PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

DURING THE YEAR

1931

THE Eighty-Third Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Minehead on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, June 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th. The last meeting of the Society at Minehead took place in June 1906.

First Day's Proceedings

Motor cars and coaches assembled in 'The Square' outside the 'Plume of Feathers' Hotel, and left at 10 a.m. for

St. George's Church, Bicknoller

of which the Rev. Preb. A. C. Harman is vicar. The party arrived at 10.30 a.m., and were met by Mr. F. C. EELES who described the edifice. His observations have since been amplified.

This Church, dedicated in the name of St. George, like those of Sampford Brett and Dunster, was originally a chapel to Stogumber. It is not of large size, but its bench-ends, screen, and recently unblocked windows, with the careful treatment it has lately received, combine to give it special distinction. It consists of chancel, nave, north aisle, south porch and west tower.

That there was a church or chapel here in Norman times is shown by the existence of the cushion capital of a pillar piscina now in the S.E. corner of the sanctuary, but there are no other visible remains of a building of this period. The south wall of the nave contains earlier work than the rest of the Church, including a few stones of the eastern jamb of a window of a character that cannot now be determined. There is a fifteenth-century chancel-arch and the tower appears to belong to the second quarter of that century. There is some evidence of the original porch doorway having been of this date, while the large window in the south wall of the nave was probably inserted not much later than the middle of the century. Thus it would seem that the earlier church was very considerably altered about this time, and the tower and porch added, though probably not all at once. A little later the window in the north side of the chancel was inserted. Early in the sixteenth century the north aisle was added, the parapet placed on the south side of the nave, the porch practically rebuilt, and the east end of the chancel reconstructed. Last of all, about 1530 two new windows were placed in the south wall of the chancel.

The screen probably dates from before the addition of the aisle, while the bench-ends seem to be of the period when the south chancel windows were added.

Of the subsequent history of the Church and its fittings we know nothing till modern times. Sometime before the Gothic revival, probably in the eighteenth century but possibly not till early in the nineteenth, no less than four windows were blocked up and also the west doorway of the north aisle. Either then or later the window-tracery in the north aisle and in the east window was mutilated, no doubt to save the cost of repair.

The large five-light east window has cinquefoiled ogee-headed lights with Perpendicular tracery, the original form of which it is rather difficult to determine. The label stops are angels holding shields. Above it outside is a small niche with an angel below and a richly carved canopy at the apex of the gable. At its base is the most remarkable feature of a series of flat, thin stones, blocking the lowest foot or so of each light, plain on the inside, but each carved externally with a quatrefoil containing a flower or a shield. The purpose of this blocking is

difficult to discover unless it can be due to a desire to use a reredos not made for the church which may have risen above the level of the base of the glass inside.

The north chancel window is of a usual Perpendicular type with three cinquefoiled lights supporting tracery-lights divided into two panels in each section, having trefoiled heads. The label stops seem to have been re-cut long ago. This window was entirely blocked, probably in the eighteenth century, and was opened out in 1930.

Of the two windows in the south wall of the chancel, the eastmost which had been blocked in like manner and was also opened out in 1930, is of a later type and may be compared with the windows in the latest part of the cloister at Cleeve Abbey believed to date from 1534. It has a depressed head, almost segmental, and is in three lights with an unusual arrangement of tracery. Although, as in the case of the window opposite, the splitting of the mullions by the ironwork made extensive repairs necessary, the tracery itself is as perfect as when it was made in the sixteenth century.

The window westwards of this is similar and larger, being of four lights. In the case of both there is a deep splay externally and the rear arch within is supported by a small shaft. The mullions run right up to the head of the window. The material is Dundry stone and the craftsmanship very fine and good. Between these windows is a small doorway with a four-centred head.

On either side of the chancel within are two recesses, almost opposite each other, each with a depressed arch beneath a square head, apparently intended to enclose monuments of some kind. These are now gone and there are modern sills at a high level beneath these arches.

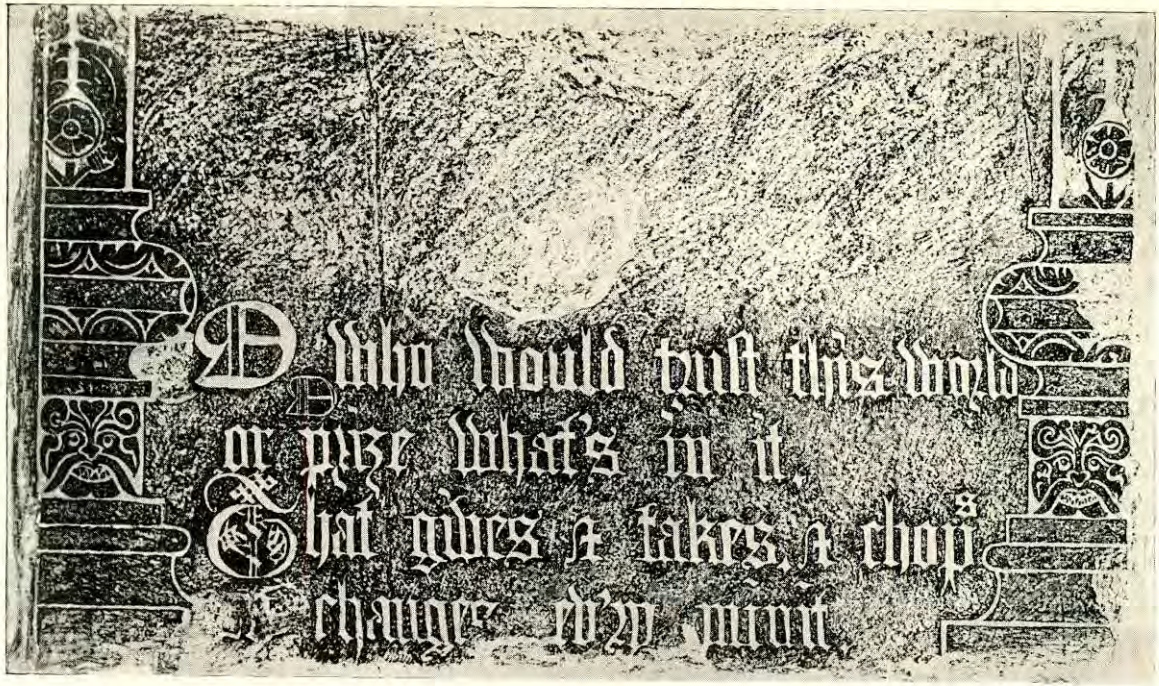
The large square-headed window on the south side of the nave is similar to one on the south side of Stogumber Church. Its stonework is a modern renewal, but it clearly reproduces an original design of a very local character which has affinities with work at St. Decuman's, at Holcombe Rogus in Devonshire, and in the little Doverhay Manor House, now used as a reading-room at Porlock. In all these cases a peculiar type of tracery has an arrangement best described as a triple tracery-light over

each main light, the central cusp of which breaks through into the central tracery light. Work of this kind was probably done by Watchet masons about the middle of the fifteenth century.

The north aisle has four bays, three in the nave, one in the chancel. Its walls are of red stone ashlar, but the windows are of Ham Hill stone. It has an embattled parapet with quatrefoil piercings, and the string-course is carried up round each gable end. Its general character resembles other work in the Quantock area, particularly the richer north aisle of Stogumber. The windows have three cinquefoiled ogee-headed lights, and in the tracery they had originally two panels subdivided into three lights each trefoiled. But in the eighteenth century the tracery was unfortunately mutilated, no doubt to save repairs, and the east and west windows were blocked up. The east window has now been unblocked : the tracery will require a good deal of repair which it has not yet been found possible to effect. The west window still remains blocked. Beneath it is a small, plain doorway with a very depressed head hidden externally by the heating-chamber, at present. Doorways in this position are exceptional, but there are other cases in Somerset, particularly in places where there is a steep hillside or other obstruction at the side, as at Winscombe, East Brent and Selworthy.

The arcade has clustered pillars and wreathed capitals on the model of Stogumber : the arch from the chancel to the aisle is separated from the rest by the thickness of the east wall of the nave, but the aisle is continuous. There is a small, plain sinking in the north wall for a niche, no doubt fitted with wood originally, midway between the two eastmost windows on the north side. Its position would be in the way of the screen had that been continued across the aisle at this point. We may conclude from this, taking also into consideration the small space eastwards of it, that the chapel in the east end of the aisle was formed by a screen returning westwards from the rood-screen to the first pillar in the nave, and then crossing the aisle a bay further west than the rood-screen.

There is a groove in the base of this pillar that points in the same direction and its capital has shields with the instruments of the passion which marks it out from the others which have only wreaths of foliage.



BICKNOLLER CHURCH

Lower part of a Memorial Stone to Thomas Slocombe, his wife and daughter
XVII Century

From a Rubbing by Mr. A. B. Connor, 1930

The roofs are modern. Those of nave and aisles are of the traditional waggon type and include some old carved bosses retained at the restoration, when Mr. Ewen Christian claimed that it was impossible to retain the old roof.

The porch is of two stories. The upper one is reached from a staircase at the S.W. corner entered from the nave. The ancient roof remains. There is the peculiarity of the only window being a square-headed one on the east side. The gable end over the doorway is blank. At the apex of the gable is a small figure of an angel, above which rose the cross which is now gone. The outer doorway is modern, but in the vicarage garden are some moulded stones which seem to have come from this position and which have the deep hollow one finds in the early or mid-fifteenth century doorways at St. Decuman's and Porlock.

The tower is divided into three stages. It has angle buttresses and a large square staircase-turret at the east end of the north side. There is no west doorway, but the west window is set rather low and has three cinquefoiled lights with two-panel Perpendicular tracery. The tower arch has three recessed orders chamfered, of which the innermost die into the wall. The belfry windows are of two cinquefoiled lights with quatrefoils in the tracery. There is a fine roof to the ground story with good moulded beams. The parapet is deep and embattled. The staircase-turret projects well above the rest of the tower and upon it is growing the miniature yew tree which has become so well known in recent years, and strangely enough seems to have done little if any harm to the structure. The pinnacles probably date from the seventeenth century or the early part of the eighteenth. At each corner of the string-course beneath the parapet are carved five most remarkable winged figures, four of them rèpresenting the evangelistic symbols. The figures themselves have been mutilated, but the wings are spread along the faces of the tower walls in each direction and are executed with a diagrammatic boldness which one associates with work of very different periods. Somewhat similar treatment may be seen at Stogumber in the case of a large dragon beneath the top of the staircase turret. Indeed the whole tower is reminiscent of that of Stogumber and appears

to have been based upon it. If we compare it with the tower of Dunster which we know was planned in 1443 we may conclude that it was built shortly before that time.

The screen has five bays and retains its doors and its original fan-vaulting and cornices; it was carefully restored by Mr. Bligh Bond who was obliged to renew certain portions of it. It is one of the local group of seven screens of this type which were probably produced at Dunster about 1500 and subsequently. Mr. Bligh Bond looks upon it as the earliest member of the group. Like the Dunster screen its lower panels are enriched with tracery consisting of two short trefoiled panels under an ogee canopy enriched with beautifully carved crockets, the treatment of which varies with each panel. There are only three panels in each bay although the openings above are in four lights. The loft is reached by a staircase in the south wall.

There are many fine bench-ends and several seat-backs of the Quantock type, closely akin to the Crowcombe seating which is dated 1534, and also like that at East Quantockshead. Unfortunately the seating itself only dates from the nineteenth century restoration.

The octagonal font is very modern in appearance, having been re-cut when the Church was restored. But it is the fifteenth-century font and seems to retain its original form.

The Church has recently undergone most careful repair under Mr. W. H. R. Blacking whose skill has gone far towards undoing the mischief carried out in the nineteenth century, when the Church was rather drastically handled by the late Mr. Ewen Christian, then architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Three of the four blocked windows have been opened out and two of them repaired with very great care, so that almost every scrap of the original tracery has been retained, notwithstanding the way in which the mullions were split by the rusty stanchions and saddle-bars.

Within the last few years a good deal of valuable work has been done here. Beside the opening out of the blocked windows and doorway already mentioned, the font has been replaced in its former position, and a richly carved seat-back replaced in the passage way. An enormous Victorian pulpit has been removed and a smaller one provided which does not hide the

squint. The chancel floor has been lowered to its original level and repaired. The removal of the Victorian tiles and steps has disclosed several interesting grave slabs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which have been carefully relaid. The mediæval altar-slab of the side chapel has been combined with the new high altar, the ancient proportion and arrangement of which have been restored. A few tiles have been found and relaid in the chancel: they were probably made at Cleeve Abbey. A plain seventeenth-century chest which belonged to the church has been recovered and replaced in the vestry.

A memorial stone (Plate II) has been removed from the churchyard in modern times, and built into the west wall of the south porch under a canopy of which there are slight remains. It is to the memory of Thomas Slocombe, his wife and daughter, and it bears a date 1689. The inscription is scaling off and further details of the Slocombes are now undecipherable.

Remains of Mediæval Stained Glass discovered at Bicknoller

When the blocked windows on the north and south sides of the chancel and at the east end of the north aisle were opened out, some few remains of the original glazing were found. Long before the windows were blocked up, the old stained glass must have been broken, for many of the fragments were not *in situ* but had been re-used to fill the smaller tracery-lights. In the east window of the north aisle fragments of the smaller angle lights were found in position: in the north chancel window the greater part of a female figure was in place in one of the tracery-lights, but her head had been broken and its place was taken by a thick piece of seventeenth-century glass. In the south chancel window at the heads of the main lights were remains of the original leading enclosing scraps of a coloured border of the usual type, including the roses and crowns generally used in the cusps of the stonework.

The glass in the chancel windows must have been more or less of the same date, the latter half of the fifteenth century. Generally speaking it seems to have been of the kind which we are coming to associate with a particular school of West of England glass painting which was very likely at Bristol. The

main lights no doubt contained figures of saints without very much dark or rich colouring upon a quarry background, with a surrounding border. There would be small figures of saints in the tracery-lights or else floral devices, in either case on a white ground. In the larger tracery-lights of the north window were four female saints : the fact that the one of which we have the largest portion carries a long staff and has not a dragon at her feet suggest that she may be St. Sidwell, the staff being that of a scythe carried over her shoulder.

The fragments from the east window of the north aisle, the stonework of which is of later date—perhaps as late as 1520 or 1530—are correspondingly later in character. The yellow stain is rather darker, the blue warmer, and there are fragments of evangelistic symbols from tracery-lights which show a shaded black and white treatment which is akin to that of the window on the north side of the chancel of Winscombe, and which we know to have been placed there between 1520 and 1532.

A detailed description of the fragments follows :

North Window of Chancel.

In second principal tracery-light the greater part of the figure of a female saint standing on a mound on which flowers are growing. She is represented in a pallium over a long undergarment. The former is plain, the latter powdered with yellow roses. In the right hand, concealed under drapery, the saint holds a closed book, in the left a long gold staff. Long golden hair hangs down her back. The head and shoulders are gone. The whole is carried out in line upon a white background of a very greenish tint with a little smear shading applied to the outer side of the glass, and a little yellow stain. Round the panel above the mound is a narrow border of three lines the inner one indented, enclosing yellow stain. Size, 5½ in. by 10 in.

The upper part of a female saint from another tracery-light, carried out in similar manner : she has long hair and holds a book in her left hand. This has been re-used at some time to glaze one of the smaller tracery-lights.

Part of an upper tracery-light containing a fragment of some small device in the centre on a large white ground with narrow border of pigment and yellow stain with conventional ring decoration.

A few small fragments of others.

South Window of Chancel.

Three medallions for the central cusps of tracery containing

crowns in pigment and yellow stain, two of them imperfect, and portions of three or four medallions containing Tudor roses for lateral cusps, similarly treated. These were found *in situ*.

Plain blue glass and plain red from the pointed cusps of tracery-lights, and two more pieces of plain blue, of a greyer and ' colder ' type than the blue glass found in the east window of the north aisle.

Fragments of a capital letter of Lombardic type, or ornamental Roman based upon it, in yellow stain and pigment on white.

Fragments of leaf ornaments in pigment and yellow stain.

East Window of North Aisle.

Remains of tracery-lights containing symbols of the four evangelists carried out in pigment, heavily drawn upon a grey background made by smear brushed out, in two cases vertically, in one also horizontally, within panels formed by borders of black and yellow stain, shaded. There remain fragments of the paws of the lion of St. Mark, and half the head of the bull of St. Luke, with a few scraps of what appears to be St. John's eagle. These were in the four principal tracery-lights.

Remains of a conventional leaf ornament, within a black border, all in yellow stain, shaded. Probably from the two upper tracery-lights.

Parts of all four-angle lights containing a rough suggestion of a bursting pomegranate within a border, very narrow, the whole within a fairly wide border of white.

Five small pieces of plain blue glass of a somewhat ' hot ' tint, darker and richer than the cold grey found in the chancel.

Several other scraps of indeterminate character.

At 11.20 a.m. the members arrived at

Sampford Brett Church

where they were welcomed by the Rev. D. A. Rowlands, rector. This edifice had not previously been visited by the Society and was described at some length by Mr. F. C. Eeles.

The Church, which is dedicated in the name of St. George, like those of Bicknoller and Dunster, is comparatively little known in spite of its proximity to the railway and to the main road, from which it is scarcely visible.

It underwent an extensive restoration in 1835 in the ' romantic ' or ' Strawberry Hill ' Gothic manner which preceded the Gothic revival properly so-called. The chancel and west end were rebuilt in this way, and the whole Church replastered and

its fittings reconstructed in accordance with this wave of taste. The original building is therefore very greatly disguised.

It consists of chancel, nave, north and south transepts, tower on south side of nave, shallow west porch, vestry on south side of chancel. The vestry and south transept are so arranged externally as to present the appearance of a south aisle extending eastwards from the tower.

The nave may contain thirteenth-century work, but none is visible unless perhaps the blocked north doorway be of this date. To it was added early in the fourteenth century a somewhat deep north transept which is the most untouched part of the Church. Late in the fourteenth century a tower forming also a porch was added on the south side of the nave near the west end. Late in the fifteenth century a new east window was provided. The north transept roof is of fifteenth-century date and is of the usual waggon type with three purlins, the bosses having small sprays attached ; the nave roof is richer, with five purlins and dates from about the middle of the century. The rebuilt chancel and the vestry, and all that can be seen of the south transept and west front belong to the reconstruction of 1835.

The east window, evidently re-used at the reconstruction, is of four cinquefoiled ogee-headed lights with good Perpendicular tracery, having a deep hollow moulding externally and a label with stops in the form of angels holding shields. The tall lancet windows in the side walls of the chancel may be reminiscences of thirteenth-century lancets previously there, but they are not ancient and seem to contain no remains of ancient stonework.

There are two ancient windows in the north transept both of the fourteenth century, both of two lights, one earlier than the other. That in the north gable has no label, trefoiled-headed lights and a circle containing a quatrefoil in the tracery. That in the east wall has hollow mouldings, a label with plain stops, ogee heads to the trefoiled lights and a quatrefoil in a shield-shaped opening in the tracery, clearly dating from after the middle of the fourteenth century.

There is no trace of any window on the north side of the nave and the south side is occupied by the tower, but there is a

blocked pointed doorway with no label close to the west side of the north transept. The south transept has no visible ancient features and may well be entirely modern.

The tower consists of two stages. The lowest stage is entered externally by a massive segmental arch consisting of two recessed orders chamfered, the inner order dying on to the responds. The doorway leading from the tower into the Church through the south wall of the nave is invisible; it is boarded over on the tower side, plastered on the nave side. The upper part of the tower is tall in proportion to the lower. At the top of it, close beneath the string-course, are belfry windows each of two trefoiled lights. The parapet is embattled and there are the square bases of pinnacles at each corner surmounted by miniature battlements. Access is by ladders, as in the earlier class of tower in the district. The position of the tower is exactly like that of Withycombe, although it is later in date.

The tower joins the south transept on the east, the transept joins the heating chamber, the heating chamber joins the vestry. All these buildings east of the tower appear to be modern.

The chancel and transept arches are completely disguised by plaster shafts and mouldings of great elaboration added at the reconstruction, when plaster enrichments were affixed to the wall-plates of the nave roof. Close examination shows that the nave roof is original; its ribs and bosses are fine massive work of the fifteenth century although coated with gritty looking brown paint to imitate dark coloured stone. The design and character of the bosses has much in common with those of the south aisle of St. Decuman's, the north aisle of Wootton Courtenay, the south aisle of Holcombe Rogus, the refectory at Cleeve Abbey and the chancel of Queen Camel.[1]

The whole of the fittings of the Church in their present form date from the reconstruction in 1835 though many of them incorporate earlier work. They represent a drastic and costly scheme which seems to have involved the destruction of earlier

[1] The church of Queen Camel was appropriated to Cleeve Abbey, and the chancel roof is evidently the work of West Somerset men, and was no doubt constructed at the instance of the monks of Cleeve, and probably carried by water to Ilchester.

woodwork of great value. Some panels in the north transept seats with the tracery design terminating in a tall crocketted finial like those of the screens at Bicknoller and Dunster, seem to indicate the former existence of a similar screen to that of Bicknoller. The pulpit contains some similar panels.

The nave seating is not without interest. The richly carved bench-ends of Quantock type on examination turn out to be largely imitative early nineteenth century work, but not wholly so. The central panels in some cases are medieval, but their wreathed edges are modern imitations, and the surfaces appear to have been smoothed. All the bench-ends have been raised on bases so as to give added height to the seats. The divisions between the seats are largely made of panelling from eighteenth-century box-pews. It would seem as if the old open seats had been converted into box-pews in the eighteenth century without being wholly destroyed, the old bench-ends being used as supports for the large and high panelling and doors. This would account for the bench-ends having been so injured at the edges that those of them that survived were given new edges at the reconstruction.

There are two exceptionally large bench-ends close to the west end where there are churchwardens' seats against the wall on either side. The tall bench-end on the north side is carved with a representation of an Elizabethan lady which tradition supposes to be the Florence Wyndham[1] of whom the story is told that she was buried at St. Decuman's while in a trance and saved by the sexton attempting to steal her rings. This bench-end is almost certainly a fanciful piece of modern work.

The font is of dark veined marble and is severely plain. It has a large wide and shallow octagonal basin on an octagonal baluster stem, without mouldings or ornament. Of seventeenth-century date—probably not early in the century—it has great dignity and simplicity and is one of the most remarkable and striking of our Renaissance fonts. It stands in an unusual position at the entrance to the north transept, and is raised on a low step 4½ in. high, 4 ft. 4 in. long and 2 ft. 2½ in. wide—an unusual adjunct for a font of this period. It is noticeably

[1] Her monument is in the north chancel aisle at St. Decuman's, dated 1596. The same story is also told of other people in other places.

larger than most Renaissance fonts: the basin is 2 ft. $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, and its edge is 3 ft. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. above the step, which is of the same dark blue marble as the rest.

The lectern is evidently part of the scheme of refitting which was undertaken when the Church was reconstructed. It is of special interest because hardly any isolated lecterns as distinct from reading-desks or prayer-desks were being made at that time. It is of wood and consists of a desk supported by a carved and moulded octagonal pillar with a large capital of freely-treated acanthus-leaf foliage. It is of no great height.

The altar is a carved table no doubt contemporary with the rest of the woodwork.

There is a plainly panelled low altar-tomb of not very ancient construction in the vestry and upon it lies a cross-legged effigy of a knight in Ham Hill stone very badly worn. No doubt it was originally in the north transept, which is probably what Collinson meant when he said it was in the aisle. Later on it was in the churchyard and is said to have been brought into the vestry in 1820. Dr. Fryer dates it *circ.* 1270.[1]

In the west window there is an oval medallion of stained glass, largely enamel painted, enclosing a lozenge bearing the arms of Margaret, widow of John Courtenay of Molland. She was a daughter of John Gifford of Brightleigh and his wife, Margaret, daughter of John Clotworthy of Rashleigh, and died 30 August 1743. There is a memorial to her at Wembworthy. Beneath the arms there is the date 1744. Stained glass of this period is rare and valuable.

On the south wall of the chancel is a beautifully proportioned tablet consisting of a slate centre with an alabaster border, the whole being surmounted by a cartouche enclosing the arms of Wyndham. The inscriptions are as follows:

ZACHARIAS WINDHAMVS HIC IACET
NEC INNOCENTIOR HIC IACET QVĀ VIXIT
NEC SEDATVS MAGIS AVT TRANQVILLVS

VIR SECVLO SVO DISSIMVLVS, GRATISSIMVS TAMEN
PROBITATE, FIDE, MORIBVS, AD ANTIQVVM INSTAR
PECTORE APERTO, ET CANDIDO, ET AMICITIIS NATO
PROCVL FVCO ET FRAVDE, CETERISQVE DIVITIARVM, ARTIBVS

[1] He describes it in full in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxii, 83.

MODESTIAM IMPENSIVS COLVIT, (SI FORTVNAM SPECTES) DAMNOSAM
QVAE NIL ILLI EX LITERIS PRAETER SAPERE PERMISIT,
AMICOS VT FRATRES, FRATRES VERO VT GEMELLOS COLVIT
QVORVM E SEPTĒ TRES, SINGVLARI CONTVBERNIO IPSE QVARTVS
PERPETVO CONVICTORES HABVIT VITA QVĀ SANGVINE CONVINCTIORES
NEC CONIVGIVM ADMISSVM EST NE DIVORTIVM FACERET
MORS SOLA DISSIDIVM FECIT, MINVS ILLI QVAM SVIS GRAVIS
QVOS TRVNCATOS OPTIMO FRATRE, RELIQVIT SVPERSTITES

GRAVIOR FVTVRA, NISI QVOD OLIM
CONIVNCTVRA SIT QVOS NVNC DIVULSIT

In the vestry there is a painting of the Royal Arms of Charles II. Outside the tower doorway lies a medieval grave-slab, any ornament on which is completely worn away.

The motors proceeded to

Carhampton

where the members arrived soon after noon, and were met by the vicar, the Rev. T. S. Dawson. The church was described by Mr. F. C. EELES.

The Church of St. John the Baptist consists of a wide chancel and nave without a division, a south aisle the length of both, south porch, modern west tower, and modern vestry on the north of the chancel. Apart from porch, tower and vestry, the plan of the church is a parallelogram.

The unusually wide nave suggests comparison with the Norman nave of Dunster ; indeed at the west end of the south aisle close to the tower, near the ground in the corner, are two axe-dressed stones one above the other, of which the southern sides form a straight vertical line in the wall and which therefore seem to be a small surviving fragment of the S.W. corner of an early nave which may well have been Norman. Close beside them, built end-on into the aisle wall, is what appears to be part of the angle shaft of a doorway, probably destroyed when the tower or the aisle was built.

There is a photograph in the vestry showing the old tower from which we gather that it was of the thirteenth century. It had angle buttresses with three offsets, no west doorway, a

small narrow west window, probably a lancet, and narrow slits above. It was of no great height and terminated in a box-like upper storey of wood with a low-pitched saddle-back roof, running north and south. The date of this is uncertain : possibly there may once have been a spire like that of Porlock, and the wooden structure may have been a makeshift made to house the bells after some accident.

It is quite likely that the chancel may have been widened to the size of the nave in the thirteenth century, as at Porlock and Luccombe, but we have no evidence as to this. In the vestry is a square-headed two-light window of the fourteenth century, re-used apparently from the chancel north wall, which seems to have been rebuilt with the rest of the north wall of the Church at the restoration.

About the middle of the fifteenth century a south aisle of four bays was added to the nave. Later on one window at least was placed in the north side of the nave and the east window renewed. Early in the sixteenth century the aisle was extended eastwards alongside the chancel. To effect this, the original east respond of the arcade was rebuilt at the east end and two new pillars provided for the two new bays of the arcade, with differently moulded capitals and bases. The old east window, like the respond, was re-used in the new east end, but the new south window shows its later date in the richer character of its tracery. A peculiarity of the aisle in its original form is the fact, shown by the position of its earlier window, that it extended alongside the chancel a few feet further than the arcade.

The splendid screen was built about the same time that the aisle was extended, and the aisle roof also must have been renewed. The nave roof was of somewhat earlier date. Both roofs were again almost wholly renewed at the restoration in 1862, though there are a number of old bosses left and a great deal of a richly carved wall-plate in the aisle.

The east window has four ogee-headed cinquefoiled lights supporting tracery lights in three panels, each subdivided into two trefoil-headed lights. The tracery has been renewed but it seems to be a reproduction of that shown in the drawing in the Pigott collection at Taunton. The label has lozenge-

shaped stops. The masonry of the wall is largely blue lias and has an earlier appearance than the window.

The earlier aisle windows, that is to say all except the more recent window at the east end of the south side, have three cinquefoil-headed lights with tracery lights in two panels subdivided into two trefoiled lights. The angle lights above are plain and uncusped, the stone of the surrounding openings is largely the local new red sandstone and there seem to have been originally no labels : those of the east and west windows are modern. The east window has a transom. The later window has ogee-heads to the lights and tracery panels in three divisions.

The porch belonged originally to the period of the western part of the aisle : the inner doorway has two hollow mouldings and has been much restored : the porch itself has been largely rebuilt and the outer doorway is almost if not wholly modern.

The arcade has clustered pillars of which the shafts have heavily moulded capitals with a bell-shaped section above the lower portion—a form common in the Perpendicular work of the middle period all over the western part of the county. It is found at St. Decuman's, Old Cleeve and Wootton Courtenay in the immediate area. The arches are four-centred and of low pitch. The capitals of the newer work at the east end are of the more usual form with a long necking and a thinly-moulded abacus, as in the naves of Dunster, Timberscombe and Selworthy. The bases in the nave are plain : those of the two newer pillars have mouldings as in the other later examples.

We may conclude that the aisle was built a little later than the aisles of Cleeve and Wootton Courtenay ; that the nave window and the east window are just before the south aisle of Dunster, while the eastward extension of the aisle is just after the date of the Dunster aisle but considerably earlier than the much later work at Selworthy and Luccombe.

The modern tower is modelled on the Bristol type with the very prominent spirelet on the staircase turret, and is rather an exotic in this part of the county.

The font is modern and of no interest. It takes the place of a thirteenth-century font, now in the chapel at Rodhuish, which is attached to this parish. This has a shallow circular bowl

about 11 in. deep externally and 27 in. wide, on a circular stem and a moulded circular base. The cover is of considerable interest and appears to be ancient, in spite of the modern iron handle. It is flat and is now divided into six sections, each containing three shallow leaves. It has been considerably restored.

The screen is the great treasure of the Church. It is one of the group of seven probably made at Dunster and is in some ways the most striking of them. Its cornice is one of the richest and deepest in existence: only Banwell and Norton Fitzwarren can be compared with it in Somerset: in Devonshire Lapford, Bovey Tracey and Dartmouth have cornices as deep, but these have fewer separate orders. The whole screen is richly coloured and gilt. This colouring is modern but said to be an exact reproduction of the original, most carefully carried out by Miss Luttrell, under the direction of Archdeacon Willoughby Jermyn, afterwards Bishop of Brechin, in 1862–3. How much modern work was done then is uncertain: the sill seems to have been renewed but not much more. The English inscription on the east side is modern but the fact that the lower panels are left blank points to the accuracy of the rest of the colouring: evidently nothing was found here, and nothing conjectural was attempted. Of course the tone and character of the colouring, apart from the general effect and the colour scheme, are not quite like what medieval colouring would have been. The screen consists of a half bay next the north wall, and two on each side of both doorways.

The screen is continuous across the Church, but the east side of the loft is built round the pillar of the arcade, and the south end of the screen runs into the east side of the adjacent aisle window. This has given rise to the suggestion that it was made for some other church. A little consideration shows that this is impossible. The screen is thoroughly local in type and there is no church in the district from which it could have come.

The lower panels are treated like those of Withycombe or Timberscombe, the openings have rather straight-sided arches with sharp points like Exford. The tracery and vaulting are similar to those of the majority of these screens, but the door-

ways have the peculiar arrangement, rare in the West of England, of only reaching to the spring of the arches and not including the tracery, which is fixed and separated from the opening by a crested lintel.

The pulpit is a beautifully-panelled example of early eighteenth century work.

There is a fine dug-out chest 5 ft. 7 in. long, 1 ft. 10 in. wide and 1 ft. 7½ in. high. It is quite plain and the lid has four hinges.

In the south aisle wall east of the screen is what at first sight looks like a piscina niche with an elaborate arch. This is a re-used window head, ogee-headed and trefoiled, at one time sub-cusped, with quatrefoils in circles in the angles. Apparently this must have been taken from a window in the south side of the chancel when the aisle was extended. There is no basin, but the basins of the two piscinas are obliterated. These, one in the chancel the other in the aisle, have very small and plain niches with depressed heads.

The members arrived at Minehead at 12.45 p.m. for luncheon.

The Annual Meeting

There was a good attendance at the Annual General Meeting, which was held in the Assembly Room at the 'Plume of Feathers' Hotel, by kind permission of Mr. Henry Chidgey. The chair was taken at 2.10 p.m. by Mr. A. F. Somerville, one of the Vice-Presidents, in the absence of the outgoing President, the Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew Nathan, G.C.M.G. He was supported by Mr. William Wyndham, of Orchard Wyndham (*President-Elect*), the Very Rev. Dr. Armitage Robinson, Dean of Wells, F.S.A. (*Vice-President*), the Very Rev. Prior Ethelbert Horne, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*), the Rev. Prebendary W. T. Reeder (*Local Correspondent for Dunster and Minehead*), Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal (*Hon. Editor*), and Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. (*Asst.-Secretary, Curator and Excursion Secretary*).

After apologies for absence had been announced, fifteen candidates (ten for ordinary and five for associate membership) were nominated, with proposer and seconder, for election at the next meeting of the Council.

The Annual Report

Mr. H. St. George Gray, Asst.-Secretary, read the Annual Report, which was as follows :

'In presenting the eighty-third annual report, the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 64 new names have been added to the list of members and associates. Losses by death and resignation for the year 1930–31 have been 67, and the net loss is 3. The total membership at date is 1,040, against 1,043 at the Yeovil Meeting last year, and 1,052 at the Weston-super-Mare Meeting in 1929.

'During the year the Society has lost three past Presidents, namely, Colonel J. W. Gifford, F.R.A.S. (1884), who was President at the Chard Meeting in 1927 (see an obituary notice of him, with portrait, in the *Proceedings*, lxxvi for 1930) ; the Rt. Hon. Earl Waldegrave, of Chewton Priory (1899), who was a Trustee of the Society and President at the Bath Meeting in 1914 ; and Mr. Ernest E. Baker, F.S.A. (1883), who was President at the Weston-super-Mare Meeting in 1929. The Society has also suffered the great loss of Mr. Walter Raymond (1886), the well-known Somerset novelist and folklorist.

'Last week the death of the Rev. William Hunt, D.LITT., at the age of 89 years, was announced. He joined the Society in 1866, and was the last remaining member of the sixties. When Vicar of Congresbury (1867–81) he was one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Society, from 1872 to 1879. In later years he became President of the Royal Historical Society.

'In addition the Council regrets to record a large loss of members by death, as follows : Mr. C. A. Bird (1914), Mr. Robert Blake (1911), Mrs. John Bradford (1908), Mr. A. H. Cowan (1927), the Rev. W. Powell Davies (1912), Mrs. A. E. Eastwood (1925), Mrs. Howard (1919) the Rev. Dr. J. B. Johnson (1911), Mr. J. Kingsbury (1906), the Rev. A. Kirke (1930), Mr. P. E. Le Gros (1907), Mr. W. M. Llewellin, C.E. (1906), Mr. J. G. Loveday (1898), Colonel A. A. Lyle (1922), Mr. W. McMillan (1910), Mr. John Merrick (1902), Major G. St. John Mildmay (1913), the Rev. G. F. C. Peppin (1925), Mr. R. P. H. Batten Pooll (1885), the Rev. J. A. Rawlins (1918), Colonel H. M. Ridley (1920), the Rev. F. B. Kerr Thompson

(1924), the Rev. J. D. C. Wickham (1902), Dr. A. D. Willcocks (1897), and Miss E. Woodroffe-Hicks (1922).

'There was a balance in hand of £37 10*s*. 10*d*. on the Society's general account at the end of 1929, after paying for re-roofing Castle Lodge. This increased to £76 13*s*. 1*d*. on December 31, 1930, when, in addition, £100 was placed on reserve to meet the cost of certain general repairs and painting which were long overdue.

'The expenses attending the issue of the *Proceedings* for 1930 (recently circulated) amount to £208 8*s*. 0*d*. A large part of the cost of the illustrations was defrayed by those mentioned in the preface of the volume. The *Proceedings* cost £214 13*s*. 10*d*. in 1929, and £290 10*s*. 11*d*. in 1928, the latter being much above our average.

'The new volume contains a full list of subscribers to the Society's Development Fund, including all donations and collections to the Excavations at Taunton Castle since September 1927 and the Extension and Special Repairs Funds to December 1930, the total amount being £1,240 17*s*. 7*d*. The Receipts and Payments account (*see* p. xxiv) showed a balance in hand, on 31 December 1930, of £545 14*s*. 0*d*. Much of this was set aside for the repairs and alterations to that part of the Castle at present occupied by the Curator, including heating by the low-pressure system. This work was completed two or three months ago at a total cost of £363. Other expenses having been paid off, a balance of £125 remained over towards the repairs and alterations of the Jury Room which, although having served a temporary purpose as a store, has long been required for offices and work-rooms.

'Quite recently Mr. W. Wyndham has given the Society £200 to complete (with the £125 before mentioned) the re-roofing and alterations to the Jury Room, and this work will be proceeded with during the summer. Money is now required to enclose the space below, where the Jury Room is supported by wooden pillars, and thus some additional Museum space would be provided on the ground floor. It is seen, therefore, that the Council is endeavouring to make use of all available space, until the time comes when extension may be possible. In view of such extension, the somewhat dilapidated property known

as Tone House has been demolished, and the proposed new buildings, in keeping with the surroundings, have been designed by Sir George Oatley, whose drawings are now exhibited on a screen in the Museum, where they can be seen by all persons interested.

'The amenities of the Taunton Castle property have suffered to some extent from the fact that the Corporation has converted what was the Outer Bailey of the Castle (and more recently the Markets) into a large motor-park. We understand that this is only a temporary measure, and it is hoped that the part nearest the present Castle wall may soon be laid out as a garden of some kind.

'The Council viewed with some little alarm the Land Tax proposals recently outlined by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and steps were taken to get into touch with certain associations and persons who presumably had influence in the matter.

'For the better regulation of Sections and Branches of the Society the Council proposes some additions to the Rules, which will be brought forward after the reading of this report.

'Owing to lack of membership the meetings of the Microscopical Section have been discontinued.

'The Council recommends the Annual Meeting to give approval to the general policy of handing over, on permanent loan, from time to time as may be considered desirable by the Council of the Society, documents relating to Somerset in the possession of the Society to the Records Committee of the Somerset County Council, for custody in their reconditioned muniment rooms at the Shire Hall, Taunton.

'At the same time the Council asks the Annual Meeting to approve of the principle of disposing of certain duplicates and ethnographical specimens (i.e. savage weapons, etc.) in the Museum. Under Rule VIII (*a*) the Council has power to dispose of such books and specimens as are no longer useful for the purposes of the Society.

'The excavations at Glastonbury Abbey in 1930, carried out in an area to the south of St. Mary's Chapel and to the west of the cloisters, did not provide much additional knowledge. The work was now being continued at the crossing of the great church with the object of finding the plan of the Norman building.

'The investigations carried out by Dr. Bulleid and Mr. Gray at the Meare Lake Village last September were very successful, and extended over a period of nearly four weeks. The excavators wish to complete the examination of the east end of the western half of the village this season. This can be done easily if sufficient money is forthcoming, but at the present moment funds are so low that the work might have to be abandoned. On completion of the excavation of this portion of the village it is proposed to produce a monograph on similar lines to the Glastonbury Lake Village volumes.

'The work conducted by Mr. St. George Gray on the Battlegore site, Williton, the property of Mr. W. Wyndham, last April will be reported upon at this meeting.

'The Very Rev. Dom. E. Horne continued the examination of the Saxon Cemetery at Camerton last summer, and hopes to resume operations in August. The two enamelled discs discovered at Camerton and illustrated in the *Proceedings* for 1929 have an added interest now, as they are identical with those on the famous Anglo-Saxon bowl found at Winchester in 1930.

'The excavation of a large barrow, containing a stone cist, in the parish of West Harptree, is reported upon in the *Proceedings* for 1930.

'Besides the three days' meeting at Yeovil last year, day excursions have been held at Gloucester (27 September) and Cardiff and Caerphilly (21 May), under the guidance of Mr. C. H. Bothamley, to whom the Society is indebted for making the arrangements.

'The Correspondent with the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments reports that during the past year 106 barrows on Mendip have been sent in for scheduling, in addition to the 105 already placed on the list. The total of 211 will, it is hoped, preserve all the tumuli for the future, in the Mendip district. Several other items in the county have been sent to the Inspectorate for scheduling in the course of the year.

'It is gratifying to be able to report that the foundations of the Abbey church at Muchelney have now been exposed and rendered secure from further destruction. It is much to be wished that the foundations of the adjoining cloisters could be treated in the same way.

'Taunton Castle was visited during 1930 by 9,108 persons, including 1,863 attendances from members, as against 8,524 persons in 1929.'

Mr. PHILIP STURDY in proposing the adoption of the Report said that the split in the south wall of the Castle had not yet been dealt with, but was being watched. He also alluded to the proposal that the Society, owing to lack of space, should hand over the greater part of its deeds and documents to the Somerset Record Office administered by the County Council, and he made some observations with regard to the disposal of duplicates and certain of the ethnographical specimens in the museum.

The Rev. Preb. W. T. REEDER, in seconding the adoption of the Report, thought that the Council's proposal with regard to the disposal of certain documents and museum specimens must commend itself to everyone's judgment as being a reasonable course to adopt. He thought the object of the Society's museum at Taunton Castle should be to illustrate the past of the county itself, and that was what Mr. Gray had always striven for ever since he had been the curator.

The adoption of the Report was carried unanimously.

Finances

The Very Rev. Father E. HORNE, F.S.A., Chairman of Council, asked the meeting to adopt formally the Accounts of the Society for the year 1930, which had already been published in the *Proceedings*, vol. lxxvi. This was accordingly done.