

Wyre Forest Station, Furnace Mill and Arley.

Monday, October 27th, 1873

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The fourth and last meeting for the season 1873 was held on Monday, the 27th of October, in Wyre Forest. The club mustered at Shrub Hill, and proceeded by train to the Bewdley Forest Station, on the Tenbury line of railway, where many of the northern members joined the Worcester contingent. The first advance was made to Furnace Mill, which is situated on the banks of a brook that winds among picturesque sylvan scenery, and here is a pretty waterfall splashing over carboniferous rocks. Near the brook the *Mentha rotundifolia* (now - *Mentha suaveolens* Ehrh. – Round-leaved Mint) and other plants were found.

After passing through the little hamlet of But-ton Oak the naturalists proceeded along sequestered lanes to the banks of the Severn, Arley Church, Castle, and village on the opposite bank forming a very pretty view. The river was forthwith crossed, and the Rev. Mr. Wilding, the incumbent of Arley, meeting the party, invited them to inspect his church, which is seated on an eminence contiguous to the grounds of the Castle. He pointed out all that was curious about the building, and related the history of the cross-legged knight whose effigy reposes in the sill of the west window in helmet and armour, but with broken shield, and which, formerly thrown out

of the church and taken to a farm house, had afterwards been discovered and reinstated. The members then walked over the grounds and gardens attached to the Castle, which had been opened to their view by kind permission of Robert Woodward, Esq., the present possessor; but the Castle was erected by the late Earl of Mountnorris, who died here, and his only son, Lord Valentia, died in his father's lifetime. Both have mural monuments to their memory in the parish church. In the grounds is a vigorous specimen of *Pyrus domestica* (now - *Sorbus domestica*), which was gazed upon with interest as derived from the famous old Sorb tree in Wyre Forest, now destroyed, and which was the only apparently wild one of the species in this country; and indeed the tree is a rarity in arboretums. Specimens of the long-enduring pear-like fruit were picked up. They were once believed to be a talisman against witchcraft, and carefully preserved, and a fine specimen of *Polyporus giganteus* (now - *Meripilus giganteus* - Giant Polypore) was also noticed.

On leaving the Castle grounds, where there are many fine evergreen and exotic trees, the party hastened to the Valentia Arms, for dinner, after which the members returned by rail to Worcester.

At this meeting the Rev. Josiah T. Lea, of the Far Forest, Bewdley, was duly elected a member of the Club.



The cross-legged Knight in Arley Church (2023)

Graham Hill