

Thursday: Excursion.

The party assembled at the George Hotel at 10 a.m. and drove by the Tor to

Ponter's Ball.

Mr. DICKINSON said the earthwork was about 15 feet high from the ground, and on the eastern side there were signs of a fosse. The earthwork had very likely been made to defend Glastonbury from anything coming from the east. When it was thrown up the ground all round, except the narrow isthmus on this side, was all morass, so that the construction of this earthwork made Glastonbury perfectly safe from attack. When it was made was a question he could not undertake to answer; but it was thought that it was more ancient than Roman, and that it dated back to very early times indeed. They might imagine it as being originally five or six feet higher than it was at the present time. Mr. Bulleid had told him that the entrance to the field was called Havyate, the latter portion of which word evidently referred to a gate; and probably at one time there was a gate there in an old road leading through Glastonbury to Polden. They would observe that the field in which they were standing was five or six feet

(6). A full description of the excavation of the road at this point will probably be brought before the next meeting of the Society.

higher than the next field towards Glastonbury, which led to the belief that there was once a village close by and protected by the fortress.

Mr. BULLEID remarked that by some persons the earth-work was called Ponter's Vall; but he believed the correct name was Ponter's Ball.

Mr. DICKINSON said that both names were really the same and referred to a wall.

The party next drove to

West Pennard Church.

The Rev. W. HUNT explained the architectural features of this and all other churches visited throughout the day from notes supplied by Mr. E. B. Ferrey, who was prevented from attending the meeting owing to the severe illness of his father, Mr. Benjamin Ferrey.

Mr. Hunt said the Church was dedicated to S. Nicholas. The tower was very massive, built about the time of Edward IV, and showing very distinctly the best type of Perpendicular work. The base mouldings and mouldings to the doorway were remarkably good. There was a stoup on the south side of the tower doorway. The carved angels in the string course over the doorway were very beautiful, and the arrangement of niches on either side of the west doorway, and higher up in the tower, was a rather characteristic feature in Somersetshire towers. The west window had a bold deep cavetto moulding, with great recessing to the glass line, and was a fine specimen of the earlier Perpendicular period, with very good tracery. There was no label moulding, an omission to be noticed pretty generally elsewhere in this church. On the south side of the lower part of the tower the blue lias stone had been cased. This was done in 1813, so that after service the people might play at fives. The stair-turret on the north side of the tower was of good bold design. The tower is 66 feet high, and was taken down and underpinned (the decayed battlements being restored) as low as the clock, in the year 1853. The upper

portion of the tower, particularly the belfry-stage, appeared to be later than the lower, and was certainly not so well designed. The belfry windows, compared with many village churches in Somerset, were poor, and the same remark applied to the buttresses. The perforated stone louvres were modern, and probably not like what the original ones were. The pinnacles slightly projected from the battlements, and the arrangement of niches in the centre of the battlements was rather unusual. The lead spire added much to its picturesque appearance. There were five bells of 17th century date. The high closely panelled battlement to the south aisle resembled the parapets at Wedmore Church, but wanted the grace of the perforated quatrefoil parapet to the nave of this (West Pennard) church. The porch had a modern finial to its south gable, but the arrangement of the tracery to the niche was curious. The windows to the south aisle were good specimens of the best Perpendicular period, and there was a stair-turret at the south-east angle of the south aisle leading up to the lead flat. There was a priest's door in the chancel, as would be found in all the five churches to be visited that day, but this one was very late 16th century work, and an after insertion. There was a good segmental-headed Perpendicular window at the east end, the tracery of which had been restored. There was a north door peculiarly treated with respect to the window. The west window of the north aisle was out of the centre on account of the stair turret of the tower, and the rear arch, internally of crippled outline, seems purposely adapted to the situation. There was a plain unpierced parapet to the north aisle, with ribbon-like enrichments and carved bosses at intervals. The north aisle was evidently of earlier date than the south. The clerestory windows, with their graceless elliptical arches, and heads destitute of labels, though looking more like late Decorated than Perpendicular, were really very late Tudor.

Interior.—The early Perpendicular groining to the tower

was very good, the tower arch being of the panelled type so usual in Somersetshire churches of this date. The levels of the Church were the original ones, *i.e.*, the tower one step below the nave, and the east end of the chancel well raised. The clerestory windows had no relation to the arcade under, which on the south side was very irregular, having a very wide easternmost arch, a wide arch opposite the porch, and a narrow arch next the tower. The wide easternmost arch obviously originally opened out into a chantry chapel, screened off from the nave, with a squint at the south side of the chancel arch. This squint had been enlarged late in the 16th century. The arcade on the north side was of earlier date than the south, and the nave arcade and clerestory were certainly later in date than the aisles. The nave ceiling was a characteristic Somersetshire one; the angels were modern. The north aisle roof was original and very beautiful; the south aisle ceiling was inserted in 1852, under the old roof. The south door was a good mediæval panelled one. The capitals to the chancel arch were restored in 1852, and copied from the old ones; the mouldings to this arch were far superior to those of the tower. The beautiful early 16th century rood-screen had been, unfortunately, *varnished*. The cross was of course modern. Like most of the old rood-screens, it would be observed to be plainer on the east side than on the west. The aumbry on the north side of the chancel was entirely modern, but the piscina on the south side was original, but restored. The chancel ceiling was good and characteristic Somersetshire work; the pulpit and font were modern.

Mr. PARKER accounted for the great width of the arcade on the south side nearest the chancel, by supposing a rood-loft to have originally existed here, the removal of which necessitated the widening of the arch.

Churchyard Cross.

The beautiful churchyard CROSS was examined. It consists of an octagonal base of four steps, with a square socket,

containing sunk panels, sculptured in relief, on three sides of which are emblems of the crucifixion, with, on the north side, the initials R.B. under an abbot's mitre, said to be those of Richard Beere, Abbot of Glastonbury, 1493 to 1524, who is supposed to have erected this cross. The square, tapering shaft is surmounted by part of the original abacus, consisting of angels with outspread wings, which supported the head.

West Bradley

was next visited, the party stopping *en route* at the TITHE BARN, a building of 15th century date, supposed to have been built by Abbot Beere.

The Rev. W. HUNT said the Church was a small and unpretending building. The tower was of plain design, without buttresses; built of blue lias, without freestone quoins. A debased west doorway had been inserted, but since blocked up. There clearly was not originally a west doorway, as small churches of this type—*i.e.*, with nave, chancel, and tower—did not generally have west doorways in mediæval times. The date of the tower was about the year 1400, the west belfry window being of Flowing Decorated type; the square-headed south window to tower was a later insertion. The nave windows were good specimens of the best period of Perpendicular work. There was a stoup outside the south porch. The date of the Church was rather earlier than West Pennard, as shown, among other evidences, by the plain, unpierced parapet. The outer archway of the porch, which was very much out of the perpendicular, had a curious and unusual arrangement of capitals and mouldings. The rood stair turret on the north side, with its little window, remains. The simple type of a village Church was well exemplified by there being no label mouldings, except to the outer archway of the porch. The two easternmost rear arches of nave windows are moulded, the two westernmost ones only chamfered. The vaulting to the lower stage of tower was bold and good, but the tower arch, unfortunately, had been mutilated, and its original respond

converted. The arrangement of the raised baptistry (with the Norman font) was good. There were three bells; 1606 date. The roof to the nave, though at first sight quite modern, on closer examination would be found to be the old tie-beam roof, with additional mouldings. The chancel arch, for the period, was a very poor one. There were two curious little carved corbels on north and south sides of chancel. On the south side of chancel were the remains of the old piscina, and the corbels formerly holding images at the east end. The east window was a poor, square-headed one, but in the gable was an interesting mediæval cross. There were no buttresses to the chancel, the type throughout of this Church being very simple. The chancel was restored in 1873, and the outer surface of south wall cased.

The party then moved to the MANOR HOUSE, where they were invited to partake of the hospitality of Mr. Allen, the owner, in the shape of dairy produce, for which he is so celebrated. A fine cheese of a hundred weight was placed on the table, and cut by the President for the occasion.

Mr. GREEN remarked that in the Record Office, among the papers of the time of Henry II, there was mention made of Somerset cheese. In 1170 one Alured de Lincoln sent in his account, in which, with other purchases made in Somerset, is a charge for one hundred seams of beans, costing one hundred shillings (a seam was eight bushels), and for forty weights of cheese, costing £11. As a weigh was 256 lbs., we get 10,240 lbs. at a cost of about a farthing per pound. Again, in 1184, Robert Fitz-Pagan renders his account, in which there is a charge for cheese bought in Somerset, "to the use of John the King's son," £10 19s. 4d. The quantity here is not named, but the amounts paid in the two cases being so nearly the same, the weights would probably be also nearly the same.

Mr. ALLEN then conducted the party to a mound or tumulus, commonly known as the "Toot," in a field about 300 yards from the house.

Mr. BOYD DAWKINS said such mounds were placed in ancient times to mark the burial places of great men. In those mounds they were supposed to live their lives over again, and to come forth from them to fight the battles they had fought in the field, if they were warriors; to hunt, if they were hunters; or to farm, if they were tillers of the soil. The mound on which they were standing appeared to be a good specimen of its class.

The thanks of the Society were given to Mr. Allen for his hospitality, and the party proceeded to

Baltonsburg Church.

The Rev. W. HUNT said this Church was dedicated to St. Dunstan, and for a Somersetshire one was peculiar, consisting of a nave wider than usual, without aisles. The tower was very plain and rough cast, doubtless on account of the blue lias stone having perished. There were some peculiar openings at one side of the belfry windows now blocked up, the object of which was not clear. The stair turret was plain, while the south window to the ringing chamber was very like that at West Bradley. The fantastic metal work to the tower roof was put up by a village smith. There were six bells, but all recast in 1804. The majority of the windows had no labels, and were not moulded. There were several interesting mediæval gable crosses in a fair state of preservation. The east gable cross was particularly elegant, and there was a beautiful "Decorated" cross to the south porch, and an old cross to east gable of nave. On the north side of the Church the rood stair turret remained. There was a very rich mediæval drop ring handle and escutcheon to the south door. The massive mediæval bench ends, with 15th century mouldings, were very interesting. There was a curious stool of Jacobean date in the nave passage, which was called the "stool of repentance," on which offenders formerly suffered penance during service. The hour glass stand still remained, and also a piscina in the south nave wall behind the pulpit, shewing that there must

formerly have been an altar there. The nave had the type of cradle ceiling so usual in Somersetshire, and had been restored and coloured of late years. The ancient sedilia, with shields enclosed in ornamental panels—an unusual feature in sedilia—still existed, as well as an aumbry on the north side of the sanctuary. The rood screen was modern. There was a very rich oak cornice to the chancel. Some very interesting deeds and accounts, with the original seals, were preserved, and dated 1547; the churchwardens' books commence from 1663.

The churchyard cross is modern, except the figure of the crucified Saviour, which was dug up accidentally and refixed.

Lunch was then partaken of in a tent in a field near the Baltonsbury Inn.

On the road between Baltonsbury and Barton St. David, Mr. DICKINSON called attention to St. Dunstan's Dyke.

Barton St. David Church.

The Rev. W. HUNT said this was originally a cruciform Church, of the Perpendicular period, with north and south transepts. The south transept had been destroyed, but the remains of the foundations of it still existed, as well as the arch opening into it from the nave (now walled up). The tower was rather an unusual one for a Somerset church. At Somerton, Podimore, South Petherton, and elsewhere in Somerset, were examples of octagonal towers with square bases, but here, at Barton St. David, they had a tower octagonal from the base. In Northamptonshire were several examples of octagonal towers from base to battlement. Mr. Freeman had commented on this distinction between the two counties. The upper part of the west window was entirely new, replacing a debased square-headed one; the jambs were old. The west buttresses had been rebuilt, but in such way as to show they were modern. The old Norman north doorway had been taken out and carefully refixed, and a portion of the south respond of the chancel arch restored. There was a squint on the north side of the chancel, opening

out into the tower. The font was a plain one of the Perpendicular period, and the pulpit of Jacobean date. The nave ceiling was the original one, repaired and painted. The doorway opening into the rood-loft still remained, as well as the projection for the loft. Some of the old seat panelling had been preserved and refixed at the west end of the Church. The chancel arch was not central with the nave. There were four bells; one of them 1591 in date. In the tower floor was a floriated, incised, sepulchral cross slab. A new roof had been put to the chancel; the upper part of the old piscina remained, and the rear arches were the original ones. The window to the north transept was a later insertion, probably of the Elizabethan period. The edifice had recently undergone a restoration, which, however, could be more favourably spoken of than some other restorations.

Mr. PARKER said the fine Norman doorway had probably formed part of an earlier building, and had been inserted in that one; the width of the walls was certainly not sufficient to give evidence of its being a Norman building.

The VICAR referred to the fact that the parish had to pay 16d. a year to the Abbey of Glastonbury, which had to be taken in every year by twelve men.

In the churchyard the remains of the old cross were examined. On the west side of the shaft is a representation of a bishop, with mitre and maniple on the left hand; at his left side is a wallet, suspended by a strap, which passes over the right shoulder. It is generally thought to represent St. David, Archbishop of Menevia, in the early part of the 6th century.⁸

Butleigh Church.

The REV. W. HUNT said this church was dedicated to St. Benedict. It was not mediævally a cruciform Church, but consisted of nave, central tower, chancel, and south porch. The north aisle was added about 1859. The transepts were built and the Church restored in 1850. The windows to the

(8). See Pooley's *Crosses of Somerset*.

nave were very elegant, late 14th century work; but the fine six-light west window was an insertion of Tudor times, with some painted glass still existing in the upper portion. The west gable cross is ancient. The fine porch was of the Decorated period, and the old gable cross still remained, with an elegant carved boss in the gable. The old hinges to the south door were apparently of the Decorated period, and earlier than the doorway itself. The windows to the chancel were the original ones, only repaired in 1850; but the east front, the roof, the aumbry, credence, and the oak stalls were entirely modern. In the Perpendicular font, the *Agnus Dei* and the pelican were each twice repeated—very unusual in mediæval work. There was an aumbry towards the easternmost end of the nave. The treatment of the rear arches internally to the Flowing Decorated windows was very elegant. The monument now on the east side of the south transept formerly stood at the east end of the chancel. The lowness of the tower arches and the groining would be noticed. The upper portion of the tower was of later date than the lower. One or two of the bench ends were old, and the rest copied from them.

MR. NEVILLE GRENVILLE said the Church was called St. Leonard's, but he believed it was dedicated to the two St. Johns, the emblems of both having been discovered in the Church.

The party were then entertained at tea by Mr. Neville Grenville, in the beautiful grounds of Butleigh Court; after which the PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Neville Grenville for his hospitality.

The Rev. F. B. PORTMAN said as they were now almost at the close of their Meeting, it fell to his lot, as senior Vice-President, to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Freeman, for the manner in which he had carried out the duties of President during the Meeting.

The vote of thanks having been heartily accorded,

Mr. FREEMAN returned thanks.

The Rev. F. B. PORTMAN next proposed a vote of thanks to the Local Committee.

Mr. BULLEID responded.

The party then proceeded to the

Street Lias Quarries.

Mr. BOYD-DAWKINS was called upon to make a few remarks, and in doing so he referred to the numerous fossils which were found in that and other liassic quarries, alluding especially to the fish and winged reptiles, of which fine specimens had been discovered in various places, some of them being of immense size, while others were very small. He next explained the formation of the lias stone in the different layers they saw before them. At one time the whole of that district was covered by the sea, the only land being the Quantock Hills, the Mendips being then under water. The various rivers brought down to the sea muddy sediment, like that now brought down by the Severn; and that muddy sediment—which included in some instances a large portion of carbonate of lime, while in others there was less—had been transformed in the long course of ages into the stone which they saw before them.

The party then proceeded to the residence of Mr. Gillett, where some fine specimens of saurians and other fossils were examined, and explained by Mr. Dawkins.

There were no further visits, and no stoppage was made until the party arrived at Glastonbury, thus terminating a most successful meeting.
