



The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

An Architectural Account of the Churches of Sparsholt and Childrey,

In the County of Berks.

By Charles E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A.

(Continued from page 90, Vol. 11.)

PART II.—CHILDREY.

LET us now take our journey of about one mile to Childrey, or Chelrey, as it appears to have been called in early times. This Parish has been one of considerable importance, and even before the time of the Norman invasion possessed three distinct manors, and we naturally therefore find many distinguished personages connected with it, and especially in the 15th and 16th centuries, to which period most of the interesting memorials still remaining in the Church belong. The Church dedicated in honour of St. Mary the Virgin is a handsome cruciform structure, and consists of a west tower, nave, south porch, transepts, and chancel. The earliest portions of the Church are the north and south doorways of the nave, and possibly the nave walls. These are of very late transition Norman work of quite the end of the 12th century. The very interesting leaden font is probably earlier than this, and a relic of a former Church, of which no record has been preserved. Towards

the end of the thirteenth century, the chancel appears to have been re-built, and a little later the transepts were added or re-constructed. Many of the windows in the nave and chancel were inserted in the middle of the fifteenth century, and about the year 1500 the Church was completed, as we now see it, by the erection of the tower and south porch, the enlargement of both the transepts, and the addition of the clerestory to the nave. The Church was restored in 1875-6.

Let us now, as at Sparsholt, make our survey of the Church, commencing with the interior of the chancel. The east window of five lights is an insertion of the 15th century, on the south are two early decorated windows of two lights, and there is one of the same date and style on the north. In the south wall in the usual place is the piscina with rounded trefoiled arch and two basins. It is of early decorated work of date about 1280, as are the sedilia adjoining it. These are not graduated, and have three trefoil-headed arches, resting on slender shafts with well moulded capitals. The shafts are attached to solid stone partitions dividing the sedilia. The arches are carried up to the string-course above, which is brought down as a base moulding to the east on south window, and seems also originally to have been continued westward along the chancel wall. In the north wall near the east end is a very beautiful Easter Sepulchre. It has a crocketed ogee headed canopy with finial, within which is a circular medallion enclosing four quatrefoils, and with delicate oak leaf foliage and some animals in the spandril spaces, the arch on the under side being almost semi-circular with a richly carved fringe. Above and on either side of the ogee canopy is some panelled work with early battlements. There is a stone table or shelf, with a shallow trough to it, and below the face of the sepulchre is divided into six partitions with a trefoil headed arch in each panel. Faint traces of the original colouring can be discerned. It is, indeed, a most elegant composition, and an admirable example of the style in vogue at the end of the reign of Edward III., or about the year 1370.

On the north side of the Chancel is a fifteenth century doorway to the Sacristy. On the floor are numerous fine and interesting brasses. Perhaps the best in the Church now is on the floor on the south side of the Altar. This was formerly in the centre of the Chancel. Here we see on a large marble stone parts of the effigies in brass of a knight and lady under very ornate canopies, on which is the inscription, starting from near the heads of the two figures, "Omnes Sci orate pro nobis." He has had his heraldic bearings

represented on his surcoat, she has had hers on her dress, but the tinctures are now gone. There have been shields above, one charged with the arms of the knight, a chevron between three cross crosslets, for Fynderne, and below, an inscription to the memory of William ffynderne and the lady Elizabeth his wife, widow of John Kyngestone. The aforesaid William ffynderne died March 13th, 1444. A long and adulatory legend in Latin hexameter and pentameter verse, runs round three sides of the verge of the stone, but it is somewhat difficult to decipher.

To the west of this is another fine brass with figure of a priest fully vested, with his hands clasped on his breast, and the usual termination to the inscription, all the rest gone. A plate, commemorating the Lady Agnes, wife of John ffynderne, who died on the 5th of February, 1441, has been let in below the figure of the priest. On the north side of the altar is another fine brass with figures of a knight in armour, bare headed, hands clasped on his breast, and his lady, with kerchief on her head, and clasped hands. Below is a long inscription recording them to be John Kyngestone, who died on April 16th, 1514, and Suzan his wife. There are parts of scrolls coming from their mouths, the whole of which was remaining when Ashmole took his notes of the Church. Between them is a representation of the Blessed Trinity, the Almighty is seated on a throne with arms, nimbed and giving the benediction with His right hand, while our Saviour on the Cross is between His knees. The Holy Dove does not appear in this instance. Above are two shields, one, a lion rampant guardant for Kyngeston, the other, Kyngeston impaling Fetyplace. Close by to the west of this is a small figure of a priest, which has lost the head, and is without inscription. He is fully vested and holds the chalice to his breast. Near this is a small figure habited as a doctor of laws, with cap and gown, hands clasped on breast, emblems of S.S. John and Matthew within medallions above, and inscription below, commemorating Bryan Roos, doctor of laws and parson of this Church, who died August 30th, 1529.

Farther west again is the figure of a civilian and his lady, with the horned head-dress and an inscription to William Walrond and Elizabeth his wife. In both cases the dates of their deaths have not been filled in beyond the letters one thousand four hundred. Above his head is a shield with a spread eagle for Walrond, above hers, one charged with three lucies or pikes, (?) for Lucy. There are the remains of some nice stall work. There is no chancel arch, but

a screen, partly old and of early character, separates the chancel from the nave. In Clarke's History of the Hundred of Wanting, it is stated that in his time the Chancel was divided from the nave by a rough boarded partition, which in 1810 it had been proposed to remove, but this plan had not been executed. The partition has now disappeared, but it would be interesting to know when this was done, as it is not unreasonable to suppose that, as in similar cases which have been discovered at Wenhaston, Suffolk, Dauntsey, Wiltshire, and elsewhere, it may have had painted on it a representation of the Doom. In the wall on the south side is a large cinquefoiled niche, and on the north side a shouldered arched doorway, opening from the staircase to the rood-loft. The lower entrance is in the south-east corner of the north transept, with a decorated arch and squint through the wall to the chancel. A late perpendicular arch with numerous mouldings opens to the north transept or Frethorne aisle, as it has always been called, after the family who originally built it and used it as a burial place. In the east wall is a piscina with shouldered arch, stone shelf, and another later arch above with cinquefoiled canopy. The east window is of two lights and of early decorated date. The north window is of six lights, four centred late perpendicular, not earlier than 1500. There is a small doorway in the north-west corner of the same date. In the wall below the north window, and almost concealed by the pews is a very beautiful monumental recess, with rich ogee-headed and feathered canopy, the ball flower ornament in a hollow, and elegant cinquefoiled fringe. Within it is the effigy of a knight in full armour, with flat helm, mail and surcoat, legs crossed right over left, and feet resting on a lion. He has a shield on his left arm, and is represented as in the act of drawing his sword. It is said to commemorate a member of the Chelrey family, and dates from about the year 1330. Clarke in the Parochial Topography of the Hundred of Wanting, states that it is supposed to be intended for Sir Edmund de Chelrey, who died in 1372, but this date is too late for this cross-legged figure. There are slight traces of old colouring on the canopy. The glass in the north window is of extreme interest, though, unfortunately, somewhat fragmentary. It is mainly plain white, with yellow introduced to enrich some portions of the pictures. It is of the same late date as the window in which it is enclosed. In the centre in the upper part is a small seated figure, and an angel with peacock wings swinging a censer, also at east side two cherubim or seraphim. Two capital letters somewhat mutilated, but apparently W.F. remain

in the top corners. Within the six upper main divisions of the window are considerable remains, viz., on east fragments of the Nativity with the Shepherds, on next two, the most perfect of the series, the Annunciation, on the east kneeling figure of the Blessed Virgin at a faldstool, and above, part of inscription "*ancilla domini.*" The lily pot is introduced, and the Archangel Gabriel on the west with peacock wings, and the inscription "*Ave gracia plena dominus tecum.*" Above is the Almighty with a ray of golden light coming from His mouth, and the Holy Dove descending on it towards the head of the Virgin. In the next division is the Ascension, several figures looking up to heaven with clasped hands, and the feet of our Lord depicted above. In the next is the head of Christ on the Cross. Above is the Fettiplace shield and some other fragments. To the west is the Assumption of the Virgin, a rather clumsy figure within a golden aureole supported by angels with peacock wings. The lower half of the window only retains the canopies to the several lights. There are numerous very pretty little diamond-shaped quarries with foliage and other patterns. The glass seems to be thoroughly English in its character, and is of great artistic merit. On the floor of this transept have been collected and laid down numerous ancient tiles ornamented with a variety of patterns. An arch opens to the south transept somewhat similar to that to the north. As in the case of the north transept, this was originally of decorated date, but was very much altered and enlarged by the Fetyplaces in the early part of the 16th century, and still contains many interesting memorials of that important family. As we learn from the brass to William Fetyplace, it was dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, Our Lady and St. Catherine. This William Fetyplace left a sum of money to Queen's College, Oxford, to provide a chantry priest, who should also be the schoolmaster and fulfil other parochial functions. He was to be removed if he transgressed the very severe restrictions laid down by the founder, which are fully set out in the account of this Parish in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*. The date of the foundation is put down as 1526, but the chantry was founded in the life-time of William Fetyplace, and apparently of his wife also, and as she died in 1516, he in 1526, it must have been earlier than this.

In the east wall of this Chapel is a relic of the earlier transept, viz., a very beautiful early decorated piscina with ogee arch and stone shelf set within an oblong frame, having a bold label with the distinctive moulding of the decorated style. The south window is

of four lights, and there are three-light windows on the east and west, all of the perpendicular period.

There are several stone corbels supporting the roof, with angels holding shields charged with the Fetyplace and other arms, and various initials. In the east window are some canopies of the old glass and figures of St. Edward the Confessor, St. Michael and Satan, and St. Catherine, portions only being ancient. There are also the armorial shields of the Fetyplaces and others. In the north-west corner is a decorated arch, opening to a narrow staircase leading to the roof. There is a squint through from the east wall to the Chancel. On the east side is a small perpendicular doorway. On the floor and wall of this transept are several most interesting brasses, with long inscriptions, which are fully set out in the appendix. Most of them have been moved from their original positions, those on the floor being ranged along the east side. Although there is a considerable difference in the dates of the several brasses, yet from the similarity in the costume it is probable they were all executed at one time, and it is a reasonable presumption that when William Fetyplace founded this chantry, he not only put in a brass to himself and his lady in his life-time, but also introduced the other memorials of his immediate ancestors.

On an irregularly shaped stone let into the south wall are figures of a civilian and lady kneeling at faldstools. From the mouth of the gentleman is a scroll with the legend "*Sancta et beata Trinitas miserere nobis*," while from that of the lady is another scroll with the words "*beata et gloriosa trinitas miserere nobis*." Above, in the centre is a representation of the Blessed Trinity, the Almighty with triple tiara, nimbed and richly clad, and with right hand raised in benediction, is seated with our Saviour on the Cross between His knees, and the Holy Dove with outspread wings on the cross above His head. Between the main figures is a shield with the arms of Walrond impaling those of Englefield, and below, an inscription in six lines commemorating the fact that under a stone in front of the image of St. Michael rest the bodies of Thomas Walrond, gentleman, who died in 1480, and Alice his wife, the daughter of Nicholas Englefield, who died in 1477.

On a small stone on the floor near the door is a brass inscription to Elizabeth and Katherine Fetiplace, daughters of Alexander Fetiplace, who departed this life in the year 1603.

To the north of this is a very large stone with some of the inscriptions, etc., in a mutilated condition. In the centre is a

recumbent figure, about two feet long, of a lady in her grave clothes lying on a coffin, with hands clasped on her breast. Below in large letters is a mutilated inscription recording the date of her death, but unfortunately, the middle portion has been cut out, and only the words *Millimo* and *Septimo* remain. A scroll is carried up on either side, but most of the brass has been extracted, and only the word "*leyson*" at the top on the east side now remains. Above this in raised letters is an inscription and invocation of seven lines, recording the fact that the lady was *Jone* the daughter of *Thomas Walrond* and wife to *Robert Straugbon*. Above this on another brass plate is a large and most interesting representation of the Blessed Trinity. The Almighty with rich nimbus and both hands uplifted is seated under a canopy, with the figure of our Lord on the cross, clad only in a loin cloth and with large nails in hands and feet, between His knees. The cross rests on an orb, and the Holy Dove with outspread wings is seated on our Saviour's head. On either side are four shields with the arms of *Walrond*, *Straugbon*, etc. To the north of this brass is another, which has had the evangelistic emblems at the corners, but all are now gone. There are three shields with the *Fettilplace*, *Walrond*, and other arms, and an oblong plate with an inscription of six lines commemorating the fact that hereunder lie the bodies of *William fettilplace* and *Elizabeth* his wife, the founders of this Chantry, founded in honour of the Blessed Trinity, our Lady and Saint Katherine. The said *Elizabeth* died January 17th, 1516. The date of the death of *William Fettilplace* is not filled in, but he is recorded to have died in 1526. As no doubt the inscription was inserted in the stone at the time of the death of *Elizabeth* in 1516, it may fairly be assumed that the Chantry was founded before this date, and not in 1526 as stated in the history of Wanting.

Inserted in the north wall of the transept to the east of the arch opening to the nave, is a late perpendicular canopied altar tomb with panelling to the top and sides of the canopy and embattled cornice. A brass plate has been carried along beneath the cornice, but this has disappeared. At the back of the upper recessed portion are two figures in grave clothes rising from their tombs, from the mouth of that on the west is a scroll with legend "*libera nos, salva nos, justifica nos, o beata trinitas*": from that of the other "*Sancta Trinitas Unus Deus miserere nobis.*" Above have been two shields, that on the left is gone, that on the right charged with the *Fettilplace* arms. Between the figures is another shield with

Fetiplace impaling Walrond and three other coats. The tinctures appear to have been shown in their proper colours. There is a marble table or shelf, for the Easter Sepulchre, and below this on lower face of the tomb have been two shields within quatrefoils enclosed in diamond-shaped panels. There is one more shield and panelling on the west side of the tomb facing towards the nave, on the side of the arch. Two old pew ends, one ornamented with the Fetiplace arms, are preserved in this transept. On the south side of the nave, high up in the wall, and probably connected with the staircase in the north-west corner of the south transept, is a plain arch of decorated date. On the north side of the nave are two three-light perpendicular windows, and on the south is a segmental headed one of later date. Of this latter period are the clerestory windows of three lights, two on the south and three on the north side. The nave roof is flat. The eastern bay is panelled, and perhaps retains traces of its original colouring. The tower arch has two recessed orders, continued without imposts to the ground. The west window is perpendicular, of three lights. The doorway to the belfry staircase is in the south-west corner. Part of an old chest is preserved under the tower. There is now a peal of six bells, and a small sanctus bell is also preserved here.

The leaden font at the west end of the nave is very interesting, and, as has been stated, a relic of the earlier Norman Church. It is circular, and now stands on a stone pedestal. At intervals round the bowl are represented twelve ecclesiastics with low mitres, simply vested, holding a pastoral staff, with the crook turned inwards, in the right hand, and a book in the left. It seems to be of the same class as the other leaden fonts in this part of England, viz., those at Long Wittenham in this county, and Warborough and Dorchester just over the border in Oxfordshire, and was apparently introduced at the same time. It is probably the most ancient feature remaining in this Church. There is not very much to detain us with regard to the exterior of the Church. The tower is massive and embattled in three stages, with heads on a cornice beneath the battlements, squareheaded two light belfry windows, and a small single light opening on the south side of the middle stage. In the head of the west window is carved a shield with the Fetiplace arms. The west doorway has a square label and ornamented spandrels. The stone work of the buttresses and upper stage is more carefully finished than that of the two lower stages.

There can be little doubt that the tower was built at the cost of

the Fettiplace family, late in the 15th or early in the 16th century. The south porch is late perpendicular with an outer arch of the same character as the west doorway. A late two-light window remains on the west side. The south doorway is not in the centre of the porch, and is a relic of the earlier Church. It is semicircular headed, and has 28 large specimens of the dog-tooth ornament on the chamfer of the hoodmould, and a plain chamfered edge to the arch and jambs. The abacus is chamfered with a shallow grooved channel on the upper part. There are numerous votive crosses, one very deeply cut, on the jambs. This arch dates from about 1200, or the very latest period of the Norman style. Part of a stringcourse is carried along towards the east, and in the north-east corner of the porch is a shaft, which either supported the original stone groining, or a holy water stoup placed in this situation.

The north doorway, now walled up, seems to be of the same date. It is obtusely pointed and has a chamfered hood and roll moulding attached to the angle of the arch and jambs. One small votive cross remains on the jambs. The west doorway to the north transept and east doorway to the south transept is in each case small, of late perpendicular date with square label, and no doubt served as the private entrance of the owner to his respective chantry. Part of a stringcourse of the decorated period is carried along the exterior walls of the Chancel, and the south doorway is also of this date with the stringcourse carried as a hoodmoulding round the head of the arch, and a hollow moulding to the arch and jambs, which have chamfer stops. The date is about 1270-1280, and contemporary with the other early decorated portions already described.

In the Churchyard is a small tombstone, which has a rather singular inscription showing the indifference to dividing words which was shown at that period. It runs as follows :—

Here lieth the
body of Thomas
Allen the Hus
ban of Jane Al
len who was
buried Septem
ber the 9 day
1678
Aged 53.

Appendix.

- (1) Brass of William Fynderne on south of altar.

Inscription below the effigies :—

“Hic jacent Willms ffynderne Armig et dna Elizabeth
ux ej et ux dni Johis Kyng (eston),
“militis qui q dem Willms obiit XIII die Mens Marcii anno
dni MCCCC^o XLIIII et dna
“Elizabeth obiit die mens A^o dni MCCCC
quorum aiabus ppiciet de’.”

Round the verge is the following inscription as given in Waller's Monumental Brasses :—

Armig' eximi' q^onda' legis qz p'it'
Et fidus nimi' subjacet hic positus,
Will'ms dict' ffynderne fuit & veneratus,
Crimine non victus consilio qz ratus,
Donis gratuitis ip'm natura beavit
Sors sublimavit undiqz fortuitis,
Quam sponsarat heram claram docta'qz vera'
Kyngeston' Elizabeth hic loc' un' habet,
Quos thor' admisit un' lapis iste relisit,
Grandis marmore' hijs miserere deus,
Ossa tegit plana petra q'd sit q^otidiana,
Hic imp'p'm mencio spirituu',
Crasti'a du' p'erat Lux Gregorii b'ndicti,
Will'mi dicti vita brevis deerat,
Ann' Millen' quat' & C pret'iere,
Et quater unden' tu'c subiere fere.
Istac qui p'peris pedibus conscendis ad aras,
ffunde p'ces caras sint socii sup'is,
Si quos leserunt vel q'd male p'mueru't,
Assis X'pe tamen pace fruantur Amen.

- (2) On Chancel floor below the effigy of a Priest :—

“Hic jacet domina Agnes qudam uxor Johis
“ffynderne que obiit v^o die ffebruar A^o dni M^o
“CCCC^o XLI^o cuius anime ppicietur deus Amen.”

- (3) On north of altar :—

“Of youre Charite pray for the soule of John Kyngeston
Esquier sonne & ayer sumetyme to John Kynge-
“ston the wyche forsayd John deptyd from this transitory
lyfe the xvi day of Apryle in the yer of ower lorde
“god M^o V^o XIII & tor the sowle of Suzan his wyfe the
Wyche deptyd from this transitor lyfe the
the yere of ower lord M V^o and on
whoys sowles Jhu have Mercy amen.”

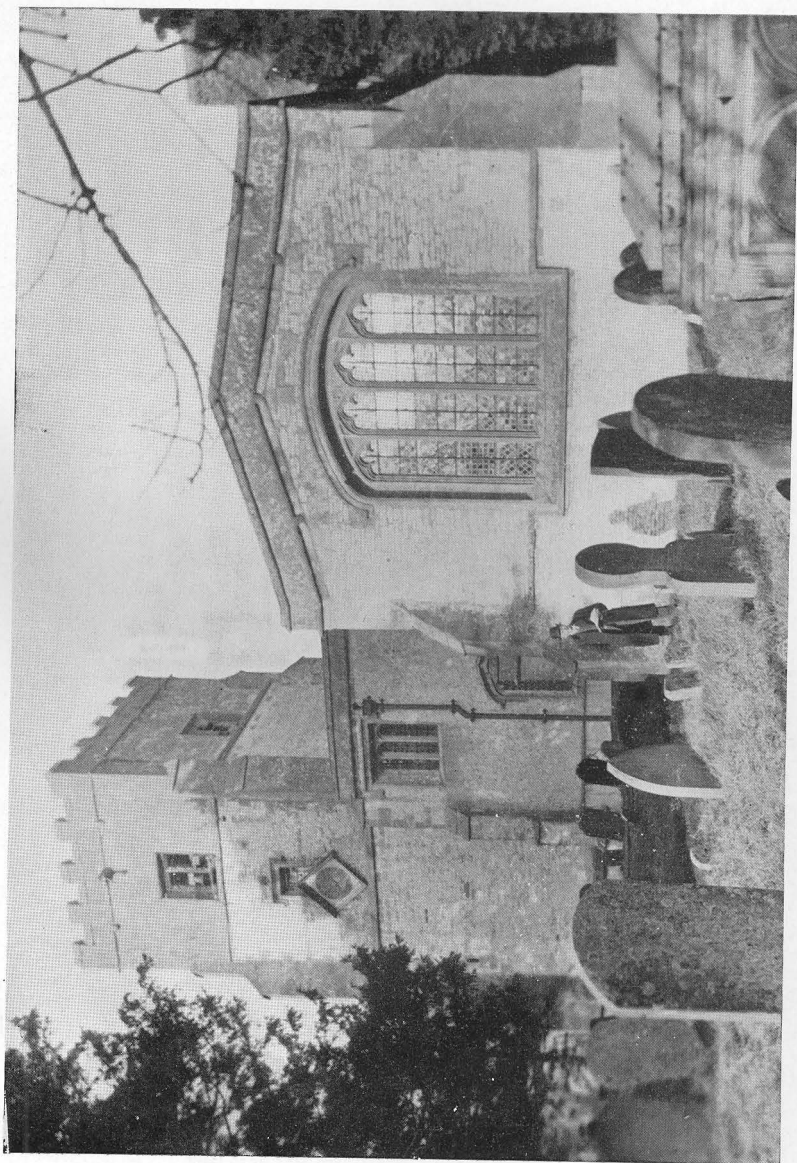
- (4) On floor of Chancel, north side :—

“of yo Charite pray for the Soule of Bryan roos
“doctor of laws sometyme p'son of this church ye which
“decessed y xxx day of august the yer of our lord god M
“CCCCXXIX on whose soule Jhu have M'cy Amen.”

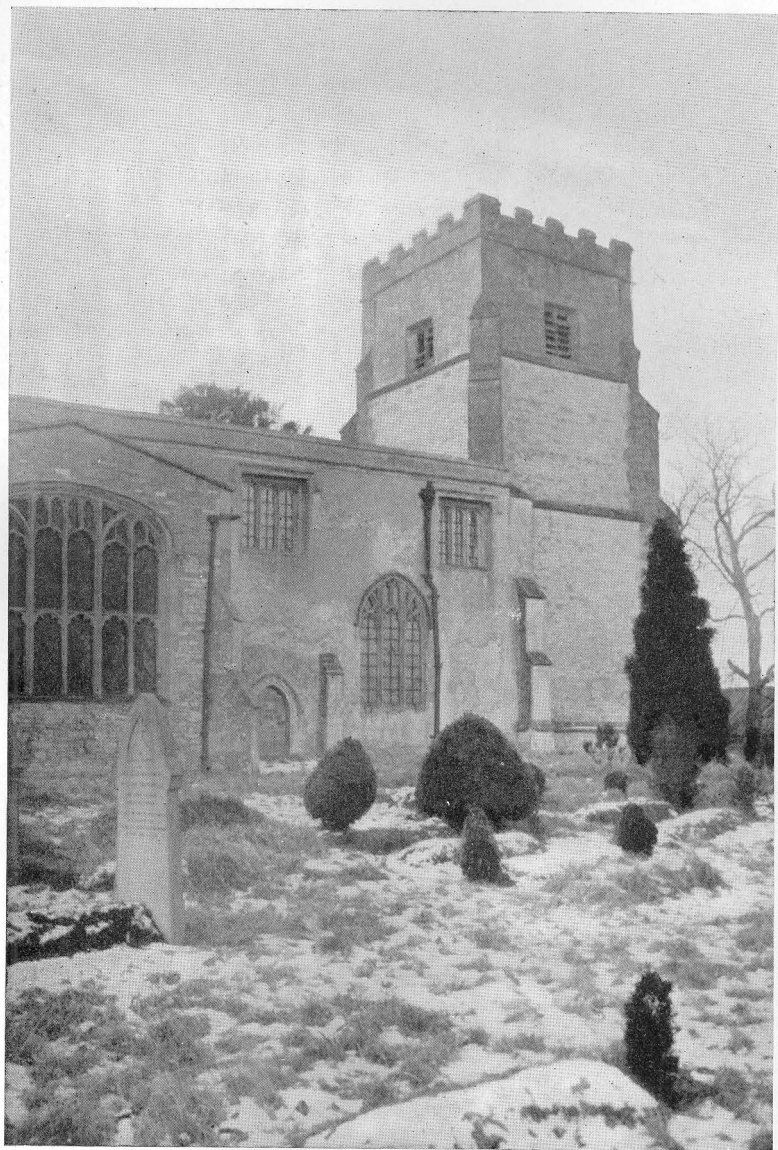
- (5) To west of No. 4 :—
 “ Hic jacet Willms Walrond generosus qui ———
 “ dn'i Milli'mo cccc & Elizabeth uxo
 “ anno dn'i Milli'mo cccc
- (6) On south wall of south transept :—
 “ here under that marble stone next before the ymage of sent
 “ Mighell resteth the bodyes of Thomas wolrond gentilman
 “ & Alice his wyf daughter of Nicha's englefeld whiche Alice
 “ decessed the day of the yere of o' lord mcccc &
 “ LXXVII & the said Thomas decessed ye xvi day of September
 “ ye yer of o' lord MCCCCLXXX on whose soull ihu' have m'rcy.”
- (7) On floor of south transept, near the door :—
 “ Here lieth buried the bodies of Elizabeth &
 “ Katherine Fetiplace daughters of Alexander
 “ Fetiplace who departed this life A^o Do 1603.”
- (8) To north of No. 7 :—
 “ Maker of mankynd o god in Trynyte ———
 “ of thyn high mercy grant me this bon ———
 “ That for my sowle seyth a pat nost & ave ———
 “ Daught to Thomas wolrond baptis'd by ye name of Jone
 “ Wyf when y in the world levid to Robt Straugbon
 “ The second day of Aple hens passed & leyd her i qui
 “ Wher aldr sowles mercy lord grant hem to have Ame'.”
- (9) To north of No. 8 :—
 “ here under this marbyll stone lieth the bodies of Willm ffitiplace
 “ esquier & Elizabeth his wyf ffounders of this chauntrey founded in
 “ the hono' of the blessed Trinite our lady & seint Kateryn whiche
 Elizabeth
 “ decessed the xvii day of January the yere of o' lord M V^o xvi and
 the said
 “ Will'm decessed the day of in the yere of our lord god
 “ M V^o on whose sowles & all Xten sowles Jhu have mercy.”

MEMORIALS OF COUNTY HISTORIES (Bemrose & Sons).—Two new volumes have been added to the growing list of counties treated of in this series, viz., Hertfordshire and Hants. The former is edited by Mr. Percy Cross Standing and the latter by the Rev. G. E. Jeans, M.A., F.S.A. The Hants volume contains a learned chapter by Mr. Keyser on mural paintings in that county, and the General Editor of the Series, Mr. Ditchfield, writes on Bramshill, and in the Herts volume on Moor Park, the home of Lord Ebury.

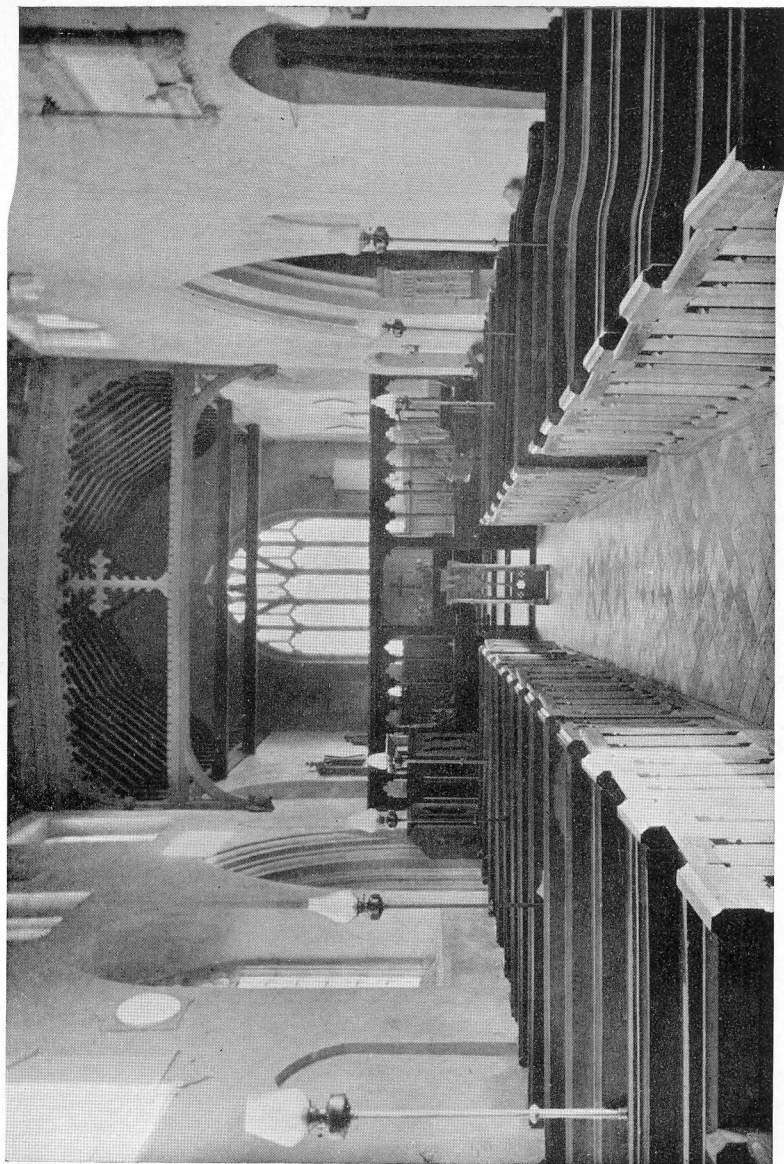
THE RELIQUARY (Bemrose & Sons) has completed another volume, and maintains its high reputation as a learned and well illustrated antiquarian magazine. No self-respecting library can afford to be without the bound volumes of the Reliquary, which in their fine buckram covers are as attractive outside as in their interior economy. Mr. J. Romilly Allen continues to be the learned editor, whose notes are always worthy of attention, and his staff of writers include Mr. Legg, who unfolds glimpses of ancient agriculture, Mr. Clinch, who writes on Neolithic relics, Mr. J. Tavenor Parry, and many other skilled antiquaries.



EXTERIOR VIEW FROM SOUTH.



EXTERIOR VIEW FROM THE NORTH.



INTERIOR LOOKING EAST.



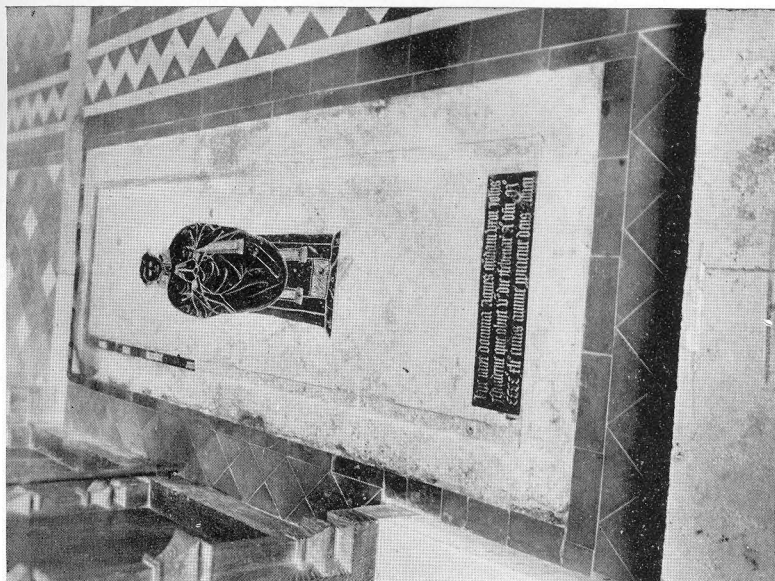
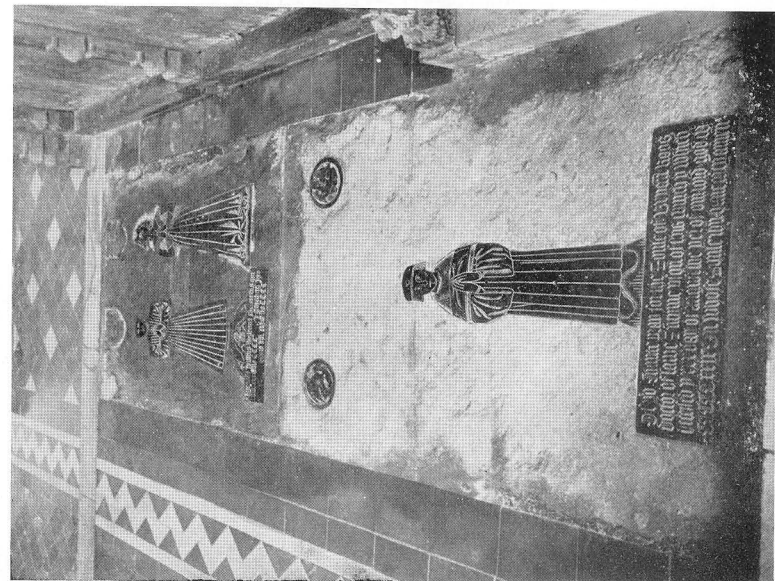
PISCINA SEDILIA, S. SIDE OF CHANCEL.

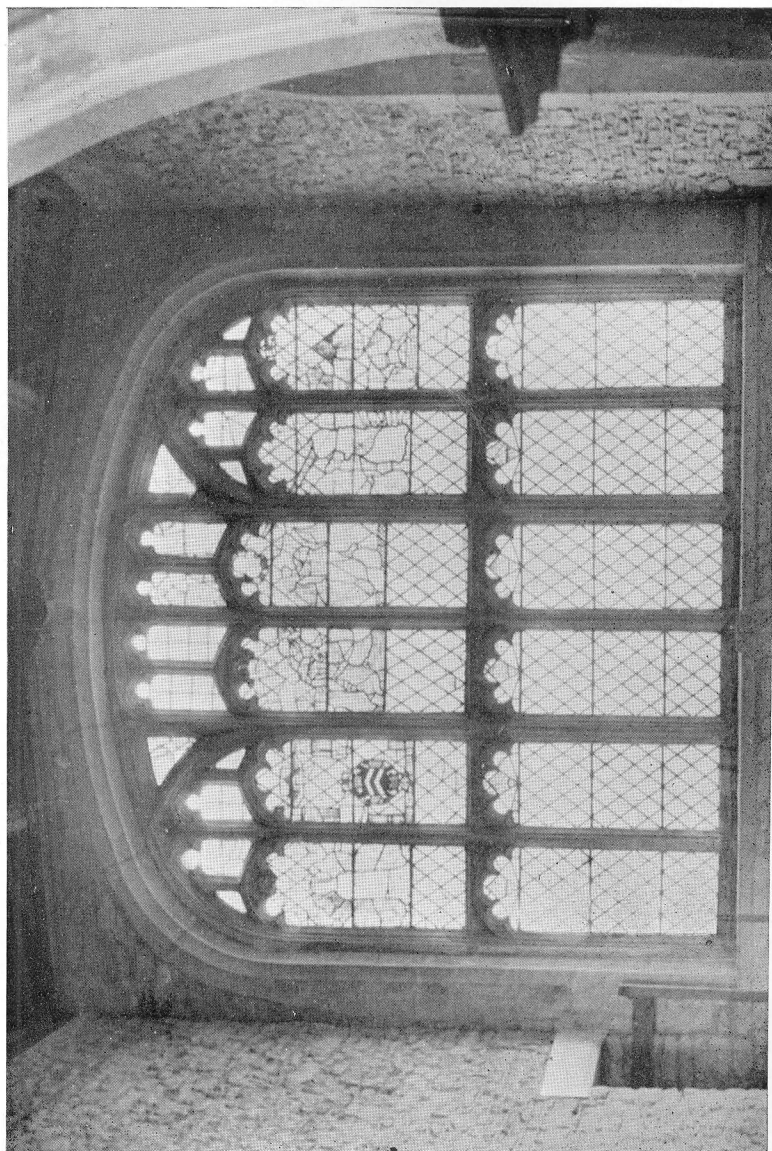


EASTER SEPULCHRE, N. SIDE OF CHANCEL.



WILLIAM FFYNDERNE AND LADY, S. SIDE OF CHANCEL.

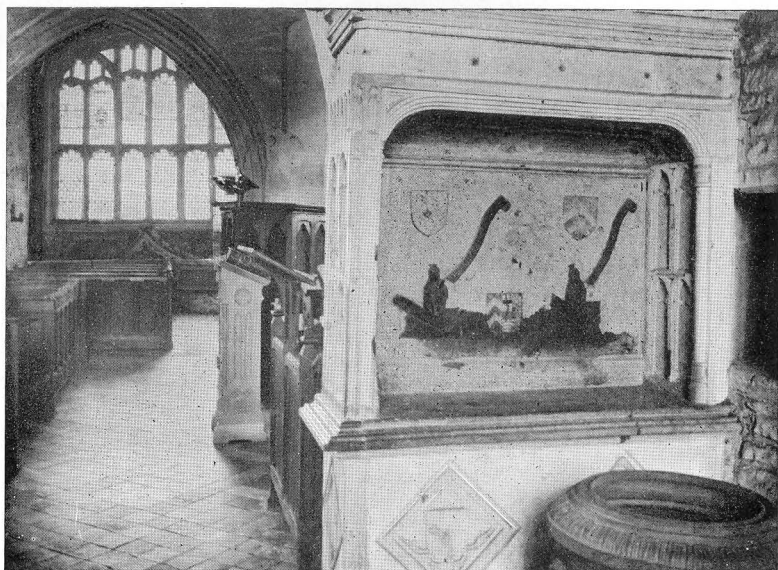




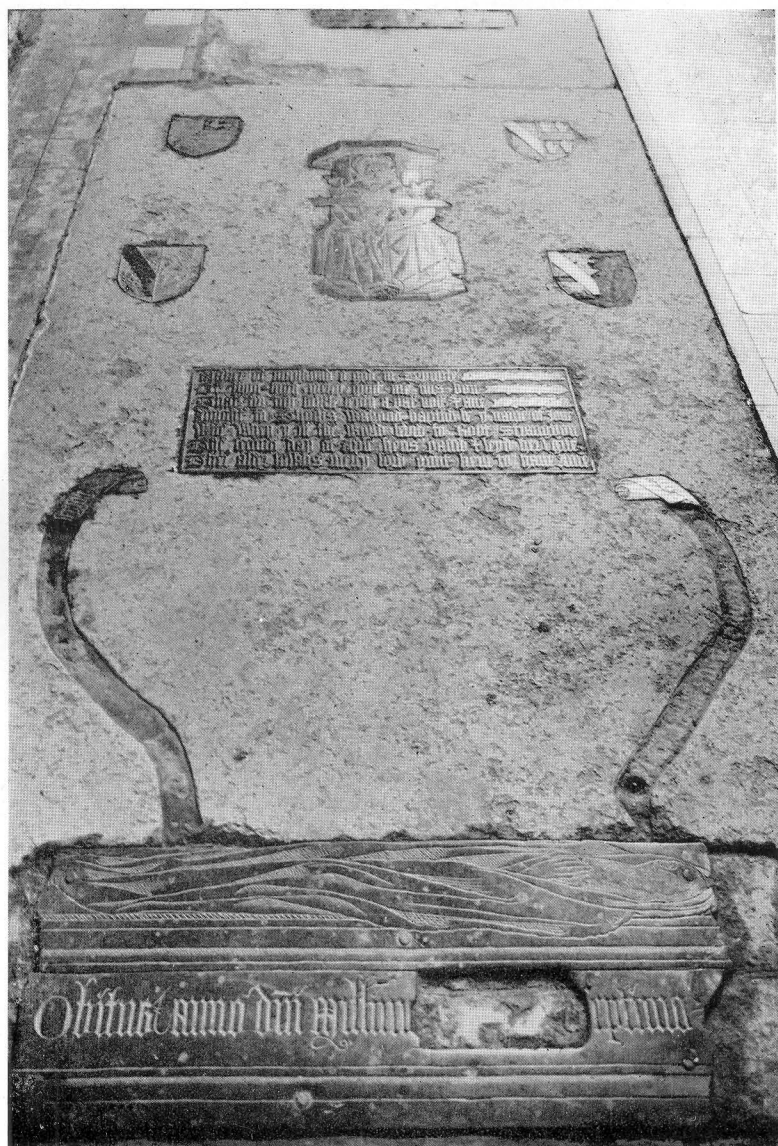
N. TRANCEPT WINDOW.



PISCINA IN S. TRANCEPT.



BRASSES IN S. TRANCEPT.



BRASS IN S. TRANCEPT.

No. 12.



THE FONT.



SOUTH DOORWAY.



NORTH DORMITORY.