

## NOTES

## RUNNYMEDE

A large piece of riverside land which includes the famous meadow has been given to the nation by Lady Fairhaven and her sons. It will be remembered that in August, 1921, it was announced that this property of the Crown would not be offered for sale, so it was presumably sold on condition that it became vested in the National Trust.

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 RECENT DISCOVERIES AT NOTLEY ABBEY

The exact site of the conventional church of Notley Abbey has always been a matter of conjecture; Lysons has nothing to tell us, but Lipscomb says: <sup>1</sup> "The tower of the church beyond the cloisters 22 feet square, and an enclosure of about 132 feet by 70 feet probably the site of the church." Then in 1889 Dr. F. G. Lee gives <sup>2</sup> the dimensions as 146 feet long and 70 feet across the transepts. He adds "cruciform, with a nave of five bays, transepts, and a deep choir, rec-tangular at the east end." In a letter <sup>3</sup> from the Vicar of Long Crendon, written, in 1912, the length has grown to 148 feet, and this addition to previous knowledge is added: "Some chapels or sacristies, probably added at a later period, both on the north and south sides of the choir." It is unfortunate that the sources of these varying figures is not given.

During the last few months discoveries have been made by Mr. Noel Bingley, the lessee of the Abbey, which give us some definite facts of very great importance in determining the site. When removing some modern outhouses on the northern side of the cloister-garth there was found a doorway, approached by two steps, leading into the angle of the south aisle

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I., p. 237 (1831), the source of his information is not clearly indicated.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of Bucks*, VI., 360.

<sup>3</sup> *Records of Bucks*, X., 201.

and the north transept. There seems to be no doubt whatever that this is the eastern of two doorways which are described thus:<sup>4</sup> " In the aisle-wall next the cloister were two doorways, one opening into the east, the other into the west walk of the cloister. The Sunday procession left the church by the eastern doorway, which was also the entrance used by the convent for the day offices, and returned by the western." The doorway shows the bases of two de-tached shafts; these bases have a simple moulding decorated in the one case with small cup-like marks, and in the other case with a kind of trowel-point decoration. This doorway is reached from the north-eastern angle of the cloister, and on removing some feet of earth a very remarkable stretch of tiling was found, forming the northern half of the eastern side of the cloisters. Inside the south aisle are further patches of tiles, and a large, round, and simply-moulded base—apparently that of the south-west pier of the central tower, as some 22 feet to the north a similar pier-base has been located under the garden wall; they have the appearance of being mid-12th century work. West of the first-named pier-base is a fragment of walling at right angles to the wall of the south aisle; the latter wall has been exposed for some yards, and is 3 feet 9 inches thick. This small piece of wall is rebated at its southern extremity; is it possible this can be the extension of the rood screen across the south aisle? To quote once more from Mr. Hamilton Thompson:<sup>5</sup> " The quire occupied the cross-ing of the transepts and one or more of the eastern bays of the nave . . . . The quire was separated from the rest of the nave by a stone screen with a loft above, known as the pulpitum, a bay west of which came another screen, the rood-screen." Again: " The rood-screen was flanked by screens across the aisles, so that the western part of the nave was entirely shut off from the quire and from the eastern processional doorway."

The tiling inside the cloister walk is laid in an elaborate pattern, consisting of a narrow band, then

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<sup>4</sup> A Hamilton Thompson : *English Monasteries*, 1913, p. 43

<sup>5</sup> Op. Cit., p.43 and 52



in the same account., the Church is described as being " about a mile distant . . . . . in the open field." See an account of the consecration of the "new" Church in the RECORDS. <sup>1</sup>

No systematic investigation of the site seems ever to have been undertaken. It occupies an area of between one and two acres a little more than half-a-mile North-West from the present Church, and con-sists of a little plateau of gravel and river deposit in the middle of the marshy valley running North-West from the village. On the North-East corner of the ground there is a cottage and barn, and a bunga-low has been built at the North-West end. During 1929, through the kindness of Mrs. R H. Morten, I was enabled to make a few small excavations on the site in an endeavour to recover the plan of the Church. In the hope of striking the foundations running from East to West, a few short trenches were run from North to South, and one or two trial holes were dug. I may mention that during exca-vations for the foundations of the bungalow already noticed, and during digging for gravel on the North edge of the plateau, considerable quantities of human bones were encountered. In my digging nearer the centre I only came across one human, bone, so that it seems likely that the Church stood in the centre of its graveyard.

All material will, of course, have been taken from the surface years ago: and the results of such small excavations as were made suggest that even the foun-dations may have been dug up for the sake of the material, as the whole site shows signs of much disturbance. However, only a comparatively small area was explored, and one may yet strike the foundations, or a section of them.

The results of the digging may be summarised as follows: — The whole area was thickly strewn with building material, struck flints and tiles being the most numerous. Human bones occurred on the outer edges of the site, particularly on the West and North, in the gravel at any depth from 2ft. to 4ft. Nearer

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<sup>1</sup> *Records of Bucks*, II., 28.

the centre, broken tiles were encountered everywhere, in places to a depth of 4ft. Most were roofing tiles, many being under-baked in the centre. Some thicker and flatter tiles, probably floor tiles, also occurred. The whole site was thickly strewn with flints struck for building purposes, and these occurred freely in all the excavations. Patches of clay-like material and chalk may indicate disintegrated chalk or clunch blocks. One or two examples of faced chalk or clunch blocks were also found. It is thus probable that the Church was a small building of flint, sparingly faced with clunch or squared chalk blocks, as seems to have been the case at Hedgerley. The roof tiles must have been a later feature. Unfortunately no dateable objects or mouldings were found, nor any clue as to the plan of the building. But it is conclusively proved that this is the site of the Church and Church-yard.

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#### CHALFONT ST. PETER

##### MORE EVIDENCE OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

In 1928 an account was given in the RECORDS of some fragments of stone moulding from the mediæval Church of Chalfont St. Peter that were found during repairs to the tower.<sup>2</sup> Other fragments have since come to light in the garden of the old Vicarage, immediately behind the church, now "Cordons," the residence of Mr. Churton Walker, to whom I am grate-ful for the information and for facilities for inspecting the stones.

Some were found in the mud of a small branch of the Misbourne which runs through the grounds; others were encountered when the fruit garden was being trenched, and these occurred at a depth of about 2ft. Most consist of arch mouldings and similar pieces, corresponding to those previously described, and are of 15th century date. In addition to these numerous pieces, there are several large stones worked flat on one or on two faces only, clearly used as base stones or base quoins. The

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<sup>2</sup> *Records of Bucks*, XII., 2, p. 60, et. seq.

most interesting pieces are two fragments which appear to be the ends of a floriated gable cross. The design is good and the workmanship sound. The date is probably early in the 15th century. There must be a mass of material all over this area, and care will now be taken to keep together and preserve such fragments as may from time to time be found.

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### DENHAM

#### MALTMAS GREEN

A house of some interest in Denham parish which appears to have been overlooked by the Historical Monuments Commission in their Inventory of build-ings, etc., in Buckinghamshire of a date prior to 1700, recently came to my notice.

The house, called Maltmas Green, lies a few hundred yards South of the Oxford Road, level with the top of Red Hill, and borders on the estate known as Denham Mount. It originally formed part of the Denham Place estate. I am grateful to the owner, Mrs. Tillard, for her kindness in allowing me to inspect the house thoroughly.

The house is built of brick, with a little timber-ing : the roofs are tiled. The plan is rather unusual for the type of house. At present it consists of a rectangular main block, with two gables, a modern addition at the East end, and a small wing with gable at the West end. The original plan is un-certain, but the West wing appears to have been built first, as a separate cottage, about the middle of the 17th century or earlier. The main block was added late in the same century, making a small farm-house. The whole was probably timbered, with brick filling. The West wing retains the timbered gable on the South, though much of the brick nogging has been renewed, and the North side has been re-built with modern brick. The main block has been re-faced with brick, probably early in the 18th century. At some time in the 19th century the house was divided into two cottages, the internal divisions being

much altered. In 1908 extensive additions and alterations were made, and the interior divisions again altered. All the chimney stacks have been renewed.

The dining-room, West of the entrance, contains the most interesting feature. There are some original heavy ceiling beams, forming a T, boldly chamfered and having curved stops. The drawing-room, East of the entrance, is lined with early 18th century panelling, of deal, painted; and the ceiling beams in this room also may be original, corresponding to those in the dining-room, though now encased, as at Hill House, Denham. The chimney-breast is a large one, and probably indicates the existence of a wide fireplace. In several rooms on the first floor there are plain ceiling beams, and from the inside heavy timbers are visible on most of the outside walls. A room in the West wing has a stop-cham-fered ceiling beam. Condition : good ; much altered.

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