

## EXCURSIONS IN THE EYE DISTRICT.

On Thursday, 3rd August, 1911, the members of the Institute visited the ancient borough of Eye. They proceeded to the Parish Church, which was restored in 1869; to this date the present roof belongs. Dr. Edgar G. Barnes pointed out the remarkable features of the building, notably the Thirteenth Century south door, the dole-table in the porch, and the altar tombs of Nicholas Cutler and his wife Elinor, dated respectively 1568 and 1549. He also read a short paper, dealing with the Fifteenth Century screen, said to have been brought from Great Massingham. The tradition is supported by the fact that the screen does not fit into its present position. A discussion followed on the date of the screen, which was probably earlier than the death of Henry VI., whose figure appears on one of the panels. Mr. V. B. Redstone noticed that there were three chapels attached to the church—the chapel of St. Mary de Populo in the churchyard, the chapel of St. Thomas à Becket in the north aisle, and that of the Assumption in the south, or Priory aisle. Dr. Barnes also noted that the loss of a frescoe which formerly existed above the Chancel arch was due to the "restoration" of 1869. The most notable feature of the exterior of the church is the south porch, of red brick and stone; the Rev. E. Farrer, of Hinderclay, showed that this was Fifteenth Century work. It was probably built about 1450, as shown by the quarterings of the De la Pole family's arms on the buttresses. In the churchyard is the ancient guild-hall, converted into a grammar school, and later into a girls' school.

The party then visited the site of the former Benedictine Priory, where Mr. V. B. Redstone gave a short account of the foundation and history of this house. Unfortunately the only visible remains of the monastic buildings, which stood outside the ancient borough boundary, are parts of an ancient barn. Incidental mention of the famous "Red Book of Eye," gave rise to a discussion, in which the Rev. Canon Warren stated that the book may still exist in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. (See note on p260).

The party returned to the Castle, of which the lofty earthwork remains, surmounted by a museum installed in a building erected by the late Sir Edward Kerrison. Having noticed the few traces of stone-work still remaining in the neighbourhood of the Castle, and the streets which have evidently grown up along the line of the Castle Ditch, the company visited the Town Hall, where they inspected the borough insignia and records.

After luncheon at the White Lion, five new members were elected. The party then drove to Wingfield Castle, a manor-house fortified by Michael de la Pole, first Earl of Suffolk. Of this building the fine gateway and some parts of the chapel remain. After listening to the account of the house, which had been read before the Institute in 1888 by the Rev. C. R. Manning, F.S.A.,\* the party examined with interest the great kitchen and curious stairway of the present residence, built by Richard Catelyn in the time of Henry VIII., and viewed the drawbridge over the moat. Hoxne Priory, next visited, was a cell of Norwich. The Rev. H. A. Harris, who acted as guide, stated that the present house was probably built after the destruction of the Priory in Henry VIII.'s reign by Sir Richard Gresham, who also laid out elaborate gardens, and that the Priory itself dated from 962 A.D. Upstairs is a

\* See Proceedings of the Suff. Inst. Arch., Vol. vii., p. 33.



WOODEN FIGURES AT HOXNE PRIORY FARM.



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panelled room containing a picture of an English House in the time of William and Mary, which has not been identified. The four wooden figures now placed within the porch of Hoxne Priory are known to have occupied some outdoor site within the bounds of the gardens adjoining the Priory in the Seventeenth Century, the probable date of their construction. They appear to represent (1) *Hercules*, clad in his lion's skin and holding in his right hand a staff, and in his left an apple from the Garden of Hesperides; (2) *Atlas*, King of Mauritania, who taught Hercules astronomy, a science represented by the globe and compass; (3) *Ceres*, the goddess of crops, grasping a sickle and sheaf of corn; (4) *Proserpine*, the daughter of Ceres, holding flowers symbolical of those which tradition states she was gathering when carried off by Pluto to Hades, but possibly (4) is *Flora*, the goddess of flowers and gardens. It has been suggested that these figures were placed within the garden to symbolise the Four Seasons—Flora or Proserpine for Spring (Flowers), Ceres for Summer (Corn), Hercules for Autumn (Fruit), Atlas for Winter (Fallow). In driving to Hoxne Church, the cross marking the site of St. Edmund's Oak was passed. At the Church the Rev. H. A. Harris drew special attention to the font, which can be dated between 1460-72, and the tombs of the Thurston family. Interest was also shown in a box made out of the wood of the oak against which, according to tradition, Edmund the King, was martyred.\*

At Brome Hall the party was welcomed by the Dowager Lady Bateman. An ably-prepared paper on the Hall was read by the Hon. Rosamund Bateman-Hanbury (see p. 227).

In the evening a meeting was held in the Town Hall, the Mayor being in the chair, supported by the Hon. Rosamund Bateman-Hanbury, Dr. E. G. Barnes

\* See Mr. Manning's paper on the Church, *ibidem* p. 28.

and others. A paper on the Castle was read by the Rev. H. A. Harris. A discussion followed upon the pronounciation of the name Eye. The majority, including the Chairman, the Hon. Rosamund Bateman-Hanbury, and the Rev. F. Eld of Polstead, favoured the form "Ay." The Rev. Canon Warren and the Rev. F. Eld questioned whether the earthworks of the Castle were of pre-Conquest date. Mr. V. B. Redstone then read a paper on the Priory and Church. In the concluding discussion, Dr. Barnes aroused great interest by mentioning the existence among the town records of a document pointing to the foundation of Eye Grammar School at an earlier date than that usually accepted. This documentary evidence is a list of masters, including twenty priests and four laymen, one being William Hadley, Prior of Eye in 1532. The meeting closed with votes of thanks to the readers of papers, and to those who had extended hospitality to the Institute.

On Friday members continued their inspection of places of interest near Eye. Having driven to Thordon Church, they were met by the Rector, the Rev. H. A. Harris, who read an interesting paper on the building. He mentioned that a church existed in 1086. Parts of the present building dated from about 1250, while the chancel was enlarged and lengthened in 1450. The Jacobean pulpit was a copy of one at Shipton, and Mr. Harris produced early photographs of the church, showing the pulpit as a "three-decker," with elaborate sounding board. A tomb ascribed to the "Founder of the chancel," Nicholas de Boclond, lay without the south wall. Mr. Harris had gathered from manuscript sources descriptions of monuments in the church before its restoration. These included the effigy of an armed man with the arms of Grimston, and a brass bearing the arms of Swynford and Ufford, and those of England and France quartered for John of Gaunt.

At Hill Farm, the party was welcomed by the occupier, Mr. H. C. Nunn, who remarked that among the former owners of the house was Sir John Clark, a member of the Long Parliament, from whom it came by marriage into the family of the present owner, Colonel Barnardiston. The house is remarkable for very fine stud-work, and the massive oak beams of the interior. Special attention was paid to windows at the back of the house, which were assigned to a date shortly before 1500. Having examined the traces of a moat which surrounded the farm, the party proceeded to the moated Rectory of Thorndon, where they were entertained at luncheon by the Rev. H. A. and Mrs. Harris. After examining the exhibits of local neoliths displayed by Mr. Harris, the company proceeded to visit four homestead moats. At Hestley Hall, a settlement dating at least from 1086, was a triple moat. The back of the house, with its projecting upper storey and remains of an early chimney stack, here attracted attention. At Lampetts, now a farmhouse, lying off an old pack-road, occupied by Mr. Hodgkinson, an interesting series of L-shaped moats was traced.\* The Rev. H. A. Harris suggested that the outermost of these, including nearly seven acres, was intended as an enclosure for the cattle of the whole hundred in times of need. The name of the house, which was sometimes known as, Goderich Thorp, pointed to an early settlement. At Rishangles Lodge, once the home of the Grimston family, traces of a moat were also inspected. At "Shorts," named, perhaps, from Mr. Short, the occupier in 1526, the party was welcomed by Mrs. F. Hammond, and admired the Tudor end of the house and some notable beams in the interior. This homestead also was surrounded by an extensive moat. Thence the visitors proceeded

\* For a plan of these moats see Hollingsworth's "History of Stowmarket," pub. 1844, p. 23.

to Yaxley Hall, where they were hospitably entertained at tea by the Rev. W. E. and Mrs. Beaumont. Attention was attracted by the shields of the Yaxley family in the windows, it being remarked that the emblem of St. Luke pointed to the removal of the glass from a chapel or from the church. The fine Hall has recently been restored. Notice was taken of a secret doorway, formerly hidden by tapestry, and of a Tudor doorway on the ground floor.

On the return journey the fine church of Yaxley was visited. The Rev. C. B. Nash pointed out the interesting porch to the memory of John Herberd, died 1459, and the remarkable Fifteenth Century screen. He noted the raising of the roof of the Church, which breaks into the fresco above the chancel arch, and the curious position of a window over the arch. In the East Window are fragments of glass said to date from 1199 to 1500. He also described the use of a "sexton's wheel" in the vestry. Only one other of these interesting relics of the Mediæval cult of the Virgin is known to exist.

The party then returned to Eye.

N.B.—A paper by Mr. Redstone on Eye Priory and Church has been reserved for the 1912 Volume of Proceedings.



HOXNE PRIORY FARM.