Excursion: Wednesday.

A large party proceeded to

Montacute House

which by the courtesy of Mrs. Phelips was thrown open to the members of the Society. This magnificent specimen of English domestic architecture was examined with great interest by all present. The illustrations which are given in the present volume render a formal description needless. The family portraits, and the original documents relating to the Gunpowder Plot were inspected with much interest and pleasure; and the illustration in the hall in bass relief, of the Somersetshire custom of Skimmety, or Skimmerton-riding was explained by the Rev. Hill Wickham.

The members then inspected several interesting specimens of domestic architecture in the village, and proceeded to

Montacute Church.

This is a cross church without a central tower, a by no means unusual form in the district. The tower is very elegant in its workmanship—is not so tall nor so stately as some, but the work is singularly graceful. It belongs to that class which is found at both ends of the county —near Bristol and in the south-western part of Somerset. There is a prominent staircase turret which runs up the whole way and springs from the ground. The church is mainly of the thirteenth century. One of the perpendicular windows on the south side of the nave is new. The Norman chancel arch has been happily left.

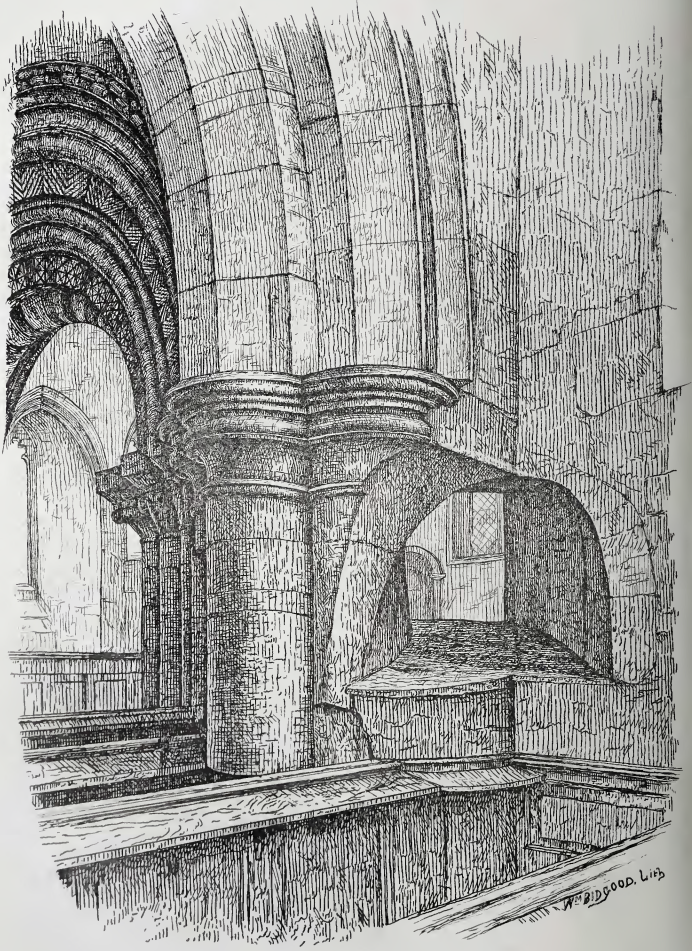
Stoke-sub-Hambdon Church.

The original church was Norman, to which period the north and south doorways, and the chancel arch, clearly belong. The chancel was remodelled and the transepts added in the Early-English period; the northern transept forming the tower. The range of trefoil lancets, in the south transept and in the chancel, are worthy of note, as is also the decorated vaulted porch, which was built over the original Norman doorway. The peculiar features of this interesting church are given in detail in the *Proceedings of the Society*, 1853.

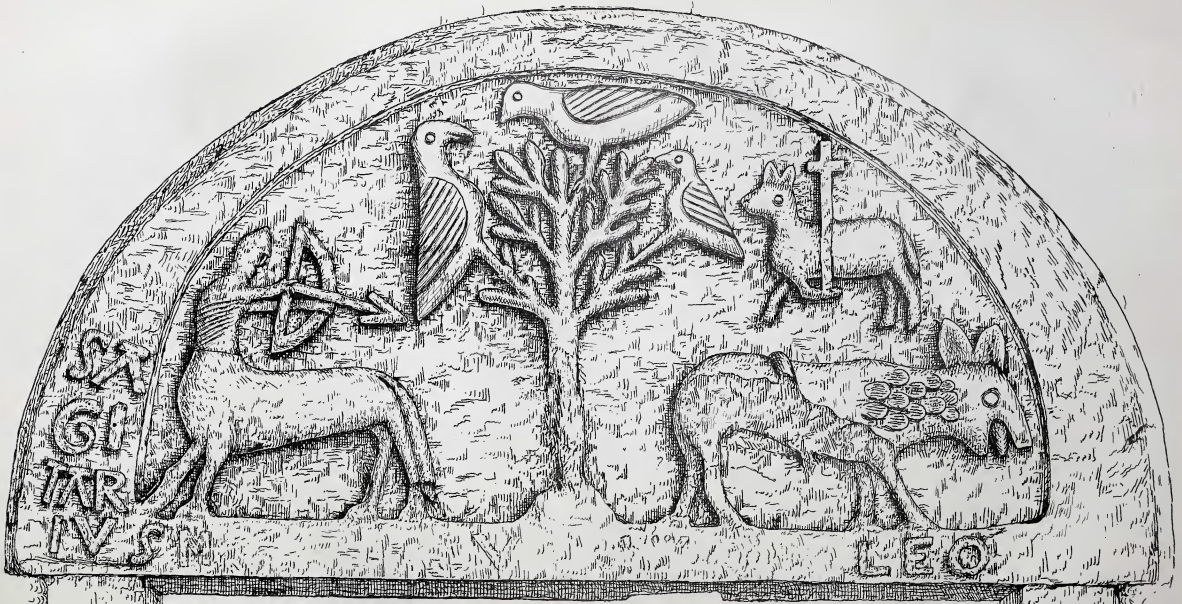
Attention was drawn to the partial removal of the plastering from the west side of the chancel arch, which had the effect of cutting in two the angels painted upon the plaster. It is very important that something should be done to preserve these ancient relicts. People now-a-days have a great fancy for taking away the plastering and leaving the bare stone. The old builders never did that. It is not at all wise to get rid of the rich plaster and paintings which were upon it.



Stoke-sub-Hambdon Church, South-East View.



SQUINT, STOKE-SUB-HAMBDON CHURCH.



TYMPANUM OF DOORWAY IN STOKE-SUB-HAMBDON CHURCH, SOMERSET.

W. BIDGOOD, Lith.

The members then ascended

Hambdon Hill

for the purpose of examining the ancient earthwork by which it is encompassed, and which is one of the most interesting and best developed in that neighbourhood.

The Rev. Prebendary SCARTH, who accompanied the party, had quitted the carriages in passing under the hill that he might be ready to receive the party on their arrival and point out to them the peculiar features of the camp.

On the party reaching the summit of the hill, they were conducted along the rampart to the extreme north-east corner, where there is a hollow, and the President having called on Mr. Scarth to address the party, they placed themselves along the slope of the embankment, within the small amphitheatre at the north-east angle of the camp.

He began by saying that it might be regarded as a superfluous work to say anything about a camp which had already been described very carefully in their Proceedings, and a plan of which had been given ; but as it was often possible to add something to the information of others, and each man who had studied a subject could bring distinct ideas to bear upon a doubtful point, he would venture to say a few words, not by way of undervaluing what had hitherto been said, but rather of adding to it, for the account given by Mr. Walter (Somersetshire Archæological Journal, 1853), was really a very valuable paper. There was, however, one mistake in it, and that was as to the length of time during which the Emperor Claudius continued in this country after he had landed, subsequent to the victories of his general, Vespasian ; his stay had been only sixteen days, he had not remained as long a

period as was asserted in that paper. (See Proceedings 1853, p. 84.)

It appeared very evident from the form of the rampart and from the very large space of ground inclosed, being a circuit of three miles, that this had been an old Celtic earthwork, formed long before the Romans set foot in this island. He would not venture to pronounce how long. There were remains of ancient habitations, which had been traced, and these had been recorded. The Romans had, however, occupied it at a later period, and the portion of the camp where they then were, was the part fixed upon by the Romans as a point of occupation, which they probably had continued to hold possession of for several hundred years—for this camp was placed on the line of one of their great roads, the Foss, the line of which could clearly be traced from the rampart of the camp and ran at a short distance below it. The Foss road went from the sea coast at Seaton (the ancient Muridunum) through Ilchester to Bath and on through Cirencester, until it reached Lincoln, and touched the east coast of England. It therefore cut the island diagonally, and along that road would be found stations at certain intervals (as on all the lines of Roman road) which had been carefully fortified, as well as the towns of larger growth. It appeared to him that this camp was one of these fortified stations; undoubted Roman remains had been found in it; these were described in the paper to which he had alluded, also in the Archæologia, volume xxi, p. 39. For further confirmation of Roman occupation they had only to look around and consider the spot on which they were. It was a Roman amphitheatre, a small one indeed, but such were not uncommon in Roman stations as well as cities. He could instance three of these small camp amphitheatres,

viz: that in which they now were assembled—one at Charterhouse on Mendip, which they had visited two years ago, another at Housesteads (Burcovicus) on the line of the great northern barrier in Northumberland. There were also larger amphitheatres in the neighbourhood of Roman towns, as at Caerleon on Usk, called Arthur's Round Table, at Dorchester, at Silchester, at Cirencester. These, though small in comparison to those met with abroad, were nevertheless very good specimens. In France, Germany, and Italy, you found the ancient stone facing still remaining, but probably those in England were simple turf constructions and had not been faced with stone. It could be shown that the Roman legions had their gladiators, but it was not necessary that gladiatorial spectacles only should take place in these amphitheatres; sports of different kinds, and exercises of skill and strength might take place there, and they were very suitable appendages to military stations.

Mr. SCARTH mentioned the Roman coins* that had been discovered in and near the camp, and also the Roman villas, as at East Coker, which existed in the neighbourhood. An account of this villa and the pavement uncovered there, will be found in the pages of the Journal of the Archæological Association, vol. iv. He pointed out the stones with square holes through them, placed at regular intervals, not far from the amphitheatre, but said he would not attempt any explanation of them, as he had not found them in any other Roman camp. They need not necessarily belong to the Roman period. They had been supposed to be placed there for the purpose of picketing the Cavalry.

* Coins of the third century, very little worn, have been found in the camp, viz. :—Philippus, sen, and jun. ; Decius, A.D. 251 ; Gallus, A.D. 254 ; Volusianus, &c.

Having pointed out the course of the rampart, and shown how much of the camp had been defaced by quarrying, and also pointed to the spots where remains had been found, he ended by expressing a very ardent hope that the entire surface of the camp might not be destroyed by quarrying, but that some portion of this old historic monument might still be suffered to remain. It was sad to see the wanton destruction of many of these noble old earthworks, a destruction which might often be averted, and which would realy be beneficial to the owners of property. At Clifton, on the down opposite the Observatory hill, and on the Somersetshire side of the Avon, a camp called Bowre-walls had been very wantonly destroyed, simply for the sake of material. The camp if allowed to remain would have imparted great historic interest to the spot, as the remains of one of the ancient earthworks which had protected the navigation of the river Avon, and been the birthplace of the trade and prosperity of the city of Bristol. The rampart, composed of hard concrete covered with earth, had now been carted away, and very little of it remained to show the former strength and importance of the position.

Happily the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society had got a record of it, and soon we should have to trust rather to printed records of these historical monuments than see the monuments themselves. He hoped the portion of the earthwork which they had just examined might be permitted to remain uninjured.

Having partaken of lunch in the schoolroom kindly placed at their service by the Rev. G. J. Blomfield, the members visited

Norton Church

the exterior of which was greatly admired as a work of art. In the interior objections were made to some of the alterations made during recent restorations and especially to the removal of the plastering whereby the walls were laid bare. The incumbent of the parish differed from this view, while Mr. Irvine and Mr. Buckley both having had great professional experience as ecclesiastical architects expressed themselves in favour of retaining and preserving the plaster on the interior walls.

From hence the company proceeded to the old interesting Manor House of

Wigborough

This mansion is a fine specimen of an Elizabethan Manor House. By the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Moody the members of the Society were allowed to inspect the interior. Several of the old rooms and chambers are in excellent preservation. Over the fire place in one of the reception rooms was noticed an elaborate coat of arms in plaster, with the following armorial bearings : *A bend fusilly ermine, a dexter hand and arm issuant in chief* (said to be Grundy) impaling 1 *and* 4, *three Helmets,* (for Compton.) 2, *A trivet* for Trivet. 3, *A dove (or lapwing) within a bordure ermine.* The Manor of Wigborough occurs in Domesday in the form of Winchberie—"John himself holds Winchberie. Alward held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for two hides." According to Collinson the owners subsequently took the name of De Wiggebere, and held of the King by the service of keeping the door of the King's hall or chamber. Sir Richard Cogan of Huntspill, became possessed of this Manor by marriage with the heiress of Sir Richard de Wiggebere,

temp. Edward III. Subsequently it passed to the family of Bouchier who sold it (temp. Henry VIII) to John Selwood. John Broome held the Manor 23rd Eliz. (A.D. 1580.*

The members then proceeded to

Hinton House,

where they were courteously received and hospitably entertained by Lord Westbury, and the Hon. Miss Bethell. Having been conducted through all the chief apartments and reception rooms, and having had ample opportunities of examining the valuable works of art, and the numerous objects of historical interest with which the house abounds, the company assembled in the Saloon, where Mr. Hoskins read the following notice of

* By a Will bearing date 24th April 1586, and proved at Taunton, on the 8th October in the same year, it appears that "Brome Joneson of Bridge, within the parish of South Petherton, gent," was "Seased of and in the thirde parte of the Manor of Wigbeare . . . and of all the lands, tenements, meadows, and pastures thereto belonging, with the appurtenances." This, with lands in Netherstratton, Over-stratton, Compton, Seavington, Dolis Wake, and other places, he leaves by the said Will in trust for his son Emorbe, and his three daughters Elizabeth, Katherine, and Margarett, who were all minors, subject to the life-interest in "my manor or capital messuage of Bridge, and of all my houses, lands, and tenements in Bridge," settled on his wife Dorothie as "joincture." The three daughters subsequently married James, George, and John Farewell, sons of John Farewell, of Bishops Hull, (afterwards of Holbrook, Co. Somerset) and Ursula, daughter of Thos. Phelips of Montacute. The deed of settlement referred to bears date 20th Jan., 18th Elizabeth.

The Executors appointed by the will are "My well-beloved father-in-law John Hoskins, gent.; my uncle James Compton, Esq.; my uncle Adam Martin, gent. (of George Hinton); my uncle James Bale, gent. (of Seaborough); my brother-in-law P. Hoskins, gent.; and Francis Saundys, gent."

W. A. J.

Evening Meeting

The Rev. Mr. Barnwell, Secretary of the Cambrian Archæological Society, gave an interesting *resumé* of the proceedings of the day.

Mr. W. A. Jones, Secretary of the Society, expressed his regret that papers on Natural History had been crowded out. He had prepared a paper on the geology of Crewkerne and its neighbourhood, but there was no time to read it. He thought that some arrangement should be made for devoting a second day to the reading of papers.

Mr. Dickinson suggested that if the excursion on the second day were shortened there would then be plenty of time in the evening.

Ancient Boundaries

Mr. Dickinson then proposed that an Index to certain boundaries recorded in old documents, the charters from which they came, and the names of the kings who granted them, be printed in the Society's publication. Great benefit would result, as the original boundaries of various parishes might then be traced.

Mr. James Parker spoke of the importance of having such an index, and referred to a piece of land adjoining his property, the boundary of which he hoped to be able to trace by means of two documents which had recently come into his possession.