

The Parish Church of St. John.

Mr. B. E. FERREY, F.S.A., said the main part of the building was a good specimen of the best days of the Perpendicular period, but it was very evident that a church of an earlier date had once stood there. Under the eastern part of the chancel was a crypt, now used as a sacristy, which was probably of late Early English, or commencement of the Decorated period. The general plan was that often found in churches of the fifteenth century. There was the tower at the west end, a wide nave, aisles, transept, and a chancel of considerable length. One addition had been made in quite modern times, viz., the organ chamber. The tower was of good height. He had been asked why there were no pinnacles on the tower, whilst there were so many about the other parts of the building. The reason was that the tower was a specimen of the simpler type of Perpendicular, and there had been no intention that pinnacles should spring from it. Where pinnacles were intended, the buttresses were carried up much higher, and the composition treated in such a manner near the parapets that the pinnacles might spring out of it in an appropriate manner. In the tower before them, however, this had not

been done. With respect to the windows, these were originally furnished with perforated stone louvres, but had been filled with boards in modern times. The parapet of the tower was rather peculiar, and different from the ordinary type, consisting of narrow perforated panels, with cusped heads. The treatment of the arch at the west end was unusual, the jamb mouldings being carried down to the floor, thus placing the window and the door practically in a recess. The same pleasing treatment was apparent in the aisles, the windows being in recesses between the stone shafts or responds which supported the trusses of the roof. This arrangement of shafts was not unique; it existed at Yatton and other places. The church was admirably lighted with five-light windows of very great size on each side; one to each bay of the aisles. Owing to this unusual feature, the church had been appropriately called "The Lantern of the West." The nave was on a level with the chancel; another unusual feature in a church of such large proportions. Mr. Ferrey had been looking to see if the floor level had been altered, but there was nothing to indicate that. There was one noteworthy feature he would like them to see before leaving, which was the elegant vaulting of the entrance or lobby to the crypt. It would be worth their while also to go down and view the crypt itself, which was vaulted from a central pier. His attention had been called to the heads near the communion rails—the heads looking very much like brackets; and he was of opinion they were used at certain seasons of the Church, to support the rod upon which was hung the Lenten veil in the middle ages. He had seen a similar feature in another church in the county—Orchardleigh, near Frome; also in a church near Radstock. There was an aumbry or locker in the chancel, opposite the stairs down to the crypt. The roof of the nave was of a type very often seen in Somerset churches, *i.e.*, a series of trussed ribbed rafters, and had a beautiful effect when seen in perspective. The font was a fine specimen of the Perpendicular period, but

he could not say positively it was the original one. The stone with which the main walls of the church was built was a very peculiar one. He had been told it was a local shelly limestone, and that the quarry from which it was taken had been worked out. The dressings are of Ham Hill stone.

Carriages were now in readiness, and the party drove to Aldon, the delightfully situated residence of the President, commanding extensive views of the surrounding country. Here the Members had been invited to luncheon by the President, and were most hospitably entertained by him in a marquee on the lawn. At the conclusion of the luncheon

Bishop HOBHOUSE, in a few well chosen words, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the President for his kind and liberal entertainment.

Mr. HUTCHINGS, in seconding the motion, said Mr. Batten had given them at the morning meeting a most admirable address, full of research, and now they were additionally indebted to him for his splendid hospitality.

The PRESIDENT having thanked the Members for their kind expressions towards him, accompanied most of the party to the beautifully wooded dell in his grounds, in which rise the celebrated "Nine Springs," and the romantic beauty and seclusion of the spot was much enjoyed. On returning, the carriages were again entered, and the party drove to

Brympton D'Evercy,¹

which was approached through a fine avenue of old oaks.

The owner, Sir SPENCER PONSONBY FANE, K.C.B., welcomed the party on the lawn, and said he was sorry there was no records of the place. The only written history was the very bald reference in Collinson, which he supposed they all had read. Mr. Chisholm Batten knew a great deal more about the place than he did. He (Sir Spencer) did not pretend to a knowledge of archæology, yet he yielded to

(1). See vol. xvii. p. 85, for an illustration of this group.

no one in his love for all that was beautiful and ancient. During the few years he had been in possession of the place he had felt it a sacred duty, as well as a great pleasure, to preserve the original features of the house, and he could promise them that nowhere would they find "the ruthless and destroying hand of the restorer."

Brympton Church.

Mr. FERREY said one of the remarkable features in the church was the mixture of work of so many dates. The most ancient part of the structure was Early English and early Decorated. He had been pleased to find many remains of early 13th century architecture, in the shape of incised sepulchral crosses, which were of great interest. The church had been very considerably altered; one of the most extensive and curious works being the welding together of the early Decorated north transept with the Perpendicular chancel aisle. Externally, there were even greater alterations to this portion of the building, parapets of the Perpendicular period having been added, also a bell turret of the same date. The latter was a curious specimen, but there was a rather similar one at Ashington church, a few miles off. The alteration to the southern transept was very peculiar. The arch opening into the nave was evidently built at the same period as the transept, but another opening had been made near it at a much later period. Stone rood screens, like the example here, are rare, though not unique, there being specimens at Broughton in Oxfordshire, and other places. The cusping to the heads of the panels had been barbarously cut away, which gave the screen an earlier appearance, but it was really of the Perpendicular period. There was also a stone bench-table on the west side of the screen, which was very unusual. Mr. Ferrey did not know of another instance where they were placed in this position, though the "return stalls" on the *east side* were usual enough. The monuments in the

church are very rich; the effigies in the north transept are of an earlier date than the Decorated period. With regard to the canopies, two of them are ancient, having an early Decorated character, and the other is modern. The subjects represented are "The Adoration of the Magi," "The Annunciation," and "The Crucifixion;" the latter being modern.

The Rev. T. C. NAISH drew attention to the incised crosses on the slates in the north transept.

The communion plate, presented in 1699, by Sir Philip Sydenham, the then owner of Brympton, was shown.

Mr. GREEN expressed his opinion on the dates of three of the effigies; two being, he thought, of the 13th century, and the lady in the centre of the chapel about 1430.

The party adjourned to the front of the Manor House, where

Mr. CHISHOLM BATTEN gave a sketch of the history of the western or entrance front of the building, and of the Chantry House, between it and the church. Some people thought that what is now called the Chantry House was the old Manor House, but Mr. Batten was of a different opinion. The Chantry House was built by the D'Evercys, who preceded the Stourtons and the Sydenhams, in the time of Edward III. There are two chantry chapels in the church, which correspond in architecture with the Chantry House. This house is a good specimen of a Decorated building. The west side of the Manor House was built, Mr. Batten thought, by the first Sydenham, John, who became entitled to the manor of Brympton through his grandmother Joan, a co-heiress of the Stourton family. The whole of the north wing of this west front is a most beautiful specimen of domestic architecture of the Perpendicular period, and extremely perfect in detail. The Royal arms on this north wing are very interesting, and worthy of considerable attention. Photographs have been taken of them, and the carved stone work examined carefully. He had formed an opinion that the supporters

were two lions.¹ The only Royal arms of that period with lion supporters were the arms of Edward IV, who occasionally used two lions, to show his descent from the Earls of March—a descent by which he occupied the throne.² There are signs of Jacobean work in the hall windows of this front. There is a battlemented porch on this side of the house, but it is within Mr. Batten's recollection when this porch was only a bay window, and when the entrance door was to the right of it. The porch has on it the date 1722.³ It was suggested that it was brought from Clifton Maybank, when that place was demolished. Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane reminded him of this supposed fact, and added that some other remains of the house of Clifton Maybank could be seen at Montacute.⁴ Passing on to the south front of the house, Mr. Batten proceeded to say that this portion of the house was known to be built in the reign of Queen Anne, by Sir Philip Sydenham. The plans, however, must have been drawn at a much earlier period, as he knew no other building of that reign in which the windows contain mullions and transoms. The south front was more like a building of the Jacobean, or Charles style, and was not at all like a building of the time of Queen Anne, although it was undoubtedly built at that period. It had been suggested by Horace Walpole⁵ that the house was built from plans

(1). This is stated in a note to the paper on "Henry VII in Somersetshire," vol. xxv. p. 73.

(2). The left supporter, on most minute examination, appears to be a dragon; bringing down these Royal arms to those of Henry VIII, who assumed in 1513 the lion uncrowned as the dexter supporter, instead of the greyhound, the dexter supporter used by Henry VII. The John Sydenham of Brympton mentioned in the paper referred to as the builder of Brympton was only three years old at the death of his grandmother, *née* Stourton, in 1473, in the time of Edw. IV; and, when Henry VII came to the throne, John Sydenham was a great man. He became one of the most powerful men in Somerset, and with Luttrell, Speke, and others, welcomed Catherine, the bride of Arthur, Prince of Wales, at Crewkerne.—E. C. B.

(3). This date was probably after Sir Philip Sydenham sold Brympton to his cousin, as Mr. Fane bought it in 1730, after it had passed through two hands since Sir Philip's ownership. The clock turret over the alcove for horses in waiting is dated 1721; the clock bell, 1723.

(4). The west front stone screen at Montacute was brought from Clifton in 1786.—MS. diary of Edward Phelips, Esq., in Montacute House.

(5). *Anecdotes of Painting*, vol. iii. p. 275.

prepared by Inigo Jones, but Mr. Batten, among many others, had no faith in the statement.

The party then entered the mansion, and some time was agreeably spent in an examination of the many art treasures contained therein. Light refreshments were provided, and on returning to the west or entrance front of the house, some further discussion took place as to which of the two buildings was the original Manor House.

Mr. GREEN thought the now-called Chantry House was built in the 14th century. Some of the windows, he believed, were executed about 1380. The Chantry House had been used for stables recently, but it was evident, from the interior, that there was once a hall there.

Mr. FERREY thought the house occupied by Sir Spencer was undoubtedly the original Manor House, and the other building was most probably a Chantry House.

Mr. HUTCHINGS also thought the smaller building the Chantry, whilst Judge HOOPER thought it must have been originally the Manor House.¹

Upon the motion of Mr. CHISHOLM-BATTEN, seconded by Mr. HUTCHINGS, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane for his hospitality.

Sir SPENCER, in reply, said he hoped there would not be such a long interval before they again paid Brympton a visit.

Preston Plucknett,

which the President had referred to in his address, was taken on the return journey.

The Mediæval House.

Mr. GREEN, in describing this mansion, said that the earliest part of it dated from the latter half of the 14th century. Owing to alterations made in the interior, many of the most interesting features had been destroyed; but in the

(1). See paper by Mr. J. J. Hooper, in *Proceedings* of this Society, vol. xvii. p. 86.



Etched by W. G. Waugh, Feb. 1857

House and Barn at Pteston, Somerset

exterior an elegant octagonal chimney, with open work at the top, had been preserved.

Judge HOOPER said the house belonged at one time to the Stourton family.

The Barn.

Mr. FERREY made a few remarks relative to this barn, which stands close to, and at right angles with, the mansion. He said it was a fine specimen of the 15th century period. The roof was the original one; very probably of Spanish chestnut, and in good condition. Part of the old finial at the apex of one of the gables remains, and is an excellent example of the period. There is a bold projection where the principal entrance archway occurs, which, like the buttresses, has an ornamental appearance, besides being very useful as a means of strengthening the structure.

Yeovil was reached by six o'clock, and many Members dined at the ordinary, Lieut.-Col. MOUNT BATTEN presiding.

Evening Meeting.

At eight o'clock a meeting was held in the Town Hall, the PRESIDENT in the chair.

The Rev. J. W. HARDMAN, LL.D., read a paper on "The Hagiology of Somerset," which is printed in Part II. p. 59.

The PRESIDENT expressed his thanks on behalf of the Meeting to Dr. Hardman for his excellent paper, and called attention to the fact that Wulfric, a celebrated saint and hermit of the 12th century, lived in a cell in or close to Haselbury Plucknet, where he was visited by Henry I and his Queen, and afterwards by Stephen before he became King. His life was written by a monk of Ford Abbey, and a beautiful manuscript copy of it is preserved in the British Museum.

Mr. GREEN then read a paper on "The Manor of Yeovil," supplementary to the President's address. This paper is printed in Part II. p. 1.

Upon the motion of the PRESIDENT, a vote of thanks was offered to Mr. Green, for the diligence with which he had collected his materials, and the manner in which he had thrown light upon the subject of his paper.

Mr. GREEN then read a paper by Mr. Kerslake, on "Gifla," which is printed in Part II. p. 16. Mr. Green expressed his opinion that the derivation of the name was not from the river Yeo, which was a modern name.

The meeting then terminated.