

NOTES ON THE RESTORATION OF GODALMING CHURCH.

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IN the careful restoration of any church it is usual, through the removal of whitewash and plaster, to come across many previously unknown evidences of its date and history. In the case of Godalming, a large church of great variety of dates, I have, through my connection with the work and residence on the spot, been enabled to note so much that, in order to explain myself, I shall be forced in some measure to repeat the matter of the excellent paper by Major Heales, published in the fourth volume of Transactions. I shall therefore begin these notes from the earliest history of the church, omitting as much as possible reference to whatever has not received fresh light.

We know that there was a church here in the time of Edward the Confessor, and I am of opinion that the western arch and wall of the tower were of this date. The arch was a plain round arch on a simple impost and of rude workmanship, and the walling of loose masonry of thin Bargate stones laid in herring-bone fashion, differing therein and in the inferior quality of the stone from the rest of the tower. If not of so early, it is certain that this arch was of the earliest Norman date, and was in that case probably the work of a rector—the well-known Ranulf Flambard, the builder of Durham Cathedral. Some height above the wall and visible from the ringing floor was the line of attachment of a queen post roof clearly marked on the east side of wall, and a stage above that the line of termination of a gable,

showing the original height of the roof over this wall. It will scarcely be credited that the builders who raised the next stage of the tower finishing with the heavy spire never took the trouble to bond their work into this old gable except just at the bottom and top, in consequence of which an opening averaging about an inch wide existed along the line of the gable, admitting through the 3-ft. wall a draught strong enough to blow out a candle held against it, so that the tower had for the last 700 years virtually stood on three sides.

In order to make this side secure we have been forced to in great measure obliterate these roof marks by cutting out of the wall and putting bonding stones and irons across the cracks. I should add that the topmost gable line has no connection with the present early roof of the nave.

On the south side of tower wall, corresponding to the outside of the chancel arch, we found, just above the line of the nave capitals, some of the original quoins of an external angle.

These facts clearly show that this was originally the chancel arch of an aisleless church without central tower, and judging from the character of the masonry and the non-cruciform shape of the church, there can I think be little doubt this was a portion either of the original Saxon church, or of a church built very soon after the Conquest, and somewhat in the Saxon manner.

The author of a pleasant but too conjectural pamphlet on the Church Restoration has, from insufficient and partial information, fallen into the error of supposing that this was the west wall of the nave—a clearly untenable position; the continued existence of this older arch is another example of the prevalent mediæval custom, well known to students, of leaving the chancel arch and doorways unaltered.

A doorway in the north transept, removed from a corresponding position in the old wall, is, I think, from the character of the impost, also of this earliest date.

I regret to say that the absolute exigencies of service in a church from shape peculiarly unfitted therefor,

forced my colleague, the late Sir Gilbert Scott, and myself most reluctantly to agree to the removal of this western arch of the tower and the widening of the opening—a sacrifice which will, I am happy to think, render further structural alterations unnecessary.

The eastern arch of the tower has also been somewhat altered, the arch being lifted from its impost, which is left in its original position, and refixed on a new impost at some three or four feet above.

This not being an absolutely necessary work of alteration was done against my wishes and without my cooperation, but I am bound to admit that the church has gained greatly in appearance thereby, and that there seems to me no valid archæological reason against it. The same plan could not, unfortunately, be adopted with the west arch, owing to its much narrower size.

The next portion in date of the church is the row of windows left in each side of the chancel walls, and the base and part of jamb of a small Norman priest's door now uncovered on the south side. The arches of these windows were previously visible, but we have now opened out the splays, and found on the plaster sides of them the original colour, of the very rudest description, but interesting as having been covered up since Early English date. The eastern window on the north side is sufficiently perfect to show the opening and the internal sill. In the rubble filling of this window we found several ears of rye, but, unfortunately, containing no corn that could be experimented with.

High up in the north and south transept west walls are two small Norman windows that I opened some years ago when taking down the transept galleries. It is thus clear that the church was converted into the cruciform shape, and was at first without aisles. The fact of the side arches of the tower being pointed is very peculiar, but seems to show this alteration was of Transitional date, and it was doubtless executed by the bishops of Salisbury, after obtaining a grant of the rectory, about 1118.

In the south wall of south transept have been opened

some remains apparently of Norman work that I am quite unable to explain, though they are most like sedilia; they are left open just as found, with the old plaster still at back. There are remains of wrought stones and peculiarities on the east side of this transept, doubtless connected with the altar that stood there. The round arched piscina is, I think, of Transitional, but may possibly be of Perpendicular date. The south-west pier of this transept had been cut away and built up in brick, the small piece of the capital remaining showing some slight carving of an early kind.

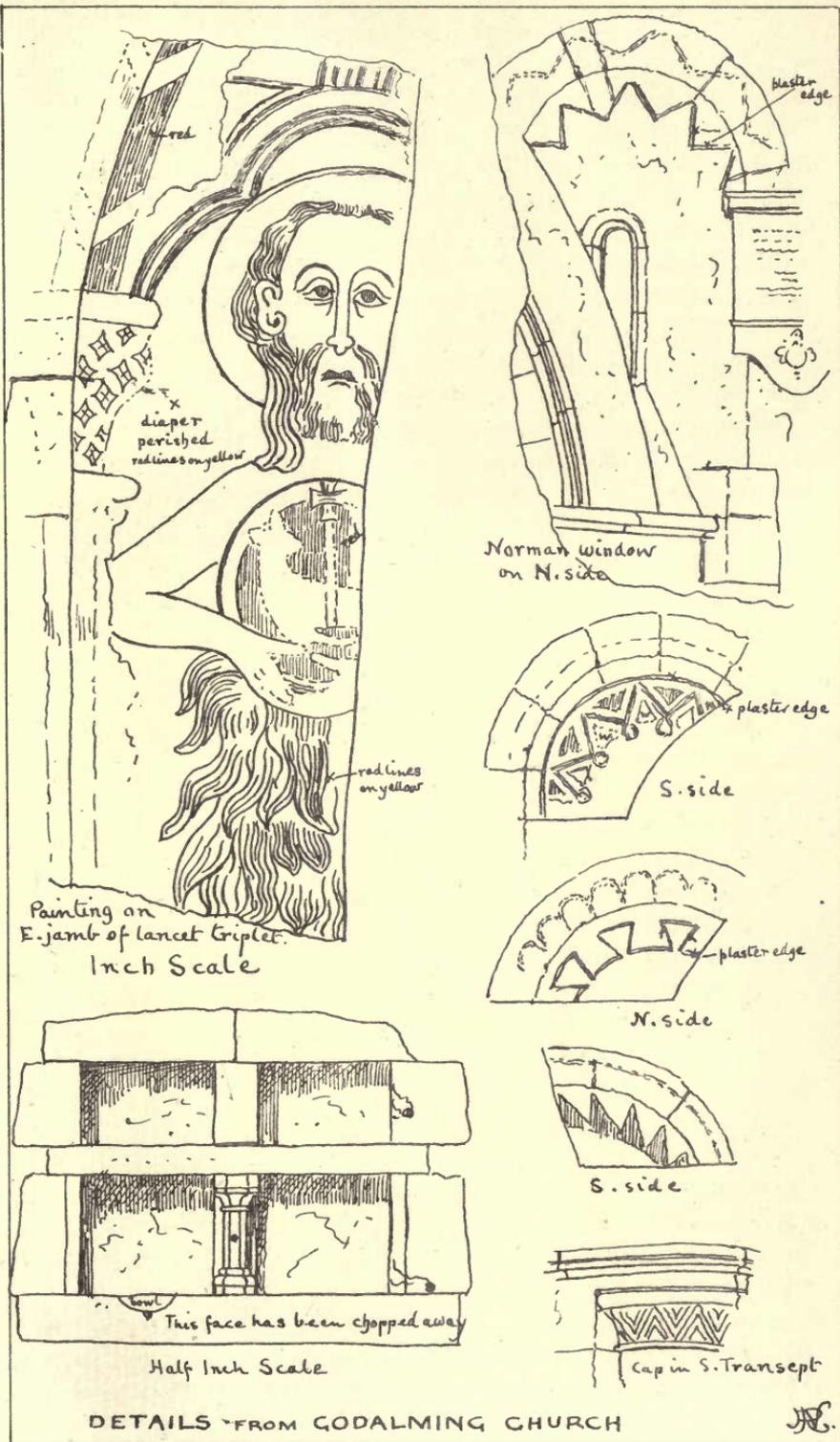
The next alterations to the church seem to have been of very extensive character, and to have comprised the two chancel and nave aisles, though there is some difference in date, the whole of the work, however, coming under the denomination of Early English, for details of the respective dates of which I may refer readers to Major Heales's paper.

The original design of the south chancel aisle is clearly shown, the jambs and parts of the arches of a range of lancet windows still existing on the south side. These have been cut about and destroyed by the insertion of the Early English triplet and two perpendicular windows. In the east wall were three lancets, the further jambs of the two outer still remaining.

As much as possible of the splay of these windows has been opened, and in consequence, on the side of the jamb of the east light on the south side we have uncovered a painting of St. John the Baptist, of very early date. There is also colour on one of the east windows.

Whether the triplet lancet with internal Sussex marble shafts was originally fixed in its present position, or with the perpendicular windows was at some time moved there from other parts of the church, it is impossible to tell; all three are, however, shown on the oldest drawings we have. This chantry must have been of quite similar character to the chancel of Bramley Church.

Under the triplet we have opened a good piscina and aumbry in two upper and two lower divisions, with a pretty Early English shaft. There are some of similar



character at Salisbury, which may be looked on as the mother church.

In the north transept we have found and exposed the jambs of two tall lancet windows existing before the east arch was erected.

The original wall of the north chancel aisle ran in continuation of the north jamb of this arch, but was taken down in 1840, when the aisle was widened. These east and west arches were opened by myself some years ago, at the time the transept galleries were taken down. The north jamb of west arch was built in brick, but has now been restored. The north wall of this transept has been taken down, and rebuilt further out, in its present position.

The east window of the south chapel had always been regarded as of its original form, having in the head three plain circles without cusps. Mr. John O. Scott, however, led by experience of a similar window, found on examination that these circles had a wide groove cut in them, that doubtless contained cusping similar to that which has been fitted to them and that improves the appearance very much. I wish to make it clear that the cusping has been simply fitted into this groove without any cutting for the purpose.

Our work of enlargement involved the destruction and rebuilding of the nave aisle walls, the only old parts of which were part of the wall on the south side, and the two west ends containing the two perpendicular windows which have been removed and re-erected in the north chancel aisle. The style selected by Sir Gilbert Scott for the aisles being decorated and the west walls having to be removed for the addition of a bay, it seemed best to move these windows into that part of the church that was mostly of old date, where they replaced some bad modern perpendicular work, and saved this part from the intrusion of incongruous modern work. All the old windows have been very carefully repaired, every piece of old stone possible being retained, both traceries and mullions being constantly halved and the inside at least preserved where the outside has perished. All these

repairs have been done in the same material as the old work, namely chalk, and I cannot refrain from adding a word of caution and entreaty to all church restorers, including architects often ignorant of the peculiarities of a district, to be firm on this point of material. It is most melancholy to see in numbers of churches in the district uninteresting copies in Bath stone of old features, where, in many cases to my certain knowledge, much of the real old work might have been retained but for a probable clause in the specification directing that all repairs shall be done in Bath stone. I have in my mind instances in this neighbourhood of most wilful destruction of this sort. The two westernmost arches of nave are new, being cut out of the wall of 1840. The western window replaces two bad perpendicular windows of the same date.

To the chancel we have at present done nothing except move the monuments on the south side, one of which has been placed on the opposite side and the other raised higher. By doing this we have opened the sedilia which had been built up, and having found some of the arch stones in the filling, have been able to replace them and complete the series of four. Some of the stones had left on them a range of late decorated crockets, and as we found a piece of the label we are enabled to see the whole design. A carved finial, which has always been kept loose in the church, turns out, as I had always suspected, to have belonged to the sedilia. A rude squint of no interest has been found and opened at back of sedilia. It may probably have been for the use of the ringer of the sanct bell, which is said to have hung on the outside of the south-east corner of the chancel before being moved to the outside of the tower. Various fragments were found built into the walls, notably in the tower arch part of what was probably a Saxon cross, carved with the usual Runic knots and of a hard, very shelly limestone. These are laid on a window-sill in the south chapel, together with the early font bowl that has always been there.

In the north chapel wall were found much of the remains of the decorated window that is shown in draw-

ings before 1840 as the east window. Two old keys and a small piece of an oak seat-back were the only curiosities found; the few fragments of old stained glass were replaced in their position.

The colour found on the chance windows is interesting from its antiquity, but is of the rudest character, consisting of lines of red and white drawn carelessly with a big brush; that in each of the windows is different, the colour being so drawn as to cover the joint of the plaster on the stone, the plaster being cut in pattern at the edge and projecting about half an inch in front of the stone.

That in the south chapel is better drawn, and, as will be seen, represents St. John the Baptist holding in his hand a vesica containing an *Agnus Dei*—this figure is, however, I believe, popularly supposed to represent Pontius Pilate. The other jambs were examined, but had no colour left; one of the east lancets only having the head of a canopy and some other work.

Probably few churches are restored without some such fragments being found, but, unfortunately, they are generally destroyed; I am glad to find that here people generally take an interest in them, and I am sure such would always be the case, if architects and committees would only take the initial responsibility of preservation. The plaster has been secured to the wall with shellac, and the surface coated with size.

In the body of the church were sundry mural monuments which, as they were necessarily moved, have all been collected and fixed in the two chapels. Many of the slabs mentioned as being in the nave had entirely rotted away, being of the treacherous Sussex marble, and others were probably destroyed in 1840. Those remaining have been placed in the south chapel, and two within the rails of the north chapel, now fitted up for week-day service. The slab under the altar here has no inscription, but shows no sign of having been an altar slab. The interesting series of stones in the chancel had been arranged in a miscellaneous patchwork when the chancel was repaired by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and ceased to represent vaults, all of which were

filled up; they have now been cleaned up and laid in an orderly manner, two brass plates being brought in from under the tower.

In order to place on record the present state of the monuments, I subjoin a list of titles, referring the inquirer to Manning and Bray for the full inscriptions.

In the chancel are slabs to—

- Catherine, infant daughter of Sir W^m Eliot, d. 1686. Sussex marble.
 Elizabeth, infant daughter of Sir W^m Eliot, d. 1674. Sussex marble.
 William, infant son of Sir W^m Eliot, d. 1668. Sussex marble.
 Edward, son of Mr Edward Leaver and grandson of Christopher Gore, 1695. Sussex marble.
 Elizabeth Westbrook, infant daughter of W^m Westbrook, 1665.
 John Warner, LL.D., rector of Pepperharrow, 1757. Brass escutcheon on Sussex marble.
 Captain James Stewart (R.N.), brother-in-law of Sir W. Eliot, 1705, and wife, 1701. Black marble.
 Sir W^m Eliot, of Busbridge, and wife, 1697 and 1706. Black marble.
 John Barker, of Sun'ing, brother-in-law of Lawrence Eliot, 1595. Brass figure on Sussex marble.
 Thomas Purvoche and wife, 1509. Brass figures on a new Sussex slab.
 W^m Eliot, son of Sir W^m Eliot, 1705. Stone with armorial.
 Mary Elliott, wife of Lawrence Eliot, 1600. Brass plate on new Sussex slab.
 Walter Underhill, citizen and fishmonger, of London, 1679. Brass plate on new Sussex slab.
 Ann Eliot, eldest daughter of Sir William Eliot, 1709. Stone with armorial.

Within the altar rails on the north side are tablets on the wall to—

- Susanna, wife of Philip Carteret Webb, of Busbridge, M.P. for Haslemere, and her husband, 1756 and 1770.
 Anthony Warton, D.D., Vicar of Godalming, "Sacilegorum Malleus," 1715.

And an alabaster monument from the opposite side to Jane Barker, sister-in-law of Lawrence Eliot, 1617.

On the south side is an alabaster tablet with kneeling figure to—

- Judeth Elyott, wife of William Elyott, 1615.

In the south transept there are slabs to —

John Coston, parish clerk, 1741.

William Shrubb and numerous family, from 1680–1763.

Hannah Shrubb (on a small stone), 1800.

James Shrubb and family, 1689–1775.

In the south chapel slabs to —

Hen. Roberts, 1713.

M^{rs} Elizabeth Potts, 1826. Black marble.

M^{rs} Catherine Lucas, 1714. Black marble, with escutcheon.

Against the east end, as described by Manning—

The altar-tomb of John Westbrook, 1513, the sides of which are a patchwork of tracery, similar to some at Salisbury.

And slabs to —

M^{rs} Ann Duncum, spinster, 1733.

Eliz. Oglethorpe, daughter of Oglethorpe, of Yorkshire, 1742.

W^m Cecil, of Yorkshire, a “near relation of the Earl of Salisbury,” and probably of the Oglethorpes, 1745.

Susanna, wife of Joseph Lawson, of Cumberland, and daughter of Oglethorpe, of Yorkshire.

And on the wall are tablets to —

Nathaniel Godbold, inventor of the Vegetable Balsam, 1799 (removed from opposite side).

M^{rs} Elizabeth Potts, 1826.

Harry, infant son of Rev^d Charles Boileau Elliot, Vicar, 1835.

In the north chapel are tablets to —

Philip Meymoth, soapboiler, 1760. Brought from outside.

Richard Brown, 1819. Brought from outside.

Rear-Admiral of the Blue, William Pierrepont, 1813, and his son, 1814.

Owen Manning, D.D., County Historian and Vicar, 1801.

Several children of Rev^d W. D. Long, Vicar, 1867.

Within the rails are two Sussex marble slabs, brought from the nave, the inscription on which is now illegible, though probably the one on the north side is that of the Bridger family.

The vaults in the south chapel contained the coffins of several of the Godbold family, Mrs. E. Pott, and of a family named Garthwaite.

In the north chapel was a vault of a Shotter family.

On the south-east cant of the spire, near the top, may

be seen some of the original leadwork of the ordinary pattern, differing from the somewhat peculiar arrangement of the rest of the spire.

The tower is shown in an old drawing to have had a stone parapet, but it seemed unnecessary, as it had entirely disappeared, to interfere with the present rather picturesque arrangement. The old stone corbels had been replaced in parts by oak, which had become quite rotten, and have now been restored in stone.

The nave roof was partially examined during the progress of work, and I find was originally a tiebeam roof, which has spread considerably in places in consequence of the beams being cut away; the rafters are of a very massive character, averaging 8 inches square, with an 18 inch space between them.

The ceiling is constructed in so flimsy a manner as to cause me great doubts as to its antiquity, although the coats of arms are certainly in great part original.

The author of the pamphlet before mentioned has adduced reasons that would bring its date below 1537, and in the time of Henry VIII. instead of Henry VII. as conjectured by Manning. The font, by-the-by, instead of being 600 years old as stated in the pamphlet and in Brayley, is a poor piece of Post-Tudor work.

In all cases of church restoration so much is to be noted by an architect or skilled observer that has bearing on the history of a church, and that must often of necessity be covered up or disappear, that it is, I think, particularly desirable that a full record should be made at the time and, if possible, published—an office particularly within the province of Archæological Societies. A brief record of facts by the architect employed would be of invaluable assistance to subsequent inquirers, and might prove a wholesome restraining influence on unnecessary destructiveness. I have, for this reason, had no hesitation in going minutely into the subject, as many matters, if not noted now, would probably be forgotten, and leave no trace behind.

NOTE.—On reference to Major Heales' paper I find the east window described as a group of five lancets; it is so shown on most old

drawings, but one which he had probably not seen shows it clearly as a perpendicular window, with the usual cusping in the heads. I had always thought the strip of carving originally in front of the transept galleries was of perpendicular date as described, but, on taking it down, found it to be only modern plaster.

In the roof of the tower is preserved the beam of the gallows on which were hung Chennell and Chalcraft, who committed a horrid murder here in 1818, as commemorated in various broadsides. An inscribed plate commemorating the fact has been stolen.

Since the above was written I have heard from Mr. Atfield, who was foreman of the works in 1840, that the nave roof was altered to its present form at that time. There was originally a flat panelled ceiling, with the coats of arms at the junction of the ribs. The fabric of the ceiling is entirely new, but the shields were replaced as nearly as possible in their old positions, new shields being carved for the angles at the junction of flat and sloping sides. I have no doubt the south chapel had a similar ceiling, though it had disappeared before this date, but since the time of Manning. At this time the south wall of the south chapel was covered with paintings similar to the St. John, but they, with nearly all the old plaster, were ruthlessly destroyed. Over the west tower arch were large figures of Moses and Aaron, but these were of course of modern date.

Under the nave floor is a continuous series of brick vaults opening one into another. The floor of the north chapel was a mass of broken coffins and bones, and one workman is said to have collected and taken away several baskets full of brass coffin nails.

I have mentioned Ranulph Flambard as builder of Durham Cathedral; he was appointed bishop in 1099, but Sir Gilbert Scott, in his lectures on Mediæval Architecture, shows that he had not, as had commonly been supposed, anything to do with the building. He did however, subsequently, build the magnificent minster at Christchurch in Hampshire.
