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OF THE
Cambridgeshire and
Huntingdonshire
Archæological Society

(FOUNDED A.D. 1900)

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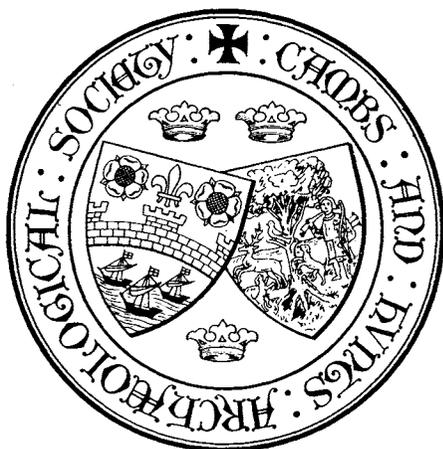
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OF THE
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Vol. III.

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Archæological Society

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VOLUME III.

EDITED BY THE REV. W. M. NOBLE, B.A.
RECTOR OF WISTOW, HUNTS.

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1914

PROCEEDINGS
OF
The Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire
Archæological Society.

THE SUMMER EXCURSION in 1908 took place on Wednesday, May 20, when the Society visited Ely.

Assembling in the Galilee Porch of the Cathedral the Ven. Archdeacon Chapman conducted the visitors through the Nave and Choir.

The Galilee Porch, a specimen of pure E.E. architecture built by Bishop Eustace, (1197—1215), opens directly into the great western tower, which is one of the distinctive features of the Cathedral. This tower, and its adjoining south transept, are of Norman date, but Perpendicular piers and arches have been inserted under the Norman arches of the tower to give additional strength.

The Nave, also of Norman date, is rather earlier than the tower and west transept, and was probably commenced soon after 1090, and completed about 1130.

In the south aisle is the base and stem of a Saxon cross, known as Ovin's stone, which was brought from Haddenham by the late Mr. Bentham. Ovin was steward to St. Ætheldreda, the foundress of Ely Monastery, and this stone, which evidently dates from the end of the Seventh Century, appropriately finds a resting place here.

In the south wall is a very rich Norman door with elaborately carved jambs, arch and tympanum, called the Prior's door; and at the eastern end of the same aisle is the Monks' door, also of Norman date and elaborately carved, and having a tympanum cut to a trefoiled shape. Close to it is another doorway, now blocked up, which has a plain tympanum, and is thought to be of the time of Abbot Simeon, (1081—1093). The transepts are the oldest parts of the Cathedral, and were commenced by Abbot Simeon, but completed by his successor, Abbot Richard.

The great central octagon, which differentiates this Cathedral from all others in England, was built after the fall of the Norman central tower in 1322 by Alan de Walsingham, successively Sub-Prior, Sacrist and Prior.

The octagon stands on eight massive piers, which carry four tall arches on the cardinal sides and four lower ones on the diagonal faces; the carved hood-mould terminals of the latter are portraits representing;—1. Edward III, 2. Queen Philippa, 3. Bishop Hotham, 4. Prior Crauden, 5. Alan de Walsingham,

6. Alan's master mason, either Peter Quadratarius or Thomas Attegrene, 7 and 8. Grotesques. Above these lower arches is a band of decorative niches filled with sculpture, and above this, in each bay, a four-light window with fine flowing Decorated tracery. Halfway up the eight piers are large niches with double-ogee canopies, and with carved bases representing incidents in the life of St. Ætheldreda. At the level of the springing of the taller arches, eight pendentives spring forward and form a kind of dome apparently carrying the lantern, but the latter is in reality carried on timber beams, and is itself formed of timber, covered on the outside with lead. Alan de Walsingham's nameless tomb lies in the nave, just outside the octagon, despoiled of its brass.

The three western bays of the Choir were destroyed by the fall of the tower, and were rebuilt at the same time as the octagon. The remaining six bays of the Choir are in the purest Early English style, and were built, *circa* 1235-1252, during the episcopate of Bishop Northwold. Those who went with the Society to West Walton, in 1907, saw there the memorial of the reputed Architect of that Church, who is thought to have been also Architect of this Presbytery of Ely;—there are many points of resemblance in the two buildings, *e.g.* the cylindrical columns with detached shafts round them, eight shafts in the Ely Presbytery—eight in the chancel and four in the nave at West Walton; the same bold carving in the caps; and the richly moulded arches.

Space will not permit us to describe the finely carved choir stalls, the interesting monuments, or the late and rich chapels of Bishop Alcock, 1488, and Bishop West, 1534; nor can we give more than a passing mention to the glorious Lady Chapel, with its wall arcading, double-ogee canopies, carving and statuary, terribly mutilated by the fanatics of the Reformation, but still one of the finest examples of pure Decorated work in the country, and of the workmanship of Ely's great Architect, Alan de Walsingham. For many other interesting particulars of Ely Cathedral the reader is referred to Dean Stubbs' Handbook¹, to which I am greatly indebted for help in putting together the above notes and the subsequent ones upon the conventual buildings.

Having spent the morning in the Cathedral, the party adjourned to the Lamb Hotel for Luncheon; after which they visited the monastic buildings, under the guidance of Dean Kirkpatrick, Archdeacon Chapman and Canon Kennett.

Very considerable remains of the Conventual buildings exist, but they are much enclosed and built in amongst the modern houses of the Dean and Canons.

The great gate-house, known as Ely Porta, was begun in the year 1396, and was not finished until twenty years later, the delay being due to the very heavy expenses to which the Monastery was subject at the time.

1. Ely Cathedral Handbook, by Dean Stubbs. *Tyndall, Ely*, price 1s. and 2s. Also see Bell's Cathedral Series; Ely, by Rev. W. D. Sweeting, 1s. 6d.

Northward of this gateway is a long range of buildings called the Gallery buildings, the walls of which are largely of Norman date and still exhibit the broad flat buttresses peculiar to that style. In the eastern wall is a good Norman door with plain tympanum, leading into a long vaulted chamber which communicates at its northern end with the fine Decorated Hall built by Alan de Walsingham for Prior Crauden, the large Decorated windows of which still remain.

Adjoining this Hall is the Deanery, anciently the great Guest Hall of the Monastery—this fine hall was 80 feet long, 32 feet wide, and 25 feet high; it is now divided into several rooms, and completely modernised, but the jambs and other portions of its windows may still be traced, and the ancient chimney still serves its original purpose. The magnificent oak roof, doubtless the work of Alan de Walsingham, still remains in excellent preservation, and a modern floor inserted at the level of the stone corbels which support its principal timbers gives an almost unique opportunity for examining a most interesting piece of mediæval carpentry.

Prior Crauden's Chapel, a delightful specimen of Alan de Walsingham's work, is now used as the chapel of the King's School. It stands upon a vaulted apartment, and is reached by a turret staircase in the buttresses at the north-west corner. It is vaulted, and has two-light windows on the sides and a very fine five-light at the east end—the west window is a four-light. The walls are panelled with Decorated arcading and niches with double-ogee canopies, and on the floor are some interesting ancient tiles.

Adjoining this chapel is the Prior's House, which although considerably altered during recent years, still retains a fine Norman crypt, now forming the entrance hall and kitchen of a Canon's house. This is said to be the oldest remaining part of the Conventual buildings, and to have been built, probably, in the time of Abbot Simeon, (1081-1093). The building over this crypt shows traces of Alan de Walsingham's works.

The sites of the Refectory, the Dormitory, the Norman Kitchen, and the Chapter House are known, but of these buildings almost nothing remains, and only very small portions of the cloisters.

Of the Infirmary of the Monastery much remains; the two arcade walls of late Norman work still stand, the columns being alternately circular and octagonal, some of the latter being placed with their angles to the cardinal points. The cross wall with Norman doorway which divided the Infirmary proper from its chapel also remains, and the chancel of the chapel now forms the study of one of the houses.

On the north side of this building is a large hall built by Alan de Walsingham, and known as "the painted chamber;" it is built over an older vault, now used as kitchens, &c., and at the south end of which is a very good Norman doorway with a tympanum ornamented with squares placed lozenge-wise and at the bottom corner of each of which is a smaller square. This

makes five tympana at Ely—quite an unusual number—the others being the Prior's Door, the Monk's Door, and the one near it, and the door to the Gallery buildings

Proceeding then to St. Mary's Church, the Rev. Kenelm H. Smith read a very interesting paper on its history, and described in a very amusing way his own life-long connection with it. From here he led the party to the Vicarage, formerly known as Cromwell House, and which was kindly thrown open for inspection by the Vicar, the Rev. Canon Punchard. Still under the guidance of Mr. Smith the party made their way to St. John's Hospital, a small chapel much mutilated, and patched with mean material, and now used as a barn. See Mr. Smith's paper on these three buildings in the Transactions (Vol. II, pp. 228-238).

After this the visitors adjourned to the residence of Archdeacon and Miss Chapman, who kindly entertained them to tea.

Canon Kennett now took the lead, and, in the absence of the Bishop, showed the party over the Palace. This is an interesting building, consisting of a centre and two towers, and a long western addition. The towers were built by Bishop Alcock, whose arms may be seen on a carved boss in the vaulting of a lower room, and also on the outside of the eastern tower. The western addition, which contains the long gallery, was built by Bishop Goodrich, and his arms are on the bay window facing the street. The chapel is small, and fitted up in the Renaissance style. With the exception of the portraits of former Bishops, a few other pictures, and the curious *Tabula Eliensis*, there is not much to be seen inside the Palace. The gardens are small but pretty, and contain a fine specimen of the Oriental Plane, planted in 1674. What appears to be a small Norman window may be seen in the upper part of a stable wall.

From the Palace the company made their way to the station by the pleasant path through the Park, many of them climbing to the top of Cherry Hill, and admiring the fine view of the country around. The origin of this hill is not certainly known—some think it to be the site of the Castle built by Bishop Nigel, others that this was the site of the Abbey Mill, others that it is a British burial mound—but whatever it may have been it has been much modernised and an obelisk has been built at the top by Mr. Bentham, *circa* 1779.

Those attending this visit, which was without exception the most popular excursion that the Society has organised, included the Revs. A. J. Edmonds, G. E. Sharland, A. Peskett, K. H. Smith, J. Pawley Smith, T. Hodgson, J. P. Dyer, W. M. Noble, J. S. Serjeant, S. St. A. Baylee, W. Robinson, A. G. Cane, C. T. Lawrence, A. L. Grimley; Messrs A. Bull, W. Emery, T. Spencer, D. R. Tomson, H. E. Norris, S. Inskip Ladds, J. Hall, G. G. Wheeler, E. L. Watts, L. Newton, F. Christmas, R. Watts White, G. H. Tyndall, W. Sheard; Mrs. Sharland, Mrs. Hodgson, Mrs. Noble, Mrs. Baylee, Mrs. and Miss Clarkson, Miss Carnegy, Miss May Ladds, Mrs. and Miss Walker, Mrs. Yeatherd, Miss Newton, and others.

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