

The Proceedings of the Bucks Architectural and Archæological Society,

FOR THE YEAR 1894.

THE Annual Excursion of the Society was held on Thursday the 2nd of August. The places visited were Waddesdon and Winchendon. The members first visited Waddesdon Church, where they were received by the Rev. F. J. Williams, the Rector, who gave them a cordial welcome. Mr. W. White, F.S.A., the architect employed in the restoration of the tower of the church, attended and produced a sketch of the old tower and gave details of the alterations that had been made, referring to the reports he had given in 1882 and in 1890, in which latter report he recommended an entire rebuilding. The interior of the church was afterwards inspected, a beautiful feature is the transitional Norman work in the arches of the nave. From the church the members drove to Waddesdon Manor, the seat of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, M.P., who had invited the Society to his beautifully situated mansion, truly a French chateau, the model of its architect having been the Chateau of Blois. The Annual Meeting was at once held, at which Baron Rothschild presided. The Bishop of Oxford was re-elected as President, and the Vice-presidents were also re-elected, and with them Baron Rothschild was elected an additional Vice-president. To the Committee the following names were added, Lieut.-Colonel Goodall, Mr. G. Weller, Mr. E. Wilkins, Mr. J. L. Myres, and Mr. W. H. Russell. The Honorary Secretaries and the Treasurer were re-elected.

Mr. Williams, the Treasurer, gave a financial report, showing a balance in hand of £9 10s. 1d., as compared with £3 18s. 6d. last year.

Mr. Parker presented the Secretarial Report which alluded to the remarkably interesting excursion to Windsor in 1893, under the able guidance of Mr. St. John Hope. He also referred to the deaths of two distinguished members of the Society, viz., Sir Harry Verney and Mr. Samuel Sandars, and he took occasion to call the meeting's attention to the three patrons of the Rectory of Waddesdon, the church being originally served by three Rectors, the supposed origin of this arrangement he explained to be, that the church was erected for the use of three Manors, the Lords agreeing by this means to save the cost of building three churches. One portion of the living was appendant to each Manor prior to tem. Hen. III.

After the election of several members of the Society, the Rev. Randolph H. Pigott read the paper on "The Dukes of Wharton and the Earl of Chesterfield," which is published in this number of THE RECORDS. At its conclusion

The Chairman heartily thanked Mr. Pigott, in the name of the company, for his interesting and entertaining paper. Passing on to make a

few comments upon it, Baron Rothschild observed that Mr. Pigott said that nothing remained of the original house of the Dukes of Wharton at Upper Winchendon. The company would wend their way to that spot on returning to Aylesbury, and they would perhaps see a small building in which the agent of the estate resided. That building was part of the ancient house the Lords Wharton inhabited, and it still retained some of the old oak panelling. Mr. Pigott had also alluded to a lady who was supposed to have resided in a castellated building. The Rector of Waddesdon, however, had made investigations which threw some light on the subject. Mr. Williams said that it was not a castellated building in which that lady lived, but a cottage, which also dated from the days of Lord Wharton, and stood in front of the Wilderness, and was inhabited by the gamekeeper of the estate. Some four or five years ago Mr. Williams inspected the crypt at Upper Winchendon Church, which had been restored. There, amongst the coffins of the Lords and Ladies Wharton, was discovered a coffin bearing a tablet with the inscription "Madame B.," and the date corresponded with the date tradition fixed as being that on which the "favourite lady," as she was called, died. The fact, too, that the word "Madame" was spelt with a final "e" proved that she must have been a foreigner. Then, Mr. Pigott said that the estate was confiscated by a King after the rebellion of the Duke of Wharton. He (the Baron) understood that the Duke died in 1728, whereas the estate was purchased, not by the Duke of Marlborough, but by the then widow of the great Duke of Marlborough, from the administrators of the estate of the Duke of Wharton, who became a bankrupt. Having made these corrections, with, he was sure, the approval of Mr. Pigott, the Baron formally submitted the vote of thanks, which was cordially responded to.

On the invitation of Baron Rothschild the company sat down to luncheon in the beautiful banqueting room.

Subsequently Lord Cottesloe expressed, in appropriate terms, the thanks of the Society to the Baron for the reception accorded them, and remarked that the hospitality of Waddesdon Manor was dispensed to all ranks and classes. Her Majesty the Queen was welcomed there, as well as the humblest peasant of the neighbourhood.

The toast was received with great cordiality.

Baron Rothschild, in returning thanks, said he was proud and delighted to entertain the Archæological Society of Buckinghamshire. He only regretted for their sake that they were unable to make any archæological discoveries in the mansion itself. The time would no doubt come—but he hoped it was far distant—when that house would share the fate of the ancient houses of Winchendon and Eythrope, and when the ruins would attract the curiosity of Macaulay's New Zealander. On one occasion when he had some friends staying at his mansion, one of the ladies came to him in the morning with horror and said she had heard a ghost in her bedroom, but she admitted that she had not seen it. He could not induce her to sleep in the same room again, but from that day he was very proud to think that Waddesdon Manor had aspired to the rank of a haunted house. He hoped the Society would repeat their visit to that neighbourhood, and assured them that if they did he would give them a hearty welcome. He was sorry to say he had received a note from his sister, saying that she was laid up with illness. Miss Rothschild was waiting to welcome them that day but was confined to her room. She wished him to say that she had made arrangements for their reception in her grounds, and that everything was in order for the occasion.

The guests were shown over the principal rooms and inspected

the treasures of the mansion, and afterwards adjourned to the grounds, where the Baron took leave of them.

A very pleasant drive brought the Members to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Upper Winchendon, which has been recently restored under the supervision of Mr. W. White. This little village church has much to charm the Archæologist. The Rector of Waddesdon conducted them to the chancel, and Mr. White, speaking from the reading desk, described the alterations which had been made during the work of restoration. He read a lengthy correspondence, from which it appeared that he differed from the recommendations of the Society of Ancient Monuments on various points, and that the restoration was effected in accordance with his own views. Among the features of interest are the old oak pulpit and screen, the latter having been reproduced in Tasmania.

From this church the Members proceeded to Eythrope and inspected the site of the Earl of Chesterfield's mansion. They also walked through the beautiful gardens of Miss Alice de Rothschild in the direction of the stables. Here, in a spare building, they were shown the brass effigy (referred to in Mr. Pigott's paper, illustrated in this number) of Sir Roger Dynham, which was found beneath what was described as "the haunted spot."

The inspection of this effigy concluded the proceedings.

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