



An Architectural Account of the Churches of Cholsey and South Moreton.

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(Continued from page 46, Vol. 14.)

As has been stated the arches opening to the transepts are quite plain, but they have the chamfered abacus, which is continued as a stringcourse so as to connect with the abacus of the adjoining arch. The wall within the arches is of great thickness being nearly six feet in breadth, and may fairly be deemed part of the early Saxon edifice, which as evidenced by certain stones with marks of fire on them, found in the Chancel during the restoration in 1878, was destroyed by the Danes, when they also burned the Monastery in 1003. It is probable that the Church was reconstructed soon after this date.

The north transept is rather larger than the south, and was formerly known as the Chapel of St. John. It has a plain Norman window on the west side, and a large semi-circular arched recess (Fig. 9) eight feet three inches in width in the east wall, with grooved and chamfered hoodmould and abacus, and plain arch and jambs. There are no traces of this arch on the outside, and it seems therefore to have been the recess for the altar of this Chapel. There is a somewhat similar recess in the north transept of the ancient church of Stow, in Lincolnshire, with the painting of a Bishop on the back wall. In the south east corner of this chapel is the head of a blocked up squint, no doubt formerly opening into the Chancel. It is shouldered arched, and probably of 13th century date. There is a large three light decorated window in the north wall, an insertion of the late 13th or early 14th century. On the floor is a large stone with the indents of figures of a civilian and lady, their sons and daughters, and a modern brass plate with the following inscription, copied from the note by Ashmole in the

CHOLSEY CHURCH.

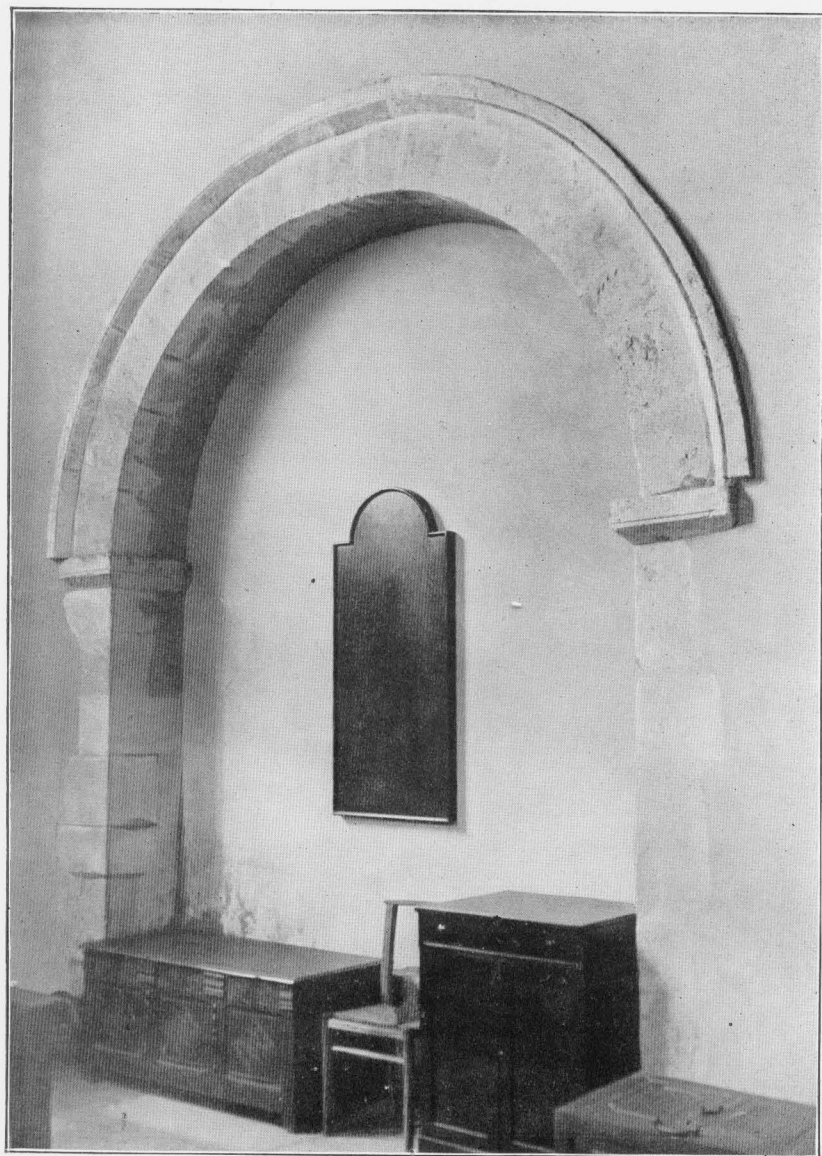


Fig. 9. ARCH IN EAST WALL OF NORTH TRANSEPT.

CHOLSEY CHURCH.

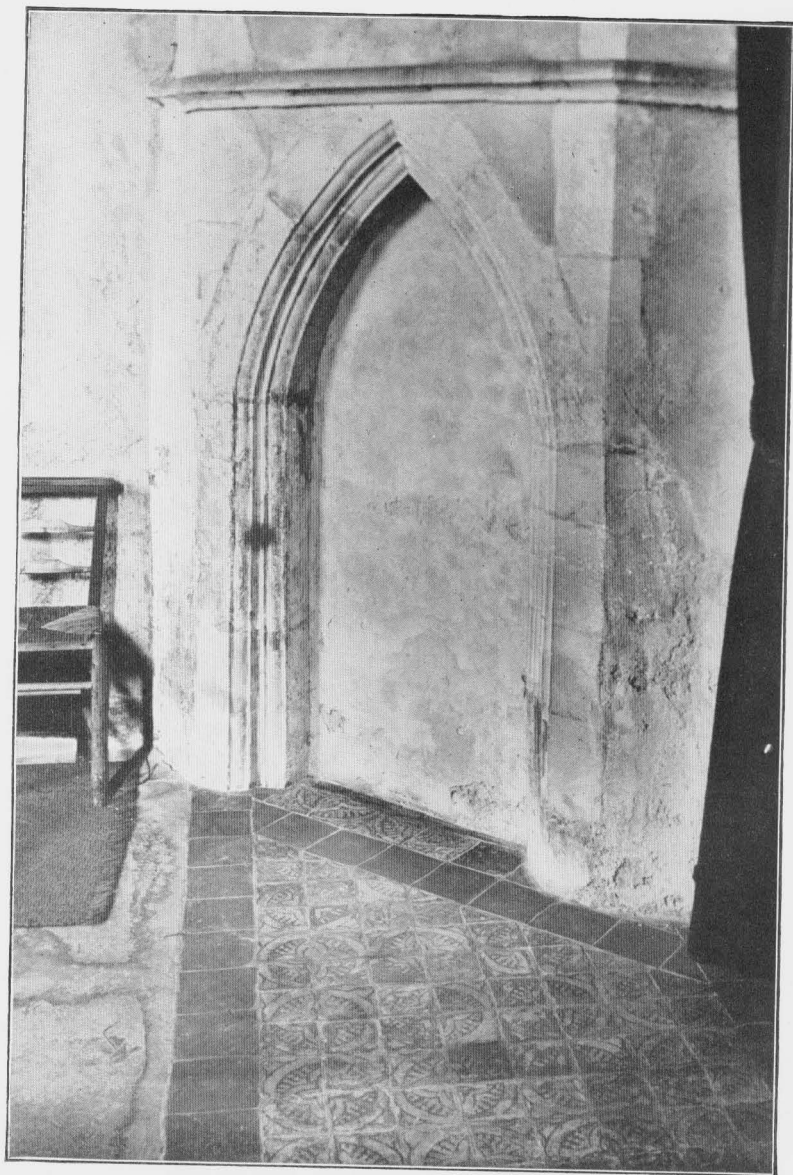


Fig. 10. ENTRANCE TO TURRET, SOUTH TRANSEPT.

Antiquities of Berkshire :

“ Of your charite pray for the sowles of
John Willmot [who died in 1529] and Agnes his
wife on who's sowles Lord have mercy.”

The portion in brackets is not in the original. Members of the Willmot family still reside in the Parish. The south transept was the Lady Chapel, and has a plain Norman light on the east and west sides. The south window is large of three lights with three canopied compartments in the head. It was inserted at the beginning of the 15th century. In the north-west corner is the lower part of the turret containing the staircase leading up to the tower (Fig. 10). It has a walled-up doorway of 14th century date with several mouldings to the arch and jambs, and a small oblong window above. The pavement in this corner is formed by numerous early encaustic tiles, each set of four forming a circle enclosing quatrefoils and foliage. On the floor against the south wall is the freestone effigy of a lady, about six feet in length, and much worn. She has her head on a pillow, and hands clasped on her breast. She is clad in a long cloak, but the feet have been hacked away. The figure is an elegant one of date between 1320 and 1340. On a stone under the carpet is the following inscription in Norman-French on a brass plate :—

“ Ici gist John Barfoot de Chelseye q^e morust le viii jo

Doctob^r lan de grace M^oCCC^oLXI^o calme de qi dieu eit mey.”

(Fig. 8). Let into the south wall is a plain tablet with the following inscription, the letters having been recently re-blacked :—

Here lie the Remains

of

The Reverend Richard Knight,

M.A.

Vicar of this Parish,

Who departed this life,

Septem : y^e 10th 1755,

In y^e 71st year of his age.

To enlarge on

His particular Virtues,

Decency declines

Yet Justice requires this at least,

To be said of Him in general

That he died, respected and esteemed

By all that knew Him :

But in a more especial manner,
Sincerely beloved and lamented
By those of His own Family,
Who have erected This,
As a small Token & Testimony
Of Their greatest regard
To His Memory,

The roof of this Chapel, as are those of the Chancel and north transept, is high pitched, but not ancient. The nave (Fig. 11) is of considerable length and very bare in its appearance. The arch from the tower space (Fig. 12) is recessed in three plain orders. To the inner is a half round respond shaft on each side with large well carved capitals, with a pattern of trefoils, that on south (Fig. 13) having human heads within two of the trefoils. On north and south of the nave are two modern windows in the decorated style, and at the west end is a three-light segmental headed window of late 15th century date. The font is in the perpendicular style, with large octagonal bowl ornamented with quatrefoils, &c., but is not old. The roof is low pitched with the beams supported on brackets, and pendants. It is of early 18th century date, and superior to the usual timber work of that debased period. There is a gallery and organ at the west end. On taking our stand outside the Church, we notice that the tower, transepts and Chancel are composed of flint and rubble. The nave is coated with roughcast, which effectually conceals any traces of windows, or other features, which may formerly have been visible. The Chancel and transept roofs are tiled, the nave roof is slated and very poor. The east window has a plain hoodmould; the lancets on north and south have separate dripstones terminating on human heads, one or two of very grotesque character. A stringcourse is carried round the eastern portion of the Chancel, under the three lancets on the north, the east window, and the three lancets on the south, and continued as a hoodmoulding with head terminations to the south Chancel doorway (Fig. 14). This has two roll mouldings in arch and down the jambs, and is of the same date as the lancet windows.

The lower stage of the tower is undoubtedly of early date. The south-west angle is concealed by the turret, which is carried up to the upper stage, and is of that same fourteenth century date. At the other three angles are good examples of the long and short work, which as we have already stated, we usually associate with the handicraft of the pre-Norman builders. Some of the old plaster

CHOLSEY CHURCH.



Fig. 11.

NAVE, LOOKING EAST.

CHOLSEY CHURCH.

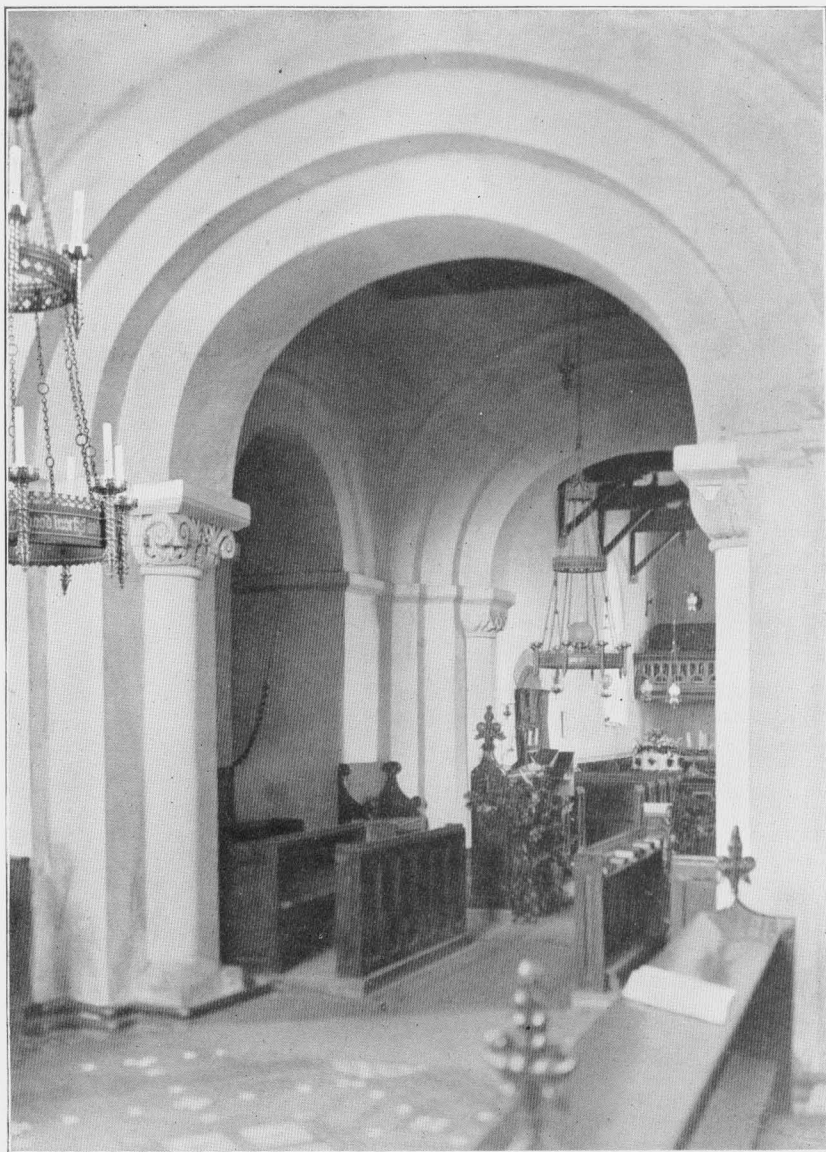


Fig. 12.

TOWER ARCHES, FROM EAST.

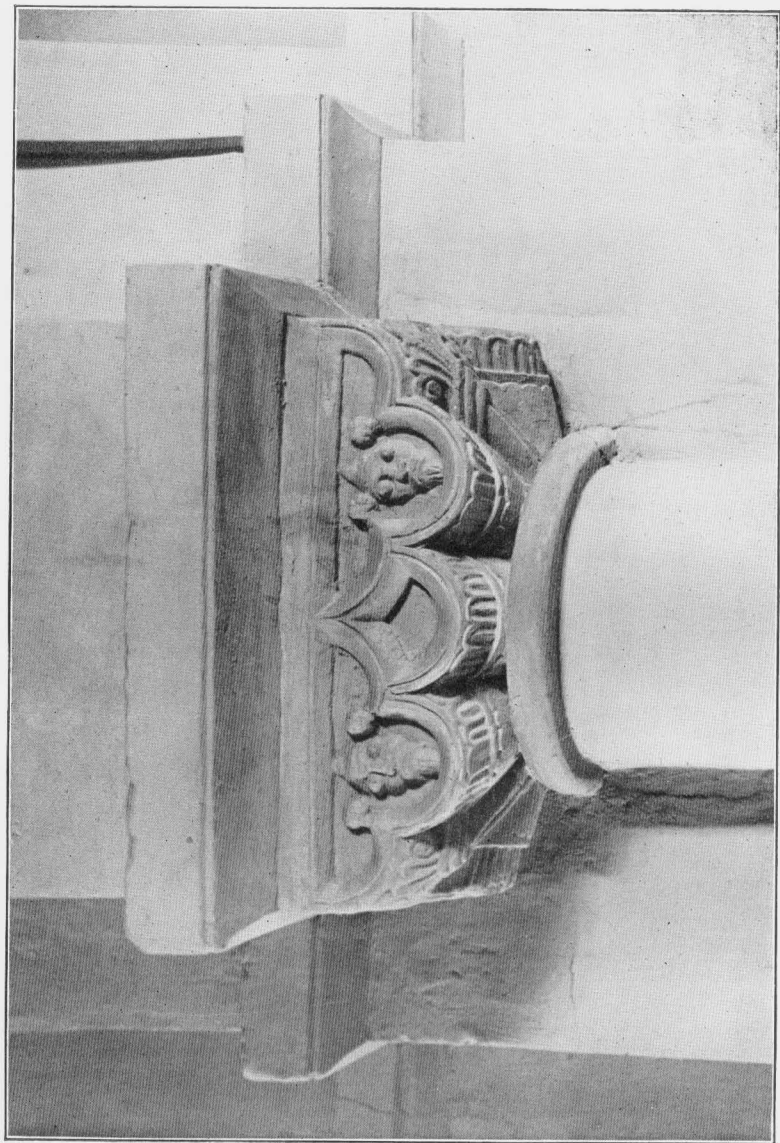


Fig. 13.

CAPITAL OF WEST TOWER ARCH.

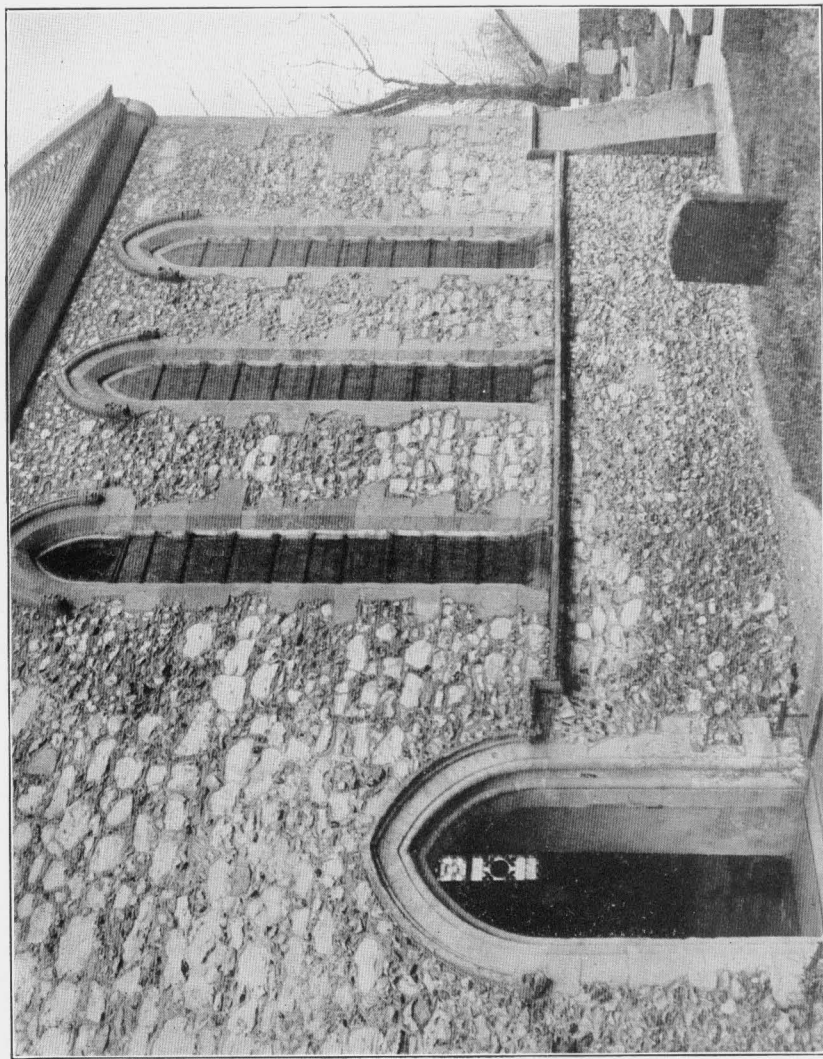


Fig. 14.

SOUTH CHANCEL DOORWAY.

CHOLSEY CHURCH.

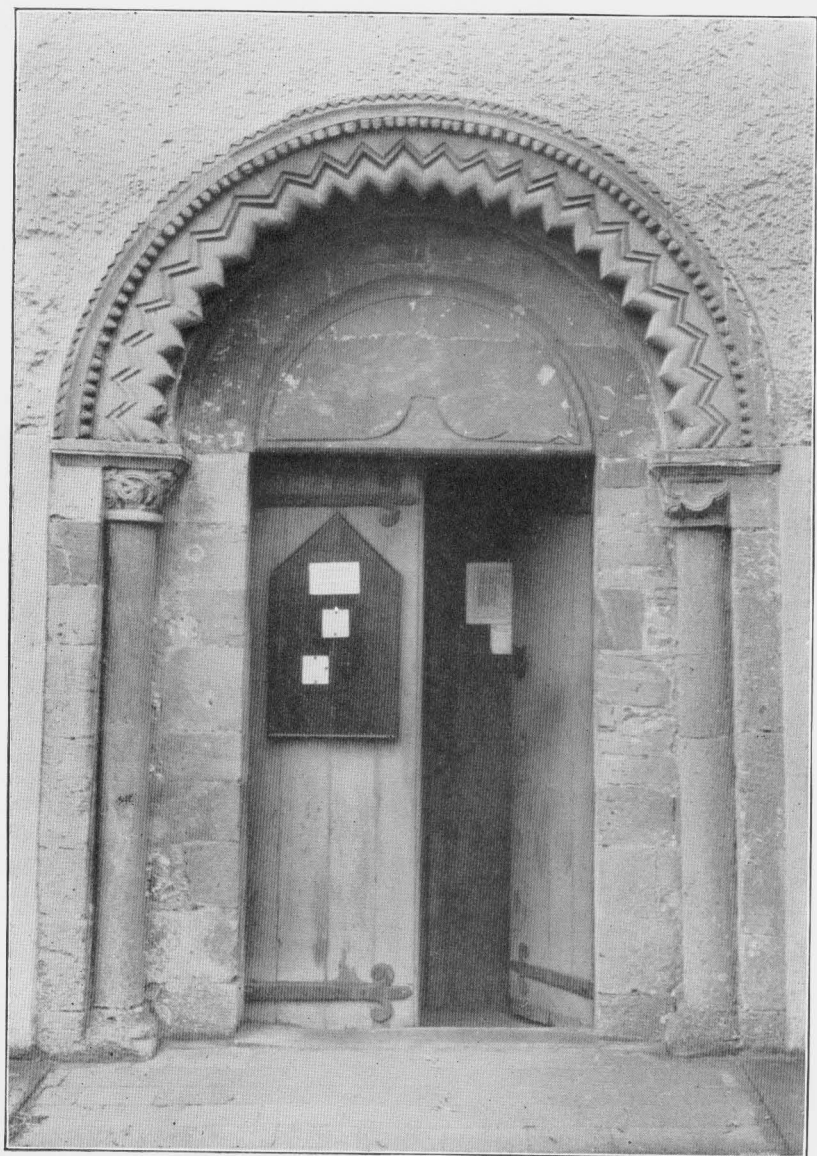


Fig. 15.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

CHOLSEY CHURCH.

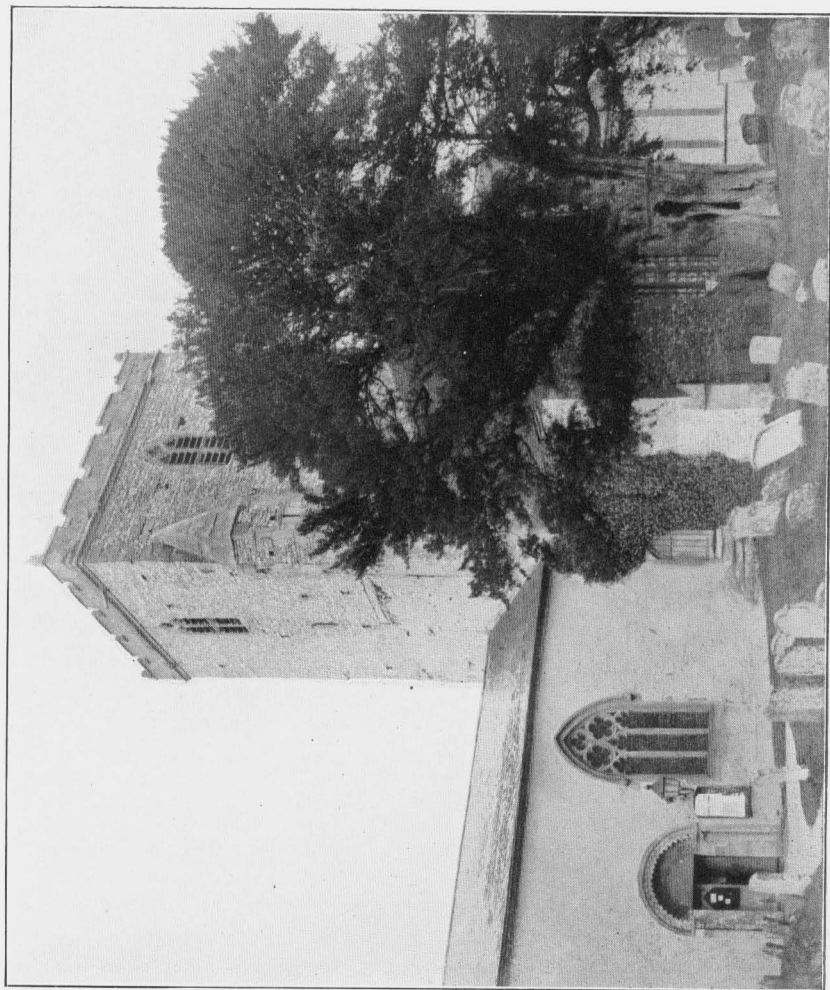


Fig. 16.

YEW TREE.

still remains on the walls. There is a small nondescript window on the south and west sides, and an oblong light on the west, formerly opening to the nave before the pitch of the roof was lowered. The upper stage has a large two-light belfry window on each face. The parapet is curiously weatherworn. There are six bells. Some solid early looking masonry remains at the west end of the north wall of the Chancel. There is a shallow groove round the head of the west window of the north transept. The west window (Fig. 5) has a segmental headed label, terminating on heads. There were traces of a walled-up doorway on north side of nave. The south doorway (Fig. 15) of the nave is very good Norman, not very early in the style. It is semi-circular with a hoodmould and two recessed orders. On the upper part of the hoodmould, is a course of the indented pattern and a hollow, and on the chamfer a series of large pellets. On the outer order is a course of small recessed and raised zig-zag, and a bold zig-zag on the angle. This is supported on a grooved and chamfered abacus of rather late type, and a large detached shaft on each side, with, on the east capital, an inverted trefoil on each face and a monster head on the angle, and on that on west interlacing scroll foliage. The inner order and jambs are plain. Forming part of the same stone as the arch, but separated by a groove is a large tympanum with a simple attempt at ornamentation, with the groove carried round the semi-circular portion and below, so as to outline the lintel, which is also part of the same stone. This groove is carried up in the centre to form a kind of shoulder, and in the east lower corner it is turned in the shape of a trefoil. In the centre of the tympanum is half of a small sundial, and part of another sundial is inserted on the outer west jamb. The lower side of the lintel has a chamfered edge. Above the doorway can be made out on the wall the triangular ridge of a former porch or pediment. Let into the south wall of the Chancel is a stone with the initials I. P. and date 1694, no doubt recording some repairs to the Church. There is (Fig. 16) a very fine old yew tree, about 16 feet in girth, close to the south transept.

(To be continued.)