

The Proceedings of the Bucks Architectural and Archæological Society.

FOR THE YEAR 1893.

THE Society, on the 23rd August, made Windsor Castle the object of its annual gathering. The excursion had, owing to unavoidable reasons, been arranged somewhat hurriedly, yet a very fair response was made to the circular invitation issued by the Organising Secretary, Mr. A. H. Cocks, the party in all numbering about eighty. Through the kindness of the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Carrington, a special "permit" was granted, by which the members of the Society had access to portions of the Castle not ordinarily open to public inspection, a privilege which, it need hardly be said, was greatly appreciated. The visitors, too, had the excellent services of an experienced guide in the person of Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, M.A., the Assistant Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, who had just previously conducted the members of the Archæological Institute over the Castle, and who most readily responded to the invitation of Mr. Parker to give the same assistance to the Bucks Society. From the close attention Mr. Hope has given to the history of the Castle and its surrounding buildings, no one could have proved a more able cicerone than himself.

The morning was spent in going over the interior of the Castle, Mr. Hope commencing his remarks with a general explanation of its earliest history. The original mounds, and fortress, and the Saxon stockade, the alterations effected in the reigns of Henry III., Edward I., and Edward III., the work more particularly of William of Wickham, and onward to modern times, that of Wren and Watville, were all clearly brought before the attention of the members. After passing through the state apartments, an unexpected surprise was afforded to the members by the opening of the doors of the Royal Library, the only regret being that the time was too limited to inspect the valuable books and illuminated manuscripts, and the rare collection of prints, autographs, and drawings.

The morning's work was completed by a visit to the Round Tower. As was explained, the original idea of this structure was the Banqueting Chamber, used after the manner of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. The structural termination of the earliest building, erected in the eighteenth year of Edward III., was pointed out and clearly seen.

On completing the inspection of the Round Tower, the members and their friends retraced their steps to the town, and after luncheon at Mr. Ivey's Rooms, Thames Street, there held the Annual Meeting.

The Rev. R. Chilton, Rural Dean of Wycombe, presided.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretaries—the Rev. R. H. Pigott, Mr. J. Parker, Mr. A. H. Cocks, and Mr. Myres—were re-elected. The name of the Rev. F. W. Tatham, of Wing, having been added to the Committee, who were re-elected, Mr. J. Williams, of Aylesbury, was re-appointed Treasurer.

Mr. Parker, who presented the secretarial report, said that during the past year Mr. J. L. Myres had retired from the active work of the Society owing to his having gained the Clifford Fellowship at his University, a distinction the Society heartily congratulated him on attaining. His place as Secretary had been efficiently supplied by Mr. Cocks, who had taken considerable trouble and interest in the organization of that day's excursion. They had to lament the death of their old friend, who was their very active Secretary for many years, Mr. Robert Gibbs, of Aylesbury. He took immense interest in the Society, and no one would miss his familiar face and correspondence

more than he (Mr. Parker) should. He hoped that a suitable record of Mr. Gibbs' merits and work for the Society would appear in their RECORDS for the present year, which, owing to unavoidable circumstances, had been somewhat delayed in publication, but would, he hoped, be shortly available to the members. They were very anxious not only to extend the usefulness, but the number of members of their Society, and he asked those present to endeavour to introduce new members.

Mr. J. T. Harrison felt sure that it was the wish of the Society that Mr. Parker should write a suitable memorial of Mr. Gibbs's worth for the RECORDS.

Mr. J. Williams submitted the Treasurer's report, which showed subscriptions during the past year to the amount of £83 6s., a balance of £3 18s. 6d. being due to the Treasurer. He explained that the adverse balance was owing to the printer's bill having been paid up to 1891. The Society owed £44 13s. 7d. for printing in 1892, while the estimate for the present year had not yet been received. It was satisfactory to record that the annual income had increased, and now averaged about £84, and there were arrears in the subscriptions for 1892 amounting to £13, which was less than for several previous years.

Mr. Parker said they could not disperse without giving their thanks to those to whom they were chiefly indebted for that very interesting excursion. They were, in the first place, under a debt of obligation to Lord Carrington, the Lord Chamberlain, for kindly extending to them the special privilege of visiting parts of the Castle not usually shown to the visitors. Then they must thank Mr. St. John Hope for the singularly able manner in which he had guided them, and for the clear and concise information he had given them on the many points of interest in the Castle.

Mr. Cocks seconded the resolution, and in so doing apologised for the short notice that had been given of the excursion, owing to circumstances over which they had no control. Alluding to the proposed County Museum, he said that the movement was still going on, but they wanted money in order to bring it to a practical issue.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The following were elected members of the Society —The Rev. E. Elton, vicar of Sherrington, Newport Pagnell; Mr. A. C. Griffiths, 25, Talbot Sq., Hyde Park, London; and Mr. T. C. Baines, of High Wycombe.

The Chairman expressed a hope that the success of the present excursion would induce more members to join the Society.

The Rev. C. G. Hutchins proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Cocks for his kindness in so readily coming forward and continuing the secretarial work of Mr. Myres, when that gentleman had to withdraw from active service. A similar compliment was also extended to the other working members of the Society.

Mr. Harrison seconded the resolution, which was heartily accorded.

The meeting then ended.

The members again assembled under the guidance of Mr. St. John Hope. The weather, which had been unsettled now improved and became beautifully fine. The Towers within the circuit of the Lower Ward formed the chief objects of attention. Some time was occupied in noting interesting features in connection with the Curfew or Belfry Tower, built by Henry III. This was pointed out as being the only portion of the Castle erected in the thirteenth century that retains its original aspect. It was formerly designated the Clure Tower, presumably because of its being in the manor or parish of Clewer. Passing attention was drawn to the Choristers' Lodgings, the Dean's and Canons' Cloisters, and to external peculiarities of architecture in St. Georges' Chapel.

No attempt, it will be seen, is being made to reproduce Mr. St. John Hope's exhaustive information to the members of all that may be learnt of these royal buildings; yet an incident he brought to light in passing through the Cloisters will be of interest, and is worthy of recording, if only that it might very naturally be passed over by a less keen archaeologist. On the stone seats in the Cloisters Mr. Hope pointed out, in the true spirit of the antiquary, a touching example of a long-forgotten game played by the boys of the fourteenth century. The holes made in the seats by the boys of the period represent the table for playing the game known as "Nine-men's Morris." The holes are intended for the spots where the pawns or marbles were placed. Strutt says "The manner of playing is briefly this: Two persons, having each of them nine pieces or men, lay them down alternately, one by one, upon the spots, and the business of either party is to prevent his antagonist from placing three of his pieces so as to form a row of three without the intervention of an opponent's piece. From the moving of these men backwards or forwards," Strutt adds, "as though they were dancing a morris, I suppose the pastime received the appellation of Nine-men's Morris." (For a fuller explanation of the game, see Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes," pp. 317—318.) As before hinted, a point of interest of this kind may very well, from its insignificance, be lost sight of, whilst the special features of these historic buildings will be naturally the subject of inquiry. It is thought well, therefore, not to lose sight of Mr. Hope's minute description of everything worthy of attention in connection with the Castle and its surroundings.

Next in order came the Prince Consort's Memorial Chapel. Here the eye feasted upon the Mosaic figures, ornaments, and inscriptions covering the vaulted roof, and the magnificent stained-glass windows; while the three recumbent figures of the Prince Consort, the Duke of Albany, and the Duke of Clarence, were respectively commented upon—the latter, which is unfinished, being, according to Mr. Hope, even superior in workmanship to the others.

Then the members passed into the Chapel of St. George, every feature of which is strikingly characteristic of the end of the Perpendicular period. Assembling in the gorgeous Choir, they were reminded by the sculptured stalls and pendant banners and the emblazoned stall-plates, to which latter objects Mr. Hope is giving his special study, of the host of illustrious names, winners of the blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter, described as having been founded "to promote the honour of God and the glory and interest of their Sovereign." The building has numerous memorials of those who have either worn the crown or been closely connected with the throne. The little Beaufort, Rutland, and Bray Chapels were inspected in turn, and scarcely an item of prominent importance escaped notice. Finally, leaving the Chapel, Mr. St. John Hope led the way to the North Terrace, which was added to the Castle by order of Queen Elizabeth. He mentioned the length of this noble promenade as no less than 1870 feet, and alluded to the different towers which relieve the elevation of the terraces. The members and their friends were also privileged to walk along the East Terrace and gardens.

Many of the visitors were able to leave by convenient trains late in the afternoon, but for those who had to return to Aylesbury and the north of the county, Mr. Cocks very kindly volunteered his services as guide, and the time passed pleasantly in a walk to Eton, where the venerable college-buildings were, of course, the special object of inspection and interest.