

## NOTES

### HIGH WYCOMBE. *Wall Paintings at 45 Temple End.*

A note on the re-exposure of wall paintings in this house at Temple End, High Wycombe, may not be out of place, as it is possible to add a few comments to what is already known.

*The House.* The house in which the paintings occur is an important one. It is not noticed by the *Royal Commission*, nor in the *Victoria County History*, and there is no mention of it in Parker's *History of High Wycombe*. But, as nearly always, Pevsner is not found wanting, and he lists it on page 168 of his Buckinghamshire volume where he describes Nos. 45 and 47 as an eight-bay structure of early 18th-century date. I would say very early in the century or even circa 1700 on account of the thickness of the glazing bars and the character of one of the staircases and doorway.

*The Paintings.* The paintings were found in 1911 and are described on pp. 311 and 132 of Vol. X of the *Records of Bucks.*, where Mr. Thurlow considers the house to be of the late 17th-century date. The paintings, in a room on the first floor facing the street, were re-exposed during conversion of the premises for office accommodation in February 1975 and my attention was kindly drawn to them by Mrs. L. M. Cassidy of the High Wycombe Society and with the co-operation of Mr. Cooper, the builder doing the work. The removal of wall paper has further damaged the paintings, and few details are now identifiable. Mr. Thurlow, in the note in the *Records* already referred to suggested there were eight or nine "panels" made by arches between classical columns containing figures with a moulded frieze or cornice above. A feature not previously noted is that there is a dado at the base with swags of fruit or flowers, all in grisaille like the rest of the architectural setting, below each figure. I suggest that there were in fact nine such figure subject panels, with perhaps two half-panels flanking the fireplace (recently removed and now blocked up). It is difficult, in view of many alterations, to decide which were the original openings for doors or cupboards, and which are more recent, destroying paintings.

The note in the *Records* identifies four of the figures as representing the Four Cardinal or Moral Virtues—Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude. (To these were later added the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity). Of the first four only Justice, blindfold and with sword and scales in arms extended, is now identifiable.

All the figures are female; and one has to think of other "sets" of subjects, fashionable in the 17th century and early 18th century which might be appropriate. The Nine Worthies (in wall painting in a house in Amersham) are clearly not here, as all are male characters and would be too many when added to the Virtues. Thurlow suggested the Four Elements, or Mars and Diana, both highly unlikely. A set of five which would make up a total of nine, is the Five Senses, as they appear in a house in Faversham High Street. Another set of four would be the Seasons, making eight panels. The Seven Liberal Arts would clearly be too many, as would be the Nine Muses.

*Details.* All that I could see is as follows:

*South Wall.* Three panels approximately 7 ft. 9 in.  $\times$  3 ft. 3 in. between thin timber uprights, with a door opening on to the staircase landing and a destroyed panel in the corner. Three female figures in an architectural setting in grisaille, round-headed arches or niches between columns, moulded cornice and oblong dado panels below with swags of fruit and flowers in imitation of stone carving.

The lefthand figure is in a green dress with a pink sash and short sleeves, her left hand extended, her right holding an object with handle that might be a mirror—?Sight. The Centre figure is in a green dress of slightly different tone, red sash, arms extended;

there are unidentifiable objects at the base, possibly shells—?Hearing. The Third figure has a yellow dress, whitish bodice, long green veil or scarf flowing behind, her hands held out together before her. ?Flowers at base—? Smell or Touch.

*North Wall.* Left-hand end, female figure in red dress or robe, blindfold, hair done up on top of head with a bun, holding a sword in her right hand, and scales in her left—Justice. The Centre figure is almost obliterated but the head is inclined in an attitude of modesty—?Temperance. The Right hand figure has a long flowing red veil or scarf similar to the green one on the opposite wall and is in an upright attitude—?Fortitude. A blocked doorway pierces this wall.

On the right of the fireplace is another blocked opening, and adjoining the chimney breast is a half-panel also apparently containing a figure.

The painting is extremely competent, and the scheme when complete must have been elaborate and beautiful. For such a sophisticated piece of work there must have been some kind of original type to work from; and it is unfortunate that its now very fragmentary state (and it was never recorded pictorially in 1911) prevents any hope of identifying the source.

Thurlow describes the paintings as in distemper: I would have thought they were in a size medium or flat oil, which is at any rate fast to water (used to try and bring up what is left of the paintings).

In the course of trenching for drains a hone-stone and some pottery were found. Three fragments are from a coarse red earthenware vessel, a shallow dish or pan with everted rim, and having heavy green glaze on the interior, presumably late 17th century.

E.C.R.

#### WOLVERTON. *A Note on Recent Changes in the Railway Workshops.*

In two recent papers in the *Records*, I outlined the growth of these workshops.<sup>1</sup> A further recent study analysed their growth in more detail.<sup>2</sup> Since these were written changes have taken place. It is the aim of this note to record recent developments.

Wolverton Works are controlled by British Rail Engineering Limited, whose headquarters are in Bishopsgate, London. The part of the works which can be seen from the railway line were closed as part of British Railways Workshops five-year modernisation and re-organisation plan of 1962-1967. Under nationalisation Wolverton ceased to be a carriage building works and concentrated on an increased work-load of carriage repairs. The modernisation of equipment and facilities led to the concentration of work in a smaller area in 1964, and the staff were transferred to the main works and the surplus buildings sold. There was little or no redundancy.

Mr. Robert Maxwell, through either Pergamon Press Limited or Robert Maxwell and Company Limited, obtained an option for the purchase of surplus British Railway land in Wolverton, and acquired this particular part of the Railway Workshop which he subsequently leased to Dunlop and Ranken, and later sold to the Scottish Widowers and Orphans Insurance Company.

In considering the planning application for change of use, the Council were mindful of the fact that the existing use was in the heavy engineering category, and with the

<sup>1</sup> Richards, P. S. 'The Influence of Railways on the growth of Wolverton'. *Records of Bucks.* Vol. xvii. pp. 115-126. (1962) 'Wolverton: some further notes', *ibid.* Vol. xviii. pp. 173-4 (1967)

<sup>2</sup> Courtman, Moira *Wolverton: a study in Urban Geography* M.Phil., (London) 1968

benefit of that permitted class, a number of things could happen which were not necessarily in the interests of the district, bearing in mind the full employment enjoyed then and for many years previously. In the circumstances, the steel stockholding business of Dunlop and Ranken was not unwelcome in that it brought substantial additional rateable value to the district as to a certain extent diversified employment prospects. In passing it must be noted that the railway workshops as a whole paid negligible sums in rates. Other parts of the workshop acquired by Mr. Maxwell's company were devoted to his publishing interests.

In 1967 Dunlop and Ranken Limited, Steel Stockholders, took over the part of the former Railway Carriage Works that were on the south side of the main road. The firm distributes steel which comes from the British Steel Corporation and Private Sector steel supply. The steel comes in by rail and road, and is sent by lorry all over the south of England.

The attraction of the Works was their geographical location, the ease of road and rail access, and the existing buildings could easily be modified to meet the firm's requirements. There are three buildings and these were joined by crane tracks. Most of the training is on the job, and the employees live in Milton Keynes and outlying areas and the journey to work is mainly by car. Wolverton is a department of this large international Stockholding Company whose presence in the area, as a market for labour, is appreciated. This is proved by the ease with which planning permission was obtained.

P. S. Richards

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*Royal Arms in Bucks Churches.* A provisional list was published in *Records*, XIX, 2, 229 to which the following additions can now be made:

GREAT MISSENDEN

HANSLOPE George 4

HARTWELL George 3

HITCHAM George 3

NEWPORT PAGNELL

NORTH CRAWLEY George 3

RADCLIVE Hanoverian

ST. LEONARDS 1963 Elisabeth 2

THORNTON Victoria

UPTON 1716 George 1

WESTON TURVILLE George 4

WEST WYCOMBE George 3