



A Tour through Buckinghamshire.

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Continued from Vol. 7, page 89.

SECTION IV.—RAILWAY.—TRING TO BLETCHLEY.

THE Main Line of the L. & N.W.R. enters Buckinghamshire two miles N. of Tring.

On the E. side is Ashridge Park, which is a beautiful piece of wild country, with hollies, beeches and large box trees growing in it. It occupies a long ridge of high ground which runs southward into Hertfordshire, but is in the parish of Pitstone, in Buckinghamshire.

The House is three miles N. of Berkhamstead.

The early history of Ashridge is that of a Religious House, which was founded for the Order of Bonhommes by Edmund Earl of Cornwall, Brother of Henry III., in 1283. Edmund died here in 1300, and his heart was buried on the N. side of the choir. The house possessed as a relic a portion of the Holy Blood, which was given to it by the Founder. This relic formed an object of pilgrimage, and brought in much wealth. Another Religious House at Hailes in Gloucestershire was founded by the Earl and endowed in the same manner.

Edward I., says the Chronicler of Dunstable, kept Christmas here in 1290, and also held a Parliament at Ashridge, and the people in the neighbourhood were obliged to furnish him with provisions.

The Monastery was suppressed by Henry VIII., and the estates were purchased in 1604 by Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas Egerton, created Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley. His son, the first Earl of Bridgwater, and Lord of the Welsh Marshes, before whom *Comus* was first performed in the great hall of Ludlow Castle, succeeded, and the property descended to Francis Duke of Bridgwater, the "Father of Inland Navigation," who, for no apparent reason,

pulled down, about 1800, the Refectory, a remarkably fine building, and the Cloisters, also fine specimens of architecture and painted in fresco, and sold the materials. The Monastic Church had been taken down in the time of Elizabeth. Duke Francis died 1803, and was followed by his cousin John William Egerton, who succeeded to the Earldom and the estates, but not to the Marquisate or Dukedom, and built the present mansion from designs by Wyatt. It was begun in 1808 and finished in 1814. This Earl of Bridgwater died 1823, and was succeeded by his Brother, Francis Henry of the "Bridgwater Treatises." Viscount. Alford, son of the Earl of Brownlow, was the next heir-at-law, and assumed by royal licence the surname and arms of Egerton.

There is a crypt under a portion of the present house which is the only part left of the ancient buildings.

A conspicuous feature in the park is a column erected to the memory of Duke Francis, who devoted so much time and attention to the construction of canals throughout the country.

The Egerton Monuments are in Albury Church, two miles W. of the House, across the border in Hertfordshire.

The village of PITSTONE or Pightlestone, is one mile E. of the railway. The Decorated and Perpendicular Church (St. Mary, register 1653) has a Norman font, a pulpit of the XVII. century, and a tessellated floor which is also said to be Norman.

At the extreme S. point of the tongue of Buckinghamshire which contains Ashridge Park, is NETTLEDEN, once a hamlet of Pitstone. The Chapel (St. Laurence, register 1687), which was originally built about 1470, has been nearly rebuilt. Sir George Cotton, Vice-Chamberlain to Edward VI. when Prince of Wales, who died 1545, is buried in it. There is a fine XVI. century brass.

At St. Margaret's, one mile N. of Nettleden, was a Benedictine Nunnery, supposed, but wrongly, to have been founded by Stephen de Blois, Bishop of Winchester.

One mile N. of Pitstone, charmingly situated under the hills, is the little old fashioned town of Ivinghoe. The nearest station is Cheddington, three miles.

Ivinghoe or, as Scott spells it, Ivanhoe, is one of the places mentioned in the old rhyme—

"Tring, Wing and Ivinghoe
Hampden did forego
For striking of a blow
And well pleased to escape so."

Unfortunately for the tradition, the Hampden family appear never to have possessed these three Manors.

There are many old timber houses, and in the centre stands the very handsome cruciform church (St. Mary, register 1559), which is chiefly Decorated in style. The clerestory is Perp., but the windows were formerly circular, and some of these remain. The roof of the nave, with figures of angels, should be noticed.

On the N. side of the chancel is the Altar tomb supposed to be that of Peter de Chasseport, Rector 1241-1254. It was formerly considered that of Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, but he is buried at Westminster. The local name of the monument is, however, Grandfather Greybeard.

In the chancel are some brasses.

The parish is a very large one in acreage, and there are many hamlets. At Aston was formerly a chapel of St. James.

A road, which probably follows the line of the Icknield Way, crossing some of the lower spurs of the Chilterns beneath some earthworks, which occupy a lofty summit called the Beacon, leads, three miles, to EDLESBOROUGH, where there is a remarkable church (St. Mary, register 1567), standing on a mound, a very conspicuous feature in the view from the railway.

It is chiefly Perp. in style, but is perhaps built on Early English lines. The stalls, screen with canopy, and pulpit are all very good. The E. window is a good example of developed Early English. A curious niche in the porch may have contained a beacon light as a guide to travellers crossing the plain. The window and fire-place at the W. end of the North aisle may have belonged to the cell of a recluse. In the chancel are brasses, amongst them that of Sir John Swynshyde, Rector, died 1390, and in the N. or Rufford aisle, are monuments of that family.

The village straggles away to the E. towards the Bedfordshire border, but anyone approaching from the W. cannot fail to be struck with the grand appearance of the church rising up from the plain with hardly another building in sight.

At DAGNALL, three miles E. amongst the hills was a chantry chapel (All Saints).

On the W. side of the railway opposite Pitstone, and one mile distant, is MARSWORTH, situated on the banks of the great Startops reservoir, which supplies the locks of the Grand Junction Canal, here at its summit level 400 feet. The reservoir affords good fishing, and when it is not hired privately the Company grant fishing

tickets for a small payment, both in the reservoir and in the canal itself. Application should be made at the lock-keeper's house.

Marsworth Church (All Saints, register 1720) stands on the hill E. of the Canal. The chancel was rebuilt in 1854. The E. window and one N. window were designed and worked by the Vicar in 1890. The tower is older than the remainder of the church, and is of flint work. The chancel arch has also been lately rebuilt.

There are brasses of the West Family, and a curious monument to Edmund West, representing his death bed, 1613. Death strikes him with a dart, and his wife and children and a priest are at the bed-side.

Cheddington Junction is the first station on the main line in Buckinghamshire. CHEDDINGTON village, one mile S., contains nothing remarkable. The Church (St. Giles, register 1538) is Perp., and was restored by G. E. Street, R.A., 1858.

One-and-a-half miles N. is MENTMORE. Here are the Park and Mansion called *Mentmore Towers*, built by Baron Meyer de Rothschild, who died 1874, the property passing to his daughter and her husband, the Earl of Rosebery.

The distinguished family of Rothschild have made this part of Buckinghamshire to a great extent their home, and many of the villages in the neighbourhood are adorned with mansions either erected or enlarged by members of the family, which was founded by Nathan Meyer Rothschild, who settled in England in 1800, and after a prosperous career died in 1836. His eldest son, Baron Lionel Rothschild, had three sons, the two younger of whom, Leopold and Alfred, became the owners of Ascot Park, Wing and The Cottage, Halton, respectively; while his daughter married Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, of Waddesdon Manor. The second son of Nathan Meyer Rothschild, Sir Anthony de Rothschild, rebuilt the mansion of Lord Lake at Aston Clinton, and died in 1876.

Mentmore Towers is built in the Italian style, from designs by Sir J. Paxton and G. H. Stokes. It stands in a commanding position, and contains a large collection of pictures, chiefly of the French School.

At the park gate is the Church (St. Mary, register 1655), which is Dec., restored, and chancel rebuilt, 1858.

Michael de Mentmore, Abbot of St. Albans, "a good ruler and acceptable to the court," was born here. He died of the plague, 1349.

A short branch line runs from Cheddington Junction to Aylesbury. There is one station on the way, *Marston Gate*, which is in an outlying part of Hertfordshire. It passes N. one mile *HULCOT*. The Church (All Saints, register 1537) is partly early English, restored by G. S. Street, R.A., 1863. It contains an altar tomb supposed to be that of Benedict Leigh, died 1547. The modern fittings are handsome.

One mile further W. is *BIERTON*, the mother Church of Stoke Mandeville and Quarrington. Bierton Church (St. James, register 1560) is cruciform and of mixed styles, the earliest portion being early English. It contains a round Norman font and a mural monument, with figures, to Samuel Bosse, died 1616, and his family. There are clerestory windows to the aisles and none to the nave. There is a Norman font with cable moulding.

Proceeding N. from Cheddington Junction we see N.W. one mile Mentmore and E. one mile and a half *SLAPTON*, where the Dec. Church (Holy Cross, register 1653) contains brasses to Reginald Manser, 1462; James Tornay, Yeoman-at-Arms to Henry VIII., 1519; and to Sir Thomas Knyghton, 1522. There is also an early English font.

John Kempe, Archbishop of Canterbury, was Rector, 1407.

The railway here enters the valley of the river Ousel which rises in the Bedfordshire Chilterns.

On the banks of the stream is Grove, a village of a few houses with a tiny Church.

Leighton Station is on the Buckinghamshire side of the Ousel in Linslade parish. The suburb in which the station stands is called Chelsea, and it has for County Council purposes been made a portion of the Bedfordshire town of Leighton Buzzard. There is here a new district Church.

The old village of *LINSLADE*, or *LINCHLADE*, is three miles and a half further N. It consists only of the Church (St. Mary, register 1690), which is now no longer used, the manor house, and a few cottages, all of which stand in a beautiful little promontory nearly surrounded by the river. Linslade, however, once had a weekly market, and was also in the XIII. century possessed of a Holy Well to which pilgrimages were made. These pilgrimages, which had been encouraged by the then Vicar, were prohibited by Oliver Sutton, Bishop of Lincoln in 1299, who forbade such gatherings at a *profane* or unconsecrated place. The great tithes once belonged to Chick-

sands Priory in Bedfordshire. The churchyard is large as it is still used as the burial place for the more populous part of the parish.

There are several interesting churches W. & S.W. of Leighton which should be visited. The cyclist will reach these from the high road between Leighton and Aylesbury, which, however, according to Buckinghamshire fashion does not run through many villages.

The first of these, three miles from Leighton, and situated on the high road, is WING, once a market town.

The interesting and remarkable Church (All Saints, register 1546) stands in an open position near the centre of the village. It has a considerable amount of Saxon work about it at the E. end. The chancel is raised above a crypt of rude construction 8-ft. in height. Round the outside of the chancel runs an arcade, and the chancel is finished with an apse. This work may be of the time of Knut, or even of that of Alfred. The windows are of later date. Above the chancel arch is a Saxon window. The nave arcades are Norman or perhaps late Saxon, but its roof is Perp. The N. porch is Dec. and the S. Perp., as is also the massive tower.

The Jacobean pulpit, the chancel screen, the stalls, and the nave seats should all be carefully examined as good specimens of their dates.

The church also contains many brasses and monuments of much interest. The finest of the latter are those to members of the Dormer family. On the N. side of the chancel is that of Sir William and Dorothy Dormer, of the latter part of the XVI. century. There are effigies of the Knight and his Dame, and eight shields contain altogether 98 quarterings of arms. The whole is enclosed with its original iron railings. On the opposite side, also enclosed, are the kneeling figures of Robert Dormer and his wife and six children. In the N. aisle is a yet more stately and remarkable monument erected to Sir Robert Dormer and his wife, 1541 and 1552. The elaborately carved altar tomb supports, however, a plain Sussex marble slab.

The monument to Mrs. Margaret Fynes is said to be by Roubiliac. The brasses to Harry Brasknall, 1460, and Agnes his wife, 1489; to Tankerville Fynes; and John Theede, 1622, should be observed as well as that of "Honest old Thomas Cotes," Porter at Ascott Hall, 1648, with its quaint inscription.

The Church was restored 1850 by Sir G. G. Scott, R.A.

In the churchyard are the remains of a cross.

The Dormer Almshouses were founded 1562, by Dame Dorothy Pellam.

The mansion of the Dormers, Ascott House, one mile E., was pulled down in the last century.

Sir Robert Dormer here entertained the Princess Elizabeth in 1554 when on her way to London as a prisoner. His grandson was created Baron Dormer of Wing, 1615. The son of the latter was created, in 1628, Viscount Ascott, and Earl of Carnarvon. In 1642 Lord Carnarvon's home was ransacked by the Parliamentary horse, and he fell at the battle of Newbury in the next year. In 1645 Charles I. stayed a night in the house when on his way from Woburn, and his soldiers were encamped in a field close by. One of these was hanged on a tree for stealing the Church communion plate.

The titles of Viscount Ascott and Earl of Carnarvon became extinct in 1709. The title of Lord Dormer passed to the descendants of a younger son of the first Baron, and the estates at Ascott soon afterwards passed by marriage to the family of Stanhope, Earls of Chesterfield.

Browne Willis in the last century bought some of the material of Ascott House for his Chapel at Fenny Stratford.

There was at Ascott a cell of Benedictines, an alien Priory attached to the Abbey of St. Nicholas, at Angiers. The Empress Maud gave the manor to the mother-house. After the suppression of alien monasteries the Priory and manor were given to the nunnery of St. Mary de Prè, near St. Albans in 1416.

At *Ascott Park*, is an Elizabethan house of brick and timber restored. Here the Rothschild stag-hounds are kennelled. They were formerly at Mentmore.

Dr. William Dodd, who was hanged for forgery in 1777, was presented to the Vicarage of Wing by the Earl of Chesterfield in 1775. The bond of 4,200, for the forgery of which he was executed, was on his Patron. He probably intended to take it up before it was due, but failed to raise the money.

Three miles further along the road, and one mile N. is *ASTON ABBOTS*. The manor once belonged to the Abbey of St. Alban's, hence the second name. The house now called the Abbey was the country seat of the Abbots. It is chiefly of Queen Ann's time but some of the old thick walls of the original building have been worked into the modern structure. A moat enclosed the grounds on one side, and a large fish-pond remains. A skeleton was found

near the moat a few years ago. One wing of the house has been pulled down, and rebuilt.

The Church (St. James, register 1554) was nearly rebuilt in 1856 from designs by G. E. Street, R.A. The tower is old.

Here is a *draw* for the badger hounds.

Two miles N. of Aston Abbots is CUBBINGTON, situated amongst the hills. The Church (St. Nicholas, register 1556) dates from 1400. It contains a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, 1568, chained to a desk.

S. of the highway one mile is WINGRAVE. The Church (St. Peter and St. Paul, register 1550) is Dec. and Perp. The tower was raised one storey in 1898. There are pinnacles on the battlements. The chancel has interior arcading, and there is some Early English work, and there are an ancient aumbrey, piscina and credence table. On the corbels of the nave roof are figures and animals. The font is Norman.

An old lady who had lost her way on a winter night was directed to the village by the ringing of the bells, and in thankful remembrance left a piece of land, the rushes from which were to be strewn in the Church the Sunday after St. Peter's Day. A little new-mown grass is now used in an untidy fashion.

Two miles further the road passes through ROWSHAM, a hamlet of Wingrave, where there was once a chapel. There are many old houses.

(To be continued.)

The Churchwardens' Accounts of the
Parish of St. Mary, Thame.

Commencing in the year 1442.

Transcribed by W. Patterson Ellis.

(Continued from page 119.)

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Joh Manyturne & Tomas Bonsce schyrsche wordeynys the new
towne of tame We have reseynede to the worke of the norye ele.

of Jō tayler vi^d

Halsen mulschefe	vi ^d
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