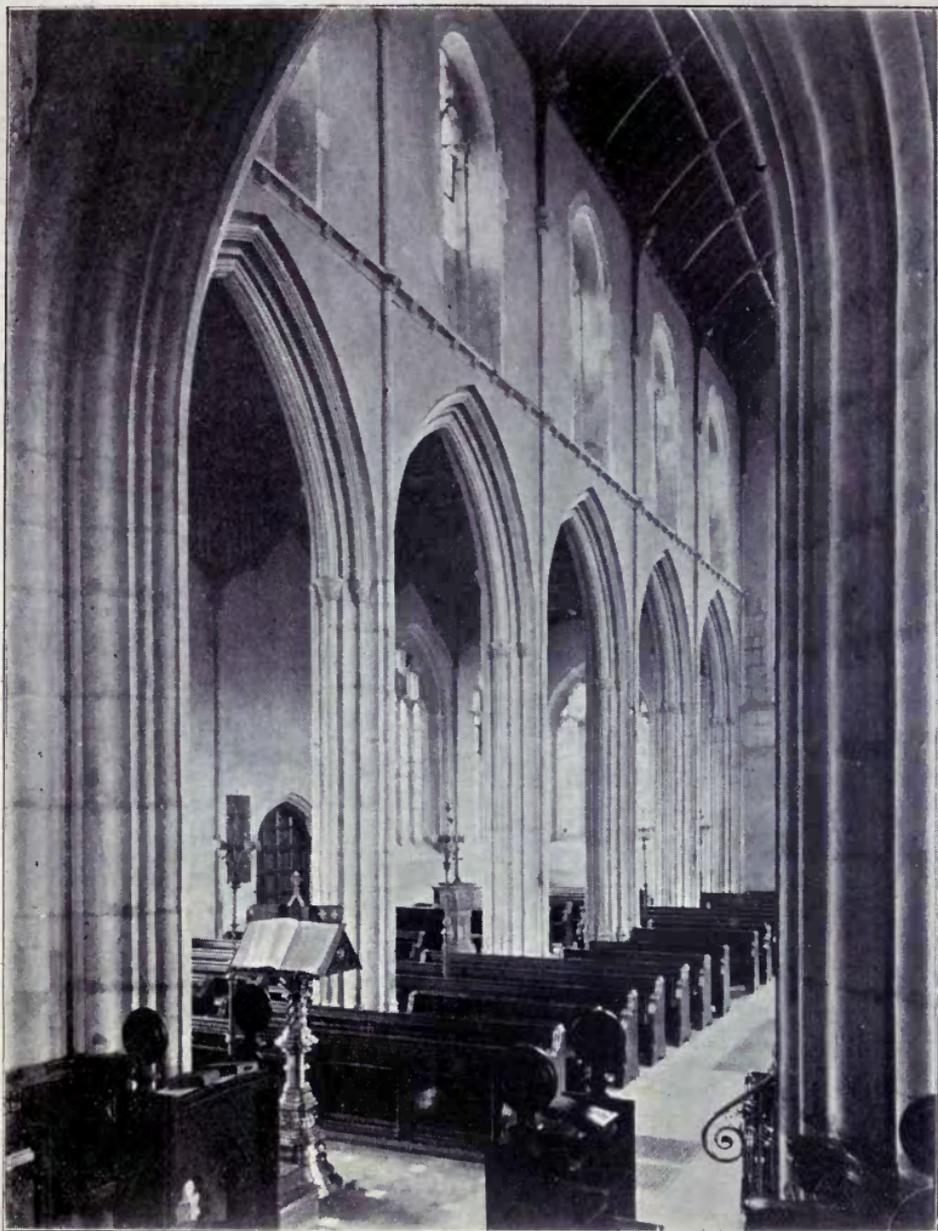


Second Day's Proceedings.

Favoured with a continuance of fine weather, the members of the Society commenced their excursions on Wednesday morning to the various churches and places of interest in the neighbourhood. The party, numbering over eighty, set out in brakes from Walton Park Hotel, the first stopping-place being

Yatton Church.

Mr. EDMUND BUCKLE said this church, like the one they saw at Clevedon the previous day, was cruciform in plan, with the tower right in the centre, and with the tower piers very massive, so that the chancel was, to a large extent, blocked out from the nave, very much as was the case at Clevedon. It seemed almost certain that there must have been a Norman church there, comparatively a small one, with a central tower, and as the church became changed and enlarged, from time to time, the original Norman building left its influence on all the successive stages. There was nothing left in Yatton church which they could actually trace back further than to the Decorated period—the first half of the 14th century—but the plan, the massive pillars under the tower, and the low arches rising from these pillars, pointed pretty distinctly to a Norman church of the same form. The lower part of the tower was actually of the Decorated period, and that was the oldest part of this interesting church, though the two transepts were nearly of



YATTON.

Interior.

the same date. Originally there was certainly no north aisle, for the tower had a buttress at the north-west corner, but during the Decorated period this aisle was added, a fragment of which still clings to the base of the tower pier. The nave at this time must have been small and low. The chancel was a pretty example of Early Perpendicular, which it was interesting to compare with the later Perpendicular so common in Somerset. The whole of the nave, clerestory, and aisles had been rebuilt in the richest manner of this latter style. He directed attention to a curious fact in connection with the windows in the aisle, that there was hardly an example of a window being in the middle between two vaulting shafts. That was characteristic of how these old churches were set out, as they rarely found windows exactly opposite one another. In a new church the windows were generally arranged symmetrically. The north chapel was an addition considerably later than the rest of the building, and was probably about the middle of the fifteenth century. He called attention to the beautiful features in the mortuary chapel of Sir John Newton and his wife, Isabel de Cheddre. There was a magnificent monument against the north wall, which was the important feature of the chapel. Among the peculiar features of the monument was a representation of the Annunciation. The date of Sir John Newton's death was 1487, and it was almost certain that the chapel was built by him in his lifetime. The tracery of the windows bore a striking resemblance to that in the Chain Gate at Wells, which was erected shortly after 1465. There was also, in the north transept, a figure in alabaster of the father of Sir John, Sir Richard Newton, serjeant and judge, represented in his red gown with the serjeant's coif on his head, and a wallet by his side to contain the seal. The figure of his wife, elaborately dressed in mitre headdress and flaunches, appeared on the same tomb. In recesses, in this transept, were also figures of a man and woman of the latter part of the thirteenth century. The rood loft seemed to have

been curiously arranged, since the entrance to it was in the north-west corner of the north transept. One of the most interesting volumes of the Record Society contained a number of churchwardens' accounts, and among them were those of Yatton, in which was a mass of information about the building and repairing of the church. In 1445 the accounts commenced, and at the time they were building a church-house and doing work in the belfry. Directly after that, in 1447, occurred the first entry concerning the rood-screen. The churchwardens went to Easton-in-Gordano to look at the rood-screen there, and in the same year there was the mason's bill for erecting a pulpit and two altars. He (Mr. Buckle) did not think it was a pulpit as they understood the word now, but the lower part of the rood-screen. That would account for the two altars, as there were usually two altars, against the rood-screen. In the same year they found a carpenter engaged upon the rood-loft, which was variously described as *Alle*, *Aler*, and *solarium*. The work was given to John Cross, the village carpenter, who had a shop at Claverham, about a mile away, and this was an example of how capable the artisans of the country were in the old times that the lower part of an elaborate screen should have been entrusted to the village mason, and the upper part to the village carpenter. They had not a carver in the village, however, so that the order for 69 images went to a foreigner. The cost of the figures was £3 10s. 4d., just over 1s. 1d. each. In 1457 there was an entry of £31 2s. 11d., as being the total amount of Cross, the carpenter's bill. The next item of interest was for white-washing the church, a frequent proceeding in mediæval times. The entry ran *pro dealbatione ecclesiæ*. It was a common opinion that whitewashing was inartistic and modern. It might be inartistic but certainly was not modern. In 1482 there was a charge for the "closing between the church and the chancel," and he thought what was referred to might be the temporary screens put into the arches in order to

build the Newton chapel. In 1531 there was mention of an iron beam before the high altar, which was the work of a local smith, with apparently a great deal of decorative work about it. They might glean that the altars were the high altar of St. Mary, and those of St. James, St. Nicholas, and St. Catherine. There were also images of St. Sunday, St. Thomas, St. John, St. George, and a gigantic figure of St. Christopher painted on the wall. There was in the churchyard an entirely separate chapel, respecting which, at the abolition of the chantries, the inhabitants made humble suit that it might be taken down and the stones used as "a sluice against the rage of the sea for the safeguard of the country." Outside the church Mr. Buckle drew attention to the delicate carving on the front of the south porch, with a coat-of-arms apparently for Montacute or Sherborne. The window at the end of the south transept was plainly seen to be entirely different in character to those in the nave. Mr. Buckle next spoke of the tower with its broken spire. The turret was in a rather peculiar position, Moreover, it was not octagonal but hexagonal; a form used very much in the southern part of the county, at Crewkerne and neighbourhood. It was a question whether the spire of this church was ever completed. It might have been left unfinished, or perhaps it had to be taken down on account of some accident such as having been struck by lightning. He should think, judging by the churchwardens' accounts, that there could have been no possible question about want of funds for completing it, and he felt sure that at the end of the mediæval period there must have been a perfect spire. The accident which reduced it to its present form probably occurred at a later period, when there was no longer money easily obtainable for restoring it. The west front of the church was probably, with the exception of Crewkerne, the finest in the county. That at Crewkerne was very similar, but much more elaborate, and the hexagonal turrets were repeated here, so that it seemed probable that the architect came from the

Crewkerne district. Mr. Buckle then accompanied the party round to the north side of the church and pointed out that, unlike many churches where the north side was meanly treated, this north side at Yatton was as well finished as any other part of the church, and that from the north-west part of the churchyard one could obtain a very good view of the entire building.

Congresbury Church

was next visited. Mr. BUCKLE said that this church presented the greatest contrast to Yatton church as regarded the general effect, yet there were several features in which it bore a considerable resemblance to it. Here they found an Early English nave and aisles, and the first thing which must strike one in coming into the church was the remarkable difference between the two arcades. The one on the south side had four black shafts around it with nothing to support, while the other one was a simple natural arcade. The arrangement now existing on the south side, of a round central pier carrying the arches flanked by black shafts which carried nothing, was excessively ugly, and in its present state quite modern. Certainly when the arcade was first built the shape of the pillar was as at present, for the bases were genuine Early English, and provided for all five shafts. But that pillar was intended to carry perfectly plain, heavy, square arches, resting on all the five shafts, instead of the present light molded arches. When (probably in the 14th century) it was desired to lighten the appearance of the church, they took down the heavy square arch, but, like sensible people, they also took down the four shafts at the corners of each pier, and thus lightened the whole effect of the arcade. But when the time came for restoring the church, the ingenious restorer found from the bases of the pillars that four shafts had been there primarily, so he put up those four black shafts which presented such an extraordinarily foolish appearance. The north arcade was very different, probably a little

later in date, and was interesting as being as early an example as they could find of the pier which became practically universal in Somerset in the Perpendicular period—a pier with four little attached shafts, one on each face. The tower arch, like those of the south arcade, was presumably Decorated, and he thought the bases of the chancel arch were of the same period. Then came the usual Perpendicular enlargement, and in that case it consisted of the raising of all the aisle walls and the insertion in them of large windows; the raising of the nave walls and the addition of a clerestory of rather an unusual character, consisting of a large number of small windows all close together—two windows in every bay. Some of the arrangements of the church were exceedingly interesting. The step on which he was standing at the entrance to the chancel, seemed to have been intended as a seat. The base of the rood screen was a stone wall, which had been richly ornamented, but was now much damaged. The side screen, however, which was of similar design, was beautifully frescoed; the whole of the stone tracery remained with stone buttresses at intervals. That low stone wall was intended to carry the ordinary oak screen over, but that upper part had been very much pulled about, and had clearly been made up again at some subsequent period. How exactly that screen, the base of which stood there, was brought forward to meet the stone corbels left standing it was difficult to say. It looked as though there had been an elaborate piece of vaulting under the gallery, as at Dunster. The screen leading from the aisle into the chapel was again in two parts. The lower part of it was most interesting, for there was a seat attached to it, facing the altar that was in the chapel. Attention was called to the two corbels which carried the ends of the loft, on which were inscriptions not very easy to read. The most interesting Decorated work in the church consisted of the two square windows in the chancel and chapel. though, perhaps, their beauty was questionable, as they were rather bald-looking. Their date was of the 14th century. On

the outside they would observe that it was another church with a spire. Spires were distinctly uncommon in that county, but there was a band of them which ran across the county, from Kewstoke to Frome, and one of them, Crocombe spire, was almost identical with this one. Here, as at Yatton, there was a chapel in the churchyard, and in this case it was dedicated to St. Michael. There were remains of two crosses, one in the churchyard, and another just outside in the roadway.

The vicar of the parish, the Rev. R. H. MAUNSELL-EYRE, being away, the curate, the Rev. J. H. CRAVEN, read a few notes which had been prepared by the vicar. He called attention to the registers, which were in a chest in the vestry, which dated from the year 1543. Parts of the vicarage, dated from 1446, and the arms carved on the porch were those of the bishopric, Bishop Beckington's, and those of the Poultney family. What connection they had with it he could not tell. The font was the oldest part being early Norman. The stump of the yew tree in the churchyard was said to be St. Congar's walking stick. The cross in the churchyard was erected as a memorial to Mr. Hardwick, who was attacked by highwaymen and shot in several places, but delivered his assailants to justice.

The next stopping-place was

Wrington Church.

Here Mr. BUCKLE first of all alluded to the tower. He said that it had attained great distinction as being that which Professor Freeman had described as the finest square western tower of any parish church in this country (and therefore probably in the world), not intended for a spire or lantern. But Mr. Buckle did not share Freeman's views, he thought the tower had been over-rated, but he agreed that it was a remarkably fine one. In order to do the tower justice, it must be looked upon as intended for a much smaller church. The



CONGRESBURY

church for which that tower was designed was a church not much higher and not much wider than the chancel, and with such a building as that there was no doubt that the tower would have looked much better than at present. The nave was exceedingly short and dumpy, and it was cramped in between the chancel at one end, and the tower at the other. Proceeding inside the church, Mr. Buckle said that over the tower arch could be seen the work of the old nave roof which the tower was designed to suit. The chancel was of the Early English period, but with Perpendicular additions. When the nave was rebuilt it was widened as well as heightened, and the western bay of the chancel had been corbelled out to allow of this. He drew attention to the trefoil arch in the clerestory, the width of the clerestory windows which were of three lights instead of the usual two. The whole of the nave was a very pretty piece of work, but it certainly wanted, for proportion, greater length. The screen there seemed to have been a good deal pulled about, and much of it removed. There were also remains of the Perpendicular reredos which was now restored, and it was not easy to say how much of it was old and how much was new.

Some of the old registers were shown and the communion plate.

Wrighton is famous as having been the birthplace of Locke, the philosopher. In the church is a tablet to Hannah More, who with her sisters lies buried in the churchyard. An entry in the parish registers mentions the payment of "one shilling for killing an author." "Otter" is the word which was evidently meant.

Brockley Church.

After luncheon at the "Golden Lion" Hotel, the party proceeded to visit Brockley Church and Court. Mr. BUCKLE said this was a totally different kind of church to those they had already seen. They had seen grand works of architecture

before, but here they had a small, quiet, country church. There was here no division between the nave and the chancel, except that the chancel roof was about a foot lower than the nave roof, so that a sort of chancel arch was formed in the woodwork of the roof. That was a rather curious feature in that part of the county, because it belonged emphatically to the western corner of England. It was very common throughout Cornwall and Devonshire, and there were several instances of it west of Taunton. The body of the church there was Early English, but there was one fragment of the Norman period in the very beautiful font, which was circular right from the bottom to the top. The arch leading into the chapel was also a portion of the Early English work. When the Perpendicular change came it made very little difference here, though the roof belonged to that period. He called attention to the altar cloth, the centre part of which was modern. It had exceedingly beautiful lace fringed with filagree work. What its date was or where it came from he was entirely unable to say. There was a monument in the chantry to the Rev. Wadham Pigott.

The Court House was afterwards visited, and much interest was displayed in the inspection of some of the rooms. The party then drove to

Chelvey Church.

This church, said Mr. BUCKLE, was almost identical with the church they had just left, as regarded its plan and general arrangement. It had been restored in a very charming way. The entrance was through a Norman doorway. This church, like the other, was in the main Early English. The arcade was Early Perpendicular. The heads of the sepulchral arches in the south chapel wall had lost their finials, and the monuments were entirely lost. The whole of the church was very rough and irregular in the setting out, the floors were uneven, and the chapel had the further irregularity of being wider at

the east end than at the west end. Here, as at Yatton and Congresbury, the lower part of the rood screen was of stone. The position of the rood loft was indicated on the arch immediately above. There was one stone missing. That stone stood out, no doubt, as a corbel, and it was on the top of that stone that the gallery rested. He drew attention to the arrangement of the two altar reredoses. The central part of the principal reredos was entirely modern, but was set in the frame of stone work which was all old. On the top was a pretty cornice, the greater part of which was also old. On both sides of the reredos were niches for figures, but there was nothing now left of the ornamental work. Precisely the same arrangement was repeated at the end of the chapel. There was the same square recess over the altar for the reredos. He also called attention to the corbels on each side of the chancel. These corbels supported the ends of the Lenten veil, which completely shut out the east end of the church from view. At the west end of the aisle was a most magnificent Court pew of the Jacobean period. The oak had never been oiled, and so had turned to a soft white, as old oak did when left to itself. The roof was of the Perpendicular period, and part of it was new. The old rafters were nearly white. Here, again, the font was a Norman one. There was a little stained glass in the windows, including some coats of arms. The tower of the church was also like that at Brockley—a small west tower with no pretensions, and with just a diagonal buttress. There was a frame for an hour-glass by the pulpit, with the glass missing. The old seats were interesting, but they were a rough lot.

Chelvey Court was next visited, and what remains of the fine old mansion, once the residence of the Tynte family, was inspected with considerable curiosity. The house was well worth seeing, especially the staircase, though care had to be exercised in visiting some of the spacious rooms, on account of the decaying condition of the flooring. Enquiries were made for the secret chamber, but this was believed to have been de-

molished when the upper part of the structure was taken down some years ago.

Nailsea Court, another old mansion in the neighbourhood, was also visited, and this fine old building was in a much better state of preservation, and is now partly used as a farmhouse.

Tickenham Church.

The day's programme concluded with a visit to Tickenham Church. Mr. BUCKLE, in describing it, said the church formed a great contrast to some of the others visited. The chancel arch was exceedingly small, and was very early work, and had something of the appearance of a Saxon arch, but he was disposed to consider it as an early Norman arch. The two arcades were not very much later than the Norman period—probably twelfth century. The simplicity of the work it would be impossible to beat. There were no pillars or capitals, but square piers supporting plain square arches. The early church there appeared to have had its aisle on the north side of the nave as at present, but on the south side there appeared to have been only two bays in the original aisle. The tall arch at the east end of the arcade appeared to have been a later insertion. It was curious that on the next pillar was the only attempt at decoration, which had delicate shafts with fine twelfth century foliage. It looked as though the transept had been added on to the south side. There were three thirteenth century figures in the north aisle—two men in armour and one a lady. A good deal of old glass was scattered about here and there in the different windows. In the old chapel was a figure of the Crucifixion in the side window. In the aisle a good deal of heraldic glass was left in the tracery. Among them were one or two examples of the Berkeley arms, the family having once resided at the Court House. The arrangement of the rood-loft was peculiar; there was a squint window in the loft to enable the person standing there to see the high altar.

He had very little doubt that the person whose duty it was to ring the sanctus bell stood on the rood-loft.

The oldest entry in the parish register was 1538. The new altar was put in in 1812.

The party were afterwards driven into Clevedon, and this concluded the second day's proceedings.