

NOTES

RECTORY COTTAGES, BLETCHLEY (Grid. Ref. SP 864 336)

Dr. P. N. Jervis writes:

Lord Grey de Wilton (died 1447) lived at Saffron Gardens by the River Ouzel near Fenny Stratford, and his house was demolished in 1618. In 1619 the Tithe Barn adjacent to the parish church of S. Mary, Bletchley, first comes on record. This barn is an unusual hammer-beam roofed structure which shows signs of its having been moved from elsewhere, and it has enough detail to attribute it to the first half of the fifteenth century, so it has been plausibly argued that this barn is in fact a surviving portion of Lord Grey de Wilton's dining hall. The structure is in three bays of about ten feet length; it stands about 25 ft high and 18 ft across. The hammer beams are carved into grotesque heads of a secular demeanour. Unusually, there are intermediate hammers between the principals: these intermediate hammers reach only to the purlins, and only one survives in a reasonably complete condition.

Next to the barn is a cottage, half-timbered and built round a large stone chimney with brick stacks. This is probably seventeenth century, but it is difficult to date because of the extensive use of heavily moulded timbers on an earlier period. There is evidence that it once had the upper storey jettied—a dragon tie survives.

The building is being restored for use as a meeting place for local societies, with provision for exhibitions. Much of the fund for the restoration has been raised locally, and particularly generous grants have been made by the Bletchley U.D.C. (£5,000), the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (£5,000), the Pilgrim Trust (£1,500), the Buckinghamshire County Council (£500) and the Historic Buildings Council for England (£500).

The first stage of the restoration was undertaken two years ago, when the roof was repaired and the building made weatherproof. The walls of the hammer-beam roofed hall were also repaired. The second stage comprises the restoration of the cottages and the completion of the alterations to fit it for public use.

A full account of the restoration will be made after completion of the work.

FAWLEY. In the grounds of Fawley Court are several 18th century follies, in some of which fragments of antique sculpture were incorporated. In May 1971, Dr. Denys Haynes, Keeper of Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, identified one large fragment as the head and torso, in marble, of a giant, originating from Asia Minor in the second century B.C., part of the frieze of the altar of Zeus at Pergamon. The giant was brought to England in the seventeenth century by Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel, whose great art collection was dispersed in the 18th century. The head had been inserted upside down in a circular window in one of the "Gothick" ruins.

HARDWICK, *Civil War Monument.* Just outside Aylesbury, on the Buckingham road is Holman's Bridge where the road crosses the River Thames. There are records of a skirmish here in the Civil War and in 1818, during river drainage, many skeletons were uncovered. Lord Nugent who lived at Lilies, had all the remains buried in Hardwick churchyard and erected a tomb, with a long inscription; the latter has

seriously decayed and the Parish Council are trying to raise funds to restore it. It was most unfortunate that an oil storage tank was recently erected within two feet of the monument.

LISTED BUILDINGS. Once again the Society's advice has been sought on numerous occasions in connection with listed buildings. Overall 1971 was an encouraging year. The most important decision by the Minister for the Environment was his refusal to permit the demolition and redevelopment of 1-2 Church Street, High Wycombe, which are to be restored and altered internally. The High Wycombe Society led this particular campaign, supported by many other local and national organisations. Permission to redevelop was refused on two other key sites, 14-22 West Street, Marlow and 60-68 High Street, Newport Pagnell. Application for a large office block alongside Thomas Archer's important house Marlow Place was turned down as were plans to transform High Wycombe's Guildhall (Henry Keene 1757) into a restaurant. On the debit side, the seventeenth century dovecot at Ravenstone was demolished after failure to raise sufficient funds for restoration.

The first building to be purchased and restored under the County Council's imaginative "rolling fund" schemes, Brewery House, Newport Pagnell, an excellent early 18th century house, has been completed and subsequently sold satisfactorily. They intend shortly to restore the impressive, but now near-derelict Bridger (or Langley) House at Langley Marish. In addition a new road bridge will be built at Thornborough, 200 yards downstream from the present bridge, which is of great importance as the only medieval bridge in the County. At present it carries the heavy traffic of the Buckingham-Bletchley road. This solution is far preferable to the most unsatisfactory widening of the 18th century bridge at Sherington, recently completed.

Restoration by private owners include the former Rectories at Old Wolverton and Filgrave (Tyringham), Park House, High Wycombe and the impressive 15th century Dovecote at Notley Abbey. One of Christopher Wren's only two authentic country houses, Winslow Hall, is to have the Victorian plate-glass windows removed in the upper stories and the original fenestration of 1700 restored.

RECORDS OF BUCKS. A printed Index to the Records is available for Volume I-X. Miss G. M. de Fraine has compiled an Index to Volume XI-XVI, two copies of which are available for consultation at the Library.

REDUNDANT CHURCHES. The Pastoral Measure, 1968 set up a procedure for dealing with churches declared "redundant" on pastoral grounds by a Diocesan Committee. Various alternatives are a different use (e.g. as a village hall), demolition or preservation with the help of the newly created (and Government supported) Redundant Churches Fund. Many problems will arise under the first two alternatives, in particular the preservation of wall paintings, stained glass, pulpits, wall monuments and other fittings as well as the future treatment of the churchyard and its graves. The Society hopes to be of practical use to the appropriate Church Committees considering these matters and has formed a sub-committee to deal with them.

PARISH REGISTERS. In 1951, mainly from the initiative of the late A. Vere Woodman, the Bishop of Oxford nominated the Society's Muniment Room as the depository for Parish Registers in the Archdeaconry of Buckingham (i.e. the County). Since then 70 parishes (nearly a third) have deposited their Registers which have been

looked after by the Honorary Archivist and have been available for researchers. It has however been impossible for a voluntary Society to make them available throughout the week. The Bishop of Oxford decided in 1971 that it would be appropriate for the much expanded County Record Office to become the official depository and the Registers were, with each incumbent's approval, transferred there. The Society accepted the Bishop's decision with some regret, but considers it to be logical and appropriate at the present time. In any case the relations between the Society and the County Record Office have always been close and harmonious. The Society's main anxiety is that still far too many Registers remain in the parishes, often uncared for, sometimes missing because of past neglect, and unavailable to researchers. A full list of those deposited with the Society was published in *Records* XVIII. 176.