

Second Day's Proceedings.

On Wednesday morning the members left the Phoenix Hotel in brakes for Stavordale Priory, Bruton and Cucklington. The weather was decidedly favourable, both on this day and the two following ones.

En route Mr. H. ST. G. GRAY pointed out a much mutilated long barrow, called "Longbury," situated one-and-a-quarter mile west of Gillingham in an allotment field. He said that it measured about thirty-four paces in length, and that large holes had been dug into it from the top in three places. Skeletons were found in the barrow in 1804.

Stavordale Priory.

The first halt was made at Stavordale Priory, where the President and others met the party.

The buildings were fully described by the Rev. E. H. BATES, who has since amplified his remarks to form a paper on the subject, which will be found in Part II of this volume.

Bruton Church.

At noon the party arrived at Bruton Church, where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. DOUGLAS LL. HAYWARD, who gave the following account of the church :—

“I have been asked to say a few words on the history of this beautiful church, but I am afraid I can add nothing to what has already been written on the subject. The paper in Vol. XXIV of the *Proceedings*, except where it deals with the architectural features of the church, must be read with caution; but for a fuller history of the Priory and its connection with the parish church, I may refer you to the introduction to the volume of the Somerset Record Society that deals with the Bruton cartulary.

“There was a church here in Saxon times, dedicated to S. Peter and founded by Bishop Aldhelm. In 688, on his return from Rome, he brought back with him a slab of white marble which he presented to this church to be used as an altar. William of Malmesbury records in the XII Century that this altar was then in existence.

“This Saxon church gave place to a Norman church dedicated to S. Aldhelm and S. Mary; of this Norman church there remain to-day only a few fragments of stone. In the organ chamber, built into the wall are two Norman capitals dug up a few years ago in the churchyard. In the vicarage garden are two fragments of the font, and the stoup you will see as you pass round the church. This is all that remains of the church of S. Aldhelm and S. Mary.

“In 1142, Earl William de Mohun founded here a house of Augustinian Canons who were the impropriate rectors of the parish church. The Canons numbered thirteen, under a Prior who held an important position as landowner. He was lord of the manors of Bruton and North Brewham (where he had a manor house), and also of the manors of Charlton Adam and Ston Easton. The founder rebuilt the chancel and built a crypt beneath it, which still remains. This crypt became the burial place of the Mohuns, the Luttrells, and the Montagues. When the chancel was pulled down and rebuilt in 1743, the crypt was cleared and the bones buried in the churchyard, and it then became the burial place of the Berkeleys; and to-day

there are many coffins belonging to that family lying in it. This crypt, 40ft. by 28ft., marks the extent of the founder's chancel. The church then became an *Ecclesia conventualis*, with two sets of worshippers and one ministering body: the chancel, dedicated to S. Mary the Virgin, patroness of the Priory, was used by the canons, while the parish altar of S. Aldhelm was moved into the nave, which thus became the parish church of Bruton. The small north tower, which contains two chambers one above the other, in the uppermost of which are evidences of its use as a belfry, probably belonged to this period, and through its wide porch entrance was obtained to the parish church.

"I now pass to the time of the great rebuilding. The beautiful west tower was probably the first part to be built, for on the eastern face of it can be traced the line of a steeper roof than the present. It was begun in the Priorate of John Henton, 1448-1494, and was probably completed in that of his successor, Gilbert. About 1510, Gilbert obtained a bull elevating the Priory into an Abbey, and he thus became the first Abbot of Bruton. He it was who rebuilt the naves and aisles of the parish church. The nave was extended one bay eastward, and consequently encroached on the crown of the crypt. The floor was therefore raised 18ins. above the level of the west end. The nave roof was first completed, then the aisle roofs, these latter being, I believe, rather later in the character of their mouldings. I would call your attention to the easternmost beam of the roof, the gold and colour decoration of which still remains a proof of the richness of the rood-loft and canopy.

"There were many chantries here, but only three can be located. In the easternmost bay of the north aisle was the chapel of the Five Wounds; in the next bay westward, an inscription on the cornice marks it as the chapel of S. Katherine, and you will notice that the roof is coloured in alternate squares of red and green; at the east end of the south aisle is another chapel with a piscina *in situ*. This was the private

chapel of the Berkeleys, and was entered by a private doorway now blocked up. The initials of Maurice Berkeley are to be seen on the bosses of the richly carved roof. There were also the chantries of All Saints, founded by Richard de Bruton in 1417, of S. George and S. Lawrence.

“Outside, on the battlements of the north aisle, you will notice the initials, W.G. of Abbot Gilbert, and also the arms of Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London, co-founder of the school—a shield bearing the dolphin of his family, the mitre of his office, and the crossed swords of the see of London. A third device may also be seen—a monogram R.B. and a ton. Gilbert died in 1533 and his tomb may be seen close to the west entrance gate of the churchyard. The second and last Abbot was Ely, and in his time came the dissolution. In 1541, the Abbey and the estate and the patronage of the church were first leased, and then sold to Sir Maurice Berkeley, standard-bearer to Henry VIII and constable of the Tower, whose tomb, with that of his two wives, is now in the chancel.

“The present chancel was built in 1743 in memory of William, Lord Berkeley, by his second son Charles, to whom he bequeathed the manor of Bruton. It is a copy of an Italian chancel of a church of the Passionists.

“Sir M. Berkeley either adopted the Abbot's residence, or built a new mansion on a site south of the vicarage. This was burnt in 1763, and finally pulled down in 1786.

“There are six bells. The fourth was given by Abbot Gilbert in 1528, and is dedicated to SS. Mary and Stephen; the tenor is of the same date and is dedicated to S. Clement.

“The registers date from 1554.”

Sexey's Hospital.

After luncheon at the Blue Ball Hotel, the party was conducted by Mr. Weaver to Sexey's Hospital; passing on the

way the old house in High Street which was either a *hospitium* for pilgrims or else the house of the steward of the Priory. It bears on its face shields containing the maunch and cross engrailed of the Mohuns, and also a crown surrounded by five roses, probably the arms of the Priory.

Arriving at the Hospital, Mr. WEAVER said that Hugh Sexey, the founder, was a poor boy of Bruton who rose to be auditor to Queen Elizabeth and James I. His arms, *Gn. a fess sa. in chief two eagles displaced*, are a conspicuous feature of the quadrangle.

His will is given in *Brown's Somerset Wills* (2nd Series, p. 10), from which it will be seen that he died in 1619, having been born on November 18th, 1556. No mention is made in his will of the foundation of the Hospital, but during his lifetime he conveyed certain manors and tenements to Sir Lawrence Hyde and other gentlemen *upon trust* that the said estates should be employed to such charitable uses as he should, by any writing or will, appoint. These estates are still held by the Feoffees of the Hospital.

The chapel with its fine carving was much admired by the visitors.

Cucklington Church.

Later in the afternoon the members were met at Cucklington Church by the Rector, the Rev. G. Maule.

The Rev. E. H. BATES acted as cicerone, and the following is the gist of his address:—

The church is of a type rather common in this district, having the tower on the south side of the nave with the entrance in the ground stage. The north aisle is separated from the nave by an arcade of two arches; there are no capitals to the pillars or responds: the date is probably the latter part of the XIII Century. Adjoining the tower on the south side is

a chapel now opening into the nave by a modern arcade of three arches. The windows of the lights are Late Perpendicular. One of them contains the only piece of old glass in the church, the head of St. Barbara (*Proceedings*, XXXIX, ii, 43, with illustration). A large bracket of green sandstone is in the east wall. The history of the chapel is quite unknown; there is a Babwell, *i.e.* Barbara's well in the village. Owing to the rise of the ground, the chancel is considerably elevated above the nave; the chancel arch is modern; the east window is of three lancets under a relieving arch. The chapel on the north side is now used as an organ chamber.

The font is late Norman; the pulpit, choir-stalls and reredos are of modern carved oak. Over the door are the royal arms, placed there in 1660. A tablet on the tower records its reconstruction in 1703, after the great storm of 26th November, 1703. The same hurricane, by throwing down a chimney stack at Wells Palace, caused the death of Bishop Kidder, and blew in the windows of Yeovil church. (For further details of Cucklington Church, see *Som. and Dorset Notes and Queries* v, p. 221).

After the inspection of the church, tea was partaken of in the Rectory grounds, by the kind permission of Mr. Maule, and the return journey was made to Gillingham, which was reached at 6.30 p.m.

After dinner, the members had the pleasure of accepting the Vicar and Mrs. Heygate's invitation to a *Conversazione* at Gillingham Vicarage. The pretty grounds were illuminated, and a programme of music was gone through. It should be added that the Vicar was chairman of a small local committee who arranged for the Society's reception—Mr. R. H. Symons acting as secretary—and these gentlemen were heartily thanked on behalf of the members present for their kind hospitality and entertainment.