

EXCURSIONS, 1941.

1ST EXCURSION—4TH JUNE.

ARBORLOW, LOMBERDALE HALL AND YOULGREAVE.

On Wednesday, 4th June, the Society opened its excursion season.

There was a gratifyingly large attendance and the route traversed much of the fairest scenery of the Peak—out by the Ashbourne-Buxton road to Arborlow, the richly wooded country of the Bradford stream, to delightful private gardens at Lomberdale Hall, of old the home of distinguished local antiquaries William and (son) Thomas Bateman. The company then proceeded to the finely placed and attractive Youlgreave, with its noble church where the vicar did the honours of the reception. Thence to Harthill Moor to see so-called “Nine Stone Circle” (now consisting of five only) of which one recently fallen had been re-erected and another repaired at the Society’s cost and under the voluntary direction of Messrs. J. C. and J. P. Heathcote.

Passing on to the Miners’ Standard by Winster for tea, the party from there visited the church and were received by the vicar, who described the qualities of a structure rebuilt throughout, except for the uninteresting tower, about 1842, and as unattractive as might be expected from its date. There are two good modern windows, and a crude ancient font of doubtful Norman origin. A visit to the old Market Hall and the ancient Hall occupied by the late outstanding Derby antiquary, Llewellyn Jewitt (whose grave was pointed out in the churchyard) completed a very enjoyable and informing expedition admirably carried through.

The organiser of the tour was Mr. J. C. Heathcote, of Birchover, who was leader, with the assistance of his son, Mr. J. P. Heathcote, M.A. They received the party at ARBORLOW and at once proceeded to Gib Hill, the primary object of this visit, where the bronze-age cist, removed by the late Thomas Bateman after his excavations there, to his residence, has been recently replaced. This cist was found near the summit after the partial collapse of the mound following a vain search at its base for an interment. A brief description of the circumstances was given by the leaders who expressed the opinion that this was a secondary interment, and that in all probability the original interment still remains in the base, in which Mr. Walton concurred on an appeal for his opinion.

Arborlow (a concise and trustworthy guide to which was issued recently by Mr. J. C. Heathcote) was then visited and discussed. Several "special" students in the company considered the stones were never erect. New light on the circle's age was thrown by the leader's statements that the pottery of the tumulus imposed on the "vallum" was of "Peterborough" or "Forest" technique, suggesting it might be late "Neolithic" (?) and therefore the circle still earlier—say not later than 2,000 B.C.—a conclusion rather at variance with the recent tendency to bring these circles forward in time.

LOMBERDALE HALL, by invitation of Mrs. Parker Rhodes, was then visited primarily for the inspection of incised stone fragments, interesting but of no outstanding significance. The gardens were much admired.

YOULGREAVE CHURCH followed, where its noble tower, its Norman arcades (1130-50), 14th century chancel, rare font (c. 1200) with a secondary bowl, assumed to be a holy-water stoup, its early Rossington and later Cokaine effigies and curious Gilbert "reredos" and its Burne-Jones window were noted and admired. The three

western bays of the nave extend beyond the aisles, and Dr. Cox has stated these were built when the tower was raised in the fifteenth century. Mr. Routh questioned this and he and Mr. Walton carefully examined the walls particularly externally, concluding this work was obviously earlier and not improbably part of the original nave.

Having visited the repaired "NINE STONES CIRCLE" briefly described by the leaders, the company moved into the nearby "Rough" on Harthill Moor where the very important local discovery of a Romano-British village has just been excavated by the Heathcotes. It has no military suggestions, but there are indications of staked stockades, crude walling foundations and hut circles. Some of the newly identified "Derbyshire Ware" Romano-British pottery has been found, but so far no coins. The pottery fragments suggest dates 200-300 A.D.

In the absence of the chairman (General Meynell) the pleasant duty of thanking the guides and exponents, particularly the leaders, fell to the Rev. R. F. Borough, F.S.A., and Mr. W. H. Walton.

2ND EXCURSION—19TH JULY.

WORKSOP, STEETLEY AND CHESTERFIELD.

The arrangements were made by Miss M. M. Mugliston. The route by Old Annesley, with its Byronic connections, Mansfield and the borders of the wide picturesque landscape of Sherwood with its frequent extensive patches of beautiful woodland and rolling pasture, and the journey was not the least enjoyable part of the programme.

At WORKSOP the antiquarian attractions are the beautiful Priory and well-preserved ornate fourteenth century Gatehouse and guest-house over which the vicar, the Rev. J. C. Morton Howard, conducted the party.

His discourse was mainly concerned with the recent restorations as war memorials, prior to which choir transepts and Lady Chapel were desecrated and ruined from the period of the Reformation. The Lady Chapel, except for being roofless, was fairly complete and was restored in 1922, the transepts re-edified by 1929. The chapel is in good "lancet or Early English" and opens from the south transept which contains the earliest "Norman" of the whole fabric. The north transept is also austere lancet, practically an entire rebuilding, the east end, choir or presbytery has entirely disappeared, but we know that in pre-Dissolution days it had replaced in "Decorated" style the earlier Norman. It is the vicar's ambition that this also may yet be rebuilt and the ancient plan thus restored. In the restored south transept there may be remains of Henry I period, but the very beautiful nave of ten round-arch bays is later. The two to the east are 1140-50, the remainder, probably of the most ornate Norman pillars in England, with the exception of Oxford Cathedral and St. Peter's, Northampton, is as late as 1170-80. In the aisles the windows are pointed, the elaborate doorways are still round-arched. Two tall towers flank the west front, fourteenth century in upper stages, rather thin from the front, but dignified as seen on the flank. The house was of Black or Austin Canons and was founded 1103 by Wm. de Lovetot and dedicated to St. Cuthbert and Our Lady. There are very mutilated effigies attributed to de Furnival and the immediate successor of the line, de Neville.

The party then sped on to the delightful little Norman Chapel of STRETLEY, where the vicar of Whitwell received the guests. This structure is a perfect example (with only the single alteration of an inserted "decorated" window) of an unaisled groined apsidal Norman church with the longitudinal tripart division, by round arches of nave, chancel and sanctuary. The chancel and

apsidal arch is each of three and the south doorway of four richly decorated orders. The style suggests c. 1160.

The rector of Whitwell, the Rev. W. E. C. Sternberg, received the company at Steetley, where he did the honours and then accompanied them to WHITWELL, where he called on an old parishioner, who knew the church better than himself, to speak. The nave arcades of four bays are Norman on heavy round piers, suggestive of Melbourne, their only superior in the county, probably 1130-40, the aisles, transepts and chancel are "decorated," the latter with lovely sedilia and a beautiful east window, said to have come from the destroyed east end of Worksop Priory. Other good windows of the same period may be noted. On the west wall of the north transept is a fine renaissance tomb with effigy in armour to Roger Manners, d. 1632. We were asked if this armour with its raised visor was not much earlier than the interment? Rather a matter of fashion than utility at this period.

The antiquarian parishioner then conducted a section of the party to the beautiful old manor house or hall quite unsuspected from outside its enclosure, which he named Elizabethan, but which we should put a generation later, without prejudice to its charm.

An exhilarating swing of about a dozen miles through pleasant country, in spite of industrialism, brought the company to its final resort for the day, CHESTERFIELD. Here, after tea at the Station Hotel, where General Meynell thanked Miss Mugliston for her painstaking and highly successful arrangements on the company's behalf—thanks certainly merited—the church was visited, where its history and features were indicated in an interesting manner by the Archdeacon of Chesterfield, the Ven. Talbot Dilworth-Harrison, M.A. He pointed out that a reference occurs to a church here (1042-66) in a Lincoln chartulary c. 1093, and then mentioned King John's grant of the manor, etc., to Wm. Briwere (1203) and the

town's incorporation with market and fair in 1204. He believed it became an important wool market and we know the church was at times stored with woolpacks.

The last de Ferrers Earl of Derby, was captured hiding amid the woolpacks in the church, 1266.

There was a dedication of the church (chancel and chapels) in 1234, but alterations and rebuilding have obscured most of this. Soon after 1300 the tower and south transept were begun and perhaps thirty years later the nave, assumed to have been completed by c. 1360.

The remarkable spire of timber and lead followed between 1375-1400 and its form is attributed not to warping (the general theory), but to incompetence, the master carpenter having begun a design he was unable to complete!—a recent theory by a local commentator, an engineer I believe. The fine rood screen now across the Holy Cross chapel is credited to 1430-40 and the much more ornate Foljambe screen about 1500. In early Tudor times the tracery of the east windows (and others) and the west front were rebuilt and on the suppression of the chantries the Lady Chapel became the Foljambe chapel (originally in south aisle of nave) and the fine monuments placed there. The pulpit (good) dates about 1620, and in 1769 the north transept unfortunately was rebuilt. Much beautifying and reverent rearrangement has taken place in quite recent days which we have no space to record.

The Archdeacon was a delightful and most painstaking guide and was earnestly thanked by General Meynell. As the company departed he distributed to them copies of a valuable chronological illustrated guide, involving much research, which he had himself compiled.

W. H. WALTON.