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TRANSACTIONS. VOL. IV.

HADDON CHURCH, HUNTS.

The earliest record which we have of the parish of Haddon is contained in Domesday Book, which refers to it, amongst the lands of the Abbot of Thorney, in these words:—

(A Manor.) In Adone, the Abbot of Thorney had 5 hides paying geld. There is land for 12 ploughs. There are now in demesne 2 ploughs in one hide and a half of this land, and 18 villeins with 6 ploughs.

There is a church and a priest, and 24 acres of meadow and one acre of small woods.

In the time of King Edward and now worth 100 shillings.

In regard to the name of the village, it has been thought to be derived from "Adune" meaning down hill, which would be very appropriate as every road leading to Haddon is down hill, although on the east side the decline is hardly perceptible. Professor Skeat, however, says that it is derived from "Hadda's down"; the Old Mercian *Hadda* being a known personal name.

The parish, which is nearly three miles from Stilton, is small and compact, the inhabitants numbering about 80.

For many centuries Haddon Church belonged to Thorney Abbey, and until the Dissolution of the Monasteries that Abbey presented the Incumbents. After the Dissolution the patronage came into lay hands, and in 1682 was held by John Dryden, from whom it passed to the Piggotts, who held it from about 1708 to 1776. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was purchased, with the Manor, by the Earl of Aboyne, whose descendant, the Marquis of Huntley, is now Patron.

There are but few records, known to exist, to tell us anything of the actual building of the Church, or as to the additions and alterations which have evidently taken place in Pre-Reformation days; so we have to be content with what we can learn from the architecture of the Church itself.

There can be little doubt that the beginnings of the present church date back to the Norman period, as can be judged by the splendid Norman chancel arch. The pillars of this arch are in strict accordance with Norman work, and the designs of the carving on the capitals are carried out in low relief, suggestive of the intricate patterns so often fashioned by early painters.

The rest of the church, with the exception of the tower, is of thirteenth century date. The chancel has a very pretty two-light window in its north wall; and the nave is remarkable for the general use of the semi-circular arch,—the arches of the nave arcade and one of the early windows being of this form.

The porch also has Early English windows with semi-circular heads in its side walls.

Over the Norman chancel arch, and on the East walls of the north and south transepts are to be seen fifteenth century frescoes; the painting over the chancel arch depicting a "Doom", with our Saviour represented as sitting on a throne on a rainbow. The other fragments of decorative painting are in too advanced a state of decay for their meaning to be deciphered.

In the south wall of the south transept there is a good Decorated three-light window; and in the same wall there is a piscina, which points to the use of this transept as a side chapel.

The font is divided into two portions, the bowl being ancient. The font cover was carved by Miss Alderson, the sister of the late Rector of this parish and now Rector of Lutterworth.

The embattled tower contains in its west wall two fine specimens of Early English lancet windows which are grouped together inside under somewhat irregularly shaped arches. The upper stage of the tower contains windows of the late Perpendicular period.

There are three bells hung in a steel frame, and inscribed as follows:—

1. *Johannis est nomen ejus.* (25½ inches dia.)
2. A [a figure of a dog] BD EN ER 1568.
S. [on the waist, an animal.] (28¼ inches dia.)
3. Edwarde Newcome. (30½ inches dia.)

The treble is by Danyell; the second and third by Newcome. (Owen's Church Bells of Hunts.)

The paten bears the arms of the Bevill family, and the hall-mark for 1648-9. The Chalice is inscribed:—“Parish of Haddon Huntingdonshire, June 1798,” and bears the hall-mark of the London Office for that year.

The Registers are in excellent order; the earliest dates from 1538, the earlier entries, as usual, having been copied from an older book and attested on each page by the Rector, or Curate, and Churchwardens.

The church was restored in 1745, at the expense of John Piggott, who it is believed had a fine residence at Haddon; the Rector at that time being Samuel Addenbrook.

The roofs of the north and south aisles were restored by Lord Huntley and the Rev. C. H. Gandy, in 1897; and the roofs of the nave and chancel, together with a complete restoration of the tower and bells was accomplished by the Rev. M. F. Alderson, in 1906.

The window in the east end, of three lights, representing the Crucifixion and St. Michael and St. George, was erected by Mr. Lionel Trower in memory of his brother, Lieut. Cornwallis Jasper Trower, R.N., who was killed at Majuba Hill, 27th February 1881.

The picture, "the descent from the Cross," is the property of Mr. Trower, and is lent to the church.

Richard Hird, the Rector, who died in 1541, and willed to be buried in the "Chapel of Haddon," left to the said church 3 seme of malt and 2 of peas and beans, also a cow, a heifer and 7 sheep, these to be in the hands of his sister, Joane Roche, to provide an obit for his soul, his good friends' souls, and for all for whom he was bound to pray,—and after her death the churchwardens to take possession of the said animals for the yearly continuance of the prayers. During his sister's lifetime she was to distribute two shillings yearly,—4d. to the curate, 1d. to the clerk, 3d. to the ringers, 4d. to the churchwardens, and the rest to the poor; and the churchwardens were to distribute the same after her death.

John Colman, Rector, who died in 1572, willed to be buried in the church, and his executors were to make all the neighbours of the town a good and sufficient dinner on the day of his burial.

I may add that I am indebted to the Rev. W. M. Noble for many details in this paper, and to Mr. Inskip Ladds for suggestions and corrections, to both of whom I offer my sincerest thanks.

ALAN CHAPLIN.

