

REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS, 1931.

SPRING MEETING.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Museum, Maidstone, on April 9th, the chair being taken by the President. Particulars of the business transacted in the morning, and of the papers read at the afternoon meeting, appear in the Council's Report printed at the beginning of this volume.

SUMMER MEETING.

The Summer Excursion took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 23rd and 24th, somewhat earlier than has been usual in recent years. Some 280 members and friends took part, and admirable arrangements were made by Major T. M. Osborne, of Chilham, who has taken over the onerous duties of Hon. Excursions Secretary in East Kent, which Mr. Elliston Erwood so excellently carried out for many years.

The meeting place on the first day was at Ashford station. The first object of interest to be visited was the church of **High Halden**, where the party was met by the rector, the Rev. C. P. Johnson. The church was described by Mr. V. J. Torr.

Dedicated to St. Mary, it consists of nave, chancel, and S. aisle, with chapels unsymmetrically placed to the N. and S. (Plan *Arch. Cant.* XXVI, p. 294). The present fabric is substantially of the 13th century, with later windows, and with a remarkable 14th century timber tower and spire at the W. end which may be compared with the detached campanile at Brookland. A good Perp. arcade divides the S. aisle from the nave, and against one of its piers is a late 12th century font similar to that at Aldington (see *Arch. Cant.* XLII, 223). The S. porch is a good example of Dec. timber work, and there is a Perp. king-post roof over the chancel. The

church is fully dealt with in Canon Livett's article in *Arch. Cant.* XXVI, 295.

The party then left for **Tenterden**, where they were welcomed by the Mayor (Col. Findlater) in the Town Hall, before proceeding to lunch at the Drill Hall. After lunch the church was described by the Vicar, the Rev. M. L. Man.

Tenterden Church (St. Mildred), though lofty and spacious, is more noteworthy for its contents than for its structural features, among which however, the 15th century tower is very important, and famous for its often quoted connection with the Goodwin sands. It contains a peal of eight bells which claim to be the best parish church bells in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The north aisle has built into it an interesting alabaster panel of the Resurrection, English work of the 14th century, rescued some forty years ago from a neighbouring farmhouse. In the E. wall of the same aisle are paintings representing St. Peter with the keys and the patron saint of the church. The interior of the church has recently been whitened, a course which, though recommended by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, did not meet with the unqualified approval of all the members.

Woodchurch Church was then visited, and described by Dr. F. William Cock, F.S.A., the party having been met by the rector, the Rev. C. E. Owtram.

The church consists of tower, nave (with N. porch and parvise), aisles with chapels, and a particularly fine chancel. The greater part of the work is of the 13th century, but the outer walls of the aisles were largely rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries. The E.E. nave pillars, alternately octagonal and circular, were, with misguided zeal, polished with beeswax and turpentine by the village schoolmaster and his pupils about a hundred years ago. There is a great deal of interesting woodwork, and some fine heraldic glass which is in need of releading. There are brasses of the Herlackenden family (see *Arch. Cant.* XIV) and others. In the churchyard is a curiosity in the shape of a wooden 18th century headstone. The church is fully described in *Arch. Cant.* XIV.

The Herlackenden missal, a 15th century MS. of Sarum use, was exhibited by kind permission of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and Dr. Cock also showed some interesting 17th century books, some of the works of Edward Boughen, rector of the parish.

On the return journey the church at **Great Chart** was visited, the Rector, the Rev. N. A. Holt, again welcoming the party. The description of the building was shared by Canon G. M. Livett, F.S.A., and Mr. V. J. Torr. The architecture has been fully dealt with by Canon Livett in *Arch. Cant.* XXVI, which also contains a paper on the glass and brasses by the late Rev. H. W. Russell. Mr. Torr's supplementary remarks on the font and other details will, it is hoped, form the basis of an article in a later volume.

After tea at the County Hotel at Ashford the official programme ended, but some of the members were able to remain to hear Mr. Torr describe **Ashford Church**.

The present building (which replaces a Norman fabric and is dedicated to St. Mary), is a cruciform structure, with chancel chapels and a central tower, and dates almost wholly from the 14th century. The windows are later, and the nave was extended westwards during the last century; it has a good Laudian ceiling, but is disfigured by 17th and 18th century galleries. There are several interesting monuments, and some remains of brasses (notably of the Countess of Atholl, 1375) which have recently been satisfactorily reset in the N. chapel under the supervision of Dr. Cock. The ten bells date from the 17th and 18th centuries, and there is a fine example of the Royal Arms of 1660. (See also *Arch. Cant.* XXVIII, lxxviii-lxxxviii.)

On the second day members again assembled at Ashford station, this time setting out for **Saltwood Castle**, which was visited by kind permission of Mrs. Lawson. The rooms in the castle could unfortunately not be seen, but the historical and architectural features of the building were explained by the late Dr. Randall Davis.

The ruins date from the 11th to the 14th centuries. Their ruined condition is due to a violent earthquake which

occurred in 1580. Saltwood was one of the Manors of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and was their principal residence during and after the time of Archbishop Courtenay, who built a new gateway and enlarged the castle by the addition of a big outer-bailey with a gateway and surrounding wall. It was here that the four knights met and together with Randolf de Broc—who was then living in the Castle—on the night of 28th December 1170, planned the murder of Archbishop Becket, which was perpetrated in the evening of the following day.

Leaving Saltwood, the party proceeded to Hythe, where they were received by the Mayor, who with the members lunched at the Imperial Hotel. **Hythe Church** was next visited, and was described by the Vicar, the Rev. C. W. Chastel de Boinville, some additional remarks on the bones in the "crypt" being made by the Rev. H. D. Dale, a former Vicar.

The church of St. Leonard, Hythe, replaces an early Norman structure, enlarged in late Norman times, traces of which are to be seen in the N. and W. walls of the nave. The greater part of the present building—nave with aisles, transepts, triple chancel and W. tower—dates from the Early English period. Its most striking feature is the extreme elevation of the chancel, perhaps modelled on that of Canterbury Cathedral, and described by Mr. Francis Bond as "the finest chancel of any Parish Church in England, not to say Europe". This allowed for the construction of a crypt-like ambulatory beneath it. Among the many details of interest in the church are the 13th century sedilia; an Easter Sepulchre in the unusual position of the N. wall of the N. transept; and an iron treasure chest near the lectern, said to have come from one of the ships captured from the Spanish Armada. The church is exhaustively described, with numerous plans, by Canon Livett and Mr. Dale in *Arch. Cant.* XXX, 263 ff.

On the way from Hythe to Lympne, the attention of members was directed to the monument (often mistaken for a War Memorial) which Lord Beauchamp, Lord Warden of

the Cinque Ports, has recently erected on the ancient site of Shepway Cross, "To the Glory of God and in memory of the historic deeds of the Cinque Ports".

Lympne Church, where the Vicar, the Rev. G. H. Green, met the party, was described by Canon G. M. Livett, F.S.A., who has contributed a full "analytical study" of it to the last Volume (XLIII) of *Arch. Cant.*, supplementing the earlier description by Scott Robertson in Vol. XVIII.

By kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beecham, to whom especial thanks are due, members were permitted to visit some of the rooms in **Lympne Castle** and the building was described by Mr. Aymer Vallance, F.S.A.

Strictly speaking this is not a "Castle", but a fortified Manor of the Archdeacon of Canterbury. Though it has (of late years) been much enlarged from the designs of the late Sir Robert Lorimer of Edinburgh, the nucleus of the old house that remains can still be distinguished. The original entrance to the Great Hall survives in the shape of a two-storeyed porch on the north side, though the door no longer serves its old purpose. The Hall screen, which is known to have existed in 1858, has long since vanished. Originally, of course, the Great Hall must have had a central hearth and an open roof; no trace survives of the hearth and the louvre has vanished. The roof, after having been closed, has once more been opened up to the ridge. There is no oriel-bay, nor does there appear ever to have been one. The solar still exists beyond the West end of the Hall. At the opposite end, the site of the old offices remains; but the arrangement of the rooms has been altered almost beyond recognition. The apsidal termination of the house at the West is unnatural, but it may be accounted for on the supposition that there was a large watch-tower. (See also *Arch. Cant.* XXX, lii.)

Following this, Canon Livett gave a brief address on the geological formation of **Romney Marsh**, dealing with the Rhee Wall, the Roman Fort at Stutfall, the Cinque Ports, and the Military Canal. This brought the archæological

programme to a close, but, tea having been arranged at **Lympne Aerodrome** (by kind permission of the Commandant, Commander Deacon, R.N. Retd.), an opportunity occurred for such members as cared to do so to stay on and conclude their two days' study of the past with a glimpse at modernity. Commander Deacon was good enough to act as guide.

AUTUMN EXCURSION.

The Autumn Excursion was held on Saturday, September 19th, in the neighbourhood of Otford and Cowden, and was excellently organised by Mr. F. Godwin, of Sevenoaks. Some 100 or more members assembled by eleven o'clock at Otford Green and made their way to the ruins of **Otford Palace**, which was described by Dr. Gordon Ward.

The palace was built by Archbishop Wareham in the early 16th century on the site of a much older manor house. It is supposed that it was here that Cranmer wrote the Thirty-nine Articles, and there is no doubt that most of the Kings and Archbishops of England from the Conquest to the Reformation stayed from time to time at Otford.

The palace and park are dealt with by the late Major C. Hesketh, in *Arch. Cant.* XXXI, and the making of the park by Dr. Ward in Vol. XLI.

A visit was then made to **Becket's Well**, a walled-in spring head at a short distance from the palace. Becket was frequently a visitor at Otford, and his enclosing of the well is only one of the many legends that have arisen about him in this neighbourhood. Various finds of Samian ware and other fragments from a first century cremation burial and an inhumation recently discovered at Eynsford were exhibited in the window of Mr. T. H. Knight's shop facing the Green.

Otford Church was also visited, the description of it being put into the hands of Mr. V. J. Torr, by arrangement with the Vicar, the Rev. A. E. Elder.

Dedicated to St. Bartholomew, Otford Church consists of chancel, nave, S. aisle, and tower, the base of which is

Norman. The windows are mainly decorated, but have been much restored. There was extensive rebuilding after a fire early in the seventeenth century, the tower then being repaired with brick. In 1637 a timber porch was added at the W. A square recess, absurdly known as a "leper's squint," in the W. wall of the sacristy to the N. of the chancel, was probably an aumbry. The church contains two stone coffin-covers with crosses in relief, of about 1200. The Royal Arms have recently been well restored.

The journey of ten or eleven miles to Hildenborough was full of interest, members' attention being directed to the fine timbered house "Pickmoss" in the main street of Otford, and to Broughton House with its highly decorated Tudor gable. Passing along the "Pilgrims' Way", members were able to see the two Otford battlefields, referred to in Mr. Box's article, "Notes on the History of Saxon Otford", in the last Volume (XLIII) of *Arch. Cant.* In the first battle Offa of Mercia defeated the Kentish king in 775, and in the second the English under Edmund Ironside defeated the Danes under Cnut in 1016. Between these two interesting sites was the old Saxon "plegstow" or playing field. Dr. Ward's sketch maps of Otford Park and of the battle sites, included in the programme, were very helpful.

Lunch was taken in the **Old Barn, Hildenborough**, a fine example of a Kentish barn, though little is known of its history. After this a beautiful drive of some ten miles through the weald brought the party, now much increased in size, by way of **Cowden** to **Scarletts**, where Dr. Gordon Ward gave a talk on the iron works. By kindness of Mr. W. R. Biddell, members were admitted to the mill where the old wooden-toothed wheel was working as it did in the old days. The members then dispersed, having spent a very pleasant day, to the enjoyment of which the fine weather contributed.