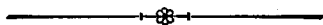


# The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.



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

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*(Continued from page 77, Vol. 14.)*

A DRIVE or walk of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles will bring us to South Moreton, where the Church is situate some little way out of the village and close to the Hack or Hag-Bourne. It is said that there was an ancient road from Sinodun Hill to Lowbury which crossed the brook by a ford at this place, and that the present parish Church was originally a chapel built for the benefit of those using this highway. A large mound still remains close to the Church and Brook, which is reputed to be the site of a fortification guarding the ford in very early times. Be this as it may, it is certain that portions of the present Church are of great antiquity, and probably date from the Saxon period.

The Church (Fig. 1) dedicated to St. John is a very singular building, but unfortunately not improved by a drastic restoration in the year 1849. It is divided into two equal parallel parts by an arcade separating the nave from the south aisle, and the Chancel from the south chapel. There is a double bellcote on the west

gable of the aisle, which has taken the place of a timber turret which was existing previous to the 1849 restoration. There is a south porch, and modern vestry on north side of Chancel.

The western portion of the nave is the earliest part of the present Church and possibly of pre-Norman date, though the only visible relic of this is indicated by the blocked-up west doorway. At this time no doubt the Church or Chapel was a small and plain oblong building, but about the end of the 12th century a south aisle was added, opening to the nave through the two western arches, and within a few years a south chapel was erected with the two eastern arches dividing it from the Chancel. There are several windows, which have been inserted in the 14th and 15th centuries. There was formerly a portion of the ancient wall with a semi-circular headed doorway, separating the eastern pair of arches from those on the west, but a modern arch has been constructed as a connecting link to the two sets of arches, and making the arcade continuous from east to west. There is no arch or division separating the Chancel from the nave or the south Chapel from the south aisle.

It is claimed by some that the fragments of stone screen and canopy work lying in the Churchyard by the west wall of North Moreton Church, came from South Moreton and not from Cholsey, as has been previously stated, and there is said to be some documentary evidence in support of this claim.

Commencing as usual our notes of the Church from the interior of the Chancel, we observe that the east window (Fig. 2) is of three lights and in the Decorated style of architecture; the containing arch looks old. On the north side is a two-light window of the same period, square-headed within a segmental-headed containing arch. There are two arches between the Chancel and Chapel (Fig. 3) with two chamfered orders supported on low circular column and half-round responds, and with a quarter-round moulding on the abacus. These belong to the Early English period of about the middle of the 13th century. The east window (Fig. 4) of the Chapel is of three lights with intersecting mullions enriched with cusping, and within a semi-circular containing arch, all of the late Decorated period. On the south side of the Chapel is a three-light late Perpendicular window, and farther west a two-light Decorated one, both square-headed and within segmental-headed containing arches. In the south wall (Fig. 5), almost hidden by the organ, is an Early English piscina with two pointed arches on a central shaft, and chamfer stop on the lower portion on each side.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.

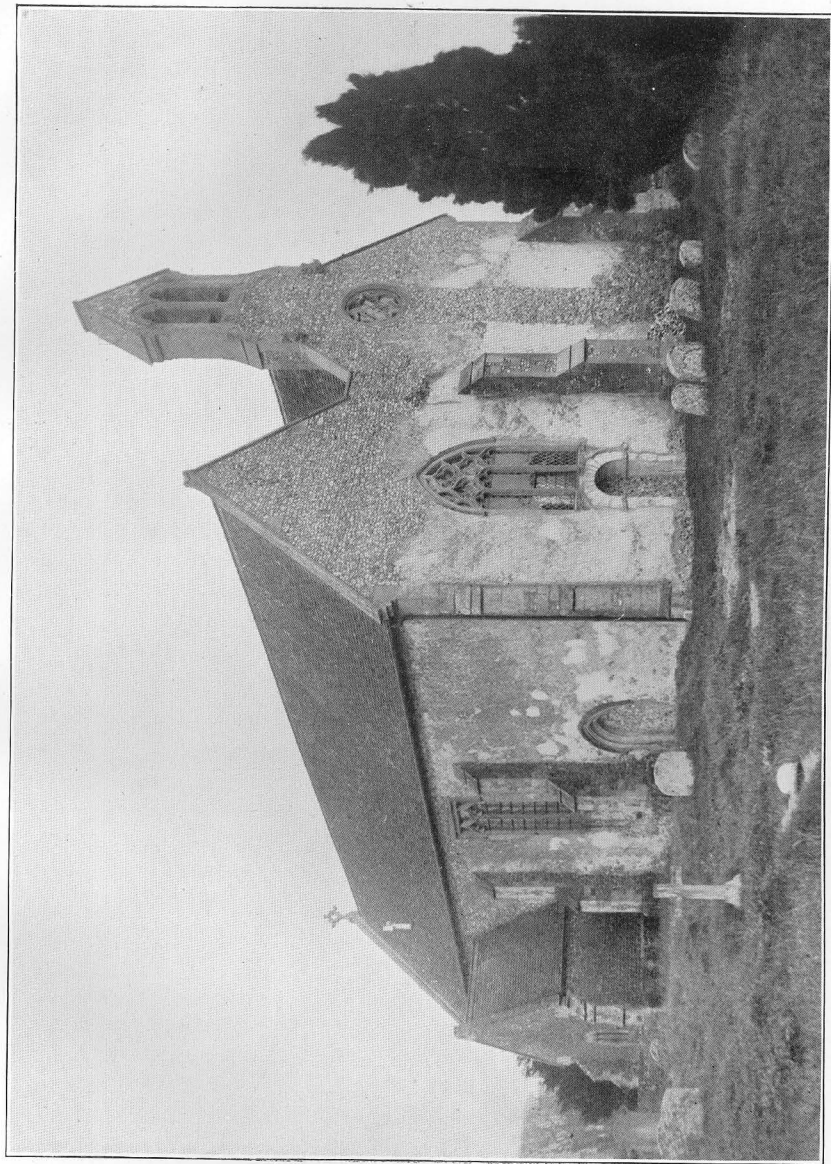


Fig. 1.

VIEW FROM THE NORTH WEST.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.



Fig. 2.

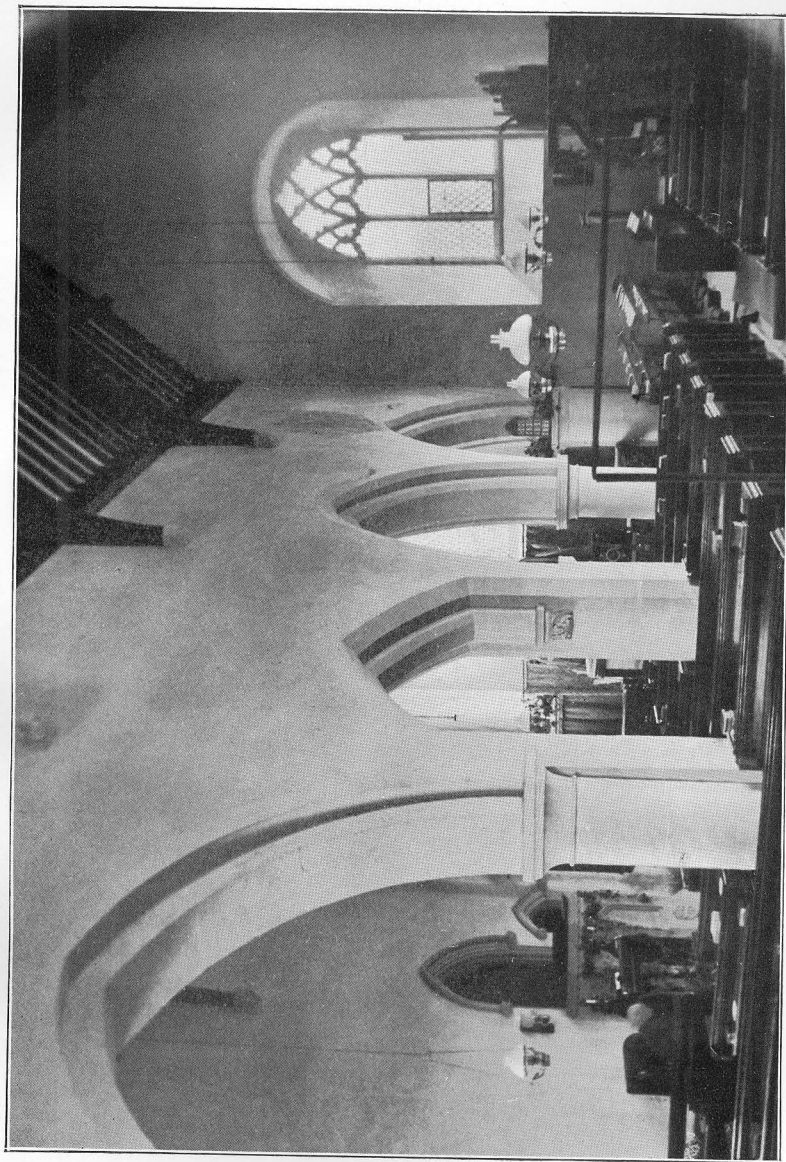
CHANCEL, LOOKING EAST.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.



Fig. 3. VIEW ACROSS THE AISLE.

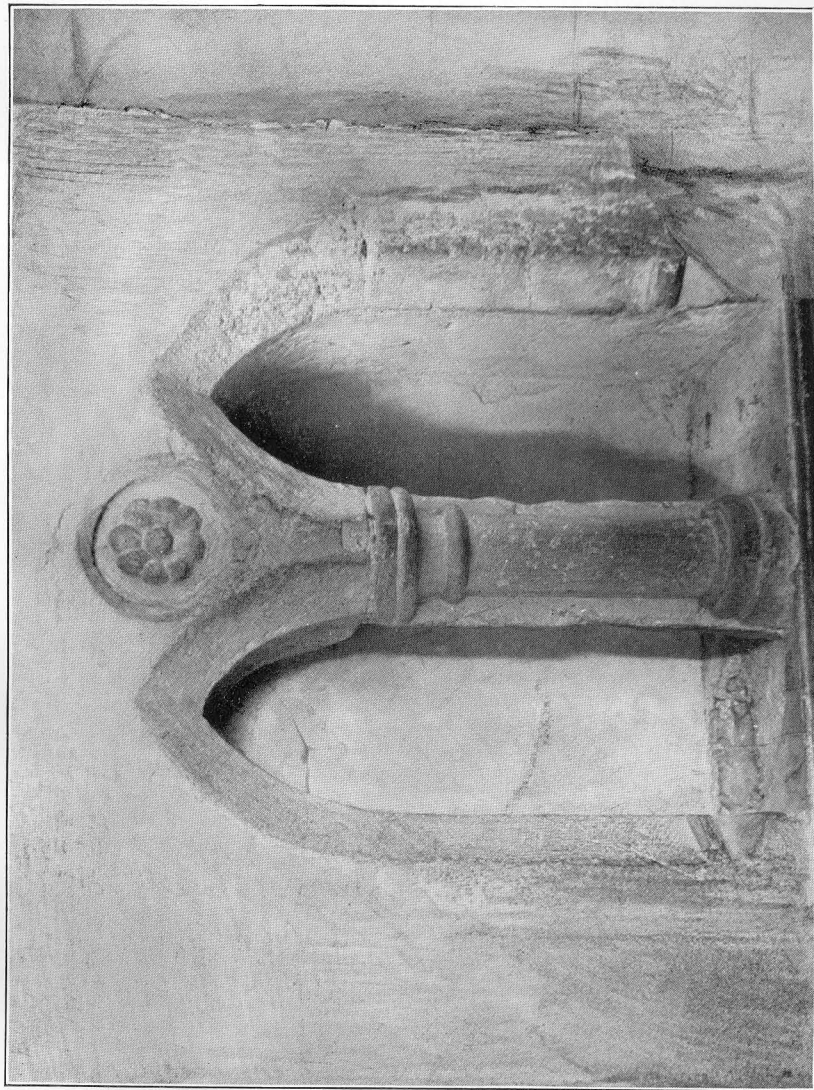
SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.



SOUTH AISLE, LOOKING EAST.

Fig. 4.





PISCINA IN SOUTH CHAPEL.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.

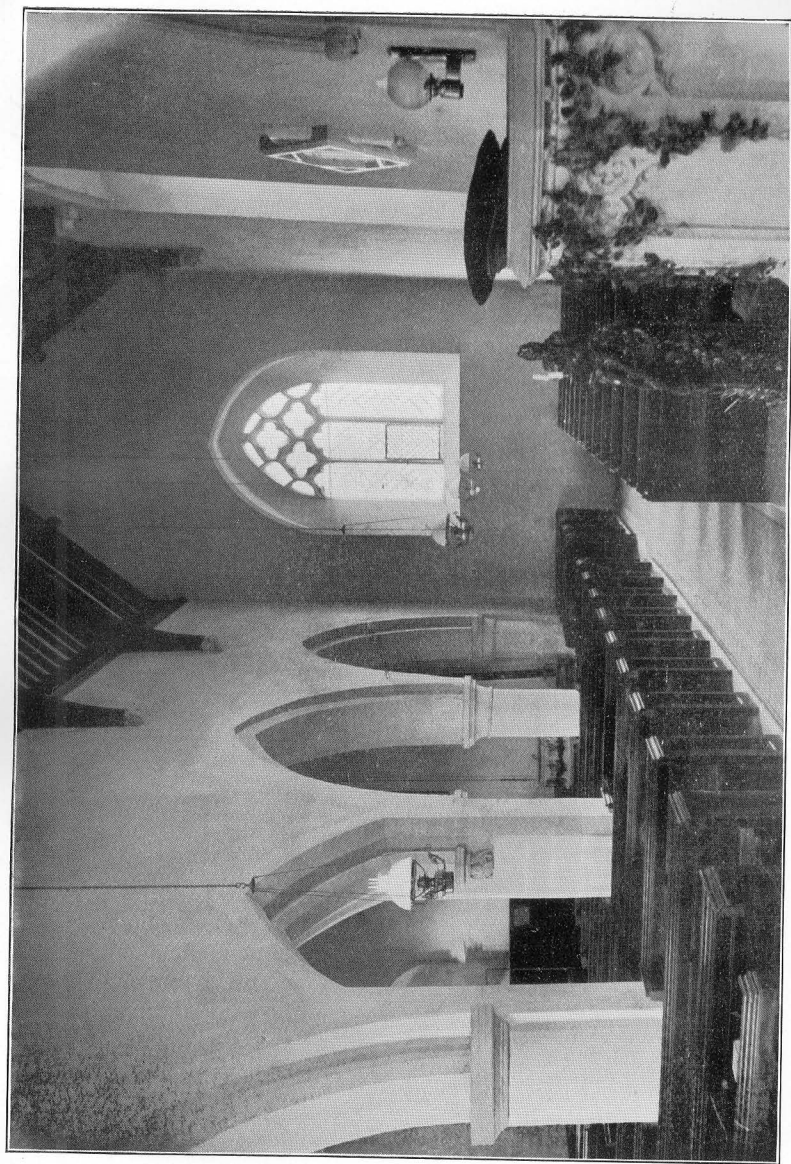


Fig. 6.

INTERIOR, LOOKING WEST.



SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.

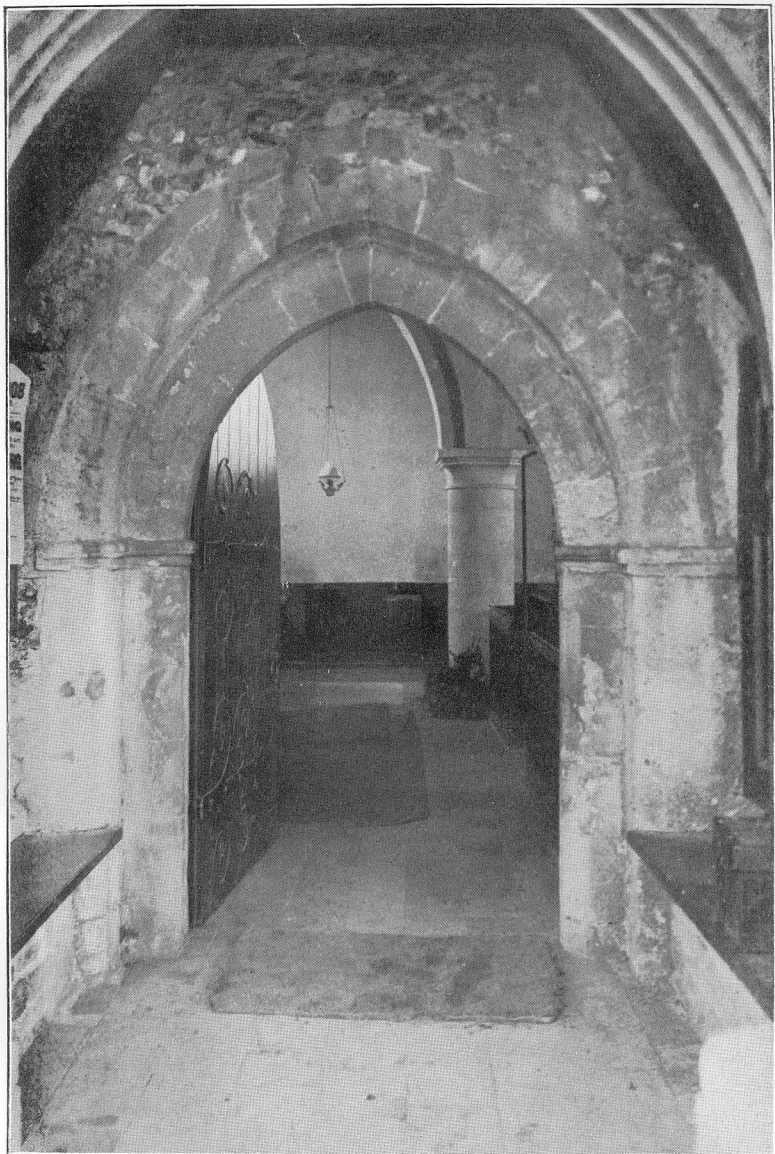


Fig. 7.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.



Fig. 8.

SAXON WEST DOORWAY.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH

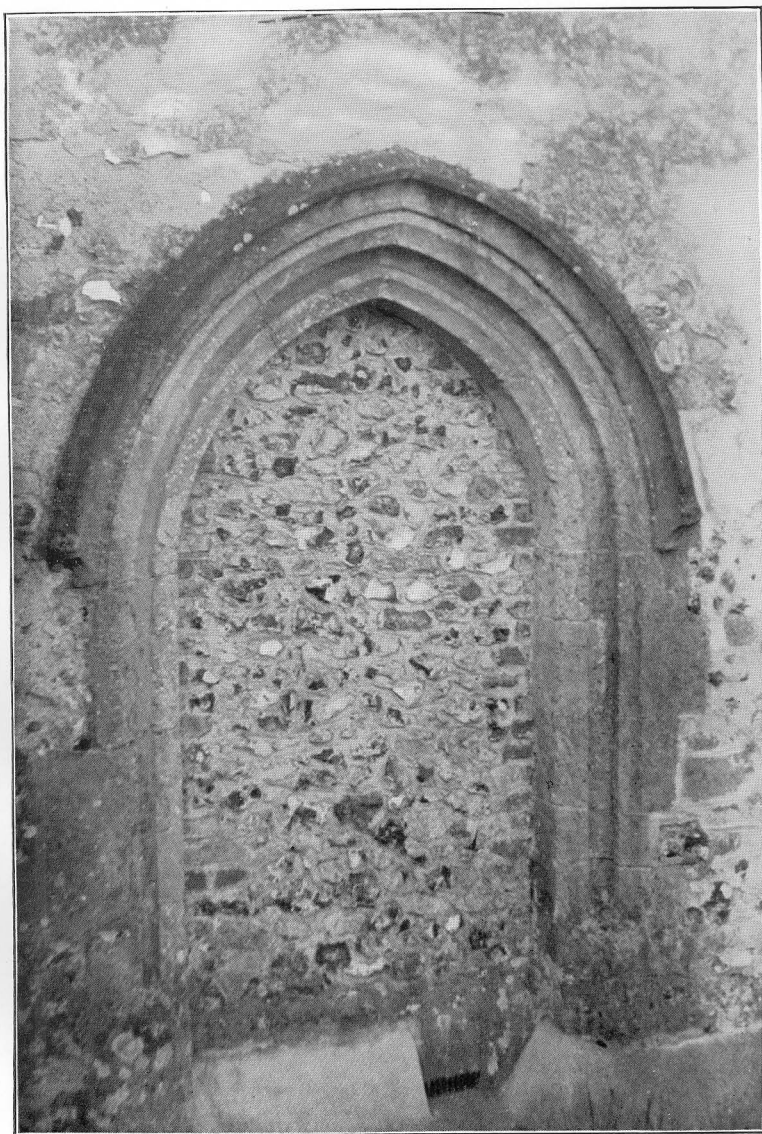


Fig. 9.

NORTH DOORWAY.

SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.

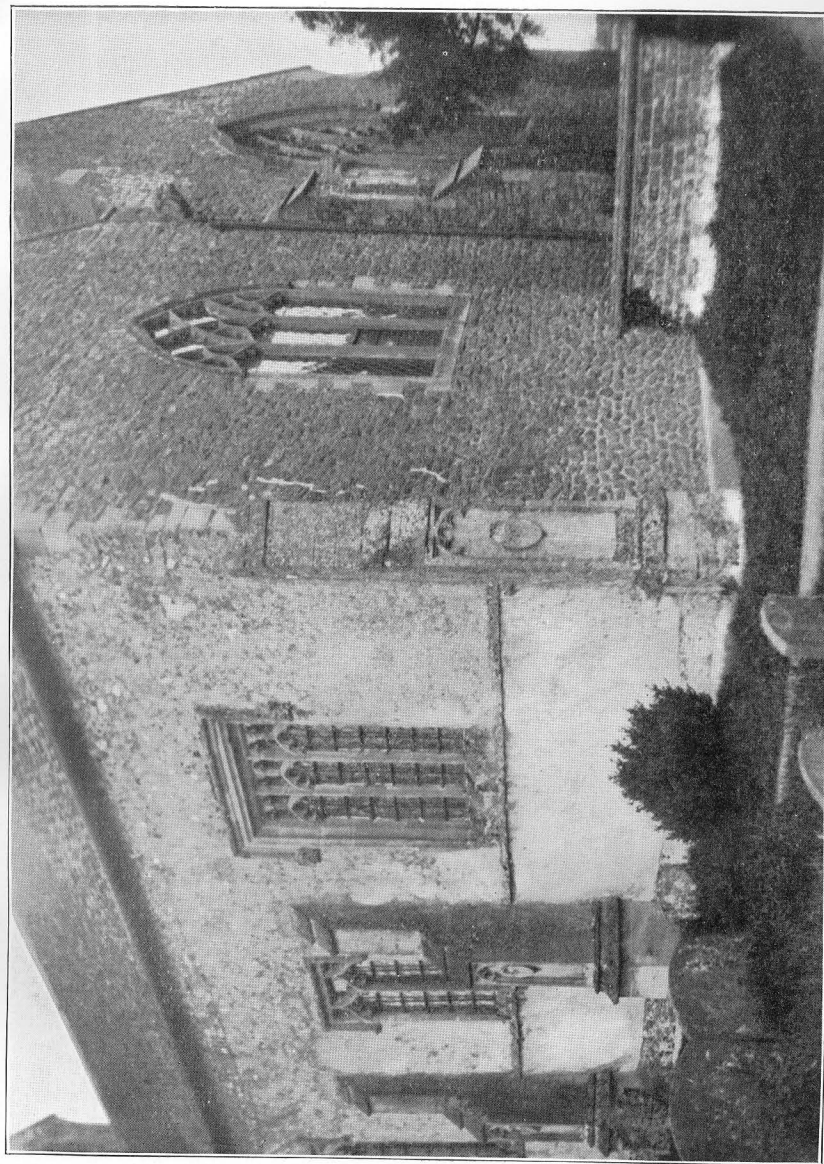


Fig. 10.

THE SOUTH CHAPEL.



SOUTH MORETON CHURCH.



Fig. 11. VIEW FROM THE SOUTH EAST, AND YEW TREE.



There is one basin under the eastern arch. Between the heads of the arches is a rose within a circular medallion. As has been stated a small modern arch has been constructed, in place of the old wall with a semi-circular doorway perhaps of the same date as that still remaining at the west end of the nave, and joining up the two arches at the east with the two arches on the west so as to form a continuous arcade. These two arches (Fig. 6) between the nave and aisle have two recessed orders supported on circular column and semi-circular responds with octagonal abacus and capital, and are probably transitional Norman dating from about the year 1200. On the north of the nave is a two-light square-headed Decorated window within a segmental containing arch with the hollow chamfer on the head. The west window is Decorated of three lights with geometrical tracery. In the south aisle are three windows on the south side, viz., from east, a two-light Decorated window similar to that on north of nave, but with fluted mullions, then a single lancet, and then a smaller trefoil-headed lancet. The west wall of the aisle is very thick. A modern wheel window has been inserted in it. On the aisle floor is part of a large blue stone. There was formerly a brass of a knight with the following quaint inscription as given in Ashmole's Antiquities of Berkshire :—

Sub jacet ecce pede Ricardus Morus in ede  
Kene, qui discretus fuit ampla pace quietus.  
Equater & Mille, quater & bis sex obit ille,  
Luceque sexta ter Junii, fit hujus sibi mater,  
Fecit plura loco, bono sunt suffragia pro quo.  
Post Christiana sua vita subit ad relevamen,  
Quos manus alma tua salvet, precor, O Deus. Amen.

Ashmole does not attempt a literal translation but gives it in English thus :—

Behold beneath thy foot lieth the Body of Richard More of Ken Hall, who was remarkable for his Discretion, Quietness and Peaceableness. He departed this Life on the 18th Day of June, 1416.

It is unfortunate that this very singular inscription has disappeared.

On the nave floor is a large blue ledger stone with a crest, a winged hound, and mantling and shield with the following armorial bearings :—1 and 4 a wing within an engrailed bordure, 2 and 3 a chess rook impaling on a bend engrailed three pheons. Below in plain capital letters is the following inscription :—

Here lyes y<sup>e</sup> body of Margaret 2<sup>d</sup>  
Daughter of William Tipping of  
Dracott in the County of Ox Esq  
[Wife of] Richard Pount of Southmorton  
in the County of Berks Gent who  
departed this life y<sup>e</sup> 10th day of May  
Anno Domini 1656.

There are some stone corbels with heads mainly re-carved or new, supporting the roofs.

The south doorway (Fig. 7) within a timber porch is Early English with two plain chamfered orders and jambs and undercut abacus. Some old tiles are collected here and laid in the floor of the Porch. Some of the timber work is old, and may be a portion of an old roof or screen. At the south-west angle of the aisle are two good buttresses. Some of the old plaster still remains on the west wall. At the west end of the nave is a blocked semi-circular headed doorway (Fig. 8) with plain arch and jambs formed by large stones, and a rudely carved quarter-round on the abacus, similar to that on the arch of the porch at Aston Tirrold. There is very little doubt that this is a relic of the pre-Norman Chapel or Church. On the north side of the nave is a blocked 14th century doorway (Fig. 9) with hollow on the hoodmould and two fluted orders to the arch and jambs with a hollow between. The windows on south side of Chapel, and the east on south of nave, have square labels, the eastern one of the Chapel with quaint head terminations. At the south-east corner of the Chapel is a buttress (Fig. 10) with a niche enclosing a shield suspended on a ring of the 15th century date. There are two similar buttresses on the south of the Chapel and aisle, also with a shield, but added at the time of the restoration. A plain stringcourse runs along the south wall, which is stated by Parker in the Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England, Berkshire, to be of transitional Norman date.

At the east end of the Church is a very fine yew tree (Fig. 11), quite hollow, and about 19 feet 6 inches in girth. It is probably of great age.

