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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

OCTOBER 1926—JULY 1927

WITH
Communications
MADE TO THE SOCIETY

VOLUME XXIX



Cambridge:
DEIGHTON, BELL & CO., LTD.; BOWES & BOWES.
LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.
1928

Price Twelve Shillings and Sixpence net.

**CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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MELBOURN CHURCH.

By A. H. LLOYD, F.S.A.

(Read 15 November 1926.)

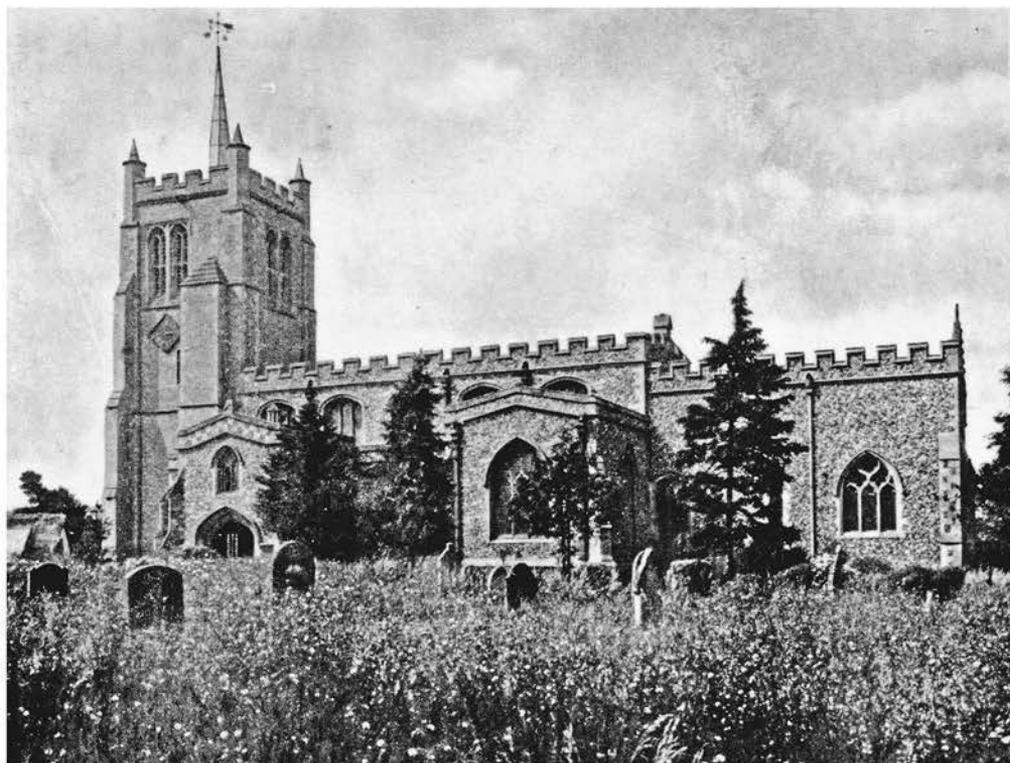
This communication does not purport to be a complete account of the church, and it has no concern with the history of the parish and its manors. The architecture of the building is examined and its development traced with the intention of putting in its proper relation the architectural problem. For the manorial and parochial history of Melbourn, readers are referred to Dr Palmer's masterly accounts communicated to this and other societies. The writer's acknowledgments are gratefully offered to the Rev. H. MacNeice, the vicar of Melbourn, and to Dr Palmer, for information they have most kindly supplied, and to Mr L. Hale for making the ground-plan.

No evidence has been discovered of a pre-Conquest church at Melbourn and there is no indication in *Domesday* of a church existing there in 1086. But although there is no trace of a church built before or soon after the Conquest, the existing building contains, as part of its necessary equipment, evidence of a predecessor of Norman date.

With the exception of stone dressings, the exterior (Pl. I A) is of flint and rubble, exposed or plastered, and traces of the development of the building and indications of the changes it has undergone are thereby mostly hidden; it is mainly from the interior, built of good clunch, that the church must be required to give an account of its architectural story.

THE FONT.

The earliest feature is the basin of the font (Pl. I B). This was originally a rectangle about 2 ft. 6 in. square, one side being decorated with an arcade of columns and rather flat, round arches, surmounted by a band of diaper work of unusual form, the whole in low relief; the remaining three sides were plain. The font belonged in its original form to the first half of the 12th century and points to the building of a church in Melbourn at that period. The basin was cut down to its



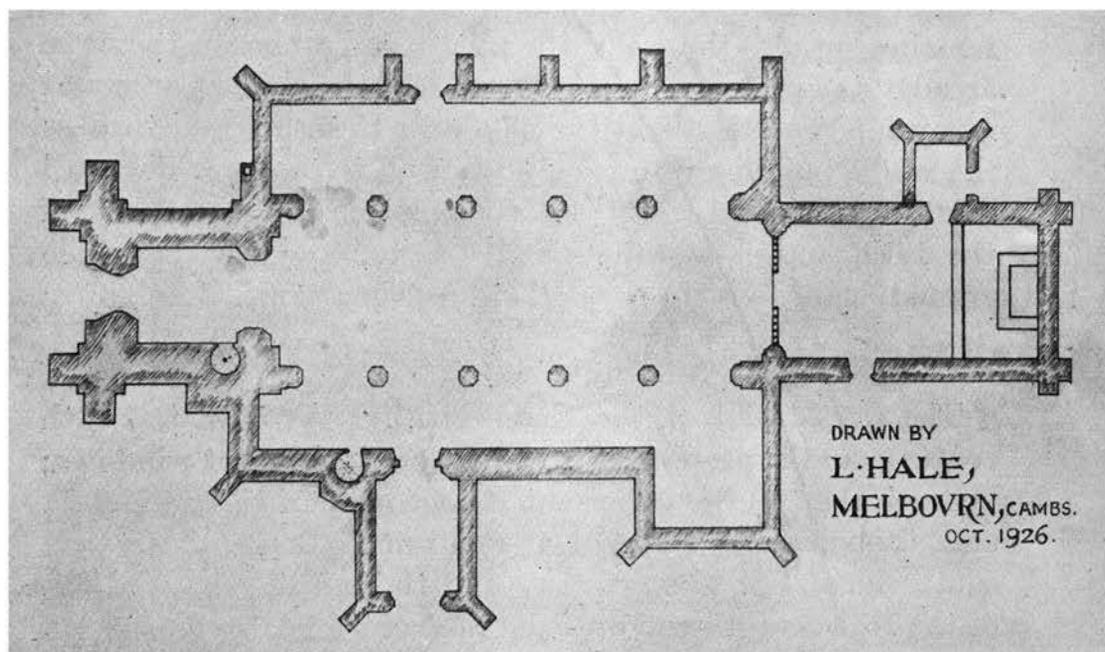
A



B.

PLATE I. MELBOURN CHURCH,
(A. SOUTH SIDE).
(B. FONT).

present octagonal form in a way that preserves a portion of the arcaded side and a portion of one original plain side; the remaining six sides of the octagon are each ornamented with rounded trefoils in high relief on their inner sides and having a quirk marking their outer lines, the foils terminating in balls. These panels are indubitably mediaeval notwithstanding their sharpness of line and smoothness of surface, qualities derived from one or other of the numerous handlings of the font in the latter part of the 19th century. It may safely be assumed that the square Norman font-basin was



cut down into octagonal form to fit against the westernmost pillar of the south arcade when the present nave was built in the 13th century; it appears to have remained in that position until it was removed under a Faculty of 1882.

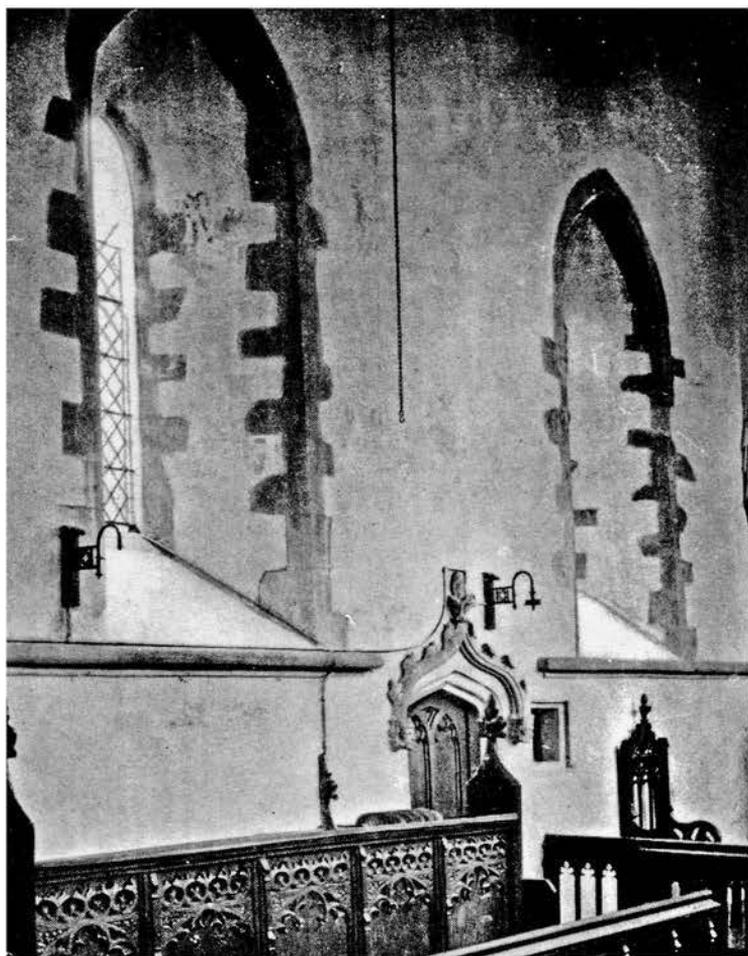
The church of the first half of the 12th century, the church for which the existing font-basin in its original square form was made, seems to have had a life of about 100 years. No portion of its building was retained in that of its successor and this suggests the possibility that the present church was built at a little distance apart from the Norman

church. During any excavations in the churchyard, a close watch should be kept for traces of old foundations.

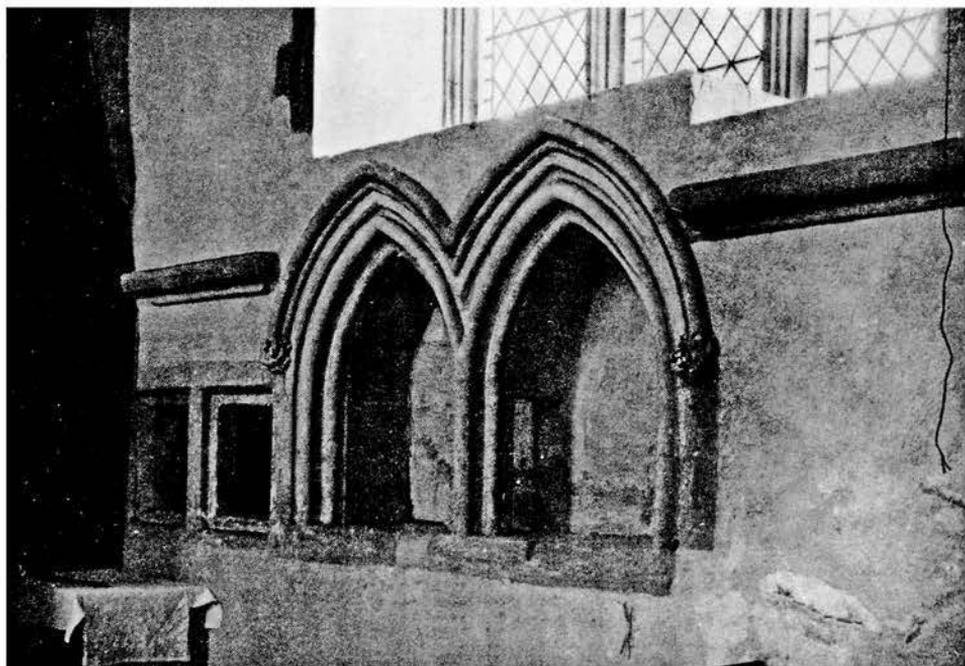
The structure of the present church belongs in the main to two periods: the reign of Henry III and the reign of Henry VII. The church begun in the first half of the reign of Henry III and completed well before its end is, in essence, the building as it is seen today, little as that may be assumed from the evidence of the exterior. If there were removed from the ground-plan the tower, the porch, the projection of the chapel and the vestry, there would remain the whole of the ground-plan of the 13th-century church with the exception of the north aisle wall. And not the ground-plan alone remains but also the walls, the pillars and arches of the nave arcades, the principal doorway, much of the chancel arch and many internal details in the chancel. It seems well to pass the whole building in review first of all to discover in detail what remains of the 13th-century church, then to speak of the 14th-century additions and, finally, to cover the whole ground again to identify the 15th-century work.

THE CHANCEL.

The north wall of the chancel (Pl. IIA) is of the 13th century, and it preserves two of the original lancet windows; beneath them is the under-cut stringcourse of the same date and, though much restored, it still remains on the east and south sides also. The doorway and the opening beyond are of the 15th century and must be reserved for later consideration. On the south (Pl. IIB) nothing, save the wall, the stringcourse and one lancet window, belongs to the original date of the chancel, but the double-drain piscina is also of the 13th century though of the second half; it probably replaced one with a single drain and its introduction must have caused the removal of the lancet that originally occupied the space above. These piscinae with twin drains have much ecclesiastical interest; they came into use during the course of the 13th century in obedience to the desire for greater reverence in regard to the Holy elements and, after prevailing for a few decades, their need ceased and later buildings were supplied with piscinae of single drains, following a further ritual



A



B

PLATE II. MELBOURN CHURCH,
(A. NORTH WALL OF CHANCEL).
(B. SOUTH WALL OF CHANCEL).



PLATE III. MELBOURN CHURCH,
NAVE, LOOKING EAST.

development in the same direction. The double aumbry is of uncertain date, but it is later than the piscina with which, to some degree, it interferes; the deep fastening-holes remain on the jambs, but the mullion has been renewed. The actual arch between chancel and nave is later, but the responds up to and including the lower capitals are those of the 13th century; the bases are of the water-hollow type and the southern one has been renewed.

THE NAVE (Pl. III).

Both north and south arcades belong to this time also when, of course, the clerestory did not exist. The mouldings of the arches and capitals are normal, but those of the bases are unusual. Like the water-hollow type and the three-roll type the base-mouldings have three members, but the middle member is neither a hollow nor a roll: it may be described as a half-fillet or, better still, as a step. This form of base, though less frequent than the two main types, is occasionally to be seen elsewhere; there is a Cambridge example in the shafts of the east window of what is popularly known as the "Abbey Church" at Barnwell.

THE SOUTH AISLE.

That the south aisle (Pl. V A) is the original south aisle of the 13th-century church is clearly indicated, notwithstanding later window insertions, by its narrow width and the thickness of its two walls. The inner jambs of its doorway and its pointed segmental scoinson arch retain the simple but effective pointed bowtell. The external arch of this doorway is new, having been rebuilt along with the porch in one of the restorations of the 19th century. Boissier in his *Notes on the Cambridgeshire Churches*, published in 1827, says, "The inner arch of the south porch [the outer arch of our doorway] is Decorated and the best of that style in the neighbourhood." The actual arch seen by Boissier has gone, but, if the new arch is a copy of the old, it was not Decorated; it was coeval with the scoinson arch and of the full flower of the Early English period.

This completes the survey of the 13th-century church.

Begun at the east end, the work would continue slowly westward, and nave and aisles were completed early in the third quarter of the century.

Although in most mediaeval churches there are periods of outstanding building activity, the years lying between these greater efforts are frequently marked by less important works of alteration or addition, and of minor undertakings of that character there are at Melbourn records of some and examples and traces of others.

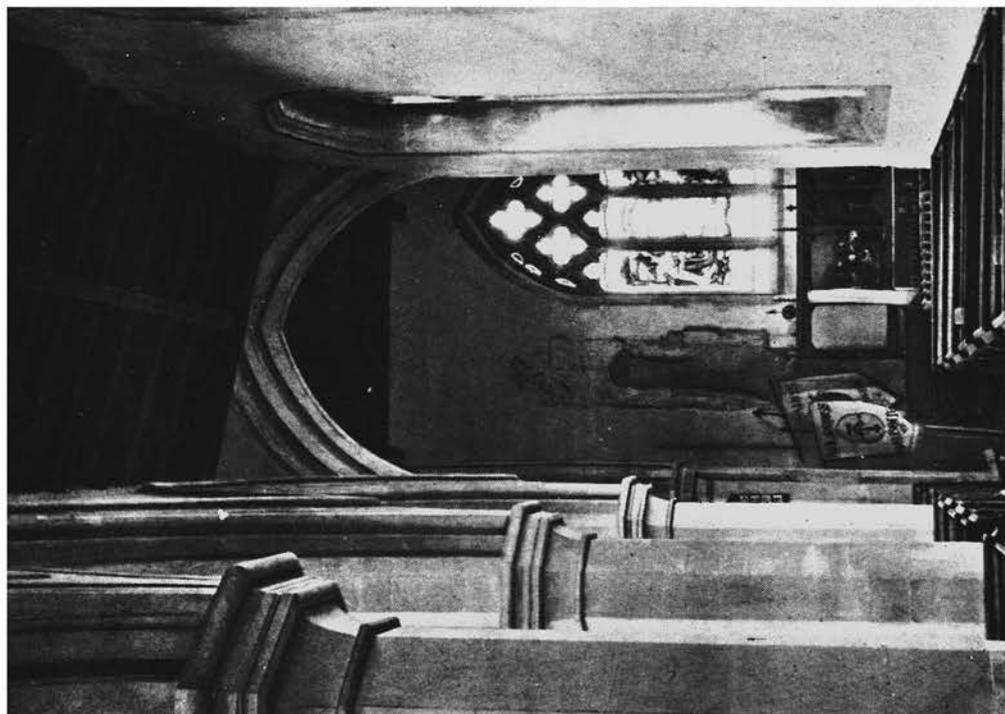
The first of these in order of date is known to us only by documentary record and it concerns the chancel. In the *Vetus Liber Archidiaconi Eliensis*¹, edited for the Society by Dr Minns and the late Dr Feltoe, a volume rich alike in information and interest, we read on page 115 that George, vicar of Melbourn, who had made the *celatura*, the windows and other things in the chancel, declared at a visitation made some time between 1304 and 1316 that in so doing he did not intend to prejudice the church nor to burden his successors. The significance of this declaration deserves consideration. It was the duty of the archdeacon to see that each church in the archdeaconry was properly cared for and provided with certain minima of service books, vessels, vestments and other things needful, and that these were kept in decent condition. The minima were often exceeded by the pious provision of those interested in the churches, and it was the responsibility of the archdeacon to require that such additions should also be cared for, repaired and, when necessary, replaced. George the vicar, obviously a man of means, had provided his church with the additional advantages he named, but it was his desire that the parish, and the clergy who followed him, should enjoy their use without entering into bondage to maintain or replace them; his declaration was made with the purpose of safeguarding them against this liability.

The nature of the work described by the word *celatura* is uncertain, but the term appears to have relation rather to the ornamentation of the object to which it was applied than

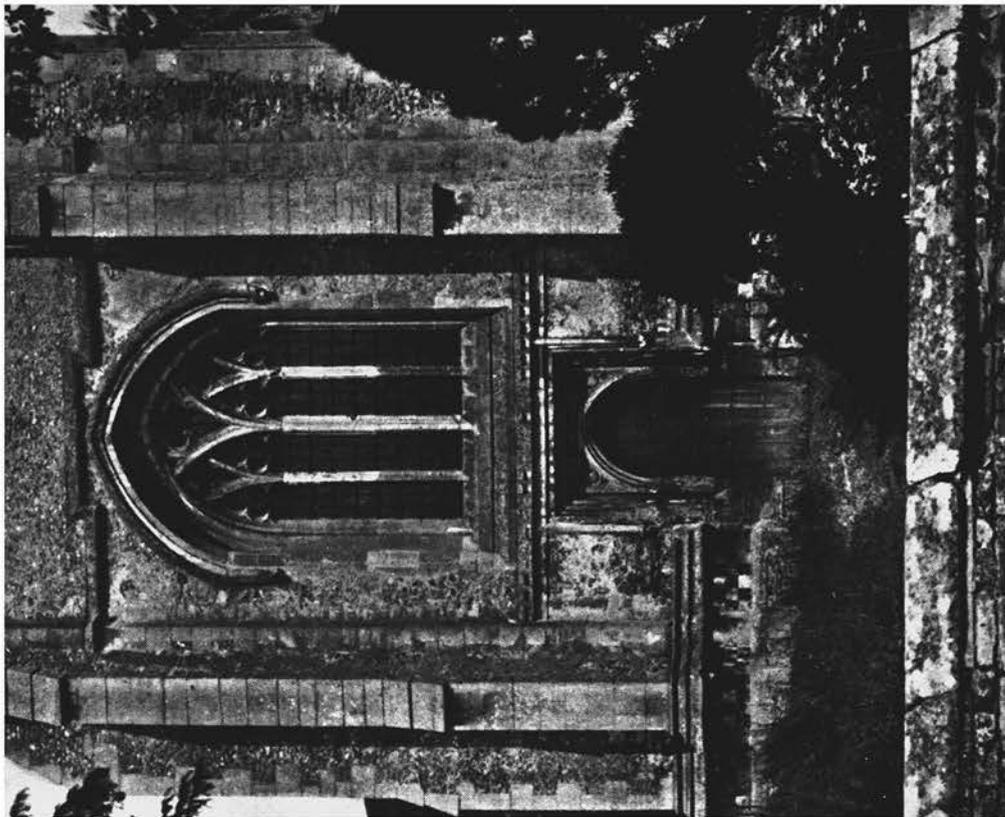
¹ Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Octavo Publications, No. XLVIII (1917).



PLATE IV. MELBOURN CHURCH,
SOUTH CHAPEL FROM NAVE.



A



B

PLATE V. MELBOURN CHURCH,
(A. SOUTH CHAPEL FROM SOUTH AISLE.)
(B. WEST WINDOW.)

to its fabric or function: the ornamentation was of the character of carving, engraving or embossing. There is a little guidance to be had from the use of this term in the nearly contemporary inventory of the church at Horningsea (*Vetus Liber*, p. 41) where reference is made to the *celatura ultra altare et tabula retro altare*, suggestive perhaps as regards *celatura* of something connected with a canopy or screen which may have stood above or near the altar. Some such structure was common about the mediaeval high altars, sometimes plain, sometimes enriched with carving or painting, and carving, tracery or other detail in that position might explain the use here of *celatura*.

When George says he "made" the windows we are not compelled to assume a reference to window-openings; he may have filled existing openings with glass which in his time is frequently mentioned in other churches of the archdeaconry. Whatever George made has disappeared for there is nothing of his date remaining unless, perchance, the aumbry east of the piscina.

THE SOUTH CHAPEL (Pl. IV).

The story of the next work of which there is record is not found in any written document but is preserved in the structure itself. This work is the chapel at the east end of the south aisle which was built before the middle of the 14th century, say, in the early years of Edward III. The chapel is "divided" from the aisle "archwise," to quote a delightful phrase from No. III of *Documents Relative to Cambridgeshire Villages*, by whose publication Dr Palmer and Mr Saunders are putting local historians and antiquaries deeply in their debt. The chapel has a gabled roof at right angles to the lean-to of the aisle, and the awkward transition internally from one form of roof to the other is masked by a plain but good arch (Pl. VA) which, at the same time, satisfies the eye by the suggestion of receiving and transferring to the chapel's west wall the thrust of the arcade. This function it cannot effectively perform since it abuts, not upon the wall-space above the pillar but upon the weakest place in the arch adjoining, i.e. its shoulder.

The east window of the chapel, of three lights with reticulated tracery, remains though largely repaired, and on each side of it is a much mutilated niche with lierne vaulting; there were buttresses at the sides of the niches, and they were surmounted by elaborate canopies whose outlines alone are left, while in the backgrounds there is still much colour. It is probable that the niches are somewhat later than the window they flank. While it is impossible to answer with any degree of certainty the oft-repeated question as to the figures which formerly filled the niches, it is not at all improbable that one would be given to the Blessed Virgin who, as we should expect, certainly had an altar in the church, and the lady-chapel would naturally be found in this position, the most honourable after that accorded to the high altar. As to the other niche, Dr Palmer says that a gild of St Wyburgh is mentioned in a document of 1542. It is possible (it must be said with all reserve) that a statue of this royal and sainted lady, the sister of Saint Etheldreda and herself the foundress of a monastic house at Dereham, filled the second niche; she should not be confused with the Saint Werberga, princess of the Mercian house and fourth Abbess of Ely, whose remains were translated to Chester, of which monastery and church she became patroness.

THE NORTH CHAPEL (Pl. VI).

The space of nearly 100 years from the date of the main building to that of the south chapel is about equalled by the time elapsing before the next building period. The work then done was not very important and what remains and is now to be described is so minute that reference to it would scarcely be justifiable apart from the inquiry to which it belongs. By those who know Melbourn church, residents and visitors alike, the question is often asked, "Was there ever a chapel at the east end of the north aisle similar to that on the south; a chapel, that is, projecting beyond the north wall of the north aisle?" The present chapel at the east end of the south aisle is commonly referred to as "the transept," but there never was a true transept at Melbourn, and it would be well to speak instead of the "South Chapel." If there had been



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PLATE VI. MELBOURN CHURCH,
NORTH AISLE LOOKING EAST.

a similar chapel on the north side, exactly opposite to that on the south, it would have produced something in the nature of a pseudo-transept, but, if such a chapel ever existed, it had disappeared before 1500. For, when the clerestory was added to the nave at about that time, its easternmost window on the south side was shortened and the stringcourse beneath it raised to clear the roof of the south chapel, but there is no such special provision on the north side where the lines of the windows and the string run unbroken from west to east. While this makes it clear that no such projecting chapel existed on the north side after the changes of the late 15th century, it remains to be considered whether one had occupied that position at an earlier period.

It has been said above that the south chapel was built before the middle of the 14th century and that one of its attendant features is the arch across the south aisle. There remains in the north aisle, against the arcade, the springing of an arch in the same position as that on the south; it rises out of the shoulder of the main arch in the same manner as the southern one and is also in two orders. On a superficial examination it would be natural to assume from this evidence the former existence of a north chapel similar to that on the south, but the mouldings of the northern arch show that it was built 75 years or more after the southern: it was erected, say, in the second quarter of the 15th century. The radius used in describing this north aisle arch makes it obvious that it spanned the narrow original aisle of the 13th century. There can be no doubt that towards the close of the 15th century the original north wall was taken down and a new one built four feet farther to the north, involving the destruction of the arch and the separate structural entity of the chapel it might be supposed to indicate; it is easier to believe that a projecting north chapel never existed than that it had a fleeting career of 60 or 70 years. There was, we may be sure, from an early date an altar at the east end of the north aisle (where the organ now stands), and in the later mediaeval period it appears to have been dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The arch was probably inserted under the influence of its fellow on the south to divide the chapel "archwise" from the

aisle for the use of the members of the gild of the Holy Trinity, knowledge of which at Melbourn is due to documentary evidence. Beneath the arch there would be a parclose screen with another across the bay of the nave, and in this way would be obtained the individuality and, in a proper measure, the exclusiveness of the chapel if it were used for the services of a gild: as compared with the south chapel it would then differ mainly in size.

THE SOUTH CHAPEL.

Rivalry is contagious, and if the gild of the Holy Trinity sought to emulate in its special corner the splendours of the south chapel, those with a special interest in the latter, perhaps the gild of St Wyburgh, being determined to keep their lead, entered upon the work on the south side of their chapel remaining today in the window with its lower solid panels (Pl. IV), the tomb slab beneath it, and the piscina niche, all of them, including possibly the squint in the north-east angle, being attributable to the first half of the 15th century.

THE LATE 15TH-CENTURY CHANGES.

Beginning with the year 1487, the church entered upon its second great period of building activity, lasting twenty years and equalling in extent and importance that attending its erection 250 years earlier. The people of Melbourn set out upon this enterprise under the pressure of two impulses, one general, the other local. Throughout the country new churches were being built, old ones enlarged, and Melbourn went with the tide; but the will to act without the means avails little, and the means, there is reason to believe, were at least to some extent provided by that eminent man, John Alcock, who had entered the diocese the year before as its bishop. Among his many interests two stood out prominently, building and education; the former certainly, the latter possibly, engaged his attention here. Alcock supplied Melbourn's local impulse.

THE CHANCEL.

Beginning as before with the chancel, we find that the walls were raised, a new roof was provided which is still in position, the rather small east window of the 13th century was replaced by the one which, though frequently repaired, still remains and, to adjust it to these various changes, the chancel arch was entirely remodelled. The 13th-century arch, now far too low, was taken down and upon its capitals, while they and the responds below them were retained, was built an extension of about six feet or so provided with its own capitals and arch in the manner of the time (Pl. III). This economy of material and labour in retaining the 13th century responds should be noted. At this period also there was built a sacristy or priests' vestry on the north side (Pl. II A) whose doorway is still in position, though the chamber itself has long passed away. Forty years ago the doorway, then blocked, was opened up to give entrance to a small modern vestry. East of the doorway is a rectangular recess possibly intended for and used as an Easter Sepulchre. It has not now and never had any ornamentation indicative of that purpose, such as may be seen at Northwold (Norfolk) and in the splendid example at Heckington (Lincolnshire), but the use is suggested by the internal easterly recess, as for the reception of the crucifix or Host, and by the rebate of the face so appropriate for the ritual fixing and rolling away of the "Stone" as part of the Good Friday and Easter Day ceremonies.

THE SCREEN.

About twenty years later, in 1507, the rood screen (Pl. III) with its loft was put up, access to the loft being by the beautiful corbelled staircase which projects into the south aisle but is mostly hidden by the organ. The staircase is still perfect and it was entered by a doorway behind where the pulpit stands; seventy years ago that doorway was carried away to serve the same purpose for the chamber over the porch and its old position was walled up. The wooden screen for whose erection the 15th century builders, with callous disregard for the work of their predecessors, cruelly cut into

the beautiful 13th-century capitals is that which is seen today. It has lost its coving and has been restored, but it is in a good state of preservation; on a shield on each side facing the nave are borne the five wounds.

THE NAVE (Pl. III).

The work done in the nave was in keeping with the changes in the chancel. The clerestory was added and the tie-beam roof over the nave is coeval with it. The roof was cleaned and repaired in 1883, being carried away to the contractor's yard at Royston for the purpose as is attested by the reference in the architect's Bill of Costs to the visits he paid to Royston in supervision of the work done there. If tradition could be relied upon this roof might be regarded as a great traveller, and its journeys to and from Royston as minor incidents in an adventurous career. The Cole MSS. referring to it say, "The roof of the church is a very fine one and there is a tradition in the parish that it was originally designed for Gt St Maries in Cambridge." If designed for the University Church it was a bad misfit. In the restoration of 1883 the original intention was to make a new roof, but, to the satisfaction of all who love beautiful ancient work, the funds did not suffice.

THE NORTH AISLE (Pl. VI).

The 13th-century north wall was taken down and a new wall was built four feet farther to the north for the purpose, probably, of making good to the chapel of the gild of the Holy Trinity the space lost by the intrusion of the rood-loft staircase. The north wall then built is, unhappily, not that to be seen today; the north and west walls of the north aisle were rebuilt and the east wall was largely repaired in 1883, when the heavy internal flying buttress was introduced to resist the northward inclination of the arcade.

THE PORCH.

To the end of the 15th century also must be attributed the old porch and its upper chamber, predecessors of the present ones which, fairly closely resembling them and using some



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PLATE VII. MELBOURN CHURCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE,
NAVE, LOOKING WEST.

of their old materials, were built in the 19th century. Access to the upper room was obtained from the church by the winding staircase that still, but now much repaired, serves the same purpose. This upper chamber, from 1690 onwards for many years, was occupied as a school for whose teacher one William Ayloffé at that time made permanent provision by charging the duty upon the parson of Meldreth in return for the payment to him of an annual stipend. While no evidence can be offered in support of the suggestion, it does not seem unlikely, in the light of our knowledge of Bishop Alcock's zeal and generosity in regard to all forms of education, that William Ayloffé in 1690 was only continuing or reviving an educational institution initiated by the founder of Jesus College, benefactor of Peterhouse and founder of many grammar and other schools.

THE TOWER.

To this late 15th-century date belongs the tower, and it is the greatest of all the numerous additions to the church at this period. There has been no original building of any moment since the works that have been detailed and the erection of the tower marks the culmination of the mediaeval development of the church, both in plan and in elevation. It presents today, modern rebuilding notwithstanding, an exterior aspect that would be entirely recognizable by those who worshipped in the church 425 years ago.

If one stands at the east end of the nave and looks westward (Pl. VII) one is impressed at once by the fact that the tower window is not in line with the axis of the nave. This is owing to the tower as a whole being placed south of the axis, and also to the north and south walls being inclined at an angle southerly to it. It would be a mistake to attribute any symbolic meaning to this deviation from right lines, or to connect it with an error in lay-out by the master builder; there is almost certainly some simple, natural and justifiable reason for the deviation, not the least probable being that it may have been dictated by the presence of foundations of earlier buildings which right lines might have traversed.

The consideration of the tower from this point of vantage introduces the problem whose recognition and attempted solution have prompted this communication: the problem of the tower arch. The bold characteristic responds of *circa* 1500 carry an arch of the 13th century, and above the arch there is again the wall of *circa* 1500. Insertions in mediaeval buildings are familiar to everyone, and this church like most others abounds in inserted windows; there are also examples elsewhere of insertions in arches, e.g. at Madingley where capitals of *circa* 1300 are inserted in the late 12th-century arch, and the complete tower arch of *circa* 1300 is inserted in a tower that is 100 years or more earlier. But these and innumerable similar examples are of later insertions in earlier work, while this example at Melbourn is of earlier work inserted in later. The newcomer to the church is haunted as he seeks to examine its other features by the persistent questions, "Why and whence this survival from the days of Henry III in work of the time of Henry VII?" Before attempting to answer these questions it should be remarked that Melbourn church and parish, after the days of the Argentines until the times now being considered, were in complete enjoyment of one great blessing whose value is probably more conspicuous to the modern mediaevalist, viewing it in distant and detached perspective, than it was to the Melbourn of the time. There was then, so far as is known, no resident family of great possessions and therefore no superabundance of means wherewith to pay for needlessly extravagant schemes of building. The necessity in such circumstances of the careful husbanding of resources need not be stressed, and of the pressing urgency of the need evidence has already been seen in the matter of the chancel arch (Pl. III) which they patched instead of rebuilding. The same imperious motive may be seen at work in the case of the tower arch, and the answer to the question "why?" is "economy." It remains to seek the source of this 13th-century arch found in such unusual surroundings.

As has been shown, the tower was part only, though the greater part, of the very extensive alterations of *circa* 1500 including the insertion of many windows and, in particular,

the great east window of the chancel which, though it has often been repaired, is still in position. It is suggested that the arch inserted in the tower is the arch of that 13th-century east window which was removed to make room for the present one. Once the tracery of the window was taken out, its arch was admirably suited for its new position and the manner in which it is adapted makes clear that its use in its new position was contemplated in the designing of the tower; for, although their mouldings differ so greatly, there is no awkwardness in the manner in which the 13th-century arch sits upon the 15th-century responds. If evidence be sought that the original position of the arch was a former window, it may be found in the mouldings of the soffit, distributed between hollows, quirks and rounds, a system differing absolutely in character from the flat soffits of the adjoining arcades and from the soffit mouldings of any other open arch known to the writer. These mouldings must have formed the back-joints of the removed tracery, for it should be remembered that, in the Middle Ages, it was the almost invariable practice to build up the tracery layer by layer separately from the arch to which it was attached, as contrasted with the prevailing modern method of cutting arch-voussoirs and their attendant tracery together out of the same stones. The mediaeval method made it easy to separate this particular arch from its tracery in preparation for its use in its new surroundings, and it also explains the unusual character of the mouldings, one feature of which, though it is not attributable to the special conditions, is best seen in the outermost bowtell where, instead of a fillet, there is a hollowed channel or groove. The rare prototype of this uncommon moulding may be seen at Furness where there is a hollow in the bowtells of the nave and the door arches. The later development, as at Melbourn, may be seen at Castle Rising, but it is prominent in some of the great churches of France; it is to be found in the windows of the north ambulatory of the choir at Poitiers, and it is abundant in the splendid church of Bourges. Curiously enough it seems to be somewhat of a local type near Melbourn, for, without seeking it specially, it has been observed by the writer in

the north door of Meldreth and in the two 13th-century arches of the north arcade at Litlington.

THE WEST WINDOW IN THE TOWER (Pl. VB).

The tower arch and the chancel arch are not the only parts of the church indicating the fondness of the 15th-century people at Melbourn for retaining and using again supplanted earlier material, and attention must now be drawn to the tower's west window in this connexion. There is nothing to show how the nave was terminated westwards before the building of the tower, but it is likely that the west wall had upon its summit a bell-gable, after the manner still to be seen, e.g. at Longstanton St Michael, and that beneath it there would be a window, not very tall, for the gable itself was rather low in the period preceding the erection of the clerestory. As the west wall had to be removed to make way for the tower arch, it would not seem unlikely that its window would be carefully taken down and preserved until it could be re-used as the west window in the new tower. The setting in which the window is placed is dignified, but its deep cavetto is distinctive of late 15th-century work; the window itself is entirely different in character, admirably though it serves its purpose. The eye rests with delight upon the elongated quatrefoils, the long graceful mullions unbroken by any transom and duly subordinated, the bold half-round on the main mullion which is continued on the major arches of the tracery; all the details combine to produce a composition of singular beauty not too often seen anywhere and quite beyond approach in any other window remaining in this particular building. The only appearance of straight lines is at the sides of the main quatrefoil, and the window may safely be attributed to near the middle of the 14th century.

BISHOP ALCOCK'S REBUS.

It has been said that Alcock was clearly concerned in the late 15th-century building, and the evidence for this lies partly in his rebus, or canting badge, found upon a shield fixed upon the westerly side of a tie-beam of the chancel roof. This badge, of a class very characteristic of the age, is a cock standing upon a globe; the position given to the shield at the entrance to the *sacrarium* almost suggests that the Bishop was regarded as the second founder of the church. In addition to the Alcock badge, the shield bears another device which has hitherto been regarded as a bird with spread wings standing upon a fish, but close examination, in brilliant sunshine with powerful field-glasses, gives a different interpretation; the second device seems to be a wyvern with head reverted standing upon its own tail. This is not a case of one device impaling another, for badges were not usually borne upon shields, and the disproportionate allocation of the space between the two devices forbids our giving the shield heraldic value. Search in Alcock's ornate sepulchral chapel at Ely, where his badge is seen in great profusion, fails to find, amongst all its wealth of natural and imaginary beasts, a wyvern. The only interpretation left would appear to be that there is on this shield a piece of mediaeval symbolic imagery. The wyvern is a fabled monster, akin to the dragon and griffin; like them it dwelt in caves, rock crevices and other antechambers of the lower world, whence it issued to do evil things to mankind. The late 15th-century work at Melbourn had for its object the admission of more light; the raising of the roofs, the addition of the clerestory, the insertion of larger aisle and chancel windows and the great east window must have had the effect of converting a dark or dim building into one irradiated with light. The purpose of these extensive additions and alterations is as unmistakable as their result, but, that it may be made clear that Bishop Alcock was the force behind the purpose, the story is carved upon the shield. The interpretation appears to be this: the cock, bird and herald of the day, chases away the thing of darkness

which, reluctantly retreating, turns back its head and ejects its venom towards the agent of light.

LATER WORK.

It is not the purpose of this communication to refer in detail to the work of the 19th century, some of which all would approve while other all would join to condemn. To the work of 1855 we owe the preservation of the best of the mediaeval seats, now carefully placed together at the west end of the north aisle; to neglect or to 'restoration' we owe the loss of the numerous shields of arms that were to be seen in the church when it was visited by Laver and by Cole in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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