

ANNUAL EXCURSION

The annual excursion took place on Wednesday, June 27th, in very favourable weather, and a large gathering of nearly one hundred members met the Chairman, Major Disraeli, at High Wycombe. Amongst those present were Major Flower, Lady Smyth, Major Timmis, Lady Stopford, Mrs. Stewart Liberty Sir James Berry, the Rev. R. Bale and Dr. L. H. West.

The first place visited was Widmer Farm in the parish of Great Marlow. From 1248 it was the property of the Hospitallers, and their property here was added to in 1307 at the dissolution of the Templars. The chapel belongs to the early part of the 13th century and was probably part of a large building which has long perished. The N. wall retains two lancet windows, now blocked ; those in the S. wall were inserted in the 14th century, and a large window (of which only the outline and the label remain) was inserted in the E. wall at the same time. The dormer window on the S. side was placed there in the early 17th century when the building was turned into a dwelling-place, and the windows were at the same time cut into to form doorways. The most interesting feature of the building is the undercroft or crypt, vaulted in square bays and divided into two aisles by three central pillars which are circular, and have plain caps with octagonal abaci and plain chamfered bases ; the arches are segmental and double-chamfered. A drawing and plan were included in "Records " III., p. 122, to illustrate Hastings Kelke's admirable articles on " Desecrated Churches."

From Widmer the party went to Great Marlow and lunched at the Crown Hotel ; after lunch a visit was paid to the Old Parsonage. The central part of the present house is the remains of a hall built late in the 14th century. Both N. and S. walls contain original windows of two trefoiled lights and tracery under a square head ; inside they are rebated for shutters. At the E. end of the present kitchen-wing is a 14th century doorway now set inside out ; it has a large moulded label. The hall is fortunate in retaining a king-post truss of the original roof ; it has 4-way struts, and the great cambered tie-beam is supported by arched braces. There was some rebuilding in the 17th century which has left its mark in panelling in the hall and elsewhere, and in the plaster-covered beams and ceiling rosettes in the room W. of the hall. After 5½ centuries the stonework of the windows has naturally weathered, but as an example of domestic work of this date it is most valuable. In recent years the Society has visited Boarstall, The Savoy, Denham, and now this fine relic, so it has seen all that matters in the south of the county which belongs to the 14th century in the way of domestic buildings.

After leaving the Old Parsonage the party went to Hambleden, stopping as they left Great Marlow to look at Shelley's house and

Remnantz, with its Military College memories of days before Sandhurst. The four tenements into which Shelley's residence is now divided make it very uncertain which was actually his dwelling. No. 104 claims to hold his study, though No. 110 is also said to be his abode. Whilst Shelley was here in 1817 he wrote "Laon and Cythna" and Mrs. Shelley wrote "Frankenstein." It was called "Albion House" in those days—Shelley actually mentions the cedar-tree in the garden, which is still standing. Clement Shorter contradicts the statement on the inscription upon the house that Shelley "was here visited by Lord Byron"—who was certainly in Venice all that year—Shelley was here from March, 1817, to March, 1818. If Byron was not a visitor Shelley had Peacock (who had attracted him to Marlow), Godwin and Leigh Hunt.

At Hambleden the beautiful Museum, built by the late Lord Hambleden to contain the remarkable series of objects found in the Roman villa at Yewden, was visited. Here the Society had the advantage of listening to Dr. Mortimer Wheeler, keeper of the London Museum; he explained the general character of the buildings and the peculiar arrangement of hypocausts possibly intended for drying grain. He drew attention to the various types of pottery, coins and metal-work discovered; and alluded to the large quantity of infants' bones found in one corner, suggesting that, as particular virtues were assigned to the bones of newly killed infants, we might have a kind of Patent Medicine factory at Yewden!

After examining the many interesting objects in the Museum, the party then left, and made a brief visit to Fingest Church, where the original plan of the early 12th century building, which is represented by the existing tower and nave, was discussed.

From Fingest the party went direct to Hughenden, where they were hospitably entertained by Major and Mrs. Disraeli and allowed to wander through the delightful grounds and the house with its interesting and historic associations.

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