

Wednesday: Excursion.

By the ten o'clock train a party of about seventy left Weston

for Yatton station, where carriages awaited to convey them to the site of the newly discovered

Roman Villa at Wemberham,

about a mile distant. By the thoughtful care of Mr. Smyth-Pigott, the remains were found enclosed by hoarding, and the pavements carefully protected by sheds or roofs of corrugated iron.

Mr. SMYTH-PIGOTT gave some particulars as to the discovery of the remains, remarking that in March, 1884, they were found in the course of draining the field. The drain pipes were being laid at a depth of 2 feet 6 inches from the surface, and in the course of this work the men cut into a piece of tessellated pavement. Upon this discovery excavations were commenced. They followed the lines of the walls, one of which penetrated into the bank of the Yeo, which would seem to indicate that the course of the river had been diverted. Two coins were found in one of the rooms, but they were both defaced, and it was difficult to say whose they were, but they were assumed to be of the reign of Tetricus. Pieces of tessellated pavement were found throughout the parts excavated. He added that in the following November, about two miles from the villa, upwards of 800 coins of the second and third centuries were unearthed.

Prebendary SCARTH directed attention to the fact that one of the floors of the villa had evidently been treated in the same way as that at Silchester. There was a large central block of masonry at the back, and flues branched out from this, and were carried underneath the floors. In proof of this it was pointed out that portions of flue pipes had been found all over the parts excavated. The herring-bone masonry to be seen in the walling was a characteristic of Roman works. This kind of masonry was, however, to be found in Norman castles, of which there was an instance at Ludlow, likewise in some of their old churches; so that he supposed the mediæval

masons received their instruction in this kind of work from the Romans.

LORD CARLINGFORD, on behalf of the Society, thanked Mr. Pigott for the enlightened care with which he had unearthed and was now protecting this most interesting Roman villa, and wished that all owners of such relics of antiquity would act in the same spirit.

A full description of the remains will be found in Mr. Scarth's paper, in Part II.

A pleasant drive through Yatton, by Congresbury, and Dolbury Camp, brought the party to

Churchill.

Dolbury could not be explored, for want of time, but Mr. Somers had kindly invited the Society to visit it, adding an offer of extended courtesy.

Following the time by the clock, the Members, as a first duty, at once proceeded to the charming new Wesleyan School-room, recently built by Mr. Sidney Hill, and kindly lent for the luncheon.

LORD CARLINGFORD—the repast being finished—moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Hill for his kindness in placing so handsome an apartment at their disposal, coupling with him the Rev. S. P. Jose, who had so much aided the local arrangements.

Rev. S. P. JOSE acknowledged the compliment on behalf of himself and Mr. Hill, whose absence he regretted. The Churchill people, he added, would like to be enlightened as to the probable date of the effigies in the church porch, and as to whom they were supposed to represent.

Mr. SMYTH-PIGOTT, expressing a regret, which would be shared by all, that Lord Carlingford was obliged to leave them, proposed his Lordship's health, thanking him for the great interest he had taken in the meeting.

LORD CARLINGFORD, in reply, acknowledged the kindness

he had received as President, and expressed regret that a previous engagement prevented him from joining the Society on the morrow.

The Members then proceeded through the meadow, by the Camp, to

Churchill Church.

Mr. B. EDMUND FERREY, F.S.A., said that the tower at the west end of the church was a specimen of the plain and simple Somerset type. Neither in size nor in any other respect was it remarkable. Instead of being faced with ashlar like the richer examples of towers, it was constructed of a rough, warm-coloured local stone. There had been a west door, but this had not long since been filled in, as a window. The open timber roof, with curved braces to each rafter, and with short wood shafts at intervals, resting on corbel heads, much resembled the nave roof to Priddy church, on the Mendips, near Wells. It was an excellent example of Perpendicular work. But the roof of the north aisle was the *chef d'œuvre* of the building, the treatment of its panels being, as far as he knew, unique. For, instead of having only the usual arrangement of square or oblong panels, separated by moulded ribs, there were in this beautiful ceiling narrow panels, at intervals, the whole width of the aisle, filled in with the most delicate and diversified ornamental cusping, the design being different in each bay. This roof, like the rest of the body of the church, had been conservatively restored, about five or six years since, by Mr. Christian, architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The south aisle open roof was quite of a different description; a very poor modern one, the easternmost bay of which was panelled. Though this also was modern work, he thought it very likely that the original mediæval roof had been panelled, as this end of the aisle had evidently been a chapel, as shown by the piscina still existing in it. In nave roofs, one often sees the easternmost bay more

elaborately decorated over the rood, and so, in like manner, possibly the roof over that part of an aisle, when there had been an altar. The arcades on the north and south sides of the nave were markedly different in date and design. The latter was the earlier, being of the period transitional between Decorated and Perpendicular; *i.e.*, the end of the 14th century. The north arcade was fully developed late 15th century Perpendicular. Behind the handsome pulpit, recently executed, was a curious quatrefoil pierced panel, opening out into a squint, between the east end of the north aisle of the chancel. This squint was rather unusual in form, as it reached to the floor. It had evidently always been designed so. The old shaped poppy-head bench ends to the nave were almost precisely like those to Banwell church, which was not to be wondered at, considering their close connection. The chancel was poor and small, as compared with the nave. Its side walls had been raised, and the pitch of the roof lowered, some thirty years since. During the *recent* restoration, a new east window, of good Perpendicular character, had been inserted.

Mr. C. J. SIMMONS next called attention to the monument on the north side of the chancel, date 1644, erected to the memory of John Latch and his wife. Mr. Simmons, a descendant of the seventh generation, has recently restored and recoloured it. With other notes on the Latch family, he gave the tradition that this John Latch, being engaged in the Civil War, on his return home found his wife dead, and whilst looking at the corpse, himself expired. The monument represents him clad in scarlet uniform and buff-coloured boots, lying beside the corpse, with an expression of horror on his countenance on beholding the face of his wife, from which he has just removed a portion of the winding-sheet. Mr. Simmons also drew attention to, and commented on, the children represented on the monument.

Rev. S. JOSE conducted the Members to the Jenyns brass, date 1572, on the floor of the south aisle, giving some details.

This brass was found protected by a carpet, or probably it would have been by now entirely defaced.

Stopping next in the porch, Mr. GREEN made some remarks on the two effigies now deposited there. The costume of the lady was of the thirteenth century, and he judged that of the knight, by the fashion of the armour, to be about 1280. His death might have been later, as such effigies were made during life. As the early history of Churchill Manor was rather obscure, he would not venture to give these effigies a name.

Some suggestions were made, chiefly drawing attention to already published notices.

Passing the tomb of Dr. Giles, lying just without the churchyard, in unconsecrated ground, the party walked round to

Churchill Court.

Here the Members were courteously received by Mr. POLLOCK, in the absence of Mr. Dundas Cloete, and conducted to the lawn.

The HON. SECRETARY gave some details of the plan of the old house, as imparted to him by Mr. Cloete, pointing out where foundations, under or on the borders of the lawn, had been met with.

Mr. JOHN BATTEN, noticing the connection of Sir John Churchill with Churchill, expressed his opinion that the story of the Churchill family having taken the name from the parish of Churchill was all a myth. No doubt Sir John Churchill, the purchaser of property in the parish, was of the family of the Churchills the progenitors of the Duke of Marlborough; but these were directly of Wotton Glanville, in Dorset.

Lord CARLINGFORD suggested that Sir John Churchill may have purchased the property for the sake of the name.

Mr. C. J. SIMMONS then read a paper, being "Notes on the Manor of Churchill," which will be found printed in Part II.

A general discussion followed, when Mr. GEORGE men-

tioned that Sir John Churchill was Recorder of Bristol in 1682, and its representative in Parliament in 1685. In the churchwardens' books of St. Peter's, Bristol, is an entry under date 1685,—“Paid to the ringers when Sir John Churchill was made Master of the Rowles, order of Mr. Major, 6s.”

The party then inspected the house or ascended the tower, and partook of the refreshment kindly provided in the hall.

After thanking Mr. Pollock for his courtesy, carriages were sought for the drive through Sandford—where the President left—and through Banwell, to

Hutton Church.

Mr. FERREY said this church had been much modernised, as, in 1849, the chancel was rebuilt and an organ-chamber and vestry added to the north of it. At the same time a south aisle was added, the fine south porch destroyed, and no entrance left on that side of the church. As there is no north door, the body of the building has thus no side entrance—a fact of unusual occurrence. The only mediæval objects preserved were the brasses to the Payn family in the chancel. The beautiful ancient pulpit on the north side of the nave, constructed partly in the thickness of the wall, was a very good specimen of the earlier part of the Perpendicular period. All its ornamentation was of refined and delicate character, and exceedingly well designed. Instead of being corbelled out from the wall, a considerable part of the pulpit rested on an elegant panelled shaft, attached to the wall. Examples of mediæval pulpits are scarce, and so the Hutton pulpit ought to be much appreciated. There was a good octagonal, Perpendicular font; to all appearance the old one cleaned and repaired. At the west end of the south aisle was an interesting Jacobean monumental tablet, dated 1626. The groined stone ceiling to the ground storey of the west tower was of singular beauty. The ribs were of bold projection, with several short “lierne” ribs, with exquisitely carved bosses. The character

of the work was superior to the kind of fan-tracery vaulting so often found in the late Perpendicular churches of Somerset. Commenting on the exterior of the tower, Mr. Ferrey praised the design of the stair-turret, crowned with its beautiful spirelet.

Mr. BISDEE remarked that the porch was removed during his absence from England, or he would have tried to prevent it. He also called attention to the ivy tree, the branches from which encircle the tower to its full height. The stem of the tree is the largest in the West of England, and is fully three feet in girth.

Proceeding now to the lawn of

The Court,

Mr. GREEN described the house as a most interesting example of domestic architecture. The part from the tower eastward was of the fifteenth century; as the windows had been tampered with, it was difficult to give the date very exactly, but he would suggest about or soon after 1450. There would be, he thought, a window in the minstrels' room, now hidden by the conservatory. Should this one be found unaltered, it would be a guide for the others. The hall was still perfect, and used as a dining room, and a very charming place it was. It was supposed, because there was a tower, that this was a fortified house; but that was a mistake, and it was equally erroneous to suppose that it had ever been connected with any monastic establishment. It was simply a very perfect example of a manor house of its period. The portion west of the tower was Jacobean. In one of the bedrooms was a mantle-piece, very late Elizabethan in character, but really Jacobean. The date of this house—for it was distinct and perfect in itself, although most cleverly added—would be the early part of the reign of James I.

By the kind permission of Mr. Bisdee the interior was now inspected—a ewery at the entrance being pointed out as a charming relic of the olden times, when fingers were used at

meals instead of forks. The party was subsequently most hospitably entertained in the hall, which was much admired for its symmetrical proportions.

Gathering next just without the front entrance,

Mr. JOHN BATTEN, in a few well chosen words, thanked Mr. Bisdee for his kindness and hospitality, expressing the general opinion how fortunate it was that this little gem was owned by one who so carefully preserved and guarded it.

Mr. BISDEE briefly acknowledged the compliment, and expressed the pleasure the Society's visit had given him.

A pleasant drive by Oldmixon and Uphill brought the party home by six o'clock.

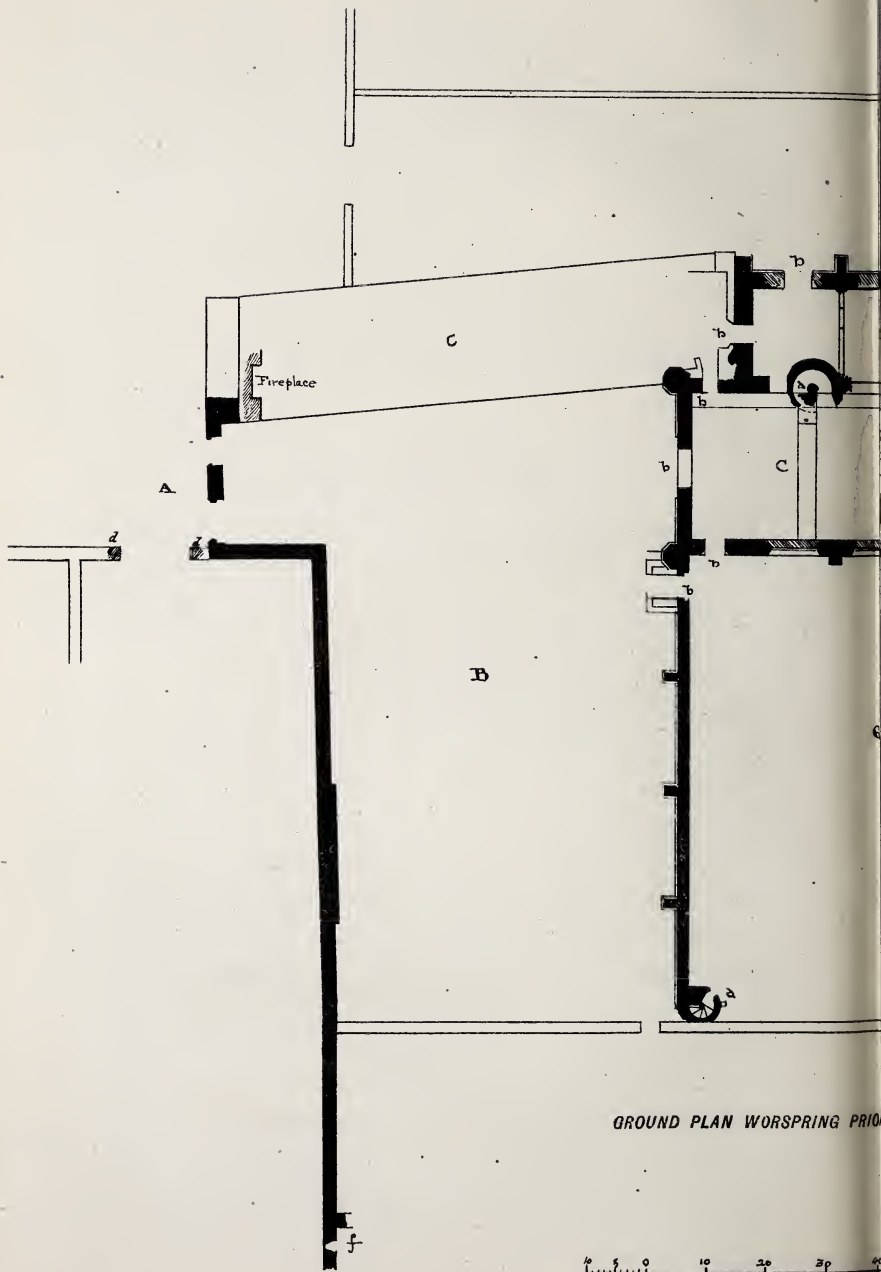
Evening Meeting.

The attendance was more numerous than on the preceding evening. Bishop CLIFFORD presided, and briefly opened the proceedings, after which

Mr. R. W. PAUL gave a description of

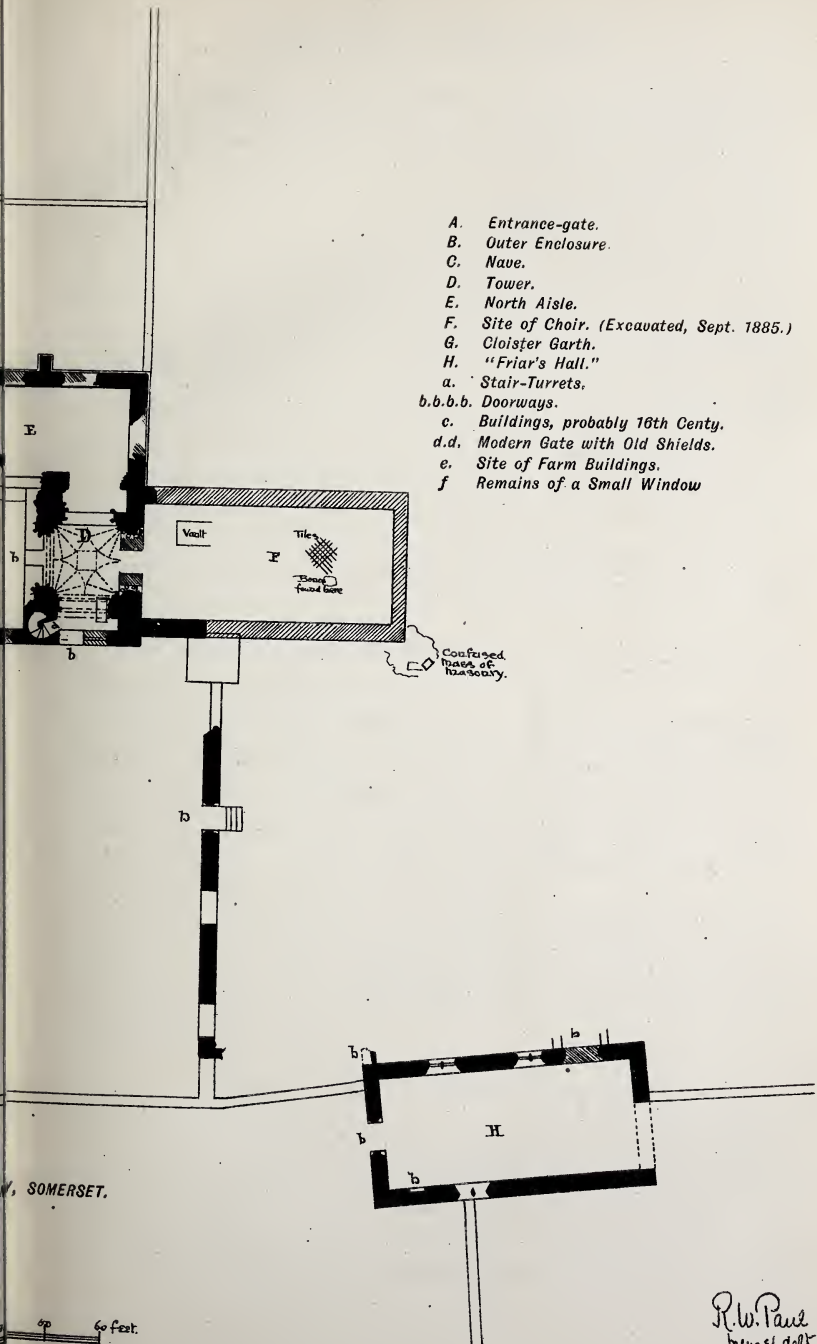
Woodspring Priory.

Of the early church there are but few remains visible. The remains now existing are of distinct dates. The cloister walls, the whole of the outer enclosure, and perhaps a portion of the lower part of the tower belonged to the 14th century. The building known as the "hall," and the upper part of the tower, are of the early part of the 15th century; and the nave, north aisle, and the barn, are of the latter part of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. By excavations commenced in Sept., and continued to the previous Saturday, the foundations of the walls of the choir had been laid bare. Where the high altar had stood, was found a quantity of 14th century pavement, and amongst the armorial tiles were the arms of England, France, the Isle of Man (with roses between each leg), lion rampant, a portion of the arms of Clare, and fragments. Ten feet from the east wall was found a large hole, containing



GROUND PLAN WORSRING PRIORY





- A. Entrance-gate.
- B. Outer Enclosure.
- C. Nave.
- D. Tower.
- E. North Aisle.
- F. Site of Choir. (Excavated, Sept. 1885.)
- G. Cloister Garth.
- H. "Friar's Hall."
- a. Stair-Turrets.
- b.b.b.b. Doorways.
- c. Buildings, probably 16th Centy.
- d.d. Modern Gate with Old Shields.
- e. Site of Farm Buildings.
- f. Remains of a Small Window

Confined
bases of
masonry.

SOMERSET.

R.W. Paul
mens et del. 1885.

human remains, including skulls; and four feet beneath the surface, near the tower, were found slabs, which appeared to have formed the end of a vault. Leaden coffins had been found. Large pieces of tracery and filials, evidently portions of the choir windows, were also unearthed; also glazed tiles and some large white squares, either of very fine freestone or marble. From the position of these relics it would appear that the pavement of the west end was more plain than at the east, where the more elaborate remains were found. The total length of the chancel was 43 ft. 5 in., and the width 19 ft. 10 in.; the side walls being 3 ft. in thickness.

The HON. SECRETARY thanked Mr. Paul for his paper, and for the great trouble he had taken in respect of the excavations. He added, that the Priory was originally founded at Dodelyn, and subsequently removed to Worspring. He asked where Dodelyn might be.

A Member suggested Doulling, as some foundation was made there in early times.

Bishop CLIFFORD remarked there was an interesting description of Woodspring in *The Antiquary*, of August, 1881, from which it appeared that the tower of the 13th century—which had been of an oblong form—had been cased in the 16th century and made square. The old tower was only about two-thirds the height of the present one.

Mr. BATTEN said there was evidence to show a family connection between the founder and three of the assassins of Thomas á Becket, which might be a good reason for his founding the Priory.

Roman Bath v. Roman Chester, etc.

Mr. GEORGE ESDAILE then contributed a well-considered argument, in which he wished to show that Roman Bath was originally similar to the camps at Chester, London, Lincoln, and Manchester. The reading was well illustrated by plans or outlines of the Roman camps above named, thereby adding

greatly to its general interest. Slightly epitomised, the paper is printed in Part II.

In the course of a brief discussion,

Mr. SCARTH observed that the origin of our cities out of Roman stations was a subject of much interest, and not confined to Britain alone, as many continental cities have arisen in like manner. With respect to Bath, he could not agree with Mr. Esdaile as to the original line of the Roman walls. The course of the river had not altered much since the Roman period, and this was proved by finding Roman interments on both banks, not far distant from its present course. It had, indeed, in former times occasionally flooded the land where Pulteney Street now stands, but interments of Roman times were found behind Daniel Street, in the Sydney Gardens, and the Villa Fields; and a Roman road appears to have run on each side of the river. The form of Roman camps was not always quadrangular, as Vegetius, in his treatise on Roman military matters (*Flav. Vegeti de Re Militari*, Lib. I., cap. xxiii.), clearly tells us, but often suited to the form of the ground, and this seems rather to have been the case with Bath, where the site of the Roman fortified town had been regulated by the bend of the river. He had listened with much pleasure to the address, to which the large plans exhibited of the original forms of many fortified cities in Britain, as traced out by portions of the Roman walls, had given a special interest.

The PRESIDENT having thanked Mr. Esdaile for his contribution, and the evident trouble he had taken with it, the meeting broke up.