

EXCURSIONS.

YARE-MOUTH.

It is a singular fact—and a coincidence, in a way—yet, at the same time, it might be looked upon as appropriate, that of the four Excursions carried out so successfully last year, it should fall to my lot to write an account of the first of these, that in connection with the Yarmouth Archæological Society (or as Mr. Claude Morley described it, Yare-mouth).

One little thought some years ago when, as Curate-in-Charge of St. James's, Great Yarmouth, one would have the honour and privilege of not only belonging to the Ancient Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History, but also of acting in the capacity of an Hon. Excursion Director to help its members.

Thus the Excursion on May 11th, 1928, was of the greatest interest to one who knew the neighbourhood so well.

But to proceed. Marching orders had been issued and when eleven o'clock struck a goodly number "fell in" at the appointed parade ground, Gorleston Church. Here the Vicar of Gorleston, the Rev. Richard Talbot, read a paper, descriptive of the history of the building and its contents. This large three aisled church measures 124 feet in length and 56 feet in breadth. The tower, 90 feet high, commands a wide view, which repays the toil of climbing 127 stone steps. Attention was drawn to the fine brass effigy of a cross-legged knight, once in the Bacon Chapel, and now reinstated on its own slab placed upright in the north wall. It dates from 1292 and probably commemorates Sir John Bacon. The figure was originally 5-ft. 6-in. in length, but the portion from the knees downwards is missing, as well as the canopy. In 1872 some mural paintings were brought to light, but as the wall on which they remained had to be rebuilt, all trace of these has vanished. One over the north door was a St. Christopher bearing the Holy Child over the river, with a pelican wading behind in the act of swallowing a fish.

The painting east of this was of the Legend of the Three Living meeting the Three Dead, as at Belton, Kentford, and elsewhere. The panel under the canopied tomb in the north wall formerly had a rich painting of the Trinity, with "censing" angels.

The fourteenth century font, badly mutilated, is one of the 29 Seven Sacrament fonts remaining in Norfolk and Suffolk. Here the eighth panel represents the last Judgment. The Vicar reminded his hearers that the worst despoiling of the Church occurred, not at the Reformation, as many supposed, but during the period of military despotism, euphemistically called the Commonwealth.

Of the salubrity of Gorleston and the longevity of its inhabitants testimony exists in the Churchyard. All the monumental inscriptions there, were copied in 1851, when no fewer than eight centenarians were noted.

Reinforced by other members, the party examined the church, commenting especially on the font, the Gorleston psalter and the fine brass.

By applying a wet sponge to a pillar in the South Arcade, some small paintings, tentatively identified as St. Catherine and St. Anne, with the Virgin, were made visible.

Mr. R. H. Teasdel, Hon. Secretary of the Yarmouth Archæological Society, traced the history of Gorleston, the "little town on the Yare," which existed long before Yarmouth, probably as a minor Roman Station connected with Burgh Castle. Roman relics, including javelin heads, locally called "Roman pokers," have been found there. Bones had also been unearthed, telling of the raids of the Danes. Yarmouth's development had proved fatal to Gorleston's importance as a port. The place had no natural harbour; the present exit was artificial and constructed in 1560. Five crosses were known to have existed here in pre-Reformation days. One, St. Clement's Cross, was preserved in part until 1786, the fragment being incongruously dubbed by the townfolk "The devil's tombstone." Until the beginning of last century portions of the Augustinian Priory founded here, in the reign of Edward I. were still standing, including the West gate, with a stone bench where beggars waited for alms. In 1800 three cartloads of tiles from the Priory were sold for road making. The friars were concerned in the herring fishery. Their's was a healthy life, if not always a happy one, judging from an epitaph once in their conventual church:

"Here is the Prior's monument in brass,
Who received his fatal wound at Mass."

Gorleston was never a municipal borough. In 1832 it was added to Yarmouth, but the people of the place drew comfort from the prophecy: Gorleston great one day will be,
Yarmouth buried in the sea.

BURGH CASTLE.

The next halt was at the Roman Camp at Burgh Castle, where, gathered in the South-east corner of this site of from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 acres, the archæologists listened to an admirable paper by Major Ernest R. Cooper. This Roman military encampment is rectangular,

having walls 9 feet thick and 15 feet high, constructed of rubble and flint with courses of Roman brick, on three of its sides. The Western side is open, but excavations in 1859 establish the existence of a wall here also. The stones were easily accessible from the river, and Major Cooper suggested that some might have been removed to Yarmouth, others to St. Olave's Priory, for building. Four solid bastions or towers remain in the walls. In the top of each is a hole, which it is thought may have been for holding the king-post of a wooden turreas or sentry-box, so making it possible to temper the rigours of the weather, much in the manner of our modern rotating summerhouses. The camp, built between 43 and 61 a.d., was garrisoned by cavalry, and it is thought by the Stablesian Horse.

Many horses' teeth have been dug up here. The site overlooking the confluence of the Yare and the Waveney appears to have been chosen because of the availability of water. In 636 King Sigebert granted this place to the Irish saint, Fursey, who was here visited by St. Felix. Queen Elizabeth sold the camp in 1560, and the property has been in private possession ever since.

After lunch the members assembled in Great Yarmouth, where Mr. R. F. E. Ferrier, F.S.A., President of the Norfolk Society, assumed command. In a paper, partly based on one by the late Dean Willink, Mr. Ferrier told the story of this vast church built between 1101 and 1119 by Herbert de Losinga, first Bishop of Norwich. Tradition asserts that the Bishop reared Norwich Cathedral, St. Margaret's Church, Lynn and St. Nicholas' Church, Yarmouth, in expiation of the sin of simony. All the Norman work is now obliterated, except some small windows and arcading in the tower.

The spire was struck by lightning in 1683, and after a poor substitute ("as crooked as Yarmouth steeple" was once a byword) had been endured for 120 years, the present inadequate stone spire was erected in 1807. The Black Death swept away over 7,000 of Yarmouth's population of 10,000 and the plans for extension of the church westward were never carried out. In 1649, the Puritans took possession and partitions were erected so that the building could be used or abused) by Presbyterians and Independents.

On November 18th, 1661, the edifice came back to the church, but such was the lethargy of the time that no steps were taken to restore it to even a measure of its former glory. Even until 1847 the church was in a disgraceful state. Not till that year was the brick walling between the arches cleared away. Since then restoration not always judicious had wrought many changes.

A TOUR OF YARMOUTH.

The church having been inspected and the curious Elizabethan case of shelves (now fitted with Yarmouth's Roll of Honour) having been made to revolve with unwonted frequency, a move was made to the Priory Schools, with their interesting architectural features. It was rather unfortunate that the reading of Mr. Teasdel's paper synchronised with the school "break." Mr. Teasdel then led the way to the Town Walls. Many made the ascent of St. Mary's Tower, one of the ten wall-towers still standing. From the summit were seen the town walls built about 1300, now flaunting yellow gilly-flowers, and a shaded burial ground seaward, the number of houses afforded a reminder that at Yarmouth the sea has receded. The quaint Hospital for Decayed Fishermen built by the Corporation in 1702, was next visited. The law buildings occupy three side of a square, with a statue of Charity in the centre, and a cross-legged St. Peter, Patron Saint of fishermen, peering down from a cupola on the roof.

The walk being resumed the members passed single-file through Kitty Witches' Row. At one time Yarmouth had 145 rows. This one is the narrowest, being only $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at one part.

At the Toll House, one of the oldest municipal buildings in England, with an external stone staircase, Mr. Gourlay Ferrier read an able paper on this building, used in turn as dungeons, court of justice, council chamber and museum.

At the Grey Friars Cloisters, Mr. Haward pointed out various features, including the stone-vaulting of the Early English period, with hints of the coming Decorated style. One of the fine bosses depicts the Last Supper.

Through the courtesy of the Mayor of Yarmouth the members enjoyed tea, kindly provided by the President and Council of the Yarmouth Society at the Town Hall, where the municipal regalia, including the Sword of Justice (1684) and a large silver gilt oar (1745) was on view.

A comprehensive vote of thanks to all who had been concerned in the smooth working and the hospitable arrangements of the day, was felicitously proposed by the Rev. C. H. Raven, seconded by Mr. Claude Morley. Mr. R. F. E. Ferrier, in responding, spoke of the happy relations existing between the Archæologists of Yarmouth and their Mayor and Corporation. The Mayor (Mr. R. E. Platten) also responded in a brief and humorous speech.

Mr. Edgar Stephens, Town Clerk of Yarmouth, described the Town Charters and expatiated upon the various exhibits. Yarmouth's first Charter was granted by King John in 1208. The

town was fortified under King Henry III. Mr. Ferrier, senior, having voiced thanks to Mr. Stephens, the exhibits were closely examined, and at about 6 p.m., the Suffolk archæologists bade farewell to their brothers of Norfolk after a memorable Excursion, equally enjoyed by the representatives of both counties.

GRAVES LOMBARD,

May 20th, 1929.

Hon. Excursion Director.

EXCURSION IN THE DEBENHAM DISTRICT.

The excursion to Debenham and its neighbourhood, held on Thursday, September 13th, 1928, was well-attended; the weather being exceptionally fine there was nothing to mar the day's pleasure. The company, whose cars and vehicles crowded the large open space before the Moot Hall, first assembled in the church, where Mr. V. B. Redstone, acting as director for the day, gave a brief description of its history and structure, for particulars of which, see Vol. XII of the Institute's Proceedings, p. 217.

DEBENHAM CHURCH.

The visit to the church was made more interesting by the fact that the new vicar, the Rev. W. G. L. Armstrong, who was to be inducted during the evening service into the benefice, was present, together with the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. After making a tour of the building the visitors, with the kind help of Dr. J. E. Gordon and other inhabitants of the town inspected the old Moot Hall, the 15th century houses, old inns and other dwellings of interest.

From Debenham the company proceeded to Crows Hall, and by the kind permission of Mrs. Moore, were enabled to use the grounds of the Hall for luncheon. Many persons took the opportunity of taking photographic views of the picturesque house and premises. One such view of the premises taken on a like occasion is reproduced in Vol. XII of the Institute's Proceedings, page 221. Before departure the Rev. E. Farrer, F.S.A., described the history of the hall and its structure.

CROWS HALL.

Mr. Farrer pointed out that the house which we see to-day, when originally erected, consisted of a main block facing the west, with gabled wings at either end, reaching the edge of the moat, and then running all along there was a series of one-storied buildings, divided in the centre by a square-headed entrance gateway