

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—EXCURSION TO CHICHESTER.—The Berks Arch. Soc. made their two-days' excursion to Chichester on 11th and 12th June. Few of the cathedral cities of England can rival Chichester. Its cathedral is not so large and imposing a structure as some of the mighty episcopal buildings of our dioceses, but for quiet dignity and for unspoilt original beauty it is not surpassed by any other in the land. The city itself is full of objects of beauty and interest, the Market Cross, one of the finest in England, save perhaps that at Malmesbury; the Hospital of St. Mary, the quaint streets with their great variety of types of domestic architecture, houses covered with creeping greenness, from wisteria to ampelopsis, every door with its classic pillars and pediment, some grave and solid, such as Miss Austen's characters might have lived in, and at least one superb specimen of the art of Sir Christopher Wren, a masterpiece of substantial red brick, and a noble inn, the Dolphin, which the Society made its headquarters and where its guests dine in a room big enough for a ball-room. The city has many attractions, and the members of the Society found quite as much to interest them in it as at Gloucester, Wells, Warwick, and other places whither they have wandered since the programme of the Society has included a two-days' excursion. The success of the excursion is mainly due to the kind exertions of Mr. Gordon P. G. Hills, Surveyor of the Cathedral, who knows Chichester and its neighbourhood extremely well, and readily gave the Society the benefit of his wide knowledge.

Arriving at the Sussex city the party made its way to The Dolphin Hotel. After luncheon the proceedings commenced with a visit to the Cathedral, under the guidance of Mr. Gordon Hills, where the antiquaries were met by the Rev. Canon Jones (Canon in residence), Canon Masters, and Prebendary Bennett. Seated in the nave, the members listened to an admirable description of the history and architectural features of the splendid building. The first cathedral stood on the Island of Selsey, which was granted to St. Wilfrid, who converted the South Saxons to Christianity. Until the Conquest, Selsey remained the seat of the bishopric. The last Saxon prelate, Ethelric, received harsh treatment from the Conqueror, and was deprived, and the first Norman prelate, Stigand, moved the bishop's throne to Chichester. Ralph de Luffa, the third Norman bishop (1091-1123) began the present building. Fire played havoc with it in 1114, but it was rebuilt before the bishop's death in 1123. Fire again visited it in 1186, which prepared the way for the transitional builders, who were developing the beauties of English Gothic. Bishop Seffrid, the second who bore that name, was the director of the work; the clerestory, the upper storey of the western towers, and the middle storey of the central tower were mainly his work. Bishop Neville (1224-1244) designed and began to build a spire, and the Lady Chapel was partly constructed by Bishop Gilbert de St. Leofard (1288-1304), and John de Langton (1305-1336) the south window of the south transept. By this time the cathedral began to assume its present form. Want of space prevents us from describing the rest of the story of the building. The party then proceeded to walk round the cathedral, and their attention was drawn to the chapels of St. George and St. Clement, St. Anne, the Four Virgins, SS. Thomas and Edmund, and the site of the shrine of St. Richard, etc., the

tombs and monuments, the library with its treasures, the paintings of the Bishops of Chichester and the Kings of England by Bernardi, which were much injured by the soldiers in the Civil War and restored by an indifferent artist, and those of the founding of the see and of the four prebends by Henry VIII. and Bishop Sherbourne. An examination was also made of the bell-tower and of the ancient choir screen, which the antiquaries hoped would be replaced in the cathedral.

Mr. Gordon Hills then conducted the party to the Bishop's Palace, which is a building of many dates and shared in the fires that demolished the Cathedral. The chapel was the work of Seffrid, and possessed some charming Early English painting, the Virgin and Child and two consecration crosses. The dining-room probably originated in the time of Bishop Ware (1418-1421) is a lofty hall extending as high as the roof. It was divided into an upper and lower storey by Bishop Sherbourne, who remodelled the whole palace in the Tudor style. He died in 1536. It contains some portraits of the holders of the See, including Bishop Wilberforce and the present bishop. The old kitchen, with its huge fireplace, gives an idea of the hospitality of the bishops in former days. No barons of beef now are roasted before the great fire, and the modern kitchen is in another part of the palace. This one was probably built on old foundations about 1380, to which date the fine roof commonly attributed to Bishop Sherbourne may more fitly be assigned. The palace was sold to a private gentleman during the Commonwealth period, but was restored to the see at the Restoration. It was remodelled by Bishop Waddington in 1727, and Bishop Buckner in 1800 made sundry alterations in accordance with the taste of the time, and brought it very much to its present condition.

The party then adjourned to the hotel for tea, and afterwards visited St. Mary's Hospital, that unique example of almshouse, which was described by Canon Masters, the Custos, and Mr. Gordon Hills. A visit was then paid to Priory Park, where stands all that remains of the Greyfriars' monastery. Alderman Holt met the members there, and Mr. Gordon Hills stated that the friars removed to this place from their original home at St. Mary's Hospital about the year 1253. The fine church was the scene of an ordination by Bishop Peckham in 1283. It sometimes bears the name of the Guild Hall, because the Guild merchants used to hold their meetings there, and the assizes were once held in it. Time only allowed a glance in passing at the famous "Pudens" inscription stone fixed in the wall of the Council Chamber, which was dug up in 1823 on a site on the opposite side of the little street to the north of its present position. A wonderful amount of ingenuity has been expended in surmises about the persons named, but it is most valuable as confirming the mention by Tacitus of the British King and Imperial Legate Cogidistonus, and bears witness to the existence of a flourishing community in those early days when the Guild of Artificers dedicated a Temple to Neptune and Minerva. The party was conducted to visit one of the old houses, which contains a fine plaster ceiling and was the city dwelling of the Earl of Scarborough, where he entertained Queen Elizabeth, who there received the homage of the Corporation. Needle-making was then a special industry of the city, and the Queen was so struck with the busy scene that she exclaimed "I trow this is a very Little London." This name is still applied to a street in the city. The market cross, which greeted the visitors whenever they issued from their hotel, may be claimed as the finest example

in England, and was the gift of Bishop Storey in 1502. Its present appearance is due to a restoration by the Duke of Richmond in 1748. Rain prevented the intended perambulation of the city walls, the oft repeated assertion of whose Roman origin an examination of the foundations, a few years since, fully confirmed, but an opportunity was taken to drive past those of the N.W. quarter on starting for the drive on Friday afternoon, so that our members might have some idea of these remains.

Dinner was served at The Dolphin, and then the members adjourned to the Council Chamber, where they were received by the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Garland. There was an exhibition of the Corporation plate and charters of the city. Alderman Holt described the former, which has passed through sundry vicissitudes. It was all sold in 1836, when the Corporation was reformed. Then certain gentlemen of the City formed a Mace Society and purchased the plate and preserved it until recent times, when the society presented it to the Corporation, and pieces that had passed into private hands followed its example. It consists of a large mace of the time of Charles II., two sergeants' maces, cup salt cellars, state walking-sticks, etc. Chichester also possesses a "Mock" Corporation, known as that of St. Pancras, possessing a mace and mayor's chain of office. This curious body was founded in 1689 to celebrate the coming of William of Orange and the principles for which he stood, and possesses a loving cup and other treasures. The charters of the city were described by the Town Clerk, Mr. Loader Cooper, and include a very early one granted by King Stephen. There are two given by Henry II., and others by successive monarchs. A great curiosity is the "Moon," a balloon-shaped lantern placed on a pole, that used to be carried before the Mayor to guide him homewards on dark evening.

At the close of the evening the President, Mr. Keyser, expressed to the Mayor the cordial thanks of the Society for his hospitality, and to the speakers who had so ably described the treasures of the city. So ended the proceedings of the first day of the excursion.

On Friday Bosham was visited, one of the most interesting churches in Sussex. It was very ably described by the Vicar, the Rev. K. H. Macdermott, who has published a guide to his church which contains abundant information concerning it. Want of space prevents us from giving a résumé of his excellent address. The visitors then drove to Kingly Vale, one of the most famous beauty spots in Sussex. It was the scene of a battle between the Saxons and the Danes, and seven Kings of the Danes were killed in the slaughter, and the mounds or tumuli on the summit of the hill are supposed to be their graves. These barrows are really neolithic. The vale has a wonderful grove of yews and a single oak that seems to date back to pre-historic days. A long walk over the Downs was much enjoyed and enabled the antiquaries to inspect some pit-dwellings which have recently been excavated. They then drove back to Chichester for lunch, and set out again for Boxgrove Church, which rivals Bosham in interest and importance. It was a monastic church with a parochial church attached to it.* There the party was wel-

*The Church of St. Mary, Boxgrove, was granted c. 1105 by Robert de Haia (Ralf being Bishop of Chichester) to the Abbev of the Holy Trinity, France. This grant was confirmed by his grandsons, William and Robert de St. John. Their mother, Cecilia Haia, married Robert de St. John. From this marriage descend the St. Johns, Lords of Basing, Hants, and Hainaker, Sussex, and Shefford, Berks.—Round, *cat. of Document, France*. Ibid. The families of St. John and de Port.

comed by the Vicar, the Rev. Richard Wells, the son of Mr. Wells, of Scarletts, Wargrave, who with Mr. Gordon Hills described the building and entertained the members to tea. The drive to Chichester was quickly accomplished, where the 5.14 train was waiting to convey the party back to Berkshire. It is always a pleasure to the members of the Berks Society to meet those of the Newbury District Field Club, and it is hoped that ere long the two bodies may be able to arrange another joint excursion. The cordial thanks of the Society were due to Mr. Gordon Hills for the trouble he had taken in helping to arrange this excursion, to the Hon. Secretary, and to Mr. E. Ravenscroft, who very ably carried out the details and arranged for the comfort and convenience of the members, who will long retain very happy memories of their visit to Chichester.

NEWBURY DISTRICT FIELD CLUB.—Mr. A. E. Gathorne-Hardy, President of the Newbury District Field Club, occupied the chair at the 44th annual meeting on May 25th. He remarked that his first observations were tinged with sadness and regret at the losses during the past year. Mr. Wm. Keep, who joined in 1875, had a wonderful knowledge of the district, and his store of anecdote and history made him a most delightful companion; Mr. Belcher, who joined in 1878, was nearly always present at their excursions, he was a native of the Vale, and full of the interesting folk-lore of that part of the County. They had also lost Mr. J. T. Strange, who joined in 1876. Their Secretary had already expressed in each case the sincere sense of loss felt by the members. Continuing, the President reviewed the excursions undertaken last year, and acknowledged the excellent arrangements made by Mr. Watts. As regards his own branch of field-work, which was natural history, the past year had been rather a special one. The Plumage Bill, to prevent the importation into this country of the feathers taken from rare birds during the breeding season, had been taken up as a Government measure, and he felt confident that it would become law. He therefore hoped that all the brutalities for so-called fashion would become a thing of the past, as they had done in America. He had had the pleasure of studying the habits of the grey seal in its home in the Hebrides; this beast was much more rare than the ordinary seal, and much larger in length and weight. Its young were covered with a beautiful white fur, and they possessed lovely dark eyes; they were born on the rocks, and unable to take to the water for some three weeks. It had been the practice of the natives at these breeding times to club the creatures to death, but he rejoiced that a measure had now been actually passed setting up a close time for grey seals. He felt that he might specially congratulate himself upon this, inasmuch as Mr. Hesketh Pritchard, who was as great a naturalist as he was a cricketer, had been prominent in getting the measure through, in association with his own son, Mr. A. Gathorne-Hardy. He was happy, too, at the great increase of sympathy to-day in these matters, as, in addition to the law, sentiment had greatly changed, and many people now were quite as fond of watching or photographing a bird or beast as they had formerly been ready to shoot them. It might interest the members to see some bird photographs taken by his son (Mr. G. Gathorne-Hardy) at Donnington Priory; these included a moorhen hatching her eggs, a sedgetit feeding a young cuckoo, a thrush feeding her young, the mother bird having in her beak a worm that greatly resembled a wedding-ring in shape. He hoped that this feeling of interest

and sympathy would grow as time went on, and that in increasing numbers they might see the birds hopping about their gardens, and feeding from their hands, as many now did at Donnington Priory.

The accounts, audited by Dr. E. Somerset, were presented by Mr. Watts, viz. : Receipts (including balance in hand at beginning of year £23 Os. 10d.) amounted to £58 6s. 4d., the expenditure £43 Os. 8d., leaving a balance of £15 5s. 8d. Mr. Keyser proposed the re-election of the President, which was seconded by Mr. Money, and adopted. The Vice-Presidents were re-elected. The General Committee was re-appointed. The Central Committee, viz. : Rev. C. L. Jeayes, Dr. E. Somerset, Mr. F. Comyns, and Captain Stuart. Mr. Watts was re-elected as hon. secretary and treasurer. The meeting then discussed the excursions for the ensuing season. The decision as to these will be determined by the Central Committee. This concluded the business, and the members adjourned for tea ; at its close the President gave a reading of " Thomas Hood, his life and works," which was greatly enjoyed.

On Monday, July 20th, the Newbury District Field Club made an excursion to the villages of Hampstead Norris, Aldworth, Ashampstead, Yattendon and Frilsham. Hampstead Norris Church was first visited, where they were welcomed by the Vicar (Rev. H. G. W. Cooper) and Mr. Jethro Lousley, the octogenarian churchwarden. The Vicar led the way to the vestry, where the registers, dating back to 1538, were shown, together with the list of the incumbents from the year 1298, and the Churchwardens and Overseers Accounts from 1636. Returning into the Church, he assured the visitors that they had a hearty welcome, and hoped Mr. Keyser would tell the story of the fabric. Mr. Keyser said he could not do better than refer them to the account given by Mr. Money, and subsequently published when the Club visited the Church in 1885, and he regretted that Mr. Money was not able to be with them. The Church was undoubtedly late Norman, and had retained its original form without much alteration until its restoration 30 or 40 years ago, at which time the old Norman font was discarded and it was now in the parish church of Stone, near Aylesbury. The earliest mention of the parish was in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and it had taken its later name from the family of Norreys settled here, who were the owners of large estates. He would place the date of the church at about 1170. The rood loft, with an abrupt termination of the staircase was a feature, also an indistinct mural painting. The tower belonged to the 15th or 16th century. In the church were to be seen several memorials, including those to the Lowsley family—Joseph Lowsley, 1765—1825 ; Job Lousley, 1790—1855 ; Luke Lowsley, 1828—1892.

The journey was resumed for Aldworth Church, where the first object to arrest attention was the ancient yew tree, measuring nine yards round. The age of which, as placed by a member of the Royal Horticultural Society, who had recently visited Aldworth, might be anything between one thousand and two thousand years. Entering the sacred edifice, the Field Club was received by the Rev. G. F. Matthews, the Vicar, who led the party round the Church, so that a personal inspection should be made of the priceless monuments of antiquity which are here to be seen. He then proceeded to describe the nine recumbent effigies, identifying these ancestors and giving short descriptive notices of each. The De la Beches were a large and powerful family who came over from Normandy soon after the Conquest and

managed to get a good deal of land at Aldworth, Compton, Bradfield, and other parts of the County. Some time since, whilst ploughing near the site of what was De la Beche's Castle, a seal had been discovered which had assisted in ascertaining information hitherto in doubt as to the members of this family. The canopies of the tombs represented the several periods of architecture, the Decorative, the Transitional and the Perpendicular. Leaving the monuments, the Vicar spoke of the visit of Queen Elizabeth. Up to this time, a parchment had been suspended from the south wall giving a pedigree of the family of De la Beche. It was then taken down to show the Queen, and the Earl of Leicester put it in his pocket and it was never seen again. The barrel font was not later than the 12th century. Some carved seat ends were pointed out, also the carving of the reading desk and pulpit, both of which came from the Church of St. Laurence, Reading. It is recorded that the chancel was completed in 1315, and was consecrated on St. Peter's Day by the Bishop of St. David's acting for the Bishop of Salisbury, in whose diocese Aldworth then was. A visit was made not long since by Mr. Stanley Weyman, the historical novelist, who examined the monuments and declared that the armour, as represented in the several effigies, was perfectly correct in all the details. Both Mr. Keyser and the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield spoke briefly, the latter giving incidents as recorded of the De la Beches. In passing through the vestry, the outline of a face was seen affixed to the wall and enclosed in a frame. It is believed to be meant for the face of Our Lord. Below was the inscription :—

" Jesus Held His Peace."

" This carving was found concealed in the brickwork in the church in 1845 ; was lost ; but brought to the church in 1884. It probably belonged to the bracket at the foot of the monument of Sir John De la Beche."

Having left the church, the party sat down to luncheon. Before leaving, the following new members were elected : Mr. G. Gidley Robinson, of Donnington Square, Newbury ; Miss F. Waldron, Coley Avenue, Reading ; Mrs. May, of Oxford Road, Newbury. A beautiful drive led to Ashampstead Church. Here the party were received by the Rev. C. A. Williamson, the Vicar, who had laid out for inspection the Church Books, the Communion Plate, and some interesting documents. The register dates from 1612. The Church was formerly in connection with Basildon. There is evidence that in 1329 Sir Gilbert de Ellerfield gave land to King Edward III. for the Manor of Ashampstead. No record of the clergy from 1323 to 1607 are extant. Documents relating to the Court Manor and Court Leet extend from 1758 to 1885, and memoranda gave particulars as to the places at which halts were made to serve refreshments when beating the bounds. In 1769 there were four bells, three of which were sold for a clock, and the clock was ultimately sold for 5s. The church was restored in 1895. The population had kept pretty uniform ; in 1811 it was 334, and when last taken 340. Mr. Keyser, in the course of his remarks, spoke of the church having been built at the beginning of the 13th century and directed attention to the paintings to be seen on the walls, representing the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, and the Angel appearing to the Shepherds. There was a further fragment not readily deciphered. The next part of the journey was delightful through Ashampstead Common, where the variety of the woodland, the different kinds of timber and the undulating character of the country with the number of neat and newly-erected residences, was a pleasing experience.

Yattendon Court was the next halting place. Here the party were welcomed by Mrs. and Miss Waterhouse, and a number of bronze objects were laid out to view. These had been discovered during the digging for the foundations of the new house, and found at a depth of 450 feet above the sea level. They consisted of spear heads and fragments, socketed gouges, knives and fragments of bronze. Though no date was given, yet, these objects belonged to an early period before iron was used.* Permission was also given to visit the grounds, and Miss Waterhouse showed great pleasure in leading to the points of interest and to those spots where charming bits of scenery were visible. A magnificent avenue of coniferæ was a feature much admired. Leaving the Court, the visitors descended into the village, took tea at the Reading Room and afterwards visited the Church, under the guidance of the Rector, the Rev. A. Barrington Simeon. Assembling near the chancel steps, Mr. Keyser spoke of the church as being one which was practically begun and finished at one time, probably about 1450—60. The screen was 15th century work, as also the door leading to the rood-loft. The roof was a good example of that period. The panelling and pulpit were Jacobean work. The list of Rectors commenced with 1297. The registers having been mentioned, Mrs. Hautenville Cope said that she transcribed the registers for Canon Beeching (who is now the Dean of Norwich) in 1898. There were three books of the respective dates of 1538, 1620 and 1678. Mrs. Cope then proceeded to illustrate some of the characteristics of the registers. It was remarked that the Manor House (which, however, time would not allow to be visited) was even more interesting historically than the Church, inasmuch as it belonged to King Alfred, and is mentioned in his will.† Before leaving the Church, a look round was made of the tablets. That to Mr. Alfred Waterhouse being the most modern. It was by that gentleman, and at his expense, that the Church was restored.

At Frilsham Church, Mr. Keyser, who described the building, spoke of it as being all of one date, and curiously, it was dedicated to St. Frideswide, for what reason he could not say. The windows and chancel arch were Norman, and it had a nice open roof. Evidently it had not much of a history architecturally, nor had there been much change of ownership, for Lysons devoted only seven or eight lines to this parish.‡ It was a perfect little Church, divided into three parts. The Rector, the Rev. G. Floyd, in reply to Mr. Keyser, said the Church was restored by his father many years ago, before these things were much understood. One of his early recollections as a boy was the lid of a Bible with a chain affixed to a pew, but he could not say what had become of it.

*Sir John Evans (Ancient Bronze Implements) considers the beginning of the Bronze Age in Britain at about 1200 B.C. See also Edward Clodd, "Story of Primitive Man."—J. H. COPE.

† Ashampstead is not mentioned by name in the text of King Alfred's Will in the "Liber Vitæ" of Hyde Abbey, published by the Hampshire Record Society.—J. H. COPE.

‡ See Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæol. Journ., xviii., 72-77, article by J. Horace Round, LL.D., "The Manorial Descent of Frilsham."