

The
Suffolk Institute of Archaeology
AND
Natural History.

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, 1888—1889.

A MEETING of the Council was held at Bury, on Monday, April 16, 1888, when the Venerable Archdeacon Chapman presided. Four members were present besides the Honorary Secretaries. A letter from the Lord Henniker, F.S.A., President, was read, expressing his inability to attend. The Report and Balance Sheet, 1887—1888, were read and approved.

The subject of the Summer Excursion was then discussed, and the Council unanimously agreed to accept Dr. Raven's invitation to visit Fressingfield. The Honorary Secretary placed on the table a suggested binding for the Volumes of the Institute. The cover was of a maroon color, stamped with the official seal. No resolution on the subject was passed.

Thirty-nine new members were elected.

The Annual Excursion and General Meeting were held on Friday, June 8, 1888, when members and their friends, numbering in all about 70, assembled to explore the neighbourhood of Fressingfield, according to the programme sketched out by the Council in April. The rendezvous was Diss Station, and on the arrival of the 10.12 train there, carriages were ready to convey the excursionists to

HOXNE.

The way lay over the common and through the magnificent avenue of trees, now resplendent in its new dress, and rendered yet more beautiful from the recent rainfall which had served to lay the dust and wash the leaves.

Arrived at Hoxne Church, the first object which claimed attention on entering the sacred edifice, was the screen, placed in the west tower arch, by Sir E. C. Kerrison, to the memory of the King and Martyr. It bears the following inscription:—Saint Edmund, Martyr, A.D. 870.”

The Rev. C. R. Manning, F.S.A., read the following paper on this church, and its interesting contents.

“There are many reasons why Hoxne should be a place of much interest to antiquaries. (1.) As the first locality from which were brought under the observation of scientific men the palæolithic Celts, that have since attained so much celebrity as the most ancient remains of human handiwork in pre-historic times. (2.) As a possible site of British Christianity. (3.) As the scene of the death of Saint Edmund the King. (4.) As a very early possession, manor, and residence of the Bishops of Elmham and Norwich. (5.) As giving a name to its Hundred, and its Deanery. (6.) As the habitation of a Cell, or Branch Priory, of the Benedictine Convent at Norwich. (7.) As having a fine parish church, parts of which are, owing to the liberality of the great family of de la Pole, Dukes of Suffolk, who resided hard by at Wingfield Castle, and to the accomplished Walter Lyhart, Bishop of Norwich, and as in more recent times the residence of several distinguished families. On all these grounds it is a most suitable place for archæologists to inspect, and on each of these points a few words must be said.

(1.) Hoxne is, perhaps, the only locality in the valley of the Waveney, that has produced flint implements from its drift. The site is a brick pit by the side of the road, at the other end of the village from the church, and close to Fairstead farm. The discovery, as Dr. John Evans says (*Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 516), was of peculiar interest, on account of its having been observed and recorded before the close of the last century, when speculations as to the great antiquity of the human race can hardly be said to have commenced. Mr. Frere, F.R.S., then of Roydon, wrote a letter to the Society of Antiquaries in 1797, which was printed in the *Archæologia* (Vol. XIII, p. 204), and has become famous, as the first notice of worked flints being found in the gravel below the Boulder Clay. Such numbers were unearthed in the brick pits, that they were used to mend the ruts in the neighbouring roads. The subsequent discovery of similar implements under similar circumstances in the valley of the Somme in France, caused the subject to be re-opened, and a whole literature has been the result. Dr. John Evans, the Treasurer of the Royal Society, and President of the Society of Antiquaries, and the well-known geologists, Mr. Prestwich, F.R.S., came down to Diss in 1859, and visited Hoxne. Particulars of the find, in connection with this large subject, will be found in Dr. Evans' work, and in Sir John Lubbock's *Pre-historic Times* (2nd ed., p. 336, iv., p. 19); in the *Geologist*, and the *Philosophical Transactions*, by Mr. Prestwich (1860, p. 307).

2. It is stated on good authority, that the place or district in which

what since Saxon times has been Hoxne is situated, was called Eggesdune. The early chronicles mention that when King Edmund in 870, fled from the Danes at Thetford, he came and was taken and martyred at Eggesdune, now Hoxne. Hoxne, or Hoxon, was the name of the place given by the Saxon settlers to what is now the parish, the hundred, and the deanery. But before that, it seems, the country hereabout, when there was no marked out settlement was Eggesdune. In regard to etymology, the opinion can hardly be far wrong that interprets this as the "down"—(the table land on which this church stands)—of eglwys, the British word for church, from Ecclesia. If so, here is a rare indication of the existence of British Christianity in these parts. Perhaps this view is strengthened by the fact that in very early times, how early does not appear to be recorded, this place was one of the possessions of the Bishopric. The same was the case with Eccles (*Mumford's Local Names*, p. 98), near Attleborough, which also belonged to the Bishopric, and may have been a name adopted by the Saxons from the British Eglwys. Theodred II., Bishop of Elmham, who was also Bishop of London, speaks of his "bishopruck" or place at Hoxne, in his will, in 962. Even at that date it had long been in episcopal possession, and perhaps, being in Suffolk, had belonged to the Bishopric of Dunwich. It continued to be one of the chief residences of the Bishops of Elmham, Thetford, and Norwich, down to the time of Henry VIII., when most of the old revenues of the See were exchanged for those of the Abby of S. Benet, at Holm. Travelling in early times was so difficult and dangerous, that it was to the advantage of a diocese that its Bishop should have several residences, where he might stay for a time, and visit churches, ordain clergy, institute incumbents, and fulfil the duties and business of the See. The site of the palace at Hoxne, was, probably, that on which now stands Hoxne Hall, or as it has been called since the present mansion was built, Oakley Park, the seat of Lady Bateman, and formerly that of General Sir Edw. Kerrison and his son, the late Sir Edward, and of Sir Thomas Maynard Hesilrigge. This property of the See of Norwich, including the manor, rectory, and advowson; with the palace, and a chapel in it, is quite distinct from the Priory, and Chapel of S. Edmund—in another part of the parish.

3. Of the connection of the parish with S. Edmund, and of his chapel, and his death, and Priory, I will reserve what it may be necessary to say, until our return journey, when we shall visit the spots to which these matters relate. In regard to the fabric of the church: its general date appears to be the very frequent one of the 13th century, to which the nave, piers, and arches belong, and no doubt the walls generally, with large Perpendicular additions. The chancel was re-built in 1879. It has an arch of apparently late Decorated date, into a north chapel, where is a large mural monument to Thomas Maynard, Esq., 1742. One of the old bench ends now placed in this chapel, is carved with the legend of the wolf holding the head of King Edmund in its paws. At the east end of the chancel are many slabs of the Thurston

family, whose residence we shall see at the Priory farm. An altar stone, with the five crosses, remains under the Holy Table. The chancel arch is lofty, and probably of early Perpendicular date. The nave has six rather low arches on the north side, with a clear story above, and has no south aisle, but a lofty wall pierced with windows of two lights. This south side, with the porch (the inner doorway of which is a good Decorated one), the fine tower, some 90 feet high, a doorway at the north-west end of the aisle, and the font, I would attribute to the munificence of the De la Pole family, and to the taste of the eminent church builder, Bishop Lyhart, 1446 to 1472. There is a large old coffin lid, displaced from some grave and carefully preserved on the floor at the west end. On the whole, the outside of the church is finer than the interior. The west doorway to the tower, with its mitres and plain shields in the hollow of the moulding, and the old oaken door, with the fine staircase turret on the south side of the tower, and the range of Perpendicular windows, give a very good effect to the structure. Bishop Tanner's MS. in the Diocesan Registry, contains few notes of wills relating to Hoxne. In 1475 Richard Barker left a close called Ealstongs, and two acres of land in Low close, and one piece of land lying in the close of John Doo, for ever to the inhabitants of Hoxne, to pay the King's fifteenth, or the taske (tax) when it occurs; and also wills to have a chapel of S. Mary the Virgin built of his goods. (*Reg. Gelour*, 199.) Thomas Young, in 1504, wills his Executors to make a treyng crosse at the crosse way called Yesteele cross in Hoxton. (*Reg. Germore*, 48.) If "Low close" could be identified now, it might prove to be a Saxon burial-place. A licence to erect a gallery in the church was granted by the Bishop, October 21st, 1700, 'desirous (it runs) to encourage and promote decent ornamenting the church.' (*E. Counties Collectanea*, p. 241.) A similar desire in more recent days has caused it to be pulled down again; and a screen of oak and good design was placed at the tower arch in 1872. Some wall paintings were discovered on the south wall in 1835. One was thought to represent the battle scene of David and Goliath; another, S. Paul in the stocks at Philippi; with the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, &c. They were about 10 feet high, and 12 feet wide. There were also several inscriptions, which no one present at the time of the discovery could decipher, although quite perfect. (*Page's Suffolk*, p. 402.) As they were probably white-washed over again, they may be still on the walls. There are three brass inscriptions with arms of the Thurston family, viz., to John Thurston, Esq., 28th November, 1606, who lived here 89 years, eight months, and three days, and was Justice of the Peace for 56 years. John Thurston, Esq., 2nd December, 1613, J.P. for six years, and John Thurston, Esq., 1st April, 1640, aged 56, J.P. every year. The church plate is of no antiquarian interest. There is a fine modern chalice, and the rest is of the year 1791. The registers date from 1581. The flags by the chancel arch are those of the ill-fated H.M.S. 'Captain,' which went down in September, 1870, when the son, and the son-in-law, of Admiral

Sir Baldwin Wake Walker, Bart., of this parish, were lost. Of the Font something more must be said, inasmuch as its heraldry enables us to give a definite date to the work of the period that is found here. I have already described it in the *East Anglian Notes and Queries* (new series, vol. I., p. 329), for October, 1886. It is always interesting to examine the coats of arms remaining in many parts of our old churches, especially on towers, porches, and fonts. The benefactors and builders in old days made much use of this mode of conveying facts to posterity in a simple and unostentatious way. The heraldry on this font fixes its date within a few years, and it seems extremely probable that we may attribute to the same time the perpendicular restoration that included the building of the tower, the porch, and the south wall of the nave, and also, it is believed, the timber framing of the vicarage house, which forms such a picturesque object to the west of the church, surrounded by its ancient moat. The font is one of a very common East Anglian type, having an octagonal bowl, with four of the sides sculptured with the emblems of the four Evangelists, and the other four with angels bearing shields of arms. The bowl is supported underneath by angels with expanded wings, and the stem has four seated figures round it, and four others, smaller, standing on pedestals. The seated figures were cows or tippets, but their heads are broken off; the others, where not mutilated, appear to have high pointed caps or turbans, and wear stoles. Possibly these two sets may represent the four doctors of the church, and the four greater prophets. Of the four shields on the bowl, those on the north and the west faces bear, on the one two keys, and on the other two swords, in saltire, emblems of SS. Peter and Paul, in whose honour the church is dedicated. The shield on the east face has the arms of Bishop Lyhart, of Norwich (1446 to 1472), *viz.*: Argent, a bull passant sable, within a border of the second bezanty. There appears no indication of a mitre in middle chief of the border, or, which is sometimes found with this bishop's arms; but the carving is somewhat mutilated. The rectory of Hoxne, with the advowson, a manor, and lands, formed part of the revenues of the bishopric until the dissolution. Bishop Lyhart, who had been chaplain to William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, was a lover of architecture, and to his taste and munificence is owing the splendid groining of the nave of his cathedral. He died at his palace at Hoxne, on Whit Sunday, 1472. So far, then, we may safely bring the date of the restored work here to the 26 years of his episcopate. The other shield on the south face of the font helps us to narrow the time yet more. The arms are those of De la Pole, azure, a fess between three leopards' faces, or: quartering Burghersh, gules, a lion rampant, double-queued, or: and impaling the Royal arms, France and England quarterly, with a label of three points. I failed to observe the label when writing my note for the *East Anglian*. These are the arms of John de la Pole, second Duke of Suffolk (son of William, fourth Earl, and first Marquess and Duke, beheaded 1450. *Pastor Letters*, X., Shakespear's Hen. VI., part II., act 4), and of his wife, Elizabeth

Plantagenet, sister of Edward iv. and Richard iii., who was re-instated in his father's honours, and created Duke of Suffolk in 1463. He died in 1491, and we shall see the tomb, with effigies of himself and his wife, on the north side of the altar in Wingfield Church. This remarkable family is famed for church building, and the arms, or the badge of a leopard's face, may be found in stone or glass in several other churches; as on the tower and porch at Eye, in glass at Yaxley; on the tower at Cawston, Norfolk, and of course at Wingfield. Descended from a successful Hull trader, there was once a near prospect of a De la Pole reaching the throne of England; for John, Earl of Lincoln, the son of this Duke John, was declared by his uncle Richard iii., next heir to the crown in the event of the death of his own son, Prince Edward, which actually occurred, and had the current of history flowed on in its even course, the royal house of De la Pole would have ascended the throne. ('Rise and Fall of the De la Poles,' *Gent. Mag.*, 1866, ii., p. 303).

"The end of the wars of York and Lancaster, however, brought in the Tudors, with all the consequences, for good or evil, of the dominant rules of that race, and the De la Poles were not destined to reign. John de la Pole was born 27th September, 1442, and was seven years old at his father's violent death, on the gunwale at Dover, in 1450, and, therefore, was only just of age in 1463, when the Dukedom was restored to him. He married the daughter of Richard, Duke of York, before October, 1460, when only eighteen years old. (Doyle's *Official Baronage*, iii, 438, 439.) Consequently, the font must have been erected after 1460, and probably after 1463, when his restored honours would enable him to be liberal in church building, and before 1472, when he was made a Knight of the Garter (Nicolas' *Orders of Knighthood*, ii., App. lviii.), of which there is no sign on the shield, as at Wingfield, and when also Bishop Lyhart died. I think we may thus narrow the date of the font, and, in my opinion of the tower, &c., and of the moulded timber springers with square pateræ, at the Vicarage, to certainly within the 10 years before 1473, and probably to about 1463 or 1465."

After having passed out through the west tower on the vicarage lawn, and inspected the timbered front of the old house to which Mr. Manning had referred, the party remounted and proceeded to Wingfield.

The Castle of Wingfield is an imposing structure even now, and the visitors found great pleasure in roaming about the grounds. They entered over the moat through the fine entrance gateway, a portion of the party taking advantage of permission to ascend to the guard room overhead, and to the flat roof, where a fine prospect was had of the surrounding country. Within the court yard, where the more modern farm-house has been erected, and which has, built in the wall over the door, an ancient niche containing a modern stone figure highly coloured with paint, Rev. C. R. Manning, F.S.A., read the following brief paper, descriptive of the castle.