

By the following letter was the generous gift conveyed :—
Abbotsbrook, Reading.

Feb. 25th, 1909.

To the Right Worshipful, the Mayor of Reading.

DEAR MR. MAYOR,—“ Amongst the famous events that the ancient Borough of Reading has witnessed, the founding of the Abbey on June 18th, 1121, by King Henry the First, and the burial of the same King on January 4th, 1136, hold an important place. The Royal body was buried before the high altar of the splendid Abbey Church, in the presence of King Stephen and of many nobles of the Realm.

Such historical landmarks, which link our civic with our national life, are worthy to be kept in remembrance, since they stimulate local patriotism and a desire to promote, to the utmost of our power, the beauty, prosperity and happiness of this Borough which it is our good fortune to inhabit.

In the hope of encouraging such patriotism, I have the pleasure of offering to erect in the Forbury Gardens, on the site of the Abbey Church, a memorial to its Royal founder, King Henry Beauclerc. The accompanying design, which has been kindly prepared by my friend, Mr. W. Ravenscroft, F.S.A., indicates the form of memorial proposed, viz., an Early English cross, in silver granite, 20 feet high, with mouldings appropriate to the Plantagenet period, and an inscription recording the burial of the King in the Abbey Church at Reading.”

Believe me, dear Mr. Mayor,

Yours faithfully,

JAMIESON B. HURRY.

THE BECHES, WOKINGHAM.—This house has recently been sold by Mr. F. C. C. Barnett to Mr. H. Pearson. It is a very picturesque old house, and is thus described in Lyson's History of Berkshire as “The Ancient Manor House of the De La Beche Family,” or more correctly, of Robert de la Beche, a branch of the family whose holdings were chiefly in mid-Berkshire. The only daughter and heiress of Robert de la Beche married one John Witelock about 1450, in the reign of Henry VI., who is described as thus becoming possessed of “The Manor of Beches, near Ockingham, Berks.” The old front door bears the date 1624, and the initials “R.” and “E.H.” which are believed to refer to one Richard Harrison and his wife, but there is in the town records, evidence that in 1729 one Richard Hawe died and bequeathed his property, including the “Holt” and the “Beches,” to his wife for life, and then to her six nieces.