

PREHISTORIC RING COINAGE.—The following is from *The Standard* of October 16th : " A fine specimen of prehistoric ring coinage has been found by an Oxfordshire farmer in a field at Westfield. The coin, which has the general appearance of a curled caterpillar, has a solid gold matrix with regular traverse belts of a silver alloy. Its total weight is 9 dwt. Similar coins, belonging to the end of the Bronze age (500—300 B.C.), figure amongst the collections in the Gold Room of the British Museum, but the present find is the first of its kind to be recorded in the South Midlands."

### Queries.

Whitchurch-on-Thames,

Reading, April 8th, 1912.

AN OLD ROAD.—You doubtless know the old Packhorse track, or Bridle way, from near Caversham Church, through The Warren, through Mapledurham, and through Whitchurch, to Goring and Crowmarsh. It is, of course, now, a hard road between Caversham and Whitchurch.

I want to ask you, if you could refer me to the *name, or names of the Authors*, of any old Books, Maps, or descriptions of the district, in which I should be likely to find a clue as to the status, importance, or evidence of the general use of this old road many years ago.

And if so, if you know of any copy of such book, map, etc., available locally, or in the British Museum.

H. J. HOLMES.

## Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The Society has during this Winter Session been very much favoured in its lecturers. Miss Swann, who had promised a lecture on Ancient Costumes, was unfortunately prevented by family bereavement from visiting us, but her paper has been postponed until the autumn.

The third meeting of the Winter Session was held at the Abbey Gate, on Thursday, January 18th, when a lecture was given by Mrs. Hautenville Cope, on " Pedigrees and Genealogy." The Society is not often favoured with a lecture delivered by a lady Member. Mrs. Cope is the authoress of a learned work on " How to Decipher Ancient Documents." She has transcribed many Berkshire Registers, and showed herself an authority on the subject of pedigree hunting. Tea was provided after the lecture by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Fellowes.

The fourth meeting was held at the Abbey Gate, on Friday, February 16th, when a lecture was given by E. Guy Dawber, Esq., on " Fountains," illustrated by lantern slides. Mr. Guy Dawber's name is well known as one of the leading architectural experts of the day, whose numerous books on architectural studies

are valued greatly by all students and lovers of old English buildings. The Society was fortunate in having persuaded him to favour us with a lecture on so attractive a subject, which was illustrated by an admirable series of lantern slides. Tea was provided by the kind invitation of Miss Hissey and Miss Cooper-Smith.

The fifth meeting was held on Friday, March 8th, when a lecture was given by Edward Warren, Esq., on "Collegiate Architecture," illustrated by lantern slides. We were again favoured with a lecture by a distinguished London Architect on the noble buildings of Colleges, both at home and abroad. The Society was most fortunate in having secured Mr. Warren as a lecturer on so attractive a subject, and the interest of his lecture was greatly enhanced by an admirable series of views of Collegiate buildings. Tea was provided by the kind invitation of Sir Edward Barry, Bart., and Lady Barry.

The sixth meeting was held on Thursday, March 28th, when a lecture was given by Charles E. Keyser, Esq., President, on "Notes on the Architecture of the Churches of Steventon, Harwell, Didcot and Hagbourne," illustrated by lantern slides. The President's lectures on Berkshire Churches have become one of the most attractive features of the Society's programme. The four Churches which he selected for description this year all possess architectural details of interest and beauty, and the lecture was illustrated by a large number of lantern slides specially taken by Mr. Marcus Adams, which added much to the enjoyment and interest of the lecture. The gratitude of the Society is certainly due to its President for his careful researches and study of the architecture of the County and for the wealth of illustrations which he provides; and the appreciation of the Members was shown by a large attendance at the lecture. Tea was provided by the kind invitation of the President and Mrs. Keyser.

The seventh meeting will be held on April 19th, which will be the Annual Meeting, when the Officers will be elected and the Reports read. A lecture that promises to be most interesting will be given by Mervyn Macartney, Esq., F.R.S., on "Old Gardens," illustrated by lantern slides. Mrs. Williams will be the hostess at the tea after the lecture.

NEWBURY AND DISTRICT FIELD CLUB.—EXCURSION TO TOM HUGHES' COUNTRY.—UFFINGTON, KINGSTON LISLE, WHITE HORSE HILL, WAYLEN SMITH'S CAVE, DONNINGTON PRIORY.—(*Account continued*).—Mr. Money's notes stated that the beautiful church of Uffington, founded by Faritius, Abbot of Abingdon, 1105, which rises picturesquely against the chalk downs, is a large cruciform building, chiefly of the earliest pointed architecture, with an octagonal central lantern tower. The chancel has three windows with detached shafts, having bands and foliated caps; under these are three small circular openings with good mouldings; the side windows are also lancets with detached shafts, except one which is decorated; the sedilia and piscina are fine examples of early English; the tower arches are fine and lofty Early English. On the east side of the north transept are two very remarkable recesses for altars, with high pitched gabled roofs and three windows in each of a peculiar form, as if the heads of the windows were cut off by the slope of the roof, but evidently all original work; this example is believed to be unique. The south transept is nearly the same as the north, but has only one altar-recess. The south doorway has a fine Early English porch, with a groined vault, and room over it, in which was formerly an original fireplace and chimney. On the exterior of the church will be noticed

twelve circular mouldings, each of which originally contained a metal consecration cross. These crosses are highly interesting, and date from the foundation of the church it being according to the ancient ritual for twelve crosses to be made by the bishop at the dedication of a church, symbolical of the twelve Apostles, the teachers of the Gentiles, or the light of the world. These crosses were afterwards cut in stone, or distinguished by colour. Very few examples of original metal crosses remain. Referring to the foregoing notes, which had been prepared by Mr. Money, Mr. Keyser said he was fully in accord with the same, and they gave a good impression of this interesting structure. Mr. Keyser also said that Ashmole's "*Antiquities of Berkshire*" were published by Richard Rawlinson, the Oxford antiquary, many years after Ashmole's death, the epitaphs being falsely printed. What Ashmole did was done very carefully, as appears from the original in the Ashmolean Museum. In the nave, the heads of the west triplet, and of the north-east and south-east windows have been cut off by a flat lead roof which was put on in 1678, when an inscription states the church "long ruined" was repaired by Richard Saunders and Thomas Lockey, Churchwardens. If we may judge from a contemporary record, the vandalism of these rustic restorers in cutting off the heads of the original lancets did not go unpunished, for after the spoliation was done they were both excommunicated by the Vicar, no doubt with a view to stay their hands. This good Vicar deserves a memorial in the church where the churchwarden architects record their achievement. On the south of the church is a small picturesque old building given by John Saunders, 1617, as a school, and referred to in "*Tom Brown's Schooldays*." It is now used as a reading room. The pretty and trim village of Kingston Lisle is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south-east of Uffington. The little church was originally Norman, of which style there only remain a plain north door with Decorated ironwork, a restored window, and the cylindrical font. The chancel shows mostly late Decorated work, i.e., a reticulated east window with a foliated niche on either side, two other windows, foliated piscina, and sill-sedile. The chancel arch is new; nave windows late and bad. The square wooden belfry has a small shingled spire. There is some good modern woodwork. An extremely interesting sanctuary ring-knocker, or hagoday, remains on the entrance doorway of this church, affording the right of asylum to accused persons fleeing from justice. So soon as the fugitive laid hold on the ring or hagoday he was safe, and provided with food for thirty days, and might go certain paces from the church with immunity. It was but a short drive to the Blowing stone or King Alfred's Bugle. This singular natural production is composed of the substance here called Sarsen stone. It is pierced with holes on each side, of which seven are in front, three at the top and several behind. The opening from which it is blown is at the top. The sound issues from the side, near the top of the stone, and can be heard in fine weather at Faringdon Clump, six miles distant. To quote a stanza or two from a poetical description of the antiquities round Lambourn, under the title of "*A day on the Downs*":

" This stone, which utter'd many a blast  
In silence lay for ages past ;  
By man unheard, by man unseen,  
Tradition said it once had been,  
And that for miles its loud alarms  
Were heard when Alfred flew to arms ;  
And this tradition has it still,  
The stone was on the White Horse Hill.  
From sire to son the Blow Stone tale  
Thus circles round the White Horse Vale."

White Horse Hill is well-known for its panoramic view of the vale below; but its celebrity is chiefly owing to the rude figures of a white horse formed on the north-west side of the hill, and being 374 feet in length, is visible from a distance of over 15 miles, when the afternoon sun is shining upon it. Its formation is ascribed to King Alfred as a memento of his celebrated victory over the Danes at *Æscedune*, but this may possibly be regarded more as a popular legend than an historical and ascertained fact. It is almost certainly one thousand years earlier. The dimensions occupy about an acre of ground, with white chalk between two and three feet deep and ten broad. The head, neck, body and tail, are composed of one line varying in width; and one line or trench has also been made for each of the legs. At the summit of the hill, which is 893 ft. above the level of the sea, is the large oval camp known as *Uffington Castle*, 700 ft. in diameter from E. to W., and 500 from N. to S. The view from it is very fine, embracing objects in eight different counties. Below the White Horse is a curious deep descent called "*The Manger*," into one side of which the hill falls with a series of sweeping curves known as "*The Giants' Stairs*." To the right is a high mound called "*Dragon Hill*," where according to local folk-lore, St. George killed the dragon, "whose blood made pool on the top, and ran down the steps on the other side," where the grass has never grown since. The story is told by Job Cork, the *Uffington* shepherd-poet;

"Ah! zur, I can remember well  
The stories the old folks do tell—  
Upon this hill which here is seen,  
Many a battle there have been  
If it is true as I heard say,  
King Gaarge did here the dragon slay,  
And down below on yonder hill  
They buried him as I've heard tell."

Leaving our direct subject for a moment, and being somewhat in the anecdotal vein, we may here record that we recently met with an old Vale shepherd, who was present at the famous *Scouring of the White Horse* in 1843. It was, he said, on the 27th of September that the "*Revel*" took place, and there were from 10,000 to 15,000 persons present. The sports commenced with a foot race, for which fourteen entered. This was followed by a race down the steep face of the hill after a painted wheel, for a good Vale Cheese. The falls were numerous and terrible, some of the men rolling more than fifty yards. Then came the race after the Berkshire pig. The grunter who was started from a cart, went off in gallant style, with eighteen men in pursuit, amid the cheers of thousands and thousands, and faced the open country for about a mile, when he was run into and secured after a most exciting race. No ladies could be induced to enter the race for the holland unmentionables. There were capital heats in sacks, and a famous jingling match—one man being stripped to the waist, round which a bell was tied, endeavouring to elude some dozen blindfolded men who ran after the bell. In the attempt to catch the bell-man the competitors threw each other over in a very amusing way, causing great merriment. The man who carried the bell for fifteen minutes gained the prize. But the piece de resistance was the wrestling, such as never before had been seen in this part of Berkshire. Three men came down from London, professed hands, who threw the countrymen, old good ones at the sport, one after another in quick succession—great powerful men who had carried off many prizes in the county—were tossed in the neatest manner by the London professionals. The backword play was very spirited and good—Wilts against Somerset—the Purton men being trium-

phant, the veteran Simon Stone, having had his head broken, unluckily, in the first bout. There were lots of shows, also a theatre, and no end of other diversions.

The steep slopes leading to White Horse Hill, having been successfully negotiated, a survey was made of the country which spread out before the enchanted vision, though the haze which hung around was not helpful to an extended view. Interest next centred in Uffington Castle, where the luncheon was laid out upon tables in the open. The company then walked down to the Ridgway, where carriages were in readiness, and proceeded to Waylen Smith's Cave, which was described by Mr. Belcher in a paper printed in the last number of the *Journal*. In reply to an inquiry as to how such large stones could have been brought together from a distance, and how such enormous weights could have been lifted up, Mr. Money said the first question was answered by ropes and rollers, and the mural scriptures of Nineveh show us what can be done by such simple machinery. We there see the whole picture how these colossal blocks of stone were moved from the quarry on to the place where they were wanted. As to the second question, by accumulated earth an easy ascent or inclined plane was formed at the top, and by means of levers the stones were raised to the summit, and the earth would then be dug away, leaving the structure complete.

The drive was continued to Lambourn whence the Valley train conveyed the party to Speen station. Here carriages were in readiness to convey them to Donnington Priory, where the guests were received by the Hon. and Mrs. Gathorne Hardy. A little time was spent in inspecting the objects of interest in the drawing-room, including the fine carved overmantels to which reference is made in Mr. Hardy's already printed paper. Also the volumes of the *Life of the first Earl of Cranbrook*, the father of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who was the author of these Memorials. Bound up in these volumes are comprised the original letters and documents referred to on these pages, and form an altogether reliable history of one of the most eventful periods of the reign of Queen Victoria. Mr. Money was able to explain that the modern parts of the carved oak frontispieces over the fireplaces were the work of John Hughes, who, as Miss Mitford remarks "was also an artist in wood, embroidering his oaken wainscots with every quirk and quiddity that comes into his head from a comic masque to an old English motto." Afterwards a paper was read by Mr. Gathorne Hardy on the Author of "*Tom Brown's Schooldays*" and his connection with the Priory. This paper has already been published in the *Journal*. The party was then invited to tea on the lawn, and next strolled along the banks of the Lambourn stream which runs through the grounds. Before leaving, acknowledgment was made by Mr. Keyser of the appreciated hospitality of the President and Mrs. Gathorne Hardy. The excursion proved a great success and reflects much credit on the organiser, Mr. Watts, Hon. Secretary of the Field Club.

