

EXCURSIONS IN 1946.

During the war years the members of the Society have had to forego their customary excursions, but 1946 has seen a renewal of those pleasant and informative occasions.

Twice during the summer the members sallied forth and both outings were thoroughly enjoyable though they differed from one another in all other ways.

On June the fourteenth they journeyed, on a perfect summer's day, south and west through pleasant, unspoiled country, typical of the homely, kindly midland levels, visited three churches, a ruined monastic house and passed through a beautiful country town.

Their second journey took them north and east on a day of storm, when five of our life boats were at work off our coast, they passed through more than one town that could not be called beautiful, the countryside was industrialised in part, they entered no church but saw one of the remaining English great houses and had its store of treasures skilfully displayed for their delectation by its owner.

On June the fourteenth Cubley was their first halt and it says much for the wealth enshrined in our village churches that there was found so much to interest in this church that has not been boosted as outstanding. The Rev. F. H. Barber proved an excellent guide to his church.

After crossing into Staffordshire the second stop was at Croxden, a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of England's past, and everyone must rejoice that now and from now on this memorial was being reverently and efficiently preserved. The Society's honorary secretary, Mr. W. H. Hanbury, read a paper on Croxden that was a model of its kind.

Norbury, that gem, that all lovers of beauty must hold dear, saw the next halt, and here, too, the members were fortunate in having the Rev. R. L. Bowyer as their guide.

Ashbourne completed the itinerary. Over tea the vicar of the parish informed the members that the acoustic properties of the church were not satisfactory, and deplored his inability to knock holes in its walls. This view would hardly be endorsed by such of his hearers as recalled the doings of certain energetic clerics: at St. Mary the Virgin's at Nottingham and All Saints', now the Cathedral, at Derby for example.

A band of helpers explained many points of interest when the visitors went over the fine church of St. Oswald, both king and martyr.

The second outing on the twenty-eighth of August was less ambitious. It had two instead of four objects: Renishaw and an old house nearby, now used as a golf club-house. This was possibly an improvement for the first programme was a trifle too full for the time available; the stay at Croxden being distinctly limited and the interesting town of Ashbourne merely passed through.

If I devote less space to this second outing it is not that the day was not as interesting as the first, but that the fewer objects naturally call for a shorter description.

While at Renishaw, that store house of treasures, Sir Osbert Sitwell was guide to his own house. To say that Sir Osbert was an ideal guide is unnecessary: his intimate knowledge and taste making all his guests of the afternoon appreciate and understand the accumulated gatherings of generations of cultured collectors, while the fine house and its setting spoke of a social state that modern conditions have done nothing to replace.

Dr. A. Court was our guide to the old house near Eckington station. The most interesting features pointed out to us were the early 17th century polychrome frescoes

in one of the upstairs rooms. These and the arrangement of the windows to light them suggested to our guide that the building was an Oratory during Elizabethan and early Stuart times.¹

The thanks of all members who shared the pleasures of these two excursions are owed to the organisers: Miss M. M. Mugliston, the Rev. W. M. Leake and Mr. J. P. Heathcote.

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¹ The reader is referred to Vol. xliv of the *D.A.J.* where the house is fully described and illustrated.—ED.