

The Annual Excursion of the members took place on Thursday, September 12th, and a visit was paid to Cuddington, Long Crendon, Boarstall Tower, Brill, and Wotton Underwood, to which latter place the members had been invited by his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

Cuddington Church was first visited; it is dedicated to St. Nicholas, and has been beautifully restored, from designs by the diocesan architect, G. E. Street, Esq.

Long Crendon Church, built in the twelfth century, is cruciform, with an embattled tower sixty feet high, at the intersection of the transepts with the nave and chancel. It has eight bells; but Browne Willis mentions that in 1712 there were only five, said to be the largest in the county, one weighing forty hundredweight, cast in 1535. The second bell bears the following inscription:—"In multis annis resonat campana Johannis." There is a remarkable window in the north transept, and under it an arch called by Browne Willis an "anchoret." In the south transept is a monument "to the memory of Sir John Dormer, of Dorton, and Jane, his wife, the latter of whom died 8th of September, 1605." The date of Sir John's death, March 11th, 1626, was left blank, but was added at the recent restoration, on the authority of the parish register. Lipscomb is in error here, as well as in reference to the commencement of the register, which dates from 1559, when Johannis Trulove is styled vicar of the parish. The Dormer family originated in Thame as woolstaplers, and held large possessions in the neighbourhood. The monument was erected at great expense, being of foreign workmanship, and of Caen stone. The font, which is of the fourteenth century, is ornamented with couchant lions at the base, and saintly heads around, decorated with foliage. The names of "John Madge and John Greening, Churchwardens, 1633," are inscribed on a stone over the arch leading from the south aisle to the south transept. John Greening was descended from one Christopher Greening, who

recovered the lost art of needle-making in 1560. His family illustrates the connection which often subsists for generations between a family and an occupation. The name of Greening figures prominently in the Charter of Monopoly granted by James I. to the original introducers of wire-drawing into England. The manufacture was commenced at Tintern Abbey, where half a century ago the family pursued their calling, until the grandfather of the present generation settled at Manchester, and established the "Greening and Co. Victoria Iron Works." Some of the brasses relate to the Canon, Canan, or Cannan family, the earliest bearing date 1468. In the middle alley of the church is the following epitaph:—"Here lyeth the body of Frances, the daughter of Jerard and Frances Burnham; she dyed the 9th of August, 1690, aged 1 yr and 9 months.

"Beneath this stone here innocence doth lie,
A rose just budded, blusht and then did die,
As if it were afraid to blow, least sin
Should blast its spotless purity within."

Near the entrance to the churchyard is a very old building, the upper part of which is now used as a schoolroom, and for holding the Court Leet in Whitsun-week. A market was formerly held here, the staple commodity of which, being wool, gave it the name of "Staple Hall." The Court Rolls are sometimes exhibited here, and bear date from about the eighth century. At the end of the village, on the Oakley road, there are some remains of Crendon Park, and farmhouses with Elizabethan chimneys.

At Brill Church the visitors inspected two frescoes of St. Peter and St. Paul, which have lately been discovered in the thickness of the chancel arch, one on each side.

On arriving at Wotton a visit was paid to the church. A chancel aisle has been built by the present Duke of Buckingham, and the chapel, which contains the tombs of his ancestors, has been thrown open by the removal of the iron railings which formerly screened them from view.

The members assembled in the large saloon of the mansion, where the Annual Meeting was held, the Duke of Buckingham presiding.

The Rev. C. LOWNDES read the Report of the Committee, which stated that the Society continued in a prosperous state, and referred to the excursion made last year to Claydon and Addington as having been in every way successful.

Archdeacon BICKERSTETH moved that the report be adopted, printed, and circulated amongst the members.

The Rev. A. BAKER, in seconding the resolution, said, as this was almost the only opportunity for making remarks as to the working of the Society, he would venture to throw out a suggestion. From his clear recollection of the circumstances attending the institution of the Society, he could say, that among the objects contemplated by its promoters was what he would call practical utility—that they should not form a mere literary club, but that their chief aim should be to encourage and advance the art, especially the ecclesiastical art, of the county. They intended to collect plans of churches, schools, and parsonage houses, and other public buildings, to improve the ecclesiastical taste of the county, and to assist in applying what might be called the principles of architecture to the practical details of ecclesiastical art. He regretted that they seemed to have somewhat dropped out of that path. They had hoped, by collecting plans, to be able to guide and advise those who were engaged in church restoration, or church building, or other work of a similar kind. One of the rules specially prescribed that the Committee should meet once a quarter, or oftener, in order that they might keep an eye on the progress of resto-

ration and architectural work in the neighbourhood, and help to increase the interest in ecclesiastical art in the county. He merely threw out the hint for the consideration of the Committee at Aylesbury, that they might see whether it was possible to carry out the idea more fully than seemed to have been done of late. By recording every church restoration and every new church built in the transactions of the Society, they would furnish an important addition to the materials for a county history.

The adoption of the report was carried unanimously.

G. L. BROWNE, Esq., then moved the re-election of the whole of the officers of the Society for the ensuing year.

Sir HARRY VERNEY seconded the motion. He would remind them that ecclesiastical architecture was not the only branch of archaeological knowledge to which they should give attention. His own attention was drawn to the subject by a recent article in the "Quarterly Review," showing how, in many parts of England, most beautiful and interesting architectural remains were going to ruin from utter inattention. In Cornwall some of the old monuments, supposed to be Celtic, or at all events of a pre-historical date, were used as quarries of materials of which to build houses in different places. It appeared to him that this was a subject to which the public ought to give attention, and that these remains should be under the attention of some public body—either a local authority under the responsibility of a member of the Government, or at any rate some competent authority. It was stated that there are ancient monuments extending beyond the memory of man, consisting of sixty or seventy large stones, of which all but half a dozen have disappeared. Suppose Stonehenge were to be removed in that way; surely we should feel that it ought to be preserved by somebody. Speaking in the presence of a member of the Government, he ventured to ask whether the Government should not turn their attention to this matter, and nominate some authority which should be responsible for the protection of these ancient monuments?

The motion was carried unanimously, and several gentlemen, their names having been previously submitted to the Committee, were elected members of the Society.

The Rev. C. LOWNDES next read a paper by Mr. E. J. Payne, of Wycombe, on "The Legends of the Swan."

The Rev. A. BAKER next read a paper on the life of Bishop Hough, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who defended the rights of his college against the arbitrary encroachments of James II., who would have forced into the headship persons in every way disqualified. The writer, by a singular coincidence, became possessed, while in New Zealand, of a book once the property of Bishop Hough, a copy of the Jewish Kalendar for 1696, in the blank leaves of which are various private memoranda. The substance of the paper appeared in the "Ecclesiastic," for the present month.

The Rev. A. BAKER next submitted to the meeting a curious MS. book lent by the Rev. Mr. Cross, of Mursley, entitled "Memoirs of the Winslow Choir," from the year 1755, apparently compiled about the year 1832, from old documents. It traced the history of music in the parish through three eras—first, the merely vocal, from 1755, the only instrument in use being a pitchpipe; second, the introduction of instruments, about 1790; and, thirdly, "solvization," and singing before service, commenced in 1829. It would appear than in 1790 the choir "had lost so much of its usual talent and ability that at times it was with considerable difficulty that sufficient strength could be mustered to sing an ordinary psalm in divine service," and the few who remained "were compelled to adopt the artificial aid of music." The order in which the various instruments were introduced

would appear to be as follows: the flute, hautboy, bassoon, clarionet, and violoncello. Among many personal anecdotes of the members of the choir, it was noticed as a remarkable circumstance that six brothers, progenitors of Mr. John Gibbs, were constant ringers on each New Year's Day from 1647 down to the period when he, with five other brothers, succeeded them, and continued to ring on the New Year's Day in like manner. These two generations completed seventy years in this annual performance.

The members then proceeded to inspect the various objects of interest before them, among which were the "Boarstall horn," and the "Boarstall Book," containing a complete chartulary of Boarstall (a transcript of evidences in the time of Henry VI.), an old signet ring, and several badges, one having the representation of a horn. Other objects of interest were, a silver brooch, worn by the Pretender while a fugitive in Scotland, bearing the inscription "P.C., 1717;" an enamelled miniature of Charles II., and a badge of the Order of the Bath worn by Sir R. Temple, an ancestor of the present Duke of Buckingham, at the coronation of that monarch. The Duke of Buckingham also called attention to an old plan of Brill and Ludgershall, before Bernwode Forest was disafforested, which, from deeds referring to it, was probably of the date of A.D. 1520 to 1540. On comparing this plan with the present features of the country he recognized two important landmarks—a little clump of trees on Windmill Hill and the great tree on Farm Hill—as still existing. An ancient terrier was also exhibited, written in 1657 by Mr. Grenville, one of the Duke's ancestors, with his own hand. This document shows the Mercers' Company as owners of land in this locality at that early period. At the end is a curious entry to the effect that by the Parliament, began in 1640, commonly called the Long Parliament, archbishops, bishops, deacons, and chaplains, and the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy were abolished, and the glebe land belonging to the Archbishop of Canterbury, as to the rectory of Wotton had been sold, but that since the happy restoration of King Charles II., the archbishops, bishops, deacons, and chaplains had been restored to their estates, "so that I (the writer) have now lost again the glebe land which I have set down in this book as my own."

Archdeacon BUCKENSTETH, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Duke of Buckingham for his hospitable reception of the Society, said that when his Grace made the kind offer to receive the Association he was not then a member of the Government, so that he might have found a valid reason for not fulfilling his engagement, in the onerous duties which had since devolved on him. It was certainly not without some inconvenience that he had given them a portion of his time. He felt sure that he was expressing the feeling of every member of the Association in saying that they felt grateful for the hospitable reception which they had met with under such circumstances, and for his Grace's kindness in placing before them so many objects of interest.

The Rev. H. BULL seconded the motion.

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM, in acknowledging the compliment, said—It is a great pleasure to the Duchess and myself to have the opportunity of receiving some of our neighbours here. At the time when I expressed a hope that the Society should meet here, I had very little expectation of being a Secretary of State, although I was then a member of the Government in a position where I had more control over my own time. I was greatly afraid, as the summer drew to an end without much prospect of getting out of London, that I should be obliged to ask you either to postpone your visit till a period too late to allow of a pleasant excursion, or to defer it till another year. I think these societies must do, and have

done, a great deal of good, by drawing attention to the relics which exist unknown in many nooks and corners of old England. More than this, it will be found to have often prevented injudicious measures of what is called restoration, but which is really as great a work of destruction as any that is going on at the present time. Sir Harry Verney has alluded to the destruction of many monuments of antiquity in various parts of England. I have seen in Cornwall a great deal of this going on under the eyes of persons who, if their attention were drawn to it, would be the first to say that it should not go on. There are close to Buckingham farm buildings erected in great part by my own family out of the destruction of most ancient Roman remains. We discovered very curious pavements, rooms, etc., showing that if the search had been made fifty or sixty years before, we might have laid open the *arcana* of a Roman house, and all its domestic arrangements, as perfect as any preserved in Herculaneum and Pompeii. I have much more faith in the voluntary effort of persons interested in the preservation of these relics than in Government charge of them. The first thing—very satisfactory to individuals—would be the employment of a great number of people in the country to do very little. These persons would not do a great deal of work without many other good people to look after them, and I do not think that would be found extremely pleasing to the House of Commons. If it was thought that Government action would be good in preserving these relics, there is no one more able to bring the subject forward in the House of Commons than Sir Harry Verney. There is another point of disadvantage. Government have the care and direction of large museums in London and the neighbourhood, national collections into which it is their duty to get every valuable relic, showing the past history of the country, and exemplifying the progress of art. The first thing that would result from Government care would be the centralization of everything in London, on the plea that it is impossible to take care of it in the country. I want rather to see these old relics preserved in their own localities, and I really think it will be done far better by local societies calling the attention of local residents to them, than by any possible Government provision that can be devised. There are many things in our own county, for example, the curious works thrown up in the civil war, near Muswell Hill, in front of these windows, and Boarstall Tower, which you have seen to-day. Their preservation must depend on how the tower is occupied, and as to the earthworks, on whether the farmer is allowed to plough over them. These are not matters which can be trusted to Government. If we look at what governments do in other countries—for example, in France—I doubt if you will find this work better carried out than in England. Certainly, the last thirty or forty years have done a great deal to insure the care of these relics for the future, and if, as I trust, within the next few years the interest in our social history should become more general, and this Society should persevere in urging upon the local proprietors to take care of these relics, a great deal will be done to preserve our past history. Perhaps, when the Society desires to visit again the northern part of the county, in the neighbourhood of Buckingham, you will honour the Duchess and myself by allowing us to receive you at Stowe (applause).

The company were entertained, at the close of the meeting, at a sumptuous luncheon, and shortly afterwards took their leave, after spending one of the most pleasant days which the members of the Society have ever enjoyed.