

FIRST EXCURSION OF THE SEASON.

FRAMLINGHAM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

The first Excursion of the season to Framlingham and neighbourhood on Wednesday, 12th June, 1929, proved a very enjoyable day, and the weather being perfectly fine added to the enjoyment.

A start was made from Framlingham Church at 11 a.m., and a brake left there at that hour for Dennington Church. One helpful feature of this excursion was the presence for the first time of an Automobile Association Patrol, to direct us on our route and to arrange about the parking of cars at the various halting places. This plan was adopted at the suggestion of some of the members upon a former occasion.

We arrived at Dennington in due course and repaired at once to the Church, where we were welcomed by the Rector, the Rev. G. D. Castleden, who gave us a most interesting, if rather too lengthy, account of his Church. Consequently this rather curtailed our time throughout the day, and caused our return to Framlingham to be somewhat later than intended. I turn now to the account that appeared in the "East Anglian" on June 13th, headed "A Day in the Woodland of Suffolk."

Talking of Dennington Church the writer says: "The Rector detailed the main features of interest. The chancel, a beautiful example of decorated work, belongs to the early 14th century. Most of the remainder of the building is Perpendicular. Of the Church which the present fabric replaces very little is left, the Rector being able to point only to the corbels beneath the chancel arch. Much of the building was erected by the Rous and Wingfield families. It is well stored with finely-wrought woodwork. Though the rood-screen has gone, the parcloles at the ends of the aisles have escaped destruction. These with the loft which ran around from north to south, are highly coloured, and have a fine effect. Many 15th century benches remain, their backs deeply carved and their ends highly ornamented and finished with poppy heads.

In the Chapel of St. Margaret is the alabaster tomb of Sir William Phelipp, Lord Bardolf, 1441, whose full-length effigy lies beside that of his wife. If this nobleman's directions were executed his body was buried in the churchyard. The church possesses a hanging pyx under a canopy, now restored to its ancient purpose. Mention of the three-decker pulpit drew from Mr. Castleden an amusing anecdote concerning Laughlin, a bygone clerk of good lung power. The pulpit is partly surrounded by box pews, placed here in 1805,

under which may be seen the oak battens of the medieval benches then removed. Although Dowsing "brake" various superstitious "pictures" in the windows, he left the canopies as reminders of what has been lost by his mistaken zeal. On the chancel door still hangs a sanctuary knocker. Other unusual relics include a sand table, by means of which the art of writing was formerly taught, a "Peter's Pence Chest," with delicate locks, whose intricacy was demonstrated by the Rector, and the musician's desk."

From Dennington we had a very charming drive to Badingham, where we arrived at the church of St. John the Baptist.

To turn again to the account. "Mr. V. B. Redstone, F.S.A., threw light on the history of another building of more than ordinary interest. Evidently, he said, this structure stands on an old burial site. It is on rising ground, which accounts for a slope upward from west to east, the rise from the font to the chancel arch being as much as two feet. Most of the windows are decorated and perpendicular insertions in earlier walls. The font is one of the twelve Suffolk fonts bearing representations of the Seven Sacraments. The panels at Badingham have rich canopies, and are fairly well preserved. The chancel contains the canopy of a late 14th Century tomb and an elaborate monument, with recumbent figures, to William Cotton and family. A fine angel roof, restored, spans the nave."

From Badingham Church we went to Sibton Abbey and Church. I much regret that some of our members did not appear to arrive at the church. I turn again to the account. "By the kindness of the Vicar of Sibton, the Rev. R. C. Scrimgeour, the members were granted the use of the Vicarage garden for lunch. Subsequently a visit was paid to the Church, which, though outwardly robbed of its bloom through having been restored not wisely but too well, proved to be well worth prolonged examination internally. The earliest part, explained the Vicar, is the Norman doorway, in the south wall. The font with its wild men and lions mounting guard round the stem, which supports an octagonal bowl, is a typical Suffolk specimen of the 15th century. The nave roof has excellent wall-plates. Its hammer-beams are now adorned with heraldic shields. Parts of the rood-screen are preserved in a lowered position, these being the traceried heads of the openings, still gilded and coloured. On either side of the chancel arch are two canopied niches."

There appeared to be further enticements to linger but to the sound of the whistle, the party moved on to Sibton Abbey.

Of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary founded at Sibton in 1150, only roofless walls are left. Gathered in the refectory—the most

complete section of the ruins—the account says, the members listened to a resume, read by the Rev. Graves Lombard (one of the joint excursion directors) of a paper contributed to the S.I.A. Journal of 1892 by the late Sir William St. John Hope. In this, attention was directed to the remoteness of the spot chosen for this Abbey, quite in accordance with Cistercian practice. The house, secluded and difficult of access, escaped the earlier Dissolution, but succumbed at last. To-day only fragments of walls, with blank circular-headed window openings, aisles, grass-grown and nettle fringed, and a few stone coffins testify to the existence of a once well endowed establishment. Even the walls still standing are being disintegrated by ivy. Tree-shaded and flaunting the faithful wall flower they are somewhat melancholy reminders of a piety which was, and is no more.

From Sibton the members moved on to Bruisyard and were much interested in looking over Bruisyard Hall. The account says: "The mansion converted into a farmhouse, dates from Elizabethan times. Though the windows have been modernised, the formation of the house is little altered. The main entrance is through a three-storeyed brick porch, flanked by two octagonal pilasters and having crow-stepped gables. In a room over the porch is a clock, contemporaneous with or earlier than the house. As the clock has no face, it is necessary to climb to the turret chamber in which are the works, if one would know how the time wags. The moated site is that of "the manor Place of Bruisyard, called, 'Roke Hall,'" which passed after the dissolution of the monasteries to the family of Hare, whose memorials are in Bruisyard Church.

The account says: "The round towered church of Bruisyard, half screened by its avenue of limes, was next visited. Here Mr. Redstone spoke of the Chantry founded at Campsey Ashe by Maud Countess of Ulster in 1348 and removed hither in 1354. He pointed to the Chapel of the Nuns Minoresses of the Order of St. Clare, and then adduced documentary evidence, lately discovered by Miss Lilian Redstone, which associates two ladies of Royal blood with this remote Suffolk parish. Hitherto it has been taken for granted that Elizabeth de Burgh, first wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, was buried at Clare. In fact the Dictionary of National Biography states that when Lionel's remains were taken from Pavia they were re-interred "side by side with his first wife . . . at Clare in Suffolk." Detailed records of the expenses incurred in connection with the removal and burial of the body of Lady Elizabeth, Duchess of Clarence—processes covering a period of nearly six weeks in 1365—prove conclusively that the burial took place in "the Nuns graveyard at Bruisyard." Further Miss Redstone has been able to show

that Lady Elizabeth's half sister, Maud (de Clifford), widow of Thomas Earl of Orford, was likewise buried at Bruisyard in 1413-14. The particulars relating to the Duchess of Clarence record how the body was taken from Neston in Cheshire, to Chester, conveyed thence (with two men and six horses) to Coventry and so, in a further ten days to Bruisyard. The accounts include expenses, incurred in connection with a special hearse and "black bed" sent from London to this quiet Suffolk parish, where the nuns owed their office to the piety of the mother of the deceased duchess. Thus it has been established beyond a doubt that Bruisyard has in its keeping the mortal remains of a daughter-in-law of King Edward III and Queen Phillipa. Her interment here must have given the country folk matter for gossip and reminiscence for two or three generations. Yet, apparently, local tradition is silent upon this epoch in the life of the parish.

After glancing at the excellent nave roof, perfect rood-loft stairway and other interesting features, the archæologists left Bruisyard Church to its solitude."

After Bruisyard, Framlingham. Here tea was generously provided by the Rector, Canon H. C. O. Lanchester. During tea a brief business meeting was held, over which the Rev. Edmund Farrer, F.S.A., presided. New members were elected, and the Chairman voiced the thanks of the members to Canon Lanchester for his kindness in entertaining the numerous visitors. Afterwards the noble church was inspected, the Rector drawing attention to the chestnut roof of the nave, the mural painting opposite the south door and the splendid series of tombs for which Framlingham Church is noted. Canon Lanchester mentioned that the painted alabaster monument of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, beheaded in 1547, carries an endowment for its upkeep.

At Henry's feet kneels his son Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk, also executed in 1572. Nearby lies the 2nd Duke, the hero of Flodden Field. The helmet actually worn by the Duke at the battle hangs on the wall hard by his tomb. Another Duke, the 3rd, here interred, wears round his neck a collar with the motto: "By the grace of God I am what I am," commemorating his deliverance from the block, a fate to which he was condemned, but escaped through the death of Henry VIII, one day before the day fixed for the execution.

The castle of the Bigods on its grassy mound was next visited. The good work of the Office of Works was here in evidence, and the "ivied towers" which inspired Bernard Barton's muse were noted to be now freed of that destructive invader. The vicissitudes