

ANNUAL EXCURSION

The annual excursion took place on 22 June, 1933, and over 100 members attended, amongst whom were Major and Mrs. Disraeli, Sir James and Lady Berry, Captain and Mrs. Stewart-Liberty, Col. and Mrs. Lea and Mr. R. Robinson.

LITTLE KIMBLE CHURCH

The first place visited was Little Kimble Church, where Mr. Clive Rouse kindly explained the chief points of interest, touching in particular upon the extensive series of mediæval paintings on the walls, carried out almost entirely in the early years of the 14th century. Since the Church is dedicated to All Saints the artists seem to have tried to assemble as many figures of saints as possible, since ten are visible to-day, and the original number may well have been twice as much. Mr. Rouse followed the walls, beginning with the north side of the east wall where the first figure is apparently that of St. Lawrence the Deacon, standing behind a large grid-iron. Next, in the window splay, comes St. Francis feeding the birds, a subject believed to be unique in England. Opposite are St. Clare and her sister St. Agnes; whilst on the centre of the wall is the fine figure of St. George, with his name in Lombardic capitals, the details of costume and armour are of great importance. In the next window-splay are other fragments of figures, possibly one is St. Thomas of Canterbury. Over the door is a possible St. Christopher; further west a large subject, conjectured to be a Doom. On the south wall is a large figure of St. Bernard, in cowl and robe, carrying a book—a rare figure. Over the south door is the mystic burial of St. Katherine of Alexandria on Mount Sinai. Those paintings were known to exist before 1860, and were uncovered in 1875-6.

Mr. Rouse then alluded to the armorial glass, of which fragments display France (ancient), England, and England quartering France. Finally he called attention to the tiles of the Chertsey Abbey type, which form such a notable feature in the floor of the chancel; they date from the latter years of the 13th century. The subjects are secular and include a king with sceptre, two men disputing over a deed, knight on horseback, and a queen with a pet animal.

BLEDLOW CHURCH.

From Little Kimble the Society then moved to Bledlow where attention was drawn to the admirable work, chiefly of the 13th century, particularly the fine arcades in which circular columns are surmounted by octagonal capitals, each decorated

with distinctive foliated ornament. Whilst these belonged to the beginning of the century the doorway is a little later (c. 1260) and bears a pair of very early doors with traces of their original hinges, the porch itself containing a well-preserved stoup. The tower, with its corbel-table carved with grotesque heads, was pointed out, and the indication of the window, or doorway, formerly communicating between the ringing-loft and the interior of the nave, when it had a high-pitched roof, which was replaced by a much lower one about 1600. The painting of St. Christopher on the north wall of the north aisle is a little later than those at Little Kimble, and includes the hermit in his tower showing the Saint a light across the water, whilst over the south doorway is a rare and interesting drawing of Adam and Eve, Eve bearing a spindle. Attention was called to traces of other paintings in the spandrels of the arcade arches, and at the east end of the south side, where there is also an altar-piece and reredos painted by Samuel Wale at the close of the 18th century.

EWELME.

On leaving Bledlow the Society went to the "Lambert Arms," Kingston Blount, for lunch. At the end of the meal the formal business of the annual meeting took place, and members then drove on to Ewelme. Here the Rev. A. T. Humphreys, the Rector, very kindly spoke of the unrivalled beauty and interest of the building in his care. The existing fabric is wholly the work of William de la Pole, fourth Earl and first Duke of Suffolk, who married Alice, the grand-daughter of the poet Chaucer. Her father Thomas, and Matilda his wife, are buried in a panelled altar-tomb between the chancel and the south chapel of St. Luke. Farther east is the high alabaster tomb of the Duchess of Suffolk herself, who died at Ewelme 20th May, 1475. This is the tomb with the superb recumbent effigy, coroneted, and wearing the Garter on her left arm. The tomb is surmounted by canopies, with angels bearing shields, whilst the lower stage is open and contains an emaciated figure of the Duchess in a shroud. In the north aisle is a slab of Purbeck marble, which is said to mark the grave of the third Earl of Suffolk, who was slain at Agincourt in 1415.

The tomb of the Duchess is probably the finest of its type in the country, and was most remarkably preserved during the Civil War, as was the whole fabric of the Church, by Colonel Martin, who refused to allow the Church to be opened or used unless he was present. The extremely impressive effect of the whole church is largely due to the fact that it was wholly built within two years, and the small differences in mouldings, etc., are mere variations of workmen. The chancel screen is remarkable for having iron bars as uprights in place of the

usual wooden columns. In 1834 the pews were unluckily removed and replaced by benches, but otherwise the church is just as built. The particularly fine font-cover was mentioned, and the corbel by it carved with the face of Edward III.

From the Church attention was then directed to the Alms-houses, founded by the Duke of Suffolk in 1437. Through the tower of the Church the inner quadrangle, surrounded by cloisters, is approached by a flight of steps. There is accommodation for thirteen inmates, and the finely decorated barge-boards and other woodwork made them appear most attractive homes.

The muniments relating to this endowment (which also covers a grammar school) are kept in a small chamber, and were shown to the Society by Miss Dickson, on behalf of Sir Farquhar Buzzard, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, who is Trustee *ex-officio*. The documents include most interesting letters from the first Duchess of Suffolk, and the whole have been most carefully mounted and preserved.

FAWLEY COURT

The Society then left Ewelme with much reluctance, and stopped next at Fawley Court, where Major Roderick Mackenzie gave a history of the original and of the present house. He said that Fawley's reputation for beauty was by no means of recent date, since nearly 850 years ago was a certain Herbrand de Sackville, who was steward for Walter Giffard's lands in Normandy, and acquitted himself so well in that capacity that he was offered the choice of two goodly manors, one at Long Crendon and this; he chose this "on account of its beauty," and was holding it at the time of Domesday. The Sackville's continued to hold it until 1477, when it passed, through an heiress, to Thos. Rokes. There had been a Sackville-Stonor marriage, and a Rokes-Stonor alliance formed the subject of a draft contract, which never came to anything. Other and humbler marriages at Fawley before this time were expensive; thus in 1379 the customary tenants paid a fine of £1 to the lord on the marriage of their daughters. The Court Rolls from 1362 (with gaps) to 1479 are in the British Museum.

By 1617 the estate had been purchased by Sir James Whitelock, Judge of Common Pleas, who married Eliz. Bulstrode, of Hedgerley. His son, Bulstrode Whitelock, became a very famous person indeed; throughout the Long Parliament he was M.P. for Marlow, was Commissioner to treat with the King in 1643, went as ambassador to Sweden in 1653, and fell out of favour somewhat, for Cromwell refused to put him in that proud place of honour for a scholar of which

Dr. James is the present distinguished occupant. He made his peace at the Restoration, and lived until 1676—but not here, for in 1642 the house was badly plundered by the Royal troops (in spite of orders to the contrary) and made unfit for habitation. Sir Bulstrode tells us all about it in his Memorials: "divers writings of consequence—some they tore in pieces, others they burnt to light their tobacco, and some they carried away with them, to my extreme loss and great prejudice in wanting the writings of my estate." One wonders whether these writings included the long series of Court Rolls now in the B.M.

Sir Bulstrode's son sold the estate to Wm. Freeman, who in 1684 rebuilt the house according to the design of Sir Christopher Wren; it was presumably fit for residence by 1688, as William III. rested here in his progress from Torbay to London, and received a declaration from the Peers and an address from the Corporation of London. Possibly, however, the visit was paid to Phyllis Court and not to this house. It should be said that the brickwork which we see is not original, as that was hacked to receive stucco in 1800, and this was removed in 1880 and a new brick face was necessary.

The ceiling of the saloon bears a scroll at the S. end dated 1690 but the fittings of the house are of the Adam type, which is exemplified at its very best in the library, where the deep frieze painted in imitation of bas-relief will remind us of the room at Shardeloes, the doors and book-cases are ornamented with inlaid work by Mrs. Dawson Damer, who carved the heads of Thames and Isis on Henley Bridge (Isis, by the way, is said to be a portrait of Miss Freeman).

After examining the interior of the house, where every window seems to command fine views, members then turned to the grounds, where the specimen trees (mostly planted by the Freemans in 1730) aroused great admiration, the wonderful planes are said by Elwes and Henry to be possibly the best in England, and many specimen trees, such as the huge cut-leaved beech, the magnolia, and a taxodium, struck all as the best of their kind ever seen.

Altogether the excursion, to which the weather was threatening though not actually unkind, proved of the greatest interest and variety.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TRADE TOKENS ISSUED IN
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

By J. O. Manton and E. Hollis.

With illustrations of 230 tokens.

The Society still has a few copies of this work
(noticed on p. 57) which it can offer to Members at 15/-
per copy, or at £1 : 1 : 0 to the general public.