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An Architectural Account of the Churches of North Moreton, Brightwell, Little Wittenham and Long Wittenham.

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A DRIVE of about a mile will bring us to Earls or Long Wittenham, where is a spacious Church, containing many objects of interest (Fig. 33). The Rectory was acquired from the Priory of Newton Longueville in Buckinghamshire, a cell to the abbey of Longueville Gifford in Normandy, by the Stapletons, and formed part of the endowment of Exeter College, Oxford, founded by them in 1322. There seems to have been a serious dispute as to the ownership of the Rectory, which was not settled till 1355. St. John's College, Oxford, are Lords of the Manor. There is some uncertainty as to the dedication of the Church. In the records of Exeter College it is described as St. Mary's, but in two 18th century

documents it is called St. Peter's, and it is so named in the Ecclesiastical Topography. The Church is somewhat irregular in its form, and now consists of west tower, nave, aisles with south porch, south chapel or transept, and chancel. The chancel was rebuilt in 1850, but most of the windows, etc., were replaced. It was part of the Norman Church, as evidenced by a plain semi-circular headed window on the north side (Fig. 34), and the Chancel arch. The very interesting leaden font belongs to the Transitional period at the end of the 12th century. In the 13th century some lancet windows were inserted in the Chancel, and the south arcade of the nave was erected. The south chapel was built in the early Decorated period or about 1290, and about 30 years later the north aisle was added, and the nave doorways and some windows inserted in the south aisle. The west tower, timber porch, clerestory and nave roof are of late 15th century date, and at this same time some alteration seems to have been made in the columns of the north nave arcades. There is some interesting 17th century screen and stall work brought from the old chapel of Exeter College, Oxford. There are no brasses in the Church, nor are any mentioned by Ashmole, but there is a rather ominous item in the Churchwardens' accounts for 1727, when some brass was sold out of the Church for 6d. a lb., the amount realized being 11s. 6d. In that year the "hole charg" amounted to £16 6s. 1d., of which the bellfounder's bill accounted for £14 13s. 11d.

Let us now, as is our wont, commence our perambulation of the Church in the interior of the Chancel (Fig. 35). As has been stated, the Chancel has been rebuilt, but most of the ancient features have been preserved. The east window is new, but on the north side is a plain Norman window, and to the east of it a single lancet. To the west (Fig. 36) is a two-light early Decorated window with a segmental headed containing arch terminating on heads. The glass of this window has been carefully restored. It exhibits a central stem with branches at intervals on either side enriched with leaves, all in white outlined in black. In the head of the window is a red rose and foliage. Within the Norman light is some old glass, presented by a resident of Abingdon, with foliage within diamond quarries. On the south of the Chancel are two lancet windows, and a two-light Decorated window at the west end. Within the quatrefoil in the head, is the head of our Lord with cruciform nimbus in old glass. The sill, both of this and the opposite one on the north side, is brought down so as to provide a low side window.

There is a trefoil-headed piscina with basin of the Early English period in the south wall, and on the sill of the east lancet on this side two plain piscina basins. In the Chancel is some of the old stall work brought from Exeter College, Oxford. The seats at the back are of pre-Reformation character, but the stalls with the richly carved poppy-heads date from 1623-4. There are pairs of figures on each poppy-head, viz. (Fig. 37), on the east on south side two animals with heads of a cock, on west on south two winged animals, query, dogs (Fig. 38), on west on north two mermen holding some object, and a ring and foliage above, on east on north two nude figures squatting down with the hands on the knees. There is some ornamental carving of the same date on the front of the desks. The Chancel arch is semi-circular Norman with two plain recessed orders, and bold grooved and chamfered abacus, continued as a stringcourse to the north and south walls. There is one shaft on each side to the outer order, with ornamented capital and cable band below, that on the south is much worn, but that on the north (Fig. 39) has a head at the angle, and a beaded dragon on either side biting it. On the space above the arch are remains of the Commandments painted in old letters. In Ashmole's time under the King's Arms, placed over the Rood-Loft was this distich :

Qui leo de Juda est, & flos de Jesse, leones
Protegat, & Flores Carole Magne tuos.

There was also a picture of Death and these verses :

Man is a Glass, Life is as Water, weakly walled about.

Sin brought in Death, Death breaks the glass, so runs the water out.

The nave arcades (Fig. 40) are irregular, and the arches do not correspond. On the south side are four Early English arches with two chamfered orders supported on circular columns with beautiful conventional foliage on the capitals (Fig. 41). They commence at the west end, but terminate some few feet from the east, the space here being occupied by a table tomb with arch having a half-round moulding opening through into the aisle. There has probably been a brass to the monument, but this has gone and the indent has been obliterated. On the north side are three arches (Fig. 42) starting from the east wall, but terminating some way from the west, and leaving a stretch of blank wall joining on to the tower. The arches have three recessed orders, and are of 14th century date, but the bases and capitals of the octagonal columns seem to have been altered, probably at the time the clerestory was added. Against the east pier (Fig. 43) is a nice pillar piscina and a small trefoiled niche for image

above. Above the arcades on each side are three square-headed three-light late Perpendicular windows. The nave roof is flat, and a good specimen of this same period. The east window of the north aisle is of three lights, square-headed, of late 15th century date. On the north side is a three-light Decorated window, another of two-lights to the west of the doorway and in the west wall. In the east window was formerly in old glass a man in armour kneeling, and a woman in a green gown and yellow mantle holding an escutcheon. In the head of the west window on the north side is a head and some other fragments of old glass. In the south aisle are two two-light Decorated windows on the south side, the east one containing same fragments of old glass. The east window of two lights is of the early Decorated period, of the same date as the adjoining chapel. The north aisle is much wider than the south. Both have plain lean-to roofs. There are numerous encaustic tiles in both aisles. They seem to have been in patterns of four tiles with a black letter inscription on a circular border to each set. They are probably of 15th century date. There is an old chest in the south aisle, apparently made up of early Jacobean panelling. At the west end of the north aisle is the well-known font (Fig. 44), with large circular leaden bowl standing on a massive stone plinth. On the upper part of the bowl in two rows are the two following designs arranged alternately, viz., a kind of star within a circle and a foliated pattern, then comes a double band, and then on lower part a series of thirty small figures of archbishops under pointed arches. Each is holding a cross in the left hand and giving the benediction with the right. These figures are smaller than, but similar to, those on the leaden font at Childrey, and of the same date, viz., quite the end of the 12th century. There are other well-known leaden fonts at Dorchester and Warborough on the Oxfordshire side of the Thames.

The tower arch is lofty, with two fluted orders continued without imposts to the ground. It is of the fifteenth century period. The west window is new, of two lights. The south Chapel, or St. Thomas' aisle, as it was formerly called, is now separated from the South aisle by the Jacobean screen brought from the old Chapel of Exeter College, Oxford, which has semi-circular arches to the compartments. There are rings on the ornaments round the doorway, and on either side a shield with the following armorial bearings, on a bend a mullet of five points between six trefoils slipped three

and three, no doubt those of the donor of the screen.* The pulpit at the north-east corner of the nave, with a dragon's head terminating in foliage carved on the upper part of each of the five sides, seems to belong to this same date. The south Chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas, has a flat underdrawn roof, but one old beam remains. There is a three-light early decorated window with a circle enclosing an eight foil in the head in the south wall, and a two-light square-headed window on the east side. In the south wall is the very interesting piscina (Fig. 45) with miniature effigy of a cross-legged knight on the edge of the basin. The piscina has a canopy with undercut hoodmould or dripstone formerly terminating on heads, but these are now hacked away. The canopy is trefoil headed with two members separated by a hollow on either side of the arch. On the head are two angels with extended wings, the right of that on west being over the left of that on east. They appear to have been swinging censers, but their arms below the elbow have been broken away. On the edge of the basin is carved the effigy of a crusader, so-called, with flat helm, head on a pillow, surcoat, feet crossed right over left, and grasping the hilt of the sword in his right hand. Ashmole mentions it, and states it to be about three-quarters of a yard long. It is perhaps an unique example of a monumental effigy in this situation, and, as in the case of other miniature figures, marks the site of the interment of the heart only, and not of the body of the deceased. An illustration of it is given in Vol. II. of the *Archæological Journal*. It dates from the latter part of the 13th century. The interior walls of this Chapel and of the nave and aisles have a liberal coating of whitewash, which one would like to see removed. The Church is built of stone, and one cannot but be

* By the kind help of the Rev. J. E. Field, of Benson, and Mr. James Parker, of Oxford, I have been able to identify these arms (or a bend between six 3-foils slipped purp.) as those of George Hakewill. He was the third son of John Hakewill of Exeter, and was baptised January 25th, 1578. He became a fellow of Exeter College on the Devonshire foundation in 1596. He took his various degrees, B.A. in 1599, M.A. in 1602, B.D. in 1610, and D.D. in 1611. He seems to have resigned his fellowship in 1611, as he was at Lincoln's Inn in 1614, and Archdeacon of Surrey in 1617. He became chaplain to Prince Charles in 1621, but with his brother was imprisoned for opposing the Spanish match. Before this he was presented to the living of Heaton Punchard in Devonshire. He was elected Rector of Exeter College in 1642, and died and was buried at Heaton Punchard in 1649. He was a great benefactor to the College. He gave £1,200, the greater part of the cost of the new Chapel, of which the foundation stone was laid in March, 1623. It was consecrated in October, 1624, and the sermon, preached by Dr. Prideaux, was dedicated to Dr. Hakewill. These two coats of arms therefore remain on the screen to perpetuate the memory of one who had done so much for the College over which he presided, and the Chapel in which he worshipped for so many years.

struck by the size of many of the stones incorporated in the present walls, either relics of an earlier Church, or brought from some of the ancient structures which formerly existed in this neighbourhood. The north doorway (Fig. 46) is of the Decorated period, with undercut hoodmould, and quarter-round moulding to the arch and jambs. The south doorway within the porch is similar, but has a hoodmould terminating on the heads of ecclesiastics. The porch (Fig. 47) is a very interesting specimen of 15th century timber work, though much patched up and weatherworn. It has a well moulded projecting barge board, and arched entrance with solid timber jamb posts, and good open frame work above, most of the beams of the roof being old. It is divided within into two bays by an arch with fillet band on it terminating on heads on the wall plate. On each side of the porch is an open arcade supported on nine shafts. The south Chancel doorway has three grooved or fluted mouldings in the head. All the decorated windows have external dripstones or hoodmoulds, that on the south of the Chapel having a small additional member. The tower (Fig. 48) is lofty with debased battlements, single belfry lights, and small oblong openings in middle stage. On the upper west face is a small ogee headed niche enclosing a mutilated figure, said by some to be St. Nicholas, by others the Virgin and Child.

Near the Church is an old pigeon house, and other remains of the Manor House, and as we return to Didcot we pass the old way-side cross, the steps being original, but the shaft and cross having been recently erected.

Feet of Fines for Berkshire.

(Continued from page 79.)

Transcribed by L. J. Acton Pile.

TRINITY 23 AND 24 GEO. II. *(continued).*

(601.) Catherine Edwin, spinster *and* Edmund Hewitt and Ann, w, house, wharf and ferry and passage over River Thames called Cookham ferry with Toll and duties belonging to said wharf and ferry, also a seat in psh church of Cookham. £100.