

ACQUISITIONS, 1930

Amongst the additions to the Museum during the year were the following:—

FLINT IMPLEMENTS	Name of donor Or source
Pear-shaped paleolith found at Burnham	Bucks County
Polished celt found at Stoke Goldington	Council
Neolithic axe-head found at Prestwood	Mr Rowland Hill
TRADE TOKENS	
Issued by J. Hartley of Buckingham	Mr. A. J. Clear
“ “ W. Clark of Brill	Mr. J. White
“ “ R. Butler of Aylesbury	Mr. G. C. Whitbread
“ “ E. Coke of Aylesbury	Mr. J. Young
COINS	
Silver penny (EDW. III.) found at Wendover	Wiltshire Archæol. Society
Silver penny (Edw. the Confessor—Buckingham Mint)	Purchased
Coin of Carausius found at Haddenham	Mr. Walter Rose
MISCELLANEA	
Bronze Standard measures (quart and pint)	Eton Guardians Committee
Bronze ring, Anglo-Saxon, from Beacon, Cublington	Miss C. M. Biggs
Engraving of John Westcar of Creslow, by C. Turner	Major T. Sutton Timmis
DEEDS (various dates and parishes)	
	Messrs. Bonham Carter, Thorold Brodie, British Record Society, A. J. Clear and G. Eland
Large quantity including manor rolls of Farnham Royal and Quainton	Trustees of Duke of Leeds Bucks Estates
Relating to Grenville Manor, Haddenham	Purchased

ANNUAL EXCURSION—1930

The Society went outside Bucks and paid its first visit to Abingdon, Berks, upon the recommendation of Mr. Bradbrooke; in the event it had ample reason to be grateful to him for introducing members to a town so full of places of interest. The distance which many had to travel reduced the numbers somewhat, but at least 70 were present with Major Disraeli on 20th June.

The first place visited was St. Helen's Church, where Mr. Bradbrooke drew attention to the points of interest in that strange building of five aisles, 108 feet wide and only 97 feet long, and without a chancel arch. Though the tower is of early 12th century, most of the church was re-constructed in the 15th century. The parvise over the north porch in the Jesus aisle served as the Exchequer Chamber for the Fraternity of the Holy Cross; it remains the property of Christ's Hospital and does not belong to the Church, though part of its structure.

The Rev. Jno. Cleobury was vicar of St. Helens during the last quarter of the 18th century; for most of that time he was also vicar of Medmenham, and is buried at Marlow, where his father was vicar.

Leaving by the west door the Society crossed the grave yard and visited the famous Long Alley Almshouses, built in 1446, with its curious corridor and entrance porch, surmounted by pictures ascribed to Sampson Strong of Oxford, added in 1605. In the Hall of this ancient building, "modernized" in 1605-7 by the addition of a mullioned bay-window and panelling, they had the privilege of listening to an account by the learned but delightful antiquary, Mr. A. E. Preston. He outlined the story of the Holy Cross Guild and of Christ's Hospital, and explained the wealth of documentary evidence available for their history. Besides Cartularies and deeds of all periods from medieval times there are accounts of the Hospital from 1553 complete, and minutes from 1577.

The furniture and pictures in this wonderful Hall were duly noticed; a 15th century oak table in the

bay-window had been made originally for the Exchequer Chamber in the church porch; a magnificent oak table which occupied most of the room was made for the governors in 1618—at a cost of £4.

The portraits form a most remarkable little gallery; hung just above the panelling they take us from the 15th century (Sir Peter Bessils, died 1424), to the end of the 18th century (represented by two pastel portraits). The most remarkable picture possibly is that of Geoffrey Barbour and John Howchion painted about 1607, to the order of Francis Little. As the subjects were early 14th century worthies, whose title to fame is that they were active in building bridges over the Thames at Abingdon and Culham in 1416-7,—it is clear that the portraits could only be traditional; the dresses belong to a far later period too. Mr. Preston showed from the extreme resemblance of the two men to each other, that in all probability they both preserved the features of Mr. Little, the donor of the picture. Another, and better portrait is that of a notable diplomat, Sir John Mason (died 1566), which may be the work of Sampson Strong, it is the copy of a portrait then existing at Hartley Wintney.

Other objects in this remarkable Hall were some silver badges formerly worn by the almshouse dwellers.

After leaving this very fascinating building, and looking more casually at the Brick Alley and Twitty's Almshouses (of the 18th century), the Society then went to the Council Chamber where they were made welcome by the Mayor and where Mr. Preston very kindly talked about the very fine portraits which lined the walls; besides the Gainsborough portraits of George III. and Queen Charlotte, there were worthies more closely associated with the Borough like John Roysse, Baron Harcourt, and Lord Chelmsford.

The next move was to lunch in the same building but at right angles to the wing in which the magistrates hold their court, with the Council Chamber immediately above it. This was the curiously decorated Roysse Room which had a character of its own and increased the pleasure of an excellent lunch, at which the present Mayor sat on one side of the

Chairman and the present vicar of Abingdon (and former vicar of Fenny Stratford), sat on the other side.

Afterwards the magnificent plate of the Corporation was examined, with its three maces of the reigns of Elizabeth, Charles I., and James II.; the great silver-gilt mace belongs to Restoration times. Goblets of the 17th century, tankards of a later date, earlier salt-cellars, rosewater dishes,—the whole made a most wonderful display and aroused great admiration.

Members then went through the late 15th century gateway to what is left of the Abbey, consisting of the Guest-house chiefly. The stone tower-like building at the west end is a remarkable example of work c. 1300; it is of two storeys with gabled buttresses, the basement is a stone vault on central octagonal columns, with chamfered ribs. The upper floor consists of two rooms, of which one contains a very fine fireplace; the stone hood has fallen but the supporting corbels remain; the flue is carried up in a circular shaft with a conical cap and vent slits below it. (The fireplace is well illustrated in Turner and Parker's *Domestic Architecture*, vol. I, p. 85). The chimney is one of the best examples of its date remaining in England. These two chambers have some 14th century windows, and the roof trusses are extremely good.

To the east of this building is a long wing mainly of the 15th century, the south side is of stone, the north side is timber-framed, and is divided by a row of 9 posts forming the line of a corridor.

It was difficult to leave such a fine relic of the middle ages, but it had to be done in order to visit the Church of St. Nicholas with its late 12th century doorway in the W. tower, and its nave of a century later. Mr. Bradbrooke said all that was necessary about a building which had undergone many changes and restorations, and mentioned, amongst other things, that the River Stert runs beneath the nave.

Mr. Bradbrooke drew particular attention to the tomb of John Blacknall and his wife; their daughter married Sir Ralph Verney in 1631. Some account of John Blacknall is given in Bruce's *Verney Papers*, 1853, pp. 138-9, with the epitaph on this tomb. It is

repeated, with other facts, in the *Verney Memoirs*, 1892, vol. I., p. 113-115, where Parthenope, Lady Verney explains how this marriage took documents relating to Abingdon Abbey to Claydon.

Tea was then taken in the Roysse Room, and this concluded a day which was generally considered to have been one of the most interesting in the experience of members. This interest was certainly stimulated by the abundant learning and delightful exposition of Mr. Preston, whose experience as an antiquary who has been Mayor of Abingdon four times gave complete authority to his remarks.

To him and to Mr. Bradbrooke for introducing the Society to this delightful town the thanks of all are due.

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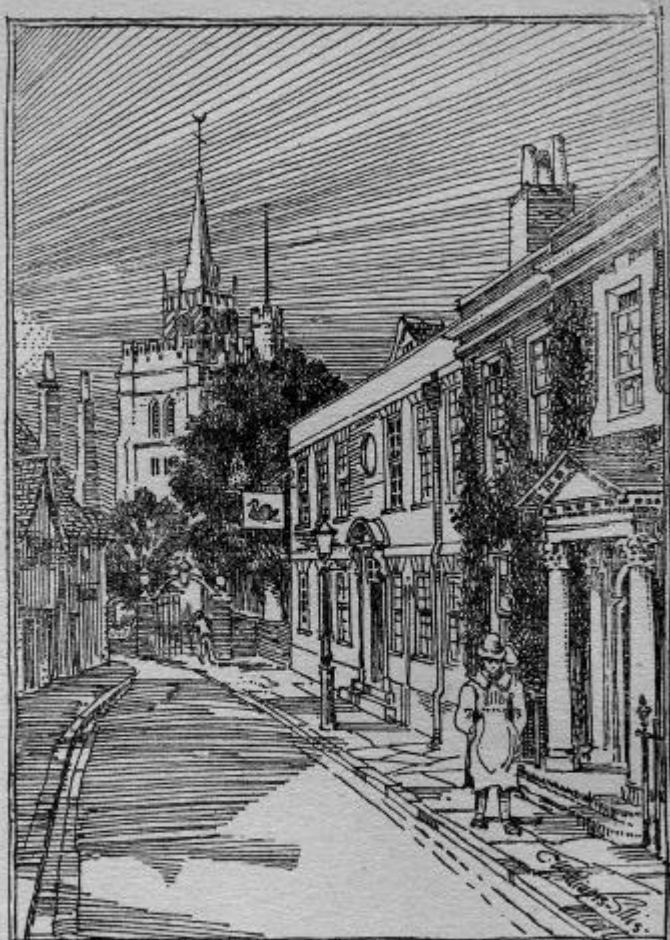
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