

## EXCURSION TO EUSTON HALL AND DISTRICT.

The company of members present at the excursion, who stayed for the night at Thetford, was increased by further arrivals when conveyances left "The Bell" for Kilverstone Church, on Friday, 15th August, 1913. Among the new arrivals were Mr. Edward Packard, of Bramford; Mr. Brooke, of Sibton Park; Mr. W. W. Gross, of Woodbridge; and Miss M. Gross, of Bury St. Edmunds; Mr. Tracey, of Bury St. Edmunds; and Mrs. Watts and Miss R. T. Hellis, of Thetford.

The greater part of Brettenham and district comprises the estate of the well-known owner of race-horses, Mr. Musker. Before reaching Brettenham a stop was made at Kilverstone Church, the approach to which was along a grassy "haw-haw" traversing the park of the Hon. Cecil Vavaseur Fisher, son of Sir John Fisher, better known as Lord Fisher of Kilverstone. In the park was seen, as a conspicuous sight, the figure head of the ship over which Admiral Fisher first held command.

The church had undergone much careful restoration in recent years, chiefly at the expense of the late Josiah Vavaseur, C.B. A striking feature of the building is its neat round tower with the late Norman windows. It seems more than probable that the interesting Norman doorway of the 12th Century to be seen within the south porch was at one time used for an approach to the tower. The Rector placed out in the vestry the Communion plate of Elizabethan pattern and his early parish registers. It was remarked that the early name of the village pound-keeper, Pinner, occurred within the pages of the register, but

the company hesitated to express any opinion as to who was the first "Keepasse," whose descendents lived for many generations in the parish. The long drive, under overhanging archways of leaves with thick foliage, to Brettenham Church was much appreciated.

The handsome Norman doorway of Brettenham is remarkable for the two variant pillars which support the archway. One is decorated with the inverted chevron, the other has a remarkable twist or roll pattern. The capitals of the pillars are ornamental. A strange sight to the Suffolk visitors were the wrought-iron gates leading into the tower within the church. Other examples of the same ironwork, manufactured by Bradley, of Dereham, are to be seen in neighbouring churches.

Rushford College, which was next visited, was founded in 1342 by Edmund de Gonville, who was also the founder of a Hall in Cambridge. A master and five priests held their residence within the college. Their duties were mainly to offer up masses on behalf of the souls of the founder of the College and its many benefactors. Little remains of the old foundations; the only parts which now present any ancient and original appearance once comprised the hall of the College. The building was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. After the Dissolution the property was held by the descendants of Robert Buxton for over three centuries. Much has been done to the walls of the church to mark it as a building in private hands, once a donative. Within the vestry is a handsomely-bound iron-wrought chest of a peculiar wedge-shape. Evidently this iron work of excellent North German design is as old as any part of the church itself, dating early in the 15th Century. The tower has some interesting windows on its west side.

To commemorate the visit of the Institute to Rushford the Hon. Excursion Secretary has transcribed and indexed for the parish its earliest register, which has on its front fly-leaf the title "Register of Baptisms Burials, and Marriages in Rushford Collegiate Church from its Recovery by Robert Buxton, A.D. 1588." Many valuable manuscripts, late the property of the Buxtons, of Rushford, are now in the University Library, Cambridge.

From Rushford the party proceeded to Euston, and through the kindness of His Grace the Duke of Grafton enjoyed the privilege of seeing the valuable pictures which line the walls of Euston Hall. The gardens were also visited, as well as the church, which has not the homely characteristics which generally mark the features of a Suffolk church.

The carriages proceeded from Euston to Barnham. There an inspection was made of an old Elizabethan country house, the timbers of which bore in carved relief the date 1572. It was the opinion of the company that the building may have been in use formerly as a Guild Hall or Church House. A journey was then made to an object traditionally considered to have been a "plague stone," standing far distant upon Thetford Common. It, however, has the appearance of the socket of a boundary cross standing on the confines of Thetford and Barnham parishes.

The final stoppage was made at the Bell Inn, Thetford, where, after luncheon, the party dispersed quite satisfied with the arrangements which had been made for the annual excursion of 1913.