

Notes and Queries.

BRASSES AND MURAL MONUMENTS IN SHINFIELD CHURCH

(VOL. 35, No. 2).

Through the courtesy of the Editor I am able to acknowledge the kindness of correspondents who have taken an interest in my paper on the brasses and monuments in Shinfield church. My thanks are due to the Hon. Secretary for calling my attention to the two other brasses mentioned by Ashmole; but they belong rather to Stuart times. I am grateful to the Misses Kemble of Wokingham for their letter saying that when they left Hartley Court in 1899, "there were four staircases to the first floor—the front Georgian staircase and two exactly opposite each other, that started in the passage that led from the back door to the kitchen. One of these led to the front landing and the other to a little passage that opened on to two old rooms at the back of the house, one of which faced north and one south. The only other way to these rooms in 1899 was by going through two bedrooms and then to the other end of the little passage. Now there is a passage from the front landing taken off the two rooms that were passage rooms. Another staircase led from the kitchen up to the front landing and from there to the attic. The panelling, etc., in the solar was thickly painted and varnished. The 'one room' Miss Mitford speaks of 'at an angle of the house' has been pulled down but its chimney is left. It is on the south side, and once when a workman's tool fell into it, a boy was let down to pick it up. Bees used to build in it when we were there."

Mr. Benyon has been good enough to inform me that there is a plan in his estate office showing these stairs open; and that they must have been blocked and the panelling cleaned either in the time of Mr. Vallange or Capt. de Bathe.

With regard to the house where the Stewards lived in Shinfield, the name of Mary Woodcock (p. 104) at once suggests Didenham. Evidence is, however, too slight to stress. Still,

Dr. Dee calls Shinfield, "Shinefield"; Snare calls Didenham, "Shinefield Manor House"; and there was friendship, if not relationship, between a family named Woodcock and the Berkshire family of Huick, both in London, when Dr. Huick's daughter was residing in the Wiltshire part of Shinfield parish.

With reference to the Steward monuments, the most magnificent of all is the tomb of John Steward and his wife Ann Shouldham (p. 109, No. 3), which is at Marham, and has a shield like that of Sir Mark Steward at Ely, quartering twenty-three coats, five of which cannot be identified, and some others which cannot be accounted for. Concerning the Walkfare arms (p. 106, No. 5) it is interesting to recall that the Sir Robert who slew two of Mortimer's defenders in the scuffle of his capture by Edward III., was appointed Constable of Beaumaris Castle, and pardoned "by assent of Parliament." The device of the ragged staff and crossed sword-ends occurs at Swaffham as well as at Shinfield and Lakenheath; but so small as to be difficult to detect on the photograph made for the writer. (Information given by G. A. Stephen, Esq., Norwich). This tablet is to the memory of Catherine Steward, nee Payne (p. 105, No. 6), Cromwell's grandmother. My paper has been fortunate in coming out along with Mr. Spokes' on "Coats of Arms in Berkshire Churches," which sets forth (p. 111) Cromwell's paternal connections in the county—a family probably more sympathetic to the Commonwealth than the Forsters or the Hampshire Stewards.

I would like to make one correction. Reference No. 6 at the foot of p. 100 should read "Oxford Record Society 1930" not "1830."

META E. WILLIAMS.

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS AT CAVERSHAM.

In the last number of the Journal (Vo. 35, No. 2) mention was made of the discovery at Caversham Court (the old Rectory) of a human skeleton about four feet from the surface in undisturbed brickearth. It was then stated that the remains were being examined by a specialist whose report was awaited with

interest. This report is now available and has been made by Mr. Buxton of Oxford University. For it we are indebted to the proprietors of the "Reading Mercury," the account having appeared in the issue of that paper of the 21st December, 1931 :—

" The skeleton is that of an old man. From the condition of the bones one would not suspect any great antiquity, but on these matters the archaeologist rather than the anthropologist must have the say. The face is unfortunately missing, and the side of the skull is damaged, preventing any long series of measurements. Probably the sagittal suture closed somewhat early, as there is a curious bulge in the occiput. This is, however, a not uncommon individual character, and is of no racial significance. Owing to the loss of the molar teeth during life the mandible had undergone considerable changes, but these again are regularly associated with old age. I am very uncertain what the cephalic index was. I make it about 70, which perhaps is unusually dolichocephalic for an English skull, but this is due, I think, probably to difficulty of measurement rather than to the skull itself. The height index is 69.9, which is well within the range, but indicates a skull which is somewhat low (low actually, not low in its metaphorical sense of low development). For so small a man he had a large head, the length being 197 mm. The only other measurements on the skull I could obtain were: Basibregmatic height 137, parietal arc 143, occipital arc 118, and occipital chord 20.

Certain of the long bones were well preserved and gave a good indication of stature and general condition of the man. He seems to have been rather heavily built, probably about 5 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (1,612 mm). in height. Some of the vertebrae show slight signs of arthritis. There is no trace either on the tibia or on the astragalus of squatting facets, which confirms me in my idea that the skeleton is of no high antiquity; practically always in Romano-British and in pagan Saxons, definite marks appear on the bones which show that their former owner did not use a chair. The most unusual thing is the fact that the femur is flattened. This flattening is usually measured at the top of the shaft. In modern English bones the average value of this index, the percentage ratio of the

antero-posterior diameter to the transverse is 85 ; in the present skeleton the indices are 70 on the right side and 77 on the left (measurements 37 by 26 and 35 by 27). This variation, although great, is well within the range of individual variation. I think that when we come to know more about mediaeval bones, and, indeed, modern ones, we shall find that such anomalies are commoner than is often supposed. There is also a certain amount of flattening of the tibia (shin bone), the index and measurements being the same on both sides. (Index 69, antero-posterior 36 mm., transverse 25). The head of the femur is large, measuring 47 in vertical diameter and 44 and 46 mm. respectively on right and left side in the antero-posterior diameter. This is very close to the average male diameters of modern English. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the centre of the shaft is greater in the left than in the right bone, and is rather heavier than the average ; the left bone is also longer than the right. Lengths : R. femur 425 ; L. femur 429 (both below average length) ; R. tibia 348 ; L. tibia 347 ; R. radius 241."

There the matter at the moment rests, but it is difficult to reconcile the anthropological view with that of the archaeologist who certainly would, from data of an almost identical kind from Great Marlow, be inclined to place the skeleton as far back as the later Neolithic period.

E. W. D.

ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.

At a meeting of the Friends of St. George's held at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, on the 23rd April, 1932, The Dean, Dr. Albert Baillie, intimated that it was proposed to take in hand some important restoration work at the Chapel in the near future, including the historic wall paintings in the Hastings and Oxenbridge Chantry Chapels. Professor Tristram, after examination had pronounced them to be of exceptional interest and importance. Owing to their age—some four hundred years—they were badly flaking and were in need of restorative care. Similar

treatment is also needed, he states, for the four large portraits opposite the Bishop King Chapel. In the Chapter Library are two very beautiful panels, the only survivors of those which originally decorated the Urswick Chapel. It is hoped to treat these also and to restore them to the Urswick Chapel. The tapestry hanging in the choir aisle, depicting the supper at Emmaus, after a picture by Titian, which was given to the Chapel by Lady Mordaunt, wife of a Constable of the Tower in the 17th century, has been restored. It is now proposed to mount it behind glass.

A SUGGESTED LOAN EXHIBITION.

A reader has forwarded to the Editor a suggestion that an endeavour should be made to bring together in the form of an exhibition, objects of artistic value associated with the County of Berkshire and prominent figures in its history. Many Berkshire families could assist in such an enterprise and a loan exhibition would do much to stimulate interest in a fascinating subject. The Editor commends it to the careful examination of the Council of the Society who might appoint a small Sub-Committee of its members to explore the feasibility of such a proposal.