



Notes and Queries

RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the three counties. Correspondents are requested to write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only, with REPLIES, QUERIES and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name of the writer appended to each communication.

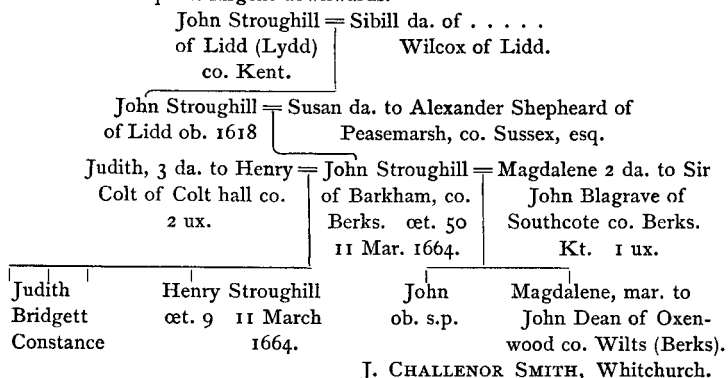
Notes.

DISCOVERY IN THE THAMES.—In May of this year (1899), I went along the towing path by the bottom of the portion of the old Fish Stew belonging to Shiplake House. The towing path was being cut through to form an entrance from the river to a new boat-house, built for Sir Walter Phillimore. This path, which originally belonged to Shiplake Court before the horse towing path was formed in 1773, and then transferred from the Berkshire side of the river to the Oxfordshire, is purely artificial, made of huge blocks of chalk supported by wooden piles rammed into the bed of the river. Doubtless the chalk was dug from the old chalk-pit hard by. In a very ancient picture of the old Court, an heirloom to the Vicarage, and depicted in my "History of Shiplake," this is simply a path dividing the Fish Stew from the river; in a later picture of 1765, there appear to be weir gates or sluices along it, which would regulate the water in the Stew, which probably from this was originally a sort of natural bay or indentation at the side of the river, but dug out square, deepened, and this artificial path formed for the purpose of retaining fish for fast days. Warning the workmen to look out for worked stones, weapons, &c., I passed on, and returning in about two hours found that from the bed of the river, about six feet below the path, a weapon had been found half-an-hour after I had first passed by. This appeared at first as if part of a sword-blade, but on closer inspection the end presented the appearance of a knife where set in a handle. The iron is thickly incrustated with stones and heavy corrugations, accumulated by the immense time it must have been in the water. On the upper part either side is cut a groove. Its length is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the width of blade at the top more than a quarter-of-an-inch. I bought it of the man who found it. I should like some expert in ancient iron weapons to give me his opinion on it. The only weapons I have seen like it, but they were longer, are some Anglo-Saxon bill-heads in the Dorchester Museum, which also have accumulated the same kind of incrustations.—Emily J. CLIMENSON, Shiplake Vicarage.

PEDIGREE OF STROUGHILL OF BARKHAM.—In your notes on Barkham history ought not Stronghill to be Stroughill? I enclose the Pedigree as given in the Visitation :—

Arms—Argent, a chevron betw. 6 escallops Gules.

Crest—An arm in armour embowed proper holding a spear Or.
point Argent downwards.



RELICS OF THE OLD BERKS YEOMANRY.—At the present time when everything connected with the past military history of our country is of interest, we may mention that the standard or guidon of the Aldermaston Troop of Royal Berks Yeomanry (which was raised about the year 1803, by Captain Congreve) is still preserved by one of the churchwardens, whose father served in the corps. The standard, which is of fine silk, fixed on a pike staff, with spear and ferrule, has cords and tassels of silver thread, and is most beautifully emblazoned with the Royal arms. On a scroll is inscribed "Aldermaston Troop of Berks Yeomanry Cavalry." There are also a pair of camp-colours, a small sort of flag, which were placed on the right and left of the parade of the Troop.

IN Asser's Annals of the exploits of King Alfred, of glorious memory, we read that before the invention of clocks, the Saxon king caused six tapers to be made for his daily use; each taper containing twelve pennyweights of wax, was twelve inches long, and of proportionate breadth. The whole length was divided into twelve parts or inches, of which three would burn for one hour, so that each taper would be consumed in four hours; and the six tapers, being lighted one after the other, lasted twenty-four hours. This is an amusing and oft-quoted story, and there is nothing very questionable in this mode of Alfred's to measure time, but it will be a surprise to many of our readers to find that at the present day a "time-candle" is still used at the annual letting of the "Churchwardens' Acre," belonging to the ancient and historic parish of Aldermaston in Berkshire. This picturesque, old-world village, which like many other places received its name from some Saxon proprietor, being literally the Alderman's town, from time immemorial has possessed this "Churchwardens' Acre," which some pious son of the Church in early days left for the purpose of maintaining a perpetual light to burn before the high altar of the Parish Church. These "Lamp-Acre lands," "Churchwardens' Acres," and "Unknown Acres," which are of variable extent, are common to all parts of England, and at the

Reformation the rentals were transferred to general Church purposes. This singular survival of letting by "Time-candle" took place at Aldermaston, a few days ago, when the Vicar and Churchwardens attended at the Vestry meeting, and an inch of candle having been measured off, a light was applied, and the biddings commenced, the last bidder before the pin fell out being declared the tenant for the next three years.

CHAINED BOOKS.—Bibliographers will be glad to learn that the valuable collection of chained books at Guildford Grammar School is being repaired, catalogued, and placed in something like order. The work of re-arrangement has been undertaken by Mr. H. A. Powell. Probably only two other towns in England—Wimborne and Hereford—have larger collections of manacled books than Guildford, and probably only one other Grammar School in England possesses similar curiosities. At present there are 85 chained volumes, chiefly theological works, and several of them of rarity. The library which was enriched by a splendid gift from Bishop Parkhurst, of Norwich, 300 years ago, formerly contained a Caxton—a copy of his "*History of Troye Town*"—but this with several other valuable old tomes has disappeared. Many of the chains are missing.

ANCIENT ECCLESIASTICAL WALL PAINTINGS.—Several series of wall paintings of great antiquarian interest have been discovered during the process of restoring the early Norman church of Ashmansworth, high up on the north Hampshire hills, a few miles south of Highclere Park. The most ancient series of paintings probably dates from about the year 1200, and represents the descent of Our Lord into Hades. This painting is on the wall of the nave. Other scriptural subjects are also depicted. The paintings have just been examined with great care and minuteness by Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., of Aldermaston Court, who is likely to report upon the discovery to the Society of Antiquaries.

CURIOUS REMEDIES AND STRANGE MEDICINES.—Under the title of "*Animal Simples*," Dr. Fernie has put together a curious and interesting collection of such medicines, derived from all sorts of creatures, insects, birds, reptiles, etc. In a review of the book "*The Standard*" says: Some of the substances mentioned by Dr. Fernie are too repulsive to bear discussion. Many others, particularly those handed down by tradition, and by old writers, are no doubt purely fantastic, and suggested by some superstition pertaining to the creature, or by something strange in its habits and appearance. It would however, be a great mistake to dismiss them all as childish and absurd, merely because they are unfamiliar. Different creatures secrete different substances, just as different plants do; and when we see such powerful vegetable principles drawn from the soil as, for instance, morphia, strychnia, and quinine, it would be folly to deny the possibility—indeed, the probability—of equally powerful agents being contained in animal secretions, which may act as specifics to an almost unlimited extent. We know that substances having the most violent properties are, in fact, elaborated in the living economy of many reptiles and insects, and by analogy we must admit the possible occurrence of remedial agents of unknown potency in the vast and little explored domain of the animal kingdom. The virtues of the magpie, dried and powdered, were vouched for by the late Princess Bismarck, who in 1880 addressed a circular to the Eckenford Shooting Club, asking the members to shoot and forward as many magpies as possible, "from

the burnt remains of which anti-epileptic powder may be manufactured." This was noted by the medical journals at the time. A simple cure for frenzy is a roast mouse. Peter Levens recommends it in the "Pathway to Health" (1664), and many other authorities corroborate him. Bulleyn, physician to Henry VIII., recommended a small mouse roasted whole for children suffering from any nervous disorder, and the London Pharmacopœia of 1695 prescribes mouse's fat for cancer, baldness, and various skin affections. In some parts of the country to this day fried mouse is regarded as a specific for small-pox and whooping-cough.

Queries.

SOUTHCOT GRANGE.—This interesting house is now in a state of partial ruin, and sadly needs restoration. There is no glass in the windows, some of the floors are up, the chapel has been pulled down, and rooms arranged for on a portion of its site. Three of the towers and the walls surrounding the place on the inside of the moat have been pulled down. Surely some Society could take the matter in hand and save it from further vandalism. I have been trying to find out something of its past history. Can you tell me of any book dealing with the subject?—J. E. GARRATT, Athenæum Club, Reading.

WILCOTES' FAMILY.—I am much obliged to you for sending me the "B. & B. A. Journal." Dr. Macnamara's paper is not quite conclusive on one or two points, and I think I will go through the Inquisitions P.M. myself. It seems unlikely that if John Wilcotes had a son Thomas, he (John) would be found to have two daughters his heirs. I believe there must have been two Johns. I should like to know if anyone else has enquired into the pedigree.—WILLIAM F. CARTER, Union Club, Birmingham.

LYFORD MANOR.—Does the house belonging to the Yates', at Lyford, in which Edmund Campion was arrested still exist? I can find no mention of it, but Simpson, in his life of Campion, speaks of it as a moated grange and implies that it was well known. It is not referred to in any County Guide I have seen, but I notice (in the P.O. Directory) that at Charney Bassett, one mile from Lyford, there is an old Manor House. The Yates (in whose house Campion was arrested) I know, lived at Charney Bassett, and it occurs to me that this may be the house. I should be extremely obliged if you could give me any information on the subject.—WM. BARCLAY SQUIRE, F.S.A., British Museum.

Replies.

LYFORD MANOR.—The house, formerly occupied by the Yates, is still here. It is occupied by Mr. Rickards, one of the Farmers of Lyford. Several changes have been made in the structure. The Moat and other features of the house no longer exist. Some rooms have been added, but (I think) the secret chambers have been done away with. E. B. Pusey, Esq., owns the farm. The interesting old Manor House at Charney is still a place of residence.—FRDK. H. CURRIE, Lyford Vicarage.