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Archæological Society

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PROCEEDINGS
OF
The Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire
Archæological Society.

On the 20th May, 1920, the Members and their friends visited Audley End and Saffron Walden, when the Rev. G. Montagu Benton, of Saffron Walden, local Secretary of the Essex Archæological Society, acted as guide, and to him we are indebted for the following account of the visit.

The first stop was at Audley End House, which is situated about a mile west of the town, in the midst of delightful scenery. This is the noblest residence in Essex, and although considerably reduced in size is amongst the finest Jacobean mansions in the Country. It is said to have been erected between the years 1603-1616, and stands near the site of the Benedictine Abbey of Walden, which was granted to Lord Chancellor Audley on its suppression in 1538. James I. when on a visit to Audley End is reported to have said that the house was then too large for a King though it might do for a Lord Treasurer, which was the Office then held by Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, the builder of the mansion.

The Audley End Estate was conveyed to Charles II in 1669, and the Court was established there in the following year; it was re-conveyed to Henry, the fifth Earl of Suffolk, in 1701.

By the kind permission of Lord Braybrooke the house was inspected, and among its many noteworthy features may be mentioned the Great Hall, 65½ feet in length, with its handsome seventeenth century screen; the richly carved mantelpieces of the same date in the various rooms; and the Saloon with its original plaster ceiling, and fine series of portraits of persons connected with the history of Audley End let into the panelled walls.

Before leaving the Grounds the attention of the visitors was drawn to the picturesque stables of red brick, with gabled wings, dating from the latter part of the sixteenth century.

At this point the Rev. G. Montagu Benton joined the party and acted as guide for the rest of the day. On the way to the town a short visit was paid to the Abbey Farm and Almshouses in Audley End hamlet. These gabled red-brick buildings, which are more or less contemporary with the Mansion, surround two court yards, and form a charming old-world picture. Fragments of ancient

stained glass, probably from Walden Abbey, are preserved in some of the windows; and the Kitchen still retains its original fireplace fitted with an old wrought-iron pot-crane.

Proceeding to the Market Place the Members made their way to the Rose and Crown Hotel for luncheon. After this interval the time allotted was found barely sufficient to do justice to the many antiquarian features of this old Essex town.

The parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin was considered by Professor Freeman to be "the noblest parochial church of the Perpendicular style in England, with the sole exception of St. Mary, Redcliffe." This may be extravagant praise, but at any rate it is safe to maintain that the nave in its exquisite grace and proportion has few rivals of the period. Mr. Benton gave a brief account of the historical growth of the fabric:—the chancel arcades date from *circa* 1300, but the body of the church was rebuilt *circa* 1480-1520. The spire, erected in 1831, was designed by Messrs. Rickman and Hutchinson, and for its period must be considered an achievement. The architect, Thomas Rickman, who was a Quaker for the greater part of his life and a pioneer of the Gothic Revival, resided in Walden for a brief time during his earlier years, having come to the town in 1799 to serve as journeyman to a firm of grocers. The church retains a few brasses, and in the south chapel stands the altar-tomb of Lord Chancellor Audley (d. 1544).

The next objects to claim attention were the Castle and Museum, both of which are only a few yards from the Church. Of the Castle, built *circa* 1100, all that remains is the ruined keep. The Museum was opened in 1835, and is a remarkable institution for so small a town, the collections being both valuable and extensive; the mediæval wood-work, the collection of 'by-gones', and the old china and glass especially excited interest.

A short walk down Castle Street brought the visitors to Fry's Gardens. These gardens, although only laid out some seventy or eighty years ago, strike one as being a veritable haunt of ancient peace. They are the property of the Right Hon. Lewis Fry who generously places them at the disposal of the townspeople.

Walden is particularly rich in old domestic buildings, and possess no less than twenty-eight houses of pre-Reformation date. There was practically no time to devote to these, but the old Sun Inn (an inn no longer) in Church Street, which was used by Cromwell as his head-quarters, was noticed in passing, its many gables and rich parge or plaster work being duly admired.

The Members attending this excursion were the Reverends J. A. Griffin and J. A. Ross, Dr. Newton, Dr. Grove, Mr. A. E. Wright, Mrs. Yeatherd, Mrs. Priestley, Mrs. Ross, Mrs. Ellis, Miss Parsons, Miss Wright, and others.

The Autumn Excursion in 1920 was held on the 14th September when a party of Members and their friends visited Landwade, Fordham, Chippenham, Snailwell and Exning. Starting from Cambridge Station the party proceeded in a motor omnibus to

Landwade, where they were met by the Rev. W. M. Shepherd, Vicar of Exning, who showed them the Church.

The Church of St. Nicholas is really a private chapel belonging to the owner of Landwade Hall, but structurally it has all the appearances of a parish church, being a detached building consisting of Chancel, Nave, Transepts, West Tower and South Porch, and standing in a churchyard just as other churches do. It is served by the neighbouring clergy on the invitation of the owner, afternoon service being held twice a month from Easter to September, and the officiating clergyman being paid £1 1s. 0d. The Vicar of Exning is, however, called Vicar of Landwade, and is paid a yearly stipend of £2 11s. 8d by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The Church is said to have been built by Walter Cotton, who died in 1445, and its architecture is of the Perpendicular style corresponding very well with this date. The Cottons had acquired the property by the marriage of Sir Thomas Cotton, of Coton Hall, Cambs., with Alice, daughter and heir of John de Hastings, about the year 1400. The chancel has a three-light east window, two-lights on north and south, and a piscina in the usual place. There is no chancel arch, the roof continuing in one line from end to end of the church, but a fine Perpendicular oak screen separates the chancel from the nave. The nave has two two-light windows on each side, and there is a pretty little stoup just inside the north door. Two arches on each side open into the transepts, which have two light widows in the end walls, and the north transept has a three-light in the east wall. There are some well carved bench-ends in the church, some of them exhibiting the lifeless doves similar to those at Chesterton near Cambridge; and there is a little ancient stained glass.

There are many memorials and monuments to the Cotton family, the earliest being a square brass plate, in the jamb of the north window of the chancel, commemorating William Cotton, Vice-Chamberlain to King Henry VI. Keeper of the Wardrobe, Receiver to the Queen, and Collector of the Duchy of Lancaster, who was killed at the battle of St. Albans, 1455.

A large monument in the north transept, with recumbent effigies commemorates Sir John Cotton, died 1593, aged 81, and his wife, Isabel, daughter of Sir William Spencer of Althorpe, Norths., died 1578, aged 63. Against the western wall of the south transept, another fine monument records Sir John Cotton, died 1620, aged 67, and his three wives—1, Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Carrell of Warnham, Sussex, 2, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Humphrey Bradbourne, of Bradbourne, Derbyshire, and 3, Anne, daughter of Sir Richard Houghton, Bart., of Houghton Tower, Lancashire.

Another monument in this transept commemorates Sir John Cotton, Kt., and first Baronet, a distinguished Royalist who helped to convoy the College plate from Cambridge to the King. He was created a baronet in 1641, and died in 1689, aged 74.

His wife was Jane, third daughter and eventual heiress of Sir Edward Hinde, Kt., of Madingley. As a result of this marriage the family became possessed of the Hall and Estate of Madingley, where they took up their residence, and Landwade Hall was probably pulled down soon afterwards.

Leaving Landwade, the party proceeded to Fordham, where luncheon was partaken of at the "Chequers Inn," and afterwards visited the Church (St. Peter) where the Vicar, the Revd. A. W. Ivatt read some notes. The church contains some small remains of Norman work,—the west wall of the north aisle and the wall between the aisle and the undercroft of St. Mary's Chapel are evidently of this date, as a small Norman window remains in both walls,—and the jambs of the north door are of very late Norman workmanship although doubtless rebuilt and widened, and surmounted by a fourteenth century arch.

The remaining walls of the church are mostly of thirteenth century date. Some of the chancel windows and the priest's door are of this period. The responds of the chancel arch still retain their thirteenth century caps at the level of those of the nave arcade, but the responds have been continued up and a new arch built in the fifteenth century.

The nave arcades are of five arches and are chiefly of thirteenth century workmanship, although the three western bays appear to have been rebuilt and have some fourteenth century work about them. The windows of the south aisle are of the fourteenth century and those of the north aisle of the fifteenth.

The Chapel of St. Mary with its undercroft on the north side of the church is a very unusual feature in a village church and its original use does not seem to be known. The undercroft is of early fourteenth century work and has two columns down the centre supporting simple vaulting. The chapel itself is entered from the outside by a circular staircase at the N.W. corner, and is of rather fine late fourteenth century work. The three arches opening from this chapel into the church are quite modern.

The chancel and nave roofs, the clerestory and the tower are all of fifteenth century date. There is a piscina and a credence towards the east end of the south aisle, and eastward of these is a square nich with the rope from the Sanctus Bell coming through a hole in the top.

The next church on the programme was Chippenham (St. Margaret) where the Vicar, the Revd. S. F. Cunningham, read a paper which we hope shortly to print in the Transactions. The most noticeable feature of this church is the long nave arcade of seven bays with columns alternately circular and octagonal on the north and clustered on the south. They are of thirteenth century date but look older owing to the stone having been damaged by fire. The church is recorded to have been burnt, and an Indulgence granted for its repair in 1447. The columns on the south side have been very much patched with cement. The very fine but sadly mutilated Perpendicular chancel screen also



Photo by

FORDHAM CHURCH, CAMBS.

G. H. Tyndall

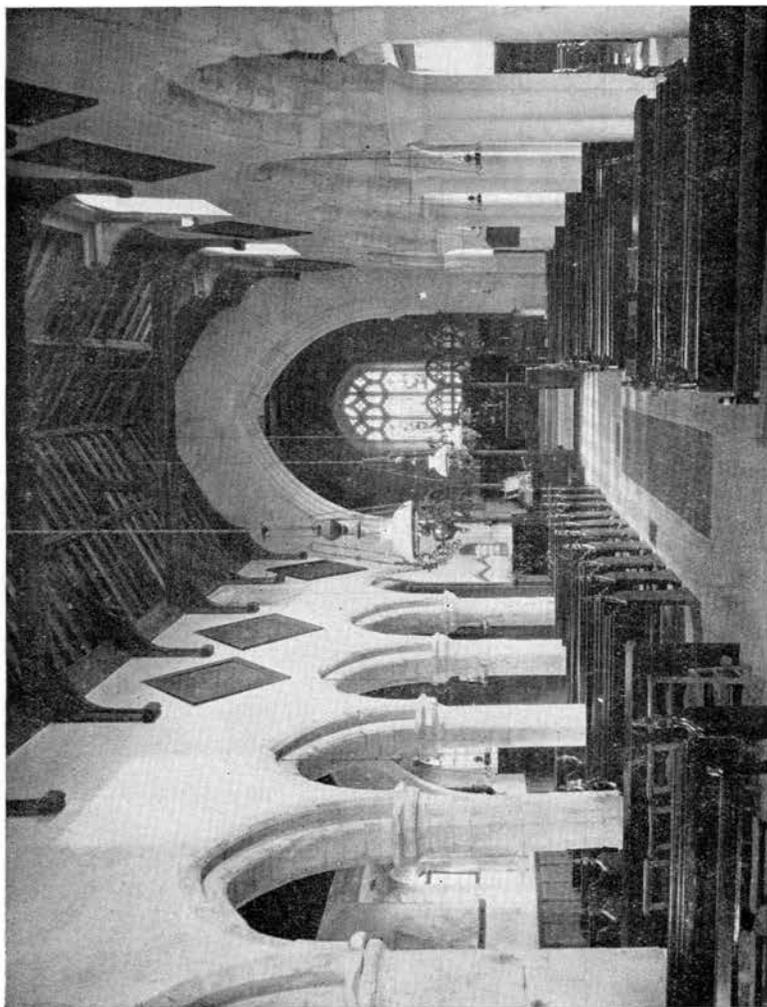


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CHIPPENHAM CHURCH, CAMBS.

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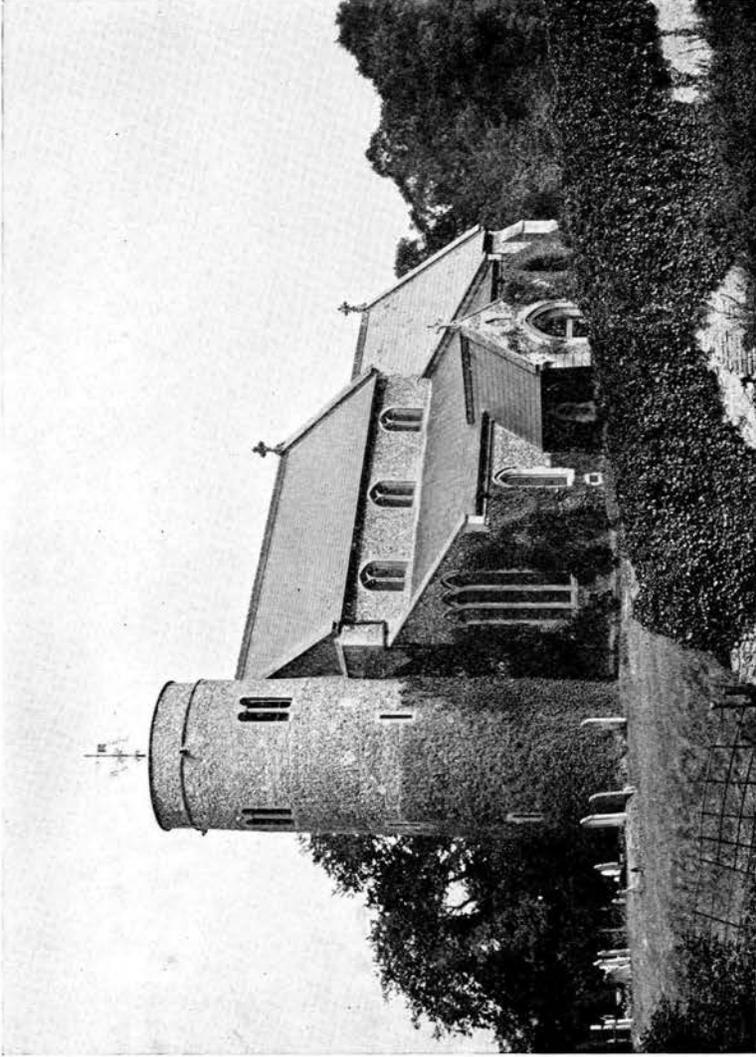


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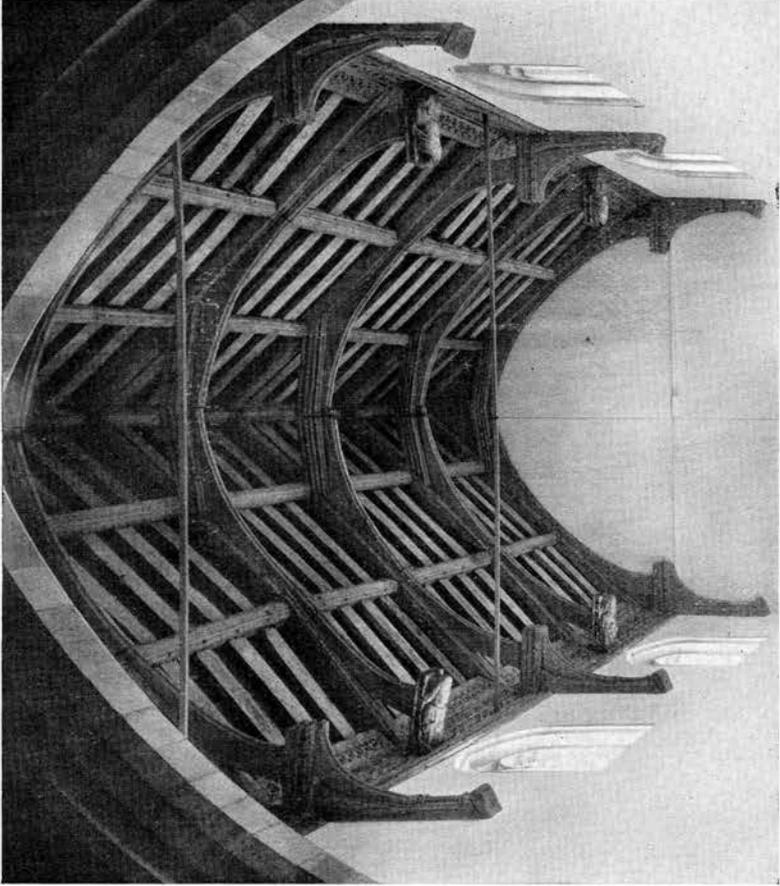


Photo by

G. H. Tyndall

THE NAVE ROOF, SNAILWELL CHURCH, CAMBS.

arrests attention. There are several frescoes on the north wall, one of St Christopher and another shows the martyrdom of St. Erasmus. There are a few small fragments of Norman work in the chancel.

Mrs. Tharp, Lady of the Manor, very kindly brought for inspection an exceedingly fine bronze sword found in a gravel pit on the road to Badlingham; it is $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, and in a remarkably perfect state of preservation.

Turning homewards from Chippenham a halt was made at Snailwell, where the Rector, the Revd. E. Powles, described the church. St. Peter's Church is one of the two Cambridgeshire churches which have a round tower. The round tower is evidently of Norman date, and has a two-light belfry window of this period; in the lower parts of the walls are two plain slits. An embattled parapet has been added at a later date, and in the eastern embrasure a small bell has been hung.

The church has been very much restored and has a very modern appearance, but the nave retains a truly magnificent oak roof and there are two rather nice parclose screens at the eastern ends of the aisles. There is a Perpendicular tomb in the north wall of the chancel; and at the S.E. corner of the nave is a pretty perforated stone which formerly lighted the rood staircase.

From Snailwell the party went on to Exning, where the Vicar, the Revd. W. M. Shepherd, described the church. He has kindly supplied the following notes.

Exning, Exelinges or Exnyng, was originally a village of the Icenii. Together with Soham, it was formerly in the Diocese of Norwich. Pope Paschall II., in the last year of St. Auselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1109, raised the Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Etheldreda, Ely, to Cathedral dignity, and Ely became a new See formed from part of the See of Lincoln and some parts of that of Norwich, and Exning was included in the Diocese of Ely, but is now in that of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

By William Rufus the Church of St. Martin of Exning was granted to Battle Abbey. This donation was made on the occasion of the dedication of the newly erected Church of Battle Abbey at which Rufus was present. Like Exning the Abbey Church was dedicated to St. Martin as well as to the Blessed Trinity and our Lady.

The Church consists of a tower at the western end, a nave, side aisles, transepts and chancel; the extreme length from the altar to the font is about 90 feet; the length of the transepts and height of the tower are about the same measurements, viz. 75 feet. The style of architecture (with one exception) is that of the Decorated period, as the windows in the aisles and north transept will prove, and it is probable that the reign of Edward III. may be the period of the building of the church. The window of the chancel however is of the Perpendicular style, and this portion might have been completed in the reign of Henry V. or Henry VI. There

are several mural ornaments or niches which give evidence of the latter period, one in particular to the left of the north door, on entrance, which was probably the depository of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of St. Martin the patron saint of the Church.

During the Incumbency of the Rev. Dr. Dibden (1823) the brick pavement of the north and south aisles were relaid, their respective roofs have been repaired, the tower has been substantially repaired, a new clock dial has been fixed on the east and west sides of it, a new bell on the summit, and the five bells within the tower rehung. A singing gallery was also enlarged and improved.

There are very few mural tablets in the church; the most ancient are the two grey slabs, or flat stones, near the pulpit, of which the cross upon one is almost defaced. A raised monument of Purbeck marble, to the left of the altar, is the next in point of antiquity; it may possibly be of the time of Henry VIII. Of the time of the Commonwealth there is a quaint inscription upon a hatchment suspended on one of the pillars or arches which divide the north transept from the nave, to Francis Robertson, Esquire, March 1, 1657. There is a mural tablet in the chancel to Francis Dibden, died October 14, 1826. The Registers date from 1558; the marriage is recorded of Margaret Fabian, probably a direct descendant of John Fabian, the chronicler and Lord Mayor of London, 1516.

Those who took part in this excursion included the Reverends J. A. Griffin, A. Peskett, J. A. Ross, W. M. Shepherd, A. W. Ivatt, S. F. Cunningham, Messrs. R. Edleston, O. W. Gillson, S. Inskip Ladds, G. H. Tyndall, C. F. Attenborough, Dr. Hendley, Mrs. Yeatherd, Mrs. Ross, Mrs. Gillson, Mrs. Tyndall, Mrs. Priestley, Mrs. Ellis, and others.