

Luncheon at Gillingham.

The Members were entertained at Luncheon by the President, at the Phoenix Hotel.

In proposing the health of the President, the Rev. F. W. WEAVER thanked him for his address and his kind hospitality.

Col. CARY BATTEN seconded.

The PRESIDENT, in returning thanks, said that the last re-

mains of the old palace had been quarried out to mend the road that led from Gillingham to Shaftesbury, so that when they drove to Shaftesbury they would have under their feet the first and last fragments of the House of the Plantagenets.

The Rev. W. A. HEYGATE, vicar of Gillingham, expressed the welcome of the town to the Society. They had not the privilege of a Mayor and Corporation, but he asked the Society to be content with a clerical welcome.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER thanked Mr. Heygate for welcoming the Society.

Gillingham Church.

After luncheon, the Society, under the guidance of the Vicar, paid a visit to the Parish Church.

The Rev. W. A. HEYGATE gave a full account of the Church, of which the following is the substance :—

It is believed that Gillingham is not mentioned in any Saxon Charter. The Church, according to Hutchins, was originally a Royal peculiar; the official having archidiaconal jurisdiction, granted licenses for marriages, probate of wills, and visited once a year; the mandate for the induction of a Vicar was made out to him, but William I gave the Church and living to Shaftesbury Abbey.

In the Mortival Register we find the following information about the ordination of the Vicarage of the Church of Gillingham.

“ Ides of December, 1319.

“ On this day Roger de Mortival, Bishop of Salisbury, made an ordinance formally establishing the perpetual Vicarage of Gillingham. Up to that time the Prebendary of the Prebend of Gillingham in the Abbey of Shaftesbury had been in receipt of all the titles and emoluments of the parish and had employed priests to act as his “vicars.” The document recites that William de Handlo, late Prebendary of Gillingham,

had presented to the Bishop, William de Clyve of Motcombe, to be instituted to the perpetual Vicarage to be established by the Bishop's order. Reciting that the existing Prebendary Richard de Bateshull and William de Clyve, had humbly entreated the Bishop to make an ordinance for the endowment of the perpetual Vicarage and its members (*i.e.* chapelries), the Bishop after taking advice from competent persons as to value, etc., ordained, specified and thereby declared :

"Since he who serves the Altar should live by the Altar and he who is chosen to bear the burden should not be excluded from the reward, he ordained that the Vicar of Gillingham and his successors should have a dwelling-house in Gillingham near the Church which was formerly the house of the Rector (*i.e.* Prebendary), and a dwelling-house at Motcombe assigned to the priest who should celebrate in the Chapel there, and a dwelling-house at Stour Estovere assigned for the priest who should celebrate and continually reside there, and a dwelling-house at Stour Westovere assigned for the priest who should celebrate in the Chapel of that village."

In the year 1326 Bishop Roger de Mortival finding that many churches in his diocese were unconsecrated issued a commission to Robert Petyt Bishop of Enachdune to consecrate them, by virtue of which commission Robert Petyt consecrated fifty-three churches in the diocese, including Stour Westovere and Gillingham. Before this date no doubt a moveable consecrated Altar slab was used for the celebrations of the Mass. Enachdune was a small Irish Bishopric in the province of, and about five miles from, Tuam. Robert Petyt was Bishop of Clonfert, 1319-25, acted as Suffragan of Worcester 1322, was translated to Enachdune 1325, and acted as Suffragan to Salisbury.

It has been suggested that it was after this arrangement as to the endowment that the Abbey rebuilt the chancel. It is in this part of the church, as we see, together with the chapel on the north side which now forms the vestry, that the present

historical interest of the church centres. The nave was rebuilt in 1838 ; and the only opportunity which I have had of seeing anything that tells of the building thus taken down is from an engraving of 1805, which shows the north and south aisles enfolding the tower. Outside the chancel is the XV Century font of Purbeck marble with the Tudor ceiling above it. Some of the seats, together with the backs of some, probably parts of the XV Century rood-screen, are the sole remaining parts of the nave of the mediæval church.

In the chancel itself, almost entirely of the XIV Century, with its remarkable single Purbeck shaft, one may notice the ball-flower pattern of the period in the capitals of the arcade, dividing the chancel from what was the chapel of St. Katherine, and also running along the whole of the outer north side. The string-course, the same inside and out, is of an unusual section. In the piscina we see a late example of centre shelf, and above it an upper shelf for a small cruet—the original XIV Century ones. In the south door the hinges are the original XIV Century ones.

Coming to St. Katherine's chapel with its XV Century east window, we find the piscina still existing, hidden by a cupboard. The chapel (or chantry) was founded originally by John de Sandhull in 1330 and further endowed by John Bettesthorpe de Chadwick in 1398. His brass you will see in Mere Church. His gift to Mere consisted of twelve acres of land in Gillingham. He held the advowson of this chantry, and at the Reformation the lands belonging to it were given to King's School, Sherborne. In the chapel is the monument of the two brothers Jessop ; John, Fellow of All Souls, Vicar of Gillingham and Prebendary of Salisbury from 1579 to 1625, and Thomas *in medicinis doctor*. He is also spoken of as the rescuer of certain parish lands, almost lost ; but in their earlier days (1584) both brothers it seems somehow incurred the hostility of the people of the place, as an entry says that Thomas Jessop, Doctor of Medicine and John Jessop, Vicar, are

slanderers and disturbers of their neighbours to the bad example of the Queen's lieges. A certain William Jessop, clerk, is twice prosecuted and fined in 1583 for breach of the game laws, having shot with a fire-arm called a hand-gun a bird called a heron, he not having property in his own right. The Jessop vault lies to the east of the present lectern. The monument to Frances Dyrdo, 1733, is to the daughter of the Henry Dirdoe whose name is on the north wall of the chancel. The family were evidently settled here for a long time. In 20 Hen. VII, 1585, we read "that this very mynde and will of the said Robert Dyrdo that if any of his heirs, man or woman of his body begotyn intend to sell or lay out any of this land above named to mortgage, then his mind is that the next of the blood of Dyrdo shall come and clayme all the same land and if that name of Dyrdo dye out without an issue of that body remaining, then the above named Robert Dyrdo will, that William Hardgyll, his sisters sonne and his heir come into the court and clayme all the said land, and if he and the stock of the Dyrdos do dye without issue thenne the said Robert do give all the same land to the Church of Gillingham and have a solemn obit once a year to pray for him and all Crysten souls." We find a grant of pardon to Thomas Dirdoe, of Gillingham, Dorset, for piracy, of which he stands indicted but is not guilty (July 13th, 1613).

In the east tower wall is the monument of Edward Davent, Vicar for fifty-four years, dying in 1679. His library, said to be worth £1000, was seized by Sir W. Waller's soldiers during the Civil War, and only restored on payment of a ransom. He was a man of great learning and said to have assisted Archbishop Usher in his chronological labours. The register of November 25th, 1663, records the marriage of his daughter Katherine with Dr. Lamplugh, afterwards Bishop of Exeter.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER, in thanking the Vicar for his interesting address, pointed out that the arms of the Dirdo

family were described as a "chevron between three ostriches." He thought it extremely likely that these ostriches were really *dodos*, a play upon the name of the family. (See *Visitation of Wilts*, 1623, p. 95.)

Ancient Royal Residence, Gillingham.

A drive of about half-a-mile to the south-east of Gillingham, brought the members to a field containing earthworks representing the site of a palace built by the Norman kings when they came to this part of Britain to hunt.

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY read some notes relating to this place taken from Lady Theodora Guest's book on *Motcombe, Past and Present*, 1867. He said that they stood in the angle formed by the junction of Cramburne Lake with the Lydden, on ground encompassed by a moat (now dry), in some places 9ft. deep by 20ft. broad. The rampart, which had become much denuded, was about 30ft. thick, and encloses an area (330ft. long by 240ft. broad) in which the Royal Residence once stood. The palace was built in one corner of this space, about 20ft. from the rampart, somewhat in the form of the letter L, the longer portion of the letter measuring 186ft. by 80ft., the foot of the letter being 48ft. by 40ft. The area of the house contained 16,800 square feet, and the whole enclosure comprised $3\frac{1}{2}$ roods. King Henry I appears to have resided here, for his Charter to the Cathedral of Lincoln of the manor of Biggleswade was dated from Gillingham. It seems to have been rebuilt or repaired by King John, though not at his own expense, as he made the county provide the necessary funds. About 1270, Edward I spent a Christmas here.

(*Further particulars of the Royal Residence are given in the Presidential Address*, p. 19).

Shaftesbury Abbey Excavations.

At Shaftesbury the members of the Society were met outside the Town Hall by the Mayor (Alderman J. Burbidge), Alderman F. Powell, and other members of the Corporation, Major J. Benett-Stanford (hon. treasurer Excavation Committee), and Mr. E. Doran Webb, F.S.A. (hon. director of the Excavations), who kindly consented to act as cicerone throughout the afternoon.

Mr. E. DORAN WEBB gave an interesting description of the old churches of the X Century. These were chiefly marked by shallow transepts, short naves and great height. He then came to the great rebuilding of the churches in Christendom in the beginning of the XI Century. Up to the end of the X Century these early Saxon churches were ample for the needs of the people. They rather multiplied churches than built great churches. People had an idea that the Millennium was coming, and the X Century was hardly an age for building on a scale that marked it in the next century. In the XI Century people were busy and active in pulling down the old churches and building the great churches they saw scattered all over the land. At that time they must have rebuilt Shaftesbury. They were then building Romsey Church, and there was the strongest possible resemblance between the two churches. Both had narrow Norman choir aisles, ending in apses internally, but square on the exterior. Other points of resemblance were the apsidal chancels, shallow transepts, and long naves with two narrow Norman aisles. The speaker proceeded to describe the crypt, built in the angle of the Abbey, formed by the north choir aisle and the east wall of the north transept. Over the crypt was built a very magnificent chapel, in which was placed the shrine of St. Edmund the King and Martyr, patron saint of the Abbey. Towards the end of the XIV Century the south choir aisle was widened. Two chapels were formed at the east end of the

new aisle, each with a moulded base and a moulded plinth. The two chapels each had an altar, about 6ft. 3in. in length. The apsidal east end of the north transept was thus destroyed by the building of the crypt, and that of the south transept by the widening of the aisle. They could still see the foundations of the old apsidal end of the south transept. The graves when opened, were found to contain the débris of the monuments which were above them, and a quantity of fragments of stained glass. In the grave marked C on the plan Miss Oliver found a leaden bulla of Pope Martin V (date 1417-1431). He was Pope at the commencement of the XV Century, and that practically gave them the date of the completion of the south choir aisle; if they wanted further evidence than that it was found in the glazed tiles, one of which bore the badge of Richard II. To any expert in mouldings he had only to point to the bases of the buttresses, which fixed the date at early in the XV Century. Besides the leaden bulla two gold rings were found, one in each of the other two graves. The tiled paving was most interesting, beginning with very early work in the chancel; they had XIV and XV Century tiles in the aisles and transepts. The tiles were all just as they had been laid, and there was no attempt at restoration. Mr. Webb pointed out the original site of the spire and tower, and showed where a part of the spire had fallen and crashed into the tiled paving below. Mr. Webb conducted the party to the north choir aisle, and showed the base of one of the pillars *in situ*. In the crypt Mr. Webb pointed out the original sunk sills of two windows made to prevent the water coming into the crypt. When the crypt was opened they found a great number of skulls, but they had nothing to do with the people who built the Abbey. They were probably the skulls of a number of neolithic people. When the clubmen garrisoned Shaftesbury during the Civil Wars, in altering the old earthworks they would come across these skulls and bones, and not knowing what to do with them emptied them into the disused

crypt of the church. The Excavations Committee hoped to discover the west wall of the south transept, and the chapter house. If the latter was not too much damaged he hoped they would find the ancient Anglo-Saxon inscription found by Leland in 1530.

St. Peter's Church, Shaftesbury.

MR. DORAN WEBB said this was one of the nine churches which existed in Shaftesbury in 1701. It was the only one remaining. A few years ago people visiting the church were in imminent danger of falling into the graves, so a concrete and tiled floor had been put down. The church was a Perpendicular building. It never had a chancel in the sense of the word, as meaning a fabric extending beyond the end of the aisles. The chancel was formed by a series of screens in the two eastern bays, and they could see where the screens went into the piers. The roof was of Late Perpendicular woodwork. The parapet on the outside was perhaps the most interesting feature of the church. It had a Tudor rose and portcullis, the badges of Henry VII. It was no doubt the work of some good Shaftesbury native in the reign of Henry VII. The old benches were found face downwards on the floor of the nave. An adjacent inn was now on the site of the old parsonage, where the vicar of this church lived. Between the inn and the church was a window (now blocked up) through which the vicar could look into the church. A small brass inscription commemorated Stephen Payne, seneschal or steward to the Abbess of Shaftesbury.

Gold Hill, Shaftesbury.

At the top of Gold Hill, Mr. DORAN WEBB pointed out the wonderful old wall, which was certainly, in some parts, XII Century. That wall surrounded the headland on which

stood the Abbey church. There was an old flagged causeway winding down the hill, and between the wall and the old thatched cottages they had a beautiful peep of the county of Dorset.

Town Hall, Shaftesbury.

At the Town Hall the ancient municipal documents, maces, chain, etc., were inspected. The maces are extremely interesting, and are described in the *Proceedings* of the Dorset Field Club, Vol. XXIV, p. lvii.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER said their best thanks were due to Mr. E. Doran Webb, F.S.A. for so kindly acting as their guide. They were singularly fortunate in having the advantage of visiting the Shaftesbury excavations under Mr. Webb's guidance.

Mr. WEBB, in returning thanks, said he was glad everyone took a growing interest in archaeological work.

After tea, which was partaken of in the Town Hall by kind permission of the Mayor, the PRESIDENT expressed the Society's thanks to Mr. J. Bennett-Stanford, who had been largely instrumental in getting the excavations made, and to Mr. Doran Webb for his guidance that day. They were also indebted to the Mayor and Alderman Powell.

The annual dinner was held afterwards at the Phoenix Hotel, Gillingham, the President in the chair, and following this there was an

Evening Meeting

at the Market Hall for the reading of three papers, illustrated by lantern slides. The first paper, on "Excavations at Small Down Camp, 1904" by Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, is printed in Part II.

Mr. R. P. BREBETON read an interesting paper on "Somerset Church Towers," illustrated by lantern slides from his own

photographs. The main points of the paper were shown in a synopsis of it distributed to the members present. As Mr. Brereton has, in forward preparation, a book on the subject, it is not necessary to print his paper in these *Proceedings*.

Another excellent paper was read by Dr. F. J. ALLEN, on "The Classification of the Somerset Church Towers," illustrated by lantern slides made by the lecturer. This paper is printed in Part II, p. 1.