

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE "RECORDS"

THE foundation meeting of our Society was held in the Vestry of St. Mary's, Aylesbury, on November 16, 1847. Perhaps both the place and time are significant, for an appeal had been launched for "repairs and restorations" to that church on March 1, 1843; little can have been done then, for there is a report by Sir Gilbert Scott on its condition dated November 4, 1848, and the work carried out by him is generally put at 1850.

No doubt the completion of Lipscomb's *History* had stimulated interest in the study of the county's antiquities generally, but there was clearly a strong element of ecclesiology in the early years. For instance, one of the first publications which bears the Society's name was a paper on Baptismal Fonts, which was read by its author, the Rev. R. E. Batty, curate of Drayton Beauchamp, at the quarterly general meeting held on October 19, 1848. It has the slight defect of omitting to name any font in Bucks. in its thirty-two pages, except for an allusion to the modern font at Hartwell, put there by Dr. Lee. To make up for this omission, four lithographic plates are included, which show the fonts of Aylesbury, Great Kimble, Bierton, and Drayton Beauchamp; but the text ignores them.

Again Sir Gilbert Scott read a paper at the first annual meeting in 1848, which he called "A Plea for the Faithful Restoration of our Ancient Churches." This he subsequently published in 1850, but again it contains no mention of any Bucks. church, and its author is not generally considered to have practised in all cases the cause which he advocated.

Whatever the immediate motives, the Society became active, and papers were read; "much that is interesting and useful" was "culled from curious and scarce documents," but this "never appeared in such a shape that any person might collect and preserve it." Accordingly, on January 2, 1854, it was decided to publish a Journal "to be issued quarterly"; this seemed too frequent, and, in fact, the first volume contains only 308 pages and bears the date 1858 on its title-page.

It would be tedious to discuss in detail the matters collected in each volume; though the dullest paper may contain some fact which is welcome to later workers on the same subject. The Rev. T. Horn produced papers on "Mursley with Salden," which had been his parish, though he had then left the county. Mr. Boughy Burgess had a paper, with plan, of the earthworks in Bray's Wood, but no excavation had been made there. The Rev. W. Hastings Kelke was one of the most active members and, until his health forbade, was one of the secretaries; he contributed some useful papers on Desecrated Churches of Bucks., upon Creslow, and upon Drayton Beauchamp.

In 1855 the Society held its meeting at Buckingham, and on July 31 and August 1 exhibited a "museum of articles" in the Town Hall there. The idea was commendable, but by no means the bulk of the 205 items catalogued related to Bucks., and a considerable number, shown by Mr. Wells, were marked with an asterisk to show they were for sale. Similarly, in 1860, the Society met at Newport Pagnell, and had a three-day "museum," exhibited at the Assembly Rooms, with 261 items. The objects of local importance were more important and more numerous, and the dealer was excluded this time.

The second volume of the *Records* filled 374 pages and its title-page was dated 1863. At that time it was customary to print a catalogue of the Society's library, which was by no means confined to works of a local character; a preliminary slip announces that a room had been secured in Silver Street, where the books were kept and whence they could be borrowed by members, though not "without acquainting the Landlady with the circumstances, as she is partly responsible for the property of the Society."

In this volume is an account of a Roman dwelling excavated at Terrick in 1858; it contains a plan, and drawings of pottery, which are the only records of this discovery. Its very site is not known exactly to-day, but is referred to by the Historical Monuments Commissioners as their first item in Ellesborough parish. There is a note upon a paper read by Sir John Evans at the Annual Meeting of 1860 upon "Flint Implements from the Drift." It is interesting to note that at that time he had to argue that they really were implements. The Rev. H. Roundell has a paper on the Rhyne Toll of Chetwode, which is decidedly important, because even at the time he wrote "Mr. Superintendent Giles of Buckingham" rented the right of collection for 25s. The same Mr. Roundell had several papers upon the Newport Garrison in the Civil Wars, which involved a good deal of original work of value.

The third volume was finished in 1870 and ran to 375 pages. It opens with a notice, dated October 24, 1862, that the Society had leased for six years two rooms in Church Street, belonging to the Bedford Charity, and that they had left the Silver Street landlady. The indefatigable Hastings Kelke writes upon the sculptured monuments of Bucks. before the sixteenth century; he describes and illustrates the wooden effigies at Clifton Reynes and if he makes one of them fifty years too early, we must remember that he was writing nearly as many years before Mr. Alfred Fryer's masterly monograph on that fascinating subject was published. Mr. Roundell wrote an important paper, well illustrated, upon the Roman building at Tingewick. The Rev. J. A. Boodle printed the "Sepulchral Brasses of the Deaneries of Buckingham and Newport Pagnell," but unfortunately stopped there. Mr. E. J. Payne gave a somewhat superficial account of the Roman villa in the Rye, High Wycombe, but accompanied it with a plan. The Rev. Bryant Burgess did little more for the Roman villa at Latimer. The technique of excavation and the knowledge of Roman pottery were alike little understood at that time. The Rev. F. G. Lee contributed articles on the Lees of Quarrendon; and Mr. H. Gough the useful paper on the "Swan of Buckingham." Then occur the greatest blot in the whole run of the *Records*—fifty pages, elaborately illustrated, on the Vestments of the Church, without a single local reference of any kind; whether the paper is good or bad, it has no business to be where it is. The volume closes with a very full and important article on Master John Schorn, by the Rev. W. Sparrow Simpson.

The fourth volume bears the date of the first part, viz. 1870; it cannot have been completed before 1877. The Society's excursion in 1870 was their first up the Thames, and produced papers on Medmenham and Little Marlow. The Rev. C. Lowndes contributed a paper on Dinton, with illustrations. Less welcome was a series of papers,

with no mention of Bucks. in them, by the Rev. J. R. Pretyma; he called them "Illustrations of English History," and furnished a perfect example of how it should not be done. The Rev. C. Lowndes has a note on the Roman spoons found near Great Horwood in 1872, illustrating them with an actual photograph, which has faded somewhat. Sir Gilbert Scott has an article on Hillsgden church, with the St. Nicholas window illustrated, also by some photographic process, which has lasted much better.

The fifth volume starts with a preface by the Rev. C. Lowndes, dated from Hartwell Rectory in January 1878. He runs over the thirty years of the Society's existence, and mentions that it began with 55 members, whilst it was 245 when he wrote. He was the honorary secretary; at that time there was no editor as a separate officer. He contributes a paper, well illustrated with half-tone plates, upon the Saxon relics found near Bishopstone. He was present at the opening of one of the graves, but it is clear that it was not a planned excavation at all, and, except for the remark that the remains were found "from two to two and a half feet from the surface," no precise measurements are given. There is an article on Burnham Abbey by Mr. W. L. Rutton, with plan and illustrations; and a useful one on Calverton Manor, with a pedigree of the Bennett family.

At this period Mr. R. Gibbs, the historian of Aylesbury and curator of the Society in 1884, and Mr. R. S. Downs were frequent contributors; they collected useful material, but neither could claim much in the way of scholarship. There is a notice of the opening of the famous Saxon tumulus at Taplow, but it appears to have been abstracted from other sources, and was unworthy of such a famous discovery. Mr. H. Gough had a paper on the "Local Armory of Bucks.," with the arms illustrated.

But the most important paper in the volume was by one of the Society's most eminent members—Mr. A. H. Cocks. It dealt with the bells in the Hundred of Desborough, and was the beginning of his truly great book on the bells of the whole county. It exhibits his peculiar traits perfectly; one was his partiality for an incredible variety of types, so that his pages are littered with small and large caps., black-letters, italics, etc., in a way most trying to the eyes. At the same time the profound care and personal research which characterized all his work are prominent and gives great authenticity to everything that he wrote.

The sixth volume opens with a preface by Mr. John Parker, who had become responsible for the *Records* on the retirement of the Rev. C. Lowndes; it is dated 1887. Mr. W. L. Rutton has a good paper on the Wentworths of Lillingstone Lovell; and the honoured name of J. L. Myres appears for the first time with an article on Clifton Reynes.

In association with this volume, Mr. H. Gough issued his *Bibliotheca Buckinghamiensis*, publishing it as a separate volume, with the date of 1890 on the title-page. It was fairly complete for its date, though most of us have found minor omissions at different times. The Bucks. books issued since 1890 are so many that it will be necessary to bring Mr. Gough's useful work up to date some day.

Mr. John Parker writes a preface to volume VII, under the date May 14, 1892, in which he urges the necessity for securing adequate premises "worthy of the name of a County Museum," which the Society "would consider as its home and the centre of its life."

Mr. Cocks contributed two lists of South Bucks. words, but he was not the man for dialect hunting, and it was his least satisfactory performance. He also "communicated" a paper upon the mural paintings at Little Horwood and Padbury, by that authority Mr. C. E. Keyser; it was a reprint from the *Archæological Journal*,

however, and therefore formed an infringement of the general rule that only original articles should be printed. Mr. Cocks also reprinted his own article on the Hedsor pile-dwellings, from the *Antiquaries' Proceedings*. By 1894 Mr. Cocks appears as one of the honorary secretaries, and as "curator," not a happy appointment for one who was then living at Marlow. Professor Myres began his record of Church Plate in the Rural Deanery of Mursley—it is unfortunate that it has never been carried beyond the other Rural Deanery of Claydon.

The eighth volume straddled the turn of the century, as it covered the years 1898 to 1903. There were several contributors of more than local fame; Sir W. H. St. John Hope gave a paper on Wycombe Church Inventories, and Sir Charles Peers gave one on Little Marlow Nunnery; but neither had then reached the position in archæology which they were destined to attain. Mr. Harold Breakspear furnished an important paper, with plans and illustrations, of Burnham Abbey.

Another name to appear for the first time is one which the Society should ever honour—Mr. W. Bradbrooke, so long the honorary secretary in later years; in those days he had not adopted the "e" final to his name, which he assumed after long consideration.

In 1902 Mr. Bradbrooke began the Bucks. Parish Register Society, "under the auspices" of the main Society; the registers of fifteen parishes were published, with indexes, for the lack of which the usefulness of the Phillimore Marriage Registers is severely restricted.

The ninth volume of the *Records* is dated 1909, but as it covers the five preceding years, a most important period of the Society's history is embraced in that single *lustrum*. Thus the Jubilee was celebrated in 1905 by a loan exhibition at Aylesbury Town Hall, and Lord Rosebery, the then President, gave an address which he called "The Political Aspect of Buckinghamshire." This covers only ten pages of the volume, but is easily nearer akin to literature than any other paper in the fourteen volumes so far issued. Take, for example, what he has to say about John Wilkes: "He was at best the sceptical representative of an honest cause. But we are probably none of us Wilkesites, any more than he was himself."

Then, in 1907, the Society managed to acquire the old Grammar School in Church Street at a total cost of £1,156, and so obtained reasonable headquarters, which at that time were adequate for the collection owned, with room for a resident curator. In 1908, the Society was lucky enough to obtain the services of the late Mr. Edwin Hollis in this capacity; although his experience had been mainly in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, he soon familiarized himself with all forms of antiquities, and, later on, with the muniments, of which we have become custodians. The Society owes as much to his devoted service as to any one person throughout the hundred years.

The next paper to Lord Rosebery's address, mentioned above, is an important one by Mr. Morley Davies, upon the "Hundreds of Bucks." Mr. Cocks contributed two papers on some Iron Age pottery and some Saxon burials—both uncovered at Ellesborough during the making of the golf course. Here again no organized digging was possible, the discovery being accidental. Mr. Keyser had another useful paper on mural paintings, this time on those at Little Hampden Church.

The tenth volume is dated 1916, issued after the close of that year—that is to say, in the middle of what is sometimes called "The First War." This reacted severely on the activities of the Society; during 1915 the Museum was actually closed and let to the Grammar School. In 1916 the Society lost its Chairman of Council, Sir Arthur Liberty, who generously showed his unflinching interest in the Society by leaving a sum of £2,000 in trust for its benefit; indeed, he ranks almost first amongst our benefactors.

Perhaps the most important new contributor to the tenth volume was Mr. F. G. Gurney, with some 16 pages of the profound erudition of which he was such a master, exerted upon "Two Fifteenth-century Neighbours in Edlesborough"; he also contributed a fourteenth-century subsidy roll for Stone.

This tenth volume contained a paper by Sir James Berry and Mr. Bradbrooke, which dealt with their excavations at Norbury camp, near Little Horwood. The results were rather negative, but this was the first deliberate excavation, scientifically executed, carried out for the Society.

The editor, or "editorial secretary" as he was then called, of this volume was Mr. W. Niven, an architect; after seeing the first part of volume XI through the press in 1920, he was obliged to resign for reasons of "advancing age, poor health, and perhaps some indolence," and died in November 1921.

The words just quoted are contained in a letter from Mr. Niven to his successor; who found that the war seemed to have induced great inertia amongst members, and he was obliged to contribute many papers of small merit in order to furnish "copy" of any kind. A valuable contributor appeared for the first time in 1923, when the late Mr. Herbert Fowler sent "Some Early Instruments of Tickford Priory." By that time matters had improved, and Sir Cyril Fox and Mr. L. C. G. Clarke gave an authoritative paper, with plans, etc., upon their excavations at Bulstrode Park.

Sir James Berry, in 1924, made an exploration of Danesborough Camp, near Wavendon, and here he managed to find pottery, partly of early Iron Age and partly Romano-British. This paper was well illustrated, and the whole excavation (in which many of our members assisted) was perhaps the best carried out up to that time for the Society. Amongst several papers which Mr. Bradbrooke contributed to this volume, the most unusual perhaps was a summary of all the Royal Arms remaining in churches in Bucks.

The twelfth volume of the *Records* was issued over the years 1927-33; it opened with a short but interesting note by Margaret, Lady Verney. There is a slight doubt as to the identity of "Hogshaw Hill Spaw Water," and it certainly never reached the deserved fame of the Dorton spring. Another eminent contributor was Sir Arthur Keith, upon some skulls found near Fenny Stratford. Mr. Clive Rouse first appeared in the *Records*, contributing no fewer than eleven papers or notes to this volume, all infused with careful scholarship. Sir Charles Peers gives in a paper the substance of a lecture which he gave to the Society in 1928.

In 1929 the vacancy in the Presidency made by the death of Lord Rosebery was happily filled by the election of Dr. Montagu R. James, O.M., Provost of Eton. In 1932, he gave a brilliant address to the Society upon "The Iconography of Bucks.," and this appears in the twelfth volume also. Dr. Herbert Fowler sent a short paper on a twelfth-century dispute near North Crawley. Mr. Francis Reader sent some valuable papers, enriched with his careful drawings, upon domestic mural paintings—a subject which he has since made particularly his own.

In 1933 an appeal was issued at a meeting held in Eton College for funds needed for the formation of a County Muniment Room, the Society having been approved as custodians of manorial documents by the Master of the Rolls under the Law of Property Act, 1924. In the same connection a special loan collection of deeds and manuscripts was held at the Museum in February 1933, and a dozen cases of deeds of very varied types were shown. With the thirteenth volume of the *Records* (covering the years 1934-40) an innovation in the format was made, at the instigation of Major Coningsby Disraeli, the Chairman of the Council. This, in short, was the increase in the height of the page of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This has certainly given more scope for large plans, etc., but it broke the uniformity of the run, made shelving difficulties

where there was only a clearance of 9 inches, etc. This volume contains about 480 pages, and is perhaps the largest in bulk.

It opens with a brief account of the inauguration, in June 1934, of the Muniment Room and the extension of the exhibition area of the Museum. The ceremonial opening was performed by Lord Hanworth, and the Lord-Lieutenant, the High Sheriff, and the County Council Chairman were all present, to make a great day in the Society's history. The structural alterations and additions had been skilfully carried out under the direction of the present honorary secretary in his capacity of architect. The underground muniment room proper is nearly 400 square feet in area, and the extra museum space is about 550 square feet. The cost was about £2,500, towards which a legacy from Lady Smyth (ever a good friend to the Society) contributed substantially.

A late fourteenth-century Coroner's Roll, upon which Mr. J. G. Jenkins contributed a valuable paper, broke new ground so far as Bucks was concerned.

During the currency of this volume the Society lost both its President and its Chairman of Council; Major Disraeli's interest in the Society was close and untiring. By his position on the County Council he had secured for it a grant from the Education Committee, in return for which the Society did much for school-children through its devoted Curator. Several acquisitions to the Museum occurred through these elementary scholars. Major Disraeli's interest never failed, for not long before his death an opportunity occurred at one of the sales of the Phillipps MSS. to secure some early Bucks. deeds. He defrayed the full cost of this himself.

In this same thirteenth volume is an important account of the Romano-British kiln found near Hedgerley—the work of Dr. Kenneth Oakley and others; this was elaborately supported with plans, drawings, and half-tone plates. It coincided with another paper by Mr. A. D. Lacaille on some Neolithic pottery found at Iver.

Still another excavation reported in this volume was that of Cop Round Barrow, Bledlow, by Mr. J. F. Head, with Mr. W. F. Grimes's authoritative description, well illustrated, of "the finds." Mr. G. Andrews Moriarty gave an important paper on the Stretley family of Mentmore and Creslow, with a valuable pedigree.

One more excavation was the direct effort of the Society, subscriptions having been specially made for the purpose. The paper published in this volume illustrates very fully the Romano-British villa at Saunderton; it was by Miss Diana Ashcroft, with specialist contributors on the pottery, etc.

The fourteenth volume covers the years 1941–46, and suffered from the national troubles which attended printing during the war. It included two articles of the highest possible importance upon our Medieval Pavingtiles, by Mr. Christopher Hohler; as he added the exact patterns of some 235 tiles, he provided an article of permanent value on the subject.

Mr. E. C. Rouse had a paper on the Kederminster Library at Langley Marish, which is so complete that nothing is ever likely to be added to the subject. Then comes a paper on the Belgic Pottery found near Burnham, by Messrs. Corder and Lacaille; this was a case of casual discovery, not of excavation. A very full account of an Iron Age site at Bledlow, by Mr. J. F. Head and Mrs. C. M. Piggott, is well illustrated and deals with every aspect of their excavation.

In this volume we have the extremely valuable paper upon a document now in the Society's custody, the importance of which had been realized and the attention of Mr. F. G. Gurney drawn to it. It proved to be an agreement to change from the two-field to the three-field system of agriculture in 1345. He added drawings of three of the seals appended to the document, and closes with a contribution to our knowledge of Walter of Henley (so-called), which is of great importance.

Dr. Oakley contributed an entirely new kind of paper, in giving a scientific account of a "cloud-burst" near Fingest on May 17, 1936. The volume closes with a long and elaborately worked-out summary of our knowledge of Bucks. from A.D. 450-700, by Mr. J. F. Head; this is supported by maps and drawings.

These particulars touch upon the fourteen completed volumes of the *Records*. In 1928, an index of the first ten volumes was printed, by subscription and not directly by the Society. There is much matter in the four succeeding volumes which deserves easy access, and perhaps the indexes given at the end of those volumes are inadequate. As we all know, a running card-index is the only solution of this difficulty.

When one looks back over the century of the Society's existence and when one sees what has been accomplished, the feeling is left that the Society has on the whole worthily fulfilled its trust. There have been times when interest in strictly local antiquities was at a low ebb or when the people to stimulate interest in it were not directing the affairs of the Society. The very aims of the Society cover a vast field, and in these days of specialized knowledge few indeed can enter into all. For example, the study of natural history was one of our objects. Although it has received very little attention in the *Records*, the collections in the Museum are admirable and of scientific value; and there are "type specimens" of certain local fossils. When we turn to Antiquities proper, we see again how restricted is really the interest of any one member. It may be ceramics, or stained glass, or palæolithic implements. If he is a numismatist he is probably chiefly occupied with the tradesmen's tokens of the seventeenth century, so ably collected and set out by the late Mr. Hollis, who was largely responsible for the monograph published on our Bucks. tokens. Many to-day are largely interested in "digging"—there is a latent romance in what they may find which is perhaps the stimulus in such cases. Others, again, are repelled by primitive man, as a semi-bestial creature of unpleasant habits; and dislike the Romans as aliens who brought foreign ways with them. Still others prefer historic times, where documentary evidence remains to authenticate our social story—of this, Mr. Gurney's paper on the agricultural system in the fourteenth century is a perfect example.

It is the expressed opinion of Sir Alfred Clapham that the day of the amateur antiquary has passed. The activities of the Office of Works upon Ancient Monuments, of our Museums, of the Public Record Office, and the various chairs of archæology at our Universities afford a kind of technical training-ground from which the recognized antiquaries of the future will be drawn; and almost certainly from which curators of museums and conductors of excavations will be drawn. This may be so, but until human nature changes there will always be a certain number of men to whom research in the past—whether directed towards genealogy, architecture, or social history in general—makes a strong appeal. Such are well advised to pool their knowledge and experience by membership of a body interested in their aims. Whilst those interests are largely concerned with Bucks., they cannot do better than contribute their drop of oil to the lamp which the Bucks. Archæological Society has kept burning for the last hundred years.

G. E.