

The Proceedings of the Bucks Architectural and Archæological Society,

FOR THE YEAR 1897.

THE annual gathering in connection with the County Archæological Society took place on Tuesday. The members and friends accompanying the excursion met at Aylesbury. The party numbered about thirty, and included Mr. J. Parker and Mr. A. H. Cocks, hon. secs., and Mr. J. Williams, treasurer and organising secretary.

The following is mainly from the report written by Mr. Downs, and which appeared in *The Bucks Herald*:

According to the day's programme, the first stop was to be made at Newton Longville, a village to the north-east of Aylesbury. The road between these two places lies through a beautiful and picturesque part of the county, studded with places of historic and antiquarian interest, and ever and anon unfolding some charming stretch of landscape, having an undulating surface clothed with waving woods and smiling cornfields. On leaving Aylesbury the party drove along Buckingham Street, crossing Holman's Bridge, pregnant with reminiscences of the civil commotions of the seventeenth century, and then onward to Hardwick and Whitechurch. At the latter place there was much to be noted as the party drove through the village, with its ancient dwelling-houses and the church crowning the hill to the right, and the site of the once famous Bolebec Castle to the left. A short distance further on the celebrated Creslow pastures and the picturesque old Manor House, lately occupied by Mr. W. R. Rowland, were passed, and then presently leaving the main road and bearing to the right up the hill, the party drove through Dunton, a pleasant little old-fashioned village where Bishop Blomfield was once rector. A considerable stretch of flat country between Swanbourne and Stewkley was next traversed, and a drive of about three and a half miles brought the party to the last-named village, which contains the most perfect Norman church in the county, so well known to archæologists. After leaving Stewkley the character of the scenery began to undergo a change as the Portland beds gave place to the Oaktree clays and alluvial gravels. Newton Longville was reached at about noon.

NEWTON LONGVILLE CHURCH.

On arriving within the churchyard, Mr. John Parker offered a few brief remarks upon the Priory once existing here, and upon the manorial history of the parish, explaining that this was an alien priory of Cluniac monks, that Walter Giffard—*temp.* Hen. I—gave his Manor of Newington, or Newton, to the Abbey of Longueville, and made it a cell to the same. Inside the church Mr. Parker read some notes upon the building which had been drawn up by the Rector (the Rev. H. C. Blagden), who was absent from home, and called attention to the fact that the moulding of the north-west pillar of the nave was recognised by Sir Arthur Blomfield as similar to some he had seen at Longueville Abbey in Normandy. Attention was called to the heads and figures in the chancel. The opening in the north wall of the chancel had been used either as a ciborium

or aumbrey. Some old tiles preserved near the pulpit were found in the church in 1881.

The church of Newton Longville is situated on a gentle eminence near the centre of the village. It is dedicated to St. Faith, who was the patron of the priory. In 1415 the priory was suppressed with other alien houses by Henry V., and in 1442 Henry VI. granted the priory and the manor of Newton Longville to the Warden and Fellows of New College Oxford, who, soon after they came into possession, partly re-built the church, and to that period we may refer the origin of the present chancel and tower, and the addition of the clerestory, which are all in the Perpendicular style. The component parts of the building are a western tower, a nave with aisles and porches, and a chancel with a side chapel on the north, called the College aisle. The walls are embattled, and on the outside of the church at the east end of the chancel there is a mutilated figure which Browne Willis supposed to be a representation of Death. At the east end of the north aisle is a figure of St. Faith, to whom the church is dedicated. There does not appear to be, in the existing building, with the exception of the tower arch, anything earlier than the thirteenth century, when the piers and arches of the nave and the porches were erected. In the fifteenth century the tower and chancel were re-built, the steep-pitched roof of the nave removed, the walls carried up higher, and a clerestory of four windows on each side was inserted. The tower arch which opens into the nave is finely proportioned. The aisles communicate with the nave by means of two arches on each side. They are supported at the east and west ends upon piers, with a circular column in the middle, having their capitals ornamented with sculptured figures of animals and foliage. The south-eastern pier is perforated by an arch, and in the pier opposite may still be seen the passage which formerly led to the rood-loft. Under the arch lies a stone head, which was found a few years ago embedded in a cottage wall, and it was placed in its present position with a view to its preservation. The chancel is entered under a lofty obtuse pointed arch, ornamented with a string of sculptured quatrefoils, supported by semi-octagonal columns with sculptured capitals. Most of the windows are good, and the east window of the chancel is very elaborately finished. It is divided by a transom into two portions, the lower storey containing four lights with cinquefoil heads, and the upper division eight trefoil lights, terminating above in three trefoils in the spandrels. There are niches inclosing piscinæ and credence shelves at the east end of the aisles and in the chancel, thus indicating the position of the altars in former times. The priscina in the chancel is very good. It is within a cinquefoil-headed niche having three small stone shields within the recess and four above it. On two of them are cut the arms of William of Wykeham, the founder of New College, Oxford, to which this manor and advowson belongs. Near the priscina is another curious small niche ornamented with three finials sculptured with flowers, affixed to the wall between the columns of the arches, and resting on corballed heads. The north chapel, sometimes called the College-aisle, communicates with the chancel by means of a spacious arch. In the tower are a peal of six bells and a clock, the pulpit is square, the church is seated with plain open deal benches, and the font has an octagonal pyramidal wooden covering of early seventeenth century work. The bowl of the font is of an early date; but the pilasters are modern, and were presented by the late Dean Bickersteth of Lichfield when Archdeacon of Buckingham. The wood roofs are handsome. They are ceiled in wainscot and well carved, and the dividing beams are some of them partly gilt, and exhibit other evidences of former ornamentation. At the intersections of the beams are roses

and other designs carved in oak. In the chancel a shield attached to one of the beams bears the arms of William of Wykeham, and the corbals upon which it rests are formed of two full-length figures, seated. The Communion plate is dated 1685, and the parish register begins in 1561. There are a few memorials of interest. At the entrance to the college pew in the north chapel is a large sepulchral slab despoiled of its brasses. In the chancel are commemorated the Rev. Anthony Nourse Sanderson, LL.B., Rector here for thirty years, who died in 1795; the Rev. Robert Wetherell, Rector twenty-eight years, who died in 1842; Emma Margaret Hall, wife of the Rev. J. R. Hughes, Rector, who died Feb. 13, 1846; also the wife and daughter of another rector, the Rev. T. Le Mesurier. The living is a Rectory worth about £300 per annum, and many of the parish priests here have risen to places of eminence in the Church. Among the famous ecclesiastics may be enumerated:

(1) WILLIAM GROCYN pres. 1479; died 1522. A profound scholar; tutor and friend of Erasmus; Master of All Saints' College, Maidstone. In 1889 a brass was placed to his memory in the ante-chapel of New College by the Rev. H. C. Blagden.

(2) JOHN YOUNG, D.D., inst. 1525; died 1526; was a native of Newton Longville, Dean of Chichester, titular Bishop of Gallipoli, Warden of New College, Judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

(3) HENRY COLE, LL.D., pres. 1545; died 1579. Prebendary of St. Paul's and Salisbury, Archdeacon of Ely, Provost of Eton College, Dean of St. Paul's.

(4) THOMAS LE MESURIER, pres. 1799, a great controversialist.

(5) ROBERT WETHERELL, LL.B., pres. 1813, died 1842, Prebendary of Hereford. The church was restored between 1881-91 at a cost of nearly £2,000.

BLETCHLEY CHURCH.

Having completed their inspection of Newton Longville, the members drove to Bletchley and visited the Church.

Bletchley Church is a handsome structure dedicated to St. Mary, and as it occupies an elevated position northward of the village it can be seen for some distance. It is approached by an avenue of ancient yew trees, and consists of a south porch, west tower, clerestoried nave, with aisles, chancel and north chapel. With the exception of the north aisle all the walls are embattled. The last battlement but one on the east is curiously sculptured with a chalice; the others are all plain. The general style of the architecture of the church is Perpendicular. There are, however, a Decorated window and doorway, and the arch of the inner door of the porch is enriched with Norman ornamentation. There is a large west window in the lower stage of the tower, and a two-light window in each face of the upper stage. The tracery in some of the windows is very good; but most of the windows are square-headed. The interior of the church is a monument to the zeal and enthusiasm of Browne Willis, the antiquary, whose grandfather became possessed of the manor of Bletchley in 1674. Browne Willis succeeded to the estates in 1724, died at Whaddon Hall in 1760, and was buried at Fenny Stratford. In 1704 he obtained a faculty to restore and beautify the church and form a mortuary chapel for himself and family in the north aisle. The work he carried out, according to the bad taste prevalent at the time, was much out of keeping with the style of the building. There was, in fact, too much beautifying (of its sort) and too little restoring. The tower contains a clock and a peal of eight bells, re-cast by Rudall, of Gloucester, in 1712. One was re-cast in 1868, and the entire peal renovated in 1893 at a cost of £125. The organ, a small but fine-toned

instrument, placed in the north chapel, was opened on Sunday, Oct. 28th, 1860.

The church contains several curious memorials. The most ancient among them is situated under the eastern arch between the chancel and the north chapel, and commemorates Richard, Lord Grey de Wilton, who died at Water Hall in this parish in 1442, and was buried here with his son and grandson. The monument consists of an altar tomb, upon which is placed a recumbent effigy in white marble. It represents a knight in armour, with his head resting upon his helmet and his feet upon a lion. His gauntlets and sword lie by his side, and his hands are joined in the attitude of prayer. On the tomb is an ancient helmet which is said to have belonged to Lord de Grey. When Browne Willis restored the church in the early part of the last century, he caused the effigy to be repaired and re-cut by Weston, the statuary. The Greys became possessed of the manorial estates here by the marriage of John de Grey with Helena, daughter of Richard de Clare, Earl of Hereford, and his descendants held the property for over 400 years. In 1603, Thomas, the last Lord Grey de Wilton, was attainted, and his estates forfeited to the Crown, and three years later James I. bestowed Bletchley upon George Villiers, afterwards Duke of Buckingham. During the Commonwealth the property was confiscated; but at the restoration, George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham, recovered it, and in 1674 he conveyed it to Thomas Willis, grandfather of Browne Willis, who came into possession in 1724.

In the north chapel, which is the mausoleum of the Willis family, is a raised altar tomb to the memory of Catharine, the wife of Browne Willis, who died at Whaddon Hall in 1724, and was interred here. On the monument are shields bearing the family arms. There are also some wooden tablets containing the arms of Walter Giffard, who held the manor in the 11th century; of the De Greys, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Affixed to the wall, not far from Mrs. Willis's tomb, are figures *in relief* representing a man in a doublet and short coat and eight children behind him, all kneeling. There are also memorials here on flat gravestones to the father and mother of Browne Willis and other members of the family. One of the inscriptions states that both Browne Willis and his wife were descended from the ancient lords of Bletchley.

In the chancel itself, affixed to the north wall, is one of the most remarkable memorials in the county. This is a tablet to the memory of Dr. Thomas Sparke, who became rector of the church in 1578, and died in 1616. On a copper plate is the Doctor's portrait, which, from the similarity in the style of the work, is supposed to have been engraved by Dr. Haydock, the artist who executed the portrait of Erasmus Williams, rector of Tingewick, which is to be seen in the chancel of the church in that parish. He died in 1608, and was therefore a contemporary of Dr. Sparke. Another tablet commemorates Rose, the wife of Dr. Sparke, who died in 1615, aged 68. There is also a very curious monument to the memory of Edward Taylor, and Faith, his wife, which is ornamented with their portraits sketched in white on black marble, and embellished with various devices the purport of which is not very apparent. The inscription on the monument is as curious as the rest of the memorial. The ceiling of the chancel is divided into twelve compartments painted and ornamented with figures of the Apostles, the portion directly over the altar consisting of a "Tetragrammaton" (Hebrew) within a triangle surrounded by cherubs. In the chancel are four early sedilia which had been hidden by Browne Willis, and have since been uncovered. The reredos is of Painswick and Mansfield stone; the choir stalls are of carved oak, and in 1886 the east window was filled with stained glass. During the restoration of the church in 1867-8, under the direction of Mr. W.

White, F.S.A., of London, the windows and doorway of the chancel which had been misplaced were restored to their proper positions, and the pinnacles of the tower added by Willis were removed. The pulpit was the gift of the present rector, the Rev. W. Bennitt. It is of stone, and in the panels are represented our Lord and the four Evangelists.

Bletchley affords another instance of a rectory supplying dignitaries to the church. Among the most prominent of the incumbents of this parish may be enumerated the following :

(1) WILLIAM DE LAMBETH, instituted in 1351, died in 1360, was a Prebendary of St. Stephen's College, Westminster.

(2) THOMAS DE ETTESLE became the first master of St. Benet's College, Cambridge, in 1352.

(3) WILLIAM HEULETT, 1364, a Prebendary of Empingham, in Lincoln Cathedral.

(4) WILLIAM STEWKLEY, LL.B., 1396, a Prebendary of St. Paul's.

(5) JOHN BERNARD, died 1419, a Prebendary of Lincoln.

(6) DAVID HOPTON, 1477, Canon and Archdeacon of Exeter.

(7) WILLIAM WEBSTER, LL.B., 1526, a Prebendary of Lincoln Cathedral.

(8) THOMAS SPARKE, B.D., 1578, Archdeacon of Stowe ; Prebendary of Sutton-in-Marisco.

(9) MARTIN BENSON, 1727, Archdeacon of Berks, Prebendary of Durham, and Bishop of Gloucester.

Besides these, WILLIAM COLE, the Antiquary, was presented to the rectory in 1753 by Browne Willis, and three of the Willis family were rectors.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

Of the Society was held at the Eight Bells Hotel, Bletchley.

The chair was taken by the Rev. E. D. Shaw, vicar of High Wycombe. The first business was the election of officers. The Bishop of Oxford was re-elected President, and all the Vice-Presidents were re-elected, the name of the Archdeacon of Buckingham being added to the list. Mr. J. Parker and Mr. A. H. Cocks were re-appointed hon. secs., and Mr. J. Williams treasurer. The following were added to the committee : the Rev. C. O. Phipps, vicar of Aylesbury ; Mr. W. Forbes Laurie, of High Wycombe ; and the Rev. E. D. Shaw. Mr. Williams presented the financial statement, by which it appeared that the year opened with a balance in hand of £36 10s. 4d. ; the receipts amounted to £82 1s., making a total of £118 11s. 4d. After paying current expenses there was a balance in hand of £27 4s. 4d. There was, however, an account owing for the RECORDS of 1896, and other printing, towards the liquidation of which the Treasurer had in hand nearly £50. This, he thought, was a very satisfactory state of affairs, after having been in debt for about twelve years, and it was no doubt due to the increased popularity of the Society and the greater interest taken in its proceedings. The total number of members was 183.

Mr. J. Parker, as one of the hon. secs., gave a brief report, and was followed by Mr. Cocks, who referred to the efforts which had been made for the preservation of Ickford Church. In reference to the pile-dwelling discovered at Hedsor, he said the site had been flooded out by an influx of water, which required a steam pump for two days to remove. He applied for assistance towards carrying on the work of excavation to the Society of Antiquaries, but his application was sent in too late, so they would have to postpone the excavations another year. Mr. James Rutland, of Taplow, a valued member of their Society, had kindly and generously offered them some of his collection of palæolithic stone imple-

ments; but they had no proper place to put them, and it would be a thousand pities to lose the offer Mr. Rutland had made them. £10 would purchase a case, and if they had a proper one then they could start a county collection of local flints. Now was the time to make a beginning in that direction, for if they did not close with the offer they had they might run the risk of losing the flint arrow heads and other interesting specimens of the stone age. They required an air-tight oaken case in which they could preserve them properly.

Mr. W. Forbes Laurie supported Mr. Cocks' request. It was ultimately resolved that a case should be provided for the purpose named. It was also agreed that a copy of Dr. Lee's "History of Thame Church" should be purchased for one guinea. The following new members were elected: The Rev. F. W. Ragg, vicar of Marsworth; Mr. E. Parker, Thame; Mr. P. J. Rutland, Mayor of Wycombe; Mr. E. Ford, Snakeley Mill, Loudwater; Rev. J. B. Kirby, Wooburn. The Rev. W. H. Summers was elected an honorary member, on the proposition of Mr. Parker. After the business of the meeting was concluded Dr. Bradbrook gave some interesting particulars about the church at Bletchley and also some extracts from the parish registers which he was in course of transcribing.

THE BRICKHILLS.

On leaving Bletchley a drive across a most delightful stretch of country through Fenny Stratford, and along the old Watling Street, brought the members to Little Brickhill. They were met on the Vicarage lawn by the Rev. W. B. Banting and Mrs. Banting, who accorded them a most hearty welcome, and conducted them to seats conveniently arranged beneath the friendly shade of a venerable elm. Mr. Banting then read a Paper on the history of the Brickhills.

After a few introductory remarks, the rev. gentleman gave a short account of Browne Willis, to whom North Bucks owes so much, and then came to the subject proper of his Paper. As regards the derivation of the name, which is found in documents as Brichella, Brichellæ, and Brichelle, he thought it was well within the bounds of possibility that a British tribe, who have left signs of their occupation, inhabited the hills, to whom the Romans gave the Latinised name of Brichellæ. One thing was quite certain, the name had nothing to do with brickfields, there being nothing of the sort anywhere near. Each of the Brickhills has features of its own, both in history and situation.

BOW BRICKHILL.—The massive tower of the church stands on ground 683 feet above the sea level, and on a clear day no less than thirteen other church towers can be seen from it. Lipscomb says that at one time the manor belonged to a family named Boel or Bouels. In Norman times the prefix was written Bolle, and mention is made of a Lady Annora, who figures in the annals of Great Brickhill, wishing to restore the lands of Bole Brykehell to the family of Bouels. Soon after the Conquest Walter Giffard held the Manor, and in the fourteenth century, when the Abbey of Woburn held the advowson, the high tower was built to serve as a beacon to enable travellers and hunters to find their way through the forest and marshes extending over the Ousel valley below. The first rector who appears was John de Essex, presented in 1219. The church is mostly of the Perpendicular style of architecture, and dedicated to All Saints. In 1756 Browne Willis promoted a subscription for the restoration of the church, which had been unfit for Divine worship for above a century. During the last ten years it has been much improved. The registers commence in 1653.

LITTLE BRICKHILL, half-way between Bow and Great Brickhill, is on the ancient Watling Street. The hill is over a mile long, and about

twelve years ago was rendered notorious by the big bell "Paul" resting half-way up for a few days, the traction engine being unable to move it—the bell was on its way from Loughborough to St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The assizes and general gaol delivery for the county were held here from 1433 to 1638, and there is a tradition that the gibbet where the criminals were hanged was erected at the cross roads just outside the village. In ancient days frequent fairs were held here, the chief one being on the Eve of St. Mary Magdalene's Day (July 21st), to whom the church is dedicated. The first vicar on record is John de Daventre, presented by the Prior of Combwell, 1227. The church has a small embattled tower, 50 feet high, with large buttresses. Its style is of the early Decorated and Perpendicular periods. On the north side there was formerly a chantry chapel, of which the arch and piscina still remain; but it was blown down in 1703 by a high wind. The registers date from 1559. There is an entry of Agnes Potter, of Dunstable, as wounded at the battle of Edge Hill. She died here on her way home, November 30th, 1642. Williams, a soldier of the King's army, was buried August 27th, 1644. Between 1561 and 1618 occur the names of forty-two persons who suffered death and were buried at this place in consequence of sentences pronounced at the assizes held here. In the church there is an old collection-box, dated 1669. In the vestry is a curious panel, inscribed to the memory of William Bennett, who died here in 1652, on his way from London to Chester, and a tomb dated January 17th, 172 $\frac{1}{2}$, to "True Blue" and Eleanor, his wife. The Marquis of Anglesey stayed at the George Inn on his way back from the Battle of Waterloo. This was a busy hostelry in the old coaching days.

GREAT BRICKHILL.—After briefly tracing the descent of the manor, Mr. Banting said that it was in the time of the Great Rebellion that Great Brickhill figured conspicuously in English History. The Earl of Essex, General of the Parliamentary Army, was stationed here to keep open the communication with London. Two letters are extant written by him, dated at Brickhill Magna, July 9 and 20, 1643. The long list of rectors commences in 1218 with Galfridus de Bello Campo. The church, of mixed styles, dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, has a massive tower 40ft. high. There are some handsome modern stained glass windows chiefly placed to the memory of members of the Duncombe family, and a fine organ presented by the late Lady Duncombe. The manor house was re-decorated in 1859. There is a small manor attached to Great Brickhill called the Grange, and this estate was purchased recently by Mr. J. T. Mills, of London.

Mr. Banting having concluded his Paper, of which the foregoing is but a brief outline, the Rev. Mr. Gilding, F.S.A., expressed his satisfaction at having had the pleasure of listening to a most exhaustive account of a very interesting district. He then proceeded to add a few remarks upon the destroyed chantry formerly standing on the north side of the church, which he thought was probably erected somewhere near the beginning of the reign of Edward II., 1307, by one of the Lovel family, who held the manor at that time.

The Rev. M. B. Nepean, rector of Great Brickhill, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Gilding for coming so far to speak to them on the interesting subject of chantries. This was briefly seconded by Mr. Parker, who included the name of Mr. Banting in the proposal, which Mr. Cocks supported, and it was carried unanimously. The Rev. A. J. Foster, of Wootton, Beds, also offered some remarks upon the subject of chantries.

The visitors then partook of tea, which was served on the lawn, and after a hurried inspection of the interesting old church, the party left Little Brickhill with the intention of visiting Great Brickhill Church, but this part of the programme was omitted, and they drove on to

SOULBURY,

Where a stay was made to see the interior of the church, which is dedicated to All Saints, and stands in a very commanding position on an eminence rising from the village street. It is a building chiefly in the Decorated style, and consists of a massive tower, south porch, a nave with aisles, and chancel. The tower is embattled, and opens into the nave and north aisle by two good arches. Two arches on each side separate the nave from the aisles, and there are four windows in the clerestory of three lights each. The chancel is large and lighted by five good windows. There are piscinæ in the chancel and in the south aisle, and the steps to the rood-loft remain in the north-east pier of the nave. The font is octagonal, with a shield and a lozenge alternately in the middle of each compartment inclosed by a quatrefoil. The church contains a great many memorials of the Lovett family of Liscombe House, the oldest being a brass to "Thomas Lovet, Arm. ob. 1491." The advowson was vested in the Mansells before 1231, and was afterwards acquired by the Lovetts. In 1499 the rectory was appropriated to Woburn Abbey, and a vicarage was thereupon ordained. It is now in the gift of the lord of the manor.

THE RETURN.

Resuming their places in the vehicles, the party drove by Liscombe Park, and thence by Wing to Aylesbury, after an exceedingly pleasant and enjoyable day. The route taken had been through some of the most charming scenery the county can boast of, and the views, especially round the Brickhills, were extensive and extremely beautiful; so that, taken altogether, the excursion of 1897 will have to be ranked among the most successful the Society has had. Many thanks were expressed to Mr. Williams, the Treasurer, for the admirable arrangements he made for the conduct and comfort of the members of the Society and their friends.

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