Wednesday.

At 10 o'clock a meeting was held in the Town Hall, which was presided over by Mr. Freeman.

Mr. Dymond read a paper on "The Abbot's Way," which is given in Part II.

Mr. W. Boyd Dawkins said that there was no doubt that the age of those Corduroy roads in some parts of Europe was enormous, and alluded to the fact that they had been found in some of the Swiss lakes. On the other hand, he believed them to have been used until within the last few years in Britain. In Australia roads of that kind continued to be made, and in America they were very common. With regard to those in that neighbourhood they had nothing on which they could fix the date, although they might have been used by the Abbots of Glastonbury, and by the inhabitants of this country before as well as after. When they came to the question of the age of the forests which underlay those turbaries, they came to a question of exceeding difficulty,—a question on which he had a great amount of diffidence in hazarding an answer. First, however, let them examine the forests. Beginning on the sea level and examining the submarine forests,

they would find that they were not confined to the coast of Somersetshire, but ran all along the low shelving coast-line of this country and of the Channel Islands, and all along the coast-line of France, where they would find their traces. The trees were oak, ash, yew, birch, elder, and Scotch fir, the forest being composed of trees of that sort; and if they examined the trunks they would find that in nine cases out of ten they were lying parallel one to another, and pointing with the heads of the trees away from the direction of the prevalent winds. The meaning of that was that the prevalent winds blew them down. Then the question came, how was it all those forests were destroyed? In dealing with the destruction of those forests they had a cause for the position of the trees. The conclusion at which he had arrived in the matter had certainly cost him a great deal of time and trouble, as well as a great deal of thought, but still he had come to a deliberate opinion on the subject, and he preferred not to take a mere parochial point of view. The destruction of those forests was due to the formation of peat. Peat was a thing of an exceedingly uncertain rate of growth. It was, as most of them knew, merely the result of the accumulation of vegetable matter. The rate of the accumulation of the vegetable matter depended on two things—the amount which there was and the rate at which it decayed. Those were questions depending much on temperature and moisture. Supposing they had a clear and free drainage; supposing they had a slope and a free drainage down that slope, they would have little accumulation of vegetable matter on it; but if they stopped the drainage they would have an accumulation, which was practically peat, if the temperature would allow of it. In some cases that accumulation had gone on for an enormous space of time, and then they had thick peat bogs, sometimes even on the tops of hills. Peat grew necessarily in water, and as its growth was mainly dependent upon moisture this increased *pari passu* with the growth of the vegetable accumulation in much the same sort of

way as when they wetted a sponge. The result of that was that when they had a favourable condition for the developement of peat, they had that peat gradually encroaching on the land until ultimately they might have peat bogs extending over wide areas of land which were formerly cultivated. That was undoubtedly in reality the history of the destruction of those forests. They found those which were destroyed in that manner were pretty near the sea level, and in some cases 10 fathoms below it. Some of those submarine forests were part and parcel of the forest which flourished at the time when this country stood higher than it did at the present day, for they knew that those forest trees were not in the habit of growing at the bottom of the sea. The mode in which those trees were destroyed by the peat was simply this: the moisture from the peat bogs gradually acted on the roots until they rotted, and then the prevalent winds blew them down.

Mr. Dickinson communicated the following:—

The most important archæological event of the year, for this county, is the publication of Mr. Eyton's book on Domesday. He has great and accurate knowledge of events and men in the times after the Conquest, and great industry, and shows singular sagacity in putting together things that at first sight seem to have no relation to each other. His book must be read along with that which he published in 1878, on Dorset. In both he has used certain tax returns which are extant at Exeter in the same book which contains the copy of the Domesday of the five western counties, commonly called the Exon Domesday, to construct the hundreds of the county as they then existed, and so help out the identification of places.

These returns were made in 1084, two years before Domesday.

It is not always easy to see the reason for Mr. Eyton's assertions. Perhaps I have hardly the right to say this, as my reading of both his books has, as yet, been superficial and imperfect; but I must add that in several instances, when at

first I thought him wrong, I have found that he was certainly right. This relates to the general doctrines which he lays down, and not to his identification of places; as to these he has had no option but generally to follow Collinson.

I have been much pleased to see the hearty praise he gives to Collinson. It has been the fashion in our Society to run down Collinson, because other counties have better histories. He is doubtless not complete or faultless: it must be remembered that the book has been written nearly 100 years. When Mr. Eyton is wrong, he is generally wrong with Collinson; not unfrequently he corrects him and adds to his information.[2]

The tax returns on which he bases his identification of places have long been pointed out as valuable for this purpose, and I have been desirous myself to work on them, and made such preparations as I have found possible; but I was conscious that critical work on these materials was not all that was required, and that it was expedient to get together the lists of the places—whether manors, tithings, or parishes in each hundred—from the earliest date after Domesday, and compare them with each other and with it.

I have therefore copied out such lists as I could find at the Record Office, of the time of Edward the 1st, and subsequently, and my papers have been for some time in the hands of your Secretary, with a view to publication in our transactions.[3] I hope they may be of some use, as they certainly will, when they show that the clever guesses of Collinson, and the still more able inductions of Mr. Eyton, are certainly true. Perhaps it may not be amiss for me to add, in speaking to an assembly at Glastonbury, that Mr. Eyton confirms the impression I had formed, that all the flat country round Glastonbury

(2). Mr. Hooper has told me that Mr. Eyton has corrected a confusion of Collinson concerning two manors named Thorne, one of which belongs to Mr. Hooper. Blackmoor is said by Collinson to be in Churchill. This Mr. Eyton has corrected. His identification of Terra Olta as Ashholt is a very good guess indeed.

(3). In consequence of the resignation of Mr. Hunt, I have thought it better to postpone these papers until I can confer with his successor.

was morass at the time of the Conquest—undrained, and covered with underwood. There is no mill recorded at Glastonbury, though that at Baltonsbury is mentioned; and it follows that the artificial course of the Brue between But Moor and South Moor was made after the Conquest. A part of that course, if my eye does not deceive me, was cut in a line with the steeple of the Abbey Church, seen over the hill, like the roads from Butleigh and Godney.

Mr. Eyton does not agree with me in thinking that the jurisdiction of Glaston Twelve Hides was not really ancient, that the documents made use of to prove its authority were written between the time of the Conquest and that of William of Malmesbury—some 50 or 60 years later. At least, he holds there was a jurisdiction of life and death in the Abbot of Glastonbury and the Bishop of Wells, in their estates, or some of them, as there was undoubtedly at Taunton on the lands of the Bishop of Winchester.

This it is no concern of mine to dispute, but I see no mention of it in Domesday, and I am pretty sure that the greater part of the Glastonbury deeds were made—I do not like to say forged; that would be an unreasonable and very harsh expression—during the interval I speak of.

When some competent scholar, such as Professor Stubbs, who has worked on St. Dunstan, gives us a new and critical edition of William of Malmesbury's history of Glastonbury, with a careful study of the charters contained in it, and the other local charters of the Abbey, the truth of these things will be ascertained.

So far I had written before the papers of the President and Mr. Parker were read. There having been no opportunity for me to make any remarks on these papers, I wish to express my sense of the value of the views conveyed in them. While going beyond Mr. Parker, in throwing doubts on the Glastonbury charters, I look on Mr. Freeman's view, that there may be much historical truth conveyed in them, as most important.

One of the Glastonbury charters, which purports to relate to Othery, gives the boundaries of some place on the Otter in Devonshire. A comparison of the language of the Bath, Winchester, and Glastonbury charters relating to boundaries in this county, makes it plain, even to a person so little versed in our ancient language as I am, that the Glastonbury charters are the latest and those of Bath the earliest. The boundaries of Ditcheat are those of the modern parish, not of the lordship described in Domesday, and seem to have been written when the state of things familiar to those who made the local returns for Domesday was forgotten. The possessions also which Glastonbury had lost, and those held by homage, are not represented in the extant charters so fully as they would be if the charters were altogether genuine and complete. It is plain, however, that we ought not to deal with a charter as forged because some one had modernized the boundaries, or because the religious house had caused new returns of the boundaries to be made and substituted them for the older boundaries when the charters were copied in a book.

I would suggest that our Society should agree on a representation to the Master of the Rolls that a new and critical edition of William of Malmesbury on Glastonbury should be given as one of the publications of the series under his control. Professor Stubbs, as the editor of the works of St. Dunstan, is plainly pointed out as the proper person for this work, but it does not become the Society to do more than express its wish generally, it has not right to dictate the name of the editor, or what other matter relating to Glastonbury may fitly be added on to the text of William of Malmesbury.

The morning meeting closed with votes of thanks to Mr. Boyd Dawkins and the readers of papers.

The Hospitals.

The party then proceeded to visit places of interest in the town. At the Hospital in Magdalen Street,

The Rev. W. Hunt pointed out that the style of the

building was of the 13th century, it having been cut down to its present dimensions in the 14th century by Adam de Sodbury. It was dedicated to S. Mary Magdalen.

The PRESIDENT remarked that at one time the hospital contained a great hall opening into the chapel, which was a similar arrangement to many of the infirmaries of monasteries, as a convenience for the patients, and the same arrangement was also found in some ancient dwelling-houses. This hall had since apparently been divided into habitations for the old people of the almshouses.

The Almshouses at the back of the Red Lion Inn were next visited, the principal object of interest being the chapel.

Mr. BULLEID said the dedication of the chapel was unknown, but the building was evidently the work of Richard Bere, the last abbot but one of Glastonbury.

The Rev. J. T. FOWLER called attention to a recess in the side of the altar, and said if the altar was an original one it was very interesting to find such a recess, it being used as a place in which to keep the priest's vestments.

St. Benedict's Church.

The Rev. W. HUNT said there was no doubt this edifice was erected by Abbot Richard Bere, whose initials appeared over the porch. One of the chapels in the church was called the Sharpham Chapel, because when the church was built Abbot Bere attached it to the Manor of Sharpham. Inside, Mr. Hunt said there was nothing of very great interest; there was a clerestory without an arcade, and remains of a fine reredos.

A window in Northload Street, with fine wooden tracery, attracted some attention.

The George Hotel.

The Rev. W. HUNT said that inn was probably built in the time of Edward IV, by Abbot Selwood. It was said to have been built as a guest house for the abbey; but in his opinion

it had clearly been built for an inn, just as it was at present. The lower windows were of later insertion. There was a fine hall inside, which was approached by the original staircase from below.

The Tribunal.

Mr. Bulleid said it was generally believed that this building was the Court House of Glaston Twelve Hides, where petty cases were heard. It was traditional that there were large dungeons below, but he had never had it explored. As the floor was now in a capital condition, unless he had some clearer evidence as to the existence of the dungeons, he should not like to interfere with it.

St. John's Church.

Mr. Bulleid said this church was built by Abbot Selwood in 1485, on the site of an earlier Norman church. When the restoration was going on in 1859 the bases of some pillars of the older church were found. The earlier church appeared to have had a central tower. The present tower was built subsequently at the west end, and was one of the finest towers in Somerset, ranking third, the others being Wrington and St. Cuthbert's, Wells. It was about 140 feet high to the top of the pinnacles, which were added about 60 or 70 years since, they being formerly rather higher than they are now. At the east end of the church there was a very fine altar tomb to John Atyeo.

The Rev. W. Hunt said he had been informed by Mr. Merrick, who conducted the restoration, that he found the remains of the central tower, and that the present piers rested on the bases of the old piers. Referring to the present state of the chancel roof, Mr. Hunt said it was sad to see a roof of that kind deformed by such colouring, and it was a pity that artists had not been employed as well as painters.

The Society was then entertained at Luncheon, at the George Hotel, provided by the Local Committee. The Mayor of Glastonbury (Mr. J. Albert Porch) presided.

Excursion.

At half-past two o'clock the Society started on an Excursion, the first halt being made at

Meare.[4]

On arriving at this village the party proceeded to the Fish House, where

Mr. Parker said the house had been called a cottage of the time of Edward II or Edward III. In his opinion, however, it was far more than a cottage, and was probably the residence of an official of importance connected with Glastonbury Abbey. It was probably built in the time of Adam de Sodbury, from 1322 to 1335, that being a time when a good deal of money was spent on buildings. Unfortunately, however, the records of the abbey expenses had been lost, or they might have been able to find in them something definite relating to that building. There were records of there having been large lakes in that vicinity, probably used for the purpose of supplying fish to the abbey, and very likely that house was the residence of the person in charge of that department.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells said he was sorry to have heard that the old Fish House was going to be converted into cottages, but he hoped the present visit of the Society would have the effect of influencing the owner to let it remain as it was.

The next stop was made at the Manor House, now occupied by Mr. George Look.

Mr. Parker said there was evidence that probably a manor house of some kind existed here in the time of Abbot Michael of Ambresbury, for after serving the Abbey for eighteen years, he retired in the year 1252 to the manor at Mere to rest, though retaining for his use also a chamber and offices within the monastery at Glastonbury. He could, however, see no archi-

(4). See *Proc. Som. Arc. Soc.*, vol. ix., part i., p. 32, for illustrations of the Fish House and Manor House.

tectural feature remaining here which would correspond with a date so early. When Adam of Sodbury became abbot, in 1323, he repaired a great many manor houses and other buildings belonging to the abbey. The abbey chronicler, John of Glastonbury, specially mentions that he had chapels and chambers at Mere, Pulton, and Domerham, constructed of a splendid kind, with other costly buildings. At Mere also he had the church dedicated, and the court there surrounded with a stone wall, with a variety of fishponds. This then probably marks the date of all the chief architectural features now visible. He died in 1334, so that probably the buildings were completed during those ten years. The chamber, commonly called the hall, however, appeared to him more like a solar, or upper room, although it was certainly a very large one. It might have been used both for the purposes of a solar and a hall. The length of the room was sixty feet. In the window at the end they had a specimen of the practice in the Middle Ages, when glass was dear, of removing the windows from one house to another, as the frames were readily lifted off. The fireplace was a large and interesting one. The south wing, it would be seen, had a porch, and although this part of the building had undergone many changes, the hall probably was here, occupying the whole height of the building, while the solar was on the first floor, with kitchen and other offices beneath. Several alterations were made in the time of Abbot Bere, and it is probable that the hall was divided into small chambers, and the large solar served for dining hall and court room. On several occasions disputes seem to have occurred between the Abbey and the Bishop of Wells, as to the rights of fishery in the Mere or pool (whence the name), and also as to the right of taking fuel, thatch, and other materials from the moor.

The CHURCH was next visited.

The Rev. W. HUNT said the chancel was built about the time of Edward II, having been dedicated in the time of Abbot Adam of Sodbury, and contained five Decorated

windows. The chancel roof was rather peculiar, as it was more of a domestic than an ecclesiastical character. The nave was built in the latter part of the 15th century, and did not fit the chancel. In the vestry was a curious wooden alms-box, on a pedestal.

Mr. BULLEID called attention to the fact that there was a splendid peal of bells in the tower, which it was said had been recast from the old bells of Glastonbury Abbey.

After a pleasant drive through the TURBARIES, where the process of cutting the peat for fuel was witnessed with much interest, the party arrived at

Shapwick,

and proceeded to the MANOR HOUSE, the residence of George Warry, Esq.

The Rev. C. GRANT read the following paper, written by Mr. George Deedes Warry, son of the proprietor of the manor,

On the Manor of Shapwick.

The entire parish was formerly monastic property, held by the monks of Glastonbury Abbey in two rights. First, as owners of the manor, which was granted them before the Norman Conquest, in the year 745, by Lulla, a pious lady; and secondly, in right of an impropriation of the rectory, which was effected in the 25th year of Bishop Josceline's episcopate.[5] Upon their manorial property they had a Grange, which is described in Warner's history of the Abbey. The parcels of land are there set out, and the moat, which is now called the Island, is mentioned. By right of their impropriation, the Monks became possessed of the rectorial manse, which is now Mr. Strangway's house, and probably a good part of the old building still remains. Of course, at the Dissolution of Glastonbury Abbey, in 1539, the whole property reverted to the king. In subsequent grants the rectorial property and the manorial property were kept entirely distinct; and whenever a fresh grant of the rectorial property was made, it was always

(5). See two documents, No. 26, in Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

expressed to have belonged to the lately dissolved monastery of Glastonbury, and to have been attached to the office of almoner.

In one document three items are mentioned as having belonged to the rectory—the tithe barn (since pulled down), the dove cote (now standing), and a field opposite Mr. Strangway's house, therein called Ingrasshay—now corrupted into Grassy. The first grant of the manorial property was to a man named Walton; and to show how that name has been kept up, there is now an Auster tenement, or right of common, in King Sedgmoor, called Walton's. George Rolle, the ancestor of the Devonshire family, and the London merchant, was a large purchaser of Abbey lands. He died in 1552. His great grandson, Sir Henry Rolle, was a very distinguished lawyer. He became Sergeant-at-Law in the 16th year of Charles the First, a puisne Judge of the Queen's Bench in 1645, and the first Chief Justice of that Court under the Commonwealth in 1648, both Houses of Parliament concurring in his appointment. Lord Campbell, in his *Lives of the Chief Justices*, says that he purchased the manor house at Shapwick, but it is quite reasonable, also, to think that he inherited it. However, to him is attributed the building of the house. The greater part of that work remains, but since that time it has been sadly disfigured. The dining room, at the back of the house, was built at the beginning of the present century, and the mullion windows pulled out at the same time, with a view to entertainment and comfort, rather than out of respect to architectural taste. The drawing room has been taken out of the height of the hall, which, no doubt, formerly extended up to the lofty roof. In front will be seen the usual dove cote, and the moat was still in existence, which supplied fish to the monks on fasting days. Sir Henry Rolle is said to have gone the Western Circuit with Judge Nicholas in 1649. He was deposed by Cromwell from his office in 1655, and, seemingly, retired from public life. Lord Campbell says that he died at

Shapwick, and was buried in a little village adjoining; but why not in Shapwick? The following entry appears in the register of that parish, "Henry Rolle, Esquier, late Lord Chiefe Justis, died the 30th day of July, and was buried the 4th of September, 1656." The family had a vault in the Church there, and an escutcheon of the Rolle family was dug up some sixty years ago, and is still preserved. It formerly ornamented the coffin of Samuel Rolle, who died without issue, and left his property to Henry, the first Lord, whose initials are on the back of the grate in the hall. He was the grandson of the Lord Chief Justice.

After the Dissolution a grant was made of the living to one Dyer, and he was succeeded by a man named Berkeley in the time of Queen Elizabeth. During his time there was a suit promoted in the Court of Exchequer, between the parishioners and himself, as the owner of the impropriate Rectory, to determine whether he or they should repair the parish Church. The question never arose before, they having united both properties. I cannot find that a judgment was ever given, although the evidence is set out in a document to be found in the Record Office in Chancery Lane. The probability is that the suit was compromised, the lay-rector having thereafter repaired the chancel, and the parishioners having done the same for the rest of the Church, and probably this suit formed a precedent for the practice or custom now prevailing in most vicarages. It does not lie with me to describe the Church, but I hold that it was re-built, not on its own site, but on its present one, by the monks, just after the impropriation, which took place between 1261 and 1274, in the abbacy of John de Tantone. The name of the field where the former building stood bears to this day the name of "Old Church," and the boundary of the old churchyard is distinctly marked by the unevenness of the ground. On the border there are several very venerable pollard elms, in a state of decay. There was a spring of water on the spot, which, in the absence of an

outflow, caused it to become quite swampy and unsound; and when (between 60 and 70 years ago) it was drained, human bones were dug up. It may be mentioned that the present churchyard wall seems to have been the subject of fierce dispute, because its patch-work condition shows that it was divided amongst the different occupiers for the purposes of repair. The Rolle family continued to hold the property till about the year 1785, when they obtained a private Act of Parliament, enabling them to concentrate their property in Devonshire. For a few years it was held by the Templar family, and then came into possession of the present owners, of whom he might, perhaps, be allowed to say—*Stet fortuna domus.*

The Old Rectory House was next visited, and inspected from the outside, the present owner, Mr. H. B. Strangways, being absent from home.

The Rev. C. Grant said the house was supposed to have been the residence of the almoner of Glastonbury Abbey, but no doubt many alterations had been made in the building since that time, in the windows, and so on. The present screen in front of the house was erected by the Strangways' family about 200 years ago, in order to shut out of sight the farm buildings to the eastward. On the left of the premises there used to stand an old tithe barn, only second in importance and dimensions to the one at Glastonbury, and opposite to the barn were the old stables. There was nothing of great interest to be seen in the interior of the house.

The President explained that although the building was called the rectory it had nothing to do with the Church, as it had always been the property and residence of the lay rector.

The party next proceeded to the Church, where

The Rev. C. Grant said the Church was dedicated to St. Mary. Collinson, in his *History of Somersetshire*, stated that Adam de Sodbury, Abbot of Glastonbury from 1322 to 1335, rebuilt the Church at his own expense. No doubt the

former Church stood on the site described by Mr. Warry. This fell into a dilapidated state, and it was found necessary to rebuild it. Mr. Grant was of opinion that instead of doing this, the Abbot granted the use of his private Chapel to the parishioners, which stood where the present church stands, and that Abbot Sodbury built the present Church. In 1640 it was repaired and restored. In 1861 it was restored to its present condition, according to plans executed by the late Sir Gilbert Scott. It consists of a nave, chancel, and central tower. The chancel was restored by the lay-rector, Mr. Henry Bull Strangways, at his own expense. The roof and windows are entirely new; the window at the east end is a memorial to the late Mr. Henry Bull Stangways and Elishaba his wife—he died in 1829, and she in 1858. The chancel also contains monuments belonging to the Bull and the Strangways families. On the north-west corner of the chancel there is a tombstone bearing the names of Richard, Ann, and Catherine Davidge, of Sharpham Park. Catherine, according to the register-books, died in 1711. The roof of the chancel is of the same pitch as the original roof. In the nave there is an old waggon roof, which is a part of the restoration of 1640, and there were evidences discovered at the last restoration which show that it is of a much lower pitch than the one it replaced. At the west end of the Church is a memorial window to the Rev. Thomas Mason, formerly vicar of the parish, who died in 1863. On the south side is a small memorial window to the Rev. Elias Taylor, formerly proprietor of the manorial property of Shapwick, who died in 1827. On the same side of the Church is another memorial window to some members of the Warry family. On the north side of the nave is a memorial tablet to the Rev. George Henry Templar, formerly vicar, who died in 1849. In the vestry, built in the wall, is a stone bearing an ornamental cross, which was discovered some years ago while making a drain round the church, thought by some to be the lid of an old stone coffin. In the porch there

are three tombstones, one to Mary Butts, 1636; one to Captain Thomas Silver, 1707; and the third to a member of the Swaine family, 1637. These were formerly in the middle aisle of the Church, but were moved to their present position at the restoration in 1861. The registers begin at 1599, and are in a fairly good state of preservation; but contain nothing of special interest or importance.

The PRESIDENT called attention to the central tower which was not usual in Somerset churches, they generally having western towers.

The next halt was made at

Walton.

Mr. PARKER explained that the CHURCH was a comparatively modern building, and had been recently restored. In the interior he called attention to the recumbent figure of a priest, with a plain alb and chasuble, but without a chalice at the head; and also to a fragment of an old arch, which was probably the covering of the recumbent figure.

The party were entertained at tea in the pleasant grounds of the rectory, by the Rev. J. G. Hickley.

The old RECTORY HOUSE, a building of about the 15th century, was next inspected from the outside, and the party proceeded to

Sharpham.

The Manor House of Sharpham is a building of somewhat uncertain date, although known to have been granted by one of the abbots of Glastonbury. It is now occupied by Mr. Govett; but a great deal of interest is centred in the building in consequence of its having formerly been the residence of Fielding, the novelist, a room in the house being pointed out as his library. Much regret was expressed at the recent destruction of the fine avenue of trees leading to the house.

A drive through Street brought the party to

Northover,

where a halt was made in the Street road, near Pontus Peri-

culosus, where the portion of the newly-discovered old road was inspected.

Mr. MORLAND pointed out that the road was twelve feet wide, well made of stone, supported on both sides by oak piles, about seven feet in length, with a string of oak from one pile to the other. Much interest was displayed in the excavation, and hopes were expressed that further researches would be made into the matter.[6] Thanks were accorded to Mr. Morland for the trouble he had taken.

This brought the proceedings of the day to a close, and the party returned to Glastonbury.