

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

EXCURSION TO DIDCOT.—On July 31st the Berkshire Archæological Society in conjunction with the Reading Literary and Scientific Society made a joint expedition to Didcot, East Hagbourne, Blewbury, Upton, Harwell and Steventon.

About forty members and others formed the party. Unfortunately, prior to leaving Reading, a telegram was received from the Secretary, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, saying that on account of an accident he was unable to be present. His absence was much regretted by all, and all members of the Society have sympathised with him, especially as his broken arm has hindered his literary work.

The Society had never before visited the district included in this excursion, it was therefore a matter for regret that the day did not prove fine enough for the scenery to be appreciated. The President of the Society accompanied the party and explained the various architectural details in connection with the churches. As these churches have been described in a lecture, illustrated with lantern slides, given to the Society by the President last March, and as a portion of this lecture with the illustrations has already appeared in the April and July numbers of this Journal, we consider there is no need to repeat what has already been so ably told.

The first church to be visited was Didcot—or as it was formerly called “Dudcot.” The modern village Didcot New Town is really situated in North Hagbourne. At the church the party received a welcome to the parish from the Rector, Mr. Brown. After going round the church the journey was resumed *en route* to East Hagbourne Church. There are in this parish three roadside crosses, which have given rise to the tradition that Hagbourne was a Sanctuary Place in pre-reformation days. How the tradition arose no one knows, but in those far distant days each church and churchyard was a place of sanctuary. If a person had committed any crime, except treason or sacrilege, and fled to a church or churchyard and confessed his crime to the coroner, the church authorities were bound to provide him with food for forty days, if during that time he took an oath to adjure the Kingdom and would go to such port as he was ordered, and there take ship to depart from the Kingdom. From Hagbourne the party proceeded to Blewbury, where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. Victor Whitehouse, the author of a short history of this parish, by whom, as well as by Mr. Dodgson, the interesting architectural features of this church were explained. Mr. Dodgson has kindly expanded his notes; his account of both the church and the parish will be found on page 77 of this number of the Journal. We are sorry to say that time would not allow of a visit to “Blewburton Hill,” which on its western side has been cut into a series of terraces rising one above the other. They are considered to be remains of the open field system followed in former days. Some of the excursionists would also have liked to have seen the place, in this parish, on the Berkshire Downs, where tradition says that Birinus, the Apostle of Wessex, first met Cynegils, King of Wessex. This meeting of the Christian Missionary and the heathen ruler led to the latter's baptism and the establishment of Christianity in Wessex. Such a spot must

truly be held in veneration by Christians of any denomination. The festival of St. Birinus in pre-reformation days was observed on December 3rd. At the Reformation his festival was abolished. Leaving the church the excursionists drove to the small inn known as the "Man Loaded with Mischief." Outside the house the inn sign still hangs, on which is depicted a man carrying a woman who holds in one hand a glass of gin, a magpie and a monkey are also depicted. After luncheon a move was made to the little chapel-like church of Upton, so often confused with Ufton in South Berks. The Cluniac Abbey of Bermondsey, in Surrey—the only Cluniac Abbey in England in the technical sense of the word—obtained the appropriation of Upton Church in 1092, by gift from Wynban de Baalun. According to an old water colour sketch made in 1868 the church was in want of repair. In 1885 restoration took place, under the supervision of the late Mr. Stallwood, F.S.A., of Reading, a vice-president of our Berks Archæological Society, when the rough caste was taken off the walls, which were rebuilt and cased with flint. At the same date the chancel of the church was restored by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who bore the cost of this work, under the direction of the late Mr. Christian, the present triple lancet East window was then inserted. Of the Communion plate the chalice and patten are Elizabethan. From here a somewhat lengthy drive through undulating country to Harwell Church, which was restored by Mr. John Hopkins, of Tidmarsh Manor in this county, in memory of his family, who at one time were resident in this parish. The expedition ended with Stevenon Church, after which a tour of the village was made. Some of the archæologists inspected the quaint old houses, which have finely carved fireplaces. Others looked at the ancient "Causeway," which is planted with trees on either side of it and runs the entire length of the village street, providing foot passengers with a path high above any floods. The oldest register of Stevenon parish is preserved in the collection of Harleian MSS. (No. 2,395) at the British Museum. How it was lost to the parish no one knows. Possibly our readers could enlighten us. But the register could of course be claimed by the Church Authorities, for no original register can be retained anywhere but in the parish to which it belongs, except under an Act of Parliament. Through the kindness of the Vicar the party was invited to tea in the school-room, after which the return journey to Reading was made.

EXPEDITION TO SONNING AND HAMBLEDON.—On Thursday, September 6th, the last expedition of the season took place, when visits were made to the Excavations at Sonning and Hambledon (Bucks). About fifty archæologists comprised the party, and all were very pleased to welcome once again in their midst the genial Secretary of the Society (the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield) after his recent accident.

Arriving at Sonning, C. E. Keyser, Esq., kindly conducted the party to the excavations which are near the church. Sonning, as is well known, was once part of the possessions of the Bishops of Salisbury. The County of Berkshire formed part of that diocese till 1845, when by order of Council our county was placed under the care of the Bishop of Oxford. At Sonning the Bishops had a palace till they exchanged their property here with the Crown for other lands in Dorsetshire, in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Eventually, the Sonning estate passed into private hands and the old palace was demolished, another residence being built on another site. This is the present house known as Holme Park. This estate is now in the market. Earlier in the present year the President of the Berkshire Archæological Society obtained permission to excavate, most generously doing this work at his own cost, for which he well deserves the gratitude

of all antiquaries. So far the foundations of the outer walls have been laid bare, some encaustic tiles have been discovered, as well as some pieces of pottery and coins, which include a Charles II. farthing and a small silver piece of money of the reign of Edward VI. Large quantities of oyster shells have been also dug up and also several clay pipes similar to those found at the excavations at Basing House in Hampshire. Mr. Keyser, in conducting his friends round the excavations, said that there was a tradition that in ancient days a cathedral was here. Anyhow the Bishops of Salisbury had a palace here from early times. Sonning was in the old maps of Berkshire marked as being in Wiltshire, this isolated portion of Wilts extending from the Thames to Wokingham. Part of Sonning parish is over the Thames on the Oxfordshire side. The probable reason that this district was designated as Wilts was because the Cathedral of Salisbury is in that county, and the Bishops of that See liked to consider their riverside palace of Sonning in that county and not in Berkshire. After the Reformation, when the exchange of property with Queen Elizabeth took place and the estate was in private hands, the palace was pulled down and on the foundations of the episcopal residence another house was erected. The family of Rich lived in it, and eventually their mansion was demolished in 1760. At the present time the workmen are employed in following the outside walls. When more has been done, a plan of the foundations will be made. Mr. Llewellyn Treacher, who has such a vast knowledge of this district, gave the visitors the following information. That there was evidence of a regular cathedral establishment at Sonning in very early times. Also there were records of Bishops of Sonning in Saxon times, but no record of the origin of the See. The fact, of there having been then and up to the present a Church, originally probably a Cathedral, with on one side a Deanery and on the other a Bishop's Palace, each with its separate estate, and also at Ruscombe estates belonging to two prebended stalls in the cathedral, points to Sonning having been one of the very first ecclesiastical establishments in the country; but how early it was impossible to say. Mr. Treacher further said that the great house, which was pulled down in 1796, stood on a different site, and he felt certain that the existence of these ruins was not known to the Mr. Palmer of that time, or he would have utilized the large stones for the building of the present house, which was completed in 1801. For taking down the old house the contract was £150; and the following items of expense might interest those present: The carpenters received £15 17s. 5d., the labourers £22 17s. 9d., Mulford for taking off the tiles £7 os. 0d., casualties amounted to £1 os. 11d.; whilst £3 8s. 1d. was paid for beer, meat, etc. Thus the contractor made £99 15s. 10d. by the work. In conclusion Mr. Treacher said that the strip of Wiltshire situated between Sonning and Wokingham, to which allusion had already been made as being the property of the Bishop; but such was not the case, as all the episcopal estates were in Berkshire.

From Sonning to Hambledon is a pleasant drive of some eight miles, through Henley and past Fawley, with its deer park, and Greenlands, the seat of Mr. W. F. D. Smith, M.P. Arriving at Hambledon we were conducted by Mr. Heneage Cocks round the remains of the Roman Villa, which under his directions have been excavated during the present summer. Having made a tour of the Roman remains, the Society was hospitably entertained to tea by Miss Miller, Hon. Sec. of the University Extension Lectures at Henley, at the Phyllis Court Club, so well known to those who attend Henley Regatta. After tea those who liked were invited to wander through the Club gardens, which are very prettily situated on the banks of the Thames, formerly the private residence of Hugh Mair, Esq. Then came the signal for the return to Reading, and so was brought to a close

the last of the summer excursions of the season of 1912, voted by all to be most successful in every way; and hopes were expressed that a future season may bring forward some equally pleasant afternoons.

NOTE.—Florence of Worcester states there were eleven Bishops of Sonning. Bishop Stubbs (*Constitutional History* I., 271) says that the See of Ramsbury had no cathedral but moved about, resting sometimes at Sonning; but was finally joined to Sherborne just before the Conquest. If such was the case, it would account for Florence's statement, which has no doubt given rise to the supposition that there was a Cathedral establishment at Sonning.—EDITORS.

Reviews.

THE FAMILY OF FREDERICK, OF FREDERICK PLACE, OLD JEWRY, LONDON, AND OF BAMPTON, OXON. By F. H. SUCKLING. (William Pollard, Exeter, 1911.)

We are always glad to welcome any contribution to the history of the "three counties," consequently we have great pleasure in bringing to the notice of our readers Mrs. Suckling's account of the "Family of Frederick." A work which shews a great deal of original research amongst "wills" and other documents.

The first member of the Frederick family to rise to importance was one Christopher Frederick, who held the appointment of Serjeant Surgeon to the King, James I. The Serjeant Surgeon died in 1623 and was buried in the church of St. Olave's, Old Jewry, in October of that year. In Wheatley's "London Past and Present" it is stated that Frederick Place, Old Jewry, derives its name from this member of the medical profession, who at his death left a family of six sons and two daughters. Of these sons, the second Christopher was the progenitor of the Bampton branch of the family. He married Elizabeth Smith of St. Martin's-le-Grand, London, and by her had issue a son John, who emigrated to Barbadoes, where he married Martha Gascoigne, a daughter of another settler. Christopher Frederick eventually returned to England, where he died. His eldest son John settled at Bampton. We find from Mrs. Suckling's account that the Parish Register contains no record of his burial at that place, though all his daughters lie buried there, as well as his maternal aunt Mrs. (Mary) Croft, whose funeral took place at Bampton in 1718. In her will, which is of great interest to students of the history of Oxfordshire, she desires to be buried in the Parish Church of Bampton, "in the Eyle (sic) there called Pope's Eyle (sic) and bequeaths £100 to the Master of Bampton Free School, to be invested at interest, for the purpose of teaching poor boys and girls," and also she leaves to Mr. Thomas Snell, "one of the Vicars of Bampton" £17 to buy a piece of plate for the Communion Table, as well as various legacies to relatives. On the death of the above-mentioned John Frederick, the Bampton Estate passed to his son Gascoigne Frederick, who died in 1780 and is buried there. From him the property passed to his sister, Susanna Frederick, who by her will, dated 1789, bequeathed Bampton to Edward Whitaker, at whose decease in 1798 the manor passed to his son Frederick. He married Susanna Humphrey, daughter of