

DEDHAM MEETING, August 5th, 1873.

LORD JOHN HERVEY, President.

This year the Council received an invitation from the Council of the Essex Archæological Society to arrange a joint excursion on the borders of the two Counties. The invitation was at once accepted, and Dedham named as the centre.

At 10.30 some 50 members and friends of the two Societies left the Railway-station at Manningtree, and proceeded to LAWFORD CHURCH, a 14 cent. building. The chancel windows shew rich and varied tracery, the principal mouldings having a wreath of foliage divided into sections by figures similar to those which may be seen in the hollows of the string courses on the Abbey Gate at Bury St. Edmund's; one window had figures of birds, another of squirrels, another of roses and owls alternately. The sedilia had also rich Decorated foliage, and figures of angels bearing instruments of music filling the spandrels under the rectangular hood moulding. The tower arch, from which a portion of the plaster had been removed, is built of bricks of a Roman character, excellent work. It contains three bells, one by Miles Craye dated 1667.

Leaving Lawford, the Essex members went to DEDHAM, to hold the annual meeting of their Society, while the Suffolk members paid a visit to EAST BERGHOLT CHURCH, where they were met by the Rev. J. Woolley D.D. the Rector, who had kindly prepared a paper of which the following is an abstract:

"The parish of East Bergholt was once greatly celebrated for its manufactories of flannel and baize. It formerly had a market, but this market had long been disused, and the town greatly reduced in size. I have unfortunately not been able to collect any authentic information respecting the ancient history of East Bergholt that is worthy of being brought before a learned Association, like that with whose visit our village is honoured to-day, but I will read a few unconnected memorandums on the subject of our parish church. As regards the name of the parish, in some old records it is spelt *Bercold*, and King William Rufus is said to have given the Church of Brantham (*Brantona*) with the Berewic of *Bercold* to the Abbey of Battle in Sussex; and the advowson of the living, as lately belonging to that Abbey, was granted to John, Earl of Oxford, 36 Henry VIII. The name is now, however, spelt *Bergholt*; but when I came to reside here in 1855, the oldest inhabitants pronounced it *Barfle*, the *gh* being pronounced like *f*, as in many of our English words, the peculiarity in this case being that the *g* and *h* seem to be letters in different syllables. I find, from books in our parish chest, that this was an old pronunciation of the name of our village, e.g., in a memorandum, respecting the cost of recasting the great bell at *Berre*, and dated December 24th, 1621, we read 'they are to have for setting the bell, taking it at *Barfould*, and delivering it there again, build in a frame, so as to keep her one whole year, nine pounds, ten shillings.' As regards the church, it is mostly of a Perpendicular character, built of flint and stone, with a considerable quantity of flush panelling. The chancel buttresses have niches with good canopies, and the whole church has richly panelled battlements. I would draw attention to the North doorway, with its rich spandrels and flowers in jambs of the arch. On a small shield over the South arch of the tower, is the date of the building the church, 1525. About 1522, many legacies were given towards building the church, and in 1526 and 1527 other legacies towards building the steeple; but whether from their being insufficient or from other causes, I do not know, the steeple unfortunately was never finished. A legend is prevalent amongst the parishioners, that after several attempts which were frustrated by the direct influence of the evil spirit the work was given up in despair. Another tradition says that Cardinal Wolsey took much interest in the building of the church, and that his fall put a stop to the work. As regards the monuments, special attention may be drawn that of Edward Lamb, on the south side of the chancel, on account of its quaint inscription, which is as follows:—"Edwarde ever envied, evil endured, extremities even, earnestly expecting eternal ease. Lambe lived laudably, let like (such) life learne (teach) ledede (lewd) livers (to) lament." The word *ledede* in the inscription gives rise to much controversy, and it is most likely a mistake for *lewde*.

The rev. gentleman also read the following quaint inscription from the wall behind the organ, and not now visible without some pushing and squeezing into the space:—

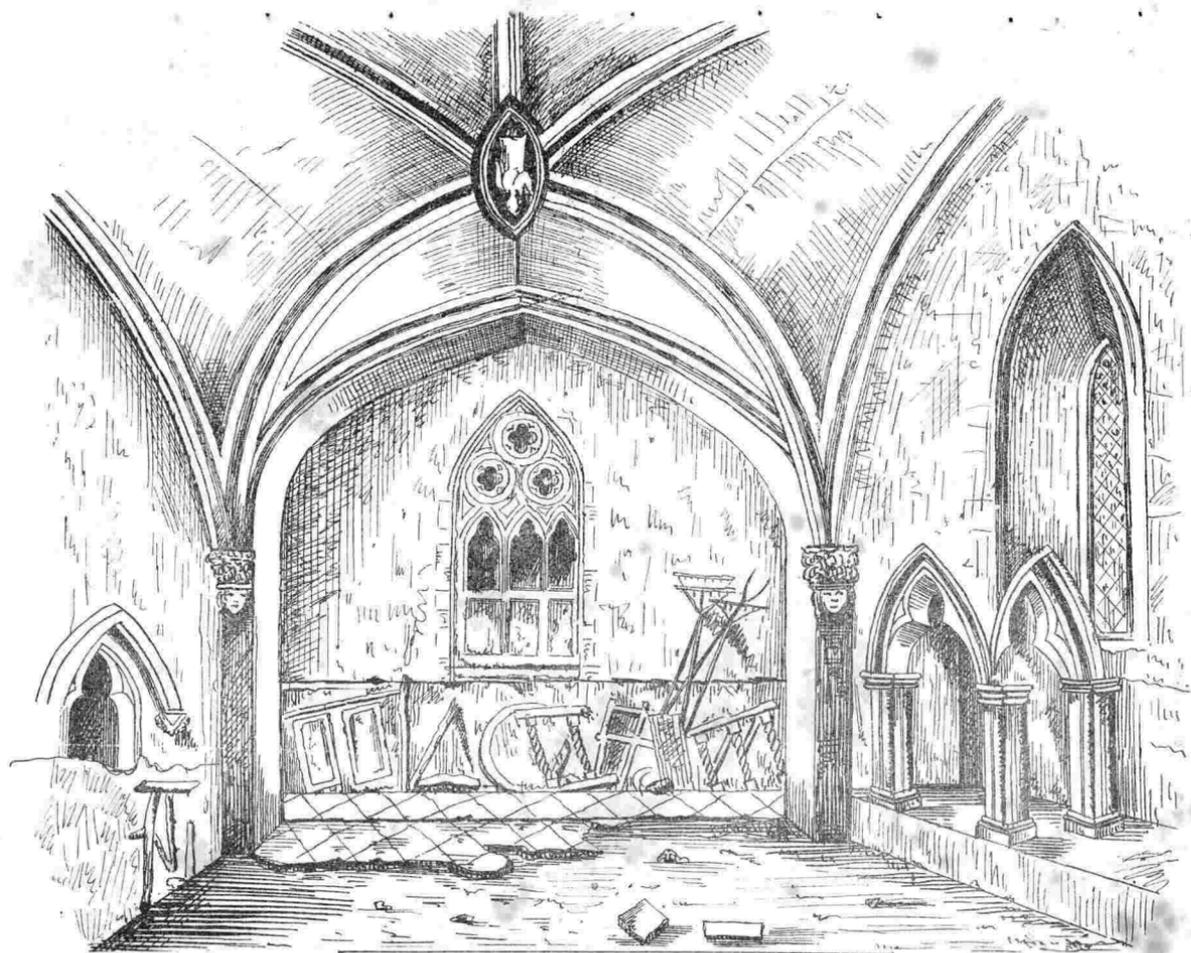
“Whate’er thou art, here reader see,
In this pale glass what thou shalt be;
Despised worms and putrid shine,
Then dust forgot and lost in time.
Birth, beauty, wealth, may gild thy East;
But the black grass shadows thy West.
Then earthly glory’s short-lived light
Sets in a dark and unknown night.
Here till the sun of glory rise,
My dearest, dark, and dusty eyes:
But clothed with his morning raye
Like polished dust shall shine for aye.
First pay to this bedewed stone
The tribute of thy tears, then begone.”

“The brasses,” continued Mr. Woolley, “with one exception, have perished. The exception is in the middle aisle, with this inscription, ‘Here lyeth interred ye body of Robert Alfounder, gent., who departed this life the 19 day of April, anno domini, 1639, being about the age of 50 years.’ There are monuments to members of the family of Cardinall, who long resided here. The last of the name of this branch was slain at the battle of Edgehill (being in the lifeguard of Robert, Earl of Essex), in the defence of the Parliament in 1642.” The rev. gentleman then led the company to the bell cage in the churchyard, and gave some interesting notes concerning the bells. Mr. Ellacombe—a great, if not the greatest, authority on the subject—had told him that there was some church on the Continent where a like custom of ringing prevailed, but in that case the bells were not so large as the East Bergholt bells. The most ancient of the Bergholt bells has its name beautifully inscribed in old English characters as “*Gabrielis campana fidelis*.” The same bell has other impressions which are well worth examining. Another of the bells has the date ‘1601, Ricardus Bowler, me fecit, 1601,

Sum rosa pulsata
Mundi Maria Vocata.

—Isaac Mechabel, John Buton, Churchwardens.” Another bell bears date 1688, and has many coins, chiefly of the reign of Charles II., embedded in it. The large bell, hung in the centre of the group, has this inscription:—“John Stephens, fecit 1727, Walter Gallifer and Thomas Brown, Churchwardens.” With reference to the bell dated 1621, Mr. Woolley said, he found, from a memorandum in the parish chest, that it “wayed in the churchyard, before it went to Berre, 26 hundred and 56lbs. It was broken in pieces, and wayed again at Berre, and found 27 hundred and 24lbs.”* “As regards the Rectors, I may mention that we can boast of one martyr named Samuel, who was taken from his parish and burnt at Ipswich. He is mentioned by Foxe, but we have no parochial record of the event. A less creditable name is that of John Welbanck, and the following is a copy of a citation from the Consistorial Court of Norwich, dated May 14, 1678.” The quotation contained, amongst other matter, the following trenchant statement:—“We doe present him having two good livings of 8 score pounds pr annum, and refusing to keep a curate to supply one of them, not having had a curate 9 months last year. The number of souls in our parish, from 16 years old and upwards, amounting to 700. All ministers that lived here before, enjoying the same livings, always kept a curate to assist them. Item for neglecting to preach in our parish church by himself, or any other, for the space of 7 weeks together; and for neglecting to read Divine service amongst us in the forenoone every Sunday since July 22nd to this day (viz., primo, Oct., 1677). Nor hath he come publicly into the pulpit to preach since the aforesaid 22nd July to this day, nor any other for him. We also present the said John Welbanck for altering the time of reading Divine service and the adm of the Lord’s Supper from the usual hour of nine of the clock in the forenoone, to six of the clock in the morning, by means whereof many people, by reason of their œconomic business and distance of place are hindered from coming to heare Divine service or receiving the Holy Com-

* A gentleman present said that he had heard of other instances of Church bells weighing more after being re-cast.



THE : CHAPEL : WENHAM : HALL

munion. Item, we, &c., for being a contentious person, striking and fighting in the churchyard of some of his parishioners, miscalling and abusing them, with brawling base and unbecoming language; and much given to law-suits, for so much, that he scarce dare stir out side of doors. Item, for that he put in a parish clerk a person so nasty and full of old ulcers that are so unsavoury, that gives a very great offence to all that sit near him in the Church." The Rector added to this extract the following note:—"According to a minute in the old parish book, dated January, 1678, £2 9s. 3d. is ordered to be paid by the parish to the Churchwarden for the expenses of a journey to Norwich, made by himself and others, no doubt in connection with these charges against the character of my predecessor; and in the same year I find that an order was made to the Churchwarden and Overseers to provide a habitation for Mr. Welbank to the 'Wallew' of fifty shillings a-year, or three pounds at the most, at the charge of the parish." As regarded others, Mr. Woolley said he found that Robert Debnam, of Bergholt, was one of a party of four, who, from pious zeal, travelled from Dedham to Dovercourt, and took from that parish church a famous crucifix and burnt it. For this offence he was indicted for felony and hung in chains upon Cattawade Causeway.

The old parish book from which Dr. Woolley quoted is beautifully written, and contains many entries illustrating the daily life of the period over which it extends.

Leaving East Bergholt a pleasant drive brought the Suffolk party to the border town of DEDHAM, where the two divisions rejoined at the church. Dedham Church, St. Mary, is a fine but late Perpendicular building; the tower is the finest feature, rising to a height of 131 feet. A curious opening occupying the usual position of the piscina has lately been discovered in the chancel. This opening is oven shaped with a flue carried up in the thickness of the wall. Mr. King said that Sir Gilbert Scott's opinion was that this cavity was once an oven for baking the wafers for the altar, an office which used to be performed by the priest. There was a similar example, he added, in the Rochford Hundred, where in the inventory he (Mr. King) found included two wafer irons.

At half-past one the members sat down to luncheon in the dining hall of the Grammar School. To the Rev. the Head Master, Dr. Lermitt, the thanks of the Societies are due for kindly in the midst of his duties undertaking and most efficiently carrying out the arrangements which were necessary to make such a meeting successful.

After luncheon the members proceeded to STRATFORD St. Mary, where they were met by the incumbent, the Rev. H. Golding. The chancel of this church is of late Decorated work, the nave and aisles being Perpendicular. Below the windows of the south aisle occurs the following inscription in flint and stone work, recording the name and date of the builder

Praye | for | the | soulys | of | Edward | Mors | and | alys | hys | wyffe | and |
 so[]lys | a | .nn | o | do | mini |

When Martin visited the church the inscription was more perfect, and ran thus:—"Pray for the soulys of Edward Mors and alys hys wyffe and all crysten sowlys anno Domini 1530. Orate p̄ animabus - - - me mors et Magarete uxoris." Martin adds: "At the bottom of the west side of the porch this—dñi mccccxxxviii." The font is modern, a good specimen of delicate carving. The parish register dates from 1563, and contains some curious historical notices; among others of the deaths of Charles I., of Oliver Cromwell, and of Gustavus Adolphus at Lutzen. One of the bells bears the inscription, "In multis annis recinet campana Johannis," another has "Sancte Gregore ora pro nobis."

Leaving Stratford the party drove to LITTLE WENHAM HALL, stopping for a few minutes *en route* at GREAT WENHAM, where the small church, dedicated to St. John, has been lately restored. At the Hall, which stands on a slight rise a short distance to the south of Little Wenham Church, the Rev. G. F. Lermitt kindly acted as cicerone. Mr. Lermitt commenced by pointing out that the visitors had before them a most interesting specimen of the domestic architecture of the Middle Ages, and one which was in an excellent state of preservation. Archæologists were not agreed exactly as to the date of the building, but it appeared to be about 1260. It was hardly necessary to say that the domestic arrangements of that period were of the simplest kind;