

ART. XIII.—*Warcop church murals*. By the Rev. J. BREAY.

DURING the summer of 1956 Warcop church was closed for structural alterations, which involved the removal of an old low flying arch on the south side of the church. This arch was erected in the 18th century to support the nave arcade which leans away from the centre aisle. During major renovations undertaken about twenty years ago, after the discovery of the collar beam roof in the nave, this old arch slipped, and had been shored up since that date. The work undertaken in 1956 under the guidance of Mr C. B. Martindale involved the taking down of the old arch, putting up a new and higher flying arch, and four new purlins to support the slab roof.

When the old arch was removed it was seen that it had not been bonded into the wall of the arcade, but its masonry had been laid flush with the old plaster. This revealed a strip of old plaster about a yard wide, stretching from the roof nearly down to the capital of the pillar below. Upon this was visible a cartouche drawn with rust coloured leaves and flowers. At the bottom was a bunch of flowers, and at the top was the remains of a basket of fruit including pomegranates.

The text of the inscription was as follows:

HE THAT HATH PITY
UPON THE POOR LEN
DETH UNTO THE LORD;
AND THAT WHICH HE
HATH GIVEN WILL HE
PAY HIM AGAIN.
PROVERBS XIX . . .

We were able to remove this plaster with the aid of a thin iron slat taken from an old bed, and it was laid on

a door. A photograph of the text was sent by Mr Martindale to Mr E. Clive Rouse, M.B.E., F.S.A., who gave the opinion that the work was late 16th-century or early 17th-century. I incline to the view that it was post-restoration (1660). The plaster proved to be too poor to be preserved, and was destroyed.

When this was removed we discovered another inscription underneath, which was clearly of the 16th century. It had a certain amount of scroll work done in red lead, and the words were in black letter type with red capitals. This inscription was so badly damaged through the removal of the first plaster that only the word LORD was clear, but it is clear that both were hortatory texts common at that time. The first inscription was on the plaster, but the older one had been painted on to the whitewash which covered the bare stones of the wall. Unfortunately this also had to be removed when the wall was raked to take the pointing and grouting for the new arch.

In the church of Brough under Stainmore a similar 17th-century text in black letter on the north wall of the north aisle was discovered in the autumn of 1956. The wall and inscription were in such bad condition, however, that no text could be identified.