

ANNUAL EXCURSION, JUNE 1925

About eighty people attended the Annual Excursion on a day which was fine, but not particularly warm. A start was made from Aylesbury and the first stopping-place was Notley Abbey, where, by kind permission of Mr. H. Reynolds, the thirteenth century remains of the Cloisters, and the wonderful corbel-table (illustrated on p. 216 of this volume of the "Records,") were examined. A brief history of the Abbey buildings was given and a large-scale plan, taken from the Historical Monuments Commissioners' Report and coloured according to the dates of the buildings, was exhibited. The former guest-house, which constitutes the present residence, was examined and the picturesque appearance of the sixteenth century stair-turret admired.

Time admitted of no long stay there, and the next place visited was the Court House at Long Crendon, the well-known hall of the Wool Staplers, erected in the fifteenth century and acquired by the National Trust in 1898, here the woodwork aroused a good deal of interest.

The noble cruciform church of Long Crendon, mostly of the thirteenth century, though slight remains of an earlier structure remain at the west end of the nave, was next visited; and the various details of the period to which the greater part of the church belongs were pointed out; and the fine tomb in the S. transept to Sir John Dormer was particularly noticed as typical of such work in the early seventeenth century.

From Long Crendon the party proceeded to Brill, through very pleasant country; lunch was served at the "Sun" Hotel, and the large party was efficiently served.

After lunch the place first touched was Boarstall Tower, now occupied by Mrs. Jennings Bramly, who most kindly allowed the party to enter that wonderful relic of fourteenth-century domestic architecture. In the large room upstairs a paper was read which largely concerned the fate of the former house during the Civil War. Originally held by Sir William Campion for the King it was surrendered to Sir William Waller in 1644; but the error of exposing the Oxford garrison to depredatory attacks from Boarstall soon led the Royal party to recover it for the King. In 1645 it was attacked by Fairfax without success, but in the following year (6th June, 1646) Sir Thomas managed to wrest it from Sir William Campion. Extracts from the correspondence which led up to the surrender were read (from Lipscomb, I., 81 to 86), together with the account given by Anthony à Wood in his *Life* (p. 40); he was at that time a school-boy at Thame, and his story has a certain engaging freshness, though slight in itself. Many years later, 16th May, 1668, he revisited Boarstall and found that when he compared it with the memory of his former visit "whereas then it was a garrison, with high bulwarks about

it, deep trenches and pallsadoes, now it had pleasant gardens about it, and several sets of trees well growne," (p. 211).

The beautiful and appropriate furniture now in the Gatehouse, set in the great chamber with its massive roof-timbers, sixteenth century fireplace, and armorial glass of the seventh century in the windows, exhibiting the arms of Aubrey and Ap Gwyllym,—elicited expressions of sincere admiration from members of the Society.

After leaving Boarstall the next stopping-place was Chilton Church, where the very curious development of plan was carefully noticed; the south transept, of the thirteenth century, is out of line with the nave which was rebuilt in the fifteenth century; whilst the tower, which balances the transept on the north side of the nave, belongs to the fourteenth century. The extraordinary appearance of a thirteenth century effigy on the *exterior* of the east wall of the nave was observed; and the imposing monument to Sir John Croke (1608) in the south chapel received attention. Two ridged stone slabs, or coffin-lids, under the floor of the south transept were shown by the kindness of the churchwarden, who also drew attention to the remains of a curious chaplet, found in the parvise above the south porch.

From Chilton members went to Dinton, where they glanced at the pleasant green, with stocks at the side beneath a little penthouse, and then passed into the fine church, with its magnificent porch of c. 1140. Members regretted to see the sad discolouration induced by leakage of rain-water where the south porch joins the south aisle. The fine brasses in the south aisle were studied, and the noble table which stands near them, and bears its date (1606) carved on the front rail.

From Dinton the party drove to Stone, where they were most hospitably entertained to tea by Lady Smyth in the charming garden which is attached to St. John's Lodge.

Those of the members who could spare the time afterwards looked into Stone Church, and saw the much-travelled font of the twelfth century, with its over-elaborate decoration, and the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century brasses to the Gurneys; the second of these is a palimpsest.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Bucks Archæological Society was held at the Parish Hall, Aylesbury, on 14th Oct., 1925. The Chairman (Major Coningsby Disraeli) presided, and others present were Mesdames S. S. Flower, S. E. Wilkins, H. Yates Thompson, Disraeli, Bennitt, and Wyness, Misses C. Baker, R. Denny, J. Wake, A. D. Grinnell, K. S. Grinnell, and Borrow, Sir James Berry, the Rev. R. Bruce Dixon, F. W. Bennitt, Col. Wyness, Lieut.-Col. F. T. H. Bernard, Major S. S. Flower, Messrs. J. O. Manton, F. W. Reader, E. Berry, H. Yates Thompson, E. G. Roscoe, E. Corner, G. Eland, W. H. Williams, A. McDonald F. W. Blake, the Hon. Secretaries (Messrs. W. Bradbrooke and W. J.

Barnes), and the Curator (Mr. E. Hollis). Apologies for absence were received from Lady Smyth, Col. Pixley, Messrs. Ralph C. Hazell, C. G. Watkins, and W. Crouch.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman proposed the re-election of Lord Rosebery as president, Sir James Berry seconded, and it was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. W. Bradbrook remarked that during the year they had lost by death one of their vice-presidents, the Lord Bishop of Oxford. He proposed that the other vice-presidents be re-elected, and this was agreed to. The vice-presidents are Lord Boston, Viscount Hambleden, the Bishop of Buckingham, Bishop Shaw, Major Coningsby Disraeli, Lady Smyth, Sir James Berry, and Mr. D. Montague.

The Chairman said it had been proposed by the Council that they should ask Dr. James, Provost of Eton, a celebrated and well-known archaeologist, to join their ranks as a vice-president, and if it was the pleasure of the meeting he would like to propose that Dr. James be elected a vice-president of the Society. —This was agreed to.

The following members of the Council were re-elected:—The Revs. F. W. Bennitt and R. F. Bale, Col. James Wyness, Lieut.-Col. F. T. H. Bernard, Major S. S. Flower, Capt. Ivor Stewart Liberty, Messrs. J. E. Manton, E. Corner, W. Crouch, F. W. Reader, E. G. Roscoe, and C. O. Skilbeck

The Chairman referred to the excellent work of the secretaries, and said he did not think they could do better than re-elect them. This was agreed to with applause, and with their re-election the Chairman gave them the Society's thanks for their work.

On the proposition of Mr. Bradbrook Col. Pixley was re-elected hon. treasurer, with the thanks of the Society for his services. Messrs. W. Crouch and C. G. Watkins were re-elected auditors.

The Chairman said the position of Editor of the "Records" had been excellently held by Mr. Eland, and he proposed his re-election with special thanks for all he had done.—The meeting readily agreed to this proposal.—Messrs. F. W. Reader and E. Hollis were elected representatives to the Congress of Archaeological Societies.

COUNCIL'S REPORT

The report of the Council was given by Mr. Bradbrooke, who said that during the year the Society had lost by death one of its vice-presidents, the Lord Bishop of Oxford, and amongst the members, Col. Henry Burney (Wavendon), Sir Stephen Collins, Mr. E. M. Johnson, and Mr. C. H. Payne. The oldest member of the Society, Canon John Wood, elected in 1857, retired last June to the great regret of the Council, and rather than lose him the Council made him an honorary member, and he (Mr. Bradbrooke) was directed to communicate with him on the subject and he agreed to accept the position. The members would agree that it would be very sad if the oldest member gave up his membership. The visitors to the Museum since last Christmas numbered 5,500. Only adults were counted and the number of children was in

excess of the number of adults, so that they might consider that during the last nine months the Museum had been visited by certainly not less than 10,000 visitors. During 1924, the number of adult visitors was 6,231, so that with three months to run they were not far behind the attendance of last year. The present number of members was 363, which was the largest on record and the Council hoped that it might be still further increased for the expense of running the Society and the Museum was considerable, and could only be met if very general interest was taken and their membership rose considerably, to certainly not less than 500.

FINANCE

Mr. Bradbrooke continued that the Treasurer was not present so that he was obliged to make reference to the finance. On December 31st last the balance standing to their credit was £12:13:10. Since then, to September 30th, the Treasurer had received in subscriptions £215:18, and other monies which made up a total of £475:19. The expenditure up to date was £370:1:9, which left a balance on October 1st of £105:17:3. There were certain outstanding liabilities amounting to about £57, which had since been paid, but more money had been paid into the bank so that at present the Society had a balance at the bank of about £50 or more, which would carry it on until the end of the year. The subscriptions of members did not suffice to carry on the Society and the Museum and to pay all the charges. The late Sir Arthur Liberty left £2,000 to the Society and the interest from that was used to help pay the expenses of maintaining the Museum, and this year the trustees of that fund had paid £75 to the Society for that purpose. In addition the County Council, owing to the educational facilities provided, had made a grant of £100 to the Society, and members would see that the grants from the County Council and the Liberty trustees had only a little more than cleared the extra expenditure. The Society had also received during the year certain other sums. The members were circularised and told that after grave consideration the Council had decided not to raise the subscription of 10s. per annum, but asked every member to consider the extra expenditure and higher charges which had to be met, and they were asked to voluntarily add something to the subscription. That appeal met with a very gratifying response, so that they would be solvent at the end of the year and probably have a balance at the bank.

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM

Mr. Hollis gave descriptions of two recent gifts to the Society by Mr. G. Weller and Mr. T. Field. He said that Mr. Weller had handed over the whole of his collection to them, including a portion of the original manuscript of Lipscomb's "History of Bucks," which was certainly most important from their point of view. There were also Lipscomb's rubbings of Buckinghamshire brasses, taken about 1820, and twenty of these rubbings showed portions of brasses, which had been lost since 1820. There was also a number of prints and drawings. Mr. Field's gift had a certain county interest in that his house stood on the site of the old Grey Friars Monastery, and he had given quite a miscellaneous collection of things dug up on the site of his house, dating from Roman days

to comparatively modern days. He had also given them a large collection of plate. Some of it was genuine old plate, such as Elizabethan rat tail spoons, and old standing salt cellars, which were valuable in themselves. Other pieces were reproductions of valuable old silver, which Mr. Field had had reproduced in silver for the Society, and the collection was a really valuable one. He thought the thanks of the Society should be passed to Mr. Field and Mr. Weller. Mr. Weller's gift was practically all of great county interest, and he would like to mention to those members of the Council who had not heard of it before that in the centre of the hall in the Museum were two exhibits which were gratifying to him as showing the interest the school children had taken in what they had been able to do for the County Museum. These exhibits were a bronze dagger and a stone weapon found by school children at The Lee and Chartridge, respectively.

Votes of thanks were then passed to Mr. Weller and Mr. Field for their handsome and valuable gifts to the Society.

A DISCOVERY AT HALTON

Mr. F. W. Reader reported on a discovery at Halton which they wanted the committee to consider. It was a mound near Halton Camp, and his attention was drawn to it by Mr. Hollis, who observed it while training troops during the war. He (the speaker) got the Chief Engineer at the Camp to give him permission to search for it and after locating it they applied to the Air Vice-Marshal Lambe for permission to examine it. This was very readily given and every assistance was given. They cut an experimental trench four feet wide and 60 or 70 feet long. They had encountered unexpected conditions. Most of the soil in the neighbourhood and within a stone's throw of it was simply eight inches of ordinary humus on top of the chalk rock, but here they found four or five feet of chalk marl and then they were on top of the solid chalk. The mound was formed of chalk rubble with a lot of large flints in it so that it presented rather an interesting geological problem, and he would like to have some expert geological advice on it before they recommended going any further. There were distinct indications on the surface of a ditch, but on digging they found no trace of it at all, although it was well marked on the surface by the depression and the difference in the herbage. They found nine fragments of early pottery, some of them hand-made, and they compared very closely with those found on Boddington Hill close by. They had also found what appeared to be a hearth, but it would have to be substantiated whether the wood was really carbonised or whether its condition was the result of a fire, because it was in such a position that it must have been put on the ground while the marl was deposited. If that was so it showed that there were very great forces at work in our history later than they supposed. There was also a great number of animal bones, which were split and broken, possibly by man or by wild beasts.

(From the "Bucks Herald" of 17th October, 1925).

ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM

The Museum and Library have been enriched this year by many gifts of great importance; taking them in the order in which they were received may be mentioned:—

A HORSE'S BIT, of c. 1560, dug up in the grounds of Little Kimble House in November, 1924, and generously presented to the Society by Mr. L. G. A. Jaques. In length the bit measures 12 ins.; the curb-chain and the jointed bar which connected the lower portion are missing, but the essential features remain in an excellent state of preservation, and bear the marks of admirable workmanship.

Next came

MR. GEORGE WELLER'S GIFT

This consisted of a large paper copy of Lipscomb in the original boards, as issued, and nine volumes of Lipscomb's MSS. relating to the Hundreds of Ashendon, Aylesbury, Buckingham, and Cottesloe, etc.; these were all from the Phillips' Collection.

In addition there were Lipscomb's Brass Rubbings in 24 parishes, and 20 of these rubbings contain portions of brasses since lost.

There are numerous packets of Engravings relating to the County, and a collection of Maps.

A series of Water-colour Drawings of Bucks Churches, made by T. Trotter in 1801, is of particular interest; and the Photographs of Churches and Mansions by May, published in 1862, is a rare and valuable record.

The Drawings and Engravings include those described in "Records," X pp. 379-389; amongst them is the drawing by Sir James Thornhill, of Wotton House, reproduced with the article mentioned.

It is difficult to exaggerate the high topographical value of this splendid gift, which forms a great acquisition to the Society's archives.

ALDERMAN THOMAS FIELD'S GIFT

By the generosity of Alderman Field the Museum has received a most varied and valuable addition to its treasures; so numerous are they that it would need several pages to furnish a complete list, and it is only possible here to refer to some of the more important features.

A most remarkable collection of objects found in the donor's garden includes:—

COINS. Roman gold coins of Valentinian II. and Mauritius Tiberius; seven denarii and brasses of Antoninus and other Emperors.

British Silver Coins of Henry II, Edward II, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, &c.

Trade Tokens, several originating in Aylesbury.

MISCELLANEOUS. Candle extinguisher, seal, betrothal ring, and book-clasp in Silver, Roman Bronze fibula, &c.

Then comes a large number of English silver coins from the time of William III, many in mint condition; military and commemorative medals, Maunday money, Venetian Sequin, Gold Coins of Madras, &c.

An object of outstanding rarity and importance is a small gold bar with a ring for suspension, found at Kimble. This curious object is assigned to the middle of the fourteenth century, and bears certain letters. It formed an amulet with the reputed power of conferring invisibility on its wearer.

SILVER PLATE, &c. Two rat-tailed spoons with the hall-marks of 1586 and 1587 are of considerable interest. The seventeenth century is represented by two watches, and the eighteenth century is very fully covered by such pieces as a coffee-pot (1721), fish slice (1760), salt cellars (1768), patch-box, ladle, candle-sticks, &c., &c.

Finally there are accurately made reproductions in silver of many bowls, porringer, caudle-cup, spoons, forks, and cream jugs.

The variety, and in some cases the rarity, of the Field collection, to say nothing of its intrinsic value, makes it a most splendid supplement to the Society's Museum.

FURTHER GIFT FROM MR. GEO. WELLER.

Whilst these pages are passing through the Press Mr. Weller has made another valuable gift to the Museum, in the shape of a portion of a screen of the fifteenth century removed from a house in Amersham of that period. The screen is mentioned by the Historical Monuments Commissioners (I. 9), and consists of three bays, each having a trefoil head between pierced quatrefoils. It is possibly the earliest domestic screen in the county, and the Society is fortunate in obtaining possession of it through Mr. Weller's generosity.