

24. JULY 1914.

Rambles Round Broughton.

Yeomen Who Fought in the Wars.

THE HOME OF ANNE STEELE.

To the uninitiated Broughton possesses few charms beyond its claims—and rightly so—to being one of the most delightful villages in the quiet valley of the Test. But, to use a well-worn phrase, there is more in Broughton than meets the eye, and only inquiring seekers after knowledge—the Southampton Ramblers Club for instance—find a deeper and more fascinating interest in the former life of this little community of souls.

It was the privilege of this Rambling Club to pay Broughton a visit on Saturday, and a still greater pleasure to be conducted by Mrs. Suckling, of Highwood, Romsey, than whom there is no greater authority on Hampshire history. This good lady studies her county as a hobby, hence the unflinching interest she takes, which makes her little lectures full of meaning and her writings overflow with knowledge.

Arriving at Horsebridge from Southampton the party, numbering over 20, drove to Broughton through the most delightful surroundings. Fields of waving corn, caught in the ears by the sun's powerful rays, glistened against a background of green, here a backward cereal and there a pretty plantation of young fir trees ranged so uniformly as to remind one of the hop rows of Kent. On the party drove, through the deepest of green country lanes, following the winding course of the river, in which flashed from time to time handsome trout. Wild flowers in the hedgerows attracted attention, and names galore were pronounced as belonging to this or that particular species. In less than an hour Broughton, reposing like a gem in an ocean of green, hove in sight, and the Ramblers suddenly became imbued with the spirit of genuine anticipation.

The first visit was to Broughton House, a pretty building basking in glorious sunshine, for the day was ideally perfect for rambling. Here Mr. W. Steele Tomkins welcomed the guests and escorted them to an elevated position overlooking the tennis courts, where, on the terrace and in refreshing shade, the members were told of old Broughton days by Mrs. Suckling, who had delved in the county archives to an astonishing degree. Her paper was as follows:—

Broughton, one of the early Saxon "tuns," is supposed to be identical with the ancient Roman station of Brieg.

"The site of their old glass works at Buckholt and Broughton is one of the most interesting in Hampshire," and may be seen where the Roman road from Winchester to Old Sarum (very much as they left it) crosses the old British highway from north to south of the county. It was along that same road, in August 1086, William the Conqueror rode from Winchester, past Farley Chamberlayne and Ashley, along Teg Down and so across the Test near Horsebridge, through Buckholt Forest to Salisbury Plain, where he met all the landowners of substance in the Kingdom, who submitted to him and swore oaths of allegiance. Close to this road is a place now called Norman Court, recorded in Domesday Book under the name Chingez

Camp, where, a Hampshire tradition says, King William encamped on that memorable occasion.

It is also alleged that men from Broughton were among Harold's followers at the battle of Hastings in company with the Saxon tenants at East Tytherley, who are known to have met their death in that encounter. During the reign of the Saxon Kings Broughton was a Royal Manor, and in the time of Edward the Confessor brought in annually £76 16s. 4d. The present church, said to have superseded the one mentioned in the Domesday Survey, was assessed at the last Crusade, in 1290, at £33 6s. 8d., and in 1341 was taxed for the French wars of Edward the Third, when the jurors sworn were:—John at the Mill, Simeon le Tailour, and Thomas le Eye.

At that time there was a Rectory house, with a Columbarium, or Pigeon house, as part of its endowment, a privilege usually confined to lords of manors, and it is now unique as the only Rectorial Columbarium in Hampshire.

In the church is a memorial, erected in 1625 by his son, Sir Edmund, to Thomas Dowse (born 1535, died 1602), who was lord of this manor in 1590. He was the direct ancestor of Francis Dowse, the celebrated antiquary, and grandfather of the Rev. Giles Dowse, Rector here from 1630 to 1646, when the living was sequestered during the Rebellion. The arms of this family gave the name to the present "Greyhound Inn" in the village, where the artist Recklaen once stayed during a sketching tour, and painted the sign. It will be noted that Thomas Dowse was a younger son of the family seated at Moor Court, near Romsey, an old house visited by the Ramblers Club in 1911.

"The Manor place of Oak," which is now incorporated in the estate of Mr. Steele Tomkins (our host) adjoins Broughton House, where Anne Steele, the hymn writer died in 1778, and is of very great interest historically. It will be found mentioned in the "Victoria History of Hampshire," as belonging to one Richard Brent, who settled it in the 16th century, upon his daughter Anne, wife of Sir Thomas Paulet; and "in 1675 it belonged to Richard Godfrey, whose eldest daughter and co-heir married William Steele, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and brought her portion of the estate into that family." In point of fact, Elizabeth

Godfrey, whose father was buried at Wye, in Kent, in 1641 was married at Elmstead, in that county, in March, 1638, to William Steele, who had been called to the bar only the previous year. She was his first wife, and the mother of his son Richard Steele, whose son Richard was the M.P. for Stockbridge. The relationship of these Godfreys and Steeles to the old Godfrey family of Romsey, who owned Lee and Timsbury Manors, and "lands at Broughton," is clearly proved by their wills at Canterbury, Winchester, &c. The final purchase of the estate of Oak is recorded in the will of Mr. William Steele (great grandfather of our host), who executed it at Broughton House in the year 1785, and bequeathed "my lands called Godfreys, which I purchased of the family of Godfrey" (with "the site of the Manor Farm of Oak, the messuage arm mansion house and place of the said Manor of Oak.")

The testator, who was brother of Anne Steele (born 1717, died 1778), the poetess, was fourth in direct descent from William Steele (born 1600, died 1663), who is said to have built the house now called "Grandfathers" and to have taken an active part in the religious controversies in the village in the civil war, which culminated in the erection of a Baptist Chapel there in April, 1655. His grandson, Henry Steele, who made a handsome fortune in contracting for timber for the navy, and resided at Broughton House, was pastor of this chapel for 40 years, and was "so much followed that the then rector of Broughton complained to Bishop Burnet that one Henry Steele had drawn all the people after him." To which the prelate replied, "Go home and preach better than Henry Steele and the people will return."

Apparently they did not, for Henry Steele's successor and nephew, William Steele, of "Grandfathers" (born 1689, died 1769), is said to have "preached to one congregation for 60 years," and to have greatly excelled his uncle in eloquence.

Anne Steele, the hymn writer, was born at "Grandfathers" in 1717, as the daughter of the aforesaid eloquent pastor and Anne Frowd, his wife (sister of the Rev. John B. Frowd, a naval chaplain at the battle of Trafalgar). Always delicate, the future poetess early devoted herself to literature, and as she grew up her father fitted up for her a room at "Grandfathers," with a new fireplace and oak cupboards, which are still shown.

She published her first volume of poems in 1760 under the name of "Theodosia," which were so well received that she was able to devote the proceeds to works of charity. After her father's death in 1769 Anne went to live with her brother and his wife at Broughton House, where, on the terrace under a fine avenue of trees, now gone, she composed some of her best known hymns and poems. She died in 1778, after long years of confinement to her room, aged 61, and was buried beside her father in Broughton churchyard. In 1780 a two volume edition of her works, with an introduction by Dr. Caleb Evans, was published, and this was followed in 1863 by an edition with a memoir by Mr. John Sheppard, who incorporated many interesting genealogical details of her family. Anne Steele's Bible is still preserved in the library belonging to the Baptist Chapel, which boasts a

collection of some 1500 volumes bequeathed by a former member of the congregation. Some pews in this chapel are of oak from the wreck of H.M.S. Royal George, lost off Spithead in 1782.

"Grandfathers," with the rest of the Steele property, eventually descended to Anne Steele's namesake and niece, Mrs. Joseph Tomkins (born 1767, died 1859), whose grandson, the late Judge Henry Mason Bompas (died 1909), most carefully and lovingly restored it for his own use, but never lived to enjoy it.

Anne Steele's stepsister, Mary Steele, in 1749 became the wife of Joseph Wakeford, of Andover, whose son, William Steele Wakeford, about 1800, purchased the Giffords' fine old manor house of East Tytherley of the Rolle family, and died its lord in 1819. It was acquired from his sons, Robert and William Wakeford, bankers, by Sir Isaac Goldsmid, Baronet, whose wife was in residence alone there at the time of the machine riots, and was so greatly alarmed that she fled and could never be induced to return, with the result that the house, remaining empty, fell into decay, and is now razed to the ground.

It was extremely interesting to note that there were no votes of thanks to Mrs. Suckling. The eager and ever alert demeanour of the audience and the applause they gave at the end of the paper was sufficient thanks, and they were appreciated.

After passing through the gardens, and admiring a fine old picture of Broughton House as it existed years before, and before Mr. Steele Tomkins had repaired the present fabric, the party wended their way across the trout stream, which Mr. Tomkins reminded them dried up in exceptional weather, and down to what at first appeared very common looking stables. An interest attached to them however, which Mr. Tomkins was good enough to halt and explain. He showed where the old Manor of Oak stood, and how in the year 1850 Dr. Fox took a lease of it. It was partly added to and improved very much, and the stable and coach house built at the same time still remained. The house was partly pulled down by Mr. Steele Tomkins' predecessor as it was not worth reinstating. The corner stone, if there was one, was underneath the soil, as he had not dug it up. There was a very interesting circumstance connected with the house. He (the speaker), knowing somewhat the extent of the doctor's knowledge, asked the workmen who demolished the house in Feb., 1900, to keep a sharp look out for any records, and this is what they found chalked on the wall of the drawing or dining room underneath the canvas: he had copied it thus:—

"Because my family becomes numerous—ten—this room was added June, 1850, built by contract by Geo. Gale, son of Hy. Gale, at the expense of L. O. Fox, Surgeon, the present Tenant—Lease having been granted for 7, 14 or 21 years by Anne Tomkins, Widow, who is now residing in 'The Cottage,' and was dated 25th March, 1850.

Great consternation among farmers in consequence of Free Trade in corn.

Bread 9d. and 10d. a gall.

Labourers wages 7s.,

Fat pigs 7s. 6d. a score.

Bacon 9d. lb."

Then there was a list of the family's names and ages, part legible. In the chimney at the back was found a bottle in which appeared the following writing:—

1867, May 16. This room was plastered this day.

I have lived here upwards of 23 years.

William is in London, and about to be married. Edward at home.

Charley at Barbadoes and married, with one child.

Walter married at the Cape.

George in the Bank of England.

Tom at Univ. College and Alfred at Epsom College.

My wife is at home.

Weather very cold, but has been warm.

Reform Bill about to pass.

Mr. Walbey lives at the next House, and wants to sell it for £10,000. He gave about £6,700. Silas Mitchell is the bricklayer.

Rev. S. Lee, Rector.

Harry Lee arrived safely at Hong Kong.

The company were highly amused at these writings, and voted them as interesting as some of Pepys' declarations, although Pepys' were written on paper. The action of a child chalking on walls nowadays is by no means tolerated,

but as it was remarked, that sort of scribbling must have been in general vogue at that time. Of those sons, added Mr. Steele Tomkins, only one was still alive, namely, Alfred, who was a clergyman in the diocese of Worcester.

The host next very kindly pointed out that he pulled down a wall where that wooden fence was which enclosed the stable yard, and there he found a bottle containing the following memorandum on a roll of parchment:—

“For the information of generations here to come.

March 19, 1864.

This wall was completed thus far on the above date by Josiah Mitchell, assisted by John Watts, jun. The property belongs to Luther Owen Fox, M.D., F.R.C.S., formerly to Steele Tomkins, Esq., Deceased. Revd. Stanlake Lee, Rector of Parish—On the eve of a war with Prussia and Austria.—W. R. Fox (R. Art.) about to sail to the Cape of G. H.—Edward L. H. Fox entering on the duties of assistant vice Sanderson Walker, Esq., Surgeon to the Royal Elthorne Militia.—Miss Cozens engaged to Mr. Lee of Thane.—Miss Potheary also engaged to be married.—New Schoolroom being built at the top of the Lane.

Verite sans peur

et

Faire sans dire

W. R. F. fecit

Broughton.”

The original of this he handed to George Fox on Feb. 24., 1909.

Rambling on down Broughton House drive by the ripened loganberries and late strawberries, the party eventually arrived at “Grandfathers,” the home of Anne Steele, a hymn writer of the 18th century, now occupied by Miss Fletcher, who graciously threw open the house for the inspection of the party and gave full explanation to all queries. Chief interest centred in the bedroom, also used as a sitting room and study by Anne Steele. The old oaken wardrobe with cupboards above, built by the hymn writer’s father for her convenience, and the old fashioned latches on the door, were pointed out and admired, as well as the general oaken condition of the house. Some of it had been repaired from time to time, an alcove had been altered, and the fireplace filled in because of the great draught, but as far as possible the general architecture of Anne Steele’s childhood days was adhered to. The oak mantelpiece still remained, and mention was made of the fact that Anne Steele’s father had the chimney altered so as to allow her to use the bedroom as a study in which it is said she wrote many of her hymns. When someone suggested what beautiful timber the house was made of, Miss Fletcher endorsed what Mrs.

Suckling had said about Anne Steele’s father being a timber merchant.

After a full inspection had been made of the house and grounds—in the latter there is a yew tree spoken of as more than 300 years old—the members sauntered away to have a look at the tombstones of the Steeles in Broughton churchyard. There one saw those of the father and mother and the children. Prominent on one side of the massive masonry is the inscription recording Anne Steele’s death. It reads:—

“Anne Steele, daughter of Mr. William Steele, dyed Novbr: 11th, 1778, aged 61 years and 6 months.

Silent the Lyre and dumb the tuneful Tongue

That fung on earth her great Redeemer’s praise,

But now in Heav’n she joins the Angelic Sraife

In more harmonious, more exalted Lays.”

Adjourning to St. Mary’s Church, the company found the Rector, Rev. Alfred Woodin, waiting to act as guide, and out of the full knowledge which he possesses of the sacred edifice many interesting things were told. Mr. Woodin had a smack of humour which was perceptible at almost every stage, hence the great enjoyment which the party had from this particular tour.

The architecture was explained, and the place shown from which in all probability the Sanct bell was rung. The fine silken banner which heads the church’s procession on festive occasions was much admired, as it is quite unique. It is made of luxurious material, and hand painted. In the reedos the Ramblers noticed the fine picture of the Ascension from the Cross, and what struck many as being quite uncommon in country, or even town churches, painted panels depicting Christ at the raising of Jairus’ daughter, and bringing back to life the widow’s son of Nain. In the vestry the Rector’s museum was scanned, containing an old font cover, old stone altar, and pieces of masonry, presumably gathered at the time when the church was on fire. There was also in the vestry a fine old carved oak communion table.

On the way to the Rectory, where tea was served on the lawn, the Rector pointed out the Columbarium where for upwards of 600 years pigeons have been accustomed to make their haunts, much to the disgust of the local farmers. It stands in the newly consecrated burial ground. When the present Archbishop of Canterbury was Bishop of Winchester, Rev. A. Woodin told him of numerous complaints that had been made as to the Rector keeping pigeons. But the Bishop replied that the custom would still be enjoyed, for he would consecrate the ground immediately around the tower.

The cup of tea which was enjoyed on the lawn of the Rectory, provided by the Rector and Mrs. Woodin, was very much enjoyed after the long afternoon’s ramble. It was mentioned how all the Broughton people and Mrs. Suckling had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the joyful labours of making the ramble the success it had been, and genuine regrets were expressed that the Ramblers would not be touring again until September.

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the Gate on Wednesday, a very satisfactory sum considering that the rain in the afternoon affected the attendance.

Accident.—Mr. Stanley Hurford, son of Mr. F. Hurford, of Manor Farm, met with a very bad accident this week at Bournemouth. He collided with a motor cycle, he himself being on an ordinary bicycle. The impact was a very violent one and both riders were very badly cut about the face and head, the motor cyclist especially so. Mr. and Mrs. Hurford motored down in response to a telegram and found their son badly hurt. We are pleased, however, to hear now he is going on as well as can be expected.

RACING.—At Leicester on Tuesday Donoghue won the July Handicap on Mr. H. Braine’s Transvaal. The winner was trained by the owner, and the value of the race was £105. At the Liverpool meeting on Wednesday Donoghue won the Mersey Stakes of £1000. At the same meeting he also landed the Windermere High Handicap of £150.

CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY.—On Sunday and Monday the anniversary services in connection with the Wesleyan Chapel were held, Rev. J. H. Litten, second circuit minister, of Salisbury, preaching excellent sermons morning and evening to very good congregations. There was a young people’s service in the afternoon.—On Monday a public tea was held in the schoolroom, but the attendance was small. The usual meeting followed in the chapel, when Mr. Hutton, of Salisbury, took the chair, the announced chairman, Mr. C. Emmence, of King’s Somborne, being kept away. Rev. J. Wells, of Salisbury, gave a capital address. The audience numbered about 50. On both days collections were taken for chapel funds, and both on Sunday and Monday there was an excellent rendered by their aid. The organisers were Mrs. C. Marsh and Mr. Oliver Hinwood, Nether Wallop. On Sunday evening, just as the audience was dispersing, there was a heavy fall of rain.

A SNAPSHOT.—In a recent issue of the Daily Graphic is a picture of Mr. W. J. Bendrey marching past Admiral Lord Charles Beresford at an inspection of the sailor boys and girls of the Royal Merchant Seamen’s Orphanage, Searesbrook, Essex, where Mr. Bendrey is an assistant master. He is an old scholar of the Broughton Boys School, and under Mr. W. C. Uphall (now of Titchfield) won a scholarship at the Andover Grammar School, where he had a successful career, also at Hartley College, Southampton. He is well known locally as an excellent all-round cricketer, and for his old school he scored several centuries, and has made many excellent scores for Broughton.

ENTERTAINERS.—There have been quite a number of entertainings of one sort or another, to be held recently, all of which have made their headquarters the Greyhound Hotel, where Mr. and Mrs. A. Joyce have catered for them in a very satisfactory manner. Excellent dinners and teas being placed on the tables. Employees from the Southampton Gas Works and the Isle of Wight Steam Tug Co., were among those who have paid the village visit. The entertainings themselves are pleased with their arrangements, and they had very pleasant times with their friends. Broughton has become quite a centre of attraction, and a desirable place to visit.