

## EXCURSIONS AND ADDRESSES, 1938.

## 1ST EXCURSION.

## BRADGATE PARK AND LEICESTER—19TH MAY.

The first excursion of the season was carried out on the 19th May, with an appreciative company of between thirty and forty members, under the leadership of the Organiser, Mr. G. A. Longden and his coadjutor, Mr. T. E. Routh.

Leicester was the major field of investigation, but the approach was designed to move through the delightful landscape of Charnwood, a true miniature mountain range, buried millions of years ago under the blown sand of a triassic desert, through which only the splintered peaks of extremely ancient rocks now pierce.

The first official halt on this beautiful progress was arranged for Bradgate Park, a recently acquired pleasure resort of the county and adjacent city of Leicester the noble gift of a generous benefactor, subsequently supplemented by other donors worthily emulating so fine an action. At the park gates the company was joined by Lt.-Col. R. E. Martin, C.M.G., chairman of the trustees, who here took charge, admirable alike in the deep fund of local knowledge he possessed and the crisp entertaining and on occasion humorous manner in which he imparted it.

Bradgate Park is an ancient deer park of 838 acres, quintessential Charnwood in its hard rock, lofty sweeping folds of bracken and heather with picturesque masses of varied woodland and particularly open glades of very old oak amid which a racing stream prettily meanders. In 1925 this beautiful property came, with much else of the

Stamford estates, into the market, and a local gentleman, Mr. Charles Bennion, approached the vendors with a view to purchasing for presentation to the Leicestershire people. The project was approved by the heirs of the barons Grey of Groby, and the price put as low as was consistent with the necessities of the estate, and in 1928 the fine gift was duly dedicated as is set forth on a plate of bronze attached to a block of the natural rock in the park.

The party were from here conducted to the extensive but very fragmentary remains of the ancient house in early brick, built by Thomas Grey, second Marquis of Dorset, from 1501. Here the nine days queen, Lady Jane Grey, was born, and the octagonal turret, the least ruinous of the remains (except the chapel) is still to be seen in which Ascham found her at the age of thirteen reading Plato in the original Greek. The great hall was built in preparation for the visit made by William III about 1694, and the whole vast structure was destroyed by fire in 1730—the legend being that the chatelaine of the day, a Court belle, bored by the country life, carried out a friend's advice to set the house on fire and to run away by its light! The very extensive debris is now being cleared up under the trustees and much of the old material used to make sound the tottering remains.

The chapel with its Grey memorials having been visited, the company (after lunch) proceeded thence to Leicester, assembling at St. Nicholas Church about 2 p.m., where they were received by Mr. A. Herbert, F.S.A., who described the building, adjacent to the old Jewry Wall, a fragment from the ancient Roman forum of Ratae, probably the west wall of the basilica or law court of this Romano-British city. The church is very early, consisting of a north nave wall retaining much of Saxon work which the speaker put at c. 960, a fine Norman tower in which Roman material was re-used, a Norman arcade and aisle (subsequently widened) broken through the "Saxon"

wall and a very wide south aisle of late "geometrical" times, which Mr. Herbert put in the 13th century, but which we should make early in the next century. Apparently the speaker was inclined to identify the pagan altar (?) of the Roman basilica with that of the Anglian Christian altar, but as he concluded the present church orientation is at right angles to the axis of the basilica the presumed sites seem irreconcilable.

The party were then led to a clearance immediately west of the church, where for about two years excavations by voluntary labour, directed by Miss Kenyon, M.A., F.S.A., have been proceeding on what seems to have been the Roman forum. It was hoped Miss Kenyon could have received the party, but she is now working on Viroconium and was not available. The deep foundations of century old workshops and dwellings have greatly complicated the site, which became earlier complicated by alterations even in later Roman times, but the beginnings of the Roman city seem to date from about 120 A.D. and perhaps a century later extensive baths were made on the site, of which parts of the plan and foundations are obvious. For the interested amateur the impressive thing is the great face, with its striking arch intact, of the basilican wall. Mr. Herbert held that the Roman site still occupies the centre of the city (which the map hardly confirms) but if the inference is continuity then we cannot agree. The Roman remains are buried under gently stratified and undisturbed dust and waterborne mud of the ages to the extent of nine or ten feet—evidence of long desertion. Nearby are to be seen good mosaic pavements one just opposite, the other under the L. and N.E. Railway, evidence of a sense of security, peace and even wealth in far off Roman Rataë.

The old Town Hall was next visited under the guidance of Mr. S. H. Skillington, who gave a detailed and masterly history of the structure and its functions, of which our

space limits forbid reproduction. The charming old half-timber habitation of the Corpus Christi Gild was traced from c. 1343 through about 1500 (Mayor's Parlour, with fine fireplace said to be of 1531) onward to its acquisition in 1563 by the Corporation, and its overhauling and extensions in 1632.

Thence tea at the Oriental Café, where Mr. W. H. Milnes Marsden moved a graceful and well-earned vote of thanks to Messrs. Herbert and Skillington and the absent Colonel Martin, and Mr. Walton supplemented with a similar acknowledgment to Mr. Longden and his associate Mr. Routh, who had so efficiently organised the arrangements. This did not quite conclude the proceedings, the company adjourning to the beautiful church of St. Mary's in the Castle, where Mr. Herbert finished his kindly labours as expositor.

Founded originally in 1107, an aisleless nave, rudely but richly decorated, for a college of seven secular canons, the surviving chancel, with exceptionally fine Norman sedilia was added c. 1150 and a north aisle (since destroyed). About 1240 a tower was raised on the south west, twenty years later entirely enclosed in a wider second nave (parochial) to the south, a connecting arcade being driven through the earlier Norman wall of the collegiate church. E.E. clerestories were added and fine E.E. sedilia erected in the new twin nave. The chancel roof is 14th century, the two naves being covered by the present roofs in the following century—low pitched "Perpendicular" work. Here a particularly successful excursion terminated and the company dispersed to their various destinations.

#### 2ND EXCURSION.

##### SOMERSHALL HERBERT—4TH JUNE.

In response to the invitation of Mr. N. H. FitzHerbert, the members made Somershall Herbert Hall and Church the principal points of interest on their second excursion

of the current season, with an inspection of Doveridge (or Dovebridge) church and churchyard.

The company were exclusively of the membership and were entertained to tea by Mr. and Miss FitzHerbert and given the unrestricted run of their beautiful old home, from base to attic, an exceptionally fine and extensive example of half timber construction, probably the best surviving in our region, which, rich in fine old homes of our old families.

The company assembled on the lawn of the ancient manor house and adjourned thence to the pretty church, with little of antiquity remaining, but possessed of a very dignified and finely proportioned memorial tower built so recently as 1912, the whole set in an exquisitely placed and beautifully kept churchyard, with mediæval cross complete.

Mr. FitzHerbert having welcomed the company then gave a brief history and description of the hall and church.

He said there had been FitzHerberts at Somershall and Norbury from very early days—at Norbury there was evidence for their presence in 1125 A.D., while for Somershall nothing positive was known of them before the thirteenth century. Actual proof that the two families were branches of the same stock were lacking, but it might be reasonably assumed they were. The third place long associated with the name was Tissington, an off shoot from the Somershall stem, acquired through a certain Elizabeth by Nicholas FitzHerbert in the fifteenth century. John FitzHerbert, a widower with three sons, married this Elizabeth. After his death she married Robert Fraunces, a widower with two daughters, thus acquiring two step-daughters in addition to three step-sons. The eldest son, another John, inherited Somershall and its resources, but what a chance for Nicholas and William, for the Fraunces girls were “thumping heiresses” through their mother Anne Clinton, whose mother, Joan, was a Meynell.

Nicholas married Margaret and got half the manor of Tissington, while William married Cicely with Upton in Leicestershire. When Richard FitzHerbert of Somershall, whose portrait was in the dining room, died unmarried in 1803, his nephew Roger Jacson sold the estate to Lord Vernon, but Alleyne FitzHerbert, Lord St. Helens—portrait in dining room—bought the house and a few acres. This Alleyne was a younger son of William FitzHerbert of Tissington, M.P., and friend of Dr. Johnson. He gave Somershall to his nephew Sir Henry FitzHerbert, who left it to his second son, Col. FitzHerbert, grandfather of the speaker.

There must have been a FitzHerbert home at Somershall since the thirteenth century but the earliest date in the house is 1564, on an oak tablet to the right of the entrance, probably built into the house erected by John and Ellen.

This may be the earliest—very small—half-timber building, first of four different half-timber constructions, to any one of which the tablet may belong. Tradition says some of the materials were brought from the destroyed Cubley manor house.

Another date is 1712 with initials J. and A. (John and Anne) a second wife and FitzHerbert, heiress from Tissington. They were probably responsible for much brickwork and panelling. Sir Henry about 1850 made additions and some 'mutilation' falsifying earlier work. The new building, kitchen, etc., was done, and well done, by Evans, of Ellaston, "George Eliot's" uncle and probably the prototype of the Adam of "Adam Bede."

In 1899 the roof needed attention and other extensive repairs were necessary, and in 1935 a truly conservative restoration was undertaken, directed by two members of the Society, Mr. P. H. Curry and Mr. Nash, whereby was recovered something of its original appearance for the ancient building.

West of the Church are the remains of an ancient and

enormous oak. In 1894 its girth at ground level was 43 feet and its smallest circumference 22 ft. 9 inches. Of the old church little remains but an original buttress in the S.E. corner and the porch of Queen Anne date. There is a mutilated but fine effigy of a priest with chalice on his lap probably of Robert by-the-Broke, first rector, 1428, and a late seventeenth century FitzHerbert wall memorial. The font is Norman with interlacing arcade and running rim band.

From the church the company proceeded to the village hall where they were entertained to tea, and after General Meynell had expressed the general appreciation alike for hospitality, guidance and address, they moved on to Doveridge where the Rev. W. J. Adams described the beautiful church with its 13th century tower and fine chancel, 14th century nave and aisles, its restored churchyard cross and the enormous yew.

#### LAST EXCURSION.

CLIFTON CAMVILLE, STATFOLD and NEWTON REGIS—  
6TH JULY.

The district visited was just over the county border into Staffordshire and Warwickshire—a charming group of genuinely rural but handsome churches with a late seventeenth century hall being inspected and expounded by specialists.

The party assembled about 11-30 a.m. at Clifton Camville, a charming village on the most easterly side of Staffordshire, by the Leicestershire border, the parish church of which is one of the most graceful in the county. Here the rector, the Rev. R. W. Reed, M.A., expounded the features and beauties of the fabric.

He said there were no traces of a church here before the 13th century, when the Norman family of Camville held the manor. At that period the church was an aisleless cruciform structure in the lancet style. In the second

part of the 14th century the manor passed by marriage to the Staffords, who materially modified and enlarged the church. About 1361 a chapel of equal height with the chancel was added on the south, the south walls were pierced and "decorated," pillars inserted, the south nave door was re-erected in the new aisle wall, the chancel was extended a bay east, and "decorated" windows inserted, with the exception of one lancet, and similar windows were set in the north wall of the nave.

The Early English north transept remains with a chapel on the ground floor and a priest's chamber over approached by stairs from the chancel. It is lighted by two five-light mullion lancets, each group contained under a 14th century round arch. The south transept was entirely absorbed in the new aisle, a little of the walling being visible to the expert. Under a richly moulded semicircular arch in this south wall is a tomb recess on the back of which a contemporary painting—the crowning of the Virgin—was uncovered in 1911 and is in large part now visible. Others then revealed have unfortunately faded out. Professor Tristram has recently treated this to secure its survival.

The tower and spire are particularly fine and were the last portions of the fabric raised—c. 1365-70—since when no further important structural additions have been made. Large windows of charming design appear in each of the three outer tower faces, a daring scheme, as Dr. Eeles later stated, fine, but tending to weaken the support of the lofty spire and superstructure.

There is much good screen work, three examples of the rare early 14th century, modelled on stone design, a rich and beautiful chancel screen of the 15th century, with doors restored in 1634 (dated) and other Jacobean work of the same date. Gilbert, the Laudian rector of that date, was expelled by the puritans and replaced by a Doctor Cross, an Oxford graduate, who, though puritan, was of the enlightened type and saved the screens. Round



the base of the nave wall are stone benches, the only ancient seating for the worshippers.

Dr. F. G. Eeles, F.S.A.(Scot.), etc., secretary to the Central Council for the Care of Churches, who had kindly come down by invitation to comment on the places visited gave an illuminating address primarily on screens, their legality, survival and replacements throughout all the centuries since the 14th to the present time. The great screen here, though approximately complete, had been cut down by more than half of its lowermost panels. The rood loft above—in most cases demolished—he thought was not vaulted in the Midlands, but its under surface flat or sloping, and often supported on vertical posts. Most of this work before the days of Wren still retained “gothic” traditions. The 1634 work was part of the Laudian revival and probably the altar was of that period. There were some good “classic” monuments, notably one signed by Rysbrack. There is a beautiful alabaster tomb of Sir John Vernon and his lady (1545) in the south chapel where also are two brasses to unknown persons (Staffords?), one a palimpsest, both of early 14th century.

After this very full intellectual meal an adjournment for more material sustenance was made, in the first place to the beautiful rectory gardens, whence a short shower drove most to the shelter of the cars, and at 2 p.m. through delightful Warwickshire lanes the hall of Statfold and its adjacent “private chapel” were reached. The latter, first visited, is a simple unaisled parallelogram with a plain late Norman west door, “lowside” and curvilinear side windows and a 17th century east window filled with late 17th or early 18th century enamelled glass, probably Flemish or German purchased abroad and inserted in 1851 by the then lord of the manor a Wolferstan. There is a font probably of the end of the 12th century.

The Rev. R. W. Reed said this had been a private chapel so far back as the records were known, the manor

was in the Stanleys until in the late 16th century it passed to Wolferstans by marriage, thence to a Pipe who took his bride's name. The church after the end of the 17th century fell into disuse and roofless was restored about 1890 and further refashioned about a dozen years later.

The beautiful chalice and patten were given in 1676 by Grace Wolferstan, whose memorial is on the wall. The saintly Bishop Ken was a visitor here. In wall recesses north and south of the altar are fine early 14th century effigies, of unknown ladies, one apparently a "religious."

Dr. Eeles did not believe this could have been originally a private chapel because of the presence of the font and also the "lowside" window to light the priest's missal, as well as the planning of the structure.

Dr. Eeles thought the altar and the east window were both of the Laudian period.

The hall, an austere example in plain brick of the last year of James II's reign (1688) much repaired and extended in later times, with beautiful views over "leafy Warwickshire," was then inspected, by permission of the owner, Major Wolferstan, and its old furniture and curios admired. Seckington, a tiny village in delightful country, was next visited, its graceful unaisled church with lofty tower and spire being greatly admired. The rector (Mr. Pike) transferred his expository duties to Dr. Eeles, who commented on the smooth ashlar of the walls, of a mainly curvilinear church (c. 1350-60) which would need no plaster but only a limewash to prepare it for colour decoration. A low rail at the entrance to the chancel is seen to be of mutilated upper traceried panels of the original 15th century screen. There are piscinæ on either side of the chancel arch, that to the north, with "raggling" or arcading, fragments of a reredos above. There is a double piscina by the altar, a feature, Dr. Eeles said, rarely set up after the 13th century when the priest was enjoined to drink the rinsing of the consecrated wine. There is a

good "classic" memorial (Robert Burdett) of c. 1603; and the west window has a "rear arch."

Finally the company passed on to the very similar and equally beautiful unaisled church of Newton Regis—similar even to the graceful tower and spire, fine east windows and later clerestory. Again the smooth walling, faint survivals of colour, and unusual "squint" from the west front (altar still visible) and a stone altar slab with a consecration cross on the front edge—a sixth cross, Dr. Eeles called it, saying the five surface crosses had been scraped off. He assumed this rare sixth cross was a substitute for the usual "relic." Under the north recess of the chancel is a very fine demi-effigy of a priest of the early 14th century richly foliated below and with the dead man's soul, over his head being received by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

#### ROMAN CAMP AT BROUGH—5TH AUGUST.

An informal visit was paid to Brough to inspect the excavations on the site of the Roman Camp of *Anavio*, then being carried out under the supervision of Mr. Ian A. Richmond. During the afternoon and evening many members of the Society took the opportunity of seeing the uncovered portions of the site. The significance of which was pointed out to them by Mr. Richmond. As notes by the excavator appear in this volume nothing further need be said here.

#### 1ST LECTURE.

##### RECENT PROGRESS IN KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO PREHISTORIC MAN.

A. LESLIE ARMSTRONG, ESQ., M.C., F.S.A.

The first of the lectures during the winter session was delivered at the Assembly Rooms on 11th November by Mr. A. Leslie Armstrong, F.S.A., on the subject of Prehistoric Man, which might be considered in two parts,

one concerning the actual remains of early man himself, the second, of his tools and activities, particularly in Derbyshire and its bordering regions.

Taking the skeletal remains in rough order of development he illustrated and dealt with fragments found in Java by a Dutch doctor, Dubois (an old man still living) about sixty years ago. A portion of the skull, some teeth and a leg bone were found indicating a tall man-like ape or ape-like man, with low but good shaped cranium, strong brow-ridges and larger brain than that of any known ape. After much debate this creature was generally accepted as a very low human form, and named *Pithecanthropus erectus* (upstanding ape-man). The discoverer wrote a short treatise on the creature, but never published it, and recently after all these years declares flatly his belief that it was an ape, but we are assured the anthropologists will not now accept the finder's revision.

Following this was the discovery about ten years ago of very primitive remains near Peking, recognised and worked out by Doctor Black. There are the enormous orbits, the heavy brow-ridges, the chinless jaw and low cranium of *Pithecanthropus*, but rather more obvious human qualities, so that Sir Arthur Keith counts it as a possible descendant of the Java "man," and a possible progenitor of the present yellow races.

Next in primitive crudeness, heavy brows, low skull, mighty chinless jaws, comes the Rhodesian skull, but in some way suggesting earlier occurrence on the genæological tree was the English find of about ten years ago, the famous Piltdown skull—a fragmentary skull two teeth and bits of the articulation of the jaw, completed from the suggested evidence of these two latter items by a restoration of the whole jaw.

Now the earlier types with the lowering brows and heavy jaws are supposed to represent a long extinct species or even genus of man, named from the discovery in

the late 50's of last century in Neanderthal, as Neanderthal man. Piltdown man had the ape-like jaw and teeth (the former, it must be remembered, partly a restoration), but the brow-ridge was not pronounced and the dome of the skull good and large so that, apart from the jaw, the whole might have belonged to modern man (*Homo sapiens*). Very recently a somewhat similar skull with modern characters was found at Swanscombe and believed to be a slightly more developed example from the same stem.

About three years ago a skull was found in Bechuanaland which caused much excitement, being at first assumed a relic of very early man, but the final conclusion seems to be that it was part of a man-like ape rather than of man himself. Within the present decade, Miss Garrod undertook the excavation of a series of caves in Palestine with an exceedingly rich harvest resulting. Remains of a considerable number of human skeletons were recovered, five being almost complete. The extraordinary thing about these obviously contemporary remains was their diversity such that it was generally agreed that had they been found separately they might have been assigned to different species or even genera. This is significant, particularly for those who, like the writer, are somewhat sceptical about the number of species (extinct, of course) into which the systematists have distributed primitive man.

An enormous structure of deduction has been raised on the tools and weapons of early man, most of what we are assumed to know of him being from this source. The theory is that the chipping of stone and particularly of flint according as it is rude or less rude, indicates his progress, and we are required to believe that each particular style of chipping indicates a chronological era and an invariable sequence throughout the world.

Earliest man wandered about in the open and, after the

still questionable remains from the Crag, the stages are Strépy, Chelles, Acheul—type stations for this early drift man, then cave-dwelling became fashionable and there the sequence is: Moustierian, Aurignacian, Solutrean Magdalenean, followed by a transitional period Azilean, to the neolithic age, not dealt with on this occasion.

The earliest cave man, of the Le Moustier type was the heavy-jawed, chinless, bull-necked man, now assumed to be extinct, and the lecturer showed rudely chipped quartzite and flint pebbles he has found very recently from the Trent gravels near Beeston and at the confluence of the Dove and Trent in Derbyshire. He then turned to his work at Creswell Crags, showing diagrams of the sequence there found and the two pronounced glacial periods with Moustierian and Aurignacian and later artifacts beautifully illustrated. Thence rock-shelters in N.E. Derbyshire were illustrated and expounded giving similar, but rather later evidence to that of the caves, and finally the sandy Lincolnshire flats at Scunthorpe brought the evidence from the era of palæolithic man down to Roman times, a series of hearths (charcoal) being shown which the lecturer considered might cover 20,000 years of human association with one site.

## 2ND LECTURE.

### THE CARTULARY OF BEAUCHIEF ABBEY.

PROFESSOR G. R. POTTER, M.A.

The second lecture of the season was delivered on 9th December, in the Assembly Rooms, by Professor G. R. Potter, M.A., Ph.D., of Sheffield University, his subject being "The Cartulary of Beauchief Abbey."

Introducing his subject, Professor Potter said the cartulary was the record of a small house of Premonstratensian canons—never, he believed more than fifteen at one time—on the extreme N.E. of Derbyshire, but indubitably in that county. Comparatively little of the

abbey's structure remained above ground, but the 13th century tower and some fragments of nave and chapter house walling survived, with much of the plan now excavated—it was founded about 1183, and acquired considerable estates in the county and district. Hence its special value for us.

The cartulary is a manuscript on vellum of 114 folios, bound in original oak boards and sewn in twelve quires, one of which had been cut out. It was in the possession of Major P. T. Davies Cooke, J.P., of Mold, in whose family it had long remained. Several writers on Beauchief and its environs had used it, notably the famous Derbyshire antiquary, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Pegge (1704-96) who, by its aid, wrote a history of the Abbey; Dr. J. C. Cox, and Mr. Addy.

It was naturally and rightly a jealously guarded treasure and was accessible only under stringent conditions and being about a hundred miles from the region with which it was mainly concerned, was rarely consulted, though frequently referred to on important economic (early coal mining, for instance), topographical, genealogical and place-name questions. Such references must be second-hand.

Dr. Pegge wrote a history of the Abbey of Beauchief and quoted extensively from this cartulary, but epitomises matter of first class interest nowadays from half-a-dozen folios to half-a-dozen lines; rarely gave names of places or witnesses or the invaluable detailed descriptions of boundaries, etc. of the various estates, which were often of first place importance in the modern history of the land. Pegge made a transcript not quite accurately, now in the College of Arms.

Dr. Cox used it in the second volume of *The Victoria History—Derby*, and Mr. Addy in a history of Beauchief, but in both cases, rather superficially.

Having made these preliminary statements, Professor

Potter then gave extensive extracts or modern renderings and comments from the volume, showing the wide range of its possessions, the light it threw on prices, serfdom (the abbey had a large number of these serfs and there was very slight record of their liberation or manumission), the local families and estates, many pretty place-names which had disappeared, and others so transmuted as only to be recognised by the student, all of which we must pass over from limits of space.

He estimated that 220 charters, etc. "of direct local interest, not more than 10 or 12 of which have been printed and these imperfectly, are here recorded, and made a vigorous appeal for the complete and accurate transcription of the whole of its printing." He recapitulated the interests we have here indicated for which or whom it is invaluable. "The cartulary in fact, provides a starting point for further historical investigations which may well prove of outstanding interest. . . . Then if the present owner should lose the volume by fire or other accident, or let it go overseas, its contents might at least be available for future use."

W. H. WALTON.