

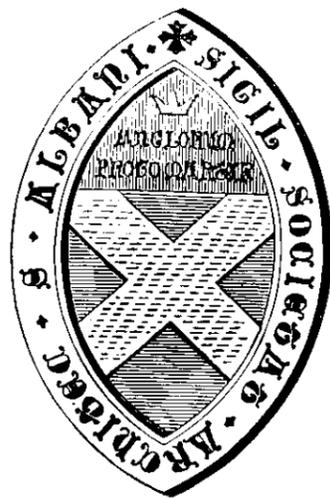
St. Albans Architectural

AND

Archæological Society.

TRANSACTIONS

1886.



St. Albans:

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1887.

St. Albans Architectural Society.

Founded 1845.

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S. ALBANS
Architectural and Archæological
SOCIETY.

PROCEEDINGS.

MAY 25TH, 1886.

An Archæological Excursion to S. Neots and Peterborough was conducted by the Secretaries.

Members and friends, to the number of about 20, from Wheathampstead and S. Albans, arriving at S. Neots at 9.40 a.m. by the Great Northern Railway, proceeded to the old bridge over the Ouse, where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. R. C. Meade and Dr. Evans.

The Rev. H. Fowler read some historical notes on the structure, afterwards pointing out the site of the Gatehouse and the Court of the ancient Priory close to the bridge. In the modern Priory-house some old carved oak panels were inspected: also in a cellar of a house in the Market-place some fragments of stone tracery, probably the only remaining relics of the Monastery of S. Neot.

The party then assembled in the parish church (S. Mary's), where Mr. Fowler read a paper on the history of the Priory, and the traditions of S. Neot preserved in an Anglo-Saxon homily, edited in Gorham's *History of Eynesbury and S. Neots*. The edifice was then inspected under the guidance of Mr. S. Flint Clarkson, who, in an instructive paper, described its remarkable architectural features in considerable detail. From the churchyard he pointed out with much elaboration the structural and decorative peculiarities of the grand Tudor tower, comparing it, by means of photographs, with other fine towers of the *Perpendicular* period.

After this the Vicar kindly gave an account of the work of restoration undertaken in modern times, directing attention to the excellent carving of the oak benches. He also expressed his gratification at the visit of the Society.

An inspection of the Museum of Dr. Evans, by his courteous invitation, concluded the proceedings at S. Neots, at which much satisfaction was expressed by the excursionists.

A pic-nic lunch was partaken of in the train.

On arriving at Peterborough, Canon Davys conducted the party to the Church of S. John the Baptist, built by Abbot Genge. At his request, the Vicar, Canon Syers, gave some historical particulars, and exhibited the Mediæval Churchwardens' Accounts dating from Henry IV.'s reign; also the old Registers, containing the record of the burial of Mary Queen of Scots.

On reaching the Cathedral precinct, the Western Gatehouse, with its interesting adjuncts, was pointed out. While the party viewed from this point the superb effect of the western portico and towers, their unique structural features were pointed out by Canon Davys. By the kind permission of the Bishop, the vaulted undercroft and other portions of the Abbot's Lodge were seen in the Palace; also, in the gardens, the wall-arcading of the Refectory of the Monks. In the Laurel Court the fine remains of the cloisters, of various dates, and the arrangement of the adjoining monastic buildings were explained by the Canon, who exhibited a plan of the site, prepared for the enlarged * edition of his *Architectural Guide to the Cathedral*. The beautiful ruins of the Infirmary and of the Chapel of S. Lawrence, also the Infirmary's house, and portions of other monastic adjuncts, now comprised in the Prebendal houses, were kindly pointed out by Canon Argles. The excursionists were then conducted over the interior of the Church by Canon Davys. In an inspection commencing at the eastern limit, the Chapel designated the *New Building*, the Presbytery, with its splendid apse, the grand transepts and transeptal chapels, the magnificent nave, with its aisles, were successively examined, and the portions of the structure erected by successive Abbots

* The 6th Edition of this book has now been published, and may be obtained at Peterborough, and at Randall's, Booksellers, S. Albans.

discriminated. The attention of the party was directed with much interest to the works of restoration in progress, more especially to the recently re-erected Central Lantern. The changes of design and style observable in the western transepts, and the later work of the western façade were fully explained by the Canon in his instructive comments on the history of the venerable fabric.

After the inspection of the interior, the party passed by Abbot Kirton's gateway, now the entrance to the Deanery, and proceeded to the Cemetery, from which the exterior of the north side of the Cathedral was viewed. Here many interesting fragments of early sculpture (some being Saxon work) recently brought to light, were pointed out by the clerk of the works, Mr. J. T. Irvine.

The majority of the visitors, after being hospitably entertained at tea by Canon Argles, returned by the 4.10 p.m. train, reaching their destinations about seven o'clock.

By a few, who remained to attend the Cathedral service (at 5.30), which was most beautifully rendered, a visit was paid to the Museum of the Peterborough Natural History and Archæological Society.

The weather proved remarkably favourable, and the day's expedition was thoroughly appreciated by the small number of members who availed themselves of the opportunity afforded.

J. GRIFFITH, Chairman.

Annual Meeting held at the Town Hall, St. Albans,
AUGUST 12TH, 1886.

Present—The Rev. J. Griffith, LL.D., in the chair; the Rev. Canon Davys and the Rev. H. Fowler, Hon. Secretaries; H. J. Toulmin, Esq., Hon. Treasurer; the Rev. T. G. Gibbons and Mr. A. E. Gibbs.

The minutes of the last two Excursions were read by the Rev. H. Fowler, and confirmed.

The audited Balance Sheet was presented and passed.

The officers of the Society were proposed for re-election by the Chairman, and re-elected.

E. N. Wix, Esq., Holywell-hill, St. Albans, and William B. L. Lowe, Esq., Hatfield-road, St. Albans, were duly elected ordinary members.

The following books were announced as added to the Library :—Swallow's *De Nova Villa*, a volume of the transactions of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington; Mrs. H. Hine's Ten Etchings of St. Albans; the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Rolls Series); Canon Davy's Peterborough Cathedral (6th Edition); North's Church Bells of Herts.

A half-day's autumn excursion was proposed by Dr. Griffith, who was requested to undertake the direction after maturing a plan in concert with the Hon. Local Secretary.

WALTER J. LAWRENCE, Chairman.

April 22nd, 1887.

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1886.

An Excursion towards the eastern side of the county was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Griffith on Sept. 15th.

Members and friends leaving S. Albans at noon were met at the Great Northern Railway Station, Hertford, at 12.44 p.m., by Mr. Hellier Gosselin, Secretary of the Royal Archæological Institute, and other friends. The party then proceeded on foot through the Warren to Bengoe Rectory. Here they were received by the Rector, the Rev. T. C. M. Mansel-Pleydell, who exhibited the old Parish Registers, dating from 1539, and read some curious extracts relating to the burials. A chalice of unusual size and weight, dated 1626, and bearing the inscription, "Bengoe Church, Fanshawe," was shown, and the story of its loss and recovery related.

On leaving the Rectory, the ancient little church of S. Leonard, long since disused, was visited. Here the early character of the masonry and features of the chancel arch, the Norman window and other apertures, discovered on stripping off the plaster from the walls; the apsidal chancel, with its piscina and mural diapers; some fine specimens of encaustic tiles, and other objects of interest, were pointed out and explained by Mr. Gerard J. H. Gosselin, of Bengoe Hall, by whose liberality a careful restoration of this interesting structure is being carried on.

The excursionists then proceeded through Ware Park. On reaching Shipman's Hill, which commands a fine view of the valley of the Lea, Mr. R. T. Andrews read some notes on "The Navigation of the Lea between Hertford and Ware, from 1600 to 1814." In the walk to Ware the site of the ancient Ermine Street was pointed out by Dr. Griffith.

The party was met at the parish church (S. Mary's) by the Rev. R. Higgins, Vicar of Ware-side, who read some notes on the condition of the fabric previous to the important restoration effected in 1848, under the architect, Mr. Godwin. The architectural features of this fine cruciform church were then inspected; the unique arcade on the south side of the chancel, the handsome roof of the nave, the remarkable sculptures of the font, and other details being pointed out by Mr. Higgins.

The party was afterwards courteously received at Ware Priory by Mr. Robert Walters, the owner, who read some notes on the Franciscan Friary, founded there by Thomas Wake in 1337. This, he stated, had been confounded by some writers with the older monastic institution established by Margaret, Countess of Leicester, in 1234.

After partaking of Mr. Walter's hospitality, and viewing the house, the excursionists returned by train to Hertford, the party from S. Albans reaching their destination soon after six o'clock. The expedition appeared to be greatly enjoyed.

WALTER J. LAWRENCE, Chairman.

April 22nd, 1887.
