

## NOTES ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF BURNINGFOLD.

BY

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THE house at Burningfold is an interesting example of the process of enlargement and adaptation to the increased standards of comfort of succeeding generations. The germ of the existing building was probably a rude timber hall, with offices, and a solar or sleeping chamber for the lord; and some of its actual timbers may well have survived from at least the 13th century. It would probably have been practically reconstructed in the 15th century, and large parts of this work remain, with, as I have suggested, some still older timbers worked in—English oak being possessed of extraordinary lasting qualities. In the heart of the house is still the skeleton of the once open hall, now divided vertically and horizontally into rooms and floors. It is of the plainest construction, quite devoid of ornamental features—plain chamfers, with stops, are the only *criteria* among details of the age of the work—and these point to the 15th century as the general date. But of the front, an addition of the Elizabethan period (*c.* 1580), we can speak more positively, as it compares with dated examples, such as Great Tangle, where the curved quarterings in the timber construction are closely similar (*vide* accompanying illustration, fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The overhanging upper story, with a plastered cove, a boldly moulded fascia to protect the ends of the projecting floor joists,

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* also the old Manor House, Bramley, where there is a gabled two-storied porch, or staircase wing, in the courtyard exhibiting similar ornamental quarterings.



WALTER C. CORIN, *Photo.*

BURNINGFOLD: Staircase.

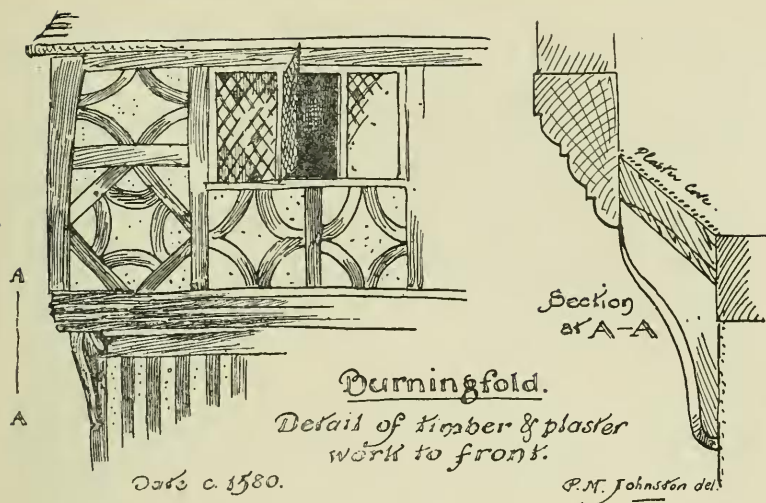


FIG. 1.

and a nicely-shaped bracket, are features worthy of special note. The windows in their present form are apparently 17th-century insertions. Unfortunately, the beauty of this front has been greatly marred by injudicious renovation, in which the beautiful silvery oak timbers have been coloured a horrid blue-black, and the plastering has been largely renewed.

In the interior of this Elizabethan portion several good moulded door-cases remain, displaying the characteristic section shown in fig. 2: and another feature, of peculiar interest, is the winding newel staircase, all in

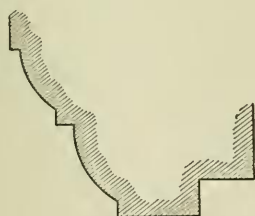


FIG. 2.

Elizabethan door-frames on 1st Floor.

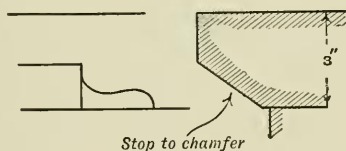


FIG. 3.

Stair-treads.

oak, with solid slabs, 3 inches thick for the treads. (Fig. 3.) These winding staircases are a local feature

of special interest, to which Mr. Ralph Nevill, F.S.A., draws attention in his book on *Old Cottages, etc., in Surrey*. I met with another example recently in an interesting old house called Bridge, in the neighbourhood of Haslemere, but just over the Sussex border. I was led by independent evidence to date this staircase, together with the wing in which it is contained, at about 1580: so that it compares interestingly with the Burningfold example. The tall rounded newel post, in one length, to serve the two or more floors, is common to both.