

Proceedings of the Society, 1872.

The annual meeting and excursion took place on Tuesday, July 23rd. The place of meeting was Bletchley, and the route taken was through Fenny Stratford, Simpson, Wavendon, Woburn, Little and Great Brickhill.

Bletchley Church is a handsome structure, and was restored in the year 1856. It is dedicated to St. Mary, and is in some parts of as early a date as the 11th century. In it is the monument of Richard, Lord Grey de Wilton, who died at Water-Hall in 1442, and was buried here with his son and grandson. The effigy was repaired and re-cut by Weston the statuary, at Browne Willis's expense. At the foot of the effigy is a helmet which is said to have belonged to Lord de Grey.

The party proceeded to Fenny Stratford, and visited Browne Willis's Chapel, for the particulars of which, see page 151.

The party then visited the site of the old Roman Station on the Watling Street, and inspected a number of coins which had been found there. The

Venerable Archdeacon Bickersteth gave an address on "Viarum Romanarum in agro Buckinghamiæ vestigia," which has been printed in the present number of the RECORDS, page 154.

The party then moved on to Simpson. The church is in a very dilapidated condition, but steps are being taken to restore it, and the lay impropiator has offered to rebuild the chancel.

The church of Wavendon was next visited. It was restored in 1849 at an expense of about £4,000, the cost of the restoration of the Chancel being borne by the Rector, the Rev. H. Burney.

The drive from Wavendon through Woburn Sands to Woburn, was very picturesque, and was much enjoyed by the whole party. They visited the two new churches—one at the Sands and the other at Woburn, built by the late Duke of Bedford, after designs by Mr. H. Clutton, Architect.

Luncheon was provided at the Bedford Arms, at which the Archdeacon presided, the vice-chair being taken by the Rev. C. Lowndes. After luncheon the annual meeting was held. The following list of candidates having been proposed and seconded at a committee meeting were unanimously elected:—Rev. W. Bennett, Bletchley; Eustace Grubbe, Esq. Holland Park, London; Rev. H. F. W. Ralph, Little Horwood; A. H. Cocks, Esq., Great Marlow; T. A. Turner, Esq., Whitechurch; Rev. C. L. Alexander, Stewkley; Rev. G. S. Bidwell, Simpson; C. G. Perceval, Esq., Passenham Manor, Stony Stratford; Rev. W. M. Hatch, Warden of St. Paul's College, Stony Stratford; Rev. J. L. Wigglesworth, Castlethorpe; Rev. T. P. Williams, Little Brickhill; Rev. W. P. C. Adams, Fenny Stratford.

All the officers were re-elected. The Rev. C. LOWNDES said that he and his brother secretaries had great pleasure in transacting the business of the Society, which was now in a fairly prosperous condition. The balance in hand on January 1st, was £2 14s. 8d. There was a long list of arrears of subscriptions, which he trusted would soon be paid, to meet the present liabilities. Mr. Lowndes added that the Archdeacon had kindly promised to give them an account of the life and character of Browne Willis, so many of whose works they had seen in that day's excursion.

The ARCHDEACON said he had much pleasure in complying with the request of Mr. Lowndes. On occasions like this it was not at all desirable to enter upon lengthy disquisitions, and he was not quite sure whether going through the process of reading formal papers was always an advantage. They had often been favoured with most excellent papers, which were valuable additions to their BUCKS RECORDS, but it was doubtful whether the reading of them in the course of an excursion day could secure for them the attention they deserved. Perhaps a few words spoken under the influence of the moment might be of more interest than reading a paper.

The account of Browne Willis given by the Archdeacon has been printed in the present number of the RECORDS, page 148.

Rev. H. BULL rose and proposed the health of the Archdeacon, with thanks to him for his very interesting and instructive lecture. They were indebted to him not only on this occasion, but at every meeting that took place, as he was extremely zealous in their cause, which he never deserted, and the prosperity and good work of the Association very much depended on him. The allusion of the Archdeacon to the numerous volumes now in safe custody at the Bodleian, reminded him of the importance it was that they should be studied by every archæologist, and he recommended their study in particular to the secretaries and others who contributed to their RECORDS, and who would find themselves very comfortably placed in one of those cool, old-fashioned nooks in the Library, poring over their contents.

The ARCHDEACON, in acknowledging the compliment which had been paid him, expressed the pleasure he had in rendering any service he could to the Society, though he assured them he got more information in these annual excursions than he could possibly give. It was a great pleasure to him to meet the laity on these occasions, and to see the progress made in the restoration of our churches. Mr. Lowndes had far more to do with the Society than he had, as on him fell the labour of arrangement and organization, without any care or trouble on his part; and the least he could do was to try to support him. He did not know what the Society would do without him. Their thanks were due to all the secretaries, but especially to Mr. Lowndes, and in the name of the company he thanked Mr. Lowndes for the pleasant excursion he had arranged for them, with a hope that his life would be long spared to prepare many more such.

Rev. C. LOWNDES said he had great pleasure in rendering those services to the Society which he had done for so many years, and as long as he remained secretary he would do his utmost to forward its best interests.

The party then returned through Great and Little Brickhill to Bletchley. Little Brickhill, now a decayed village, was once a place of no little importance. Here were held the Assizes and General Gaol Delivery for Bucks between 1433 and 1638, being mentioned as the first town in the County at which the Judges arrived on going the Norfolk Circuit. It is laid down as the Assize Town in Saxton's map, published in 1574. The elections, as well as other county meetings, were also convened here. The register, written on vellum, commences A.D. 1559, and between the years 1561 and 1618 contains the names of 42 persons in the 57 years who "suffered death and were buried," a cross in the margin indicating each case in which the law stepped in. The mode of death is seldom mentioned, though, in a few cases, hanging is stated, and in one burning, the victim in this instance being a woman, one Cecily Revis, who was burned in 1595; the crime is not stated. There are two entries connected with the civil wars; one the burial of a woman, "Agnes Potter, of Dunstable, wounded at the battle of Edge-hill," and the other that of a soldier of the King's Army, who was slain by the Parliament troops, August 27th, 1664. The church, dedicated to St. Magdalene, stands on the brow of a hill, below which runs the Roman Watling Street. It has been repaired at various times, once through the munificence of Browne Willis, and the last restoration it underwent was in 1864. The churchyard was enlarged in 1870, and the new portion consecrated in 1871.

The party next pushed on for Great Brickhill, where they visited the church, dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin, which was restored in 1865. It consists of a chancel with side chapels, a nave with aisles, a south porch, and a tower in the centre. The church contains many marble tablets to the Barton, Pauncefort, and Duncombe families. The company turned into the beautiful grounds of the rector, the Rev. Sir H. Foulis, Bart., which are kept with admirable neatness. They also passed through the pleasure-grounds of the lord of the manor, Sir Philip Pauncefort Duncombe, Bart., which are delightfully laid out, and command a splendid prospect.
