

BACTON (ST. MARY) succeeded Westhorpe, where the Rector, the Rev. A. B. Hemsworth, read the paper printed at page 184 of the *Proceedings*.

COTTON (ST. ANDREW) was the next church on the programme. At this fine example of the Decorated period the members were met by the Rector, the Rev. M. Turner, who had kindly prepared notes for the meeting. The most notable point in the building is the South door, a rare example of delicate 14th century carving, the capitals of the shafts representing oak leaves, and the hood moulding a wreath of vine leaves exquisitely undercut; traces of original colour remain. The buttresses of the tower for two stages are at right angles to the faces of the walls, but in the upper stage die into an angle buttress. The same occurs at Besthorpe, Norfolk. The arrangement of the West end is somewhat of a puzzle. The nave has a beautiful West window of the Decorated period, but this window would be entirely obscured by the tower but for a lofty arched opening which forms the Western face of the tower. The arrangement is singular, but a further difficulty arises since the tower appears to be work of the Decorated period, while this Western arch looks like an insertion of the 16th century. The roof of the nave, which is of the hammer beam type, rivals that of Bacton. The chancel, which has remains of a good piscina and sedilia, is 40 feet 3 inches long, by 20 feet 9 inches wide. The nave is 63 feet by 19 feet, separated from the aisles by five arches, and lighted above by nine clerestory windows on each side. The South aisle is 64 feet 5 inches long, by 9 feet 6 inches wide. The North aisle is 64 feet 5 inches, by 9 feet 3 inches, and the tower measures internally 14 feet square. The following extracts from the Parish Register, which dates from 1538, were read by the Rector:—

1644 Feb. 14 W^m Smyth was instituted. Chancel tiled thro' in 1648. Being kept out of my living from 1644 I was sent for by the town 1648.

This Michilmas 1653 ends y^e performance of matrimonye by ministeriall hands, as those whom wise and pious antiquity have thought most fitt to be the persons to performe that action; y^t it might be undertaken and finished wth prayers counsell and spirituall blessing upon y^e partys entering into y^t holy estate ordayned by God himself. And my judgement is y^t it is an action not merely civill, though not absolutely spirituall. And since it is in choyse into which order to place it, it would be more honourable among X^{ns} to make y^e action as religious as we can Wherein do we collect in matrimony, performed by civill men and in a civill manner that there is anything more in marrying a wife than any other legall contract as in buying horses or hiring servants In a state or church in wh. for soe many hundred years marriages have been adjoynd to ministeriall offices, it sh^d be taken from them and devolved into the hands of Gentlemen, it appears much more strange.

Then follows an entry:—

Thomas Day and Ann Cutting were married by Edward Harvy Esq^r and in the church by me, W^m Smyth.

In the Register of Baptisms is this entry—

Annis	{	1556	}	nec nati
		1557		nec renati

This entry is in the hand-writing of William Smyth, who, according to Blomfield, was born in Paston, in Norfolk, brought up at Corpus Christi College, in Cambridge, Vicar of Mendlesham and Rector of

Cotton, in Suffolk, and Harleston, in Norfolk, installed Prebend of Norwich, Oct. 18, 1670.

Leaving Cotton, a pretty drive of three miles brought the party to MENDLESHAM, at which place Camden fixes a residence of the East Anglian Kings. Here, towards the close of the 17th century, a large silver ornament, supposed at the time to be a crown, but more probably a torque, was found; and subsequently a gold ring, inscribed with runic letters, was unearthed. The church, with its fine tower abutting upon the high road, is dedicated to St. Mary. The tower and porches are of the Perpendicular period, while the nave and the North and South doors are good Early English work. The South aisle, with good windows, belongs to the next period. The North porch is a fine specimen of the 16th century work, with a chamber roughly panelled with oak slabs, and having an iron bound door, fastened by a curious lock. It has been used as the town armoury, and still contains various pieces of 17th century armour, including a musket and powder flask of the period. Here also are two church chests full of old parish accounts and stray leaves of an early Register. The Communion plate (the chalice bearing date 1662), is also kept here. The four angle buttresses of this porch terminate in bold grotesque figures of the wild man and his dogs. Two other points deserve notice, viz., the original benching and the simple cot for the sanctus-bell, a plain rectangular opening in the gable of the nave.

The following notes on the earlier history of the parish were read at the meeting :

The history of the Lordship of Mendlesham during the reign of the early Norman Kings seems somewhat uncertain. The family of Danmartin is stated to have been enfeoffed of the Lordship soon after the Conquest; Odo de Danmartin held lands here in the time of Henry II. (Pipe Rolls), and Galiena de Danmartin exchanged the Manor with Hugh de Mandeville for lands in Essex, by a fine levied 41st Henry III. (1256). Hugh, styled the son of Otto de Danmartin, held the Lordship, and obtained a patent for a fair in the year 1280 (9th Edward I.) He is called the Master of the Mint. In *Domesday Book*, the name of Otto, a goldsmith, occurs as holding lands in Essex, and in Suffolk at Mendlesham. He is supposed to have been the father of Otto, the younger, to whom Henry I., about the year 1107, restored the mysteries of the dies. Later in this reign, William Fitz Otto, goldsmith, was confirmed in the lands his father had possessed, on condition of performing the duties of the office which Otto, the goldsmith, had executed. The office to which this relates bore the title of *Cuneator*, and was the only hereditary office connected with the Mint. The tenure seems to have been by *petit serjeanty*, and the duties, to superintend and appoint the engravers of dies, an office of no small trust at any time, but more especially when we remember the number of Mints which had licence to coin money. In 1264 (49th Henry III.), Thomas Fitz Otho claimed as his right by inheritance all the broken dies, and he presented before the barons Ralph de Blund to the office of cutter of the King's dies.

In 1301 (30th Edward I.), the Manor passed to Sir John Botetout, upon his marriage with Maud, the heir of Hugh Fitz Otho. The office of *Cuneator* being hereditary, vested in Sir John Botetout, in right of his wife; upon his death it was sold by the widow to Lord Latimer. Sir John Botetout was Governor of Briavel's Castle, in Gloucestershire, and Admiral of the King's Fleet. He was distinguished in the Scottish wars of Edward I., and was one of the 104 Barons and Knights who in the name of the Commonalty of England gave answer to the Pope's assumption of