

EXCURSION IN EAST SUFFOLK.

JUNE 15TH, 1934.

The rendezvous was the Church of St. John the Baptist, Snape, which stands so prominently in its somewhat isolated situation on the Common. Here about a hundred members were gathered to listen to a very interesting paper read by the Rev. J. B. Brandram (vicar-designate of St. Augustine of Hippo, Ipswich), whose four years at Snape and Friston have been marked by archaeological zeal and discovery.

About the year 1155, the manors of Snape and Aldeburgh were given to the abbot and convent of St. John, Colchester, by William Martel, his wife Albreda, and his son Geoffrey. A cell was established at Snape, and the priory here, by its foundation charter, paid St. John's Abbey, annually half a mark of silver. The Abbot of Colchester was to visit the cell twice a year, with twelve horses, and to tarry for four days.

In 1163, Pope Alexander III confirmed to the prior and brethren of St. Mary, Snape, the churches of Friston and Bedingfield (Dugdale).

Upon complaint made by Isabel, Countess of Suffolk and patroness of the Abbey, to Boniface, that the abbot and convent of Colchester did not maintain a sufficient number of religious at Snape, according to the founder's directions, the pope, by bull dated 10 Jan., 1399-1400, made this priory independent and exempt from all control by the Colchester Abbey (Rymier). But the abbey of Colchester had sufficient influence to stir up the crown against this papal action, and a commission was issued for the arrest of John de Mersey, the prior of Snape at the time, who was to be brought before King Henry IV in chancery, and to find security that he would not leave the kingdom without the royal licence, or obtain anything prejudicial to the abbey in the court of Rome. The dispute proved favourable to the abbey, but it was not until 1443 that agreement was finally reached.

A seal of a prior of this house (c. 1200) is appended to two charters in the British Museum. It represents a prior standing, holding a book in his hands. Legend : — SIGILLUM PRIORIS DE SNAPE.

Florence Wulley, Bishop of Clogher (1475) and Vicar of Coddenham (1481-1500), died at Snape Priory in 1500 and was buried in St. Mary's Church, Snape ; but as there are no remains left of the Priory, which stood about half a mile from the present Church, there is no trace of his tomb.

The Priory was one of those suppressed in favour of Cardinal Wolsey's projected college at Ipswich. After his attainder, the site and possessions were granted to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.

The Church of St. John the Baptist is of flint and rubble. The south porch and door of early and highly enriched Perpendicular work ; the

mouldings have the four-leaved flower and shields alternately, and there are well-carved figures of dragons and similar creatures in the spandrels. A good representation of a fish (pike) has been scratched on the left jamb of this door. One of the porch lights has recently been opened and glazed as a memorial of a parishioner.

The Perpendicular font has a square pedestal with statues round it, and groups of figures in the panels of the bowl. In the will of Nicholas Crane of Aldeburgh (1523) £6 13s. 4d. was left to find a Cope for Snape Church, and the Font was to be gilded and covered after the pattern of the Font in Iken Church.

John Brooke in 1521 left "10s. to find light before the Sepulchre." He also gave to Margaret his wife "one cow and ten sheep on condition that she do pray for my soul and never curse."

Other bequests to the Church which were read, were :—"The making of a foot for Our Lady to stand upon according to and as good as the foot that St. John Baptist standeth upon, 13. 4d." 1508, Ric. Fakoner. "To the Church a poyer of chalices silver party-gilt," 1512, Ric. Stone. "A priest to sing at Our Lady's Altar," 1515, John Barbor; and "To the making of a new sepulchre in church of Snape 20/- if made and painted with 2 yrs" 1526. John Barfott.

Mr. Brandram pointed out a recess for a wooden Easter Sepulchre which he had discovered when intending to make an organ chamber north of the chancel. Also a sundial, which had been replaced in a reversed position at the N.E. corner of the church. Other recent revelations include a piscina with a much mutilated head, and also tiles of the original sanctuary floor, 3 feet below the tiles of similar make which were recently placed there.

Mention was made of the tumuli near the Priory. One of these was excavated in 1870, and proved to be the grave of a Viking. The chief had been buried beneath the remains of his ship, his sword by his side, his finger bone retaining a gold ring, and his auburn hair still existing. It is assumed from the finding of earlier native pottery in the barrow, that this Viking died on one of his raids and was buried by his followers in one of the burial places of the district. The contents of this tumulus were seen in the Aldeburgh Museum later on in the day.

FRISTON.

Notwithstanding that St. Mary's Church was restored in 1905, the Rev. J. B. Grandram had much to show us of interest in this building. There is a transitional Norman south doorway. The western tower is very fine, belonging to the early Decorated period. Inside the porch was seen a very fine specimen of the Royal Arms of James I recently renovated by Mr. H. Munro Cautley, a photograph of which now appears in the book on Royal Arms he has just published (p. 51). It was found in pieces in the church tower, but on being repaired, is seen to be a magnificent set, carved in wood, and about 7-ft. square. Unfortunately little of its original colour is left.

In the vestry were a number of interesting objects—handcuffs, constables' batons, ancient chests, etc. The Church Register, unfortunately, has been ruined by damp and many of its pages are quite undecipherable. On the north wall there is a framed cover of a Tudor Bible.

LEISTON.

From thence the Excursion made its way to Leiston Rectory, where, in the large and well-tended garden, lunch was partaken. By the kindness of the Rev. C. B. and Mrs. Greaves coffee and lemonade were very thoughtfully provided. It is regretted that, owing to failing health, the Rev. C. B. Greaves has been obliged to resign the living.

A brief business meeting was held on the lawn, and Col. R. C. Bond was elected, on the motion of Mr. H. M. Cooke, seconded by the Rev. E. Farrer, F.S.A., to serve as one of the Trustees of the Cullum Library at Bury St. Edmunds. New members were also elected.

St. Margaret's Church, Leiston, dates only from 1853, when the old church, a thatched building, was destroyed. There is, however, a very fine Early English font, having a round bowl on a trefoiled arcade; also a rude and curious oak chest. Some interesting inscriptions were pointed out on the walls of the tower. The Rector gave a story of the Church from the pulpit, and later on, when the party came to Leiston Abbey, gave a very much appreciated address on the history of this ruined house of the Premonstratensians. The original building was founded by Ralph de Glanville on a site nearer the sea; but being unapproachable by car, a visit to the site could not be included in the itinerary. The seashore proving somewhat bleak and unhealthy a move was made to the present site in 1363, the old building being retained as a cell. But 26 years later the buildings were destroyed by fire, but the Abbey was at once re-built.

"When the S.I.A. visited the Abbey in 1890 they were told by Sir W. St. John Hope that the capitals of the arch of the crossing dated from the 12th, and not the 14th century, and these, he contended, were proof that the abbey had not been moved here from an earlier building, because that was not in accordance with the universal custom that was followed." ("E.A.D. Times" report).

Miss Wrightson, the present owner of Leiston Abbey, who purchased the property from Lord Huntingfield, lends the Chapel for the purposes of Retreats. By her kindness the party were allowed to roam all over the buildings, and the beauty of its setting and its garden is a very pleasant recollection of this visit to Leiston Abbey. Due acknowledgment was made of her courtesy.

THEBERTON.

The journey to Theberton Church was made via the hamlet of East Bridge in the unrealised hope that from thereabouts a glimpse might be had of the site of the original Premonstratensian Abbey situate on the shore by Minsmere Sluice. The route through these pleasant Suffolk lanes caused some of the party to miss their bearings, so that arrival

at Theberton was not simultaneous. At the entrance to the Church-yard, where stands a German machine-gun to the memory of Lt.-Col. C. H. M. Doughty-Wylie, v.c., c.b., c.m.g., and others of Theberton who fell in the Great War, we were met by the Rector, the Rev. T. J. Bailey. The Church of St. Peter is a thatched building, of rubble and flint with stone dressings, almost entirely Perpendicular. In the north wall, however, there is a very fine Norman doorway consisting of an arch of two orders, each having a zig-zag moulding, and supported by a round pillar having a plain capital. The base of the tower is round, and is of flint; while the upper part is octagonal, and ornamented with flint and freestone.

By the south porch is an altar-tomb inscribed: "Here is a stone to sitt upon . . ." It commemorates John Fenn (1678), son of the Rev. William Fenn, Rector of this parish, who was "turned out of this living and sequestered for his loyalty to the late King Charles the First." His "misdeamours" included bowing "toward the funt and communion table."

The octagonal font (1480 or earlier) bears the emblems of the Evangelists, alternated with shields. The pedestal is supported by grotesque figures, with roses above. The Church plate includes an Elizabethan chalice.

Over the south entrance hangs part of the Zeppelin L.48, which was brought down in flames on June 17th, 1917. Sixteen of the crew rest in carefully tended graves in the new detached cemetery opposite the School. The following touching inscription is most appropriate, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth."

Another stirring episode of the Great War is commemorated in the beautiful stained glass window to the memory of Lt.-Col. Doughty-Wylie, who won the Victoria Cross posthumously by his gallant leading of the assault on Sedd-el-Bahr, Gallipoli. A mural tablet on the south wall recalls his previous gallantry and services during the massacres of Adana in Asia Minor.

A great lover of the Turks, who in turn admired him, he, like General Gordon, went into action unarmed, and carrying only a cane.

ALDEBURGH.

After inspecting the Registers and the Communion Plate at Theberton Church, and thanking the Rector for his kindness, the party made for Aldeburgh. Here in the Jubilee Hall they were welcomed by the Mayor, Mr. R. Parris. Tea was very kindly provided by Mrs. A. Galsworthy, who is one of the Members of the Institute. A vote of thanks to both His Worship the Mayor and Mrs. Galsworthy was moved by Sir John Tilley.

Subsequently the party listened in the upper room of the Moot Hall to a very full paper prepared by Mr. H. C. Casley on the history of the Borough. This was read by Mr. G. E. Daldy, Assistant Town Clerk. The Borough regalia, together with charters and records were on display, by courtesy of the Mayor and Corporation.

A few of the party visited the little Museum, and others the large Parish Church of St. Peter and Paul, where they were received by the Vicar, the Rev. G. C. Danvers, M.C., who had served as Battalion Padre to the 2nd Bn. the Suffolk Regiment from 1916 to 1918. The Vicar had several brass rubbings to show. Interest was shown in the extensive repairs which were going on in the Church, the roof having been badly damaged by ravages of the death-watch beetle.

W. M. LUMMIS (Excursion Director).

BARHAM, SHRUBLAND PARK, CODDENHAM.

FRIDAY, JULY 20TH, 1934.

The rendezvous was Barham Church, situated on the ridge 1 mile east of the Ipswich-Norwich main road, and overlooking the Gipping Valley. After an opening prayer by the Rector, the Rev. L. B. C. Newell, the Excursion Director referred in his remarks to the origin of the name. Anciently it was "Bergham"—the place of barrows. It thus preserves an old Saxon word. An old manuscript copied by the Rev. John Longe commenting on this, points out that there are two barrows near here—one on the Coddenham Road, and "the other a little farther on in the same field by the Beacon road's side."

A few years ago three skeletons were found lying face downward in the Chapelfields adjoining, or close to Barham Church. There is a tradition that a battle between Saxons and Danes was fought on this site.

The Church (St. Mary) is an ancient one, mainly of the Decorated period, but underwent extensive restoration by the Dowager Lady Middleton in 1865. Some seats belong to the 14th century, the modern ones being copies of these. A most unusual feature is the raised side-chapel on the north, containing the Shrubland pew. The church contains monuments of the Booth, Southwell, Bacon and Middleton families, and five hatchments of the Middletons. That of Edward Bacon, 3rd son of the Great Lord Keeper, and his wife Hellen, who bore him 19 children, was of special interest. It is situated in the centre of what is now the vestry. The window in this Dormitory or Chapel (says Davey in 1827) bears a great resemblance to one in the Nave of Henley Church, and both were probably built by Sir Philip Booth of Shrubland, Knt.

Extracts from the Registers were read referring to some of the Rectors of the 17th century. William Kirby, the eminent naturalist (born at Witnesham, 1759) was Curate at Barham under Rev. Nicholas Bacon, whom he succeeded as Rector, dying in 1850, having been Rector 68 years. There is a window to his memory put up by Anna, Lady Middleton.