

The Proceedings of the Society during the year 1931.

*By the courtesy of the Proprietors of the local Press we are able
to insert the following accounts.*

FIRST EXCURSION.

This excursion, which took place on 7th May, 1931, consisted of a visit to the Cathedral, St. Michael-at-Plea, and the Castle.

The Dean of Norwich (Dr. Cranage), at the
NORWICH Cathedral, spoke of archæologically important
CATHEDRAL. discoveries which have been made during the
excavations necessary for the building of the new
St. Saviour's Chapel at the east end of the Cathedral. The party,
numbering 150, was taken round the Cathedral by the Dean.

Dr. Cranage said that the earlier cathedrals of East Anglia were at Dunwich, North Elmham, and Thetford, and he discussed what was the probable early form of the cathedral at Dunwich. As only a few miles away a little church of the year 653 remained at Bradwell-on-Sea, it was highly probable that Dunwich was of similar form, namely, with rectangular nave of three arches connecting it with an apsidal chancel. The plan of North Elmham could still be plainly made out. It might well date from the 7th century, though the masonry at the ground was probably of the 10th century.

The form of the cathedral at Thetford was quite unknown, as late buildings were erected on its site. No doubt there were Christians in the east of Britain long before the foundation of the diocese in 630, and it was hoped that at Caistor, or at any rate at St. Albans, some trace of a Christian church might be found.

Dr. Cranage added, "I shall be able to say some things I have not said before for the reason that in the last few weeks discoveries have been made. I have not referred to them in public. I shall be able to show you one or two interesting things which we have lately found and about which I am hoping to give a paper to the Society of Antiquaries in London in the ensuing season."

It had always been known that there was a Norman chapel dedicated to St. Saviour, built by Herbert de Losinga, and that the foundation stone, laid in 1096, was in the middle of the east wall of that chapel. The exact form of that chapel, however, was a matter of some speculation. Excavations which took place in the 19th century were not sufficiently thorough to reveal the details.

During the past winter the excavations made had now solved the problem. The original apse of Herbert de Losinga was found, and to the great astonishment of all concerned, it cuts into an earlier apse west of it. This early apse must therefore have been in existence when Bishop Losinga chose the site, and is quite probably pre-Norman. It is connected with a sleeper wall going north and south. These walls are mainly rough flint with very strong mortar, whereas the later apse is of finer workmanship. In the earlier work Roman bricks and one heating tile were found embedded.

Apparently, when the Lady Chapel was built in 1245, there was a rough crypt to the earlier chapel, and Bishop Suffield, who built the Lady Chapel, extended this crypt to his new north wall, part of which was found to be plastered. The north wall of the earlier chapel had been removed. The excavations were of unique importance, for in no other cathedral had a similar Norman apse been found cutting into the wall of an earlier apse. This evidence, coupled with the pre-Norman character of the little circular windows in the west wall of the cloisters, seems to indicate that there was an ecclesiastical establishment of some sort on the site before Herbert de Losinga founded the Cathedral.

After the President (Col. E. A. Bulwer) had
 ST. MICHAEL- thanked the Dean for his address, the party visited
 AT-PLEA. the church of St. Michael-at-Plea, of which Mr.

C. Upcher spoke. Having reminded his hearers that the church got its name because the Archdeacon of Norwich held his "pleas" or courts there, he said the first rector of the church mentioned in diocesan records was John de Honing, 1302, but the church as we saw it appeared to be mainly 15th century as regards its windows and nave roof. Probably the most interesting objects in the church were the mediæval panels, consisting of seven paintings over the altar and one over the pulpit.

Dealing with the main features of the church, Mr. Upcher said the nave roof was interesting and was early 15th century. It was illustrated in a book on *English Church Woodwork*, by Howard and Crossley. Talking of the construction of roofs, they say "The jointing was greatly improved by the introduction of a beam projecting from the wall, as in the roof of St. Michael-at-Plea, Norwich; this beam is now generally known as a hammer-beam."

The Jacobean font cover was worthy of note, and there was a mural tablet at the back of the font on which were depicted a

gentleman and his wife with their five sons and five daughters kneeling. The porch had a fine 15th-century door, with much of the original carved tracery left. There was no glass in the windows of the porch, and they evidently never had any, as there were no grooves in the stonework to take it. Externally in the spandrels on either side of the entrance arch were carvings of St. Michael and the Dragon. The small statue of St. Michael in the central niche was modern, about 1895. The clock on the south face of the tower had on it the words, "Forget me not, 1827."

Archdeacon MacDermott, the rector, also pointed out distinctive features of the church, and showed to the party the church's fine collection of plate.

Tea was served at the Castle, after which the THE Castle and collections were studied archæologically. CASTLE. Members were taken to the battlements and to the dungeons. They were also allowed a peep behind the scenes, and saw the workshops where specimens are mounted and prepared for exhibition.

Before the party divided for this inspection, Colonel Bulwer briefly sketched the history of the Castle, and referred to the efficient way in which the Museum was conducted to-day, paying special tribute to Mr. Frank Leney and Miss G. V. Barnard.

SECOND EXCURSION.

On 16th July the Society paid a visit to the northern part of the county.

The party, by two motor coaches and many BACONSTHORPE cars, travelled to Baconsthorpe Castle from all CASTLE parts of the county. The majority of Norfolk people could not find the place without the aid of a map, and perhaps not even with it. Through narrow gateways, along a grass-covered lane where goats feed, and by the side of a corn field you have to travel to get there. The way is very rough.

After a picnic lunch, the large party, numbering about 170, gathered before the ancient gateway and listened to the following paper read by the Hon. Secretary (Mr. B. Cozens-Hardy):—

Singularly little is recorded about this building, which is surprising in view of its size. It is unknown when first this became an inhabited site. The discovery near the farm yonder in 1878 of a large earthen jar containing a hoard of 9000 Roman coins, dating from A.D. 288 to A.D. 271, only proved that either Romans or their colonists lived in this neighbourhood, as no convincing traces of Roman buildings have been discovered. In the Middle Ages, when a moat was a fashionable surround to a house, the only available site in Baconsthorpe was here near the

source of the River Glaven, which discharges itself at Blakeney Point after passing through six mills, three at least of which are still working. Soon after the Conquest the manor came into the ownership of Grimbold, lord of Letheringsett, whose family assumed the name of Bacon, and thereafter this township, hitherto called Thorpe, became known as Baconsthorpe to distinguish it from the many other Thorpes in the county. It is impossible to say whether the mansion house was on or near this site. The Bacons owned the estate until the middle of the 15th century, when it was acquired by William Heydon, who was the first of that famous family to settle here. John Heydon, his son, was Recorder of Norwich, and amassed large wealth, and is reputed to have begun the Castle by building the tower entrance. The whole structure was finished about 1486 by Sir Henry Heydon, his son. The property remained in the Heydon family for 200 years, by which time the fortunes of the family were at a low ebb, due chiefly to speculation, and in 1673 the Norfolk estates of the Heydons were sold to a Daniel Bridges, a woollen draper of London, who ten years afterwards became bankrupt, and the property was purchased by Zurishaddai Lang, M.D., whose son John succeeded him and died in 1752. It afterwards came to the Girdlestons and then to the Thrustons, who in 1802 changed their name to Mott. It has since remained in this family, and now belongs to Mrs Mott-Radclyffe, by whose kind permission, and that of her tenant, Mr. Cletheroe, we are here to-day.

With regard to the structure itself, what remain are the four walls forming the shell and the fine ivy-clad gateway and tower. There are two bastions, one on the west side and the other at the north-west corner. At the north-east corner there is a square building, probably once a tower. The spade alone can determine the internal arrangements of the Castle, but there are still extant the remains of a storied building on the east; but undergrowth and bushes make inspection very difficult. There are records that there was, as one would anticipate, a private chapel within the precinct, but I have been unable to place it. The whole building is surrounded by a moat, and this arrangement was clearly designed for defensive purposes. The builder, Sir Henry Heydon, no doubt remembered the Wars of the Roses and the value in defence of a water obstacle like a moat. Moats, too, were useful in those insanitary days for drainage purposes. Some years ago the late Mr. Rye investigated a subterranean passage leading from inside the Castle to the exterior. It was said to enable the defenders to sally forth and take besiegers in the rear, but it was found to be merely a brick culvert drain emptying into the moat. The entrance tower of three stories is particularly fine with its groined entrance, guard-rooms and spy-holes on each side. The position of the drawbridge is clear.

Sir John Heydon, who owned during the Civil War, was a Royalist, and, being Lieutenant-General of Ordnance, he served with King Charles at Oxford. His estates were accordingly sequestered, but he discharged the sequestration by a compounding payment of £294. It is said, on whose authority I know not, that the Castle stood a siege and was destroyed during the Civil War. I hardly think this is likely, inasmuch as Norfolk was almost exempt from serious fighting in that troubled period. It may have been destroyed or damaged in some way as belonging to a Royalist, but I think it is more likely that the waning and encumbered fortunes of the family towards the end of the 17th century did not permit the building to be kept in repair, and decay soon set in, rendering the structure useful only for supplying building materials.

The half-ruined building to the south is, I believe, the external gateway converted, when the Castle became a ruin, into a dwelling-house. Both the style and the materials are curious and defy accurate dating. I think that some of the mullions of the windows were taken from the Castle itself. It may have been altered into a house and first occupied by one of the Langs. The building became known as Baconsthorpe Hall, and in 1820 was the seat of Zurishaddai Girdlestone. One tower collapsed quite recently, and the house is now unoccupied.

There is an ornamental pond to the south-east, and the gardens and lake extended to the east and north, where the surface of the land is irregular.

In its prime Baconsthorpe Castle was, no doubt, a very imposing building set in beautiful surroundings. Now ivy, that pernicious weed, is compassing its further decay. One must hope that the owner will do something to kill the ivy and arrest further collapse of the grand entrance tower.

The party then proceeded to the church, which the Hon. Secretary described as follows:—

This church, which was last visited by our
 BACONSTHORPE Society in 1886, is dedicated to St. Mary the
 CHURCH. Virgin. The date of its foundation is unknown,
 but as *Domesday Book* records for fiscal purposes
 that there was a church here with 30 acres of glebe, it would not
 be rash to assume that this site has been devoted to worship in
 differing forms for 850 years at least.

In 1922, when some alterations were being carried out to the south door and porch, they came upon foundations which were thought to be those of a Saxon church.

The earliest part of the church above ground dates from the 13th century, and consists of the piscina and credence table and probably the lower south face of the tower where the stonework, consisting partly of local ironstone, looks distinctly early. The

two arcades of the nave are of the Decorated period of the 14th century and the north is somewhat later than the south. This accounts for the peculiar position of the holy-water stoup in the respond near the tower, which must have been at the door. Contemporary with the arcades are a window on the south side of the chancel and possibly the east window of the south aisle, now blocked up by a monument. The 15th century saw the insertion of windows with Perpendicular tracery throughout the church, except the two windows to which I have just alluded. There is a fine Easter sepulchre of the 15th century which is very much like the one at Kelling, about four miles away, and was probably erected by one of the Heydons who owned Kelling as well. It may very well have been John Heydon, who built and is buried in the Heydon Chapel in Norwich Cathedral. The Easter sepulchre until recently used to open into the vestry, the door into which must have opened from the chancel and not as now from the north aisle. In the chancel also one should note the piscina already referred to with the Purbeck marble shafts. The sedilia, the south window, and the priest's door were discovered in 1869 when some restoration was carried out. The rood-screen has vanished; the staircase up to the old rood-loft was behind the north chancel arch, but has been blocked up. The small screen which forms the organ chamber was once formerly in Bessingham Church, but it was found by a previous rector, the Rev. J. R. Feilden, in a hayloft in a neighbouring parish.

You will probably have been wondering at the design of the screen in the tower arch. One explanation is that in 1700 box-pews were erected and the mediæval pews were taken out and stored in the roof, where they were discovered in 1910. The backs were taken out, and in 1924 made into the screen. I am very sceptical of this explanation. I should say that until the restoration of 1869 the roof was concealed by a flat ceiling level with the clerestory windows. I cannot believe that they would go to the trouble to store all the pews above a ceiling. The more likely explanation is that the woodwork formed a cornice going round part of an old roof. This is confirmed by the carving of the woodwork being on one side only. It is difficult to say how much of the present dignified roof is old. The heraldic shields, giving a history of the ownership of the advowson and manors, and the arms of benefactors, are modern. The numerous carved corbels are particularly worthy of note.

The tower collapsed in 1739 and was rebuilt, I think, at once, as there is a stone in the tower with this on it:—"Edward Warner, Churchwarden, 1740." The new tower does not appear to have been erected exactly on the site of the old tower, as the foundations of the old tower are visible.

Among points of minor interest are :—

- (1) The piscina in the respond of the last arch on the north has rather a peculiar position, but was no doubt for the side chapel, which was where the organ now is, and before the entrance to the vestry was removed from the chancel.
- (2) The modern font of marble presented in 1779 by Mary Ann Stuart.
- (3) The painting of the cock crowing on the respond of the last arch of the south. The words are, I think, "Laudetur Deus."
- (4) An outside buttress, used rather cleverly as the chimney for the heating apparatus.

Mr. Cozens-Hardy then drew the attention of the party to the fine memorials to various members of the Heydon family recorded in brasses and mural tablets. He also pointed out the glass in the north and south clerestory windows of the chancel, suggesting that it may have come from Baconsthorpe Castle, and indicating its similarity to that which once adorned the windows of Saxlingham Hall (near Holt), destroyed by fire some years ago.

The party next proceeded to North Barningham or Barningham Norwood Hall, where Mr. R. W. Ketton-Cremer read a paper on the ancient home of the Palgraves.

When *Domesday Book* was compiled there was

BARNINGHAM only one town of Barningham; the present divisions
 NORWOOD HALL came into being some centuries later. The lordship of most of Barningham was held after the Conquest by the Bigots, Earls of Norfolk; and a family called de Berningham was enfeoffed under them of most of what is now known as Barningham Norwood. About the beginning of the 14th century an heiress, Elizabeth de Berningham, brought this property into another family by her marriage with John de Hethersett, a member of a family which held much property in Hethersett and Cringleford. Their son, William de Hethersett, was guardian of the Wool Customs in Norfolk in 1337. He had two daughters, Sibilla, who married John Palgrave, and died in 1445; and Elizabeth, who married John Winter, M.P. for Norfolk, the other principal landowner in Barningham, and a member of the family from which the adjoining parish, Barningham Winter, takes its name. The de Hethersett estates were divided between these daughters, but the greater part of Barningham Norwood seems to have remained with the Palgraves. There is some doubt as to the origin of the Palgrave family. There seem to have been two distinct families of the name, one coming from the town of Palgrave in Suffolk, and the other from the hamlet of Pgrave in Norfolk, which is now virtually merged in the parish of Sporle. Blomefield considered that the Barningham Palgraves came from the latter. They do not seem to have been armigerous, as they adopted on marrying with the Hethersetts a variation of the

arms of that family—a lion rampant instead of a lion salient. The Palgraves used as their crest a leopard's head regardant; and stone leopards' heads surmount the very fine 17th-century brick piers of the former gateway to the hall.

The de Berningham house most probably stood on the site of the existing house, and extended, with its various outbuildings, over the whole area within the moat. But there are other traces of ancient buildings to be seen. In the field to the west of the moat are the grass-covered foundations of considerable buildings, and there is another, a rather smaller moated site to the south-west of this spot, with traces of brickwork, which may have been no more than the remains of some pleasure-garden or ornamental pond constructed during the 17th century, the period of the Palgraves' greatest prosperity. It is unlikely that there can be any work done by the Berninghams or Hethersetts in the present fabric; the entire existing structure is almost certainly the work of the Palgraves. There is nothing that appears to be of pre-Tudor date; and Henry Palgrave, fourth in descent from John Palgrave and Sibilla de Hethersett, is the most likely person to have built the earliest portion of the existing house. He died in 1516, and there is a fine brass depicting him and his wife, their five sons, and their seven daughters, in the church. We may assign to him or to his immediate successors a good deal of the inward structure of the house, of which little is now visible except the fine beams and moulded door-posts in the attic. In the east living-room, probably the ancient kitchen, there is a large early 16th-century fireplace, and in the present kitchen there is a Tudor beam over the fireplace, and the remains of a stone staircase in a cupboard.

To a period not very much later belongs the curious little red-brick building to the north-east of the house, known as the chapel. It has been much pulled about and altered; and at present the only ecclesiastical features it appears to possess are its general outline and its east and west lay-out. The charming arched windows of brick, some high and narrow, some broad and low, and the steep west gable are quite secular in appearance; and the actual purpose of the "chapel" remains the most baffling of the problems of this house. In one of the cellars is the opening of an underground passage which leads in the direction of the chapel, and almost reaches it. It has been suggested that the chapel was used for secret Catholic worship after the Reformation, and that this passage was used by the priest. But this is not very probable. The Palgraves were always a Protestant family, in distinction to their neighbours, the Pastons, who succeeded the Winters at the other Barningham Hall, and who suffered all kinds of humiliations for the Catholic faith. Yet it is not likely that this passage, which is beautifully built and arched, was merely

a drain into the moat, as so many romantic secret passages in other houses have proved to be. Its purpose must remain a mystery.

Of the earlier features, particular attention should be paid to the Tudor woodwork in the attics, the traces of stone staircases, the "chapel" with its arched brick windows, and the cellars with the curious arrow-head work of the brick floors, the secret passages, the 17th-century wine bins, and the older stone niche. The greater part of the exterior of the house, including the great brick gable with its fine windows, is early 17th-century work, and the date 1638 may be suggested for it. This date is carved on a stone slab now built into a modern barn wall, and evidently taken from a portion of the old house now demolished. This would have been at the end of the life of Sir Augustine or Austin Palgrave, who was knighted by James I. in 1604, and was High Sheriff of Norfolk in 1617; there is a very fine marble and alabaster monument to him in the church. In his time and that of his son and grandson the Palgraves were at the height of their prosperity; and this house must then have been a very large one. The whole existing portion can have been no more than the north wing; and probably the great gates, crowned with the Palgrave crest, exactly faced a main door in the central portion of the house, beyond which was a south wing, with a south-west gable exactly reproducing the surviving north-west gable; the south wing would have covered the present lawn right up to the moat. This arrangement would have formed a great house in the shape of an H, of which now only one side, or one-third, remains. The south wing seems to have been demolished during the 18th century, and the central portion was taken down about a hundred years ago. The gates and most of the garden walls were likewise built in the 17th century.

Sir Austin's son John was created a baronet in 1641 by Charles I.; in spite of this, he was an ardent Parliamentarian during the Civil War, and was M.P. for Norfolk and a strong opponent of the Crown. He was returned for Yarmouth in 1660, but was unseated on petition. His son, Sir Augustine, had no such dislike of the Stuarts, and was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Charles II. He died in 1711, leaving a son, Sir Richard, on whose death in 1732 the estate was sold; most of the purchase-money went to his creditors, and the residue to four female cousins, the daughters of his aunt Urith Palgrave, who married Samuel Smith, of Colkirk. The estate was bought by one of the Windhams of Felbrigg, and the estate continued in their line till it passed to Colonel R. C. Batt, of Gresham Hall, the present owner, about thirty years ago. Ever since the Palgraves ceased to live in it the hall has undergone demolitions and adaptations without end, and much of the old fabric has been incorporated into the surrounding farm buildings. The stained glass in the windows of

the hall, mentioned by Blomefield, has gone; and the most vivid traces of the Palgraves are now their fine monuments in the church.

In conclusion, Mr. Ketton-Cremer thanked Mr. and Mrs. Croot, the tenants of the hall, for their kindness in allowing the hall to be seen, and for the help afforded him in the preparation of this paper.

At Wickmere Church Canon W. Hildyard, the rector, read the following paper:—

There was originally a Saxon church here--
 WICKMERE the work at the foot of the tower denoting this,
 CHURCH. as it is herringbone work in brown ironstone.

The possibility is that, if the ground were dug up, the foundation of the original Saxon nave would be discovered somewhere about 18 or 20 ft. east of the tower, and 12 to 15 ft. wide. Wickmere is mentioned in *Domesday Book* as Wicmera and Wicmara, where it is shown that the village was divided up into five different holdings. The two principal manors were held by the King and Roger Bigot. Later, Earl Warren held one of the manors with the advowson of the church, which he gave to Castleacre Priory when he founded that house. Later his successor had the advowson released to him and his heirs on condition that the priory should have the same assistance from his men of Wickmere as from their own.

There are evidences that an Early English church existed. This would of course replace the little Saxon nave. Some of the sepulchral slabs are of 13th-century work, and the lower half of the piscina is of quite early 13th-century character. Many of the tiles, too, are of the same period.

That there have been alterations and reconstructions in the church is quite obvious. As it stands to-day, the church consists of a nave of the Decorated period, possibly about 1350, with a good simple arcading on the north side. The south arcading has been rebuilt extraordinarily well. The clerestory may have been built after the nave, but in any case was completed by 1400.

The south aisle, with exceedingly nice windows, was built with the nave about 1350, and the porch added about 1400. The north aisle would be built with the nave and south aisle. Its roof is, however, Elizabethan and was erected in 1592, by William Dix, whose tomb is in the sanctuary.

The chancel is contemporary with the nave, but the beautiful east window is a reconstruction very well designed. The sedilia have coats of arms on them and are unique. I have a note that in 1856 the chancel was seated as at present, the floor raised, the east window put in, and the other windows repaired and re-glazed. It was then that the deplorable pews and pulpit were added.

The very curious black dado all round the walls is not painted but constructed of concrete. I do not know another church with a similar wall adornment, and I have been unable to find out why or when it was placed in the church.

Over the chancel arch is a large mitre, which is also not coloured on the wall, but made of concrete, and the bottom has been cut into by the key-stone of the arch, and the present finish to the mitre was added by myself, in order to denote what was intended. It is difficult to say why the mitre is there, whether it had any connection with the Castleacre Priory, the patron, or whether it was the result of the Bishop of Norwich holding land in the parish. It is also a question what is the age of the chancel arch itself. The present screen, which is the original 14th-century screen, was restored to its old position about 35 years ago, and the base of it was put lower than it should be, in order to avoid damaging the heads of the King and Queen, which are carved above the pillar of the arch. There is the hole at the top of the rood staircase in which rested the rood-beam.

In the south aisle there are two steps, which are evidently very ancient, and may have belonged to a previous building. They appear to be part of the staircase approaching the rood from the south, but they have been left in a recess which now forms an aumbry, the woodwork of which bears evidence of branding by fire. The fact that the mitre has been damaged, and that there is this second ascent possible to the rood, leads one to think that the chancel arch has been made higher than it was originally.

There are several niches in the church. The one in the north aisle, when opened, was found to contain coloured spandrels of a window, broken stones which would be put in to fill it up. It seems to have been used for the figure of a bishop holding his mitre, as there is a place on the stone on the right-hand side facing one, which would naturally be filled by the crozier.

Of the two niches in the south aisle, that on the right-hand, when one is facing east, was evidently intended to contain the figures of the Virgin and Child, while the one on the left, which has pre-Reformation colour still quite bright upon it, would probably be either for the figure of St. Joseph or of an angel. When the plaster was removed from the wall of the south aisle a consecration cross was revealed with the original colouring on a considerable part of it.

The altar stone was found embedded in the nave, and was removed into the sanctuary. It is a very heavy piece of stone, and has the five crosses in the centre.

There are several memorials with heraldry in the chancel. On the walls are hatchments of the Walpole family, this church being their burial place. Horatio Baron Walpole, the brother of Sir Robert Walpole, has his grave in the sanctuary. The poppy

heads on the seats, although mutilated, still have more than one interesting feature, and in the south aisle one of the pew ends has an unusually interesting memorial carved and coloured, on which (translated) is written, "Pray for the souls of John Bacon, Isabel Bacon, and Rauffe and Isabel," their children.

In the south aisle there is the only brass left in the church, which translated reads, "Pray for the souls of John Greenway and Agnes his wife, and their son Richard who died 1494."

Blomefield says there was a brass in the chancel to Thomas Bonett, rector. It probably disappeared in 1856.

There are several priests' graves in the church. In the chancel there is an altar tomb to William Dix, who lived at Wickmere Hall, and was lord of the manor. He was succeeded by his son, and grandson, and the latter having no heir contracted with his cousin John Ramsay to take his name and arms, and later a descendant of this Dix married John Bedingfield, who is buried here and was second son of Sir H. Bedingfield, and he and his wife in 1693 conveyed the manor to their brother-in-law, John Tasburgh of Flixton, Suffolk.

On the wall of the south aisle, above an altar tomb where he is buried, is a marble memorial to Henry Spelman, who lived at Wickmere. It is interesting because it records the fact that he was one of the first to establish the principle of fire insurance. As far as is known the first office that was opened for fire insurance in the country, was established by Dr. Nicholas Barbon and Partners in 1667, and this eventually became in 1680 "The Fire Office." This Dr. Barbon was the son of Praise-God Barebones of the history books, and the son changed his name to Nicholas Barbon because he was christened "If-Christ-had-not-died-for-thee-thou-hadst-been-damned Barebones," from which he was known as "Damned Barebones." A rival to The Fire Office was established by the forming of the Free Society, as it was called, in 1683 by Spelman and Hale. The Spelman office was the first to start a fire brigade.

The mural colourings are visible in several places, and when they are found as here upon the wall, they are pre-Reformation. They are clearly visible in the south aisle, but in addition there is a considerable amount of black-letter work on the plaster which is post-Reformation.

On the north wall of the nave, near the font, is a coat of arms, probably of Lord Hunsdon, an East Anglian Peer. The positions of the two chapels in the north and south aisle are indicated by the piscinae, that on the south being the Lady Chapel, and that on the north the chapel of St. Nicholas.

The two large chests in the west end of the church were for the parishes of Wickmere and Wolterton respectively. They have three locks, one for the rector, and one for each of the churchwardens.

On the south door there is some very beautiful 14th-century ironwork, and also a sanctuary knocker. It is interesting to note that when I became rector in 1893, I found written in pencil on the door itself, "I hereby declare that this is the truth," with initials below it, denoting that some man, who desired to impress upon another that what he stated was true, could think of no stronger affirmation than that made by writing it upon the door of the House of God.

It will be noticed that the seats of the nave have a rather high beam at each side, and it might be imagined that that was the result of carelessness in their re-arrangement, but as a matter of fact it was to enable straw to be put down to keep the feet of the worshippers warm and dry.

In the time of Edward VI. there were three bells weighing 6, 7, and 8 cwt. respectively. In 1779 two bells weighing about 18 cwt. were sold by faculty, being worth about £36. The present bell is a small steel one, which took the place of the last original bell, the latter being so broken at the top that it could not be hung up in the tower. It is inscribed "John Brend made me 1642." It was sold to Lord Orford, and hangs at Mannington Hall. The registers date back to 1559.

The President in thanking Canon Hildyard referred to his approaching departure from Norfolk. He remarked that it was noteworthy that the Canon's predecessor but one in the living was presented in 1801. The three incumbencies had therefore covered 130 years.

THIRD EXCURSION.

The third excursion, on 3rd September, was outside the county. Leaving Norwich in two motor coaches and several private cars, the party was considerably augmented at Mildenhall, where a halt was made to visit the church. At St. Mary's Church, Mildenhall, the following paper was read by Mr. Alfred E. Lee, M.A.:—

Though it is considered certain that a church
 ST. MARY'S existed at Mildenhall in Saxon times, no trace has
 CHURCH, been found of any foundations, and it is reason-
 MILDENHALL. able to suppose that the building was constructed
 of wood.

A church of more durable materials must have existed soon after the Conquest, for Abbot Sampson added to the structure a campanile in the year 1183. Some remains of it possibly form the base of the existing tower. If this is the case, it is the earliest part of the fabric which has come to light.

The oldest part of the structure of which there is obvious certainty is Early English, including the chantry chapel next the chancel and on the north side, the chancel arch and a doorway with carving, now leading to the room over the north porch.

The chantry chapel, with its lancet windows and shafts of Purbeck marble, the exact counterpart of the work in the semicircular apse at Tidmarsh in Berkshire, must have been designed within a year or two of 1250. It will be seen to be a very fine example of the work of the period. The chancel arch, with its foliated capitals and dog-tooth mouldings, is of about the same date. The two heads terminating the curve of the arch were carved from (apparently) blank blocks about 80 years ago; one represents the then Bishop of Ely and the other Mr. James Read, churchwarden at that time and grandfather of the present churchwarden of that name. The carving in the spandrels of the doorway to the north-west represents, on one side the Virgin with her emblem, the lily; the other figure, I was told recently by a Benedictine priest whom I found in the church, was undoubtedly the Angel of the Annunciation; the figure bears what appears to be a torch.

The chancel itself belongs to the Decorated period; the tracery of two of the side windows on the south, however, was probably damaged by the fire which occurred in the year 1567, and that at present in those windows may be Georgian. The east window is unusual, with its seven long lights and unusual elliptical centre; from the structural point of view, however, it is weak and has given somewhat owing to the thrust of the roof on the north and south walls. I would like to call to your notice the unusual duplex buttresses with niches at the eastern corners of the exterior of the building, and also the double piscina with sedilia—much restored—and the aumbreys on the south wall. There is also in the choir a second aumbrey-like recess. The corbels supporting the present roof have comparatively recently been carved; one of the heads is said to represent the Virgin.

The main structure was built, or re-built in the Perpendicular style, by Sir Henry Barton in the year 1420 and following years. The finest work of this period is to be seen externally on the north wall of the aisle, where chequers of dressed flint and freestone are surmounted by a parapet panelled in tracery. The north porch is particularly fine and carries a parvise over the entrance. The west window resembles those of St. Mary's in Oxford, but must be of an earlier date. I would call your attention to the fine vaulting under the tower gallery, the stone used here being of a very hard local chalk, similar to clunch but of different geological horizon. The font of Purbeck marble seems to be of the same period. It has escutcheons borne within the quatrefoils ornamenting the basin; some bear St. Andrew's Cross and some St. George's (or, it may be, the arms of the City of London). The shaft and the upper portions appear to have been parted at some time and, from the extent of the weathering, to have been lying out of doors for a considerable time.

At the chancel end of the nave, judging from the supporting masonry, it seems likely that the rood-loft must have been of exceptional width, and probably consisted of two stories; there still exists a stone stairway from the entry on the floor of the church to two doorways, one above the other; both are now walled up, as is the entrance to the stairway.

It was noticed by a former vicar that the dripstone of the second arch on the south side is worn as if by a bell-rope, and I have noticed a hole in the woodwork of the roof, immediately above the worn portion. It is suggested that a sanctus bell hung outside at this spot.

Very recently the tracery of the clerestory on both sides had perforce to be repaired, and in some windows replaced. It was found that in some of the shafts, the outer part of each section, after decay, had been actually replaced at some time by the hard chalk, which I have already mentioned as having been—quite properly—used in internal work. The condition of the windows was, as you will appreciate, highly dangerous.

There is now left to me only the roofing to touch upon, though many will think it to be the special glory of the building. What follows is an epitome of a paper on the roof by Mr. J. G. Waller, F.S.A., published by the Society of Antiquaries of London.

The roof of the nave, mainly composed of oak, is what is commonly called an "angel-roof," but it is, of necessity, of noble dimensions; it is unusual in that the principals are alternately of the tie-beam and hammer-beam construction. The woodwork has never been painted. The principal beams are seven in number and highly ornamented with a crested ridge and battlements characteristic of the Perpendicular period. Spandrels with obviously Perpendicular tracery will be noticed, with additions supporting the rafters. Small demi-figures of angels are numerous, with scrolls either from the left or right shoulder.

At the east and west ends are four figures with hands conjoined in prayer, each abutting directly upon the wall. The other figures, with wings expanded, bear, or have borne, emblems in their hands. Arguing from the arrangement in the somewhat inferior roof of the church at March in Cambridgeshire, and from information derived from a remarkable book of sermons printed at Lyons at the end of the 15th century, called *Sermones Dormi Securé*, Mr. Waller supplies what was, in all probability, the missing detail, and at the same time accounts for the purport of the whole, as follows:—

Next to the praying figure at the east end, come a pair of angels which once held emblems, probably the lance and sponge, and, nearest to missing figures of the Majesty and of the Virgin, which are still existent at March. The central figures and the missing emblems were probably destroyed along with the rood-loft itself.

The second pair of angels will be seen to hold each a lute. Mr. Waller quotes the ancient book of sermons, to which I have referred, to suggest that the lute, of all instruments, was held to be the most sacred at that time and that it is fitting that it should be held by the angels immediately in front of the Majesty; he quotes the book in Latin in his pamphlet. I venture the following translation:—

“And sing to the Lord, because he hath benefited you by granting you bounteous gifts. Accordingly, I give you a musical instrument, the lute. The lute, mark you, is a great instrument in respect of other instruments; thus thy life ought to be for an example to all ranks; and do thou plead for a good and holy life amongst secular men.”

In the same sermon a reference is also made to the instruments of the Passion, viz., the crown of thorns and the nails of the Cross: these, however, are borne by the fourth pair of winged angels in this roof; the third pair holding each a book, possibly the books of the old and the new law. The fifth and last pair of angels bear shields, the one on the north with the Cross with scourges, the one on the south is mutilated. These are with a fair measure of certainty, the shield of Salvation and the shield of Faith, as they exist, named, in St. Alban's Abbey. Mr. Waller also points out that the corbels on which rest the spandrels by the chancel wall have the shields of St. Edmund and of St. Edmund the Confessor.

The woodcarving in the aisles, particularly that on the north side, are still more remarkable. Indeed, Mr. Waller implies that equally fine woodwork of this period is only to be matched—if at all—at Modena. The detail and what it all means is bewildering and some of it inexplicable. There is first of all the lion, as the emblem of goodness, and then the wyvern, developed from the serpent and the emblem of evil, and also wyverns developing a second pair of legs—into the dragon, in fact. In some relief carving, the emblems of good and evil are fighting together; in some demons and dogs and fowls are mixed together. Other spandrels have heraldic devices of noble families: the dog, emblem of the Talbots, appears frequently; the swan, collared and chained, emblem of the FitzSwannes, the de Bohuns, and the Mandevilles, appears; the German eagle, imported by Henry II.'s mother, Maud; the antelope, also reminiscent of the de Bohuns; and it must be remembered that the wyvern was, in addition to its evil significance, the cognisance of Thomas, Lord Bardolph.

The Rev. H. Tyrrell Green supplemented Mr. Lee's paper with some information about the guilds connected with the church. He mentioned also that Sir Henry Barton, Lord Mayor and Sheriff of London, was the benefactor responsible for most of the 15th-century work in the church.

When the party was leaving, Mr. Cozens-Hardy drew attention to the varieties of stone used in the building. There was Barnack stone, brought by water from Northamptonshire; clunch, the rather soft local stone used in the interior mouldings of the windows; local flint employed in the outside of the tower; and imported Purbeck marble used decoratively inside.

Moving on to Ely, a distance of 15 miles, the party was joined by still more members, bringing the number up to about 150. Many enjoyed a picnic lunch in the grounds of the Deanery and the Prior's House. At the Cathedral members were welcomed by Canon Vincent Watson, in the absence of the Dean.

The story of Ely Cathedral has often been told. It fell to Mr. G. H. Tyndall once more to refresh our memories, and very interesting he made his brief sketch of its history. We had to go back to 673 for its beginning, he said, for it was in that year that Queen Etheldreda, retiring from the world, founded the monastery of Ely as a nunnery and became its first abbess and later its patron saint. That first church was entirely destroyed in one of the Danish invasions. In 970 Ely became a Benedictine Abbey, and in 1083 the present buildings were begun by Abbot Simeon. They were sufficiently advanced for the choir to be opened for use in 1106, when the second translation of the remains of St. Etheldreda took place. It was interesting to Norwich people to know that the preacher on that great occasion was Bishop Herbert de Losinga. The nave was completed in 1160, there being at that time a square central tower. About 1232 Abbot Hugh de Northwold was translated to the see of Ely and took down the east wall of the church and extended the presbytery by six bays. The remains of the patron saint were translated into the new presbytery in 1282. In the year 1321 it was decided to build a new Lady Chapel designed by Alan of Walsingham, sacrist of the abbey and afterwards prior. The year following a disaster occurred, the Norman stone tower collapsed and entirely destroyed the central part of the church. Walsingham cleared away the debris—a work which took six years—but instead of erecting a new tower he designed and had erected that wonderful octagon with the lantern above it, which was unique in Europe. Each side of the base of the lantern consisted of one tree, and he searched the country to find oaks large and sound enough for the purpose. King Edward III. and his Queen were present at the solemn re-opening of the church in 1348. Their figures are represented in the carved stonework of the octagon. On the corbels of the lantern are represented legendary events in the life of the foundress. The Black Death interrupted further building, but between 1375 and 1400 the octagonal upper storey with its four turrets was put on the western tower, and to this a spire was

added. The builders soon discovered that they had overloaded the foundations, and the spire was taken down. Soon afterwards the flat roof of the transept was replaced by the present high-pitched roof. Then came the Reformation, and a great deal of the damage done to the building took place during that period under the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth. Only one whole figure was left untouched, and that was the image of Henry VII. Mr. Essex, the architect to the chapter, was responsible for taking down the wonderful stone screen in 1770. He also wanted to destroy the porch, on the ground of its expense to maintain, but the chapter insisted on keeping the lower storey. It was in 1845 that the restoration was begun which left the building as it appears to modern eyes. The work, which cost altogether £120,000, was carried out under the guidance of Sir Gilbert Scott. The painted ceiling of the nave was designed and partly executed by Mr. H. S. le Strange.

Afterwards the large company was split up into three parties which, under the guidance of Canon Vincent Watson, Canon Creed, and Mr. Tyndall, separately toured the Cathedral and conventual buildings. It was noted that one of the unusual features of Ely Cathedral is that the Bishop has no throne in it. He sits in the choir in what would ordinarily be the Dean's place. This recalls the time when he was Abbot of the monastery as well as Bishop of the diocese. Until 1836 the bishops were temporary sovereigns of the adjoining parts of the Isle of Ely.

In walking round the Cathedral the visitors were greatly interested in the stone pedestal preserved in the nave as a genuine relic of the 7th century. It formed the base of a memorial to Ovin, steward of St. Etheldreda. Among the outer buildings visited were Prior Crauden's quaint little chapel, reached by a winding stone staircase enclosed in a turret, the remains of the infirmary buildings, the Prior's House, and the Bishop's Palace.

Tea was served in the King's School. Referring to the fact that it was the Society's last excursion of the season, the President (Col. E. A. Bulwer) spoke appreciatively of the work of the Hon. Secretary, and of his assistant. The outings entailed considerable organising work, which became heavier as the membership increased. There were now about 600 members, and he really did not know what they would do if they all turned up at one meeting! Colonel Bulwer also thanked Mr. Tyndall, Canon Watson, and Canon Creed for their good offices as guides, and a vote of thanks to them was carried with applause. The excursion returned to Norwich by Downham Market and Swaffham.