

Somerset Record Society

The Report was read by Mr. A. Vivian-Neal. In it he made reference to the Stogursey Chartulary from the archives at Eton, which was in course of preparation. He stated that the Somerset Committee of the National Register of Archives had obtained a great deal of information as to the whereabouts of ancient documents in the county and relating to the county, and they would be glad to know of any other Somerset collections of interest.

The Presidential Address

Lt.-Colonel J. A. GARTON, M.C., then delivered an address, entitled 'Our Heritage'.

In opening his address, Colonel Garton first spoke of Somerset in comparison with, say, Kent, the first landing-place of those invasions which brought great changes to this land. Somerset was the last stronghold of resistance of those who had been overcome. Picturing our county as it would have been then, nearly two-thirds water and the rest hills and woods and swamps, he felt that some little places they of Somerset knew so well must have been veritable havens of refuge and rest and peace. And this, he thought, was among many other reasons why Somerset had still an atmosphere that was unique. Then his thoughts went back to that beautiful tradition of St. Joseph of Arimathea coming to Glastonbury and founding there the first Christian church in all Britain. He liked to think of the story of Joseph planting his staff, and of its miraculously taking root and budding, as symbolic of the planting and blossoming out of the Christian Gospel of good news and hope from that holiest earth in England to the rest of our country and Empire and to the world. Passing on another five hundred years he thought of another great tradition and inspiration—the tradition of King Arthur, also in our midst, making his stronghold at Cadbury, and with his knights upholding, in rude times by possibly rude methods, those same Christian traditions implanted by St. Joseph, of fair play, honesty, nobleness and

chivalry. If the rules of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table could be written in letters of shining gold in every school which the State was starting in this country there could be no finer upbringing for boys and girls than in that spirit of tremendous chivalry, the chivalry of Christ himself, exemplified perhaps to the full in the Christian knight, Sir Galahad, whose strength was not necessarily in muscle and physique but in the purity of his soul.

Colonel Garton found another inspiring figure in Somerset's story in King Alfred, 'also in our midst, baptizing or, having baptized, standing godfather to the heathen being brought to the faith of Christ at Wedmore. Alfred, the great law-giving, prayer-making, warrior king, whose language we, who really speak good English, speak in this county. That, too, is our heritage and inspiration'. And passing onward through Somerset's history, the speaker noted other outstanding figures and phases which he wove into his tapestry of our heritage, before he turned to other aspects, such as the architecture of Somerset's beautiful churches, in which one might often find the caressing mark of a tool in the hand of a craftsman; in the architecture of those lovely old domestic houses in our county; in Somerset's scenery, amongst which no one could live and not be affected by the simplicity, the fundamentalness of it, and the spirit of the past, which made our traditions and our country what it is; in the people of Somerset, and their homeliness, their simplicity, their dependence upon simple things which appeared to be material but were not really so, and the secret they had of living, and dying, close to nature; and lastly in their quiet, subtle humour, of which Colonel Garton gave one or two examples.

An old man once called the Colonel's attention to a very fine ammonite or large fossilized shell, and he said to me, 'I d'knaw a man what 'ood gi' fifty pound to have a look at thic stowen'.

The Colonel said, 'Well, if I knew him, I'd let him'!

'You d'knaw un' z'well's I do.'

'Who is it?'

'Wold Tom Hutchens.'

'But he's blind!'

The old man still had one eye shut, but the twinkle of victory was in the other. All he said was, 'Ah!'

A TASK FOR THE SOCIETY

Looking to the Society of which he had become President, as one that found joy and interest in Somerset's great heritage and in finding out and preserving the things of the past, Colonel Garton felt that it was such bodies as this which, inspired by the spirit that was implanted in our midst two thousand years ago, could deal with the enemy of materialism with which the nation was faced to-day, a far more dangerous enemy than any we had seen before. 'We are in an age when people think they are doing the best for our children by taking the responsibility from the home. Are we educating our children to think they can all be officers in the Army, to think that it is not right to be in the rank and file? Are we forgetting the example of Our Lord Himself and the dignity of labour? Are we educating our children to want to labour for themselves, to desire to be able to be craftsmen, to be great in the ways that really matter and not in the ways that appear to matter in these material days? Cannot we see the danger when we think we can run our Empire on organization and on science and on mechanism? Cannot we see these things are nothing in themselves? I am not saying they are wrong, but what I do suggest is that they are not only useless but may be a very great evil if they have not that same spirit implanted in them that was implanted by St. Joseph's staff at Glastonbury. So I think that we, who are near the holiest earth in England, have a great task we can do in this society. This society must find the living soul behind all those things and exploit it, make it infectious and turn this upside down, blind world into a sane, seeing thing which knows whence the source of all power comes.'

DULVERTON

After lunch the members met at All Saints Church (Rev. Noah Owen, Vicar), which was described by Dr. F. C. EELES, O.B.E.

As the churches seen in Somerset on this occasion have been visited before and described in *Proceedings*, and as Bampton,

Molland and North Molton are in Devon, Dr. Eeles considers it sufficient to send in, for record here, the following résumé :

The churches visited in Somerset, namely, Dulverton, Brushford, Winsford, are all fully described in *Somerset Churches near Dulverton*, by Dr. F. C. Eeles, Taunton, Barnicotts Ltd., 1928. To these descriptions there is practically nothing to add, but Dr. Eeles points out that the book in question was rather hastily compiled as a guide-book, and the description of Exford (not visited this time) is out of date, and one or two of the others, especially Hawkridge and King's Brompton, need revision.

The Church of Dulverton, rebuilt save the tower, is a bad case of nineteenth-century destruction of valuable things. A small water-colour view of the old church from the north-west recently given and now in the vestry is a valuable record of what the north side was like. Close examination shows that some of the bosses and window tracery in this aisle survived and were re-used.

Winsford was the best church of those seen in Somerset ; since the description was written, a plain fifteenth-century north doorway has been discovered and displayed externally.

Of the Devonshire Churches seen, Molland is remarkable as an example of a church untouched by the gothic revival. Mainly fifteenth-century, with an arcade of Beer stone with wreathed capitals, it still retains all its eighteenth-century fittings, including massive oak pews, three-decker pulpit and plain screen with the partition above, which once formed the background to the rood. There are also some very fine renaissance mural monuments of a characteristic rich Devon type, probably made at Exeter, or possibly Barnstaple. The tower is very likely from the same hands as those of Lapford and Stoke Rivers. The Church is illustrated in the sixth *Report* of the Central Council for the Care of Churches, London, Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1932-33.

At Bampton there is a complete contrast. A fine church, with a fourteenth-century chancel, the rough walls skinned of

plaster, a fifteenth-century altar tomb cut in pieces and used to panel the chancel wall, an eighteenth-century reredos with the central picture cut out, and the window tracery of the rich north aisle mutilated to save repair. The screen is placed one bay west of the chancel arch, in a most unusual position. Remains of very fine fifteenth-century stained glass, of high quality, probably of Exeter origin, including a good part of several scenes, have been gathered together as a memorial of the 1914-18 war in a window on the south side of the nave—an altogether admirable thing to have done. The tower, probably of the thirteenth-century, may originally have been crowned with a wooden spire as at Swymbridge or Braunton.

North Molton has one of the finest churches in North Devon, with a splendid tower, of great size, which retains a contemporary figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a niche on the south side. The arcades are of Somerset and not Devon origin. The fine screen has lost its vaulting; there is a good fifteenth-century pulpit of a Devon type, perhaps from Exeter; the seventeenth-century monument in the south aisle is one of a group in which Watchet alabaster is used, and the whole of the chancel is lined with Jacobean panelling. There is a fine waggon roof on the nave with special enrichment over the rood loft. The clerestory is a great rarity so far west. The curious leaning pillar in the north arcade probably settled soon after it was built.

On arrival at

COMBE (Dulverton)

the members were received by the owner, Colonel E. J. Harrison, T.D., who was cordially thanked by Maj.-General R. Evans for his kindness.

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, F.S.A., read a short paper on the house and the mines in the vicinity.

‘Combe is apparently a Tudor house on the site of an older house. The present building was erected c. 1590, but portions of the west wing are earlier and became incorporated in the house in Elizabethan times.

‘The doorway (covered by a modern porch until 1924) leads into a hall, where the screens with their doorways are to be seen. The hall seems to have occupied the whole height of the house, and the beams of the wooden roof can be seen on the upper floor; it was divided into two floors in the first half of the sixteenth century, when the flat coffered ceiling of the present dining-room was inserted, and a stair made from the north-east corner of the hall to the upper chamber. Alterations took place c. 1590. The old kitchen was then turned into a drawing-room, which has an excellent plaster ceiling and frieze. A new staircase was made in a projecting block at the back of the house. It was altered about 1700, when a flat plaster ceiling was inserted, and either then or later the Elizabethan mullioned window in the gable of the staircase building was blocked.

‘There have been extensive alterations to the approach and to the outbuildings. Until recently the whole of the garden east of the house was an enclosed courtyard with the usual domestic buildings opening into the yard. The yard was approached from the house by the archway, only the beams of which survive.

‘Combe was never a manor-house, so far as is known. The manorial rights of Dulverton were purchased by John Sydenham from William Babington in 1568. In early days the house was known as Combe Reigny, and was the home of the Reigny family. It passed to the Combe family at an unknown date, and came into the possession of the Sydenhams by the marriage of Edward Sydenham with Joan Combe in 1482. It remained in the Sydenham family until 1874, when it was sold to Thomas Marriott-Dodington.

‘The above-mentioned was not the earliest Sydenham to own lands in Dulverton. The earliest known was John who owned the manor of Sterte, one mile south of Dulverton, in 1320, and who married the heiress of Pixton.

‘A certain Humphrey Sydenham, well known as the silver-tongued Sydenham, a loyal adherent to Charles I and a follower of Laud, was in possession here during the Commonwealth. He was deprived of his cures, which were many, one being the rectory of Ashbrittle to which he was instituted in 1627.

‘Tradition said that Sir Francis Drake played bowls on the

green at the back of the house. At any rate Drake married a cousin of the house—a Sydenham of Combe Sydenham, Stogumber. Drake had gone on one of his long voyages, and the parents of Mistress Sydenham concluded that he had paid the penalty for his daring! In this belief they persuaded her to accept the offer of another suitor, and she was actually on her way to be wedded, when a storm arose, and a thunderbolt fell just at the feet of the bride-to-be. On recovering from her fright, the young lady was at no loss for an explanation. "It's a token from Frankie!" she cried, and, in spite of remonstrances, she declined to proceed another step. Her constancy was rewarded, for the ship came home, with Frankie aboard to claim her.

'There was a silver and lead mine near this house. From the *Close Rolls*, 1314, we find an account of silver at "Dolverton" and "Brisford" on lands belonging to the Prior of Taunton, and several miners, whose names are given, had permission from the king to work there, on condition that a moiety of the profits should be rendered to the king's use.

"'Brisford" must not be confused with Brushford in the Taw Valley (Devon) where, on reference to the *Patent Rolls*, we find that a grant was made in 1498 by Henry VII of permission to the Earl of Devon to work a silver mine there.¹

'Dr. G. F. Sydenham had a massive silver candlestick made from the silver extracted at Combe about 1750. The mine ceased to be worked here in 1757.²

¹ 13 Henry VII, July 20, Westminster: 'Licence for Edward, earl of Devon, Paul Clynger, John Balamy, Richard Clynger, John Hethyer and Laurence Cowne to work a lead and silver mine called Brissshford in the parish of Brushshford, co. Devon, and to reduce and expose for sale the lead and silver obtained therefrom; they answering to the king all customs and tolls due on lead and silver as is done for the mines of Bere Ferrys, and licence for them to impress miners except in the king's mines of Bere Ferrys.' See also *Dev. and Conn. N. & Q.*, xxii, 370-1.

² It might be interesting to note here, that the Combe Martin silver mines were first opened in the 22nd year of Edward I, A.D. 1293, miners being brought from Derbyshire to work them (*Trans. Devon Assoc.*, ii, 190-199; lxx, 216-17). The ore was argentiferous galena and esteemed the richest in the kingdom. The output in 1294 was worth £521 10s. 0d., and in the next year £704 3s. 0d. of our money.

The king thought it worth while to extend the workings, and two years later more men were brought from Wales and Derbyshire. The mines continued to be productive and a large part of the cost of the French War

‘In making alterations at Combe over a hundred years ago coins of Elizabeth, as well as two Armada medals, were found under the porch.

‘Dr. Sydenham’s elder brother was the first child to be born at Combe, as far as can be ascertained, for three hundred years or more. The house, like many another, was occupied in the sixteenth century by more than one family. The east wing was inhabited by a younger brother of the owner in 1590, who managed the estate, and who married Abigail Sanford of Nynhead. There were no children for ten years, and when the lady presented her husband with twins they had to leave.’

At 3.30 p.m. a short visit was made to St. Michael’s Church, Brushford, which was described by Dr. F. C. EELES.

The members then returned to Dulverton for tea, and at 4.50 p.m. left in the motors for

TARR STEPS

on the River Barle, under the guidance of Mr. ST. GEORGE GRAY, who talked for a few minutes as follows :

‘To-day one sees Tarr Steps in a deplorable condition. Had it not been for Mr. Alfred Vowles, formerly of Minehead, matters would have been worse ; for a year or so ago he and his volunteers did much to ensure that no further damage would be done to the bridge under normal conditions of water and ice power. He devoted much time and energy in getting the replacing of the smaller stones carried out. But he and his friends were in no way responsible for the hideous iron girders and cement ; this represents the temporary repair by the

carried on by Edward III and Henry V was borne by the Combe Martin silver.

A new vein was discovered in Elizabeth’s reign on land belonging to Sir Beavis Bulmer, who worked it in partnership with Adrian Gilbert, half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, for four years, each partner making £10,000. Sir Beavis gave a great cup made of the silver to the Earl of Bath and another to the Lord Mayor of London in 1594, ‘to continue to the said City for ever’. Soon after the mines were closed as unproductive and remained so until 1659, when they were worked again a few years, but without much profit. They were reopened in the years 1815 and 1875, since which time they have been closed.

Somerset County Council. One wonders how long it will be "temporary" ?

'The great displaced stones are in close proximity to the present bridge, and it is hoped that they may yet be restored to approximately their original position, when the County Council can find the opportunity of providing tackle and manpower for the work. Mr. Vowles has an excellent collection of photographs of the bridge and of the floods, so that the material exists for the proper and correct reconstruction of this almost unique bridge. It is scheduled as an ancient monument by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments.

'The length of the bridge, including the paved approaches, is 180 feet ; width 5 ft., the piers extending beyond the pathway 5 ft. on either side. There were seventeen openings, the widest being in the middle. The horizontal slabs have an average length of 7 ft., the longest being $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft. ; there is no trace of mortar or cement between them. These "clappers" are believed to be of the grey Pickwell Down sandstone of the base beds, and could have been quarried at a very short distance away.

'The surface of the bridge is much worn by the feet of men and of horses, but there are no wheel-marks, and it is obviously too narrow for wheeled traffic.

'This type of bridge is believed to date from the Neolithic Period, or the early Bronze Age. The labour of building such a bridge must have been colossal, in an age when machinery was unknown, and it is hardly to be wondered at that local tradition ascribes the work to the devil. Well and truly these stones have been laid !

'The roads leading to the Steps on either side form a line of communication between the Ridgway descending from Winsford Hill past Liscombe to the road leading up to the Ridgway passing from Hawkridge in the direction of Worth Hill. Both these ridgways are more or less dated by burial-mounds in their vicinity that belong to the Bronze Age. From that time to the days of Queen Elizabeth the country traffic was carried out mainly by pack-horses.'

At 6 p.m. the motor-coaches left the 'Steps' and arrived at Taunton at 7.40 p.m.

Second Day's Proceedings

The coaches left Taunton at 9 a.m. and picked up the great majority of the members at Dulverton and then proceeded to the Church of St. Michael, Bampton (Rev. H. E. Frayling, Vicar), which was described by Dr. F. C. EELES.

BAMPTON MOTE, or MOUNT

From the Church the members walked the short distance to Bampton Mote, and some of the younger visitors climbed to its summit.

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, F.S.A., read a short paper at the foot of the mound :

‘ Unless excavations are conducted here, the history of this interesting site may never be fully interpreted. Here are the visible remains of a moated hillock and on its east the now invisible remains of a castle at a rather lower level. The foundations of Bampton Castle are, according to tradition, said to have been laid bare by ploughing. In 1336 Richard Cogan obtained a licence from the Crown to castellate his mansion or castle.¹ The south and south-east aspects of the Castle area appear to have been encroached upon by the cutting of the Bampton-Wiveliscombe road in 1830.

‘ It was Dr. Christison’s opinion that a Mote might be early Saxon, late Saxon, or early Norman ; but apart from date a Mote, when fully preserved, might be described as consisting of an artificial hillock generally placed in a commanding position, 20, 30, 40 or even as much as 100 ft. high. The hillock carried a breastwork of earth round the top, which in many cases is still preserved ; this breastwork enclosed a small court, sometimes only 30 ft. in diameter, and seldom more than half an acre in extent and generally rather less. It must have

¹ Cogan also had a licence from the Crown to enclose his wood at Uffculme. (See *Trans. Devon Assoc.*, lxxv, 190, 202 ; *V.C.H. Devon*, i, 563-4.)

been crowned by a stockade of timber, and the representations in the Bayeux Tapestry would lead us to think that it always enclosed a wooden tower. As a rule the hillock is round, sometimes oval, and occasionally, according to Mrs. Armitage, square; the base of the mount was surrounded by a ditch. Below the hillock, a court much larger than the enclosure on top of the mount. The court had a surrounding ditch, joining the ditch of the hillock, thus enclosing the whole fortified area. The court also had its defences, probably surmounted by timber stockades, the remains of which are sometimes revealed by excavation. Of course there are variations of this type of defence, according to the character of the site chosen; as a rule the whole area covered is small when compared with the late prehistoric hill-forts, which were defences of the community. These mottes were intended for individual chiefs and their warrior-bands. And so we must end this brief description of the motte-and-bailey castle. The chief and his family probably lived in these hollow mounds, but one does not infer that all these mounds were hollow. Many of these structures date from the tenth century in all probability; but we have much to learn yet by the examination of these somewhat puzzling sites.

‘Bampton Mote is situated 400 ft. above sea level, on the summit of a knoll at the junction of two roads at the end of Castle Street, the road north leading to Morebath.¹ The bailey largely depended for its defensive boundary on the natural height of the hill; but the artificial protection on the east, in the position of the former castle, is of great strength, where an outer earthwork is to be seen.

‘The Damnonii were severely handled by the Saxons at Bampton in A.D. 614. The Mote probably did not exist then; but the site was at this time known as “Beam Dune”, meaning a columnar hill.

‘Bampton was the burgh or fortified place, and the Mote was the seat of the Hundred Mote or Court of Judicature. By the laws of Edgar the Burgh-mote or Court of the borough was held three times a year. According to Risdon, Bampton was the king’s demesne; there was no overlord to intervene

¹ Plan in *V.C.H. Devon*, i, 616.

between the burgesses and the sovereign. According to another writer, Bampton had originally been an ancient crown lordship—one of the four unhided royal lordships of Devon.

‘Then sometime before Domesday and the Geld-roll the king gave Bampton to Walter de Douai (Dowai). From Walter’s son, Robert de Bampton, the lordship passed through the Paynells to the Cogans. Thence it passed to the Bourchiers, Earls of Bath, believed to be the last owners of the barony who resided at the Castle.’

TIVERTON

Members lunched at Tiverton before visiting the Church of St. Peter (Rev. W. E. Lane, Rector) at 2.15 p.m. The Church was described by Dr. F. C. EELES, O.B.E., after a welcome from the Mayor of Tiverton (Councillor L. R. Y. Carey), who apologized for the absence of the Rector. (See *Proc.*, xlvi, i, 44–6; *A History of the Church of S. Peter, Tiverton*, by the Rev. E. S. Chalk, 1905.)

On the way to Blundell’s old School some of the members viewed Greenway’s Almshouses in Gold Street. Sir L. GOODENOUGH TAYLOR, an old pupil, kindly came from Bristol to describe the old school (*Proc.*, xlvi, i, 41–4).

WASHFIELD

After tea the members left for the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Washfield, which was described by the Rev. J. M. TURNER (Rector) and Dr. F. C. EELES.

The coaches returned to Dulverton, and arrived at Taunton at 7.30 p.m.

Third Day's Proceedings

The coaches left Taunton Castle at 9.10 a.m., arriving at Dulverton at 10.15 a.m. From thence they proceeded to Molland, via Battleton, Beech Tree Cross, Five Ways Cross, East and West Anstey Commons (tumuli) and Molland Common (elevation nearly 1,200 feet). The weather was wet nearly all the day.

MOLLAND CHURCH

The members were met at the Church of St. Mary by the Vicar, the Rev. H. C. Thompson, and the edifice was described by Dr. F. C. EELES. Among the chief features were the fine woodwork and the Courtenay monuments.

NORTH MOLTON

At North Molton the members were met by the Vicar of All Saints Church, the Rev. W. J. Prew. The building was described by Dr. F. C. EELES. Here fine woodwork was to be seen, and the large alabaster tomb of Sir Amias Bampfylde.

WITHYPOOL

After lunch Dr. F. C. EELES briefly described the Church of St. Andrew (Rev. F. McD. Etherington, Rector). Owing to the inclement weather Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, instead of speaking on Winsford Hill, read a short paper in the Church on the

RUDE STONE MONUMENTS AND EARTHWORKS OF EXMOOR

'The rude stone monuments of Exmoor are of considerable interest and my fifth report in *Proceedings*, lxxxiii, deals with

the Caratacus Stone and with Hernes Barrow on Court Hill in the parish of Exford, one mile N.N.E. of Withypool—a site which has not been surveyed nor excavated.

‘For the sake of information for new members of the Society, it should be said that my first report on Exmoor (*Proc.*, lii) dealt with the then newly-discovered Stone Circle on Withypool Hill (in coming from North Molton to-day we passed it well on our right on top of the hill shortly before reaching Withypool). Its altitude is 1,250 ft. Of the circle there were thirty-seven stones remaining, but it is believed that, owing to war manœuvres, some of these have disappeared. Their average height is very slightly over 12 in., and the highest stone is 2 ft. The diameter of the circle is $119\frac{1}{2}$ ft., and its circumference about a fifteenth of a mile. The published report gives a plan of the site.

‘My second report (illustrated by a plan) records the discovery of another circle known as the Porlock Stone Circle (*Proc.*, lxxiv). It is $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles in a direct line north of the Withypool Circle. This circle is known to have suffered during the war, although it was watched by Mr. A. Vowles. My survey shows ten standing-stones and stumps and eleven prostrate stones. The highest stone is $2\frac{5}{8}$ ft. above ground; the largest recumbent stone measures $6\frac{1}{4}$ ft. in length. The stones are of green micaceous sandstone, presumably of Devonian age. This circle is at an altitude of 1,360 ft. and is situated close to the west of the road running from Porlock Hill to Exford.

‘The third report (with plan) deals with the megalithic remains on Almsworthy Common, on the north border of Exford parish, and 2 miles south of the Porlock Stone Circle (*Proc.*, lxxvii).

‘The fourth report (published in 1932) describes the ancient remains on Dunkery Hill—the Rowbarrows, Dunkery Beacon, the Kit Barrows, and the Cairns on Luccombe Hill. My survey was carried out at the request of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments in 1928 (*Proc.*, lxxviii).

‘We now return to the fifth report (*Proc.*, lxxxiii), in which all that is important with regard to the Caratacus Stone is brought together, with an account of the uprooting of this stone in the autumn of 1936 by some persons who were never traced, although the matter was put into the hands of the

Somerset Constabulary. After being thrown, the stone had been moved slightly on a subsequent occasion and Mr. Vowles arranged for its temporary removal to Folly Cottage near by. Later the Office of Works and the National Trust asked me to supervise the re-erection of the stone, as near as possible in the leaning position (we had photographs) in which it rested before it was thrown down. In the first place a small excavation was made round the hole in which the stone had stood, but no human artefacts nor anything of scientific interest were found. There was tradition of valuable treasure having been placed under this stone—at an unknown date.

‘On 14 June 1937 the re-erection of the stone was carried out in the presence of my wife, Miss E. C. Badcock, the late Hugh D. Badcock, and Mr. Vowles; also Mr. Steer, the Winsford contractor. Concrete was used for the purpose for the better security of the stone. The site was visited again in the following spring and we found all well.

‘Originally the stone, which is a Morte slate with a characteristic quartz vein, was surrounded by a very poor and inadequate wooden fence. On my writing to the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland some thirty-five years ago he did not hesitate to build the present rather substantial shelter.

‘The letters are **CARATACI NEPV**s (*nepos*) the kinsman or grandson or descendant of Caratacus. The inscription means that a man or men descended from one Caratacus (or Caranacus) were commemorated here. Caratacus is the correct spelling of the name of the British hero, vulgarly known as Caractacus, who fought against the invading Romans in the first century A.D. As Rhys and Haverfield conjectured the stone may have been set up in the fifth century when the Saxon invaders were pressing on the native population. British memories went back to their ancient hero, and maybe his name returned to commoner use. Apparently the Christians of that troubled age fled into eastern Exmoor for refuge from the barbarian English; and for a while Christianity in all probability maintained itself in these hills. There is a record that this stone was a landmark in 1279.

‘Another report on ancient Exmoor (not of the series just mentioned) has reference to Old Burrow Camp, close to Glenthorne and County Gates, and just beyond the Somerset

border. My full report on excavations there in 1911 was published, with illustrations, by the Devonshire Association (*Trans.*, xliv). It proved to be one of those interesting signal-stations such as one meets with in Yorkshire, used as a post of observation probably by Romanized Britons, among others, down to the time when, in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the Danes and Norse were hovering about the Channel and settling in South Wales.

‘ Roman coins have occasionally been found on Exmoor and in the vicinity—near Porlock, on Haddon Hill (King’s Brompton parish), Dunster Park, Dulverton, etc.

‘ One cannot leave the early archæology of Exmoor without referring to the discovery of the early Bronze Age cist in a stone quarry on Culbone Hill and close to the main Porlock—Lynmouth road (*Proc.*, xlii). This happened just fifty years ago. The cist contained a crouched skeleton, with the typical round head. The complete interment including the beaker or drinking-vessel is exhibited in the Society’s Museum.

‘ Brief allusion must be made to the earthworks of Exmoor (Somerset portion); several of them require careful investigation—in particular Road Castle overlooking Exford; Staddon Hill Camp between Exford and Winsford; and Cow Castle, a puzzling place, 3 miles north-west of the Withypool Circle. Then there is the great earthwork at Countisbury (Devon).

‘ Mention must also be made of Bury Castle, parish of Brompton Regis, described by me (*Proc.*, lxix) at the last Dulverton meeting, recalling that there is another Bury Castle at Selworthy; and also Oldberry Camp, a short distance north-west of Dulverton. Then there are the little-known ancient camps overlooking the River Barle—Brewer’s Castle on the right bank and Mounsey Castle opposite on the left bank.

‘ Our attention must also be drawn to a remarkable earthwork on the Brendon Hills—Elworthy Barrows Camp—which in all probability dates from the Neolithic period, and which, some day, will require expert investigation.

‘ Finally mention must be made of the Wam Barrows on Winsford Hill at an elevation of 1,405 ft. Wamburg (in 1279 spelt “Wimbureghe”) is the highest of the three mounds. These barrows have been dug out from the top downwards, but so far as is known there is no record of what was found.

It is not improbable that urns and cremated remains of the Bronze Age were discovered. The late Dr. G. F. Sydenham—the first medical officer for Exmoor—thought that in comparatively recent times they had been used for beacon fires.

‘On a clear day one sees the Blackdown Hills surmounted by the Wellington Monument, the heights of Dartmoor on the south-south-west and Sidmouth Gap on the south-south-east. Barnstaple is due west, 20 miles in a bee line; on the north Dunkery Beacon at an elevation of 1,708 ft.; on the east the Brendons and the Quantocks. On a clear day the sea at Watchet and the coast of Glamorgan can be distinguished.

‘A quarter-of-a-mile to the east of the barrows is an enormous dip in the side of the hill known as the Devil’s Punchbowl, at the bottom of which trickles a tiny stream. There is a good photograph of it in the *Homeland Handbook*, no. 12, *Exmoor and Dulverton*. There is another Devil’s Punchbowl, 80 ft. deep, near the Castle of Comfort on Mendip; and yet another of that name at Hindhead in Surrey.’

WINSFORD HILL, etc.

Some of the members left the motors to walk a very short distance across the moor to see the Caratacus Stone.

Before tea a visit was paid to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Rev. W. J. Stuart-Crump, Vicar), which was described by Dr. F. C. EELES.

The motors returned to Dulverton via Barlinch Priory and Jury. They then left for Taunton at 6 p.m., arriving at 7.15 p.m., and this brought the three days’ meeting to a close.

Excursion to Langport and Neighbourhood, 13 August 1947

THIS was a long half-day excursion to visit two excavated sites and three churches.

The members arrived at Low Ham Roman villa at 2 o'clock to hear Mr. C. A. RALEGH RADFORD's description of the 1947 excavations which would be closed for the season at the end of that week. The former work conducted on the site has been described (with illustrations) in *Proceedings*, xcii, 25-8, and in *Som. & Dor. Notes & Queries*, xxv, 1-6, 61-4.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Huish Episcopi (Rev. T. O. A. Sellick) was described by Dr. F. C. EELES. The members then moved on to Muchelney Church and Abbey where the Ministry of Works were conducting certain excavations superintended by Mr. Harold Hall. On completion of the work a printed report will no doubt be issued.

Tea was served at the Langport Arms Hotel, after which All Saints Church, Langport (Rev. A. Leslie) was described by Dr. F. C. EELES.

The excursion was directed by Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.