



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.

Notes.

BENSON.—A malthouse has recently been removed on the property of Mr. G. D. Faber, C.B., M.P., at Preston Crowmarsh, in the parish of Benson. The eye of the local antiquary had long been eager to discover what might appear in a series of blocks of free stone of various sizes which were conspicuous in one of the angles of the building. When they were taken out they were easily identified as having belonged to Benson Church, a quarter of a mile away. In 1780 the tower of the church was taken down, the aisles were shortened at the west, and the north doorway was destroyed (see the account in this Journal, Vol. II, p. 11). These stones are doubtless some that were left over in the rebuilding. The most interesting of them is a well-cut but mutilated cap of the angle-shaft of an Early English window corresponding with one now existing at the east end of the south aisle. Another Early English fragment has a good roll-moulding in a wide and deeply recessed groove. Other stones have mouldings of the fourteenth century which is the period of the existing doorway and the side windows of the aisles. There is also one half of a window-head of the fifteenth century with a plain incised triangle following the lines of the spandril, and as this corresponds with nothing that remains in the church it may be regarded as a probable relic of the destroyed tower of which no description has been preserved. A few of the best of these stones have been placed in the church porch.

A few yards of the front of the malthouse consisted of the wall of an older building with chequer work in alternate panels of flint and the local rubble stone; but as this could not well be retained its design has been reproduced with excellent effect in the fronts of the handsome new cottages which Mr. Faber has built on the site.—J.E.F.

NOTES ON BRIGHTWELL AND SOTWELL, BERKS.—Much that is of historical and antiquarian interest in the twin parishes of Brightwell and Sotwell has already been noted in this Journal; more particularly, the Saxon Charters which defined the boundaries in early times, and the coins and other relics that have been discovered.* It may be useful to add some further notes on points which do not appear to have been placed on record. The Victoria History of Berks, in its introductory volume, has recorded the barrow on Brightwell Hill; the moated granges of Mackney and Sotwell; the moat or series of ditches at Stonor Hays in Sotwell (where the pond is locally reputed to be unfathomable);

* IV. 44; XI. 108; XII. 7, 49, 82, 86. Also *Quarterly Journal of the Berks Archaeological Society*, II. 72; VI. 122.

and the moat enclosing a great part of the area occupied by Brightwell House and Church, which, it should be added, extended across the rectory garden until this part was filled up in recent times.

Prehistoric remains were found in some sand pits at Sotwell in 1904, close to the footpath leading to Clapcot fields which represents a primitive trackway. Trenches dug in the sand about two feet apart had been filled in with earth in which were several pieces of Roman-British pottery together with a fine antler of red deer, and the broken pieces of a tusk, apparently of an elephant, some eight or nine inches long.

There are several ancient houses. The older part of Brightwell Rectory is said to be of the time of Henry IV. The kitchen of Brightwell House bears the date 1605, and the room over it has a good stone fireplace of that period. Mackney Court is in part the same house that was built by Robert Court, who died in 1509. Small's House at Mackney is a fine gabled mansion of brick, built by one Small, a burgess of Wallingford, in the reign of Elizabeth, and unaltered, but let in separate tenements to cottagers. The moated Manor House at Sotwell is a substantial farm-house with no external signs of antiquity; but Arthur, Prince of Wales, is said to have stayed here when Robert Court, who was his auditor, lived at Mackney Court. At the south-east of Sotwell Churchyard is a cottage known as the Old Rectory, of a date not later than Tudor times. In the village street west of the church is a house which has a traditional notoriety as having been used by smugglers for concealing spirits.

In Brightwell fields, below the slope of Castle Hill in Little Wittenham and facing the southern entrance of the camp, there was within living memory a mere-bank running southward, and from it the field south of the high-road is called Bloody Mere; the villagers having a very definite tradition that blood flowed over it in old times from a great battle on the hill above. East of this, near Redgate Barn, is a field known as the Cuckoo-Pen. It is remarkable that in the district on the other side of the Thames, in the south-eastern part of Oxfordshire, almost every village has a spot bearing this designation; but the only other in Berkshire that has come under the writer's notice is at Frilford, on the Ock. As the designation evidently conceals a meaning which does not appear on the surface, any additional instances of it would be worth noting.

There are several interesting names in Sotwell. Tickleberry Lane seems to tell of the primitive "bury" and Town Furlong of the Saxon "tun." In Bustard Piece the last bustard is said to have been killed. Chapel Close marks the site of a nonconformist chapel which has disappeared. Coticroft and Gaudycroft, Pedmoor, Smell-moor and Kedging-meadow must remain puzzles to the antiquary. The meadow on the brook next to Millony, partly in Sotwell and partly in Brightwell, is "The Evils," popularly said to be "evil" because flocks pastured here are liable to sheep-rot. But it appears to be the same that is called "Iwilde" in the 16th century. *Iwilde* or *Evils* (Ewils) seems to be *ea-wells*, or water-springs (possibly *ea-welled*, flooded with springs), like Ewell in Surrey, and the plural Ewelme in Oxfordshire with its cluster of springs, close to which, but in Benson parish, is a single spring called "Hewill," where the difference from "Evils" is slight. Next on the brook is "The Steert," a term signifying a "Start" or projecting point of ground; and next, at the south-west angle of the parish, is "Tadsey"—presumably Toads isle.

The curious form of the roadway to the north-west of Brightwell, with its zigzag of successive right-angles, illustrates a piece of local history of modern times. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, as we are told in the notice of Wallingford in Lysons' Berkshire, Sir William Blackstone exerted himself to

get turnpike roads made in each direction through that town. On the west the road to Wittenham and Abingdon was followed as far as this point near Brightwell. A little further west the ancient Portway was adopted. The natural course would have been to carry a road across diagonally between these. But it is said that difficulties were interposed through certain landed interests, and these could only be met by making use of an intermediate ancient track which runs through the village. Accordingly at Brightwell New Farm the road strikes off southward at a right angle; then by another right angle turns along this next track westward; follows it for about a furlong, and makes another right angle southward; and finally after a few yards goes off by a fourth right angle to get on the Portway. The result is as awkward a half-mile of high road as can be found in the County.—J. E. FIELD.

HURLEY VILLAGE RIOTS IN 1340 AND 1342 [EDW. III].—We are indebted to the Patent Rolls of 1340 and 1342 for the following incidents. An entry dated "Andover, Sept. 18, 1340," (*membrane* 40 d.) relates to us a Commission of *oyer and terminer* (Lat. *audiendo et terminando*), which had been issued to Nicholas de la Bèche, John de Molyns, William de Shareshull and James de Wodestok, on complaint by John de Mauduyt that John de Tothale, prior of Hurlee, brothers John Baroun, John de Helmeden and Jordan Moynne, his fellow-monks, John 'le priourescok [prior's cook] of Hurlee,' Edmund son of John le Cok the elder, Thomas atte Hale [Hall Place], John Splint, John le Heyward [hedge-keeper], John Elys, Richard le Whelere [wheel-wright] of Lidlewyk, William le Rypereve [steward of the river bank], Simon de Tothale, chaplain, Philip his brother, Robert le Lasshere, Richard Gowel, Philip de Hamslepe, chaplain, John le Blake of Hurlee, Henry le Vicories, Roger le Blake, Walter le Bel of Dorneye, Robert Folcorn, John le Disshere of Yatele, Robert le Grymme, John his son, Thomas le Tylere [tiler], William his Brother, and others assaulted him at Hurlee, co. Berks, and carried away his goods.

The like Commission was issued, on like complaint by Richard de Byfeld.

Again, we learn from an entry in the Patent Rolls dated "1342, May 8th—Westminster" (*membrane* 11 d.) that a similar Commission was issued to Roger Hillary, William de Shareshull, Robert Achard and John de Mere, on complaint by John Mauduyt, knight, that John de Tothale, prior of Hurle, Nicholas de Harleston and John de Helmeden, his fellow-monks, Simon de Tothale, clerk, Walter le Cok of Hurle, Roger de Staunton, Simon Prat, 'palfreyman,' Walter le Beel [? Bel], Robert le Grymme, Thomas le Tighelele [tiler] and others assaulted him at Hurle, co. Berks, imprisoned him and carried away his goods.

The prison of Hurley Priory still exists at Lady Place. It is interesting, by the way, to notice that in three separate Royal charters,—by Hen. I, Hen. II, and Hen. III respectively,—the right of judging thieves was expressly accorded to the Hurley monks. In the first two of these concessions by the Crown, this right was extended to the judging of culprits taken *within* their manor only, and was for this reason known as *Infangthef*; whereas in the charter granted by Hen. III not only was *Infangthef* allowed to them, but also the right to judge a culprit dwelling within their Manor, but who was taken *outside* it, which privilege was on this account known as *Outfangthef*.

We may gather that Prior John de Tothale, who stands out in such an extraordinary way as a central figure in those stirring scenes in Hurley village above referred to, ended his days in the infirmary of Westminster Abbey; for the following entry in the Patent Rolls informs us that this erstwhile Sacrist of the mother Abbey, later Prior of Hurley Monastery, found sanctuary at last

amongst the brethren at the Abbey under privileged circumstances, viz : "1352, Feb. 28th., Westminster (*membrane* 10). Grant, for the indemnity of the abbot and convent of the abbey of Westminster, who at the King's request have assigned for life to brother John de Tothale, late prior of Hurlee, a cell of their abbey, such full livery, with an honourable chamber in the infirmary of the abbey, as pertains to a monk of the house, that such assignment shall not prejudice the house as a precedent."

Brother John de Tothale had given up the honourable office of Sacrist at the Abbey in order to take up the Priorate of Hurley Monastery, on February 17, 1338. The last time his name appears as Prior of Hurley, in Hurley Deeds, is on November 11th, 1349.—F. T. WETHERED, Hurley Vicarage, Berks, November 7th, 1910.

Queries.

BERKS AND BUCKS M.P.'s.—Can any one identify any of the following M.P.'s, and give their parentage and dates of birth, marriage and death. If replies are too long for these pages, would correspondents kindly communicate with me direct. Berkshire Members: Robert Packer 1712, Winchcombe Howard Packer 1731, William Archer 1734. Abingdon Members: James Jennings 1710, John Wright 1741, Nathaniel Bayly 1768, John Mayor 1774, Henry Howorth 1782, George Knapp 1807, John Maberly 1818, Ebenezer Fuller Maitland (defeated) 1830. Reading: John Dalby 1710, Robert Clarges 1713, Richard Thompson 1720, Clement Kent 1722, William Strode 1740, John Dodd 1755, George Spence 1826. Wallingford: William Jennings 1708, Thomas Renda 1709, Richard Bigg 1713, George Lewen 1727, John Bance and John Rush 1741, Richard Tonson 1747, John Cator 1772, George Galway Mills 1804. Windsor: Richard Topham 1708, Christopher Wren 1713, Robert Gayer and Samuel Travers 1715, Richard Oldfield 1737, Henry Isherwood 1796, Richard Ramsbottom 1806. Bucks County: John Fleetwood 1715. Aylesbury: Simon Mayne 1708, John Essington 1710, John Deacle 1715, Richard Abel 1722, Captain Philip Lloyd 1727, Thomas Ingoldsby 1729, Sir George Champion, Knt., 1734, Charles Pilsworth 1741, Anthony Bacon 1764, John Durand 1768, Robert Bent 1802, Thomas Hussey 1809, William Rickford 1818. Agmondersham: Henry Marshall and Thomas Gore 1734, Isaac Whittington 1747. Buckingham: John Radcliffe, M.D., 1713, Edmund Halsey 1717, Thomas Lewis 1727. Marlow: George Bruere 1710, Sir James Etheredge and James Chase 1708, John Clavering 1727, George Robinson 1731, Samuel Tufnell 1741, William Ockendon 1744, Daniel Moore 1754, William Matthew Burt 1761, William Lee Antonie 1790. Wendover: Thomas Ellis 1708, Joseph Bullock 1770, General Richard Smith and John Mansell Smith 1780, Verney Lovett 1761, John Barker Church 1790. Wycombe: Henry Waller 1727, John Waller 1754, Sir Charles Vernon 1731.—W. R. WILLIAMS, Talybont, Brecon.