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VOL. VI.—No. 1.

RECORDS  
OF  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,

OR PAPERS AND NOTES ON THE  
HISTORY, ANTIQUITIES, AND ARCHITECTURE  
OF THE COUNTY;

TOGETHER WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

Architectural and Archæological Society

FOR THE

COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

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Bibliotheca Buckinghamiensis. Part III.

AYLESBURY :

PRINTED BY G. T. DE FRAINE, "BUCKS HERALD" OFFICE.

1887.

In course of Publication, in Quarterly Parts, price 1s. ; or by  
post, 1s. 2d.

A WORK ENTITLED,

# Worthies of Buckinghamshire

AND

## Men of Note of that County.

By ROBERT GIBBS,

Author of "The Regicides of Buckinghamshire," "Local Occurrences," "History  
of Aylesbury," etc.

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PARTS 1 TO 6 ARE NOW READY.

BOURBON STREET, AYLESBURY,  
*June, 1887.*

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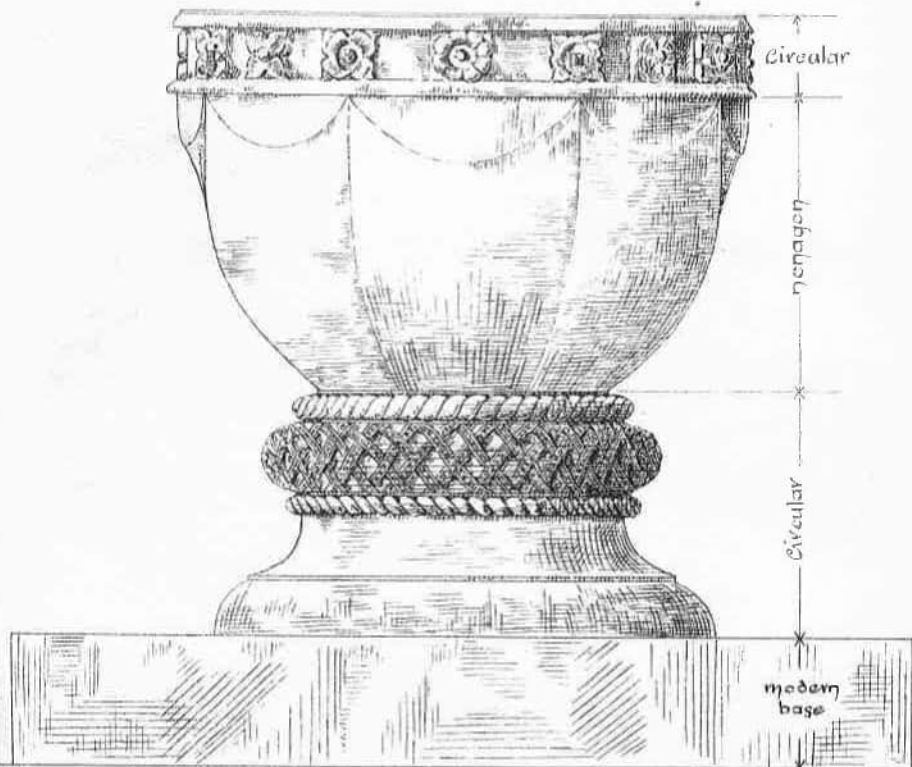
## P R E F A C E.

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IN issuing the first number for the Sixth Volume of *THE RECORDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE*, it would appear that some remarks, bearing on the position and future prospects of the Architectural and Archæological Society for the County, may be expected. Since the commencement of the Fifth Volume, death has deprived the Society of some of its Vice-Presidents, amongst them, of that illustrious statesman, the Earl of Beaconsfield; of Dr. Goodford, the greatly respected Provost of Eton; and of Mr. Du Pré, who for so many years represented the county in Parliament. The retirement of the Rev. Charles Lowndes from the office of Honorary Secretary also calls for special notice. Mr. Lowndes for a considerable period carried on the work of the Society almost unaided, except by the contributors to *THE RECORDS*. He was at once the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Editor of the Society's publication, and the organizer of its annual excursions; and it is not too much to say, that archæology in Buckinghamshire can never repay the debt of gratitude it owes him for his unwearied efforts to maintain the one Society in the county, which has for its object, to foster the study of architecture, and to aid the cause of archæological research.

It may be asked, in the outset, what are the future objects of the Society. The answer would be, that in some respects its work has scarcely begun. Dr. Lipscomb's *History of the County* is at the present time the standard authority on that subject. Undoubtedly there are inaccuracies and imperfections in the work; but, take it as a whole, it displays laborious research and patient investigation. Within its pages may be found a collection of most valuable information, consisting of subjects, such as these—of the history of the Manors, of the towns and parishes, of the

Decorated Font: Hampden Church - Bucks -



26 . 11 . 86.

Miss. Threlow. High Wycombe -

~ Scale of feet ~



ecclesiastical records of the county, of the pedigrees of the leading families, and of the memorials of the dead. The materials thus brought together were, as is well known, only obtained with great pecuniary sacrifice. It is but justice to Dr. Lipscomb's memory that this should be said, and it is no disparagement to him, considering the period when his work appeared, to remark, that an authoritative history of our churches, treated both architecturally and archæologically, has yet to be written.

By a greater appreciation of all that pertains to an ancient church can we alone depend on the preservation of its memorials, which, for the purposes of history, are often of priceless value. Could the wave of zeal for church restoration again pass over the country, how many lessons from past experience should we have learnt, how careful should we be not to sweep away the works of art, that might be otherwise condemned as not conforming to the prevailing style. We now realize the fact, that the history of a parish is frequently bound up with that of its church. The church often is the only remaining source, from whence its past annals can be gleaned. The tendency to efface everything that is not to the dominating taste of the day is not peculiar to the period just closing. No greater innovators could be found than the builders of the Perpendicular period. With relentless energy they replaced the high-pitched roofs of our churches of the Early English period for those to their own taste, and it was their delight to substitute at the west end—the most conspicuous position—of our cathedrals and important churches, a vast Perpendicular window, in the place of one, it might be, of Norman work, or of the Early English or Decorated period. Amongst all the charms of Venice, one of its greatest is the sense that you are surrounded with the choicest specimens of design which art had to bestow during a succession of years, and which she lavished on that beautiful city. Whether it be Byzantine, or Romanesque, Gothic, or Renaissance, each style is represented with fitting grace in this, it may well be said, enchanted circle of exquisite design and architectural conception. In the grand Romanesque church of St. John and St. Paul, the burial-place of the Doges, you see the splendour of their tombs: on the one side of the choir of that church is the far-famed Renais-

sance monument to the Doge Vendramin, and on the other the tomb to the Doge Michele Morosini, which Ruskin pronounces to be "the richest monument of the Gothic period in Venice." In Venice there seems to be a truce to the battle of the styles; at all events, one is impressed with this feeling at the present day, as one learns in studying its noble buildings to reverence the genius of succeeding ages. At this very time in England the zeal for everything that is Gothic is fading away before a revival of the Renaissance, in what is known as the Queen Anne's style. Surely that, which is passing before our eyes, should impress us with the importance of treating with reverend care art in its different stages, even in our humblest parish churches.

Premising that an Archæological Society has no option on the subject, it should, nevertheless, as a first abstract principle, respect rights of property; for example, of the right of the rector over his church and chancel, and of the parishioners over the body of the church, the freehold in which is vested in the incumbent for their benefit: but willingly, and as a matter of course, conceding all this, is not a beautiful building, the design and work of a bygone age, a gift, not to a single parish, but to the present generation? And if so, if the student has a claim to ask for the preservation of works which will instruct and enlighten him, as he has been lately asking for the scrupulous preservation of the Roman baths at Bath of the Corporation of that ancient city, should it not be understood that an Archæological Society is acting strictly within its own province, if it respectfully makes suggestions to a restorer or rebuildler, which have for their object the conservation of that which, if destroyed, would be, in a greater or less degree, a public calamity? There are many churches in Buckinghamshire untouched by the restorer's hand, and the greatest care and archæological knowledge are needed, before their restoration is attempted. In such cases, acting on the principle before indicated, our Society might be of some assistance to the restorer. But, leaving this question, as has been before pointed out, we need a careful history of our different churches; single papers on each parish church, its monuments, and its registers, written in the pages of these RECORDS, or published in other ways, go to contribute to the formation of

the future history of our county. In this direction the Society naturally looks to the parochial clergy, especially in the rural districts, for valuable assistance.

Passing from the ecclesiastical side of the subject, His Grace the President of the Society has set an excellent example of how to bring to light the history of such a mansion as Stowe, and this has been followed by Lady Verney in the welcome paper on Claydon House, a type of one of the most interesting of our English country seats. It would be fortunate if the memorials of each historic house in the county were similarly communicated. There are treasures in the muniment rooms of Buckinghamshire homes, which have repaid and would still repay the patient investigation of the historian; and it is needless to say, among the owners, their custodians, there are those who are in every way qualified to be the keepers of manuscripts of more than local importance. This Society has been constantly received at its annual excursions with kindly welcome and hospitality by those to whom the previous remarks would obviously apply; and, if it could reckon upon a greater direct personal interest in its objects by the possessors of family records, which are bound up with Buckinghamshire's past fame, it could achieve far more for the future history of the county than is at present in its power.

The history of the towns of the county, of their charters, their municipal institutions, and their archaeological characteristics has not been neglected of late years. In the last volume of *THE RECORDS* there is a paper devoted to the late Mr. Parker's work on "The History and Antiquities of Wycombe," which was published in 1878. A town such as Wycombe, whose incorporation is ascribed to Henry I., will be classed amongst the most ancient boroughs in the kingdom; it is a cause for satisfaction, therefore, that its history has at length been written. A vast amount of important information, too, has been gathered together and chronicled by Mr. Robert Gibbs in his "History of Aylesbury," published in 1885, and to which a paper has also been devoted in this publication. A new edition of Browne Willis's "History and Antiquities of Buckingham" would be a welcome completion of the histories of the three prominent towns of the county.



One of the most valuable undertakings in connection with the Society is the publication of the "Bibliotheca Buckinghamiensis." The compilation is being accomplished by Mr. Henry Gough, a warm friend of the Society, with conscientious labour and research. By putting before the reader all that has been written that would be worthy of attention relating to the county under various heads, Mr. Gough is conferring on the archæologist, and the general student, facilities for investigation, which cannot be too highly prized.

The earth-works and barrows on the Chiltern Hills are objects which have not received that careful investigation they deserve. Every county cannot, of course, boast of such earthworks as can Dorsetshire or Wiltshire, or of their treatment in so elaborate a way by an antiquary such as Warne, in his work on "Ancient Dorset," or Sir R. Colt Hoare, in his work on the Wiltshire barrows, yet much might be done to throw light on an interesting region, which was occupied by the early inhabitants of this island.

The relics from the now celebrated Taplow Barrow, to be seen in the Early British and Saxon Room of the British Museum, attest the importance of this region, and of devoting attention to the traces of man found on the uplands of the county. The situation of the Barrow, scarcely rivaled in its commanding position, might well suggest that here a spot had been chosen for a great occasion, and for the burial of no ordinary leader of men. It was with this conviction the Taplow investigation was made, and the labour was rewarded, and it is in this spirit that all similar operations should be undertaken. A wide field for the discovery of the traces of pre-historic man is open to the antiquary, more particularly in the Thames Valley, where the river-drift man located himself. Neolithic implements are also to be found in this locality, and in the ancient encampments on some of our prominent hills.

The subjects already touched upon are far from exhaustive of the objects which the Society might consider within its province; there is, however, but one other that will be mentioned in these introductory remarks. Mr. Cocks's paper in the preceding volume on "The Bells of the Parish Churches in the Hundred of

Desborough," was opportune, inasmuch as he truly says, "the history of the bells of Buckinghamshire is as yet unwritten;" his valuable contribution to such a work affords expectations that he may be induced to pursue a task he has so ably commenced. A very important gain to archæology will be secured if this section of the history of the county should be completed.

The Society's Museum at Aylesbury, though in a more satisfactory state since it has been under the care of the present Curator, must have long been considered unworthy to rank as the home of an archæological body. At the outset the building is limited, and quite inadequate for anything approaching to a systematic exhibition of objects of local interest; still it is, with all its imperfections, capable of great improvement, and it might be fittingly left to a local committee, selected from the members of the Society, assisted by other archæologists and geologists in the neighbourhood, to undertake the renovation and general remodeling of this Museum, so as to make it, with greater resemblance to the ideal of an Archæological Museum in the county town, of more actual use to the Society and its members.

From the preceding observations, it will be understood to be the aim of the Editor of the Society's publications to keep the subjects treated of, as much as possible, to the architecture and archæology of Buckinghamshire itself, with the object, amongst others of importance, of thus aiding the future historian of the county, and of so fulfilling one of the primary duties of the Society.

It is to those writers who have so ably and willingly afforded the benefit of their researches in the past, and to those who may be induced to assist in the future, whether as veteran archæologists giving the results of their investigations, or as students, who have lately entered on this inviting field of science, that the Society will be mainly indebted for its future efficiency and practical utility.

JOHN PARKER.

HILL SIDE, HIGH WYCOMBE.

*March, 1887.*