection of Lantern Slides.

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.—A PLEA FOR THE BETTER PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTAL BRASSES, AND OTHER SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS.—At a Meeting held in Oxford on November 14th, 1898, Viscount Dillon, President of the Society of Antiquaries and of this Society, drew attention to the need for the better Preservation of Monumental Brasses in various parts of the country, and especially in the neighbourhood of Oxford. Brasses not infrequently become detached by accident from the slabs to which they have been fixed. Such Brasses have seldom been promptly refixed, but have either been locked up in a chest, or been left lying loose in the Church. In the former case even if not mislaid, they are usually inaccessible; in the latter, they are at the mercy of the first dishonest person who may visit the building. Again, many Brasses have been purposely taken up from their original slabs, either through the ignorance of those who did not appreciate the value of their proper setting, or with the excellent intention of preserving them from the wear of feet. Many such Brasses have been secured to a lime-washed wall with iron nails or screws, and have in consequence become corroded with patches of verdigris and rust. The original slabs belonging to these Brasses, which are often of the highest interest, have been in many cases either destroyed, or turned out into the churchyard to suffer from exposure to rain and frost. Lastly, the frequent polishing of Brasses has, with the best intentions, led to their partial obliteration. This practice cannot be too strongly deprecated. One of the main objects of the Oxford University Antiquarian Society, as provided in its Rules, is "to assist in the better Preservation of Monuments of every description." With this object in view, the Society urges that wherever possible, loose Brasses should be replaced in their original slabs on the floor of the church. In cases where the original slab is lost, the Brass may be fixed in a substantial oak slab on the wall. Brasses that have suffered from being nailed or screwed directly against a lime-washed wall, should be carefully cleaned, and refixed in one of the two above mentioned ways. In either case, only

brass or gun-metal screws or rivets should be used. In some few cases it may be found necessary to move Brasses in order to save them from the wear of feet. In this case the Brass should be taken up *with its slab*, and either relaid in another part of the church, or set up right against a wall.* But such removal should only take place *as a last resort*. In most cases a thick rug will give ample protection to a Brass. Coconut matting should *not* be used to cover a Brass, as it collects grit in its interstices, and thereby acts like a file on the surface of the brass. Many churches contain those interesting Brasses, now generally known as "Palimpsest," which are engraved on the back of older Brasses, and their custodians are naturally desirous of enabling Brass-Rubbers to see both sides of them. The means usually hitherto adopted have been (1) to hinge the Brass to its original slab, (2) to mount the Brass in a wooden frame, which allows both sides to be seen. Both of these processes however are liable to injure or obscure parts of the Brasses so treated. The Society recommends that "Palimpsest" Brasses should be fixed down in their original slabs with patent keyed screws, working in gun-metal sockets, the keys of which can be kept by the proper custodian; the Brasses can then be unscrewed, and made accessible to serious students. For the mere sight-seer a framed rubbing of the reverse side, hung on an adjacent wall, will answer all purposes. Such screws, with keys, can be supplied *gratis* by the Society. Original slabs which have lost their Brasses, should always be most carefully preserved, as in many cases, to the expert, they tell almost as clear a story as the Brasses which they once contained. The Society is prepared to give advice on the best means of preserving Brasses on the above lines, and to make grants of money in aid of such preservation, as far as its funds will admit. Since the Society issued its first appeal for a fund for this purpose, in 1899, a considerable sum has been collected, and nearly 40 Brasses and Slabs have received the necessary attention, the work having been done, either at the expense of the Society, or by private generosity at the Society's suggestion. Many other loose Brasses could be secured with further funds, and the Society could also undertake the preservation of sepulchral monuments in stone, notably the fine monuments to the Dunch family at

* A small lozenge of stone, bearing the initials and date of the deceased, may be placed in the spot from which the slab has been removed, to serve as a record.

Little Wittenham, which are now lying in fragments in a barn in that village. The Society therefore appeals to all interested in the preservation of ancient sepulchral monuments to assist them with donations, however small. Such donations may be paid to the Society's Preservation Fund, at the Old Bank, Oxford, or addressed to the Treasurer of the Society, Rev. W. E. Scott-Hall, 3, Staverton Road, Oxford, who will send a receipt for them.

Amongst the Oxfordshire churches which have benefitted by the action of this admirable Society are Aston Rowant, Chalgrove, Chipping Norton, Chinnor, Churchill, Dorchester, Southleigh, &c., and the loose inscriptions to Anne Dunch (1627) at Little Wittenham, Berks, have been fixed to an oak slab on the wall. Can nothing be done to preserve the monuments of the Dunch family at Little Wittenham? The Berks Archæological Society might well subscribe to this object.—EDITOR.

ESGARSTON.—("WRONGLY CALLED EAST GARSTON")—For the last three centuries the name of this parish has been miscalled; though its proper form has been partly preserved in the local pronunciation as "Argaston," which is still in common use, at any rate among the older folk. Although it is impossible to set forth fully in this Magazine the proof, which is at hand for the above statement; a short summary may be interesting to the parishioners and to many of our neighbours. In the great Survey of England, called the "Domesday Book," made in 1086, one of the manors in the hundred of Lambourn is entered as having been held before the Conquest by Esgar, who was what we should call Master of the Horse to King Edward (the Confessor); and it is from him that this place gets its name. Eleven instances of this name, between 1086 and 1599 have been supplied by a learned antiquarian, Rev. F. T. Wethered, Vicar of Hurley, a parish in this county, which was connected with our parish for many centuries through the payment of tithes to the Priory of Hurley; and all these instances plainly shew that the real name is "Esgar's Town." It is a great advantage in these days of railway stations and post offices to have a really distinctive name; and it is an interesting fact that there is no place in the United Kingdom, which has a name beginning with "Esgar," whereas there are 160 names in the "Post Office Guide" beginning with "East," which syllable has no more to do with us than with the proverbial man in the moon. Apart therefore from all other considerations, there would be a great practical advantage, if we could by any means restore the old name "ESGARSTON," and the Vicar begs leave to offer this as a small gift to the parish with his most sincere best wishes for a Happy New Year.

[The above is extracted from the "Newbury District Parish Magazine," and we heartily support the Vicar, the Rev. J. L. Tudor, in his endeavour to restore the correct spelling of the name of his old parish. A Petition from the inhabitants to the Postmaster-General and to the Berks County Council might attain this desirable object.—EDITOR.]