

ACQUISITION OF MUNIMENTS.

The sale of a further portion of the famous M.S.S. of Sir Thos. Phillipps, which has been going on for nearly 30 years, afforded an opportunity for acquiring some rare deeds relating to Bucks. A few of our members, upon being approached, contributed sums for the purpose, the Liberty Trustees made a substantial addition, and our Chairman made a still more generous donation.

In consequence over 30 deeds were purchased and the following schedule gives some idea of their importance. They will be examined carefully in due course, and those suitable will be exhibited from time to time and possibly printed in the *Records*.

1. Charter of Prior of Canterbury, and the Abbot of Missenden relating to land at Great Kimble and Monks Risborough,
(with fine monastic seal, partly broken, 1282).
2. Charter of Alan Segyn de Ditton quit claiming property in Middiltone (Milton Keynes),
(with seal, temp. Hen. III).
3. Charter of Richd. le Warde, confirming land in Bradwell.
(undated—13th century).
4. Release of lands in Milton Keynes
(with 13 seals attached—1324).
5. Charter between Roger de Grey and Philip de Ailesbury, Seigneur de Middleton Keynes
(in old French with 9 seals—1341).
6. Four Charters relating to Bow Brickhill
(all of the 13th century).
7. Four Charters relating to Broughton, Milton Keynes, and Bradwell
(all of the 14th century).

8. Two Charters dealing with Stockholt, in Oakley; in one of which Sir Thos. Littleton, the famous judge and legal writer, is a party.
(dated 6 Apr. 1347 and 4 June 1456).
9. Two Charters concerning lands in Penn.
(of 1420 and 1470).
10. Letters Patent of Hen. VII concerning lands in Amersham, Chesham, and Chenies; with fine seal attached.
(of 12 Feb. 1508).
11. Charter of Robert de Pincheni confirming grant to Biddlesden Abbey, with part of very fine seal.
(about 1155).
12. Charter of Simon de Morton, son of Hy. de Pinkeni, granting a wood to Biddlesden Abbey, with seal.
(12th century).
13. Charter granting land in Whelpley, Chesham, with seal.
(13th century).
14. Four Charters relating to Hawridge, Chesham and Quainton.
(all of 13th century).
15. Two Charters of manumission and confirmation thereof by Bishop of Winchester to his villeins in Ivinghoe.
(1 & 2 May, 1488).
16. Covenant to secure lands which Sir Ralph de Wedope holds for the life of Adam de Schardeslowe, in Amersham and Little Missenden.
(dated 10 April, 1328).

Items 1 to 9 given above are the special donation of Major Coningsby Disraeli.

It is clear that these deeds are of considerable importance and may even add to our knowledge of land owners at the time; for example, the two charters which deal with Penn (No. 9) confirm messuages and lands to Rd. Bonindone and Henry Gery respectively, neither of these names appears in Lipscomb or the Victoria County History.

ANNUAL EXCURSION 1935.

The excursion on Thursday, July 18th took place on somewhat of a stormy day, which affected the attendance, and the number of members supporting the Chairman, Major Disraeli, was less than usual. Those who found themselves unable to be present missed the opportunity of hearing the merits of three very fine churches expounded by the kindness of Mr. Clive Rouse.

EATON BRAY.

Although the excursion officially began at Edlesborough, early arrivals were invited to attend at Eaton Bray Church, in order that they might compare the beautiful south arcade of that fine church (with its octagonal piers, and capitals with trilobed stiff-leaf foliage) with those of the same date at Ivinghoe—the first quarter of the 13th century. The much more elaborate work in the north arcade probably is not, like the south arcade, the work of a local school of masonry. The piers have eight shafts upon them, some engaged and some detached; the centrepiece being a hollow-sided octagon. The stiff-leaved foliage on the capitals and the many and deep mouldings of the arches are work of the finest quality. It is believed that this north arcade and the font were the work of William de Canteloup, who obtained Eaton from King John in 1204; the grant for some reason was not fully effective, and perhaps the completion of this beautiful church was left to other hands.

EDLESBOROUGH.

The nobly-placed church here dates from the mid 13th century, the arcades of the nave belonging to that date; the chancel and aisles represent a rebuilding at the end of that century, whilst the west tower and the windows in the aisles stand for work of the early 14th century, and the clerestory windows of the nave belong to the 15th century, at which date the N. and S. porches were added, and the chancel arch was rebuilt when the very fine screen of five bays and the "wine-glass" pulpit and canopy were erected. On the chancel side of the screen are six stalls with carved standards, and seats with misericordes. The lectern—omitted from the Royal Commission's Inventory, is also 15th cent., but has had its original steep desk (fitted for singing) altered to a flatter pitch for reading. There are brasses of 1395 and 1412 recently restored to the church from Ashridge Chapel, and in the north aisle are the brasses of John Rufford (1540) and his two wives. At the west end of that aisle is the fire-place eight feet above the ground, and a small window in the N. wall, which mark the cell of the chantry-priest who attended to the altar in that aisle. Like so much of the woodwork, the roofs are mostly of the 15th century.

From Edlesborough the Society then went to

IVINGHOE.

The Society was welcomed by the Vicar.

The old attribution of this church to Peter de Chaceport is now discarded in favour of an earlier origin, probably about 1230, and Bishop Peter des Roches of Winchester may have been concerned in its erection. The very beautiful work in the arcades of the nave is comparable with that observed at Eaton Bray, and is to some extent more impressive since both N. and S. designs are similar. This work is part of a remarkable group of similar sculpture in neighbouring churches, and should be compared with that at Studham, Chalgrave (Consecrated on Holy Cross Day, 1220), Flamstead, Pitstone, and Great Gaddesden. As originally planned the Church was cruciform and included aisles as well as transepts; the central tower was rebuilt in the 14th century. The transepts have retained their original thirteenth century sex-foiled circular windows, but those in the nave, whilst still visible above the piers, were replaced by much less distinguished windows at a higher level above the arches. The roofs are chiefly of the 15th century, and are fine examples of carpentry; attached to the foot of each intermediate timber are carved figures of angels holding shields and with opened wings.

Apart from the great dignity of the church itself the fittings are most noteworthy; there are 32 poppy-head standards of seats (now attached to modern benches), which show great variety of treatment, some bearing foliage and others figures, one exhibits a mermaid; though these are of the 15th century some may have been re-carved.

Attention was called to the mediaeval doors in the N. doorway and in that to the ringing-chamber in the tower; but the most remarkable woodwork perhaps is the 15th century lectern with hexagonal stem. The communion table in the south transept with its rich carving is a fine example of early 17th century work, to which date the pulpit also belongs. Attention was drawn to the serious losses this Church sustained during 19th century restorations, including a font, a complete screen, the west window and the porches. May this vandalism serve as a warning to modern restorers.

Upon leaving Ivinghoe the party next stopped at

PITSTONE CHURCH.

Here, also, the Society was made welcome by the Vicar.

This building, of many dates, has little to commend it in comparison with those just visited, but it contains fittings which would be remarkable in any church, and the arcade between the chancel and north aisle has capitals with carving which may bring it within the group of churches named under Ivinghoe, and make it the work of a local school of masonry. Thus the font, with its fluted bowl, cable moulding, and interlaced ornament at the top, is a

variety of the "Aylesbury type," and belongs to the late 12th century, which indicates an earlier church than that now existing; the chancel arch is attributed to c. 1240, and marks the re-building; but further re-building c. 1420 is indicated by the windows in the S. wall of the chancel. The tower belongs to the middle, and the N. arcade and roof of the nave to the end of the 15th century. The seating of the nave belongs to the 16th century, and the box-pews are of the 17th.

In the chancel are found many tiles of the 14th and 15th century with various inscriptions: "Signum Sancti Crucis," "Ave Maria gracia plena," "Ricardus me fecit," and possibly some Zodiacal designs.

The greatest possession of all perhaps is the magnificent chest, with its iron bands crossing each pair of boards, decorated with incised circles on the foot. This is attributed to the 13th century, and none of such an early date remains in that condition in Bucks. These early coffers were not morticed, but the ends are let into grooves cut in the back and front—boards two inches thick.

Upon leaving Pitstone the Society next went to Tring, where lunch was served at "The Rose and Crown," followed by the annual meeting, at which officers and council were re-elected. Major Disraeli, who was in the chair, expressed their deep sorrow at the grievous loss which the Council had sustained by the death of Col. Bernard.

After lunch heavy rain was falling, and the intention to visit the earthworks at Cholesbury had to be abandoned. The Society went directly to

ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH.

where a sedile and piscina of the 14th century are the sole relics of any building having existed here at that date. Fragments of other and later work were incorporated in the re-building which took place in the 18th century, through the activity of Cornelius Wood, a lieutenant-general in Queen Anne's army; he is commemorated by a very fine mural monument. Unfortunately his walls seem to have had poor foundation, and they are now in great need of underpinning and buttressing, and the roof is defective.

The Vicar was present, and appealed for assistance in making the building once more safe for service.

The Society moved on to

THE BURY, CHESHAM,

which seems to have had very scant treatment at the hands of Lysons, Lipscomb, and even Sheahan; still worse, the Rev. C. Lowndes (the present owner's great-uncle), wrote a good account of Chesham (in the III. volume of the "Records"), but illustrated

it with a view of a larger house on the other side of the church, which was the rectorial manor house of Chesham Leicester, and had passed, after the Dissolution, through the Ashfields to the Whichcotes of Lincs., but the erection of the great monument to Lady Whichcote in 1726 proved so costly that her husband sold the place to the Shottowes, and from them it passed to the Lowndes family, for whom it was too large, and they preferred to stop here in the house which was largely built by "Ways and Means," precisely when we do not know, but certainly very early in the 18th century, as we know from one of his note-books now in our Museum that finishing touches were being put to the wainscoting of the staircase and gallery in 1709. On a parapet at the back the date 1712 appears. The west wing was completed in 1864, and further additions and alterations since have added to the accommodation and certainly improved the garden front of the house, if one compares it with the late 18th century view which was reproduced in Vol. IX. of the "*Records*."

The portrait of "Ways and Means" Lowndes in the coved drawing-room proved very interesting, and a miniature of his son Charles, the founder of the Chesham branch of the family, was examined.

After looking upon some of the admirable furniture the party moved into the garden, where the sun fortunately shone and made everything appear at its best. Here tea was served, and the Society left with a feeling that the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Lowndes had given a very pleasant ending to a day of considerable interest.