

# The Proceedings of the Bucks Architectural and Archaeological Society

FOR THE YEAR 1904.

The annual excursion of the Society took place on Tuesday the 23rd August, 1904. The interesting places chosen for the visit of the members, which was organized by Mr. A. H. Cocks, one of the Honorary Secretaries, were in a central part of the County, and a numerous body of members and their friends was present on the occasion. The ruins of the *Chapel of St. Peter, Quarrendon*, were first visited. This was one of the parochial chapels attached to the important Church of Aylesbury, which, as Mr. Horace Round writes in his Domesday survey, had "the valuable right to church scot from the whole area of the eight hundreds round about Aylesbury."\* The ruins of this chapel with its tombs have been described by many writers in various works. At this visit Mr. S. G. Payne displayed some drawings of these ruins taken forty-one years before, and Mr. W. Crouch also produced a sketch of them taken twenty-three years before. These illustrations were valuable as showing the conditions of the chapel at the periods they were taken, and proved the melancholy fact of the gradual decay the building was undergoing. Mr. Cocks read some extracts from accounts of Quarrendon Chapel for the information of those present. *Hardwick Church* was the next building visited. The members were received by the Rector, the Rev. F. E. Allen, who had not been long in residence, and therefore was not in a position to give detailed information in reference to the history of his church. It is not proposed in this account of the Society's proceedings to consider in any detail the architectural features of the churches inspected, as it is to be expected that in a future volume of "The Victoria History of the County" the churches will receive their due share of attention, both historically and architecturally. We therefore confine our observations on this church by saying that it is dedicated to St. Mary, and consists of a tower, nave with clerestory windows, and south aisle, and a chancel. Some of those present were interested in the Church Registers produced, one of which was dated in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. The next village visited was *Whitchurch*, and the members at once assembled at the Parish Church, where the Vicar, the Rev. G. T. Medd, received the party, and pointed out a list of the Rectors and Vicars commencing in 1218, although Willis's MSS. refer to Peter a Rector in 1189. The church, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, is thus described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LXVI., p. 841:—"The church is a neat building consisting of a nave and chancel with two aisles to the former, a south porch, and an embattled tower at the west end, on each side of the window of which is a handsome niche for a statue, one on the middle bar, and one above. The four arches of the nave are pointed on octagon pillars. Three broad steps lead to the altar." The sedilia and piscina in the chancel of this church, illustrated in Lipscomb's History of the County, are curious in their construction, and are thus described:—"In the south wall of the chancel near the steps leading to the Communion Table is

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\* The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham. Vol. I., p. 223.

a low elliptic arch seven feet in span by five in height in its centre, the base forming three grades or sediles, the highest next to the altar having contiguous thereto a pointed arch, five feet by three, resting on clustered columns, each consisting of four slender shafts about two feet in height from their bases to their capitals at the spring of the arch, and that on the west side serving for an abutment to the low arch to the sedile above described."† The stalls in this church are worthy of careful inspection, and their history has yet to be written. Richard Hobbes, the last Abbot of Woburn, was a benefactor to the church, and it is supposed that the initials "R. H." carved on shields on the stalls in the chancel refer to him. These shields have a pastoral staff over the initials "R. H.," and over these letters two stars, a plain scroll below the shield, and at the back a shield with a single star. These may be the initials and arms of Richard Hobbes (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LXVI., p. 841). Some of the party visited the site of the castle built according to tradition by Hugh de Bolbec. In this village there are strikingly interesting types of domestic architecture which attracted much attention. After taking refreshment at the Cock Inn the Society held its Annual Meeting at the Inn, Mr. A. L. Liberty, one of the Vice-presidents, presiding. The Earl of Rosebery was unanimously elected President. The following Vice-Presidents were elected:—Lord Cottesloe, Lord Boston, the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop of Reading, Lord Burnham, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, Sir John Evans, K.C.B., the Archdeacon of Buckingham, General Sir Henry Smyth, K.C.M.G., Mr. Coningsby Disraeli, M.P., Colonel Goodall, Mr. A. L. Liberty, Mr. A. H. Cocks, and Mr. E. J. Payne. The following were elected members of the Committee:—The Rev. E. D. Shaw, (chairman), the Rev. C. O. Phipps, Messrs. T. Horwood, James Rutland, George Weller, Edward Wilkins, R. E. Gooden, F.S.A., Stephen Darby, J. T. Harrison, W. Bradbrook, R. H. Barrett, E. Swinfen Harris, F.R.I.B.A., and T. Thurlow. The Honorary Secretaries, Mr. John Parker and Mr. A. H. Cocks, were re-elected; also Mr. John Williams as Treasurer, and Mr. Thos. Horwood and Mr. Edward Wilkins as Hon. Auditors. In consequence of the absence of the Treasurer through illness, the annual financial report was not presented. Mr. Parker, in his report, called attention to the valuable papers by Mr. Brakspear on "Burnham Abbey," and by Lord Boston on "The Manor and Church of Hedsor," published in the last year's number of the RECORDS, to both of whom the Society was much indebted. He spoke of the Jubilee Celebration to take place in 1905, and the work the Sub-Committee was undertaking in organizing the Loan Exhibition, which would be the chief feature on that occasion. He then referred to the recent publication of "The History of Denham" by the Rev. R. H. Lathbury, a work prepared with much research and care, a copy of which had been presented to the Society by Mr. Lathbury. Mr. Cocks, in his report, explained the cause of the lateness of the Society's meeting—that it was desired by those who had to arrange the excursion that the members should not only inspect churches, but should visit the ancient homes of Buckinghamshire. In one case a polite refusal was received to the request to grant permission to the Society to view an ancient Mansion; in another no answer came to a similar request to visit an interesting house, probably in consequence of the absence from home of the owner. Mr. Cocks then announced the addition of two new cases to the Museum, for which they were indebted to the liberality of Sir Henry and Lady Smyth. He also spoke of the very inadequate accommodation of the present Museum, and the desirability of the Society's acquiring Mr. James Rutland's pre-historic antiquities,

† Lipscomb's History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham. Vol. III., p. 517.

which the latter wished to dispose of, and added that it would be a misfortune if they were lost to the County. A vote of thanks to Sir Henry and Lady Smyth for presenting the two cases to the Museum was proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously. The following gentlemen were proposed, seconded, and duly elected members of the Society:—Mr. H. L. Vaughan, Eton College; Mr. Wimperies, Slough. From Whitechurch the party drove to *Oving*, Arthur Alfred Hudson, Backcombe Warren, Wendover; Mr. E. W. and inspected the Church dedicated to All Saints, which stands on the brow of a hill. It consists of a tower, nave, south aisle, and chancel, and possesses details both externally and internally of considerable interest. From thence the next stop was made at *North Marston*, where the members and their friends were welcomed by the Vicar, Dr. James, who conducted them over the Church, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The building consists of a tower at the west end, a nave, and north and south aisles, and a perpendicular chancel of excellent workmanship and of fine proportions. At the conclusion of the inspection Dr. James read a paper, which he had kindly prepared for the benefit of those present. He referred to a former visit of the Society to North Marston when he was absent from the parish, and was then a young man. Sir Gilbert Scott had told him, standing at the time in the chancel, that he had known this Church from boyhood, as one of the objects of his keenest interest, and at the same time called particular attention to the roof of its nave, to a small window at the west end of the north aisle, to the flamboyant window at the east end of the south aisle, and to the site of the altar of the Blessed Virgin flanked by that window. The altar of the Virgin, Dr. James said, was now hidden with its piscina by the organ, but the hagioscope now closed was yet visible. There is also, he pointed out, an aumbry at the south of the Prayer Desk and close to the hagioscope. Dr. James said that the history of the Church and its architecture and archæological features were doubtless known to the members through the pages of Browne-Willis, Lipscomb, and other authorities. He had had no time to visit the Bodleian and the British Museum since the announcement of the Society's visit, and so was merely giving hints. He mentioned that there was a vestment chest in the Priest's Chamber over the vestry which the members might like to see, and also the chained Prayer Book. From this chamber the Priest used to watch the offerings, rich and costly offerings, sometimes made at the shrine of *Dominus Johannes Schorne*, Rector from 1290, to which pilgrims came from near and far. These pilgrims used to chant in honour of Schorne a Latin hymn, which has been sympathetically translated by their Rural Dean, the Rev. E. R. Massey, of Marsh Gibbon. The Pilgrims began to sing the hymn on Oving Hill, he believed, on sighting their Church. St. George's Chapel, Windsor, removed Schorne's shrine to the Chapel. The late Dean Wellesley, of Windsor, was keenly interested about Schorne, and the late Dr. Sparrow Simpson corresponded about him. Schorne gave them their unfailing holy well. The legend is that, water being then as scarce as it has ever since been abundant, Schorne struck his staff upon the ground and so brought up a bubbling spring of very pure and tonic water. Dr. James's theory was that Schorne had the dowser's gift of finding water and used it, but probably some people prefer the miraculous view of the story. The chancel was built out of the offerings of Schorne's shrine. The restored chancel is a restoration by Queen Victoria, who employed as her architect Sir Digby Wyatt. The east window has been much criticised, and the late Archdeacon Bickersteth was not one of its admirers. One of the interesting features of the chancel is the *Miserere* seats. If those seats were lifted some exquisite carvings would be found. On the wall east of the vestry door there was a stone tablet to the memory of John Virgin, perpetual curate

for over thirty years, from July 30th, 1663. It is worth notice, with its hand pointing downwards, and this inscription:—"He lies dust down there." There have been since the beginning of the 13th century 41 incumbents, including 9 Rectors, 11 Vicars, and 21 perpetual Curates. On the floor near the chancel door is the brass memorial of John Camden Neild, whose legacy of a quarter of a million to Queen Victoria became a matter of history. He used to come on foot from Chelsea to North Marston to collect his rents, and, before he had made a will in her late Majesty's favour, tried to commit suicide in a house near the Vicarage. He was saved by the housekeeper, to whom the Queen allowed an annuity as long as she lived in consideration of her interposition. Dr. James called attention to the gargoyles round the chancel roof on the north side, especially agonising and terrible in their appearance, as being supposed to depict lost souls vainly endeavouring to get within the Church. The heads within the chancel are noticeably serene and happy-looking; their souls having effected the entrance forbidden to those outside. There is a quaintly-inscribed brass on the south wall of the chancel, not quite orthodox and not quite grammatical, but which had a haunting solemnity and pathos, arresting Dr. James's thoughts at times for all the years of his long incumbency.

"'Tis, as you see, nought but the spoils of Death,  
 God's high controller and impartial taker,  
 Freehold we had of land, but not of breath.  
 All one Day must resigne unto their Maker.  
 I was the world's acquaintance in my time,  
 Acquainted and no more as thou should'st be;  
 I had my part, as thou perhaps hast thine,  
 In wealth and friends such as were fit for me.  
 I yielded up my reckoning when I died  
 What wanted in the Sinner, Christ's blood supplied."

Dr. James referred to a brass on the opposite wall to that on which the verses were inscribed, connected with the family of Saunders, and on the floor of the sacarium to a brass with an inscription in Latin, and to a small brass close to the north door of the nave. The door of the roodscreen was then, he was sorry to say, in the Vicarage entrance passage; it was put there before his time. The cause of the disproportionately large and stately chancel was the Schorne shrine offerings, and the cause of its restoration was the Neild legacy. Dr. James said that the bells in the tower were out of gear, or he would have arranged for a peal in honour of the Society, and he concluded by expressing the great pleasure it had given him and his people to see the members of the Society at North Marston.

Mr. John Parker then read the following paper on "Master John Schorne":—

It is creditable to the Bucks Architectural and Archæological Society that the most trustworthy account of Master John Schorne is to be found in the RECORDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. The first and fullest account of him was given by the Rev. W. H. Hastings-Kelke, in Vol. II. of the RECORDS, and the Rev. Dr. Sparrow-Simpson wrote another account of him in Vol. III. of the Society's publications.

I will give a very brief account of that remarkable person. He is not to be found in the Roman Calendar, though he was once recognised as a saint. He is sometimes called Sir John and Saint John, but more commonly Master John Schorne. He was once Rector of Monks Risborough, and was afterwards presented to North Marston, in about the year 1290, and continued to hold this

Rectory till his death.\* It was at North Marston that he became renowned. Renowned for two miracles widely believed over all the Midlands; one was in reference to the Holy Well at Marston, said to be endowed with healing properties, and the other the extraordinary achievement of having imprisoned the devil in one of his boots. Of the general belief in the latter miracle there is considerable evidence. It is alluded to in almost every written traditionary notice of Master John Schorne.

There was formerly a representation of the miracle in the chancel window of Marston Church. He was pictured in glass with a boot under his arm like a bagpipe, into which he was squeezing a representation of the devil. Similar representations of him were introduced into churches in distant parts of the kingdom, and Dr. Sparrow-Simpson illustrates these representations:—One figure on the rood-screen at Cawston, and another on the rood-screen at Gatley, Norfolk; another on a rood-screen panel formerly in the possession of Gainsborough Dupont, Esq., and another on a rood-screen at Suffield, Norfolk. There are also five illustrations in Dr. Sparrow-Simpson's paper of pilgrim signs found in the Thames at Queenhithe. He is generally represented with a cap, cloak, and hood, the dress of a Doctor of Divinity, and holding a boot in his left hand, with a figure representing the devil rising out of the boot. His fame spread, therefore, over different parts of the country, but North Marston was the place to which his votaries were chiefly directed, on account of the wonderful healing properties of the Holy Well.

By his will he directs his body to be buried in the chancel at North Marston, before the high altar, in a chamber which he himself prepared for the purpose. His will is dated May 8, 1308.† His remains were enclosed in a shrine, and became the object of numerous pilgrimages. So profitable was this shrine, and it became an object of such importance, that it is said Richard Beauchamp, Bishop of Salisbury, and Dean of Windsor in 1478, obtained a licence from Pope Sixtus IV. to remove it where he pleased, and accordingly he removed it from North Marston to St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. When it is realised that the offerings from the pilgrims amounted to something like £500 a year at that period, it will be understood that the Canons of Windsor were very glad to have the shrine transported to the Royal Chapel. Willis gives a different account of the removal of the shrine. From other notices of Schorne it seems that he was famed for curing the ague, and some pilgrims sought his aid for this purpose, and others supposed that the waters of the Holy Well were beneficial for gout. One would suggest that the conjuring of the devil into the boot was emblematic of a cure from this distressing complaint.

In the marriage register of North Marston there is an entry that "It is said that the chancel of this Church was built with the offerings at the shrine of Sir John Schorne, a devout man. He had been Rector of the parish about 1290, and that this village became very popular and flourishing by a well of water which he had blessed, and was ever after called Holy Well."

The entry was signed by William Pinnock, September 12th, 1810. The chancel is a fine specimen of the perpendicular style. Mr.

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\* On the authority of Brown-Willis he was Rector of North Marston from about 1290 to 1314. It seems probable that he acted as official to the Italian Archdeacon of Buckingham, Percival de Lavanna, in the year 1280. See the Victoria History of the County of Buckingham, Vol. I., p. 288, and the quotation from *Gesta Abbatum* (Rolls Series) i., 443.

† The Will is not a usual one for the times. He bequeaths what is God's to God, what is the earth's to the earth, and his goods of this world partly to his "orators" and partly to be borne by the hands of the poor to heaven that he might find them there again.

Kelke says in his paper: "Some old people can remember a niche outside the chancel over the east window which contained two figures apparently talking together. One of these is said to have been Schorne and the other the devil with forked tail and cloven feet."

The vestry gives access by a spiral staircase on its western side to the priest's chamber, as the apartment above is still called. This room has a fireplace, and is lighted by three windows. It is said to be the chamber in which the priest lodged, whose duty it was to watch the shrine of Master Schorne, and that appears to be its correct description. The opening, which enables the occupant to survey the chancel, confirms this view of the use made of the chamber. From it there is access to the roof of the chancel, which would enable the priest to see the approach of pilgrims and prepare for their reception.

The tradition was that Schorne struck his staff into the ground and produced a well, called by his name until recently, and still known as the Holy Well. Dr. Sparrow-Simpson obtained an analysis of the water by Dr. Bernay, and he gives his report. It appears that the water contains chlorine, sulphuric acid, silica, lime, and magnesia, so that its properties may be of a healing character.

Able as the papers are by Mr. Kelke and Dr. Sparrow-Simpson, it may be that further information as to this remarkable character might be found by searching Dr. Browne Willis's MSS. in the Bodleian Library. It is singular that so little is at present known of this worthy, for the pilgrimage to his shrine was extremely popular, and next in popularity to that to the shrine of our Lady of Walsingham. Browne Willis says that many aged persons living in his time remembered a post in a *quinque viam* on Oving Hill, about a mile east of the Well, which had hands pointing to several roads—one of them directing to Sir John Schorne's Well, so that his fame in this locality must have lasted through many generations.

A pleasant drive took the members to *Grandborough*, where they were welcomed by the Rev. A. E. T. Newman. There was little time at disposal before the journey to Verney Junction was made. The church was visited. It consists of a tower, nave, and chancel, and is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Special attention was called on account of its rarity to a "Chrismatory" of metal, containing three cruets to hold the consecrated oil, which was discovered in a niche in the wall near the chancel arch.

MR. A. H. COCKS has some material on the following subjects, which he proposes to offer to the Editor for publication in a future number of the RECORDS; but, before doing so, Mr. Cocks will be glad to learn whether anyone is working at any of them, so as to avoid overlapping, and in hopes that by collaboration a more perfect result may be obtained.

“TRADE TOKENS OF BUCKS OF THE 17TH CENTURY” (Notes additional to Williamson’s Edition of “Boyne’s Tokens”).

“BIBLIOTHECA BUCKINGHAMIENSIS” (to bring it down to date; by request of the author, Mr. H. Gough).

“LIST OF BUCKS PRINTS” (published 1886).