

EDITOR'S NOTES.

ANNUAL EXCURSION.

The Annual Summer Excursion took place on Wednesday, July 26th, under the leadership of Mr. W. G. Clarke, F.G.S., who kindly undertook to act as temporary Excursion Secretary.

Difficulties of train service somewhat reduced the attendance, nevertheless over 14 districts were represented by the Members, who arrived at Thetford Station at 11 a.m.

The remains of the Cluniac Priory at Thetford were first visited, Mr. Clarke giving an interesting account of the history of the Priory, and explaining the ruined masonry still standing. Roger Bigod was responsible for this early foundation, which dated from 1107, the monks taking up residence in 1114. Being the third largest Priory in Norfolk, Thetford Priory was of considerable importance, the church alone measuring 243 ft. by 123½. Three towers adorned it, the central one being Norman. It was 36-ft. square at the base.

"The church consisted of a nave, two aisles, choir, north and south transepts with apsidal chapel in each, and the chapel of the Virgin." The Chapter House adjoined the S. transept, and the Sacristy the North.

An imposing perpendicular entrance gate, known as the "Abbey Gate," was much admired, also the monks' stew pond with its picturesque surroundings.

By brake and motor the party next visited the famous pre-historic site known as Grimes Graves. After a picnic lunch partaken of in these unusual surroundings, Mr. Reid Moir kept the audience deeply interested while he described the methods of the Stone-age miners, who had sunk shafts to a depth of 30-ft. or more in order to find the good "floor-stone" flint, so necessary for the fashioning of stone implements. Out of 366 traceable shafts two, which have been excavated by the Pre-historic Society of East Anglia, were inspected. As readers of the "Proceedings" may be interested to know the questions which arise from these discoveries, we subjoin the following report which appeared in the "East Anglian Daily Times" on the occasion.

Mr. Moir said : " It is clear that these people were expert miners, as an examination of two of the pits—which were excavated by the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia in 1914—showed that in digging down through the sand and boulder clay overlying the chalk they were careful to leave an adequate slope to the sides of the pit to prevent slipping ; but when the solid rock was reached they proceeded to sink their shafts with vertical sides. Having reached the layer of flint required, the miners proceeded to drive lateral galleries from the bottom of the main shaft, and thus follow up and remove the flint seam. This procedure was no doubt followed in all the other pits, and it must be concluded, therefore, that the whole area covered by these ancient diggings is honey-combed underground by galleries, radiating from the various main shafts, and supported by the pillars of solid chalk separating these galleries. The pits examined in 1914 were about 30 feet in depth, and the amount of time and labour expended in excavating the large number at Grimes' Graves must have been immense. Until the excavations carried out by the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia, it was generally supposed that these pits were the work of people who lived in the Neolithic, or latest phase of the stone age ; and this view still has numerous supporters. But it has now been established by Mr. Reginald Smith and Dr. A. E. Peake (to whom all archæologists owe a great debt of gratitude for his successful and painstaking work at this site), that the majority of the flint implements recovered from the infilling of the shafts, and the chipping floors round their edges, are of Palæolithic and not Neolithic forms. This is a somewhat puzzling fact, as the occurrence of pottery fragments and the bones of what have been known as ' domestic ' animals, with these flints, together with the evidence of such skilful mining methods, do not make it an easy matter to assign the mines to a Palæolithic date. But when a large series of the fine cores and flake implements found is examined, and when it is realised that so far as our present knowledge goes such artefacts were only made in the Mousterian-Palæolithic epoch, it is somewhat difficult to place full reliance upon the view that the whole site and industry are of only Neolithic antiquity. Another difficulty which has to be met by those who favour the earlier dating is the lack of evidence of any geological changes (such as are known to have occurred in post-Mousterian times) having taken place since the mines were in use. But these are simply some of the many problems confronting prehistoric archæology, and they will only be solved by expert and patient investigation."

Santon Downham Church was the next item on the programme, and here the party were met by the Rector (the Rev. A. Williams), who drew attention to the particular points of interest in connection

with the building. The north and south doorways were Transitional Norman, the one having a round and the other a segmental head. A curious carved figure over the south door way provoked some discussion. It was surrounded by foliage in low relief.

There were vestiges of Early English work in the lancet windows of the north side of the nave, and the priests' doorway in the chancel, and the progressive history of the church was continued by the perpendicular tower with its raised letters and devices in stone at the base.

Tea was admirably provided at Thetford Temperance Hotel, and Mr. Clarke afterwards conducted some of the party to Thetford Castle Hill.

This magnificent earth-work is surely not sufficiently known to East Anglians. Its commanding height, which taken vertically (as Mr. Clarke informed us) is no less than 81-ft., exceeds that of Castle Rising by 38-ft., while it is unique in Britain as possessing a double line of ramparts guarding the mound. The ramparts reach a height of 30 to 35-ft., and they have been alternately assigned to the Celts, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans. Mr. Clarke favoured the Norman origin of these earthworks.

A varied and instructive excursion was thus brought to a conclusion, leaving the members of the Institute with much fresh food for intellectual reflection, as well as gratitude to the leader for his able conduct of the programme in all its details.

H.H. PRINCE FREDERICK DULEEP SINGH'S
LECTURE AT IPSWICH.

REPAIRING OR RESTORING.

(Reprinted from the "East Anglian Daily Times.")

That old buildings should be repaired rather than restored, so called, was the theme of a lecture delivered on Friday afternoon at the Ipswich Museum by H.H. Prince Frederick Duleep Singh at a meeting of members of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History. The weather was anything but kind, yet the lecture room was filled with an audience who were deeply interested in the subject.

The Bishop, who presided, said that the Institute was a sort of watch-dog, for one of its great objects was to watch against any