



The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

Proceedings of Societies.

THE last Summer Excursion for 1899 of the Berks Archæological Society took place on September 27th, when a visit was paid to Wantage, Harwell, Hendred, Ardington, and (by kind invitation of Lord and Lady Wantage) to Lockinge House. Except for a few showers, which did not seem to damp the ardour of the archæologists, the weather was most favourable, and an enjoyable and instructive day was spent. The Churches in the country villages in the neighbourhood of Wantage possess many features of peculiar interest to archæologists, and the Society were fortunate in having them described by the President (Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A.,) who takes a deep interest in the Churches in the county.

The party, numbering about 40, left the Reading G.W.R. Station by the 10 a.m. train for Didcot, where brakes were in waiting to convey them to the villages mentioned.

On arrival at Didcot the party at once proceeded to Harwell, where they were met at the Church gates by the Vicar (the Rev. S. Mountjoy Smith). Previous to walking round the Church the party became seated, and Mr. C. E. KEYSER gave a brief outline of the history of the Church and the special points of interest connected with it. Harwell Church is of Norman architecture. The Church was begun in or about the year 1200, and the plan is cruciform. It possesses some very fine Norman pillars, and it was, no doubt, the original intention of the architect to have a

central tower, instead of at the west end as now. The tower dates from about the year 1250, and the window openings in the tower were especially interesting. The edifice also possesses a most beautiful chancel, of the approximate date of 1300. There are also some fine decorative windows and a good deal of Kentish tracery, now rarely found outside the county of Kent. There is also a great deal of old glass in the Church. A shield in the east window bears the coat-of-arms of one of the early Lords of the Manor—Richard Earl of Cornwall, King of the Romans in the time of Edward III. A very rare decorative oak screen, a beautiful cross, lying in the chancel floor, in memory of a former Vicar, and the old altar stone and table were other objects of interest. A curious brass placed in the Church to John Jennings, who died in 1599, and who had six sons and five daughters, bore the following inscription :—

“ Good wife and children agree,
Serve the Lord and come to me.”

In another part of the Church a tablet commemorated the fact that the body of Rebecca Cowdery lay there, she having entered into rest on 10th February, 1805, aged 19 years, and “was a wife, a mother, and Dust in the short space of 10 months.” Some very singular sculptures adorn the walls of the Church, chiefly in the chancel.

EAST HENDRED.

A charming drive brought the party to East Hendred. The visitors were conducted over the Church by Mr. Eyston, the Lord of the Manor, and Mr. Sowden, C.C. As Mr. Keyser remarked, East Hendred was a very interesting place, and had a good historical record. It was at one time a very important market town. There were originally five manors, four ecclesiastical and one a lay manor, and still connected with the Eyston family. Mr. Eyston belonged to one of the oldest resident families in Berks, which had been associated with the county for over 600 years.

The Church in this village has been restored, but not very happily. At the time of its restoration the Ven. Archdeacon Pott was Vicar of the parish, and it was felt by many that more was carried out than was absolutely necessary. The Church was entirely reconstructed. About the end of the 12th century there appeared to be a rather undue accession of wealth brought into the district, with the result that the restoration of the churches was largely taken in hand. There were still, however, traces of the Norman work. On the north side of the Church the old transepts

had been done away with, and an aisle formed. The "Eyston" Chapel attached to the Church was of nice Perpendicular work of about the year 1500. It contained the vault of the family, but the chapel was not used at the services. The clerestory windows, dating back to the year 1300, the fine tower of rather late Perpendicular work, and two brasses erected to the memory of "Henry and Robert Eldysley, merchants at this place," all proved exceedingly interesting to the visitors. On the massive old Jacobean carved oak pulpit is the head of Charles I. The tower contains a very curious old wooden clock (date 1528), which is not only a correct time-keeper but also plays tunes. The most interesting object in the Church, however, is the Lectern, being one of those which was made before the Reformation. The stand represents a male foot resting on the bodies of three dragons.

THE MANOR HOUSE.

By kind permission of Mr. Eyston a visit was paid to the Manor House, and the little Lady Chapel attached. The latter was built about the year 1265, by one of the Turbevilles, who was then Lord of the Manor. In 1688 the Prince of Orange, who passed over the road known as the Golden Mile End, visited the chapel, which had been plundered and desecrated. In the north window of the chapel there is a picture of Hugh Farringdon, the last Abbot of Reading, whilst in the vestry near lies a somewhat curious effigy which was dug up at Poffley Priory, near Chaddleworth. The Manor House is full of historical interest, and contains pictures of Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, born 1486, and beheaded July, 1535; Cardinal Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, beheaded June 1535; and Cardinal Pole, Archbishop of Canterbury, died 1552.

Assembling in the drawing-room, the members of the Society listened to an interesting paper which was read by Mr. EYSTON, as follows:—

EAST HENDRED MANORS.

The parish of East Hendred lies in two Hundreds—viz., those of Reading and Wanting. There are five manors.

THE ABBEY MANOR.

probably is the one at the time of the Domesday Survey, and belonged to the King. After the death of Henry I it was in possession of his daughter, the Queen Matilda, who gave it to the Abbey of Reading. It belonged to the abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539. Henry VIII. granted this abbey to Henry Norris, or Norreys, then a boy, afterwards Ambassador in the reign

of Elizabeth, an ancestor the present Lord Abingdon. The manor continued in the Norris family until James I, when it was sold to one "Fenton." It passed from him to the Earl of Kelly in 1622, and from him to Sir Peter Vanlore, who sold it in 1623 to William Eyston, and it has since continued in the Eyston family.

THE MANOR OF ARCHES

derives its name from being in the possession of the Arches family. It is the only one of the five manors that has always been in lay hands. It was held by Henry de Ferrers in the Norman Survey. William de Crossbecy was lord of the manor in East Hendred in 1171, probably this one. In the reign of Henry III. the manor was in the hands of the Turbevilles, of East Hendred, and from them it passed to the Arches by the marriage of William de Arches with Annie, daughter of Sir Richard de Turbeville. Four generations of the Arches held this manor, which then passed to John Stowe, of Burford, Oxon, by his marrying, about 1443, Maud, daughter of Ralph Arches. John Stowe's daughter and heiress married John Eyston, descended from the Eystons of Isleworth, county Middlesex. Since this the manor has belonged to the Eyston family.

CHAPEL OF SS. AMAND AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

This chapel is attached to the mansion house, and dates 1265. In 1688, when the Prince of Orange passed over the Golden Mile (which forms part of the Hungerford-road, in East Hendred parish, next to the Downs), according to an MS., written by Charles Eyston; "Some loose fellows (whether by orders or not I cannot tell) came together, went into the chappell, pretended to mock the priest by supping out of the chalice, which they would have taken away had it been silver, as they themselves afterwards gave out. However, having torn down the Jesus Maria from the altar, which holy names were painted upon pannells in the same frames, where the Jesus Maria are now wrought in bugles, they retired, taking an old suite of church stuffe with them to Oxford, where they dress up a mawkin with it and set it up there on the top of a bon-fyre. This happened on Monday, 11th December, 1688, and this is all the mischief they did, besides breaking the lamp and carrying away the sanctus bell.

FRAMPTON MANOR

lies in the Hundred of Wanting, and belonged to the Benedictine Priory of Frampton. It became a cell to St. Stephen's Abbey, at Caen, in Normandy, by gift of William the Conqueror. It was suppressed in the reign of Henry V. as being one of the non-Conventical Alien Priories. According to Lysons and Clarke, the

manor came into possession of the Duke of Bedford, and was left by him in 1436 to Henry VI., who granted it to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, who surrendered it to Henry VIII. Ashmole says at one time it belonged to Abingdon Abbey ; another account says that it belonged to the Augustinian Priory of Bradenstoke in Wilts, about the time of the dissolution. In 1539 it was granted by Henry VIII. to John Winchcombe, of Noke, co. Oxon, after that to John Sherwood, of East Hendred, who was in possession in 1602. His great grandson, Edward Sherwood, left it to an only daughter, Mary, who married George Cooper, M.D. After her death, in 1788, Sir John Pollen succeeded in right of his grandmother, who was a Sherwood, and his son, Sir John Walter Pollen, sold his manor 1st March, 1822, to Mr. Allin, of East Hendred.

KING'S MANOR

at the Norman Survey belonged to the Earl of Evreux. It was given by him to the Alien Priory of Noion, in Normandy. In the reign of Henry V. it was given to the Carthusian Priory of Sheen, near Richmond, which was called the House of Jesus of Bethlehem, and founded in 1414 by Henry V. By his charter (3 and 4, H. V., M. 8) he grants leave to the Prior and Monks to have a weekly market at East Hendred every Tuesday and two fairs yearly. On this manor, on the north east, there still stands the chapel which was formerly called Jesus of Bethlehem, and now called Champs, having come into the possession of a Mr. Champ. It is now the property of the trustees of the late Mrs. Roby, of East Hendred. There is a house attached, some part of which appears to be the same date as the chapel. This chapel, no doubt, was built by the Carthusians of Sheen, temp. Henry VI. This manor came into the hands of the Crown in 1539, and hence has obtained the name of the King's Manor. During the Commonwealth it was sold to one John Addis, who held a court at Hendred 25th March, 1641. After the restoration it returned to and remained in the hands of the Crown till 1823, the stewardship of it having been given for the purpose of vacating a seat in the House of Commons. About 1833 it was sold to Mr. Allin, of East Hendred.

NEW COLLEGE MANOR

formerly belonged to the Prior of Littlemoor, in Oxfordshire ; it was a Benedictine Priory for Nuns in the reign of Henry II. In 1229 Isabella de Hendred was elected Prioress of Littlemoor. Soon after the dissolution this manor passed into the hands of John Lord Williams, of Thame. He left certain charities, and his executors

appointed the warden and scholars of New College, Oxford, trustees. Hence this manor has been called New College Manor, though it never belonged to the college. The warden and scholars held their trusts till recently, when they were handed over to the Charity Commissioners.

Before leaving the Manor House Mr. Keyser thanked Mr. and Mrs. Eyston for their kindness in allowing the party to visit the house, and Mr. Eyston for his interesting paper on the five manors.

WEST HENDRED.

The principal feature in the Church at West Hendred was the high-backed pews, some of which were very old and splendidly carved. This Church had, however, also undergone restoration. The most notable features were the old glass, the red and polished tiles in the aisle, with which churches in the olden days were paved, the ornate windows, etc. In the north window the letters "E" and "S," with a crown repeated twice, were prominently displayed. These were supposed to be the initials of Edmund Sparsholt, who came from Sparsholt, and was a man of considerable importance, being High Sheriff of Berkshire at different periods during the reigns of Richard II., Henry IV. and Henry V. This Church possesses one of the old fonts with Jacobean cover. One of the windows in the Church contained the emblems of the four Evangelists, which were of striking interest.

ARDINGTON.

The Church of Ardington has undergone considerable restoration. The Church was reconstructed about the year 1200, and has a splendid semi-circular doorway of the Norman period. Some very fine windows adorn the building, which has a number of old tiles. The Vernon Chapel, on the north side, the curious font of the tub-shaped pattern, and the decorated doorway with dog-tooth ornamentation were inspected with much interest. The Church contains a very fine churchwardens' chest, dating back to 1638—one of the finest to be found in this part of the country. The beautiful chancel was restored in 1887 by Canon Trotter, Lord Wantage bearing the expenses incurred in the body of the Church.

WANTAGE CHURCH.

On arrival at Wantage the party first of all lunched at the Bear Hotel, and subsequently visited the old Parish Church. Mr. Keyser explained all the interesting parts of the Church, the principal feature of which is the massive appearance it presents internally. This Church was almost wholly rebuilt about the end of the 13th

century. The large chancel, the elaborate windows, and the fine effigies of a cross-legged knight and lady—the former being Sir William Fitzwarren, who died in 1361—in the chancel, gave the visitors much pleasure. There are also two fine brasses in the north transept, which are some of the finest in the country. One of these represents a knight in armour. The second figure represents a priest in his robes. In the vestry was some very ancient and interesting old plate, including two tall silver flagons. Among many other interesting relics, the vestry also contains a fine oil painting of Bishop Butler, who was born at Wantage in 1692, his father being a Presbyterian. The tower arches and the splendid screen and stall work were all much admired.

In the afternoon a public meeting was held in the Wantage Town Hall, when a valuable and interesting lecture was delivered on the history of the town by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield. Lord Wantage, V.C., Lord Lieutenant of the County, presided over a large attendance.

Lord WANTAGE, in opening the meeting, said he had been asked by some of his friends around Wantage to say a word or two of welcome to those who had come into the west parts of Berkshire, and he most willingly extended that welcome. His chief object that afternoon was to introduce to them the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, who would give them some words of instruction on the history of the town of Wantage. It required research, and dexterity in searching the records of the ancient borough of Wantage, which was the birthplace of the great King Alfred. It seemed rather an astonishing thing to say, but nevertheless it was true, that during the 1,001 years since King Alfred's death, the population of Wantage had very little increased. Lord Wantage remarked that after that meeting Lady Wantage and himself had invited the members of the Society present to take tea at Lockinge and to look over their interesting Church there, which appeared to have been an offshoot of the mother Church of Wantage. They had been pleased to find some arms at Lockinge belonging to Lords who once owned territory in the town of Wantage. At Lockinge they would see glass representing arms which were preserved with more care than in the town of Wantage. He did not know if Lords of the Manor during those times visited different parts of the old county of Berkshire. He had visited, he believed, every park in the county. It was not, however, in an archæological spirit, but as one who was interested in military advancement, and for the sake of that fine Regiment of

which he was so long Colonel. In Windsor Park, and in other parks of the county they had spent many happy days. All those ladies and gentlemen who had leisure at that time of the year could not do better than visit the Churches throughout the county. They could not become really patriotic unless they saw the beauties of the county in which they lived. He did not think there were any people in any part of England who were more interested in their Churches than those in Berkshire. Berkshire had become a thoroughly territorial district. He had a curious instance of it the other day, when in the company of Sir Redvers Buller. The latter was talking about the 60th Rifles, and remarked that the officers of that Regiment were second to none. Sir Redvers was a 60th Rifles officer, but he was sorry to say the men were inferior. This statement, coming from a 60th Rifle man was somewhat remarkable. The reason was that the 60th Rifles had no territorial district to recruit from. This was where the 66th (Berkshire) was successful. The Berkshire was fast becoming one of the best regiments in the country, and this was due to patriotism. He hoped that the territorial system would continue to be successful. He then asked Mr. Ditchfield to deliver his address.

The Rev. P. H. DITCHFIELD then read a paper on the history of the town which, owing to want of space, is reserved until the next number.

Mr. C. E. KEYSER, as President of the Berks Archæological Society, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Lord Wantage for his kindness in presiding that day. They knew him at Reading, and the east side of Berkshire just as much as they did at Wantage, and they were all glad to know that he was willing to associate himself with anything that interested the people generally. He appealed for more recruits from that part of the county, in order to make the Society more popular. He also proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Ditchfield for his paper, and both propositions were carried with much applause.

Lord WANTAGE briefly returned thanks.

The party then drove back and partook of tea at Lockinge House, subsequently visiting the interesting old Church and charming grounds. Mr. Keyser explained that almost everything connected with that pretty little Church was of a much later date than the other churches they had visited. When it became necessary to enlarge the Church it was found impossible to build on the north side without taking down part of the mansion. In order to avoid

this an additional aisle was erected on the south side. The doorway and window in the chancel were Norman, dating back to about the middle of the 12th century. There was also a very fine font of the same period. The beautiful chancel arch belonged to the Decorative period, whilst the archives were of the 14th century. The ironwork on the door was very old, although the door was somewhat new. The south side was erected about eight or ten years ago, the architect being a Mr. Allin, who was a resident of the neighbourhood. The splendid pillars in this part of the Church, of English oak, cut out of solid blocks, and the roofing of the same character, called forth much comment. The pretty east window was designed by a member of Lord Wantage's family—Lady Jane Lindsay. The figures on the windows represent St. George, St. Oswald, and St. Martin, with the three Archangels above, the Church being dedicated to All Saints. The solid heavy brass and beautifully-carved candelabra, which were brought home from Corfu, and which contained some very fine and old Venetian work, were much admired. At the west end of the Church there is a marble monument to the late Lady Overstone, the mother of Lady Wantage. When the Church was restored and the new aisle added, the original north aisle became the centre one, with the chancel, whilst the old chancel is now used as a vestry.

After thanking Lord and Lady Wantage for their kind hospitality, the party drove back to Didcot, and then took train for Reading, arriving at eight o'clock, after a most instructive and pleasant day.

Proceedings of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, 1899.

LENT TERM, 1899.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH.

A Visit (No. cclxvii.) was made at 2.15 p.m. to Keble College. The Rev. the Warden (Dr. Lock) received the party in the Hall, and both there and in the Chapel described the chief features of interest. After inspecting the Library, the members moved to