Cookham Church.

A Paper read before the Berks Archæological, &c., Society, Friday, September 30th, 1910.

WE read in Domesday Book, under the entry of "Cocheham," that "Of twenty hides Reimbald has of the King one hide and a half in alms, and the Church of the said Manor, with 8 cottages and one carucate and fifteen acres of pasture, worth in all fifty shillings." Reimbald was Chancellor to the Council of Edward the Confessor, and Dean of a College of Prebendaries at Cirencester. It is not likely that any part of this Church still remains. Mr. Darby has shewn* that the Saxon settlement of Cookham was most probably on the Cockspur Rise, where the village pound has always stood, and where the Ham (or Home) Field, with the Church lands, stretches away southwards.

The present edifice was probably begun, as its earliest portion indicates, soon after 1132, when Henry II. granted to his new Augustinian Abbey at Cirencester "all the landed property that was Reimbald's the Priest," and in particular "in Berks, in Cookham, the Church, with the land and the Chapels and tithes and all things to the Church appertaining." This Abbey presented to the Vicarage up to the date of suppression of the Monasteries. The Church as we have it was erected, as a glance will show, at different times, in differing styles. There are in it well preserved specimens of Norman work, of Early English or First Pointed Gothic, of Edwardian or Second Pointed, and of Perpendicular or Third Pointed; that is to say, of the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

Look, first, at the three great central piers which, with the north wall of the west portion of the nave, mark the limits of a Norman Church built soon after the first introduction of "fine-jointed masonry." Proofs of this are (1) the small Norman window, (2) the wall-shaped pier, (3) the two central piers, with their north-east and south-east

* Chapters in the History of Cookham, pp. 2, 13.

angles intact from floor to roof, save for a chamfer cut in 1860, which are obviously the outside corners of a complete building. This Church, of about 60 feet by 20 feet, consisted of three squares, and I suggest that the easternmost was probably the Chancel, though there may have been a semi-circular apse, just where the Chancel Arch now stands.

The first addition must have been the Early English Chapel, north, into which the two arches were opened, early in the thirteenth century. This, as I gathered from a MSS. note by Mr. Gorham, in the copy of his tract on Maidenhead Chapel which he presented to the British Museum, was dedicated to St. Catherine. Those acquainted with mouldings of the Early English period will recognise in the northern door, now closed, in the roll, fillet and hollow of the hoodmoulding, in the two hollows springing from leaf-shaped impost mouldings, and in the two rolls and wide hollow of the bases, work distinctive of the earliest sort belonging to this period.

Attention should next be given to the Chancel Arch, the mouldings of which present the same features. That this arch covers a third opening, in a previously existing 3-foot Norman wall, may be inferred from the fact that it is not quite correctly centred. The error is one of 4½ inches to the northward. When this opening was made it must have been intended to erect a Chancel east of it, and I think it most likely that such a chancel was erected, with Early English features. If so, however, it has since been, at least partially, re-built.

The work next taken in hand was the building of the south aisle, and replacement of the Norman south wall of the nave by the present splendid arcade. In this should be noted (1) the Boutell ornament of the hoodmoulding next the nave, (2) the scroll ornament of that next the aisle, (3) the scroll ornament in the capitals. These with other features point to a later date than that of the north Chapel, but still one within the Early English period, that is to say, before 1300 A.D.

In the three western windows of the S. wall of the aisle may be seen a good instance of the gradual development of tracery, first explained by Ruskin. The exterior of the easternmost of the three shews outside, in the spandril between the lancet heads, a piling in of roughly shaped pieces of chalk ; that of the next shews a rude bearing arch in the wall ; the third, W. of the porch, of a somewhat later date, has the arch moulded, and an open light pierced between the lancets.

The S.E. Chapel, belonging to the Second Pointed or Edwardian period, came next. I have identified from a will the dedication of this chapel to S. Clement. The 14th century capital of the pillar in its N. wall, the sunk roll of the exterior windows S., the arch and pillars of the S.E. windows, and the monk's head in the corbel, all point to this date. Of course, before this Chapel can have been built, there must have been a Chancel in existence, Early English or other. A puzzle as yet unsolved is, that before the restoration of 1860 the E. half of the easternmost arch of the arcade separating the Chancel from S. Clement's Chapel was occupied by a blank wall. Three openings had been made in this wall, no doubt once fitted with awmries. The tracery of the E. window, as also that of the S.E. window, is a "restoration."

The opening in the N. wall of the Chancel, with segmental Arch of a date probably late, but presenting some Normanesque features, has been, by Mr. Gordon P. G. Hills, in a section on the Church contributed to Mr. Darby's work (following in this Alexander Nisbet in his "Notes on the Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England"), set down as work of Transition-Norman date, and taken as evidence, first that the N.E. Chapel, which I have identified from a will as the Lady Chapel, was also of that date, and next, as a corollary, that there must have been a Chancel S. of it, of date earlier than the Chancel Arch. But all the ancient features of this N.E. Chapel, without exception, are of late Third Pointed character. (The lancet windows are restorations of 1860, and the two doorways are also of that date.) I believe, on the contrary, that as suggested by Mr. Ferrey, this segmental arch was opened in the 15th century, in the wall of an Early English Chancel, which was at the same time enlarged Eastwards, in the Perpendicular style. Of its details, the hood moulding, a round with fillet, had not been introduced in the Transition-Norman period; the round with hollow, at the angle, and nail head ornament, had been introduced; and I think some carved work of the Norman period, perhaps from a West door which must have been destroyed when the tower was built, may possibly have been utilized and imitated in its decoration. As it came down to us there was no hood moulding on the N. side, and the piers had no sunk roll on the abacus and angles; these were supplied in 1860. The general aspect of this arch, and the defective foundations of the Chapel, which led to an early settlement outwards of its N. wall, point in my opinion to the decline of Gothic building, after the wars of the Roses, for their date.

I hope to be forgiven if I make a small digression here to reply to the further theory of Mr. Hills, that the eastern portion of the Church, quite contrary to the usual order of enlargement in Churches, is the earliest in date; and in particular that the Chancel is of the Saxon period. I find it impossible to agree with him that there is, in either of the external angles of the Chancel, any "suggestion" of Saxon "long-and-short work," mature or "immature"; and I do not find, in his chapter, any other suggestion of fact on which such a theory could be founded. On the other hand I call attention to the point that, in order to get a chance for his Saxon Chancel, he has to explain away the external angles of the great central piers. For this purpose (1) he has to suppose that their ponderous masses were erected merely to serve as abutments to an Early English Chancel Arch "inserted" between Saxon and Norman portions of a long Church of 100 feet by 20 feet—dimensions most unusual, if not impossible. (2) He has to imagine that the great south arcade was, for no conceivable reason, built 9 inches south of the true foundations of the Norman wall it replaced, thus throwing the recently-built Chancel Arch out of centricity, merely for the fun of the thing. (3) He has to suppose that very soon after finishing this arch its builders took down part of its southern abutment and rebuilt it in order to make it match with their misplaced arcade. (4) He asserts, or assumes, that there were once bearing arches north and south of these piers, but of this there is no evidence in the masonry, and there is no reason whatever why they should have been destroyed, if they ever had been built. (5) He ascribes to "about 1300" the completion of the angles, which I call external, of these piers, "with chalk quoins formed in their lower parts to a wide splay for convenience of passage way." But the chalk quoins are like good Norman work, and the "wide splay" is the chamfer which, as I have mentioned, we cut in 1860. While acknowledging the pains he has taken, and the interest of some of the details he has collected, I think I may dismiss his general theory from further consideration.

Since the date of my "Village Lecture," which appeared in the Journal of this Society for 1901, some work on the E. wall of the Lady Chapel has disclosed the interesting fact that the present window, with its curious brick mullions, must be considered as an early restoration. The spring of the arch of an earlier window has been uncovered, 16 inches N. of the present window. This has been called an Early English window; but the only fact in evidence is afforded by two inches of the angle moulding of the jamb, a

narrow chamfer and re-entering angle, which happens to be, not similar to any Early English moulding in the Church, but an exact anticipation of that in the Perpendicular windows hard by. My explanation would be that when the settlement took place in the N. wall of the Chapel, which was probably shortly after its erection, the effect was to ruin its E. window; and that after underpinning the N. wall and patching the E. wall, the restorers built a new window of different plan, but with the same moulding as the old one. Mr. Ferrey assigned this work to the time of Edward IV.

To the same century as the Chancel and Lady Chapel, but perhaps to an earlier date, before the outbreak of Civil War, belongs the noble Tower, a fine specimen of the Perpendicular style. It is interesting to note that when its builders came to open a new arch between the Tower and the Nave they must have had their attention directed to the slight eccentricity above mentioned, of the Chancel Arch. The question whether the new arch should range centrically with that arch, or with the sides of the Nave, was solved by splitting the difference. Of the bells, four date from the Commonwealth, the big bell and the treble are somewhat later.

In conclusion, I will note some scattered features of interest in the architecture and in the monuments. There are three piscinas, in St. Catherine's, St. Clement's and the Lady Chapel, of which the second has been restored. A fourth, in the Chancel, was too ruinous to be preserved. There is a hagioscope or "squint," to enable a worshipper at the altar of the Lady Chapel to see the elevation of the host at the altar of the Blessed Trinity in the Chancel. There are two hollows visible N. and S. of the great piers, marking the passage to the top of the rood screen, which was still in existence at the date of Steele's Survey in 1718. Of the monuments, the most remarkable are, (1) the canopied tomb of Robert Pecke, 1517, Master of the Spicery to King Edward VI.; (2) the alabaster memorial to Arthur Babham, with his wife and six children (1561); (3) the brass plate of Edward Woodyore, 1615, with some excellent verse; (4) the stone over the grave of Anthony Turberville (Dec., 1688), who was killed at Warminster in the skirmish arising from Colonel Kirke's desertion to William III.; (5) the sculpture by Flaxman, representing the death of Sir Isaac Pocock in a punt on the Thames; and (6) Armstead's beautiful tablet with the head of Frederick Walker. The chalk of the interior, with its dazzling whiteness and its blue veins, is a noticeable beauty; and the fine proportions, especially of the Early English work, impart a dignity to

the building which does not stand in need of elaborate ornament. The recent darkening of nearly all the lights by modern painted glass and the enclosure of the N.E. part of the Church as a vestry for the choir, are, I think, to be regretted; but mistakes of this sort, if mistakes they be, are not, after all irretrievable.

NOTES OF MR. GORDON P. G. HILLS' REMARKS ON SIR GEORGE YOUNG'S PAPER ON COOKHAM CHURCH, SEPTEMBER 30th, 1910.

I am very glad to have the opportunity of stating my views about Cookham Church, although, after listening to Sir George Young's interesting paper, it seems an ungracious task to criticise it.

There are, of course, many matters in which there is room for doubt and on which opinions may well differ, and there is not time to enter into details, but there are two points to which I wish to draw particular attention.

In the first place, I must enter a protest against the way in which Sir George Young quotes Mr. Stephen Darby as against the theory of the probability of a Saxon Church having stood on the site of the present Church. Mr. Darby entirely agrees with this proposition, and in his valuable "History of Cookham," clearly refers to two Saxon settlements—"the earlier Saxon settlement" . . . "probably on the spot known as Coxborrow field" . . . "on "the higher ground to the West of the G. W. Railway Station," and a later village "on the riverside where Cookham now is." Of the earlier settlement no remains are extant, no traces of houses, church, or burial place, "no foundations have been unearthed, nor have "coins of this period come to light": probably, the earlier settlement was destroyed in one of the Danish raids which ravished the country. We have, however, certain historical evidence in the Doomsday survey that at the time of the Conquest there was a Saxon Church of Cookham held by Reinbald, the priest. Now, Cookham, at this time, was a place of some importance, and must have been established as such for some years, as we find that in 997 the King assembled his witanagemote at Cookham. If the village

of that period had been on the Coxborrow site, at a time so near in date to the Norman remains which are clearly recognisable in the present church, it is inconceivable that all tangible traces of village or church should have so completely disappeared, and there can be no reasonable doubt that in late Saxon times Cookham Church and village stood on the present site. Sir George Young would have us believe that when Cookham Church passed, with the other properties of Reinbald, to the ownership of the Abbey of Cirencester, the new patrons set about founding a new church on a fresh site. There is not the slightest reason to suppose this, and, in this connection, it is curious to note that in two at least of the churches included in the same property and grant—Avebury in Wiltshire and Brigstock in Northamptonshire—Saxon remains of early date have survived to the present time.

Having these historical facts in mind one naturally looks for evidence of Saxon work in Cookham Church, and the form of the Nave—so elongated for a Norman building—and proportion of the chancel at once suggest to a student of Saxon architecture the conjecture that the Norman work was based on a Saxon plan. My careful examination of the masonry of the walling shows that the work of the different periods of the building is very clearly distinguishable, and I find that the walling at the east end of the Chancel presents features more in common with that of the Norman walling of the nave than that of any other period of the work. The Chancel walls, however, differ from the Norman work in their thinness—about 2 feet 2 inches to 2 feet 6 inches instead of over 3 feet wide—a recognised mark of Saxon work, and taking this with the character of the walling, the arrangement of the masonry of the quoins, and the absence of buttresses there is a very strong presumption that we have here tangible remains of the Saxon Church which have survived through the alterations of later periods, the present arrangement of the windows originating in the Perpendicular period.

Sir George Young lays great stress on the N. E. and S. E. piers of the Norman Nave, which undoubtedly exist in situ, but there is nothing exceptional in their character, they mark the Eastern angles of the Nave as in many other churches, but give no ground for supposing that the church was not completed with a Norman chancel further eastward, or that a Saxon chancel did not already stand there.

Sir George Young has referred to the curious archway in the North wall of the chancel, which he speaks of as of late date. The

mouldings and detail of this arch most clearly fix its date as of the time of the transition from the Norman to the early English periods, about 1145—1189, so that the wall in which it occurs cannot, in any case, be of later date, although as I have pointed out it is probably of Saxon origin. The walls of the Lady Chapel into which this arch opens are the most decrepid parts of the church, with traces of early English work, and evidently very considerably repaired in Perpendicular times. This work, which in contrast to the splendidly stable construction of the Perpendicular tower, needed so much renovation at that period, from its position and condition points to an early date in the history of the building for its origin.

Wanderings in Buckinghamshire.

By the Rev. A. J. Foster.

The Thames.—Wraysbury to Eton.

THE south part of the valley of the Thames below Maidenhead is very flat, especially on the Buckinghamshire side, where the hills are a long way back from the river. Following up the banks of the Thames we first come to Wyardisbury, or Wraysbury. Here was a Priory of Benedictine nuns, founded by Sir Gilbert Mountfichet in the time of Henry II. It stood close to the river. Some ruins mark the spot. They are the remains either of some portion of the Priory or of a mansion built on the site by Lord Windsor or Sir Thomas Smith. There are many fine trees in the grounds around *Ankerwycke House*, as it is now called.

Sir Thomas Smith was Provost of Eton, and went to France as Ambassador in 1551. When in disgrace at Court for some years, he retired to Ankerwycke. John Taylor, the deprived Bishop of Lincoln, also resided here. Runnymead is opposite Ankerwycke.

A little further up the river is *Magna Charta Island*, now merely divided from the meadows by a broad ditch. John is said to have stayed on this island while the Barons were forming on the opposite bank on the eve of the signature of the Charta. There are many traditions connected with John. *Place Farm*, an old house close by,