



“Notes and Queries”

RELATING TO BERKSHIRE.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the County. All Literary Communications should be sent to the EDITOR, Barkham Rectory, near Wokingham, written on one side only of the paper.

Notes.

SUPERSTITIONS.—It is quite a fallacy to imagine that superstition has died out before the advance of nineteenth century education. True, the latter has done away with many a pretty fairy tale, but it is innate, an unborn sense of the existence of things unseen and incomprehensible. To collect the many curious sayings and country omens has been often tried in other Counties, but Berkshire has in every way been very little studied. In broad daylight many people laugh at ghosts, yet I could name as many as half-a-dozen houses, not many miles apart, where vague legends of ghostly visitors are rumoured to exist. No one likes to own their house is haunted; it is an unpleasant idea, they repudiate the accusation, but forbid the story to be mentioned. One very curious superstition about here of which I know no explanation, is the firm belief that if a corpse is kept over Sunday, another death will occur before the week is out; certainly, in the spring of 1888, four times was this verified in our parish. Should a dumbledore (as the country people call the big humble bee) enter the window, a guest may be expected, and when the woodpecker laughs, they shake their heads, and say rain is coming. When the thick white mist lies in a dense mass in the valley, the people say it is the White Lady, a belief closely akin to the Dame Blanche, said in Normandy to haunt woodland streams. If one row in a bed of freshly sown seeds or potatoes does not come up, it foretells a death in the family. To mend your clothes on your back, you risk having a drunken husband. A screech owl is unlucky, so also is it if a bird flies against the window.

Replies.

CHAPEL AT WOKEFIELD.—I have heard that the notices nailed to a tree on Wokefield Green originated from their having once been put up on the Chapel door there. In Wales and the border counties, the consecrated ground or site of a Chapel is never forgotten. It is said no trees will grow on the spot. The only instance I know personally, it is true, and although every effort has been made, trenching and carefully planting, the trees have always died, though flourishing a very few yards off. Indeed, the Welsh have a special name in their language for such spots.

SEPIA PRINTS OF OLD CHURCHES.—Besides those of the nine churches already given, I have *Tomkin's* prints of Caversham, Greenham, Warfield, and Thatcham Churches.—CONSTANCE RUSSELL, Swallowfield, Reading.

IBID.—To the list published in No. 3 of the *Journal*, I may add the following:

From Views of Reading Abbey with those of Churches originally connected with it, etc. 1805.

Caversham (Ox.)

Ancient Fonts—Purley and Tidmarsh.

Monuments at Tidmarsh (2)

Saxon Doorway at Tidmarsh.

Monumental—Beenham.

Wargrave Church.

Warfield Church.

Monument in Warfield Church.

Ancient Monuments in Englefield Church. (2)

Thatcham Church.

Greenham Chapel.

Monuments in St. Laurance Church (Reading). [2]

Monument in St. Mary's (Reading).

From Views of Reading Abbey, including the Churches, etc. 1810. Snare & Man.

Cholsey Barn.

Cholsey Church.

Moulsford Chapel.

Bucklebury Church.

Midgham Chapel.

Sulhamstead Abbots Church.

Compton Church.

Stanton Harcourt [Church] Oxon.

St. Mary's, Reading, Berkshire.

St. Giles's Church in Reading.

St. Lawrence's Church in Reading.

Whitchurch Bridge.

Basledon [Church] Berkshire.

F.C.

HAUNTED PLACES.—Is not Southcote House one of these?

DE LA BERE AND HUGH FARRINGTON.—*Ashmole* says that Bere Court was “a Place of Retirement for the Miter’d Abbot of Reading,” and he describes the emblematical paintings on the old glass windows of its “Parlour.”

Ashmole also describes a window in Sir John Davis’s Chapel at Bere Court on which is painted a representation of Hugh Farrington, Abbot of Reading, *alias* Hugh Cook, whose arms as preserved at Bere Court, were “Gules, a fess chequy, argent and sable, between three plates each charged with a narcissus flower of the first: on a chief or, a bird between two flowers.”

Leland describes Bere Court as “the fair manor-place of brick of the Abbots of Reading, the last of whom, Hugh Farrington, constantly resided there.”—CONSTANCE RUSSELL, Swallowfield, Reading.

SHERBORNE PRIORY.—In *Herne’s Collections*, Vol. III, published by the Harleian Society, he gives extracts from some Charters of Scireborn or Sherborn Monastery, but they are in Saxon character.

ROMAN CATHOLICS NEAR READING.—The Private Chapels named by F.W.S. were, in the cases of Ufton and Mapledurham, only large rooms at the top of the house, not remarked in any way. In the latter, the floor is raised several steps to form a raised part for the Altar. It strikes me as curious that neither of these rooms have any other exit than the door. I should have expected to find hiding places for concealment of the priest and his vestments.

STRATFIELD MORTIMER.—Many notices of Stratfield Mortimer are to be found in the *Eton College MSS.*, which are reported on by the Historical Society. In another volume by the same Society (price 2/- and 3/4) *The House of Lords MSS.*, will be found much information about the Recusants. Beechill is in Mortimer, which must have contained many Manors, and therefore its history must necessarily be complicated, but very interesting, as containing a great amount of historical information.

Queries.

VILLAGE CHOIRS.—When were the old Village Choirs abolished? I have heard it said Sherborne St. John’s was one of the last in existence.

CHURCH BELLS.—A list of the various marks, mottoes, dates, &c., from the Parish Church Bells would be interesting.

KNAPP FAMILY.—Wanted, a Pedigree of the Knapp’s, a yeoman family of the seventeenth century, of Chilton, North Street, Tylehurst, Compton, and Griesley?

SIR JOHN DAVIS.—Did Sir John Davis leave any family? If so, who are his descendants now?

CHAPEL AT SHEFFIELD.—Is the Sorfelde or Sheffield (mentioned in *Dugdale’s Monasticon* as occurring so often amongst the Reading Abbey Charters), the same as Sheffield which is partly in Burghfield, and partly in Tilehurst. If so, was it ever a separate parish with a chapel?

ROMAN REMAINS.—How is it no Roman remains have been found between Reading or in the Kennet valley?

AVINGTON CHURCH.—What is the subject of the bas-relief on the Norman font in this church, and to what Saint is the church dedicated!—B.C.W.