Again, under Col. Bramble's admirable management, a punctual start was made at 9.30 for

Low Ham Church and Manor House.

Mr. Buckle said that the church was an excellent example of Gothic of very late date, it having been built in 1669. The character of the architecture was peculiar, it being a mixture of Perpendicular and Decorated. The windows were not reproductions of any old Decorated windows, but were really original. The whole building shewed an honest attempt to revive the principles of Gothic architecture without copying exactly any definite style. The glass in the east window was very unfortunate, and spoiled the effect to a great extent. He should imagine that the upper part at any rate was the original glass of the window. The screen was also curious; it was based on the Perpendicular. On the altar was the original altar cloth, with the date upon the front of it. The builder of this church was one George Stawel. The east window used to contain a statement that it was founded at the sole expense of George Stawel, that it was built in 1668, and consecrated in 1669. A door which formerly led into the chancel was now



LOW HAM

blocked. It had George Stawel's coat of arms upon it, Stawel impaling Wyndham, the initials "G.S.," and the motto "En parol ie sues." There was a monument in the church to two of the Stawel family, and another to their predecessors, Sir Edward and Lady Dionysia Hext, who died in 1624 and 1633.

Prebendary Grafton said the deed of the original endowment of the church was dated June 10th, 1622, and it stated that "Sir Edward Hext, of Netherham, leaves some parcels of land lying together in or near Statt Drove, in the parish of Aller (one of nine acres, another of seven, and another of five), twenty-one acres in all, in trust for the payment of the rents and profits to such scholar, minister, or preacher of God's Word as shall be appointed by Sir Edward Hext and his heirs in the Manor of Netherham, to preach one sermon in the forenoon of every Sabbath day. The minister was either to preach himself or to supply the same by some other sufficient learned man of the same profession. For each failure to do so 10s. are to be deducted and given to the overseers for the poor." The trustees were Sir Robert Phillips, of Montague; John Paulett, of Henton St. George; John Stawell, of Cothelstone; Hugh Pyne, of Cathanger; John Symes, of Chard; Marmaduke Jennings, of Burton; Gregory Gibbs, of South Perrott; and Edward Hext, of Morthoo, in the county of Devon.

Mr. Buckle said that the tower was Perpendicular. The screen came from the Mayor's Chapel at Bristol.

Colonel Bramble said that a late Mayor of Bristol, Sir Charles Wathen, was owner of the Manor here, and during the time the old chapel was being restored at Bristol a portion was taken out and brought here. He had been informed by the Rev. S. O. Baker, that the church was not donative; it was simply a private chapel of the Lord of the Manor. There was no graveyard; in fact no consecrated enclosure of any kind. The building merely stood in a field. The present Lord of the Manor would be the trustees of the late Sir Charles Wathen.

Mr. Buckle said that the pulpit at Muchelney church also came from the Mayor's Chapel.

Mr. J. C. Horsey kindly threw open the Manor House to the inspection of the visitors. This charming house, the fabric of which is of Perpendicular style, contained some fine pannelling of Charles II period, and also a beautiful portrait, in oils, of Lady Hext. It may be mentioned that the Hexts came from Morthoe, in Devon, and that the Manor came to them through a widow named Walton.

High Ham Church.

This church, said Mr. Buckle, was one of which they knew absolutely the year of its building. Adrian Schael, who was rector from 1570 to 1599, stated in his history of the parish (which is printed in Part II) that the church was built anew from the foundation in the year 1476, by Abbot Selwood (this church was appropriated to Glastonbury), Paulett, and various others. And Schael's statement was corroborated by a brass in the chancel recording that the chancel was built by J. Dyer, the rector, who died in 1499. The tower appeared to be older. The mark of the older church roof against the tower was much lower than the present roof. That showed that the church which existed before the present one was smaller. The tower arch was built of Ham Hill stone, and the body of Doulting stone. The nave and roof were undoubtedly built in 1476, and so was the porch, which had a roof corresponding with that of the nave. The rood screen was of a later date, probably about 1500. A horizontal beam across the church, some six feet above the top of the rood screen, was very peculiar and puzzling. He was of opinion that the rood stood on it. The chancel was the same date as the nave. There was originally one row of stalls against each wall in the chancel, a good deal of which remained, although converted into choir stalls on the modern plan. The sedilia consisted simply of a stone bench, as at Curry Rivel, only not

so elaborately treated. There were two small figures of old glass in the east window: one with mitre and crosier presumably represented the Abbot of Glastonbury; the other was not so clear, but there was some indication of its being a deacon, with a cow for symbol. In the chancel was a very pretty Jacobean lectern with two old books; one chained to it. The benches were fine old 15th century benches, and were most probably put in when the church was built, in 1476. The font was Norman. The tower, earlier than the rest of the church, was a simple one. On the battlement was a representation of the Virgin and child. The whole of the outside, and especially the gurgoyles, were worthy of note, they being very fanciful.

Aller Church. 1400937

At this church the members were welcomed by the Rev. Preb. Nicholson, who had anticipated their coming by hanging up in the porch a large number of manuscripts of his own writing, full of valuable information. Mr. Nicholson gave an address, published in a local paper.

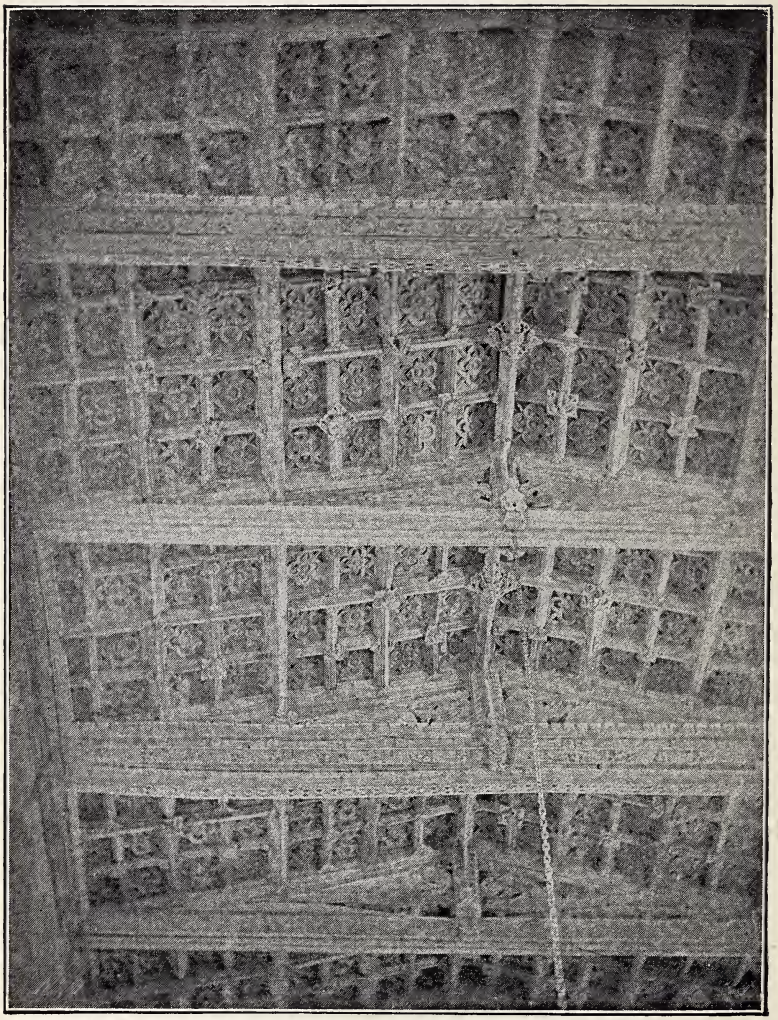
Luncheon.

The party then proceeded to Somerton, passing by "Sheepslade," probably a British encampment, on the way. After the luncheon at the Red Lion, a vote of thanks was passed to the President (Mr. Cely Trevilian), on the proposition of Canon Church. The President, in responding, acknowledged the obligation of the Society to the Local Committee, to the Local Secretary (the Rev. D. L. Hayward), to Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Bramble (the general secretary in charge of the excursions), for his excellent arrangements, his invariable courtesy, and withal his rigid punctuality and adherence to his programme; also to Mr. Buckle for his painstaking, careful preparation of interesting and valuable information respecting the different buildings. Thanks were also voted, on the proposition of Prebendary Buller, to the owners and occupiers of

houses who had kindly thrown them open to the inspection of the members of the society; and also to the incumbents of the different parishes for allowing the society to visit their churches, and for the assistance they had given. An adjournment was then made to

Somerton Church,

which, Mr. Buckle said, was in some respects an entire change from anything they had seen at that meeting. Most of the churches had been examples of the Perpendicular style, with little trace of any previous history. Here they had the foundation, so to speak, of Early English work, which had been worked upon and added to and altered generation after generation, until they had now a church which differed very greatly indeed from the original, of which they had certain fragments still left. The Early English church had a wide nave, like the one they were in now, and the eastern part of the walls of the nave were part of that church. The arch leading into the north transept and the corresponding one on the other side were both Early English. A little earlier in the twelfth century the favourite place for the tower seemed to have been over the south porch, and then the south transept came to be its usual place as in this case. The tower was of very great interest, because it was one of the comparatively small number of octagonal towers for which Somerset was famous. This was quite a typical octagonal tower. The lower storey was square. The storey above changed the square into an octagon. Above that was the octagon storey, which was intended to hold the bells. That storey was now the clock room. The top storey was an addition in Perpendicular times, as was almost invariably the case in these octagonal towers. The two transepts were part of the Early English church. This Early English church had no aisles, but in the Decorated period a great change was made, and both aisles were added. Some Decorated windows remained in the aisles. Some of them were



ROOF OF SOMERTON CHURCH.

of the original date, but the window at the west end had been a great deal altered, and the tracery was, he believed, modern. The next great change was the taking down of the roof of the nave, raising the walls, inserting the present clerestory windows, and the addition on the top of the really magnificent piece of carpentry which formed the roof. Though there were many fine roofs about this county, there were few which could compare with this. One of the most curious features of the roof was that over every tie-beam there was a pair of huge grotesque beasts. This roof, he was told by the Parish Clerk, was made in the carpenter's shop at Muchelney Abbey. This local tradition seemed a reasonable statement. On at least one place in the roof there was carved a great barrel of beer, with a bung-hole. That had led some persons to think that Abbot Beere, of Glastonbury, had some connection with the roof, but the Abbot's rebus was a beer flagon, so that this probably referred to some other person. The pulpit was a beautiful example of the work of the first half of the seventeenth century. The date on it was 1615, and a text ran round the base—"Praise God for ai." Jacobean woodwork was a strong feature of the church. The altar was dated 1626. Other minor matters of interest having been pointed out, the party proceeded to

Long Sutton Church,

which Mr. Buckle said was another church whose date was absolutely known. In Bishop Fox's register was a license to Thomas Cornish, Bishop of Tenos, to consecrate this church, stated to have been then rebuilt entirely from the ground, in the year 1490. This was of very great value from an archæological point of view, because it enabled them to say with certainty what sort of churches were put up at that time. This was built some fourteen years after High Ham church. In this case again it was not everything they saw which was built at that time. At the first glance they would see that the

work was of different periods. But further examination would show exactly what was done in 1490. The tower was a later addition: so were the two porches, and the two side chapels of the chancel. These were added afterwards, and the two windows, one on either side of the nave next to these chapels, belonged architecturally to these chapels. The second window on the south side was, he thought, partly modern, and partly older than this 1490 church. The inner arch and splays were clearly of an early date, and must have been preserved from the church then taken down, and built into this church as a matter of economy. The tracery seemed to be entirely new. There were a very few other fragments of the earlier church. Underneath the pulpit were collected some interesting stones found at different times. Some of them were Norman. And a Norman piscina was built into one of the piers. But, excluding a few scattered stones and a window, there was nothing here older than 1490. The chancel was of the same date as the rest of the church. The arches from the chancel into the chapels, and the chancel arch were panelled, and the chancel arch was of the same date as those side arches. Before the chapels were inserted there was a squint through each of these two large piers. This was now blocked up, to secure greater strength. The turret staircase and the rood screen were later work. The screen appeared to be about 1500 or later still. The clerestory windows were much later in appearance than the aisle windows. But in this church there was a great height given to the aisles, and comparatively little to the clerestory. The result was that there was plenty of room for pointed arches and tracery in the aisles, but little in the clerestory, consequently a flat arch was introduced over these upper windows. The roof over the nave was similar to that at High Ham, but not so good. There were angels bearing shields with the sign of the Passion upon them. One remarkable symbol he did not understand. It consisted of a hand, holding what appeared to be a tress of

hair. The end of the roof over the rood loft was decorated with paint, as was very commonly the case. The roofs of the aisles were like the roof of the nave, but of very much later date. In the seventeenth century these roofs appeared to have been entirely renewed, and the bosses were for the most part left entirely plain. They were prepared, but were never carved. On one of the beams were cut some initials, with the date 1691. The font seemed part of the original furniture of the church. The cover was Jacobean—a period from which they had very many font covers. The pulpit was a very grand example of Perpendicular work; but, unfortunately, the twelve niches had lost all their figures. In the cornice above the base of the pulpit, monograms were inserted. First "W.," next "I.P.," third "S.W.," then "I.H.C.," and "M" (for Mary); finally, a double triangle, representing the Trinity. The name of the vicar at the time of rebuilding was John Pim, and he therefore thought "I.P." were his initials. There were some nice fragments besides the Norman ones, including two or three heads of figures which had been destroyed. The chapel on the south side seemed to have been connected with the Spigurnel family, who were the owners of the Court-house, a little distance from the church. In the parapet of the nave, overlooking the chancel, was a very small carved figure, which had been stated to represent the Abbot of Athelney (this church was connected with Athelney): but he felt very doubtful as to this. Certainly the head-dress was not a mitre; it was a flat sort of cap, but the dress was difficult to make out. It might, perhaps, be a surplice; or it might be a cloak slung over the shoulder. In the left hand there was a staff, the head of which was gone. It was not clear whether it was crosier or staff. What he held in the right hand was difficult to make out, the figure being entirely overgrown with lichen. Another curious figure connected with the parapet of the nave was a large one overlooking the porch, standing on the roof of the nave, leaning over the parapet and looking down. This figure

had lost its head, but the left arm remained resting on the parapet, and in the left hand there was again something he had been unable to determine. This figure reminded one, of course, of the figure of the mason on the George Inn at Glastonbury, which was a very conspicuous object. It was placed in precisely the same way, standing in the gutter of the roof, and looking out between two battlements. That was quite distinctly a mason, because he had the emblems of his trade. Whether the figure here also represented a mason he had no means of saying.

The screen had been re-decorated. The upper part was entirely modern, with an addition to carry the organ, which seemed to come most happily in that position.

The tower was finely proportioned, and of a great height, but exceedingly plain. What gave a great help to its general appearance was the large amount of wall left above the top of the belfry window. This was decidedly unusual. The buttresses and general treatment were similar to that at Langport, and were crowned with very short stumpy pinnacles, which seemed inadequate to the height of the buttresses. When they had more magnificent pinnacles they were a great assistance in carrying up the eye from the buttresses to the parapet.

Kingsbury Church.

Mr. Buckle said that this church had a very simple Decorated arcade. There were plain octagonal piers, and chamfered arches over, with a plain capital between. On the outside were some very large and massive buttresses, which looked as if they belonged to a building of a still earlier date. There was nothing sufficiently definite remaining to say what the church was that existed at the earlier date. Belonging also to this Decorated period was a very curious niche in the wall outside, on the south-west end of the church, where was a large blank space. It was possible that it had been removed from the inside of the church. The greater part of this

church was Perpendicular. The roof over this Decorated arcade, no doubt, was originally a steep roof, which started close above the points of the arches; but a fine clerestory had been afterwards added. The nave was of the ordinary Perpendicular work; but the tower was most peculiar, as seen from the inside. It was very late, and was erected long after this conversion of the Decorated into the Perpendicular nave had been carried out. The tower buttresses were built projecting out into the nave; and these were ornamented with two tiers of niches: the two buttresses were bound together by a panelled arch. So they had a double arch leading into the tower. The smaller arch was the tower arch proper; the other was mere decoration. Inside the tower there was a good plain example of a fan vault. The chancel was an exceedingly fine building. Outside the windows and buttresses were particularly good, and there was a great dignity about the inside. The chancel had a chapel added on either side. These were originally, on both sides, comparatively small, but that on the north side had been rebuilt and made into a sort of transept. There were magnificent windows in the chancel, with fine tracery transoms. There were capitals on the mullions, and small mouldings went to make up the mullions. He called attention also to a small window on the south side of the chancel. It was high up, and was a plain square window, its object being to throw more light into the chancel. In the windows of the two chapels there were several coats of arms, and fragments of other glass. This glass must have suffered a great deal during the last century, because Collinson spoke of there being several kings, bishops, and saints, as well as coats of arms. He mentioned also a legend stating that "John Storthwait, chancellor of Wells, had this window made," but it was not at all clear which window was referred to. The greater part which now remained was in the south chapel, and that appeared to be in its original position. That might give a date for the chapel. This church was appropriated to the Chan-

cellors of Wells, and it showed that some of them had acted nobly towards it. Some of them must have erected this chancel. In the transept window was the coat of Mortimer. That fixed no particular date. Then there was the coat of Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-43. This coat was interesting, because it was differenced with a crescent instead of the usual mitre. Lower down were the arms of Carent. He was Dean of Wells for two years only—1446 and 1447, but he had long been Canon. These coats seemed to define the period with tolerable accuracy as between 1430 and 1450. There was another coat, Quarterly, 1 and 4, *az.* 3 bars wavy *arg.*, 2 and 3, *sa.* a fret *or*, a label of 3 points over; and in the corresponding window on the south side there were two coats. One was *Sable*, six mullets pierced *argent*. The other was very much broken, but there was no doubt that if the chevron were red, instead of white, it would again represent Stafford; but it was not uncommon to find heraldic bearings which should be red, actually white, on small coats in painted glass.

Of the nice oak screen only the middle remained. It once extended right across the church. The vestry was at the east end of the church, as at Langport, and was entered by a door on the right hand side of the altar.

Mr. Buckle drew attention to a tiny Crucifixion in the parapet of the porch. On the tower there was much very interesting sculpture. Many of the niches were still filled with the figures originally put there. These figures were a remarkable series, because they were all seated. Seated figures in niches were comparatively rare. Almost all these figures were cross-legged, the legs standing prominently out and swinging freely in the air. The two figures on the south side represented kings. That on the right hand side was the most perfect. His curls shewed underneath his hat, which was turned up to a point at front and back looking something like a mitre. On the hat, inside the brim, he wore his crown. In his hand he had the proper attribute of a king, a globe,

with three bands symbolic of the Trinity upon it. The figure on the left was another king. The head was gone, but around his neck he wore the collar of an order ; he held a globe, and was in plate armour. That in the other niche was dressed in royal robes. On the west face of the tower, there was a curious figure seated. It represented Christ in judgement, with a sheep on the right hand and a goat on the left. There were two niches—one on either side of the west door—which also had figures with legs crossed ; but the upper parts of these figures were entirely gone. On the side overlooking the church there were two more figures. One of these had on his knees an open book, and in his left hand he held an indeterminate object. The other represented a young musician, gaily dressed in a short tunic, with a turban on his head. There were some other pieces of curious sculpture. There was a corner stone—which corresponded with a band of quatrefoils at the side—with two figures carved in it, kneeling and counting their beads. On the south side there were four coats of arms. One was A chevron between three leopards' faces ; this seemed to point to Bishop Stillington, 1470 to 1490. Another was A chevron between three bulls, probably for Radbard, of Westover. The others were curious and difficult to make out.

The tower was similar to Huish, and no doubt it was on that account, that this tower was associated with Huish in the master and apprentice story. According to the story this was the inferior tower, but it was such a very noble one that it seemed rash to say that it was not the equal of Huish. Though the general idea of the tower was similar, and although there was also a broad band of quatrefoils at intervals between every storey all the way up, the arrangement of the buttresses was different. This tower was simply square on plan with buttresses put on each side, about a foot from the corner. The pinnacles grew out of the buttresses, and the parapet fitted exactly on the top of the tower. Here was the flying

pinnacle at the corners, as at Huish, but in this case it came quite naturally on the top. That was the true finish to this tower, and it appeared to him, that, so far from the Huish people having thought originally that they had a finer tower than Kingsbury, they actually changed their own parapet in order to copy the Kingsbury one.

The party then returned to Langport, and thus closed the meeting of 1894.