

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY. EXCURSION TO WARWICK.—For the third time the Society undertook a "two-day excursion," and this form of excursion has been found so pleasant that it may now be said that the two-day outing has become a regular item in our annual programme. The popularity of these outings into other neighbourhoods is proved by the large number of members, who take part in them. On June 23rd a party, numbering 52 ladies and gentlemen, which consisted of members of both the Berkshire Archæological Society and the Newbury Field Club,—these excursions are an arrangement between the two Societies—left Reading Station by the 10.35 train for Warwick. On arrival at that historic town the party proceeded to the Woolpack Hotel, which was their headquarters during their sojourn in the quaint old town.

After luncheon a move was made to the Church of St. Mary, where the Society was received by the vicar (the Rev. Allan Williams) and by Alderman Kemp, the well known local historian, who has made such a study of Warwick and all that appertains to its history. The vicar after welcoming the party made a short speech recounting the history of this Church. In his remarks he mentioned that quite recently an appeal had been made for funds to restore the celebrated Beauchamp Chapel, but unfortunately this appeal had not met with much success. During the past quarter of a century work of restoration on this Church had been going on, and during that time over £20,000 had been spent on the building. Former restorations, Mr. Williams remarked, had been of the nature of rebuilding, but now they did not intend to rebuild, but to carefully restore. The present restoration was being carried out under the supervision of an eminent architect, in conjunction with the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. On the conclusion of the Vicar's remarks, Alderman Kemp conducted the visitors over the Church. He stated that, there does not exist any record of its foundation, but that it must have been founded before the Norman Conquest, as "Domesday Book" contains an entry of some of its property. In the 12th century (1123) Henry Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, probably rebuilt the whole Church as the Crypt is of that era; this Earl made the Church a "Collegiate Foundation" by incorporating it with the Church of All Saints, which was in the precincts of Warwick Castle.

Proceeding to the Crypt, the massive piers were pointed out, Mr. Kemp remarking that the "Easternmost" one marked an extension in the 14th century by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, of that Family. The vaulted apartment, now utilised as the burial vault of the Earls of Warwick, was in pre-Reformation days known as the "Friars' kitchen" as well as the "guest room." The ancient "cucking stool," one of the few perfect specimens of this old-time instrument of punishment, was also noticed.

Leaving the Crypt, the visitors ascended to the "lobby," which is on the North side of the Chancel. It is divided from the present vestry by a 15th century screen. Alderman Kemp said that he believed this room (the lobby) to have been the ancient vestry, it communicated with the Chancel by a door opposite the Chapter House, which latter building contains the tomb of Fulke Greville, first Lord Brooke, who was killed by his servant (1628). This tomb Lord Brooke erected in his life time, the deeds referring to the costs, etc., are still preserved in

the Muniment Room at Warwick Castle.* Placed on the tomb are some weapons and armour belonging to him who lies within this sepulchre.

From the Chapter House Mr. Kemp conducted the party to the Chancel, which was begun by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (died 13 Nov., 1369), and completed by his son in 1392. The curious flying ribs were pointed out as well as the Easter Sepulchre on the North side, and the four-seated sedilia on the South side. Mr. Kemp then drew the attention of his audience to the small chamber on the South side of the choir near to the Communion rails, and the "hagioscope." This place is traditionally known as the "confessional."

The "founder" with his Countess is buried in the centre of the choir. On the top of the tomb are effigies of both the Earl and the Countess, the latter, a daughter of Roger de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore, being cousins, this marriage did not take place till "a papal dispensation" had been obtained. The statues are of alabaster. The Earl is clad in the armour of the period. Originally the figures were represented holding each other's hands (the fingers now being broken off).

From here the party moved on to the Beauchamp Chapel, on their way to it passing through the small Chantry Chapel, which is on the South side of the Chancel. The Beauchamp Chapel was founded by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick,† who died at Rouen 30th April, 1439. By his will he left directions for the founding of this Chapel as a burial place for himself, and he is interred under a costly and beautiful monument. The history of the erection of this monument is interesting. "When his executors, pursuant to his will, erected "this most magnificent tomb (which yet remains in uncommon splendour), "inferior to none in England, unless that of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey, "they covenanted with John Borde of Corfe,‡ to make the same of fine and well "coloured marble, four feet and a half high from the base, the base six inches "thick and eighteen broad, the uppermost stone of the base nine feet long, four "broad and seven inches thick, and to have for the marble, carriage to War- "wick, and work £45. For marble to pave the Chapel, workmanship and car- "riage of every hundred of these stones £2—in all £4 13s. 4d. The charges "of the tomb|| and Chapel came to £2,481 4s. 7½d., a vast sum, when the price "of an ox was 13/4, and a quarter of bread corn 3/4."§

The wonderful monument, placed upon the top of this tomb, of the deceased Earl is interesting, for, though he died in 1439, the armour in which the statue is clad is of a later period (1454). The contract for the making of the effigy is still preserved amongst the MSS. of the Corporation of Warwick.¶ From these we discover that one person cast the figure, but that it was gilded by another.

"William Austin, Citizen and Founder of London, doth covenant to cast and make an image of a man armed, of fine latten, garnished with certain ornaments, viz., with sword and dagger, with a 'garter,' with a helm and crest under

*Articles of agreement, 3 Oct. 1618, btw. Fulk Greville, Chancellor of Exchequer and Thos. Ashby of St. Martin's in Fields, Carver and Tomb Maker. . . . To erect tomb for £280. Agreement, 13 Aug. 1621, Fulke Greville and Moses Boswell of Westminster, Mason, to erect base or plinth for £20.

† Those of our readers who take an interest in heraldry, may care to know that his arms were: 1 and 4, gu., a fess between six crosslets or., 2 and 3, chequy, or. and erm. a chevron erm. Crest, a swan's head gu. issuing from a ducal coronet or. Supporters, 2 bears muzzled and collared holding rugged staffs. (Cott. MSS. Julius C. 7, f. 72.)

‡ Corfe in the Isle of Perbeck. The tomb is of Perbeck marble.

|| Five men were employed upon it, four of whom were English. ‡ Hutchins' Dorset.

¶ Hewitt. Ancient Armour, III, 463. Where a picture of the figure is given.

his head, and at his feet a bear muzzled and a griffin, perfectly of the finest latten, according to pattern; the said executors paying for the image—perfectly made and laid, etc.—in total £40.”*

“Bartholemew Lambesspring, Dutchman and goldsmith of London, xxiii. Maii. 27 Hen. VI., covenanteth to repair, whone and polish and to make perfect to the gilding an image of latten, of a man armed that is in the making, and all the apparel that belongeth thereunto, as helm, crest, sword, etc., and beasts—the said executors paying therefor £13.”†

“The said Bartholemew, III. Martii, 32 Hen. VI., doth covenant to make clean, to gild, to burnish and pullish (sic) the great image of latten, with the helm, etc., the said Bartholemew to find all manner of stuff for the doing thereof, saving gold; the said executors providing gold—the cost £95 2s. 7d.”‡

To the South-west of the Beauchamp tomb is the tomb and monument of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick (called the good Earl of Warwick) created Baron Kingston Lisle on 25th December, 1561, and on the next day, Earl of of Warwick. He died issueless 21st February, 1589.

On the North side of this chapel are the tombs and effigies of Robert Dudley || the favourite of Queen Elizabeth (created Earl of Leicester and Baron Denbigh, §) with his third and last wife Lettice, and that of their son Robert, who died in childhood. This is the Earl of Leicester who entertained Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle. He married first at Sion, May 4th 1553, Amy, daughter of Sir John Robsart, Edward VI. was one of those present at the wedding. After Amy, Countess of Leicester’s tragic death at Cumnor, the Earl espoused secondly, Douglas, daughter of Wm. Howard, first Lord Effingham, the widow of John, Lord Sheffield; by her he had issue a son Robert, though Leicester disowned this, calling him in his will his “base son.” This Robert was the husband of the Duchess of Dudley (see post). Yet Leicester bequeathed to this “base son” Kenilworth Castle, of which estate the latter was defrauded by the Crown in the following reign.¶

Coming into the nave, Mr. Kemp said that this portion of the Church was destroyed by fire on the 5th Sept., 1694 (the former nave having been built by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in 1394). The present nave was rebuilt from designs by Sir William Wilson and was completed in 1704. The “brass” of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, d. 1401, and his Countess, daughter of William, Lord Ferrers (she died 1406), was pointed out; it is the oldest military brass in the County.¹

From here the party proceeded to Warwick Castle, through the embattled gateway and thence by the roadway cut through the solid rock. Before entering the Castle Mr. Ditchfield read a paper dealing with the history of the building. He said Warwick was one of the grandest castles in England, one of the few still inhabited; it owed its existence to the fact that the Grevilles (ancestors of

* Ibid.

† Ibid. Quoting from the Warwick Corporation MSS.

‡ Ibid.

|| Robt. Dudley was appointed High Steward Reading, 1566, Lord Lieut. Berks 1559, High Steward Windsor, 1563. At Hatfield House, Herts are portraits in oils of Leicester and his brother the Earl of Warwick.

§ Chirk Castle, Denbigh was another of his possessions.

¶ Pats. Rolls: 20 Chas. [I].

¹ The Beauchamp family were well known for their piety. Not only did they rebuild St. Mary’s Church, but the three daughters of Guy de Beauchamp, d.v.p., the eldest son of the builder of the choir at St. Mary’s, all entered religion at the Convent of Shouldham. Their grandfather, the above-mentioned Thomas Beauchamp, in addition to all his other works pilgrimaged to Palestine.

the present Earl) at the time of the Civil War were on the side of the Parliament. He pointed out how picturesque was the site situated on the banks of the Avon, as Sir Walter Scott had said "the fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour," and then proceeded to describe the history of the building, pointing out that on the mound stood the early fortress—the keep of former days. The original fortress was erected by Ethelfreda, daughter of Alfred the Great; the Castle was rebuilt of wood in the Conqueror's time. When a stone structure replaced the wooden one, there was no evidence to show. During the Barons' war it was taken, re-taken, and besieged. Much of the Castle was built when it was owned by the Beauchamp family.* After this the visitors entered by the main doorway, and were conducted round those rooms which are usually shown to the public.

Having completed the tour of the Castle, the Society went to see the famous "Warwick Vase," kept in a conservatory † in the pleasure grounds. Before leaving the Castle a visit was made to the dungeons, on whose walls are the inscriptions cut by prisoners of former days.

Leaving the castle the party proceeded to St. Mary's Hall, where they were entertained to tea by the Rev. Allan Williams; after tea the next place inspected was the Leicester Almhouse, which was erected by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, for 12 brethren and a master. Here the master received the visitors and with Mrs. Toovy conducted them all over the building.

Leaving the Hospital, some of the excursionists went to the Museum, where they were received by the vice-Chairman of the Council, Sir M. H. Laken, Bart., and by Mr. Lloyd Chadwick. In the evening the Mayor received the Society at the Court House, remarking that though he was not an archæologist he was glad to welcome them to Warwick. Mr. Keyser, as president, returned thanks on the Society's behalf and to the Mayor to Mr. Kemp and also to the Rev. Allan Williams. The party then went to the Mayor's parlour, where Mr. Kemp exhibited the "Maces" as well as certain interesting documents, such as the "Black Book of Warwick," H. Fisher's diary, the first chapter of incorporation granted by Philip and Mary.

On the morrow the excursion was further a field. The first place visited was Stoneleigh Abbey—the seat of Lord Leigh. Mr. Ditchfield read a paper on its history, from this we learn it was a Cistercian House founded by Monks from Radmore, Staffs in 1155. At the dissolution ‡ (1536) it was granted to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk from whom it passed to the Cavendish family and thence to that of Leigh—its present owners.

From the Abbey the party drove to Stoneleigh Church, where the President explained the architectural details of this Church, drawing attention to the Chancel arch, which is late Norman and is ornamented with the billet lozengy, double cone and lozengy moulding. This Church was founded by Kenilworth Priory in the 12th century, the same Priory also founded Ifley in Oxfordshire and Stukeley in Buckinghamshire. The exterior Norman doorway now blocked up, contains a "tympanum" with carvings of snakes and dragons, the latter biting their tails.

* e.g. Guy's Tower, built by Thos. Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, d. 1401; Cæsar's Tower by Thos. Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, d. 1369.

† This conservatory was built to house the vase, which was found at the bottom of a lake at Hadrian's Villa, near Tivoli. The vase was purchased by a former Earl of Warwick, who conveyed it to England.

‡ At the dissolution its value was £131 3s. 1½d.. The last Abbot was Thomas Tulbury, who received a pension of £23 per annum.

In the Chancel is the tomb and monument of Alice, Duchess of Dudley. The history of this lady is curious. She was the daughter of Sir Thomas Leigh, Bart., of Stoneleigh, and married Sir Robert Dudley, son of the Earl of Leicester. Sir Robert lived abroad in Tuscany, leaving his wife Alice in England. He married after he left England a daughter of Sir Robert Southwell, of Wood Rising, Norfolk, alleging as his reason that his marriage with Alice Leigh was not in accordance with canon law, as he had had "carnal knowledge" of her "during the lifetime of his first wife, Miss Cavendish." Lady Dudley, who remained in England, was elevated to the peerage on 23rd May, 1644, as Duchess of Dudley (for life).* She lived through the period of the Civil War, and at the "Restoration" received a confirmation of her titles and honours from Charles II. She died on 22nd January, 1669/70, and was buried at Stoneleigh in the tomb already referred to and which she had prepared during her lifetime.

Leaving Stoneleigh a pleasant drive brought the excursionists to Kenilworth. The first place visited was the Parish Church, whose West door is "Norman" and is said to have been removed from Kenilworth Priory. Inside the building the Vicar (the Rev. Jas. Cairns) exhibited the plate given by Alice, Duchess of Dudley, who also endowed the Church; though she directed that if the plate was sold the endowment should revert to the Dudley family.

Having inspected the Church, a few minutes walk brought the party to the ruins of the historic Kenilworth Castle, where Mr. Ditchfield read a paper dealing with its history. He pointed out that being in the centre of England it was in the middle ages a place of great importance as a military centre, though its military history closed with the "Barons War" and its domestic history ended during the "Civil War," when by order of Cromwell it was dismantled, the lake drained, while the lands belonging to it were divided amongst Roundhead Officers; after the "Restoration" the building, or rather what was left of it, together with the lands was bestowed upon Lord Hyde, being now owned by his descendant, the Earl of Clarendon.

After lunch at Kenilworth the journey to Warwick was resumed, a short halt *en route* being made at Guy's Cliffe, where Mr. Ditchfield read a paper on Guy the Saxon Earl of Warwick, who is credited with having resided here and where he died in 929. Near Guy's Cliffe, on the left of the road from Warwick to Kenilworth, is Blacklaw Hill, where in 1314 Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, was executed by order of Guy Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick.

This being the last item on the programme a short drive to Warwick station, where the members of the Berkshire Archaeological Society joined the train for Reading, and so was brought to a close one of the most enjoyable and interesting excursions ever undertaken by the Society away from its own County.

The writer regrets that space prevents a longer account (taken from patent rolls, the Cott. MSS., etc.) of the places, and the various persons connected with them, visited in this interesting "expedition."

* Pats. 20, Chas. [I.]. The other figure on the tomb is that of her daughter.