

SUFFOLK WORKERS OF ELIZABETHAN CHURCH PLATE.

BY HENRY C. CASLEY.

In volume xii. of the Proceedings, pp. 158—183, attention is called to the marks found upon the converted Communion Cups still remaining in the Churches of this County, and the localities in which they are respectively to be found. It will be borne in mind that all the dated instances cited are comprehended within the years 1560—1590, the years most prolific of the change being 1567, 1568 and 1569.

One of the marks most frequently met with, the Roman letter "G," is discussed at some length, and allocated to Ipswich, and the probabilities of its being a town mark or a maker's mark are weighed. In considering this question it was shewn that coins minted in Ipswich bore "Gip" or "Gep," or some abbreviation of Gippeswic, though in Hen. III. reign instances occur of the use of "G" only, but it was not brought out clearly that these instances occur on coins before the date of the long-cross type, and, therefore, upwards of 300 years antecedent to the conversion of Pre-Reformation Chalices into Communion Cups. During this long period no plate has been recorded bearing the letter "G."

The absence of proof as to the incorporation of the Ipswich Goldsmiths, or of any ordinances or constitutions regulating their craft is strong *prima facie* evidence that there was no official Assayer, and that if regulated at all it was merely by their own Guild. There is no trace that they ever complied with the statute of 28 Ed. I. c. 20, "that one shall come from every good town for all the residue that be dwelling in the same unto London for to be ascertained of their touch," because the

Goldsmiths were their own judges. The statute of 2 Rich. II. ordains, "that every Goldsmith *puts his own mark upon his work*, and the assay of the touch belongs to the Mayors and Governors of the cities and boroughs with the aid of the Master of the Mint, if there be such, putting the mark of the city or borough where the assay is." In the Tudor ages the mark of the borough, if there had been such, would most certainly have been taken from the arms of the town, the three lions of England dimidiating three ships, or the arms granted in 1561, dexter a lion rampant guardant, sinister 3 demi-boats. Although Hull for a short time during the 16th and early 17th centuries, used a Roman letter "H," it was always accompanied by a maker's mark; it afterwards adopted a mark from the town arms. Exeter in like manner used a Roman "X" plain or crowned during the same period, but generally in conjunction with a maker's mark or cycle letter, or both. After the Act of 1696 it adopted the town arms.

Thus the only two marks which at present may be safely assigned to Ipswich are the "G," and the crowned "W," standing by themselves, the preponderance of evidence seems to point to the maker "putting his own mark upon the work." All the cups cited with the Roman letter "G" seem to be of the period 1567 to 1580, or the last 13 years of Jeffrey Gilbert's long life.

In like manner with the fleur-de-lys, which in the former paper was allocated to a worker at Bury St. Edmund's. Although none of the pieces unfortunately bear any date, they all of them seem to belong to the period between 1567 and 1580. It was pointed out that this mark is found upon the bells of Stephen Tonni or Toney, a bellfounder at Bury St. Edmund's, 1559-1587.

Mr. V. B. Redstone has kindly sent notes of a deed, which recently came under his notice, relating to the sale of a house in Cooke Row, occupied by Goldsmiths, witnessed by one Thomas Toney, the only seal upon which was the fleur-de-lys. This may furnish our

Members on the west side of the county with a clue, which, with the opportunity of access to the Bury archives, they may be enabled to follow up successfully.

Had the Suffolk form of Inventory recorded to whom the plate was sold, as did the Returns in the adjacent county of Essex, we should probably have derived considerable information as to the Goldsmiths of the county, and the places where they were carrying on business, but the ingenious draftsman of the form of return for this county contrived to give the minimum of information with respect to the destination of the sold plate. Thomas Rede and William Roberts, the younger, of Beccles, were purchasers from several parishes, notably from Kessingland, for which they gave £43 10s. 0d., and from Wrentham, for which they gave £30. Thomas Rede was the grandson of a Mayor of Norwich, and at this time was a Merchant of considerable property at Beccles. Whether he found the funds, and William Roberts, was the goldsmith, who found the technical knowledge, some of our members in that part of the county may be able to discover. One William Payn of Beccles was also purchaser of plate from the parish of Worlingham.

Beccles, before the fire of 1586, was a town of much greater relative importance than it is now, and it is quite probable that the mark of the four hearts in cross may be traceable to a worker there.

It is not unlikely that the sexfoil may be allocated to a worker at Framlingham, most of the places where it occurs being in the vicinity of that town. Framlingham, with its Castle, was an important place even down to Tudor days, and probably had goldsmiths, as we know it had clockmakers.

ANNUAL EXCURSION, JULY 31ST, 1907.

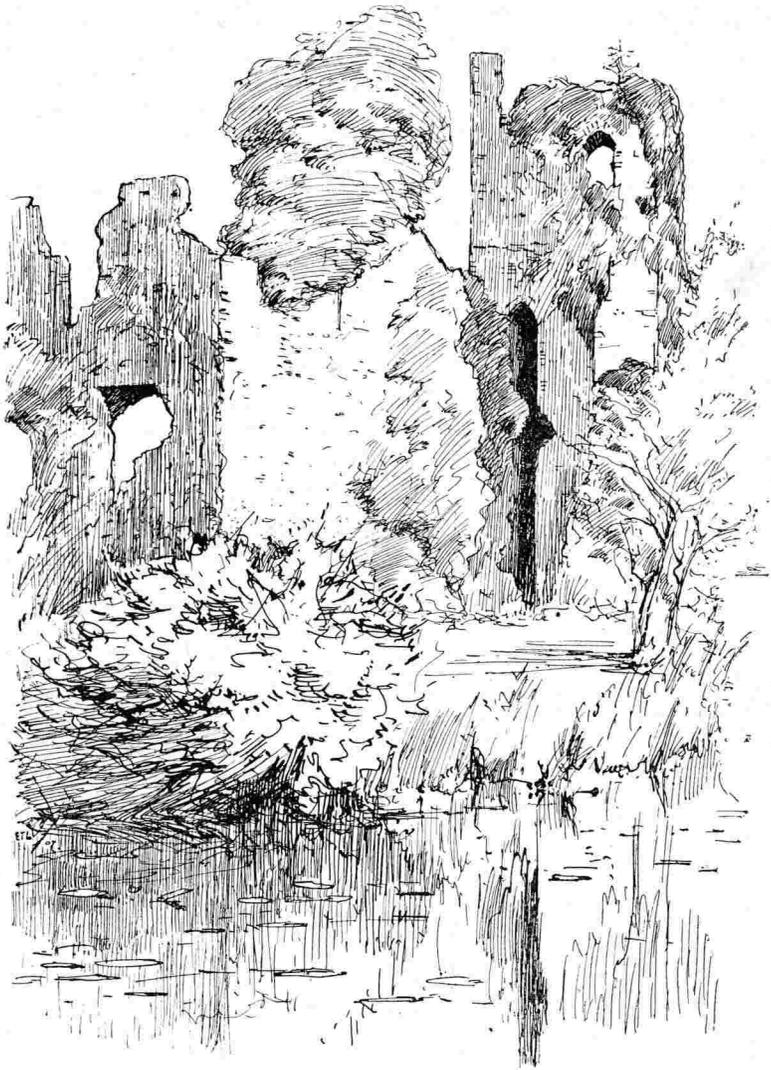
VISIT TO BUNGAY AND DISTRICT.

Members who accompanied the excursion to Bungay were fortunate enough to enjoy favourable weather. The difficulty experienced in obtaining a convenient railway service to the district from all parts of the county caused the attendance upon this occasion to be smaller than usual. However, the party, about fifty in number, was fairly representative.

The main body of the excursionists started from Ipswich by the 8.50 a.m. train for Halesworth, which was reached an hour later. During the interval of waiting for passengers from the north of the county a visit was made to Halesworth Church and the old houses in the streets of the town.

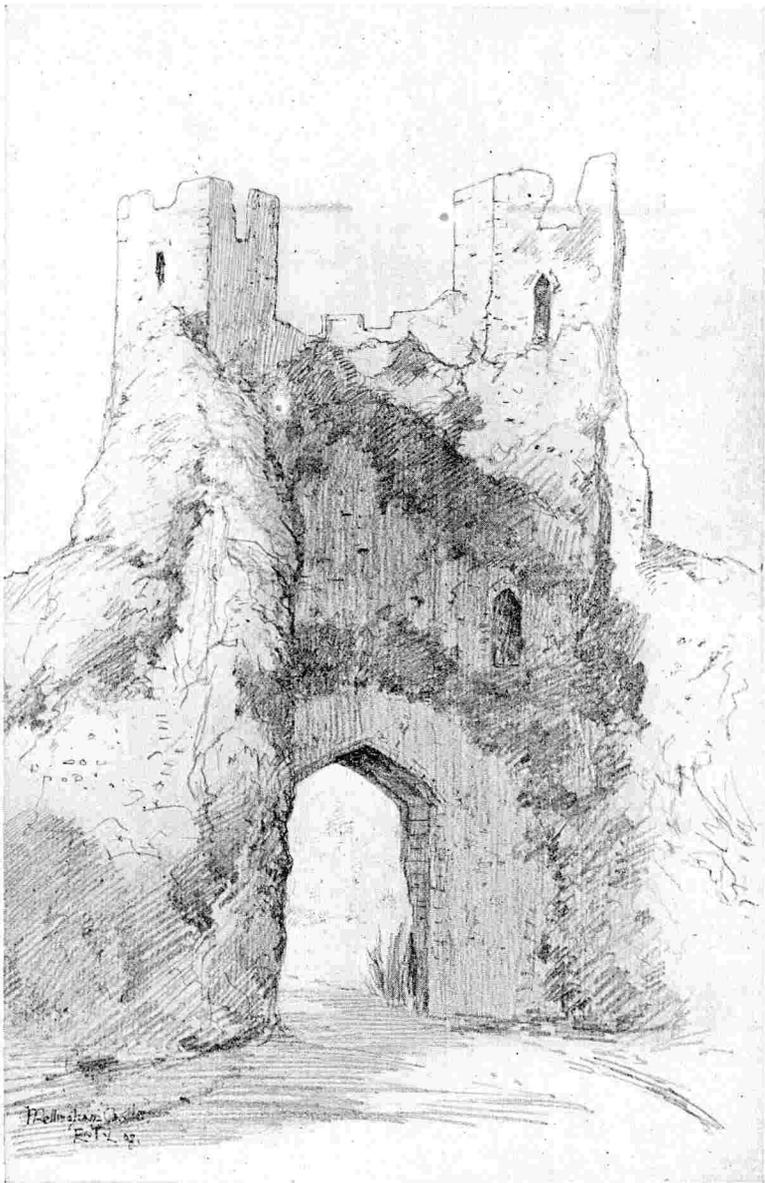
The conveyances started from the Angel, Halesworth, and after a ten-mile drive through picturesque scenery the Castle of Mettingham was reached. These ruins had recently fallen into the hands of Major H. Ross Johnson, who, although unavoidably absent at Aldershot, had made arrangements for the reception of his visitors, who were met by the surveyor of the grounds. The Hon. Secretary, acting as guide, gave a description of the ruins of which Mr. E. Lingwood has kindly forwarded sketches for the use of the Institute.

The Hon. Secretary asserted that there had formerly been two castles at Mettingham, the first dating back to early Norman days, and that when the later castle was built, the old buildings were used as a College for priests. Permission was given to John de Norwich to fortify his



METTINGHAM CASTLE—THE OLD KEEP.

(Drawn by E. T. Lingwood).



METTINGHAM CASTLE—THE GATEWAY.

(Drawn by E. T. Lingwood).

manor house at Mettingham about 1344, and it was mentioned that in 1381 the castle was attacked by Jack Straw's insurgents, who obtained possession of it, and, ransacking it, took away money and valuables to the amount of £1,000. Mr. Redstone believed that it was the second castle that was taken on that occasion, as the older one had been more strongly fortified. On entering the castle grounds to-day, one passes under a fine gateway, forming part of a tower, the walls of which are still lapped by the old moat, which has been filled up in places. The groove in the stone for the portcullis to slide up and down is easily discernible on the inner part of the gateway. The tower is in ruins, but it has evidently been of considerable height, and there are indications of numerous chambers aloft, used formerly, in all probability, for the lodgment of the castle's defenders. From the gateway the outer wall of the castle extends in both directions; it appears to have been about three feet thick, and about thirty feet high. There is a considerable length of wall left in various parts of the extensive grounds, showing the castle to have been of fair dimensions, though not very large. It is only possible to trace a portion of the numerous buildings which once existed, and it is scarcely surprising that so little is intact when in a survey made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1562) reference was made to "The gatehouse and other decayed lodgings," whilst at that time there were in existence "the Courte, the Porche and the Chamber about it, the hall, the parlour, the p'lour chamber, the vestrye, and ye vestrye chamber, the pantrie, the buttrie, the larder, and the wine cellar, the lodgings over the buttrie, pantrie, wyne cellar, and larder, the entrie (described as a 'fayer entrie'), the kytchyn, boyling house, and their necessarie chambers, the bakehouse yard, the bakehouse, brewhouse, and maltinge house, the storehouse, Cynnyhalle with a buttrie and one chamber, the lodgings over Cynnyhalle and the malte chamb', the stable, the olde castell, the inner orteyarde, the great orteyarde, the mote,