

St. Bartholomew's Church, Crewkerne.

Soon after 2 o'clock the members visited the Parish Church (the Rev. H. D. Lewis, R.D., Vicar).

Mr. A. HAMILTON THOMPSON, F.S.A., said that like so many of the other churches of Somerset this one was almost entirely rebuilt in the course of the XV Century. It was originally a cruciform church with a central tower and transepts. No work was of an earlier date than the XIII Century. The remains of an angle buttress of that date were to be seen inside the Church near the junction of the north aisle with the north transept; and the south transept was also in large part earlier than the bulk of the Church, being probably of the early part of the XIV Century. Most of the masonry of the chancel was probably XIV Century work, the priests' or rectors' doorway, with its ogee head, and the piscina being of distinctly XIV Century character. Otherwise the rest of the Church.—the central tower, the nave and north transept—was rebuilt in the XV Century, and perhaps as late as the early part of the XVI Century. The area of the aisles was considerably widened at this date, and a chapel was added east of the north transept, forming an extra aisle to the choir on that side. The whole work was thoroughly characteristic of the art of the age in the fact that its general design and proportion was vastly inferior to its detail. The detail, as could be seen by the arches of the nave, was rather poor and scanty. Elaborate ornament was confined to certain parts, such as the west doorway. A church of XV Century Gothic as they saw it was a little uninspiring and dull, and it was necessary to look upon it with the eyes of imagination and see it as it appeared with its screen-work, paintings on the walls and coloured glass in the windows. The nave would have had a better effect if it was a bay longer. In the east

wall of the chancel were two doors to the vestry or sacristy which formerly stood behind the altar. They were well worth looking at for the sake of the carving in the spandrels. On the south wall of the chancel was a brass dated 1525 to Thomas Gold, with the request for prayers for his soul scratched out after the Reformation. The corbel carving throughout and the gargoyles on the north side of the Church were uncommonly fine and showed great executive skill. The best bits of architectural detail were the niches with busts of a king and a bishop at the sides of the west doorway, and the whole treatment of the west front was very striking. It was often compared with that of Yatton, which was rather earlier in design and rather better. A most interesting feature was the curious arrangement at the outer angle of the south transept, where there was a recess with a seat. The place was much too small to be used as a cell by a recluse or anchorite. At the back of the recess there had been a small niche, probably with a statue, and the ledge was probably where people left offerings. After calling attention to the handsome XII Century font upon a modern base, Mr. Thompson made some remarks upon the medieval history of the rectory of Crewkerne, which was held in three portions, in the patronage of the Courtenays, earls of Devon. Because there were three rectors of Crewkerne at the same time throughout the medieval period it must not be regarded as a collegiate church. He thought very few of the rectors ever resided there. To be a rector in the Middle Ages was to be non-resident if the living was worth having. The Courtenays were patrons of several churches divided between rectors in a similar way, including the parish churches of Tiverton and Chulmleigh in Devon.

Mr. BLIGH BOND, F.R.I.B.A., called attention to the extreme shortness of the nave, which he thought might have been planned with a view to its eventual eastward prolongation, by the removal of the central tower. The Cross Church, with its transepts and central tower, represented the earlier type, and it was customary in the XV and XVI Century reconstructions to remove the central mass and clear the church by running the nave right up to the chancel. Sometimes this process was stopped short of the tower. In the case of Crew-

kerne it was probable that as an alternative the old masonry of the tower was cased with Perpendicular work. He wished to point out also the interesting nature of the roof of the north transept with the restoration of which he had been concerned. It was one of the finest features of the Church. In order to retain all the old work, which was very weak, he had held up the main timbers by halving them and inserting steel midribs now invisible from below. The roodloft door was very high up, and probably had some connection with the actual roodbeam.

Mr. THOMPSON added that as rectors were responsible for the chancel and the parishioners for the nave there was very often a dispute between them as to liability for the central tower, and that might explain why it was retained at Crewkerne, instead of being thrown, as in many cases, into the nave.

Old Grammar School, Crewkerne.

On leaving the Church the members proceeded to the old Grammar School. The Rev. R. G. BARTELOT, author of the "History of Crewkerne School," said that the building in which they were met was erected in 1636. On the same spot an older school stood on the site of the house of the priest of the Chantry of the Holy Trinity, founded by royal licence from Edward II, A.D. 1310. Leland, *temp.* Henry VIII, in his description of Crewkerne said, "the Chirch stondith on the Hylle, and by it is a Grammar Schole, endowid with Landes for an annual Stipende." In the year 1547 the same building was described as "the late Chantry of the Holy Trinity now the free school of Crewkerne."

The wardens' account book gave minute details of the payments made for the building of this school. John Bird, who was appointed warden, March 15th, 1635, was the moving spirit of its erection. Trees were cut on the school estate at Haselbury. The warden charged expenses for riding over to Wikewood Forest, near Ilminster, and buying nine "timber trees" for £14, and hauling them hither by "ploughs of oxen" at a cost of £5 6s. more. The old school was entirely pulled down, and the materials sold piecemeal. Edward Bettscombe

acted as architect, builder and carpenter, for which he was paid £8 in addition to his earnings for piece-work; he received for building "316 pertch of wall at 2s. 11d. per pertch the sum of £46 1s. 8d." Stone was bought from Nicholas Axe of Stoke-sub-Hamdon at a cost of £27 6s. 5d. Local stone was dug at the "Quarr" at Court Barton and "Warrens Quarr." Jasper Thorne supplied 124 "semes" of Hamdon tyle at 11d. per "seme," and Richard Coggyn sold Hardington tyle and was paid £3 11s. 3d. extra for fixing it. Robert Somer and Giles Quarrel of Beaminster glazed the windows for £5 19s. 8d., and Robert Pike received £3 12s. 2d. for 35 bars for the windows and 1s. 6d. more for 6 bars of iron "for the penacles of the porche."

Referring to the statement by Mr. Bartelot that the Crewkerne school was connected with the Chantry of the Holy Trinity in the Church, Mr. HAMILTON THOMPSON said one often came across mention of old schools in connection with chantries, and that there were many such early foundations of schools to be traced if one looked for them.

The Local Committee entertained the members to tea on the lawn of Miss Hussey's residence, the Abbey House. Afterwards the President expressed the thanks of the members to the Committee and to Miss Hussey for their kindness that afternoon.

The Rev. H. D. LEWIS, Vicar, and chairman of the Local Committee, in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said the chief work of finding accommodation for the visitors had fallen on Mr. J. Humphrey Blake, secretary of the committee, whilst the lady members undertook the management of the tea.

Visits were then made to old cellars adjoining the Market Square (occupied by Messrs. Tompsett, Edmonds & Co.), which were regarded as Elizabethan, *circa* 1570, and the White Hart Inn, which dated from about 1500.

Henley Manor.

Then, by motor and on foot, the members went to Henley Manor, situated a mile-and-a-half due south of the centre of Crewkerne, which was visited by the kind permission of Mr. A. F. Basset (the owner) and Mr. Charles Everitt.

Mr. HAMILTON THOMPSON said the greater part of the house was built in the latter part of the XVI Century, when the details of the Gothic period were maintained, the Classical style borrowed from foreign countries having not yet begun to supersede the Gothic. The house consisted chiefly of three blocks. The block they were looking at showed something of the regular Renaissance symmetry. It seemed to be but a wing of the building. The main block faced the courtyard, and there was a wing on the other side which seemed almost detached from the house. He thought that if they went into the matter they would find that probably there was a medieval manor-house there and the wings represented Elizabethan additions, whilst the main block was restored about that time. The entrance at which they were looking was probably a side doorway to a wing; it was not the natural place for a front doorway.

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY said that Mr. Everitt had an ancient parchment which had only recently been found, showing that, centuries ago, a branch of the Basset family held much property in this parish.

The members viewed the house from the different sides, and were allowed to see the interior also.

Evening Meeting.

Following dinner, an evening meeting took place in the grounds of Miss Hussey's residence, the hot weather making an open-air gathering much more desirable than a meeting in the old Grammar School.

The lecturettes and papers given were:—"Popular Illusions with regard to the Middle Ages," by Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson; "Local Superstitions in West Somerset," by Dr. G. F. Sydenham; "Piece of Statuary, Glastonbury Abbey Excavations," by Mr. F. Bligh Bond; "Barrington Fossils," by the Rev. Preb. Hamlet (*see* Part II of this volume); and "Notes on the History of Crewkerne," by Mr. W. G. Willis Watson. Those who contributed the above were heartily thanked on the motion of Mr. C. Tite.