

SUGGESTIONS FOR DESCRIBING ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

1. A preliminary description should be given of the neighbourhood and surroundings of the church or house, stating its distance from two or three well-known towns, and its relation to the points of the compass as regards those towns.

2. The ground-plan of the building should be first described, as it actually exists at the time of writing the description.

3. Then the various elevations, external and internal, should be given.

4. Next, the dates of the various portions of the structure, as determined by the mouldings and other incontrovertible architectural evidence, confirmed by actual documents, if such exist; bearing in mind that in the rebuildings which have so frequently taken place in the course of centuries, features of early date which happen to be in a good state of preservation are not infrequently used up again in the later structure.

5. The description should be accompanied by a table of architectural periods.

6. In many buildings the history of past alterations and rebuildings is clearly to be made out, by careful examination and by historical documents, but otherwise it is well to condense speculations on what might have been the original plans; and if such views are printed at all, they should be clearly given only as hypotheses.

7. It is generally desirable to re-write descriptions of this kind many times, carefully excluding all irrelevant matter, remembering that the public will not follow a long technical description.

8. Therefore the paper should have as many pictorial illustrations as funds will permit, and in all cases there should be a ground plan and at least one complete external pictorial view. In the case of quadrangular buildings, there should be a bird's-eye view. A section should, if possible, be given, and details of interesting features. The scale should be carefully marked.

9. A list of all books relating to the subject should be added, and it is often better, and perhaps more respectful to the authors, to give short quotations rather than a compilation, in which it is difficult to perceive whether the writer of the paper is giving the result of his own researches or those of other people.

10. In the case of houses, a brief history of the families who have lived in them should be given; and in the case of churches, there should be a list of rectors, and a description of all important monuments, memorial brasses, carving, and stained glass windows.

11. In Whewell's notes on *German Churches*, admirable rules are laid down for describing buildings, more or less elaborate, according to the time at the disposal of the visitor. His rules are intended for the use of amateurs, and if followed more extensively, there would be preserved to us records of many buildings which are fast disappearing. There are many such in Lancashire and Cheshire. This book should be in the Society's library, and the rules for describing buildings might with great advantage be printed for members of the Historic Society.

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