

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,
OCTOBER 1925—MAY 1926

WITH
Communications
MADE TO THE SOCIETY

VOLUME XXVIII.

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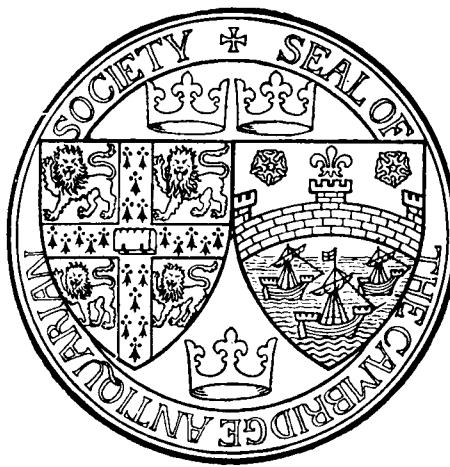
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

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**THE CHAPEL OF SAINT MARY MAGDALENE
AT STURBRIDGE, CAMBRIDGE**

BY CHESTER H. JONES

Read 18 October, 1926.

The chapel, dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, in the parish of Saint Andrew the Less, is a small Norman building dating from the XII century, and consists of nave and chancel elaborate in detail, and characteristic of the best work of the time. It now stands isolated in a field beside the Newmarket road on the outskirts of Barnwell, at a distance of about two miles from the Market Hill, Cambridge.

It is perhaps more commonly known as Sturbridge Chapel, a name which Carter¹ derives from the bridge over the river Stour. Francis Blomefield however in his *Collectanea Cantabrigiensia*, published in 1751, tells us that ‘‘Steres-brigge, or Sturbrige, where the famous Mart or Fair (commonly called Sturbrige Fair) is kept, does not take its name from the Bridge over the River of that Name, but from the Toll or Custom that was paid at it, for all Steres and young Cattle that passed here....’’ The correct derivation is no doubt that given by Professor Skeat, who, in his *Place Names of Cambridgeshire* (C.A.S. 8vo Pub. xxxvi, 2nd ed., p. 33) points out that “Steres” in this name is in the genitive case, which indicates that it was a personal name. The names of animals were not usually put into the genitive, and the custom still persists. As an instance we say “cowhouse” and not “cow’s house.” But when Steer, the owner, was dead, the personal connexion was forgotten, and the bridge was supposed to have been built for steers to pass over.

The building is of distinct interest, and we shall trace its history so far as is possible from the scanty records which remain, before describing it as it stands to-day.

¹ Edmund Carter, *History of Cambridgeshire*, 1753.

HISTORY OF THE CHAPEL

In the days when leprosy was one of the many diseases rampant in the country—encouraged by the filthy and unwholesome conditions under which the mediaeval community lived—a leprosy hospital was founded on this spot. It was built at a safe distance from the dwellings which must then have clustered by the river round the pre-Conquest church of St Benedict, which formed the nucleus from which our modern Cambridge has grown. The little chapel, frequently called the “Leper chapel,” was attached to this hospital and is all that now remains of it.

The earliest record that we possess of the hospital occurs at the end of the XII century with reference to endowments in Comberton. Walter de Brumford “deseised the lepers of Stiebrige of their free tenement in Cumberton,” and later in 1199, the lepers recovered, in the King’s Court, a free tenement in Comberton of which Alan de Berton had deprived them¹. No record of the foundation of the hospital exists, but it is most probable that it had been in existence some sixty or seventy years before this time, contemporary with other Norman work of early XIII century date which showed itself on the neighbouring banks of the Granta in the churches of Saint Peter by the Castle, Saint Giles, and Holy Sepulchre.

Charles H. Cooper, in the *Annals of Cambridge* (1842), records that about the year 1211 “King John granted to the lepers of the hospital of Saint Mary Magdalene at Sturbridge, a fair in the close of the hospital, on the vigil and feast of the Holy Cross.”² Although it is difficult to say whether the fair had not already been in existence, it is from this grant that the famous Sturbridge Fair is said to have originated, and the histories of fair and chapel were later closely connected.

In 1245 Hugh de Norwold, or Northwold, Bishop of Ely from 1229 to 1254, a man renowned for his generosity and piety and a great benefactor of the monastery there,

¹ R. Cur. Reg. I, 329 and II, 62.

² R. Hun. vol. II, 360.

appointed a master to the chapel. The patronage had been previously in the burgesses of Cambridge¹.

In 1278 commissioners were appointed by the king, Edward I, to enquire into various matters of revenue, etc. The property of each house and the means by which it was obtained were distinctly specified, and it was stated that the advowson of the mastership of "Steresbrigge belonged to the burgesses of Cambridge, but had been taken away from them by Hugh de Norwold, formerly Bishop of Ely, and his successors, and that the warden of Steresbrigge did not sustain any lepers in that hospital as he ought of right to do."²

In 1340 the "Rector of the church of Steresbrigg" was charged £1. 7s. 0d. in a levy on "the ninth part of the goods and chattels in cities and boroughs" voted by Parliament to the king in the reign of Edward III³.

The corporation made an ordinance in 1376 prohibiting any burgess to take Sturbridge chapel to farm, except to the use of the mayor and bailiffs, or to keep market there, under the penalty of 10 marks, or to make any booth there, or let any place for the building of a booth, under the penalty of 10s.; and any burgess convicted of a breach of this ordinance before the twenty-four, was to be deprived of his freedom at their discretion⁴.

John Fordham, Bishop of Ely from 1388 to 1425, granted on 19 July, 1390, forty days' indulgence to all who assisted to repair the chapel, and Cotman suggests that "it is probable the present elegant roof, and many alterations observable in the building, were made about that time."

Blomefield⁵ tells us that:

In 1391 Robert Takell then Custos died, and Bishop Fordham collated John Metfield LL.B.... He resigned it to Rob. Flate, and he in 1391, exchanged it with Thomas de Pattesle, for Waldeneuton in Winchester Diocese, who resigned it the same Year, and Metfield had it again, and again resigned it to John Wynkeperie, who in 1395 resigned, and Metfield had it again, who resigned to Flate in 1402, and in 1403, Metfield had it at Flate's resignation; and in 1407 exchanged it with Will. Wynwyk for the Custody of the Free-Chapel of St Radegund, in the Arches under St Paul's in London, he changed it with Will. Waltham, who resigned in 1408 to Metfield again.

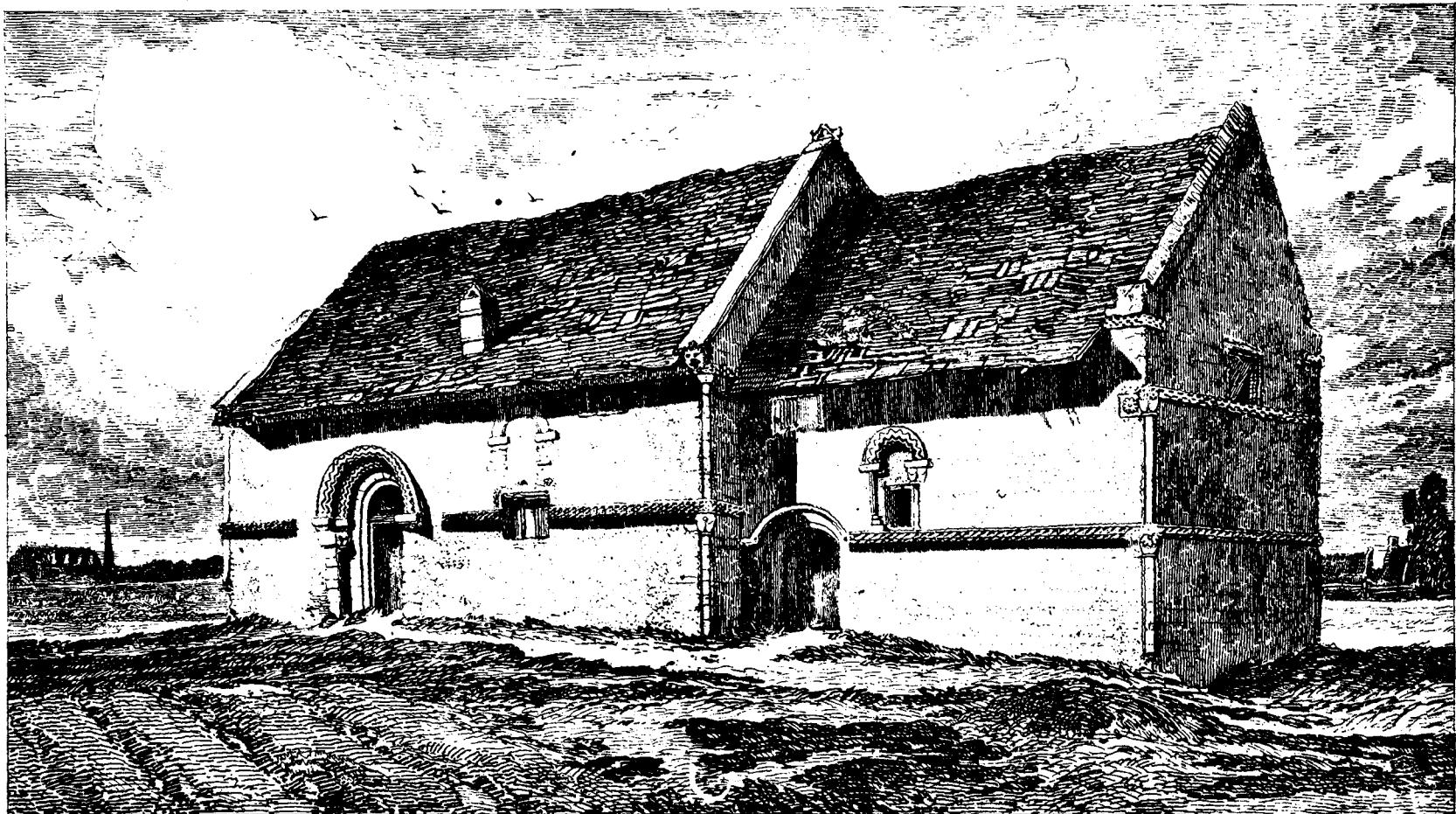
¹ J. S. Cotman, *Antiquities of Saint Mary's Chapel, at Stourbridge, near Cambridge*, 1819.

² C. H. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 1842.

³ *Ibidem.*

⁴ *Ibidem.* MS. Baker xxxvi, 218.

⁵ F. Blomefield, *Collectanea Cantabrigiensia*, 1751.



1818 Drawn. Etched & Published by J. S. Cotman.

South-east view of St Mary's Chapel at Sturbridge near Cambridge.

An interesting lawsuit took place in November 1411, when John Arondell, warden of the chapel, sued the bailiffs in exchequer because they would not allow merchants to build shops in the chapel-yard, thereby depriving him of stallage to the value of 10 marks, "to the disherison of the chapel, and to his damage of £10." The verdict was decided in favour of the warden, so that the keepers of Sturbridge Fair evidently continued to make use of the chapel ground.

On the 7th of August, 1497, Master John Fynne Bachelor in the Laws, Perpetual Chaplain and Incumbent of the Free Chapel of blessed Mary Magdalene of Barnwell, commonly called Sterbrigge Chapel, with the consent of the Bishop of Ely the Patron and Diocesan (then Bishop Alcock), and the Prior and Convent of St Etheldreda in Ely, demised all lands, tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, waste places, liberties, franchises, profits, and emoluments, rents, and services to the said free chapel belonging, except the chapel itself, the oblations, and fourteen feet of ground on each side and at each end of the chapel, to the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses for ninety-nine years, they rendering £12 yearly on the morrow of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and finding yearly at the Nativity of the Virgin, and placing before the image of the blessed Mary Magdalene, in the said chapel, five tapers of wax, of equal weight, and together weighing three pounds¹.

In 1534, in the valuation of the first-fruits, the chapel of Sturbrigge was rated at £10. 10s. 0d.

At the Dissolution Christopher Fulneby was Custos, and in Cooper's *Annals* we read:

On the 27th of September (1544), Thomas Bishop of Ely, the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Ely, and Christopher Fulneby incumbent of the free chapel of St Mary Magdalene called Styrrebrige, in the county of Cambridge, demised to the mayor, bailiffs, burgesses and commonalty of the town of Cambridge, the aforesaid chapel, with all glebe lands, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, booths and boothgrounds, standings, liberty of building booths, rents, hereditaments, oblations, commodities, and profits, (except the advowson, patronage, and donation of the same free chapel) for sixty years from the preceding feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; rendering to the said Christopher Fulneby and his successors £9. annually in the church of St Mary in Cambridge, called the University church, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, between the hours of one and five in the afternoon¹.

In a footnote we read:

Among the Corporation Muniments is An account of the possessions of the free chapel of St Mary Magdalene, commonly called Sturbridge chapel,

¹ Cooper, *Annals* (quoted from the Corporation Muniments).

within the precincts of the town of Cambridge, taken by Matthew Parker and John Redman Doctors in Divinity, and William Mey LL.D. the King's Commissioners, Feb. 1545-6. From this it appears the revenues were as follows:

	£. s. d.
Farm of 26A. 3R. of land lying dispersedly in the fields of Cambridge, Chesterton, Ditton, and Landbeach, with the pasture about the chapel 1 6 8
Farm of Stirbridge close 1 6 8
Rent of the chapel during the time of the fair on the feast of St Mary Magdalene, communibus annis 10 0
Oblations in the same chapel on the day of St Mary Magdalene, and the time of the fair annually holden 4 0 0
Farm of divers standings particularly specified 3 14 10
	<u>10 18 2</u>

Reprises.

Decay of oblations	4 0 0
Decay of certain booths	1 0 0
	<u>5 0 0</u>

Remained clear £5 18 2

In the accounts of Edmund Lamberde and Thomas Scotte, treasurers of the town for the year ending Michaelmas, 1546, is included payment of 2d. to Jenings, the carpenter, for hanging up the bell at the chapel, and for fetching a ladder, and an additional 2d. for the rope for the same bell.

Later in 1565, in the accounts of Roger Smith and William Hodson, treasurers of the town, we find an entry of 8d. for rushes and straw in the chapel, and 8d. for "carrienge a pulpit to ye chappell, and bryngynge it home agayne."¹ It appears that the chapel was in use as a place of worship at this time, else there would have been no necessity for a bell, rushes and straw, and a pulpit. The latter, however, seems to have been required only for a very short time, no doubt for some very special celebration held in the chapel.

On the 22nd of February 1596-7, Queen Elizabeth, by letters patent, in consideration of a fine of £9., and the surrender of a lease for sixty years, dated 27th September, 36 Hen. VIII (see above) by the advice of William Lord Burghley Lord Treasurer of England, and Sir John Fortescue knt, Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer, granted and demised to the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses of Cambridge, All the free Chapel of Saint Mary Magdalene, called Styrbridge Chapel, in Cambridge, With all glebe

¹ Cooper, *Annals*.

lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, booths and booth grounds, standings, liberty of building booths, rents, hereditaments, oblations, commodities, and profits, with their appurtenances (except great trees, woods, underwoods, minerals, and quarries, and the presentation and donation of the said free chapel), To hold from the feast of St Michael then last past for twenty-one years. Rendering the annual rent of £9 at Lady Day and Michaelmas. The Queen further granted to the lessees, housebote, hedgebote, firebote, ploughbote, and cartbote, and liberty to take timber for repairs by the assignment of her Steward, Under Steward or Officers¹.

On the 20th of July 1620, Mr Chace and others were appointed to rate all that held any booths or boothgrounds on any of the Chapel lands in Sturbridge fair towards the defence of the suit between the town and Mr Wyllis. On the 29th of September, a general assessment was ordered on all booth-holders in the fair for defraying the charges of suit with Mr Wyllis, such assessment to be larger on the booth-holders in the Chapel ground than the others. The assessment was made on the 17th of April, 1621, one proprietor of booths upon the Chapel ground being rated at 3s. 4d. in the pound; the others there and in Cheapside, Cook Row, and Pewterers' Row, at 2s. 6d. in the pound, and all the other booth-holders at 8d. in the pound. The total rental £710. 10s. 0d. Amount of the assessment, £50. 3s. 5d.

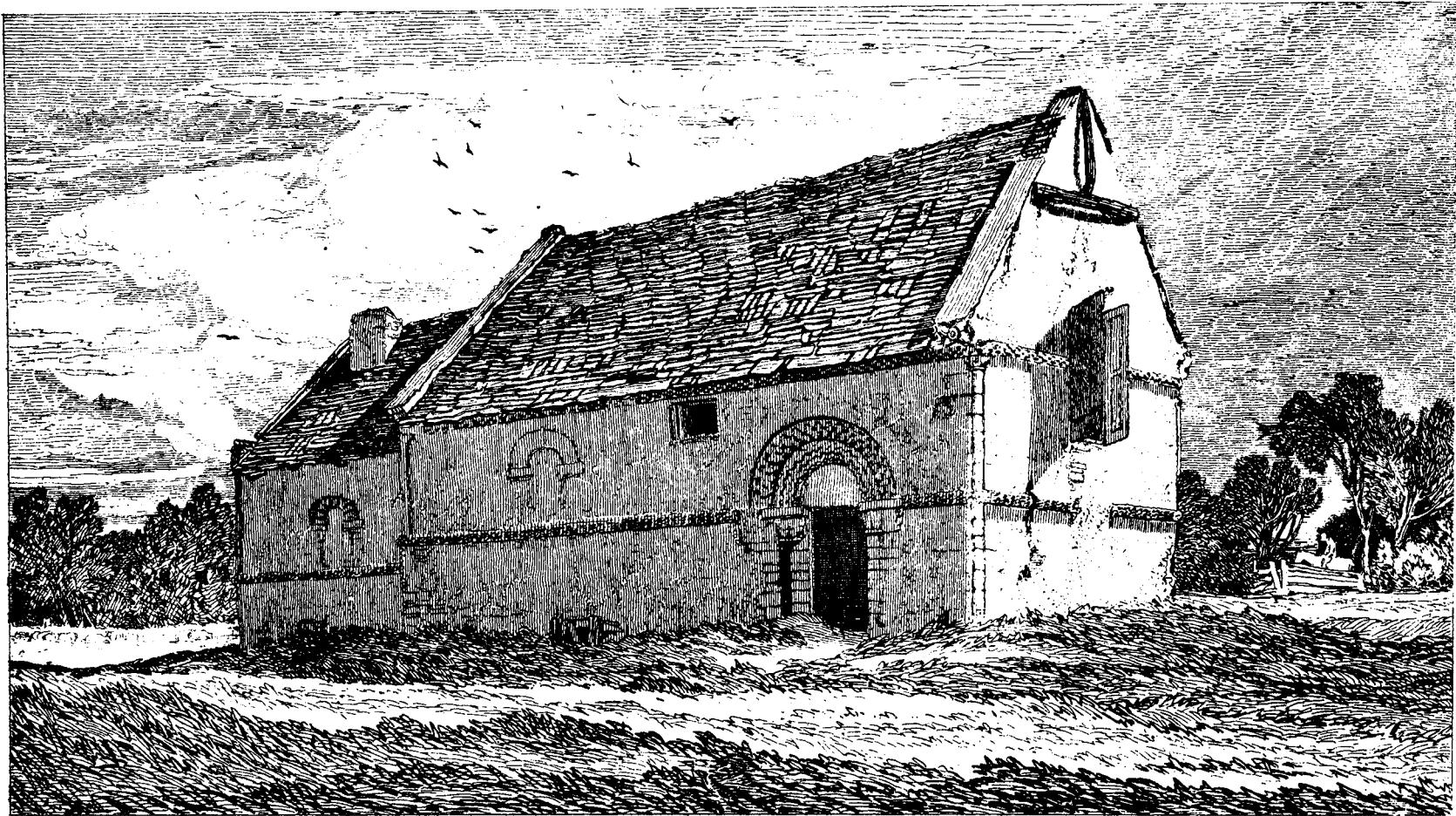
Several orders were made authorising proceedings against such parties as refused to pay this assessment, and on the 7th of May, 1622, it was ordered that if the rate should be insufficient, all the free burgesses should be assessed².

In 1622, says Cooper,

an end seems to have been put to a suit which had continued for some time with respect to the right of erecting booths in the yard of Sturbridge Chapel. An action was commenced in the King's Bench by Thomas Willys and Richard Willys Esq. against John Durrant and Matthew Dennys. The declaration alleged that the defendants on the last day of August, 16 James I., with force and arms broke and entered the close of the plaintiffs at Cambridge and Barnwell, viz. one close of pasture called the Chapel Ground, otherwise Sturbridge Chapel Ground, otherwise the Chapel Yard, in Cambridge, and one other close of pasture called the Chapel Ground, otherwise Sturbridge Chapel Ground, otherwise the Chapel Yard, in Barnwell, and that the defendants, with their feet in walking trampled upon and consumed the herbage there growing of the value of £10., and dug the soil and erected ten posts and two stalls, called Berrybooths, otherwise the Wheat Sheaf, and put out the plaintiffs from the day above mentioned, till the 1st of October next following. The defendants pleaded not guilty, and had a verdict, upon which in Michaelmas term judgement was given in their favour, and £10. adjudged them for costs. The proceedings in this case were subsequently exemplified by letters patent, dated at Westminster the 12th of February 1622-3, and tested by Sir James Ley knt.¹

¹ Cooper, *Annals* (quoted from the Corporation Muniments).

² Cooper, *Annals*.



1818 Drawn, Etched & Published by J.S. Cotman.
North-west view of St Mary's Chapel at Sturbridge near Cambridge.

Relations between Sturbridge Fair and the chapel seem frequently to have been rather strained. The close proximity of the fair caused it to play an important part in the chapel's history, and a description of the latter would be incomplete without reference to it.

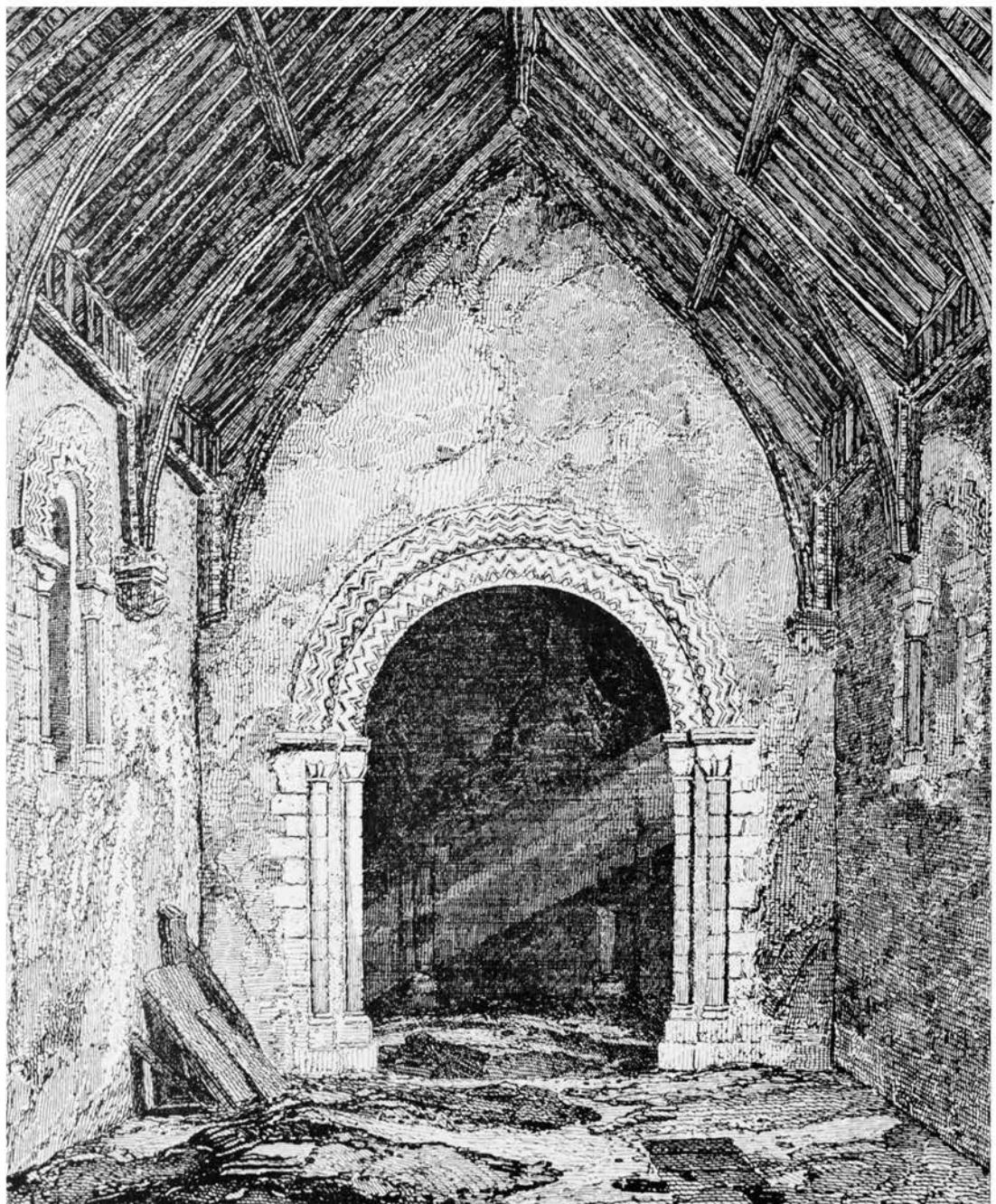
Sturbridge Fair is certainly of great antiquity. Lysons, in his *Magna Britannia* (1808) suggests that "it seems probable that it was to this mart at Cambridge that the Irish merchants brought cloth, and other goods, in the reign of King Athelstan, as may be collected from a passage in the ancient history of Ely" (foot-note: "*Hist. Angl. Scrip.* III, 482"). A vivid description of the fair is to be found in Carter's *History of Cambridgeshire*, published in 1753. He tells us that it

was thought some years ago to be the greatest in Europe.... The shops or booths are built in rows like streets, having each their name, as Garlick Row, Booksellers'-row, Cook-row, etc. And every commodity has its proper place, as the Cheese Fair, Hop Fair, Wool Fair, etc.; and here, as in several other streets or rows, are all sorts of traders, who sell by wholesale or retail, as goldsmiths, toy-men, brasiers, turners, milliners, haberdashers, hatters, mercers, drapers, pewterers, china warehouses, and, in a word, most trades that can be found in London, from whence many of them come. Here are also taverns, coffee-houses, and eating-houses, in great plenty, and all kept in booths, in any of which (except the coffee-booth) you may at any time be accommodated with hot or cold roast goose, roast or boiled pork, etc.

On the other side of the main road was the Duddery, a great square formed by the largest booths, with room for waggons to load and unload;

and in this Square, on the two chief Sundays during the fair, both forenoon and afternoon, Divine Service is read, and a sermon preached from a pulpit placed in the open air, by the Minister of Barnwell; who is very well paid for the same by the contribution of the fair-keepers.

He also tells us that "the Fair is like a well-governed city; and less disorder and confusion to be seen there than in any other place where there is so great a concourse of people"; but he observes "how inconveniently a multitude of people are lodged there who keep it." Carter's account of Sturbridge Fair will be found printed in full in *Highways and Byways in Cambridge and Ely*, by the Rev. Edward Conybeare.



1818 Drawn, Etched & Published by J. S. Cotman.
Interior view of St Mary's Chapel at Sturbridge near Cambridge.
(The corbel shown on the north wall is actually in the splay
of the window.)

The fair keepers found the chapel useful and no doubt kept it in good repair, for Francis Blomefield¹, writing in 1751, described it as "an antient Chapel built of Freestone, the Nave and Chancel of which are tiled, and serve now for a Repository for the Stuff to build the Fair with. This had formerly a Burial Place, and Houses round it for Lepers to inhabit...."

Dr W. M. Palmer, M.D., F.S.A., in the *History Teachers' Miscellany* for September 1926, prints the following extract from the *Cambridge Chronicle* for 13 September, 1783:

"To be sold, a freehold building known as the chapel of Stirbitchfair. The tenant draws between 7 and 8 barrels of beer during the fair. It is also convenient for laying up building materials for the fair. It has a right of causeway at all times of the year of four feet in breadth from the chapel to the turnpike road."

The chapel subsequently passed with the Barnwell Priory estate to George Riste, Esq., and in 1780 it was sold by his devisee, Mrs Anne Bentham, to John Gillam, Esq.

The Rev. Thomas Kerrich, M.A., Fellow of Magdalene College, and principal librarian of the University (1797–1828) bought the chapel from Frederick Markby, Esquire, for £160 on the 19th January, 1816. The condition of the building had attracted attention during the previous year, for the following Grace passed the Senate on 24th October, 1815:

"Cum nonnullis in hac Academia bene visum fuerit pecunias quasdam conferre ne vetustissima illa quae in agro Barnwelliano sita est aedes funditus eruatur:

Placeat vobis ut summa quinquaginta librarum ex cista communi in eundem usum erogetur, sintque Doctores Procter et Clarke et Magister Kerrich Syndici vestri constituti qui accepti et expensi vobis rationem reddant."

The total amount subscribed, including £30 from Mr Kerrich himself, was £174.

In the deed dated 29 May, 1817, by which Mr Kerrich conveyed the building to the University, it is described as follows:

All that building called the Chapel House situate in Stourbridge alias Stirbridge Fair Field next Paper Mills Turnpike facing the turnpike road there on the South containing in length 57 feet on the North 57 feet the

¹ Francis Blomefield, *Collectanea Cantabrigiensia*, 1751.

West end 22 feet and the East End 18 feet heretofore in the occupation of John Hillson with a baulk or piece of ground adjoining to and lying round the said House containing in width three feet and a half or thereabouts and the pathway leading from the turnpike road together with all and singular Eaves Drips Gates Stiles Fences Ways Watercourses Paths Passages Rights Privileges and Appurtenances whatsoever to the said building and premises belonging or in any wise appertaining.

At the end of the deed the following proviso occurs:

And the said Chancellor Masters and Scholars for themselves and their successors do hereby covenant promise and agree to and with the said Thos. Kerrich his heirs and assigns in manner following (that is to say) that they the said Chancellor Masters and Scholars and their Successors shall not nor will at any time hereafter pull down or remove or cause or suffer to be pulled down or removed or fall into decay the said building hereby conveyed or intended so to be but shall and will at all times hereafter maintain and keep the same in good repair and condition and preserve it as it now is as far as possible without altering on any account the style or form thereof¹.

J. S. Cotman² wrote in 1819:

Of late years it (the chapel) has served as a stable, and very recently was threatened with complete destruction, from which it has happily been rescued by the care of a few gentlemen, who had knowledge to appreciate its value, and spirit to exert themselves to preserve it. Among these was most conspicuous the Rev. Thomas Kerrich F.A.S., Librarian of the University,

to whose kind suggestions he attributes the origin of his book.

In Richard Grey Baker's map of Cambridge, dated 1830, the building is described as a "Roman Catholic Chapel in ruins."

In August, 1842, an appeal was made in *The Ecclesiologist*, the publication of the Camden Society, for the use of the building as a burial chapel.

The chapel was repaired by the University in 1843 at a cost of £84. 15s. 1d., the Rev. T. Kerrich, son of the late Librarian of the University, giving £30.

On 13 November, 1844, when the Eastern Counties Railway was under construction, the following Grace passed the Senate: "To allow the Chapel of St Mary, at Sturbridge, to be placed at the disposal of the Committee" for providing

¹ *Endowments of the University of Cambridge*, edited by J. W. Clark, 1904.

² J. S. Cotman, *Antiquities of Saint Mary's Chapel, at Stourbridge, near Cambridge*, 1819.

religious instruction for the Railway Labourers "for the celebration of Divine Worship." A subscription was raised for a salary for a chaplain.

In 1865 an appeal was made by the Cambridge Architectural Society for funds with which to restore the chapel. A circular was issued which contained the following:

"The dilapidated condition of the Chapel on the Newmarket Road, commonly called Stourbridge Chapel, has long been a subject of regret to all who value the Ecclesiastical remains of Antiquity.

The Cambridge Architectural Society are willing to undertake the Restoration of this interesting building, on the understanding that the consent of the University be obtained, and that promises of subscriptions sufficient to justify an expectation that the sum (£500), necessary for the work, will eventually be raised.

Independently of the Chapel being in itself highly worthy of restoration, as a fine specimen of Norman work, a still stronger argument for rescuing it from its present state of ruin, is found in the increase of Church accommodation, which the Chapel, if restored, would provide for the spiritual necessities of the overgrown Parish of S. Andrew the Less, Barnwell" etc.

A subjoined letter from the Rev. G. W. Weldon, the incumbent, contains the words:

I may mention for the information of the Committee, that there is a scattered population of about 200, living in the adjacent brick-fields, and since the Chapel was closed, on the completion of the Railway, these persons have seldom, if ever, attended a place of Worship.

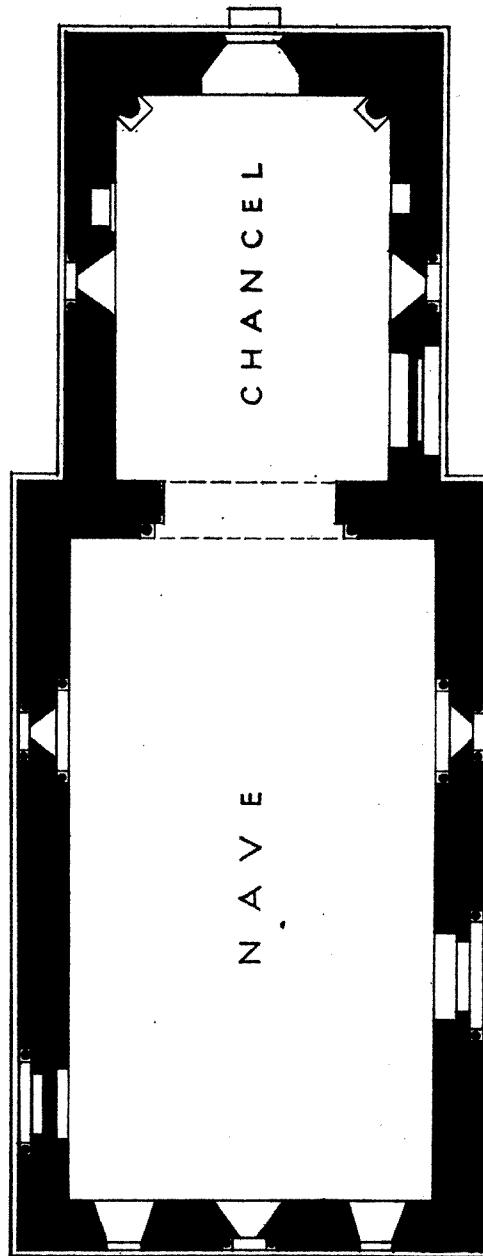
As a result of this appeal a restoration was undertaken in 1867 under the direction of the architect, Sir G. G. Scott, and the west wall of the nave was remodelled.

In 1918 the chapel was lent to the nursing and police staff of the Barnwell Military Hospital, and an adjacent detachment of the Army Ordnance Corps.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHAPEL

The work of the re-builder and the restorer is to be seen as much in the little chapel of Sturbridge as in many other much larger buildings and churches which our ancestors have passed on to us. Seven hundred years have not left the chapel untouched, and as we have seen in our historical account of it, neglect, alteration, and repair have all played their part in changing its original appearance.

Chapel of Saint Mary Magdalene, Sturbridge, Cambridge



Scale of Feet
10 0 10 0 20 30

The Ground Plan

CHESTER H. JONES MENS. ET DELT. 1925

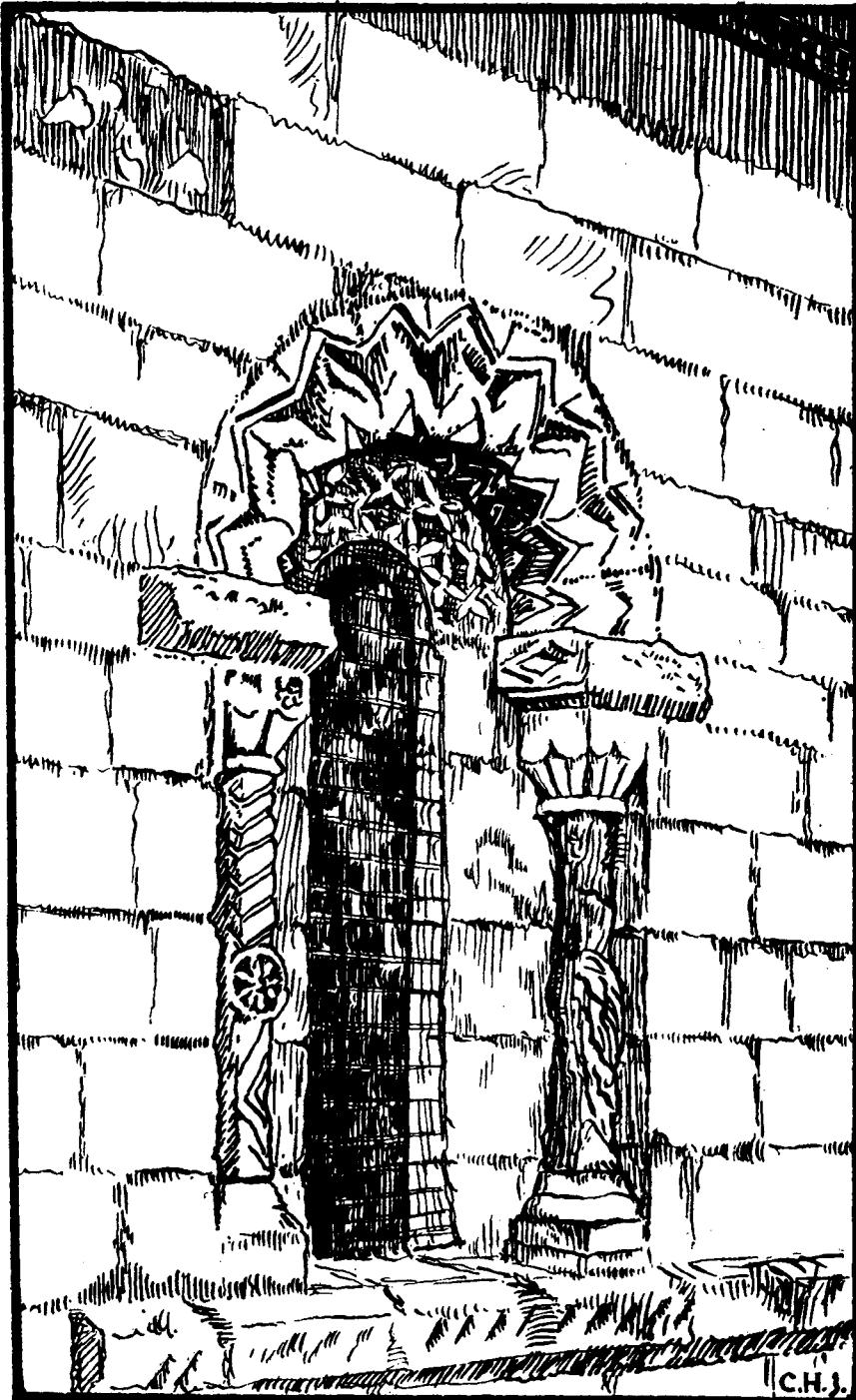
Used as a barn, a cattle shed, a support for the booths of the famous Sturbridge Fair, a repository for the material of which the fair was built and sometimes as a house of prayer, it could hardly be expected to have remained unchanged for seven centuries; yet, in spite of all this, it retains in the main its original form, and the ground plan, with its square east end typical of the English Norman church of that date, is no doubt original.

In plan the chapel consists of a nave measuring internally 30 feet 11 inches long by 16 feet 11 inches wide, and a chancel 18 feet long, by 12 feet 8 inches wide, divided from the nave by a chancel arch of 8 feet 1 inch span and 2 feet 5 inches deep. The nave originally had two doorways, north and south, but that on the north side has been bricked up, no doubt to get rid of the draught which the two must have created. The chancel is faced externally with ashlar and the nave walls are of flint with stone quoins; internally the walls are of rubble which was originally plastered throughout. The stone is oölitic limestone, no doubt from the Barnack or Weldon quarries of North Northamptonshire.

The chancel offers interesting study for the archaeologist. It appears to have been vaulted originally with a single quadripartite vault, springing from shafts in the angles, some five feet in height. The outline of the vault against the wall can be plainly made out, and portions of the eastern shafts remain, that on the north still retaining its cushion capital, carved with rosettes. Probably the chancel vault of Sturbridge chapel—if it was ever completed—shared the same fate as so many of the Norman endeavours to roof their churches in stone, but no record of its collapse exists, and it may probably have remained until the fifteenth century when the present roof was built.

The east window, rectangular in shape, is very plain, has a wooden lintel and is splayed on the inside; it was probably put in in the XVI or XVII century to admit more light. There may originally have been no east window, unless there was one above, where the wall has been patched up with brick beneath a wooden lintel. This patching was done some time during the last century, for in one of J. S. Cotman's

ST. MARY MAGDALENE, STURBRIDGE



C.H.J.

EXTERIOR OF SOUTH CHANCEL WINDOW

drawings, published in 1819¹, the present east window does not appear, and another square window is shown immediately above the upper external string-course. No doubt the present window, then unglazed, was blocked up to allow hay to be stacked up against the wall inside. Cotman's drawings are of great interest in showing us the appearance of the chapel over a hundred years ago.

In the opinion of Dr Cobbett, M.D., the north and south walls of the chancel have at some time been raised, thus accounting for the lower position of the external billet string-course on the east wall.

There are small, narrow, round-headed Norman windows north and south of the chancel, splayed on the inside and decorated with jamb shafts on the outside. The external voussoirs of the north arch are ornamented with a peculiar pattern resembling a flower enclosed by two leaves and those of the south with the familiar chevron or zig-zag pattern. The south window has a curious hexagonal western shaft decorated with the chevron ornament and having a rosette in the centre. The rosette appears again in the capital and immediately above the opening.

A remarkable feature of the chancel is the very curious, low, segmental archway in the south wall, measuring internally 7 feet 3 inches high to the crown of the arch by 4 feet 5 inches wide, and externally 5 feet 8 inches high for the inner order, and for the outer 6 feet 1 inch high by 5 feet wide. Outside the archway is of two orders and is protected by a hood-mould. It is certainly not original work and it is difficult to ascribe a use for it. Its width and lowness, taking into account the former chancel floor, makes it improbable that it was ever a priest's door, and a more feasible reason for its origin seems to be in the provision of an archway for cattle to enter the building when the chancel was used as a cattle shed and perhaps divided off from the nave. It may be that the nave doors were found insufficient when the chapel was in use as a repository for the materials of which Sturbridge Fair was built, but if this was its purpose it

¹ J. S. Cotman, *Antiquities of Saint Mary's Chapel, Stourbridge, near Cambridge*, 1819.

is remarkable that the builders should have troubled to place a hood-mould over it. It is not improbable that the chancel was inhabited during the XVII or early XVIII centuries and separated from the nave, and the existence of a chimney rising above the chancel roof and another over the nave in Cotman's drawings lends weight to this suggestion. We shall see further on that there was almost certainly a middle floor in the nave.

The use of churches for human habitation was by no means uncommon in the past. It is interesting to note that the chancel was sometimes called a "chamber," and the chancel of Prestbury, in Cheshire, was divided from the rest of the church by a timber partition, removed in 1637. Mr S. O. Addy¹ gives evidence to show that priests and others dwelt and slept in churches and he tells us that the Saxon church of St Lawrence at Bradford-on-Avon was, at least for two centuries before 1858, used as a dwelling house and contained an intermediate floor and fire-place, "the chancel being recognised in what had been a two-storied cottage." Probably the chancel of Sturbridge chapel has served a similar purpose, so that the east window which appears in Cotman's drawing would light the first floor room, the archway in the south wall being kept low to make room for the floor above it. In the same work we read: "Over the vaulting of the chancel at Leckhampton church, Gloucestershire, is a room lighted from the east.... Such chambers are not, even yet, very uncommon...."

There are two small recesses in the chancel, one in the north and one in the south wall, which probably served the purposes of aumbry and credence respectively. That on the north originally had doors.

The chancel arch, of which Cotman has made a careful drawing², is rich but unusual in design, and in a remarkably perfect state of preservation. It has a span of 8 feet 1 inch, and a height of 10 feet 8 inches to the crown of the arch, and

¹ S. O. Addy, *Church and Manor*, 1913.

² It is interesting to note that in this picture several stone slabs are shown leaning against the wall. If not entirely fictitious they may once have formed part of a stone floor.

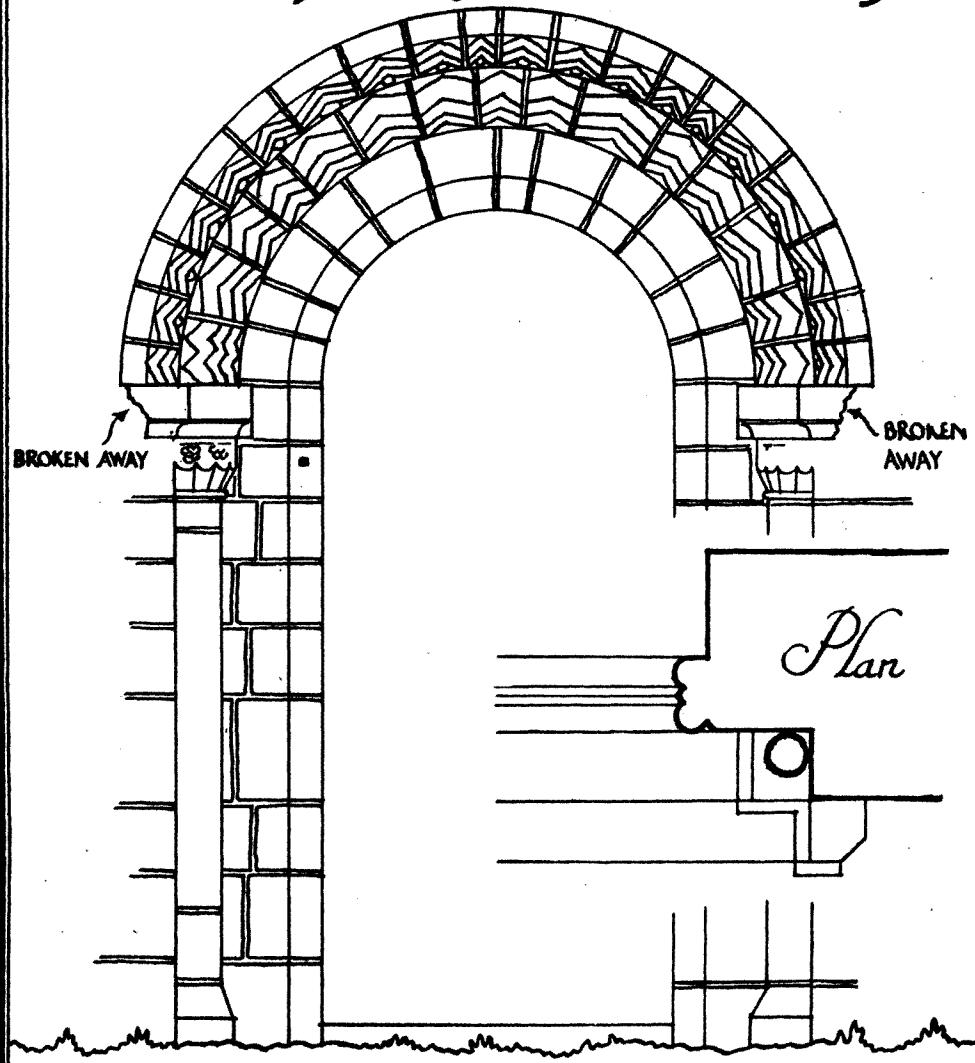
a depth of 2 feet 5 inches. The western face consists of two orders with peculiar and deeply cut forms of the chevron pattern, and the jambs are ornamented with shafts having elaborate scalloped capitals with heavy abacus, the design of which on the inner order is carried through the depth of the arch, emphasizing the springing line. The capitals of the north side are decorated with a rosette pattern. The capital and arch moulding are figured in Rickman's *Gothic Architecture*.

The nave has two original Norman windows, one in the north and one in the south wall, splayed on the inside, and ornamented both inside and out with shafts and zig-zag voussoirs similar to those in the south chancel window. Note the extreme narrowness of the original Norman windows which are only 7 inches wide in the nave and 8 inches in the chancel and set high in the wall. They are reminiscent of times when it was necessary to build with a view to protection against enemies, and the very shape of the windows with their wide splay and narrow external openings reminds us of the slits in the wall of the mediaeval castle from which the archer could aim his arrow with a considerable choice of direction and the greatest possible protection for himself. In the rise of Romanesque and Gothic architecture it is interesting, when possible, to compare the domestic with the ecclesiastical and to note the marked similarity between them.

Of the two doorways in the nave that on the south is the larger and more elaborate, as is generally the case; for since that side of the church faced the sun it was usually chosen for decoration and for the principal entrance to the building. This doorway is of two orders, the outer supported on shafts with capitals bearing traces of the rosette pattern. A third order of the arch projects beyond the wall face, supported on a projection of the abacus above the columns. It has the appearance of a big hood-mould or canopy and may have been also supported on columns. There may originally have been a porch, as is suggested by Messrs Atkinson and Clark¹. The outer two orders are ornamented with the zig-zag pattern, and the soffits of the voussoirs of the outermost are decorated

¹ Atkinson and Clark, *Cambridge, Described and Illustrated*, 1897.

Saint Mary Magdalene, Sturbridge



Scale of Feet 1 0 1 2 3 4

❖ The South Doorway ❖

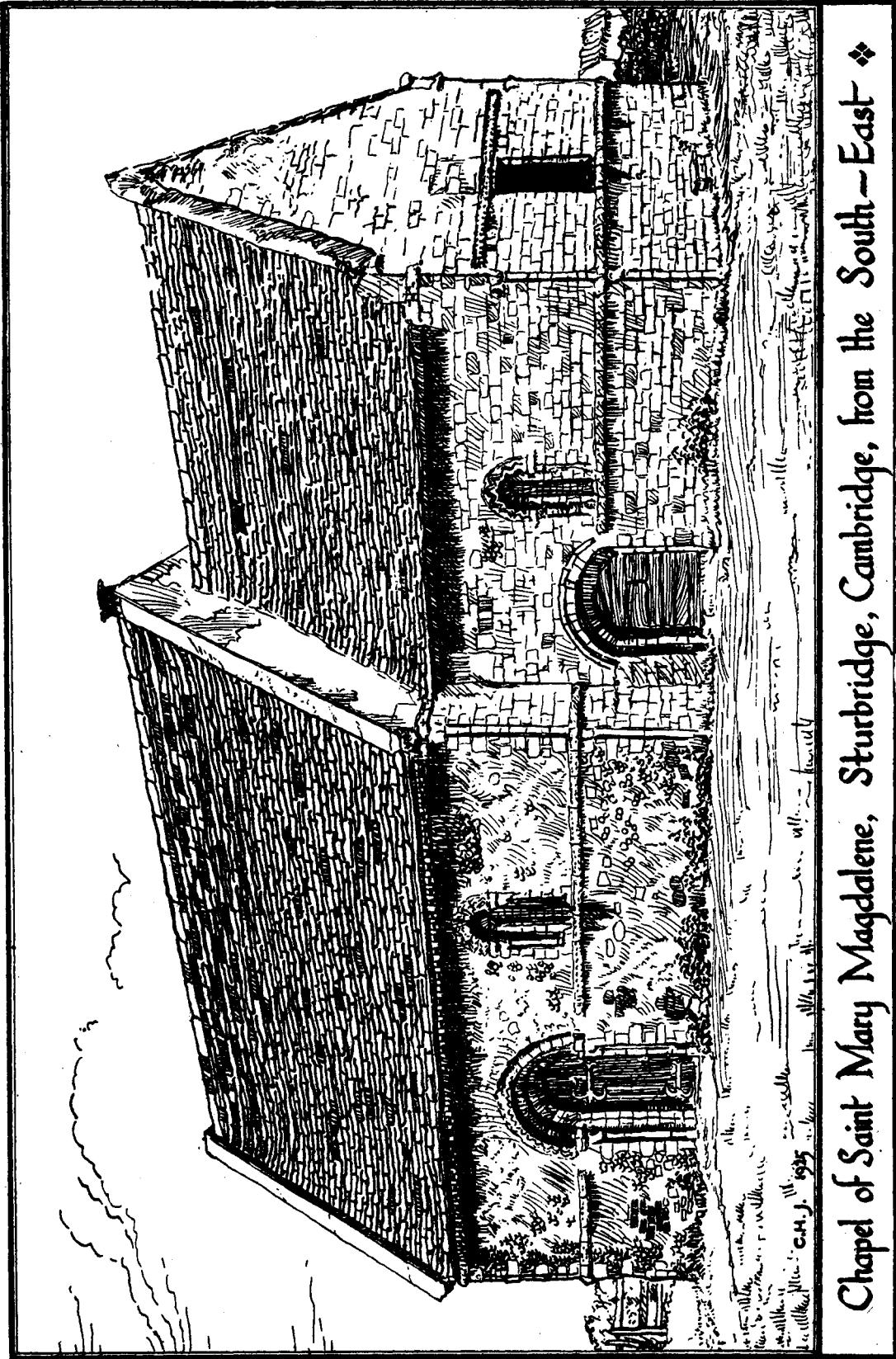
C.H.J. M&D.

with a variety of shapes, such as the flower with four petals, the diamond and the arrow-head. The level of the earth floor was a foot below the level of the surrounding ground, so that one had to step down into the church. However the base of the walls of the nave, though considerably restored with brick footings, suggested that there was originally a floor several inches higher. A tiled floor has just been completed under the direction of Mr Wilfrid Bond, F.R.I.B.A.

The north doorway, which is closer to the west wall, is considerably smaller and has a stone lintel and rubble tympanum. It has, like the south doorway, a projecting order; but this differs from the inner order, which is of the zig-zag pattern, and is decorated with the round billet moulding much worn, similar to the string-course which passes round the chapel beneath the eaves. The opening has been bricked up.

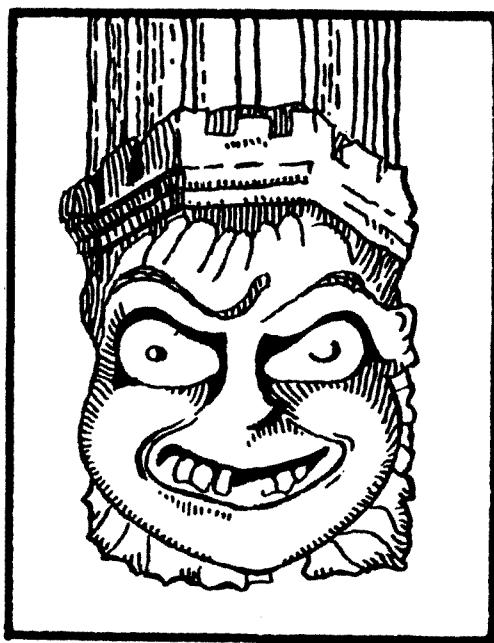
The west wall of the chapel was very much altered by Sir G. G. Scott in his restoration of the building in 1867. In Cotman's drawing double doors are shown above the lower string-course, and these probably led into a loft above the nave. No trace of this opening remains and the wall is pierced by three windows—one in the centre, of Norman design, immediately above the upper string-course, and resembling the others in the nave; and on either side of it a small circular window 1 foot 8 inches in diameter, splayed on the inside, and on the outside decorated with a round moulding. These two circular openings appear to be original. In two of Cotman's drawings openings may be seen inserted beneath the eaves in the nave, probably taking the place of the Norman windows, which were stopped up to allow of hay being stacked against the walls. It will be noticed that the threshold of the double doors in the west wall is raised above the lower string-course, and the intermediate floor would thus come immediately above the window which Cotman shows inserted in the south wall of the nave. Windows were not usually found necessary for barns, which gives additional support to the theory that the chapel might at one time have been used for habitation.

The roofs of the chapel present an interesting problem. They are of XV century date, simple in character and of a



Chapel of Saint Mary Magdalene, Sturbridge, Cambridge, from the South-East ♦

steep pitch; that above the nave is divided into four equal bays by arched moulded principals without collars and bound together by a single purlin. The rafters rest on the outside of the wall, and are supported by pendant-posts which stand on a moulded cornice, while the principals rise from carved corbels some four feet below the top of the wall. The chancel roof, smaller in size, is divided into three bays and is similar to that over the nave, save in the moulding of the principals and in the absence of pendant-posts, the rafters rising direct from a wall-plate hidden by a moulded cornice. In the chancel



A CORBEL, *from the NAVE*

the corbels do not interfere with the windows. It is remarkable that the nave roof has not been constructed to match the original building. Thus its division into four equal bays has necessitated placing corbels in the splay of the windows. Only two solutions can be found for this—unless we are to regard the mediaeval carpenter as exceedingly careless. Either it was intended to remodel the walls of the chapel, destroy the small Norman windows and insert others of larger dimensions; or else the roofs were brought from elsewhere and made to fit the chapel as well as possible, which would account for the fact that on the south side the nave

roof interferes with the arch of the window. A careful examination however reveals no constructional alterations in the roofs to make them suit a new span. Note the grotesque carved corbels which remain.

Externally the chapel exhibits very pleasing proportions and the detail deserves careful examination. It is divided into two stages by a horizontal moulded band of the "hatched" pattern, which passes right round the building at a height of about 5 feet above the ground. In the chancel it is at a slightly lower level and consequently returns twice against the east wall of the nave. This band serves excellently to unite nave and chancel, and it forms a baseline for the windows and a springing line for the arch of the nave doorways and the segmental-headed archway in the chancel. At the same time the angles of both nave and chancel are ornamented with attached shafts, the capitals of which support the band, which in its turn forms a base line for another set of angle shafts above. A second string-course, of the round billet design, passes round the chapel beneath the eaves. On the east wall it forms a separate band at a lower level, supported as in the nave by the capitals of the upper angle shafts. Note that a rosette is carved on the stone adjoining the capital of the upper south-east angle shaft of the chancel. In the masonry of the north wall of the chancel there is a zig-zag voussoir which may have come from a destroyed east window similar to the others in the chancel.

There are good carved springing stones to the coping of the nave, but of the gable crosses only the bases remain.

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHAPEL OCCUR IN THE FOLLOWING WORKS

J. S. COTMAN. *Antiquities of Saint Mary's Chapel, at Stourbridge, near Cambridge.* 1819.

1. View from the North-West.
2. View from the South-East.
3. North Doorway.
4. South Doorway.
5. Details.
6. View of the Interior.

Notes on the Cambridgeshire Churches. 1827.

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From a drawing by Frederick L. Griggs.

POSTSCRIPT

Dr W. M. Palmer sends me the following:

1299. "Master Robert de Wynewik custos capelle de Steresbrigg" dug the mill pond of Steresbrigg which is in the King's hand by reason of the vacancy of the See of Ely. This is presented by the jury of the Hundred of Flendish in the Eyre of 27 Edw. I. It comes under the head of "encroachments." The Sheriff answered that Robert has no lay fee and the jury are fined for their presentment.

P. R. O. Assize Roll, 96.

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