
Thursday.

The Members left the market-place about 9.30 in several breaks. The weather was bright and fine, so that all enjoyed the pleasant drive to

Lyte's Cary,

the fine Perpendicular house of the Lytes, with its Decorated chapel. The road leads through some charming scenery, and on arriving the party found a large company awaiting them. The Members assembled on the lawn, when

Mr. E. BUCKLE took his stand near the chapel, and read extracts from an interesting paper contributed by Mr. Maxwell Lyte, C.B., the present representative of the Lyte family, entitled "The Lytes of Lyte's Cary," and afterwards conducted

the party over the chapel and house, pointing out and explaining their interesting architectural features.

[It was intended to have printed in the present volume the paper of Mr. Maxwell Lyte above referred to, and also a complete report by Mr. Buckle upon the architecture. These were quite ready, but since the meeting fresh documents have come to light, of such importance as to render needful additions and modifications to so great an extent that it has been necessary to postpone their insertion until next year.—ED.]

The next halt was at

West Camel Church.

Here there is preserved a portion of a very fine Saxon cross shaft, of not later date than A.D. 939.

Mr. BUCKLE said: This Church, though small, is one of the most interesting in the neighbourhood. It consists of nave and chancel (without aisles), and two chapels, forming transepts. Over the south transept rises the tower, and there is a modern south porch. The Church is dedicated to All Saints.

The plan is a typical Early English one, but the tower is clearly a little older than any other part of the existing structure. This is of a transitional character (Norman to Early English); it is without buttresses, and contains in its east wall a plain pointed arch of Norman character, which seems to indicate that the altar of the chapel on the ground floor stood in a small semicircular recess or apse which has now been destroyed. All the other walls of the Church are (in the lower part, at least) of Early English date, and though great changes have been made in the appearance of the building since then, the ground plan has not been in any way altered since the thirteenth century. At the ends of the nave and transepts are some quaint little buttresses of this date, and the chancel contains a string-course and other detail which equally fixes its walls to the same period. But this early Church was very different to look at; the side walls were much lower, with

steep roofs over; the chancel was divided from the nave by a wall containing only a very narrow arch in the centre (which survived until the present century, when it was found to be too inconvenient to be retained), and the windows were probably wide lancets. One original lancet remains in the north transept, 2 feet 3 inches wide, but it has been disguised by being filled in with Perpendicular tracery.

The first serious alteration was made in the chancel, where Decorated windows and sedilia were inserted. Later on the walls of nave and tower were raised, buttresses were added wherever needed, and windows with Perpendicular tracery inserted at various periods and in very unsymmetrical positions; also the usual flat oak roof with a painted ceiling over the rood-loft. In the post-Reformation period a small window was inserted to light the pulpit, in a very picturesque manner, at the junction of tower and chancel—a window which must have been very necessary before the chancel arch was widened. In modern times too, besides the alteration to the chancel arch, a porch has been added outside the south doorway.

Such is a brief outline of the structural history of the Church, but many smaller points of interest remain to be noted. At the east end of the chancel, on either side of the window, is a very rough niche quite devoid of ornament. These appear very ancient and were doubtless intended to hold images. Between the altar and the sill of the window is an oblong panel, formed by an early string-course, and designed to contain something by way of a reredos. What originally occupied this position? In the north wall is an ambry, in the south a double piscina, and three sedilia. In the south wall over the end of the present altar rails is a corbel, about seven feet from the floor, with a circular hole bored through it, which seems intended to run a cord through. It is possible that this was intended to support one end of the line from which was hung the Lenten veil.

The north transept is treated very frankly as a side chapel.

Although roofed with a gable towards the north, the only window in this north wall is not under the centre of the gable, but near its western extremity; to the east of this on the inside is an ambry, on the outside a blank space. In the east wall is a larger window over the position of the altar. There is also a large squint from this chapel towards the high altar.

In the tower are an old chest, two old bench ends, now worked up into a reading desk, and some black-letter books. There is also a double piscina in the east wall, of a very unusual form. The basins are not, as usual, circular, but broad in front and narrowing into a point at the back, and the outlet is not vertically from the bottom of the basins, but horizontally from the point at the back. Moreover, the two basins occupy separate niches, each having the form of a pointed arch, but apparently cut out of the wall after it was built. In appearance these piscinæ strongly resemble the basins sometimes found in domestic work, adjoining halls, and in sculleries, etc. There is nothing about them which determines their date architecturally, though we may safely ascribe them to the twelfth or thirteenth century, since that is the only period in which we find double piscinæ to have been constructed in this country.

The pulpit window contains some nice fragments of fifteenth century glass; the bowl of the font is a remarkably fine specimen of Norman work; and the fragment of a Saxon cross is described in Part II.⁹ On one of the quoin stones of the tower are the vestiges of a sun-dial.

It will thus be seen that this small country Church contains an admirable epitome of the ecclesiastical history of the country. It boasts a Saxon cross, a Norman font, Early English walls, a Decorated chancel, a Perpendicular nave, a Jacobean pulpit light, and a modern porch and chancel arch.

The Rev. J. A. BENNETT pointed out that the tower had

⁹ See paper by Professor G. F. Browne.

no buttresses; this was the only example they had in that part of Somersetshire.

The Abbey Barn and Dovecot were also inspected, and thence the Members drove to

Queen Camel Church.

Mr. BUCKLE said: This very handsome Church, dedicated to S. Barnabas, consists of a nave with clerestory and two aisles, large chancel with organ chamber, a vestry, a lofty western tower, and it also contains a fine rood-loft. No part of the present building is of earlier date than the thirteenth century, but since the greater part of the wall of the south aisle is of this period it is clear that a Church with at least one aisle existed here at that date. The buttresses in the eastern part of this aisle, and the tomb recess further west, are all Early English.

The greater part of the Church was rebuilt in the Decorated period. The south arcade is early in the style, the north arcade much later, and the lower part of the tower subsequent to either. The builders of the tower were careful to prevent any damage to the Church in consequence of the settlement certain to result from its great weight. The aisle walls are not bonded to the tower at all, and the end arches of the two arcades seem to have been taken down and rebuilt after the base of the tower had settled. The old arch stones were re-used, but owing to the encroachment of the tower these arches are narrower than the others, and the old stones were not very carefully adapted to the altered conditions. The weather course remaining on the east face of the tower shows that the Decorated Church had a steep roof and no clerestory.

The clerestory and the flat oak roof over belong to the fifteenth century. At this date also the work on the tower was progressing, and the two top storeys were successively added. The builders of the topmost storey appear not to have observed that the rest of the tower was built to a con-

siderable batter; the walls of this top storey are upright, and the tower has in consequence a slightly top-heavy appearance. The chancel is also in the Perpendicular style. The rectory of this Church was appropriated to Cleve Abbey, which thus became responsible for the structure of the chancel. It is not then surprising to find in the chancel roof a resemblance to that over the hall at Cleve, or to notice a form of tracery in the east window which is common in the western part of the county. The cusping under the transom is precisely similar to the cusping in some of the windows of Old Cleve Church, and is very peculiar. (The rectory of Old Cleve Church formed the prebend of the Abbot of Bec in Wells Cathedral, and was by him leased to the Abbey of Cleve.) On the oak roof are found a remarkable series of carved bosses, representing various subjects—Jonah and the whale, a merman, a mermaid with a mirror, a knight tilting, a hart in a wood, and various monstrous animals. Outside was once a rich parapet, but little of it remains, except the gurgoyles, which are poor and thin, and intended only for ornament, not being pierced to carry away the water, which must always have been brought down, as nowadays, in a downpipe. Over the east window is an angel in a niche, but the front part of the image has flaked off.

The chancel arch is of an unusual design. It is the full width of the chancel, and the point is higher than the top of the coved roof of the chancel; it is filled with Perpendicular panelling, which is carried continuously up the jambs and round the arch without any break at the springing. This arch and the rood-loft were probably designed together, and inserted by the parishioners; not by the rector. The rood-loft remains in excellent condition, and has upon the top of the front beam a series of mortises, which seem to have been made for the purpose of fixing the images upon the beam. In the centre are two large mortises close together for two struts to support the rood; on each side are two more large mortises at equal

distances apart, indicating four large images, two on each side of the rood; and between each pair of large mortises are two smaller ones, intended apparently for smaller images, or perhaps for candlesticks.

In the chancel floor is a rude recumbent figure of a priest under a decorated canopy; on the south wall a ruined piscina, and one wide sedile. The oak pulpit is similar to that in Castle Cary Church. Attached to the base of the pillar behind the pulpit is a stone with a circular sinking (or perhaps perforation). It has been suggested that this was a stand to hold the stem of a processional cross; but it seems more likely that it is the bottom stone of a pillar piscina. The situation is a natural one for a piscina in connection with an altar in the north aisle, but the position against the pier is peculiar; an examination of the masonry of this pier appears to favour the supposition that a piscina bonded into it has been destroyed. In the side wall of the north aisle there is a curious niche, too wide for an image, and too tall for a child's monument; it probably contained a group of sculpture, such as the Ascension or the Coronation of the Virgin. The east respond on the south side of the nave has had a small recess hollowed out on its west face, just below the capital, and the pier next it has been similarly treated; though the two recesses are not precisely alike, or of quite the same size. There is no doubt that these were niches to receive small images (one still contains a fragment of an iron dowel), and were carved out of the solid pillar at different times in the fifteenth century or later. Portions of the old seats remain, and have been worked up in the new seats. The font deserves careful attention. It belongs to the fifteenth century; on each angle is a niche containing a figure, three of which are mitred, and one of these holds a building in his hand; the fourth is that of a man in a loose cloak reaching only to the knees, with bare legs and an enormous fish's tail, who carries in his hand an open book supporting a lion (or other animal). This curious figure has

probably some connection with the merman and mermaid upon the chancel roof. The mitred figure with the building may perhaps represent the Abbot of Cleve who rebuilt the chancel and who probably also gave the font. The other two figures have unfortunately been damaged beyond recognition, though the outline of the mitre remains.

This Church has no north doorway. Outside the south door a small Doric porch has been erected, which decidedly adds to the picturesqueness of the exterior. A similar porch is to be found at Sutton Montis. The Church has been recently restored by Mr. J. L. Pearson, R.A.

The Rev. A. ST. JOHN MILD MAY said the image under the east gable was popularly called a figure of St. Barnabas. Tradition was that Cromwell made that Church into stables for his horses, and that he lodged there for the night there was no manner of doubt. He added that the windows in the north aisle were ascribed to the period of William and Mary.

Sparkford Gill Quarry.

The Members then went, partly on foot, to Sparkford Hill quarry, where Mr. STORY MASKELYNE, M.P., gave an excellent address on "The great probability of finding Coal in this part of Somerset."

From the quarry the party were driven to Hazelgrove, the residence of the Rev. A. St. John Mildmay, where a bountiful tea was kindly provided. The house, with its rich historical treasures, beautiful gardens, park, and grounds, were all thrown open. Hazelgrove park is famous for its oaks, one of which, known as "Queen Elizabeth's Oak," is thirty-two feet in girth, and was a full-grown tree in her day. Tradition says this oak is a thousand years old.

The arrival at Castle Cary about six o'clock brought a most enjoyable day's excursion to a close.

The Evening Meeting

was held in the Town Hall at eight o'clock, the PRESIDENT in the Chair.

The Rev. J. A. BENNETT opened the proceedings by reading a paper contributed by the Rev. Professor Browne, of Cambridge, on the portion of a very fine

Saxon Cross Shaft,

which is preserved in the porch of West Camel Church. [The paper is printed in Part II.]

Mr. BENNETT, replying to the question where the portion of the cross seen that day was found, said that it had obviously stood as a door jamb at one time. It was found under the pavement near the pulpit.

Mr. F. T. ELWORTHY said that interlaced ornamentations on British crosses, which were said to be connected with Christianity, were not necessarily so. He had seen such crosses at Athens, one especially, dating back at least 1000 B.C., and they bore serpent-like inscriptions of similar type. He was of opinion that they were connected with serpent worship.

Mr. BENNETT said Professor Browne had made a study of early Christian art.

Mr. CHISHOLM-BATTEN read a paper on "The Forest Trees of Somerset;" printed in Part II.

At the conclusion of the paper an interesting discussion took place.

Mr. BENNETT said: According to the letters of Locke the philosopher, lime trees were introduced into England just two hundred years ago.

Mr. ELWORTHY mentioned apropos of Locke, that the lime tree avenue at Chipley still exists, but there were signs of great decay. He also mentioned that much mistletoe grew on the lime trees there, and he thought that to be very uncommon.

A Member remarked that the mistletoe commonly grew on the lime in Devon and Gloucestershire.

The Rev. G. E. SMITH thanked Mr. Batten for working up the Natural History department; he thought, however, he had given them too many indigenous trees. The elm never ripened in England, and to use a Somersetshire phrase, they would never see a lime tree "gribble." If they were indigenous trees they might think they would naturally ripen. Mr. Smith also alluded to the walnut tree, which was synonymous with "welch nut," *welch* meaning foreign. Reference was also made to the abundant and lavish use of oak by the old builders.

Bishop HOBHOUSE put in a plea for the alder as an indigenous tree. There was plenty of evidence of its having been used for charcoal from time immemorial.

Prebendary GRAFTON followed with some remarks on the

Discovery of the Norman Castle.

He said they owed their discovery of the Castle to the trees. Having explained how they came to hit upon the site, he next mentioned those local gentlemen who had taken special interest in the discovery, singling out the names of Mr. R. R. C. Gregory and Mr. Francis, the latter gentleman having the charge of and guiding the excavators. They had all worked *con amore*.¹⁰

Mr. E. BUCKLE next followed with an exceedingly interesting explanatory description of what had been unearthed.¹¹ The discovery was of great interest and importance; undoubtedly they had come upon the site of a Norman Castle. He strongly advised them to persevere in their search.

Prebendary GRAFTON, as Vicar of Castle Cary, said they had every reason to be grateful to the Archæological Society for having come there that year, and they would do all they could to welcome them again.

The proceedings then terminated.

¹⁰ See Mr. Gregory's paper in Part II.

¹¹ See *ante*, p. 23.