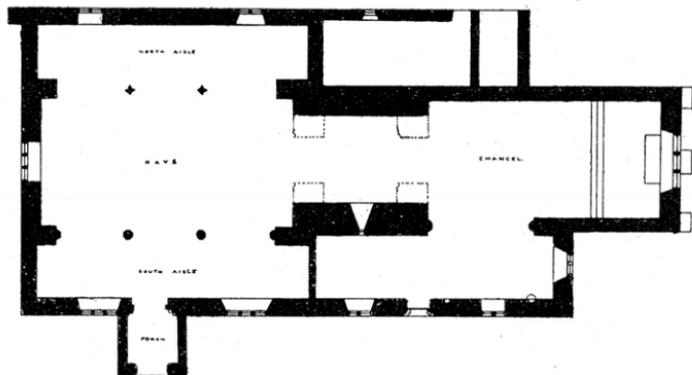


BARTON CHURCH



GROUND PLAN



ART. XXVIII.—*Barton Church*. By C. J. FERGUSON.
Read at that place, July 11th, 1879.

BARTON Church seems originally to have consisted of a nave and chancel, with the present tower placed centrally between them. We have positive evidence that this tower originally was the extent of the building, north and south, in the existing Norman window, with its characteristically stepped cill, in the south side of the tower.

The chancel was, I think, of earlier date still than the tower, and probably not so long as the present chancel; it would be a short early Norman chancel, (roofed with thatch,) of the same external width as the tower, with walls probably as thick. We have evidence of this in the weathering on the eastern face of the tower, which is at a remarkably acute pitch, suited for such a roofing as thatch. It has evidently spanned a building of which the side walls were very low.

The nave was certainly of the same width as the tower and as the present nave. Of this we have evidence in the weathering on the west face of the tower, which is at a pitch of some fifty-five degrees, and is carried the full width of the tower.

The tower itself is late Norman work in three stages, verging in its upper story on Transitional work — the coupled windows of the belfry being slightly pointed.

The parishioners seem soon to have found their church too small, and the first addition they made to it was the building of an aisle to the nave, on the south side: this they accomplished by piercing the nave wall with the three arches you now see. In this aisle they made the principal entrance, building, or re-building, the almost Transitional
Y Y
doorway

doorway that now exists. The evidence that this is the earliest addition is shewn by the fact that its wall overlaps that of the tower to eastward. The next step was to build a south aisle to the chancel, which, as you now see it, still retains its original east window of comely proportioned coupled lancets, divided by a substantial mullion; its priest's door, with its delicately moulded jambs and arch; its stoup inside the door, and its piscina.

Their next addition was that of a north aisle to the nave, and in doing this they improved upon the opposite one. They took the wall of the nave entirely down and constructed an arcade of three arches, supported on delicately moulded shafts, as you now see them. They then came to deal with the chancel, and here it seems to me they met with a difficulty; they wished to gain more room inside, but the recently erected aisle on the south prevented their gaining space on the outside. Hence, it seems to me, they built the side walls very thin for the time of their construction, piercing them with no windows and buttressing them with a thick and substantial east wall, which they finished after the fashion of the time, with three buttresses on the face of it: they inserted in it a three-light window, which still remains and shows in its arrangement the first development of tracery. By this means they got their chancel made as large as possible without disturbing pre-existing buildings. These works were all of the early English period.

For some time they seemed satisfied with their building, and during the Decorated Period, as we find usual in Cumberland, nothing was done to the church. Two centuries later they began again, and built a north aisle to the chancel. By this time it is not surprising to find that the whole building required alteration; we see by the marks on the tower wall, that new roofs were added to the chancel, and it is not improbable that new windows were inserted, which have since been superseded. Again, one hundred
years

years later, in the seventeenth century, a complete restoration of the building was considered necessary. New roofs were placed on the nave and chancel, and probably on the whole building. At the same time the chancel walls were heightened. The porch was added, and a remarkable alteration made in the tower by the removal of the lower portion of the chancel arch, and the insertion of the segmental arches, as you now see them. A window was also inserted at this time in the south aisle of the chancel. Since then, following the precedent of the ancient builders, but without their skill, the church has within the last twenty years been considerably altered, and, practically, the interior is new, a shell of plaster covering up the older work and its history.

The points of interest to be noted in the church are, first, the tower itself, which is rectangular, 24 feet by 22 feet, and its walls five feet in thickness. You see the original double chancel arch not more than seven feet wide, the arch semicircular, moulded with shallow mouldings on its west face, and springing from a rudely chamfered abacus resting on square imposts.

With regard to this chancel arch, my friend Mr. Lees has called my attention to the one at Darlington, where I understand there are two superimposed arches to the chancel,—originally so built,—the springing of the upper arch forming the rood loft, but in the case of Barton, I think the lower arch is a later alteration.
