

SUMMER EXCURSION, 1905.

EXCURSION TO DEBENHAM.

The Annual Excursion for the year, 1905, was one of exceptional interest, for owing to the invitation of F. S. Stevenson, Esq., Chairman of the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, members were enabled to visit a district which, but for the existence of the Light Railway, would be difficult to reach. More than a hundred members availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded to visit Mendlesham, Kenton, Debenham, and Aspell.

Mr. Stevenson met the members at Haughley Station, and at 10.45 a.m. the train proceeded to Mendlesham, where the company alighted to view the church. The building was well described, both as to its structure and history in a well thought-out paper read by Mr. Philip Turner, A.R.I.B.A., of Stowmarket; after a hurried examination of the edifice, the train which was in waiting was again entered. The next stopping place was a level crossing in view of Flemings Hall, which by kind permission of its owner, Mr. W. Freeman, was thrown open to the visitors. The Hall is a Tudor red brick building, erected in the early part of the sixteenth century; its picturesque East end, its South door-way, and the general features of its Northern aspect, excited universal attention. It is to be hoped that measures may be adopted to preserve this charming old farm house, distinctly one of the most pleasing buildings in Mid-Suffolk.

Conveyances were entered, and the journey was continued to Kenton Church, where a stoppage was made, "at request," in order that those who desired to use the opportunity might inspect the interior. Seats were quickly resumed in order to reach Kenton Hall, a moated house of the sixteenth century, the property of Mr. F. S. Stevenson. The occupier, Mr. H. Capon, kindly allowed members to ramble over his premises, and to view the charming hall from his moat-enclosed lawn. The interior has no features of interest, but the exterior beauties of the wing of the building still standing brought many cameras into use.

From Kenton Hall quick progress was made to the Red Lion, Debenham, where Mr. F. S. Stevenson generously entertained his guests to a well-spread luncheon. The old inn has a fine ornamented ceiling, erected in 1560. After luncheon a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman, who subsequently read a paper on "*Nicholas of Kenton*." Mr. Stevenson has promised to present this paper to the Institute. After the rector of Kenton, Rev. G. Allan, had made a few remarks upon his church, the members visited the house of Mr. W. Tawell, which has the arms of the Mercers' Company in painted glass,

and a most charming Jacobean window. Several houses on either side of the street have similar features deserving attention, but the old Guildhall, or Mote Hall, standing within the site of the former market place, formed the greatest attraction.

The visitors were received at the church by the Rev. C. W. D. Chevallier, of Aspell, in the absence of the Vicar of Debenham, owing to ill-health. Mr. V. B. Redstone read a paper on the church. He pointed out that of the two churches, St. Andrew's and St. Mary's, standing in Debenham in 1086, the latter was granted to the Priory and Convent of Butley in the 14th century, in whose hands it remained until 1543, when it was granted to Francis Framlingham. In pre-Reformation days the members of two guilds, St. Mary's and the Holy Trinity, held services in the church, the latter within the Chapel of the Holy Trinity. Robert Cheke, Lord of the Manor of Blodhall, gave the sum of 53s. 4d. towards the erection of a vestry in 1476; and in the same year Wm. Baldewyn supplied the clapper to the Great Bell. The bells of Debenham Church are especially noted. In the chancel, the level of which is lower than that of the nave, is the tomb erected to the memory of the royalist, Chas. Gawdy, in 1650.

After the reading of the paper, inspection was made of the Jacobean pulpit, the West Tower and its chamber, and the quaint epitaph and arms of John Sheppard, of Wetheringset.

The party was subsequently received and entertained at Crows Hall by Mrs. Moore. This Hall has been selected more frequently than any other in Mid-Suffolk to furnish illustrations of the neighbourhood. Its interior is as interesting as its exterior. The Hon. Secretary here read a paper on the halls of Debenham, and dwelt particularly upon the history of Crows Hall.

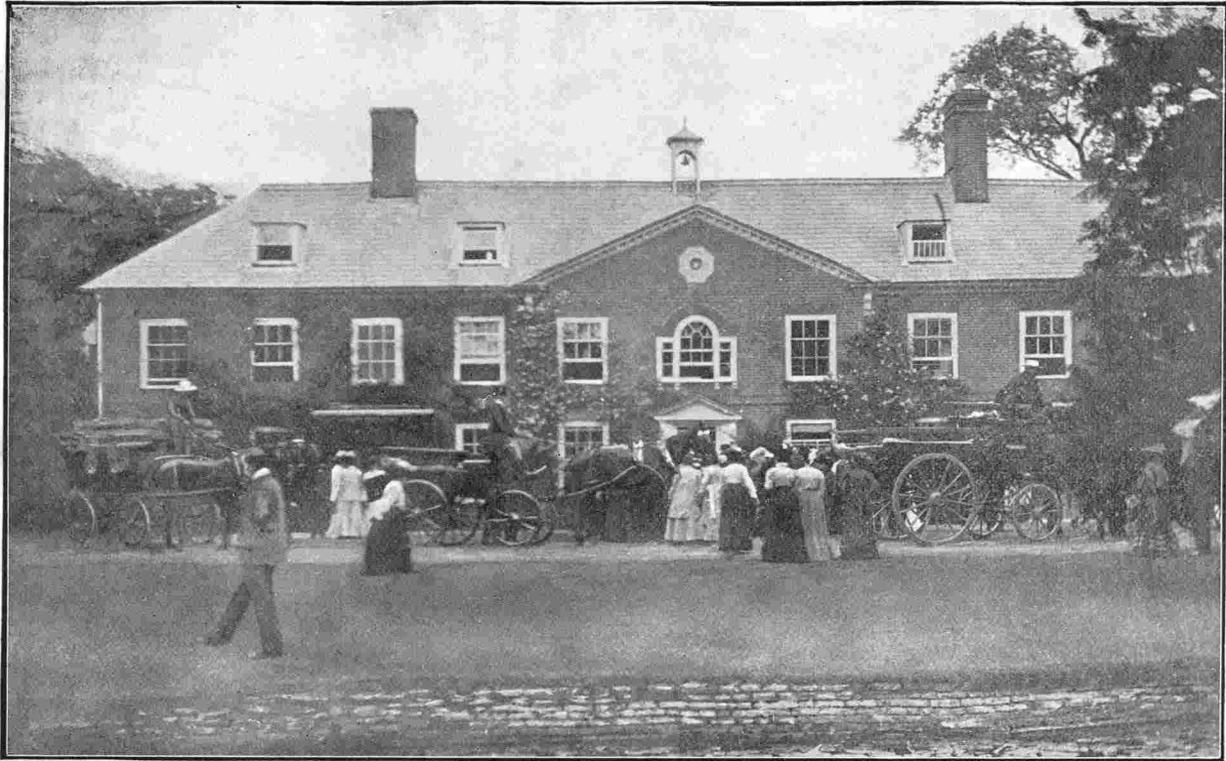
Before departure from Crows Hall, Mr. Stevenson thanked the venerable hostess and her family for the welcome and hospitality they had extended towards their guests. The journey to Aspell Hall, the seat of J. B. T. Chevallier, Esq., was not long: Mr. and Mrs. Chevallier welcomed the visitors upon their lawn and provided tea for them. Mr. Chevallier then read a most interesting paper upon the History of Aspell Hall and its past owners, and gave a description of an old cider-press, erected by his ancestor in 1728. Permission was given to inspect this cider-press, and also to view the fine moulded ceiling within the hall. This ceiling has its fellow one in the Old Ship Hotel, in Great Yarmouth.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. and Mrs. Chevallier before the company hastened away to enter the train at Kenton. The journey by rail was made in good time for all to catch the train at Haughley. Great credit is due to the Manager and Superintendent of the Mid-Suffolk Railway for the excellent manner in which they carried out the arrangements.

DEBENHAM: ITS HALLS AND MANORS.

There appear to have been in the earliest times two settlements in the locality now known as Debenham, viz., Derhaugh and Harborough, which may be considered to have been, the one a Danish Haugh, or mount; the second a Saxon Burg, or fortified mound. The former is still a prominent feature, and is situated at the source of a stream now called Derrybrook, a local corruption of Derhaugh Brook. Harborough, or Herborough, formed a small manor within the manor of Scottnets, itself a corruption of the word Scottenhatts.

In Domesday mention is made of three manors in Debenham, as well as one in Ulveston, and another in Scarneston, both hamlets now within Debenham parish. Two of the Norman lords, Robert Malet and Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, were dispossessed of their lands for rebelling; their estates became the property of Roger Bigod, another rebellious baron; later on the disaffected Tuddenham lost the same manors, which fell into the hands of the Sackvilles of Sussex, probably by the marriage of Ermentruda, one of the heirs of Robert Aguillon, Constable and defender of Orford Castle for Henry III. against the barons and Flemings. Robert Aguillon held the manor of Debenham, and in the year 1222 the king granted, until his coming of age, a fair every year at his manor of Debenham for two days, viz., on the Eve and Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and every week a market on Friday. Upon the death of Robert Aguillon, the manors and the profits of the fairs and market became divided among the Cockfield, Sackville, Aspoll, and Kenton families, so that, consequently, frequent disputes occurred as to the rights and ownership of the various quarter-rights and profits. In one instance we find that



From a photograph by the late G. Calver Mason, Esq.

ASPALL HALL.

Ivo de Kenton was handed over to the Marshal for seizing the whole of the market tolls.

There is little difficulty in tracing the early ownership of *Sackvilles Manor*, Debenham. The lands of this manor lay in Debenham, Skarneston, and Seckford, and were held by Roger Bigod, of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The manor was, subsequently, in the reign of Edward I., held in dower by Joan, wife of Andrew de Sakeville, together with a quarter of the markets and fairs of Debenham, then of a yearly value of 6s. 8d. Hence the manor received the name which it now holds. The Sackvilles were a Sussex family, from whom the noble family of Dorset was descended. The Debenham Manor remained in their hands until the reign of Hen. iv., when Agnes, widow of Andrew de Sakeville, claimed it upon the death of her only son, John, without heirs, on behalf of her own heirs, Katherine and Alice, daughters of George Glaunville.

From the incomplete Court Rolls of this manor, among the Records of the Ipswich Corporation, we gather that Robert Crane and his wife Agnes held their first court in September, 1429; that Charles Knyvett, in right of his wife Agnes, held his first court in 1534; that a Decree in Chancery, dated 1562, named Alice Thwayts, widow, lady of the manor; and that the first Court of the bailiffs, burgesses, and commonality of Ipswich was held 2nd September, 1569.

A Robert Crane held his first court in 1513, and William Thwayts, husband of Alice Thwayts, in 1535.

These Court Rolls of Sakevilles Manor give a probable reason for the name *Blodhall Manor*. Frequent mention is made of a field known as le Blodfield, parcels of which belonged to the Manor. Sometimes the name occurs as "*Longblode near the Hundred way*," near Bloodehall Close. Bloodhall Manor, which probably took its name from this field, was held in the reign of Edward III. by John de Cleydon, son of William de Cleydon, but in the reign of Henry IV. a moiety of the Manor, with

one-half the market, held by Hugh Loterell, Knt., was given with his daughter Elizabeth in marriage to William Harleston, 5th April, 1406. William Harleston, the son of the marriage, settled the estate upon his wife Philippa. William Harleston, jun., died 4th Nov., 1481, his heir was John Godard of Framlingham.

This moiety of Blodhall Manor, known as Debenham Market, was granted by the charter of Hugh Lutterell, kinsman and descendant of Hugh Lutterell, Knt., to Robert Cheke, son of John Cheke, 2nd Feb., 1488. James Lutterell, the father of Hugh, and grandson of Hugh Lutterell, Knt., was attainted of treason, 1461. The manor was held by the Cheke family in the time of Elizabeth.

The other moiety was at this time held by the family of Walpole.

Hardebergh Manor, Debenham, from the accounts rendered by William Shire, in 1405, appears to have been partly in Debenham and partly in Aspal; and comprised fields known as Wodebrown, Hillhouse, Moorhouse, Mereland, Calfhagh, Shirecroft, all parcels of Skarneston.

The *Manor of Skotnetts* contained land abutting on Bloodehalle Lane, and was known as the Manor of Scotnetts cum le Hagh; it was held by Charles Gawdy in 1649. This Charles Gawdy, an infant at his father's death, May, 1633, became the ward of Edmund Moundefort and Framlingham Gawdy.

The history of *Goslinge and Gestingthorpe* Manors at present lies in obscurity.

Ulveston Manor formed, from earliest times, part of the possession of the Ulveston family. In 1477 it was held by Elizabeth, widow of John de Ulveston, and after her death it passed on to John Ulveston, son and heir of Richard Ulveston. To this manor belonged lands in Kenton, Aspal, and Debenham, viz.:—Grentynhawis, Whelpyslane, Cokefield, Haughwode, Capelfield. It was held to the use of Christopher Thweyts, in 1507; by William Thweyts in 1533; by the bailiffs, and burgesses of Ipswich, "*ex fundacione Henrici Tooley*," in 1574.



From a photograph by the late G. Calver Mason, Esq.

CROW'S HALL.

Henry Tooley held his first court at Ulveston Hall, June, 1551.

Croweshall was held of John de Ulveston by Knights Service, 1380, and was then the property of Edmund Talebot of Hintlesham. The manor fell into the hands of the Talebots of Hintlesham by a deed of conveyance made by John Crowe, or Crawe, and Mary, his wife, about the year 1300. This Crowe was a member of the family whose ancestor held extensive lands throughout Suffolk. Over Rickinghall manor was granted by John Crowe and Mary his wife, to Talebot, son of William Talebot of Hintlesham, and his son, Peter Talebot, and Matilda his wife, held Croweshall in 1332.

Subsequently the manor was, at the time of the Reformation, held by the family of Framlingham, whose representative, Sir James Framlingham, acquired the lands in Debenham as forming part of the possessions of the dissolved Priory of Butley. It is possible that Sir James Framlingham was the founder of the present Hall, at all events it was standing in his days, when the following incident occurred.

Sir Jas. Framlingham and Anne his wife many times requested Dame Margaret Mortimer to leave her inheritance to them. She refused, owing to their manifold unkindness, saying, "she would never be bound to her cradle." They several times turned her out of their house at Croweshall after having spent and borrowed all her money. The last time they put her out, on a Christmas eve, they took away from her £8, and withheld all her plate and apparel.

The said Dame Margaret Mortimer thereupon sealed, in the *chapel at Croweshall*, the 6th August, 1520, an obligation of 3,000 marks to Sir Anthony Wingfield and Wm. Waller. The tenor of the obligation was that she should make over an estate of 100 marks (she held a pension from the Exchequer and the manors of Somerton and Droitwich) to the said Wingfield and Waller for her use during her life; and at her death the manors were

left to the uses of her will for 6 years. There was an annuity granted to Dame Anne Framlingham upon the death of Dame Mortimer, so that she should not alienate any part of her inheritance.

For two and a half years after sealing the above obligation Dame Mortimer remained a widow, but afterwards married one Downes. It was alleged that Sir James Framlingham would make no jointure to his wife before the obligation was signed, and that Dame Margaret received not a "pennysworth" for making the obligation, and never had lands or moveables from Robert Fomesse, Anne's father.

One Brown and Dame Anne came to Downe's house after he had married Dame Margaret, and in her sight stabbed at him with a dagger, which was the cause of their selling Somerton for fear of her death. She swooned, so that they might easily have slain her. Thus runs the story of a family quarrel.