

had to come down for the purposes of widening the street, and although undoubtedly the house in part was of earlier date, such indications as are given by this fireplace and of some panelling and other woodwork taken from the building point to their being work of the 17th century. One curious thing about the fireplace is that what appeared at first to be moulded stonework surrounding the grate turned out on further examination to be only a kind of cement imitation, and would suggest this as a very early use of such material for decorative purposes. The grate itself with the back is quite interesting, especially the brass fretwork on the lower part of the grate, which being hinged on the bottom edge drops down and forms a shelf for keeping things hot in front of the fire. The back as usual represents some classic scene.

Yours truly,

W. RAVENSCROFT.

Mr. Walton Adams.

Proceedings of Societies.

ON Wednesday, July 26th, the Berks Archæological Society, in conjunction with the Reading Literary and Scientific Society, made an excursion to Salisbury, Old Sarum, Amesbury, and Stonehenge, which passed off very successfully. The party was favoured with delightful weather, and the cool and refreshing breezes experienced on Salisbury plains were very pleasant after the recent trying heat. Amongst the company of antiquarians who assembled to take part in the excursion were—Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., President of the Society, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, F.S.A., Honorary Secretary of the Berks Archæological Society, and Mrs. Ditchfield, Mr. Theodore H. White, Honorary Secretary of the Reading Literary and Scientific Society, the Misses Monk-Smith, Mr. Stephen Darby (Cookham Dean), Dr. Playne (Maidenhead), Mr. and Mrs. Wyly, Mr. and Mrs. T. R. Kent, Mr. Charles Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. W. Haynes, Mr. Walton Adams, Mrs. Staniford, &c.

The party left Reading, travelling by the G.W. Railway at 9.53. At Basingstoke they were the victims of the unsatisfactory relations existing between the rival railway companies, which refuse to run their trains in connection, and cause vast inconvenience to the public. Owing to the G.W. train being a few minutes late the party

had the satisfaction of finding that the Salisbury train had left Basingstoke, and were obliged to wait there half an hour and proceed by a slow train to their destination. This necessitated the loss of an hour in the day's programme, and obliged the alteration of the itinerary. However, by a little rearrangement the programme was carried out in its entirety, except that the visit to the Cathedral was somewhat curtailed.

At Salisbury Station the party were met by Mr. Hammond, a member of the Salisbury Field Club, Mr. Doran Webb, F.S.A., being prevented by illness from giving the Society the benefit of his unique knowledge of the history of Salisbury and its neighbourhood. Mr. Hammond greatly assisted the Secretary in making arrangements for the convenience of the members of the Society, and to him they are much indebted. An excellent luncheon was provided at the Connty Hotel, and at 1.30 p.m., the party left in brakes for Stonehenge, taking Old Sarum and Amesbury *en route*.

On arriving at the ancient castle of Saxon and Norman Kings, the visitors left the carriages and scaled the heights, now grass-grown, where once stone walls proudly stood to withstand all invaders. Having reached the summit of the hill, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield gave an account of its former glories. He said:—"Many years before the Norman Conquest there was a castle at Old Sarum, which contained a chapel which was served by the deans who lived in the castle. Such is the statement of William of Malmesbury, and his account is supported by records in the Bodleian and Cottonian libraries. Old Sarum was immediately under the protection of the old Saxon Kings. We have the grant of Ina, which runs as follows:—'I, Ina, King, for the salvation of my soul, grant unto the Church of S. James, in Sarisbyrig, the lands of Tockenham, for the use of the monks serving God in this place.' Also, there is the grant of his Consort, Ethelburga, which runs:—'I, Ethelburga, wife of Ina, King, for the salvation of my soul, grant to God and the nuns serving God in the Church of S. Mary in Salisbyrig, the lands of Bedlington, with their appendages.' King Alfred also orders Leofric Earl of Wiltshire, to repair and strengthen the Castle of Old Sarum. Queen Editha was also a benefactress, according to her grant:—'I, Editha, relic of King Edward, give to the support of the canons of St. Mary's Church, Sarisbyrig, the lands of Sceorstan in Wilts.' " William, of Malmesbury, says that the Chapel in the Castle was a royal peculiar, the property of the King, and not vested in the Bishop. This arrangement was the cause of further trouble, as we

shall see presently. Before the Saxons came, this old Sarum was a fortress of the ancient Britons before the time of the Romans. The Romans occupied it, as coins of Constantine and other Roman Emperors have been found here. Saxon Kings held their Court here, and the Chapel was built for their devotions. William the Conqueror met the bishops, barons and sheriffs here in 1086, and in 1116 Henry I. convened a meeting of his subjects here. So that barren grass grown hill, now destitute of all signs of outward magnificence, was once a place of vast importance. Bishop Herman was the first Bishop of old Sarum (1058—1078) and laid the foundation of its Cathedral. Bishop Osmund, appointed keeper of the Castle by William, finished the Cathedral in 15 years, and then, according to the chronicler, much of his work was "brought to naught," as lightning struck the spire five days after its completion. This Bishop added a Cathedral Chapter to the Dean, and created ecclesiastical dignatories. The Cathedral was built in the precincts of the Castle and on the King's soil, who granted it to Osmund for that purpose. Bishop Roger, the great architect of the 12th century, according to the chronicles *ecclesiam Sariberiensem suam novam fecit*, and this new structure was much finer and larger than the old. But disagreements between the military and ecclesiastical authorities took place, and the Church and State in the 13th as in the 19th century had some difficulty in getting on together. So Bishop Poore decided to build a new Cathedral lower down the valley, and on his translation to Durham Bishop Bingham carried out the work in the reign of Henry III., who, according to William Lambard, a celebrated antiquary, *temp. Elizabeth*, "laying with his own hands the first stone of the Church made new Salisbury a citie, endowed it with many franchises and gave it to the Bishop and its successors which to this day remain owners of it." One of the reasons given for abandoning old Sarum was the lack of a supply of water, but the real reason was the dispute just referred to. On one occasion the clergy went in procession to the Church of St. Martin on a Rogation Day, or "Gang Day," and on their return found the gates of the Castle closed against them. Such an insult could not be overlooked, and it was found necessary to migrate to a more convenient spot. The ancient glories of old Sarum soon passed away, and the grand building was left to decay and destruction.

The party then returned to the carriages and journeyed to Amesbury, where they visited the interesting Norman Church. Mr. Keyser pointed out the characteristics of the building, but failed to

discover any traces of Saxon work. The Vicar was unfortunately prevented from being present. Thence the visitors drove to Stonehenge—the grandest of our pre-historic monuments. It is one of the greatest puzzles of antiquity, and although archæologists have devised countless theories concerning the object for which these massive stones were reared, the people who raised them, the ways and means by which they contrived to move these gigantic stones, it cannot be said that these puzzles have been satisfactorily solved. It was the fashion of the older school of antiquaries to attribute all pre-historic puzzles to the work of the Druids. Now the Druids are out of fashion. Evidently the constructors of Stonehenge were sun worshippers, but the Druids worshipped the genii of the woods and nymphs and streams. However a discussion on the various theories concerning Stonehenge cannot now be entered upon, and the Berks antiquaries had only a short time to stay amidst the stone circles on Salisbury Plain. The President gave a brief account of what was known about the stones, and the party drove across the Plain on a grass track, and after a very enjoyable drive returned to Salisbury, where they visited the Cathedral.

There they were met by the Sub-Dean, the Rev. G. H. Bourne, who most ably described the magnificent building. Conducting the party to the west front he pointed out its many beauties, and the numerous statues which adorned it. Some of the new sculpture was not very happy. Redfern did some of the best work. He did the statues of the four Latin fathers—SS. Ambrose, Gregory, Jerome and Augustine. A similar set was made for Bristol Cathedral, which caused much disputing there, and the figures were removed to Doncaster. On the door Dr. Bourne pointed out traces of a painted canopy which had recently been discovered. On entering the Cathedral he told the story of its construction, and described its beauties, the grand columns of Perbeck marble, and other points of interest. Then the party paid a visit to the many interesting tombs, which were learnedly described by Dr. Bourne, that of the supposed “Boy Bishop,” the Earl of Salisbury, the grand alabaster monument of Sir John Cheyney, who fought at Bosworth field, William Longépée, and many others. The time was all too short to see half the beauties of this grand Cathedral. Dr. Bourne was heartily thanked for his kindness in showing the beautiful building to the Society, and then after partaking of tea at the County Hotel the party made their way to the station, and accomplished the return journey *viâ* Eastleigh and Basingstoke to Reading, arriving there at

9.45 p.m., after enjoying a most interesting and pleasant day.

The Secretaries of the two Societies, who made all the preparations for this excursion, were heartily thanked for their excellent arrangements, and the excursion to Salisbury and Stonehenge will long live in the recollections of those who were able to take part in it.

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NEWBURY DISTRICT FIELD CLUB.—The second excursion of the season by the members of the Newbury District Field Club took place on September 13th, when the weather was fine, and an interesting route having been selected, those participating spent an enjoyable day. The district had previously been visited by the Field Club as far back as August, 1876, but this portion of the country, so rich in historical and other associations, well repays a second visit. Among the party who gathered at the Railway Station to travel by the first train to Marlborough were Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., Miss Bagnall, the Rev. O. E. Slocock, the Rev. H. H. Skrine, and Mr. W. H. Belcher, the latter acting as hon. secretary, in the absence, owing to a family bereavement, of the hon. secretary (Mr. G. J. Watts (of Donnington). The esteemed President of the Society (Mr. Mount, M.P.) was also unable to accompany the excursionists. On reaching Marlborough, the party were met by the eminent antiquary Mr. E. Doran Webb, F.S.A., of Salisbury, and, taking their seats in brakes provided by Mr. Frank Porter, of Marlborough, they drove to what has been styled the Cromlech, or "Devil's Den," a peculiar formation consisting of a huge flat stone, supported on two upright ones. The supposed history of this structure was given by Mr. Webb. Resuming their journey, the visitors passed through a district in which Sarsen stones abound, in much the same style as they may be seen in the course of a drive from Lambourn to Ashdown Park, the seat of the Craven family, and arrived at Silbury Hill, which is believed to be the largest artificial mound in Europe, its dimensions being 120 feet diameter at the summit, 2,027 feet base measurement, and 170 feet perpendicular height. The purpose of its formation is not definitely known, but it is supposed to have been erected to guard the Roman road which passed at its foot. The journey was then resumed to Avebury, where an inspection was made of the Stone Circles, which equal, if they do not excel, the megalithic monuments of past ages of a similar character at Stonehenge. Here again Mr. Webb acted as

spokesman, and gave a detailed account of the dimensions and probable object of the structures, which was listened to with much interest. The party also paid a visit to the Parish Church of Avebury, dedicated to St. James, and dating from pre-Norman times. The Vicar (the Rev. W. H. Davis) read from a pamphlet he had prepared an interesting resumé of the history and leading features of the Church, his remarks being supplemented by some from Mr. Keyser, who is familiar with a great number of country churches. Passing from the Church, a move was made to the old Manor House, the inspection of which was kindly permitted by Mrs. Kemm. The Vicar acted as guide. At Avebury, luncheon was served at the "Red Lion" hotel, under the presidency of Mr. Keyser. The party then drove back to Marlborough, where after tea they were able to make a tour of the College. At the tea-table Mr. Keyser proposed two new members—Mrs. Sperling, of Donnington Castle House, Newbury, and Mr. T. S. Cambridge, both of whom were unanimously elected. Mr. Keyser also moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Belcher for acting as secretary, and expressed the sympathy of the members with Mr. and Mrs. Watts in their bereavement. Similar compliments having been passed to Mr. Keyser and Mr. Webb for their kind assistance, the company proceeded to the railway-station, and reached Newbury by half-past eight, having spent a long but enjoyable day.

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VISIT OF SALISBURY ARCHÆOLOGISTS TO SILCHESTER AND ALDERMASTON.—On Thursday, July 13th, the members of the Salisbury Field Club and friends made an excursion to Silcehster. Leaving Salisbury, the party proceeded, *via* Basingstoke, to Bramley station, from whence they were conveyed in carriages to Silchester, paying a short visit *en route* to Bramley Church, and inspected the interesting wall paintings. On arrival at the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Silchester, the excavations which are being carried out were examined with much interest, and the remains of the massive walls were also inspected. At 1.30 the Club left Silchester for Aldermaston, and, by the kind permission of Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., were enabled to drive through the beautiful wooded park of Aldermaston Court and to inspect Aldermaston Church, which contains a fine Norman west door, a magnificent altar tomb, with effigies of Sir George Foster and his wife in the south chapel, and some 13th century glass in the chancel. After lunching at the Hind's Head Inn, the party proceeded by train to Reading, and visited the

Museum for the purpose of inspecting the many objects of interest found at Silchester, and now preserved in Reading Museum.

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BUCKS ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The annual excursion of the Architectural and Archæological Society of the county of Buckingham, was held in beautiful weather. The members left Aylesbury by the 10.10 a.m. train, and arrived at Taplow at 11.47 a.m. They then visited Hitcham Church (St. Mary's) and Burnham Church (St. Peter's), proceeding thence to the Royal Hotel, Slough, where luncheon was provided, after which the annual meeting was held. A visit was subsequently made to the following churches :—Langley Marish (St. Mary's) and Upton Old Church (St. Lawrence).

Oxford Ladies' Brass Rubbing Society.

YEAR 1898-9.

President :

MISS SWANN, Walton Manor.

Committee :

President :—MISS SWANN.

Hon. Treasurer :—MRS. DRINKWATER.

Hon. Secretaries :—

{	MISS ROSA BLAKE.
	MRS MEE.

Hon. Librarian :—MISS GREEN.

MRS. WHITMARSH.

MRS. G. EVANS.

50 Members.

The O.L.B.R.S. has completed its fifth year, and the number of its Members, which commenced with eight, has now risen to fifty.

It has been resolved that for the future the list of Members shall not exceed this number, but that ladies desiring to join the Society shall be admitted as guests, and elected members as vacancies occur.