

### EXCURSION IN ROUGHAM, HESSETT, AND WOOLPIT DISTRICT.

It was decided by the Council, that the kind invitation of Dr. O. R. M. Wood for the Institute to pay a visit to Woolpit should be accepted and that on the occasion an excursion should be made to Rougham, Hessett, and Elmswell. On 18th May, 1926, members assembled at Bury, and the Rev. J. F. Williams, recently appointed Hon. Excursion Secretary for East Suffolk, undertook a general superintendence of the necessary arrangements.

The first halting-place was Eastlow Hills, Rougham, sometimes known as Cato's Grave, where the President and Lady Wood, together with Sir George W. Agnew, owner of the estate, and many friends from the neighbourhood awaited the visitors.

After Sir John Wood had introduced the members present to Sir George Agnew, Mr. V. B. Redstone gave a few remarks upon the history of the site which, as recent as 1813, formed part of the waste or common land of the manor. The presence of a civilian population dwelling near by the mounds is noticed by Lysons as early as 1730; in 1789 discovery of pottery and other remains at Whelnetham was made. It was not, however, before the levelling of the most northerly of the four tumuli of Rougham was made, in 1843, disclosing a square cist containing jars, bones and ashes, that any keen interest was taken in the matter. A second tumulus destroyed the same year, revealed objects of a similar character; a third mound was worn down by the passage of a road across it.

The remaining mound was opened by Professor J. S. Henslow, in 1844; a report of the excavations, and the antiquities which were found, appears in vol. iv. of the Proceedings of the Institute, and a full description of the contents of the mound, with illustrations, is given by Professor G. Henslow, in the Eastern Counties Magazine, Vol. I., p. 195, *et seq.*

Before leaving Eastlow Hill a vote of thanks was accorded to Sir George Agnew, who in replying expressed his pleasure in meeting members of the Institute there, and promised to make arrangements for suitable protection for the site.

From Rougham the journey lay to Hessett church, where through the valuable account of the building given by the Rev. Canon Cooke in Vols. IV. and V. of the Proceedings, members were able to gain some useful information of its past history. The company present expressed their sympathy to Miss Bartlett upon hearing that her father (The Rector of Hessett) had been obliged to undergo a severe operation in Ipswich and could not therefore give the members a description of his church, which was mainly

of late 15th century structure. The vestry, doors, aisles, towers and windows all call for attention. Without, the embattled walls and legend are very noticeable. The quaint words of the latter inform the reader that John Hoo (d. 1492) and his wife, Katherine, had at their expense made the chapel in every part (awery dyl), had heightened the vestry, and embattled the aisle (ye hele). The tower with its flint walls is covered with the monogram, I.B., for John Bacon, 1450, and the swan-badge of the Bohun family in honour of Abbot Bohun of Bury (1454-1469). After examining the wall-painting of the Seven Deadly Sins the visitors made their way for Woolpit, some through Drinkstone Park, others by the highroad over Beyton Green.

At once upon entering Woolpit it was seen that careful and extensive preparations had been made to receive visitors. Dr. O. R. M. Wood, at whose invitation the visit to Woolpit had been made, to ensure that nothing of interest should be overlooked, had provided a number of guides, distinguishable by thin red armlets, to stand near all sites which deserved attention and to give any information needed. This kind thoughtful consideration of our host added greatly to the success of the gathering. Dr. and Mrs. Wood and Miss E. Wood were indefatigable in their efforts to secure the comfort of their guests.

At the church the rector (Rev. G. F. H. Page) gave the details of the features of interest—the Decorated Chancel, the east window of five lights, the double piscinas, and the very fine Perpendicular roof with double-hammer beams. The aisle roofs are of the same date as, and equal to those of the nave; at the east end of the south aisle are sedilia and piscina. The tower walls marked various successions of structure; stone with Norman mouldings had been found at its base, and Decorated work had succumbed to more modern styles. Mr. Page drew particular attention to the brass lectern said to have been the gift of Queen Elizabeth. The church was in pre-Reformation days famous for its image of Our Lady. Many are the bequests recorded in early wills of endowments and gifts made to it and its chapel. One will is of particular interest; it discloses the fact that the chapel in the North Aisle was dedicated to St. James. In it John Bawde states, 1501, that he desires the trene (woodwork) of the altar be well and sufficiently painted (*which I did make*) and cloth to be bought to cover the same. The stool (bench), too, which he had made was to be coloured and garnished with scallops and other signs of St. James. From this it seems probable that the greater part of the excellent carving and woodwork was the production of native talent and craftsmanship encouraged by the two gilds, one of the Nativity of the B. Virgin, the other of the Holy Trinity.

From the church the visitors went to the Village Club House, with its lecture room, billiard room, committee room, reading room, bathroom. This Club House is a monument of Dr. Wood's zeal and energy towards the betterment and welfare of Woolpit. He explained to his guests the growth and character of the club, and the story of the development of the structure from insignificant cottages concealing their history beneath whitewash and patchwork-erection to well-ventilated open rooms exhibiting bold woodwork such as John Bawd cherished to erect on and about the altar of St. James.

Many of the houses which his guides shewed also had been reclaimed by his zeal as an antiquary, and by his affection for Woolpit. Hospitality was extended to members by Mrs. Wood, Miss E. Wood and their friends in the pleasing gardens and on the well-kept lawns of Dr. Wood's residence, and all fully endorsed the thanks given on behalf of the Institute by its President to Dr. and Mrs. Wood for the generous welcome they had given their guests.

From Woolpit members departed for Elmswell, where they were met at the church by the rector, Rev. J. D. Sayer, who explained the principal features of interest. Special notice was taken of the tomb of Sir R. Gardener, Chief Justice of Ireland.

V. B. REDSTONE.