

## NOTES

UPPER WINCHENDON: *A Helmet from the Church*. Mr. Martin Holmes, F.S.A., very kindly contributes the following note:

In the recent redecoration of Upper Winchendon church, a helmet was discovered out of sight among the rafters, and was brought to the County Museum at Aylesbury for examination. It was badly corroded but was identified as one which used to hang on a bracket over the chancel arch, and was vaguely associated with the tomb of Sir John Goodwin, who died in 1558. (See Plate 13.) The whole style of the helmet showed that it was too late to have been his, as it must have been made fairly early in the following century and adapted, at a later date still, to figure in someone's formal and elaborate funeral.

Treatment in the conservation laboratory of the London Museum succeeded in checking the active corrosion and removing the remains of the yellow paint which had been applied to it apparently in the nineteenth century, and it was then observable from its style that it was a helmet made about 1610 in the Royal Armoury at Greenwich and altered for funeral purposes by the removal of the visor, and substitution of a set of curved strips to make it look like the helmet heraldically suited to the coat-of-arms of a nobleman, and the addition of a tall spike on the crown to carry the funeral crest. The crest itself was brought in a few days later. It had been fastened to the church wall immediately below the helmet, but for a long time its actual function had remained unrecognised, since it was carved on one side only, the face next to the wall being completely flat. The device is identifiable as a bull's head erased, the crest of the family of Wharton, and the coronet of a marquis worn about its neck shows that it must have been the crest of Thomas, first marquis of Wharton, who was buried at Upper Winchendon on 22nd April, 1715.

This explains the one-sidedness of the crest. Heraldic custom enjoins that the helmet surmounting the arms of a peer should be depicted in profile, and when the "ensigns of honour" were carried at a nobleman's funeral, and hung up over his tomb, care was taken not to display the helmet full-face. Helmet and crest have now been reunited and entrusted to the care of the County Museum, a photograph of the trophy being exhibited in the church itself. (See Plate 14.)

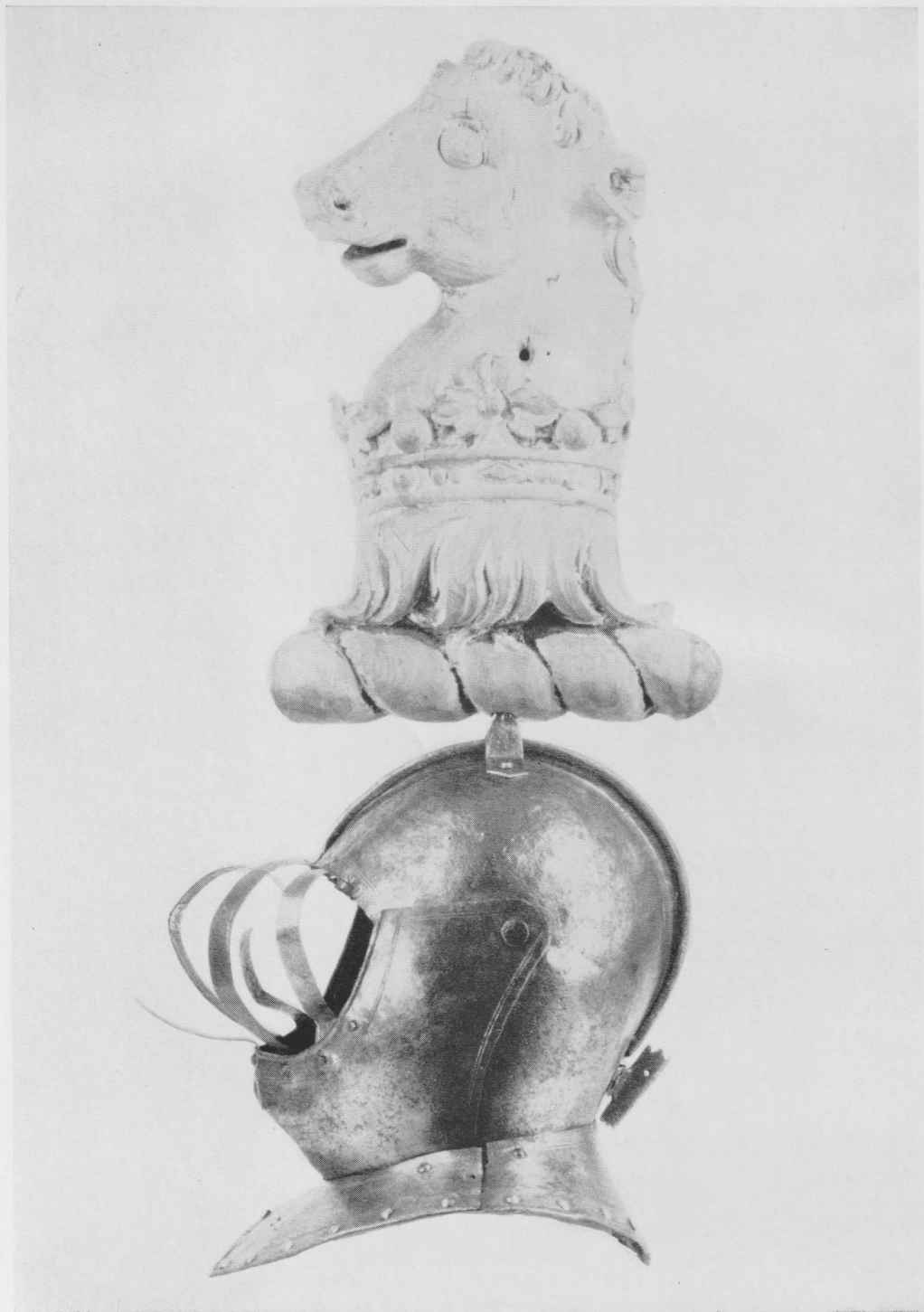
CHALFONT ST. GILES: *Work on the wall paintings and the north aisle roof*. Mrs. Eve Baker and her assistants have continued work on the cleaning and consolidation of the wall paintings (as referred to in p. 207 above) with very gratifying results. The Crucifixion and St. John Baptist subject section is almost complete: and the painting has been extended downwards by the removal of more of Street's cement plaster. This has shown that the subjects were in three tiers; and the disclosure of further details in the subject previously identified as one of the post-resurrection appearances suggests that this is in fact the Incredulity of St. Thomas. A mitred figure has appeared at the west end of the table in the Feast of Herod and Herodias: and a further scene at the base, perhaps St. John in prison preaching to a crowd, has appeared.

The north aisle roof—a poor affair of plastered pine—was found to be badly infested, and has been replaced with a simple and excellently designed oak roof similar in character to the south aisle roof.



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PLATE XIII. The Upper Winchendon helmet as discovered in the church.



*Copyright. London Museum*

PLATE XIV. The helmet after treatment, and with its crest restored.

**CHALFONT ST. PETER:** *Nave roof and vaults under the floor.* The nave roof in the parish church was found to be on the point of collapse and detailed inspection disclosed a remarkable state of affairs. The roof of the rebuilt church in 1714 was a utility measure, large quantities of the medieval roof timbers of the collapsed church being salvaged and reused. Many large moulded beams and rafters were sawn in half and stiffened by deals nailed on to make "new" rafters. There was evidently a plaster ceiling of some form, as such a makeshift timber structure can never have been meant to be seen. The plaster ceiling was removed by Street about 1860, and he substituted a sham hammer-beam roof in varnished matchboarding, which added to the weight and ceiled the already worn-out timbers above. It is to be hoped that a really worth-while substitute can be designed.

The floor and seating were likewise on the point of collapse, the reason being that there were no fewer than nine burial vaults immediately beneath. The tops of these had to be broken, and the whole cemented over before the shoring for the roof could be put in. Mr. E. J. Briden has made a plan of the vaults and details of the interments. Several coffin plates have been removed and mounted for display in the vestry. There were something like twenty interments.

**BURNHAM:** *Monuments in the Church.* Our member, Mr. A. H. Packe, has completed his splendid work of cleaning, regilding, polishing; and restoring the heraldry on every monument in the church, so that the impressive series can now be seen as monuments should be, like those recently restored in Harefield Church. Mr. Packe had ample opportunity to study each monument in detail, and asks that an amendment be made to the late Mrs. Katherine Esdaile's paper in *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XV (1947), p. 34. She refers to a memorial to Bridget Freeman, 1721. This should in fact be Bridget Friend. The sarcophagus she mentions is in fact reduced to the proportion of a shelf whose shape suggests a sarcophagus—on it rests a small coffin in black marble covered with a shroud, also in black marble. On the coffin is a white marble cushion, and on the cushion a skull—very different from Mrs. Esdaile's description.

**HITCHAM:** *Cleaning of monuments.* The fine series of monuments in Hitcham Church (incidentally not referred to by Mrs. Esdaile in *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XV, 1947) has now been cleaned, polished, re-lettered and the heraldry restored by Mr. A. H. Packe. Many features and even figures were loose, and these have all been re-fixed.

**FLEET MARSTON:** An outbreak of dry rot in the floor and pews of the church has resulted in its closure—an ominous and probable preliminary to its being declared redundant. No steps have so far been taken to cope with this, and one fears its eventual disappearance like Quarrendon nearby, or Stantonbury, each likewise the centre of a deserted village.

**LITTLE MISSENDEN:** *Wall paintings, etc.* Work on the cleaning and consolidation of the wall paintings is suspended for the moment, but it is hoped to resume it during 1965. The Society was represented, together with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, at a Consistory Court when a faculty for erecting an entirely unsuitable and unsympathetic modern church extension and appurtenances in the churchyard was opposed. The Chancellor, Mr. Peter Boydell, accepted the architectural, æsthetic and archæological evidence given, and the faculty was refused.

**WORMINGHALL:** *The King Almshouses.* It is pleasant to be able to recall the complete restoration of this charming and important group (see *R.C.H.M., S. Bucks., 325/6*), largely through the efforts of the Rev. R. H. Collier. The buildings had become very out of date and in poor condition and were threatened with closure and probable demolition. But by reducing the number of inmates it has been possible to modernise the premises internally and provide space for up-to-date requirements. The effect has been marred by the planning authority allowing a modern bungalow of poor design and materials to be built right in front of the Almshouses, partly masking them and ruining the composition.

**ASHLEY GREEN:** *Further discoveries at Grove Farm.* Mr. Harman very kindly gave information of the uncovering of an unusual structure within the main enclosure near the existing house; and of foundations of an inner gate-house or turret inside the known gatehouse foundations. Mr. Gowing and the editor inspected these, and it is hoped to place them on a general plan at a later date. One structure, of well-dressed flint with some stone, with an oblong hollow centre some 5 ft. by 3 ft. had something of the appearance of a garderobe pit; but as water filled the base it was not possible to ascertain if there were any outlet channel or drain. In 1965 it is hoped to strip the upper soil from one of the enclosed gardens within the central area, where substantial foundations are known to exist.

**NORTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHURCHES.** The editor made a tour of some 25 churches in the North of the County in the summer of 1964, disclosing a deplorable state of affairs in many of them. Probably not more than three or four could be stated as in first-class order. In very few was there any literature about the points of architectural and historical interest in the building. Some of the salient points may be summarised.

**ADDINGTON.** Structurally sound. No reference to the remarkable series of Flemish and German sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century glass panels which fill almost every window in the church. It is the most extensive collection in the county. And these, together with those at Missenden Abbey, ought to be listed.

**ADSTOCK.** Much sound restoration work recently done.

**BARTON HARTSHORN.** There is a danger of this charming remote church becoming redundant, as there is virtually no village, and it is largely maintained by the great house. It is a pleasure to record many extremely good, simple and dignified modern fittings and furnishings in classical style.

**CLIFTON REYNES.** Much good recent restoration work to parapets, etc. Condition of stone tomb chests of some of the important Reynes monuments gives cause for anxiety and should be examined and dealt with.

**COLD BRAYFIELD.** Recently well restored structurally.

**GAWCOTT.** This interesting classical building of 1828, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott's father, is in a poor state. The usual neglect of roofs, gutters and down-pipes has resulted in damage to stonework and staining of interior plaster. The decorative scheme would disgrace a nineteenth-century Board school. And recently a reredos in poor and shallow Gothic design has been allowed to be inserted in the chancel, completely out of keeping with everything else in the church.

**GAYHURST.** Recently structurally restored, and the interior cleaned. But the Wright monument could still have some attention.

**HAVERSHAM.** Recently structurally restored, and limewashed inside.

**HILLEDEN.** In poor structural condition after years of neglect. Many pinnacles fallen and exterior stonework perished. Roofs and windows have been mended; and there is a scheme for extensive restoration involving the use of much artificial stone. The

most important late-fifteenth-century church in the county deserves only the best treatment.

**LATHBURY.** Much recent structural repair done. But the important series of wall paintings are in very poor condition and in need of immediate attention.

**LAVENDON.** Recently whitewashed inside, the wash being carried over everything, obscuring details of stonework, carving, mouldings, etc.

**LECKHAMPSTEAD.** There has been recent renewal of gutters and down-pipes and the building is now structurally sound. The wall paintings have faded badly, probably due to brushing; and the fourteenth-century freestone effigy is very dirty.

**LITTLE LINFORD.** This church now stands isolated in the derelict park, since the demolition of the manor house. As half the cottages in the village are also derelict and empty, the prospect is not a bright one. The chancel roof is almost off, large areas of tiling being shattered or having slipped, exposing the boarding of the roof. As a consequence, the chancel leaks like a sieve, and few of the gutters and rain-pipes seemed to be in working order.

**NEWPORT PAGNELL.** The church appears sound, apart from a few small leaks in the aisle roofs and several settlement cracks. But no attempt at interior re-decoration seems ever to have been made since the galleries were removed nearly forty years ago, and the ugly scars of these still disfigure the whole building and give it a shabby and neglected air.

**PADBURY.** Much general restoration work, care of guttering and spouting, replastering, cleaning and limewashing has been done under Mr. J. Storry. Work was started in 1964 on the wall paintings and it is hoped to resume this in 1965. Four new subjects have been revealed—the martyrdom of a saint; the miracle of St. Edmund's head and the wolf; St. George; and St. Christopher. It is hoped these will form the subject of a paper when the work is completed.

**PRESTON BISSET.** Structurally sound; but in a tasteless and depressing decorative state with some very remarkable modern furniture. A finely carved stone corbel seems to have been recently smashed.

**RADCLIVE.** This charming building, at present in an almost unrestored state, is due for heavy restoration. And one sincerely hopes that its unspoilt atmosphere and texture will not be wrecked.

**RAVENSTONE.** A good deal of work has been done here in 1964. But how a faculty was ever granted for the destruction of the fine seventeenth-century reredos in the South aisle (formerly the high altar-piece), and its replacement by a flimsy modern affair, it is hard to conceive. The excuse was that the old one had the wood-worm in it. Parts of the original, including the fine central urn, illustrated in plate 68 in Murray's *Buckinghamshire Guide* (Betjeman & Piper), were actually found on a bonfire in the churchyard, and the urn was rescued and given to the County Museum.

**SHERINGTON.** Much good restoration work has been done on the roofs here lately and some earlier decorated timbers found. The need for this extensive and expensive work could have been greatly reduced by elementary attention to roofs and gutters in the past.

**THORNTON.** Neglected and depressing. Windows broken, birds nesting inside and fouling the building, roofs leaking, plaster falling.

**TWYFORD.** The fine series of Wenman monuments are absolutely filthy and neglected. The central, painted wooden armorial achievement panel has recently been prized off one (Richard Wenman, 1572). Can this be the work of the same vandal as stole the two Wing brasses? The top of the fine altar tomb to Thomas Giffard, 1550, was covered with miscellaneous church literature, blotting paper, ink-pots, collecting boxes and other miscellanea. Several seats at the back of the North aisle were devoted

to a superannuated bath chair, old decaying hassocks and service books mostly mildewed, and a fine selection of jam jars.

**WATER STRATFORD.** The whole place had an air of depressing dereliction and neglect. The churchyard gate and fence were broken down: the electric light (a fine factory fitting) on the corner of the building was broken and swinging loose on its wires. And it was necessary to slash a way through the dense undergrowth even to get a sight of the fine twelfth-century North door, hidden in grass, brambles, nettles and elder.