

The members then proceeded to examine

Wellington Church

under the guidance and direction of Mr. E. A. FREEMAN, who said it was a church of the usual parochial type—local Perpendicular, retaining some small Early English portions. In a great number of the churches of the county there were to be found many vestiges of an earlier period, but here there were not more than two or three. The eastern window, the niche at the end of the north chancel aisle,

which had been moved from its proper place in the north aisle, and the south porch were the only ones which he had noticed in the cursory glance which he had had of the building. These, however, did not affect the general outline and character of the building, as was the case in many other churches. The mouldings of the south door were very curious indeed. The mouldings of the arch were of Early English character, very rough, and seemed like imitations. A stone over the southern doorway, with the date 1577 on it, contained the names of two churchwardens, during whose term of office the church was probably rebuilt and the old materials then used. The eastern window manifestly belonged to the earliest days of tracery, the end of the 13th century, before the geometrical system was fully developed. He missed the shafts running up to the roof and above the string of the arches, which gave a degree of finish to a church which this did not possess. Here they had the plain arches and the plain clerestory windows above them. Any one who had seen Bruton, Martock, or any of the really grand churches of the county, would notice this. The best thing in the church was the belfry arch, which was lofty and beautiful, but even there he missed the vaulted roof which he saw in so many other towers. The chancel arch was inferior, and the effect of its being raised had been to disturb somewhat the proportions of the chancel. The tower was a most curious part of the building. The arrangement of the belfry staircase was very unusual, being made in the middle of one side. In the Taunton type of towers it stood in one corner, being worked in among the pinnacles and buttresses; in the Bristol type it stood boldly out at one corner, but here it was quite different, preventing any good arrangements in the belfry windows in the upper

storey. The roof of this church seemed to be new or a good deal touched up, and he was always glad to see the local form retained, whether it was new or not.

The PRESIDENT remarked that the roof was all plastered and the woodwork retained, on which Mr. Freeman said "Then we have a genuine coved waggon or barrel roof, which is characteristic of the county, but which, unfortunately, people too frequently get rid of as fast as they can."

On leaving the church the members visited Dr. Bridge's residence, and examined the few ancient remains left of Lord Chief Justice Popham's mansion, consisting of some arches of the Tudor period.

In the afternoon there was a cold collation in the Town Hall, which was numerously attended; the band of the Wellington Rifle Corps playing during the time.

At the evening meeting, the proposal to publish Mr. Parker's paper on Wells, with suitable illustrations, was submitted to the meeting by Colonel Pinney, M.P., and it was finally agreed that a special subscription be solicited for this purpose.*

The Rev. Prebendary SCARTH read a paper on "Roman Remains found at Camerton," which is given in part II.

An historical sketch of the parish of Wellington, by F. WHITE, Esq., was read, in which it was stated that the earliest historical account of it commences with the reign of King Alfred, who gave the manors of Wellington, Buckland and Lydeard to Asser Menevensis, the tutor of his children, the writer of his life, and an assistant in his literary pursuits. Asser was also Bishop of Sherborne, and so was the grantee under Edward the elder. We may

* NOTE.—The illustrations in the present volume are introduced in virtue of this arrangement.

reasonably assume that when the Bishopric of Wells was erected it was endowed from the possessions of the sec of Sherborne, of which it had before formed a part, and given to Athelmus, who was the first bishop. In the Harleian Library there is a copy of an instrument dated in 1234, which was intended to record the fact of a provost of the church of Wells having undertaken to observe the statutes of the church. In that instrument it is provided "That the church of Wellington we shall retain to our use, and that of our successors, a certain parcel of land * * * * so that in the same church of Wellington there shall be for ever a vicar, whose vicarage shall consist in all small tithes, bequests, and obventions of the altars, as well of Bokeland as of Wellington, in the tithes of Mills and Hay, except the tithes of our demesne, and the tithes of Hay of the demesne of Gerbert, the Knight of Wellington, and his heirs." The manor and demesne continued in the possession of the bishop until the time of Edward VI., when Bishop Barlow, who afterwards became a voluntary exile, granted it, together with the borough of Wellington, with lands there and divers other appurtenances, to Edward, Duke of Somerset, and his heirs. Wellington received its greatest glory from an honourable inhabitant, Sir John Popham, who is not only memorable for the antiquity of his noble descent, but for his strict justice and unwearied diligence. Sir John Popham and his lady lie entombed in the chapel on the south side of the parish church. On the table of the tomb are the effigies of Sir John and his lady. He is dressed in his judge's robes, chain and small square black cap, and placed with his head towards the west. On the lower basement, at the head and feet, are four other smaller figures of two men and two women, kneeling face to face. On the north side of the same basement

are five boys and eight girls, dressed in black, kneeling in a row; and on the south side are nine women, kneeling in the same manner. Over Sir John and his lady is an arched canopy, ornamented with the family arms, &c., the whole supported by eight round columns of black marble, five feet high, with Corinthian capitals, green and gilt. Near the town Popham built a large and stately house, wherein he resided several years, and during that time greatly enhanced his fortune by the purchase of several very valuable estates in this county and that of Devon. In the time of the great civil war this house was taken by stratagem and burnt. Sir John was a great patron and benefactor of the town, and in pursuance of his will, bearing date 21st September, 1604, an hospital was erected at the west end of the town for the maintenance of twelve poor and aged people, whereof six are to be men and six women, and for two poor men's children (orphans). The president of the hospital was to have 1s. 6d. per week, and to each of the residue of the same poor people twelve pence weekly, and eightpence weekly upon each of the said children until they should be of age or placed with some master or mistress as apprentices for ten years at least, in husbandry. Certain articles of wearing apparel were also to be supplied to the inmates."

Mr. W. BOYD DAWKINS read a paper on "The Bone Cavern in Wookey Hole," which is given in part II.