

The Church of Blewbury.

(Continued from page 117, Vol. 18.)

Edward III., however, recovered the presentation in or about 1377 by a suit at Westminster against Robert Hales, Prior of the Hospitallers, and appointed William de Salesbury, who was apparently instituted by the Bishop in due course. William de Salesbury's tenure of the Prebend of Blewbury appears to have been somewhat eventful as the following extracts tend to shew.

- (1) "Mandate to Sheriffs and others to arrest and bring before the King on the Octave of St. Hilary in accordance with the Statutes of 25 and 27 Edward III., ⁽¹⁾ David Canyle clerk, who has impugned the King's rights by prosecuting suits in Court Christian against William de Salesbury whom the King had presented to the Prebend of Blewbury in the Church of St. Mary, Salisbury." ⁽²⁾
- (2) "Appointment of Thomas Salyvyle and Thomas at Mulle serjeants at arms, and Thomas Syryngfield to arrest and bring before the King, David Calvyle, clerk, who has impugned the King's rights by procuring a provision from the Court of Rome to the Prebend of Blewbury in the Church of St. Mary, Salisbury, and by force entered thereon, and who has seized and imprisoned in a place unknown William de Salesbury, King's clerk, whom the late King has presented to the same, and who had long held it." ⁽³⁾

I have not been able to find what happened to Calvyle or Canyle, or whether William de Salesbury was found and reinstated.

It appears that the Hospitallers later recovered the rights of presentation and held it until the dissolution. ⁽⁴⁾

We come now to the last alterations made in the fabric of Blewbury Church. The most important was the building of the present western tower which took place early in the 15th century. This necessitated a slight rearrangement of the western wall of the church, particularly on the southern side. The end of wall of the south aisle as seen from the inside of the church is somewhat

(1) The statutes of Provisors.

(2) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1380, Nov. 18. 3 Richard II.

(3) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381, April 3. 4 Richard II.

(4) Richardson. Newbury Field Club, 1886-95, p. 62.

peculiar in appearance, as it proceeds nearly at right angles with the south wall, for the greater part of the width of the aisle, and is then joined to the western wall by a short diagonal portion. This diagonal portion is the corner buttress of the tower. The older west wall of the south aisle has been pulled down and the present one built a few feet east of it; the foundations of the original wall still exist outside the church in a line with the eastern wall of the tower. I have confirmed their position by excavation. About the same time the Early English lancets were removed from the south aisle and their place supplied by windows of three lights. Traces of one may still be seen under the plaster, it is represented as a glazed window on old drawings of Blewbury Church.

The north and south porches are of later date. The south porch contains excellent wood-work.

The font is also of 15th century date, it is octagonal and the sides are decorated with square panels, filled in with moulded quatrefoils. It would appear that the font was originally placed against a wall, as one side is left rough and undecorated.

The remaining details of the church calling for notice are :—

(1) The ancient rood loft. Nothing of the actual structure remains, and there is therefore no evidence on which to date it. The staircase to it, however, remains intact; this consists of a flight of ten steps approached by an entrance in the north transept, closed by a richly panelled doorway of 15th century date. This stairway leads to a doorway in the old north wall of the nave, which formed the entrance to the rood loft. Traces of another doorway can be seen in the angle between the north wall and the wall containing the western-most arch of the central tower. This doubtless led to a room above the central tower vaulting. The rood loft was evidently a large one as the entrance to it in the north wall is some distance from the end of the nave. It apparently supported an altar, for on the south side of the chancel arch is an ancient Norman capital, which has been pierced and used as a piscina. Piscinæ in rood lofts are not common, but other instances are to be found at Lambourne in Berks, and at Deddington in Oxfordshire.

Above the sixth step in the stairway is an opening in the wall on the right hand side, through which in all probability the beam supporting the rood loft passed. Of the rood screen nothing can with certainty be identified, although the wood work between the Chancel and the South Chapel may be a portion of it. The style of this corresponds with that of the work of the early part of the

fifteenth century, and may be slightly earlier than the doorway to the staircase.

(2) *The Squints.* Squints were originally introduced into England during the thirteenth century, and had for their object the removal of sufficient of the heavy masonry of earlier times to enable worshippers to obtain a view of the services proceeding at the altar. In Blewbury Church, however, they are probably of later date, for that on the south side is filled in with a square four cusped opening of typical perpendicular style, so that at whatever date the opening was made the decoration is not earlier than the fifteenth century. More reliable evidence, however, is obtained from the positions from which the squints provide a clear view of the centre of the altar. They will be found to command the north and south doorways. They, therefore, could not have been constructed prior to the building of the north and south aisles. Accordingly the south squint may be of thirteenth century date, despite its fifteenth century decoration, and that on the north side, despite its extreme plainness, cannot be earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century.

(3) *The Lenten Veil Rings.* One is still to be found in the wall above the string course on the north side of the Chancel, and the hole in which the other was fastened still exists opposite it on the south wall of the Chancel. The use of the Lenten Veil is well known, but the following quotations from the Register of St. Osmund may not be out of place.

“On the second day of the first week in Lent, at Matins, all the crosses and images and relics, and the vessel also containing the eucharist, shall be covered up till Matins on Easter Day. From the preceding Saturday also until Wednesday before Easter Day a veil shall hang in the Presbytery between the Choir and the Altar, which should be let down throughout Lent on week days when it is the ferial office, except when the gospel is being read, then it is raised and remains elevated until ‘orate frates’ shall be said by the Priest.” . . . “On the Wednesday before Easter, whilst the passion of the Lord is being read, at the pronouncing of that Clause ‘Velum templi scissum est,’ the aforesaid veil shall fall in the area of the Presbytery.”

(4) *The Tiles.* Ancient tiles of two patterns only are now to be found in the Church. They are of the ordinary yellow and red colours, but differ greatly in design. One is a pattern completed in four tiles, and the other a repeating pattern consisting of ornamented circles and fleurs de lys. Similar tiles are found at Cholsey.

(5) The Royal Arms. After the Reformation the rood loft and screen were removed, and some years afterwards perhaps the Royal Arms was put up over the Chancel Arch. We have in Blewbury Church the Arms of Charles II., painted on wood. This was fixed at the back of the Western Gallery, but was removed at the restoration of 1876, when it was used to cover the end of a shed. Mr. Richardson found it serving this purpose, and it is, I think, due to his kindness, and interest in the Church, that it is now to be seen over the north door.

(6) Fragments of the early building. It is somewhat remarkable that so few remains of Norman decoration are to be found in the Church. The Church was restored in 1891, and during the alterations a Norman Capital and a fragment of zig-zag moulding were discovered; they are built into the south wall of the Church near the south doorway. Mr. Richardson is of the opinion that they formed part of the Norman south door, and that "with a little more trouble and research a good part of this doorway might have been recovered." The Norman Cap used as piscina in the road loft was also probably a fragment of the earlier building.

(7) *The Brasses and Tombs.* All the brasses in the Church are described by Ashmole. ⁽¹⁾

The earliest is that of John Balam. In Ashmole's time it was "in the middle of the Chancel fixed in a marble grave stone." It is now at the west end of the Chancel on the south side of the Chancel Arch. It is 1ft. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. high, and there is an inscription below it on brass 1ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. The inscription runs:—"Hic iacet dns Johes Balam nuper vicarius istius Eccleie qui obiit xxv° die mes Maii Anno Domino M°cccc° Lxxxvi° Cuius Anime propiciet de Ame." ⁽²⁾ The figure of the priest is in full eucharistic vestments, viz., Amice, Alb, Stole, Chasuble and Maniple.

In the north wall of the Chancel is a brass of a Knight in Armour, a lady and three children. Another brass, apparently belonging to the same group, is now placed on the east side of the S.W. central tower pier. It is not known to whom these brasses are memorials; the slab on which they were fixed has been broken up, but a portion of it may be seen just inside the south door; it still retains a brass shield with the Arms of Estbury. In Ashmole's time the brasses were together on one stone, but Ashmole does not give the epitaph, as he says it was hidden by the Clerk's seat being

(1) The History and Antiquities of Berkshire.

(2) Ashmole gives the dates as 1436.

erected over it. It is supposed to have commemorated Thomas Latton, of Upton, and his two wives. Thomas Latton died, April 8th, 1503.

On a raised tomb, close to the south wall of the Chapel attached to the Chancel, is the brass to Sir John Daunce and Alice, his wife. It consists of figures of the Knight and his lady over an inscription.

The inscription is as follows :—

“Of yo’ charite pray for the soll of dame Alice daunce dowght’ of Thomas latton ge’tilman late the Wif of Sr’ John daunce Knyght Councello’ & surveyo’ gen’al unto o’ sovereyn lorde Kyng henry the viii whyche deptyed ye xxvii day of August in ye yere of o’ lorde god MVCXXIII on whos soll ihu’ have m’ce.”

The Knight is in full plate armour but without head covering and wears a tabard of his arms, the lady wears a heraldic mantle, the right side displaying the arms of Daunce, the left side showing, quarterly, Latton, Percy, Estbury and Sycheville. Above the figure of Sir John Daunce is a shield with his arms, and above the lady another shield with the arms of Latton. Below the inscription are two small plates ; that on the right hand representing five sons, that on the left two daughters. At the base of the whole is a shield with arms of Percy. Apparently this tomb has been moved during restorations, for Ashmole describes it as being on the south side of the middle aisle. ⁽¹⁾

On a brass plate under the stone altar in the north transept is a somewhat damaged inscription, still, however, easily readable. It runs :—

“Pray for the Soule of John Casberde one of the good benefactours to this Church. On whose soule Jhu’ have mercy Amen. The form of words used shew that it cannot be of later date than 1540.

The remaining brass is a memorial to John Latton, of Chilton, and one of his wives. The monument originally had brasses to two wives. The brass is dated May 31st, 1548. On the same stone are the figures of nine daughters with their names beneath, and the matrix of a brass which represented six sons ; their names remain. Below is a shield with the Arms of Latton, Percy, Estbury and Sycheville. The brass now lies on the floor of the Chancel. There are the matrices of two brasses over the north doorway.

(1) An account of this tomb, with a biography of Sir John Daunce, is given in “Archæologia,” Vol. XLVII., pp. 295, et seq.

There is no ancient heraldry in the Church other than that on the brasses. The arms are as follows :—

Estbury :—Three bends wavy sable.

Dauce :—Per pale argent and or, a fess wavy gules, between three lion's heads erased two and one, of the last, each with a spear head issuing from the mouth, azure.

Latton :—Per pale, argent and sable, a saltire engrailed, ermines and ermine countercharged.

Percy :—Argent, three fusils in fesse sable.

Sycheville :—Ermine, three crossbows or.

(8) The glass. There is very little ancient glass in the windows of the Church. The modern window in the west end of the north aisle contains a figure of St. Birinus, who is reported to have preached Christianity in the neighbourhood of Blewbury about 634, A.D. At any rate Wessex embraced Christianity in 635, when Birinus founded the See of Wessex at Dorchester. In a medallion the lower part of the window is a representation of the baptism of Cynegils, King of Wessex, by Birinus. The King, however, is represented as a youth, which does not seem to be quite correct.

(9) In the Churchyard are two much damaged recumbent effigies. They cannot be identified by any marks about them, and it is not known whom they represent.

On a buttress on the south side of the Church are the remains of two sundials incised in the stone work.

I have to express my great indebtedness to the Vicar of Blewbury, the Rev. V. L. Whitechurch, for his kindness in permitting me to make a study of his Church, and in allowing me all possible opportunities to do so.

J. W. DODGSON.

Reply.

CLOCKMAKERS IN BERKSHIRE.—Mr. Ernest Francis, 172, Friar Street, Reading, sends the following. From the *Reading Mercury* of August 29th, 1774 :—"John Winch, Clock and Watch Maker at The Dial in Minster Street, begs leave to return his most grateful thanks to his friends and the public in general for the favours he has already received, not only in the Clock and Watch branches, but also in the Scale trade, and to inform them that he has now an assortment of the best Box Beam Scales with stamped weights adjudged by the Bank and Tower Standard. He also hopes to merit their future favours by a constant application to business in the various branches he professes. New Clocks and Watches, and Clocks and Watches cleaned and repaired on the shortest notice, or cleaned and kept in order by the year. N.B.—Light gold bought.—Reading, August 20th, 1774."