

Proceedings of the Society.

ANNUAL MEETING AND EXCURSION—AUG. 3rd, 1882.

THE Committee having received an invitation from Sir Samuel Wilson, to lunch at the Manor House, Hughenden, accepted it, and decided upon holding the Annual Meeting at Hughenden. The members and their friends left the Aylesbury Station, on the Great Western Railway, by the 9.20 a.m. train for High Wycombe. On arriving at Wycombe they proceeded in carriages to Desborough Castle. Here, under the guidance of Mr. B. S. Downs, of Wycombe, they climbed up the two steep escarpments of the earthworks, and made a halt in the interior stronghold, when Mr. Downs explained the various points of interest in this historic place, which he described as the most perfect example of a British camp remaining in this country. He pointed out the different lines of the entrenchment, and gave dimensions of all of them from measurements which he had himself made. Respecting the derivation of the word Desborough, and the different views which have been advanced, Mr. Downs has given in a paper printed in this current number of the RECORDS, page 248.

Returning to Wycombe, the party drove through the town to the Hospital of St. John the Baptist. J. Parker, Esq., F.S.A., of Wycombe, gave a very interesting description of the Hospital, which he has kindly written for insertion in the current number of the RECORDS, page 245.

Upon leaving Wycombe, the party followed the London Road as far as Loudwater, and turned in at the entrance to Rayners, Sir Philip Rose's place, by the lower lodge, which stands on the highroad there, and were driven along his private road, through Magpie Lodge, and up through the Home Farm to Rayners (two miles from the lower lodge), where they partook of some slight refreshment. Here the party was joined by the Hon. T. F. Fremantle, Lady Augusta and Miss Fremantle, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Lopes, and other guests staying at Rayners, and a number of friends and members of the Society from the neighbourhood, and after viewing the tree planted by Lord Beaconsfield, and the obelisk* erected to his memory, and to record the Queen's visit, and the Dogs' Cemetery, etc., went out at the upper lodge entrance in the village of Penn, and drove to Penn Church, where they were met by the vicar, the Rev. J. Grainger. Thence, the party drove through the adjoining hamlet of Tyler's Green (which forms a continuation of Penn village, but is actually in Wycombe parish, and where the common land is still unenclosed), passing by the large pond, and the avenue of elms on the Village Green, behind which formerly stood the old mansion, which, in the times of Pitt and Burke, was occupied as a Catholic school for the education of the sons and nephews of the French noblesse, who had

* See inscription on the same, page 282.

perished by the guillotine during the Revolution, and which was given up at the Restoration in 1814. Here the party halted, and Sir Philip Rose explained the surroundings.* The mansion belonged to General de Haviland, a relation of Mrs. Burke, and was taken for the purpose—Pitt supplying from the Treasury, £600 a year towards the expense, upon the condition that Burke would be the manager. There are some still living in the village who remember Burke on his visits to the school, in which he took the warmest interest, driving over frequently from Beaconsfield through Penn Village along this same road. (See "Life of Burke," by Prior, and others, in which the correspondence with Pitt is set out; and the reference in Burke's Diary to the school; to his visits and examination of the boys, etc., under the heading "Penn School.") There, sixty to seventy boys of the best French families were educated under the Abbé Chevalier, who was one of the principals. The boys wore a uniform, and those whose *parents* had been guillotined, a distinguishing mark. They had two cannon and flags presented to them by the Marquis of Buckingham, and a boat on the pond. The property was purchased by the first Earl Howe (Queen Adelaide's Chamberlain) and, sad to relate, was pulled down by him; and the cornices and architraves and other portions of the fine old house still form incongruous parts of some wretched cottages in the village, which were built with the old materials. The garden wall, with parts of a small building now converted into an Infant School, alone remain.

The party then visited St. Margaret's Club, founded for the working classes by Sir Philip Rose, then High Sheriff of Bucks, and opened by Lady Carrington, as the first public act of her married life, in August, 1878; and then went to St. Margaret's Church,† built and consecrated in 1854.

From the Village Green, the party passed down the hill to Potters Cross, where there are two ponds, and the cross road on the right leading to Penn Street and Penn House, one and a half miles. Up the opposite hill, along what used to be open forest with beautiful beech trees, but now cut down and enclosed, and inferior cottages built, passing near to a farm house and buildings belonging to Earl Howe, built after the enclosure, and which he called "Inkerman,"—from Col. Napier Sturt's representation that the contour of the country resembled that memorable spot,—and crossed the turnpike road at Hazelmere, which leads from Hatfield through Watford, Chesham, Amersham, Wycombe, and Marlow to Reading, known as the Hatfield and Reading Trust, upon which turnpikes existed up to 1882; and which road was constructed by the old Marquis of Salisbury, grandfather of the present Marquis, and promoter of the great turnpike roads in his day, and his protégé, Macadam, who, through Lord Salisbury's patronage, became famous, and his son attained to the dignity of knight, as a means of enabling Lord Salisbury, who was in the habit of taking the Bath waters, to reach that place from Hatfield with greater facility; but which turned out to be one of the greatest public benefits, as connecting together the small market towns of Herts, Bucks, and Berks by a good road, in the place of narrow lanes over very hilly country. Then down a steep dip to Deadman Dane Bottom, so called, it is supposed, from a great battle having been fought by the Danes at this spot, many human bones, rough tombs, battle axes, spears, and implements of warfare, having been discovered and dug up from time to time, even in recent years—turning up the hill to the left, through the hamlet of Wid-

* See further particulars, page 278.

† See account of this Church, page 277.

mer End, in Hughenden parish, the party arrived at the top of Criers Hill, from which the woods of Hughenden, and what is known as "The German Forest," are visible; and descending the steep pitch of Criers Hill, came into the road leading from Wycombe to Hampden and Aylesbury, which passes the lodge below the church, by which the party entered the domain and drove direct to the church.

The route between Hughenden and Rayners is one that Lord Beaconsfield frequently adopted by choice, preferring, as he described it, "*the perils of Criers Hill*," to having to "*run the gauntlet of the town of Wycombe*." But the whole of the route taken from Sir Philip Rose's lower lodge at Loudwater, to Hughenden, is identically the same, step by step as that followed by Lord Beaconsfield on the 10th Dec. 1880, when returning from his last visit to the Queen at Windsor Castle, he lunched at Rayners, and went home by Criers Hill in excellent health and spirits; and which Her Majesty, by express command, followed, on her private visit to the vault in Hughenden churchyard, on the 30th April, 1881, to lay a wreath on the tomb of her lost friend.

The party, after visiting the Church, arrived at Hughenden Manor, where they were most hospitably received and entertained by Sir Samuel and Lady Wilson, and where the following proceedings took place:

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

Sir SAMUEL WILSON asked permission to propose a toast. It was one, he said, which was never omitted where loyal Englishmen met together, whether in Buckinghamshire or in Australia, and he had always found that wherever it was proposed it was received with the enthusiasm which it deserved. The toast was that of her most gracious Majesty, the Queen (applause).

The toast having been duly honoured, the annual meeting of the Society was proceeded with, the Archdeacon of Buckingham being voted to the chair, called on the Rev. C. Lowndes, treasurer, to read his report, which showed a balance in hand of £1 1s. 4d.

The Rev. C. Lowndes, the Rev. B. Burgess, and the Rev. J. Wood were proposed as hon. secs. for the ensuing year, the Rev. C. Lowndes as treasurer, and Messrs. J. E. Bartlett and T. Horwood as auditors. Mr. Lowndes asked to be excused from further official duty on account of his failing sight; but the meeting insisted on re-electing him, and all the appointments were made as proposed.

The following were elected members of the Society:—Sir Samuel Wilson, Hughenden; Mr. A. Taylor, Haddenham; the Rev. W. Cotton Risley, Shalstone, Buckingham; the Rev. G. Parker, Quainton; the Rev. W. M. Myers, Swanbourne; the Rev. W. H. F. Kelly, Lacey Green; the Rev. F. Brealy, Little Linford; Mr. J. Toovey, Burnham Abbey; Mr. J. Adams, Aylesbury; the Rev. W. H. Pochin, Worminghall; the Rev. J. G. Chester, Chicheley; Mr. J. Young, Aylesbury; the Rev. Sir J. C. Hawkins, Manor House, Ellesborough; the Rev. E. Ilbert Crosse, Waddesdon; Mr. G. H. C. Hussey, junr., Plomer Hill House, Wycombe; the Rev. R. Chilton, Wycombe; the Rev. G. M. Lester, Stony Stratford; Mr. James Gurney, Aylesbury; Mr. J. Petit, Aylesbury; Mr. J. Turner, Aylesbury.

Mr. LOWNDES, on the recommendation of the Committee, proposed the election of Sir Philip Rose and Sir Samuel Wilson as vice-presidents.

The Rev. Canon EVERTS then proposed "The health of the Archdeacon of Buckingham," and congratulated him upon the manner in which the business of the meeting had been conducted.

The Archdeacon replied, and proposed "The health of Sir Samuel Wilson," thanking him for his great kindness in inviting the members of the Society to Hughenden, and for the kind way in which he had received them.

Sir SAMUEL WILSON said he hoped that all the work he would have to perform in his new character of vice-president, would prove as easy and as pleasant as that of that day. He had met kind friends on every hand since he had been in Buckinghamshire, and he felt it a very great honour, to be selected as the Conservative candidate for their County, after the great man who had occupied that place with such distinction and so much honour to the country. This Society was not a political one, and he trusted he had said nothing to hurt the feelings of any Liberal present, but hoped England would long remain great, prosperous, and respected.

The ARCHDEACON proposed "The health of Rev. C. Lowndes," who had been Secretary for twenty-four years.

Mr. LOWNDES having replied, the proceedings were brought to a conclusion.

Returning to Wycombe, the Rev. R. CHILTON conducted the party round the Church, and this completed one of the most successful and agreeable excursions the Society has ever held.