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Notes on the Churches of Stanford-in-the-Vale, Hatford and Shellingford and the Chapels of Goosey and Baulking.

By Charles E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A.

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(Continued from page 37).

There is a bridle road which will bring us in about two miles to Shellingford, though by the ordinary road the distance will be nearly five miles. The village is a pretty and secluded one, but there is little to be gleaned about its history. The Manor up to the time of the Reformation was in the hands of the Abbot and Monks of Abingdon. After the dissolution of the Monasteries it came to the Untons and Packers, who by marriage were allied with the Winchcombes of Bucklebury, and we shall notice several of their monuments in the Church. The Manor House, commonly called Shellingford Castle, stood to the south of the Church, but ceased to be inhabited in the 18th century. A row of houses close to the Church of 16th century date seem to have been offices attached to the mansion.

The Church (fig. 31) is of considerable interest. It is dedicated to St. Faith, a somewhat uncommon Saint, the Church of Newton Longueville, in Buckinghamshire, being the only other one in the

Diocese dedicated in her honour. She is still commemorated in our Calendar on October 6th. Her story is very brief. She was a devout Christian and resided at Agen, in France. Dacianus, Governor of Spain under Diocletian, happening to be at Agen, and having heard of her devotion to the faith ordered her to be brought before him, and commanded her to renounce her Christian profession. On her refusing to do this, he sentenced her to be stretched on a brazen grate over a fire, with her hands and feet tied to four posts. She endured the torture and her martyrdom with great fortitude. This was about the year 287. Her head is still shown at Agen, and her arm was formerly in the possession of the Monks of Glastonbury Abbey. The crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral in London is dedicated to her, and some relics of the Saint were formerly preserved there. Her portraiture occurs at Westminster Abbey and elsewhere, and she is usually depicted holding the brazen grate.

Shellingford Church (fig. '32) consists of a west tower and spire, nave with south porch and chancel. A vestry has recently been added on the north side of the nave enclosing the north doorway. The full dimensions of the Church are given as 84 feet in length by $19\frac{1}{2}$ in width. The Church seems to have been erected towards the end of the 12th century, and the walls are mainly of this date, all the windows having been inserted at a later period. The tower is Early English, and the spire comparatively modern, the original one having been blown down.

Let us start as usual in the interior (fig. 33) and take up our stand in the chancel, where we notice that the east window is a good example of decorated architecture of three lights, with three quatrefoils, 2 and 1 in the head. In these are some remains of old glass, canopies, parts of figures, &c. On the south side are three single trefoil-headed lancets. In the middle are some diamond quarries with a running pattern of foliage and yellow five-petalled flowers. The next window on north is also a trefoil-headed lancet. This and the window facing it have the sills brought down lower than the others, so that they should serve as low side windows. All have containing arches with chamfered edges. On the south of the chancel is a piscina with rounded trefoil-headed canopy and with two deep octagonal basins. It is probably of the late 12th century date. In the sill of the window adjoining is a plain sedile. On west wall of chancel on each side of the arch is part of the old Norman stringcourse with the usual groove and chamfer. In the

north wall at the east end is a very beautiful founders tomb and Easter sepulchre (fig. 34). There is a large arch with groove on the outer face, and on the soffit and down the sides a series of circles within which are quatrefoils enclosing roses. Within, but only partly filling up the arch, is a three-light perpendicular window. On referring to Lyson's *Magna Britannia*, published in 1806, we find the following: "In the Parish Church is an ancient monument of "John de Blewbury, a Priest, who died in 1372." And on further reference to Ashmole's *History and Antiquities of Berkshire*, whose notes were taken more than one hundred years earlier, we find a more detailed account. "Under the north window of the chancel "is a monument somewhat raised from the ground, wherein is laid "a very fair and large stone, upon which in Brass Plates is the "Figure of a Priest, vested in His Habit, within an arch of "Tabernacle Work very curiously wrought. The Verge of the "Marble is also lined with Brass, and therein is circumscribed this "Epitaph."

De terre fu feat et fourme, Johan
de Bleobury, jadys nome, et entere su retourne
L'an grace bien accompte, Mil trois cent
Septanto seconde, en mois de Marz
qui bien lesponde le vint et septisme jour prove
Due Dieu de S'alme eit pitie. Amen.

In English thus :

"John of Bleobury was made of earth and returned thereunto in the year of Grace 1372, in the month of March, on whose soul God have mercy. Amen.

In the glass window over the said monument is the picture of the said John Bleobury, in a red gown and purple hood kneeling, and under this

Pro Anima Johannis Bleburi Pater Noster.

In English thus :

For the soul of John Bleobury, Pater Noster."

This glass has disappeared, and what has become of the brass, which was perhaps the finest in the County, and the monument somewhat raised from the ground? During some comparatively recent restoration, the altar space has been raised, and is now approached by two steps. On the chancel floor is the lower half of the stone with the indent of the brass, showing the feet and lower part of vestment of John de Bleobury on a mound, and the bed for the inscription, but the brass itself has gone. The figure must have

been nearly, if not quite, full size, and no doubt the remainder of the stone is concealed under the altar steps. One would like to know when this act of vandalism was perpetrated. John de Bleobury was clearly a benefactor to the Church and Parish, and it is inconceivable that such an act of desecration should have taken place, especially as the tomb could not in any way have interfered with the services of the Church. The old glass is mentioned as being in the window, when the Ecclesiastical Topography of the Diocese of Oxon was published in 1850. Is it possible, that if still in existence both it and the brass can be restored to their original situation?

Ashmole mentions another brass here, with figures of a Man and Woman stolen away, and an inscription below to William and Isabel Blebury in Norman French, which lay in the body of the Church, near the entrance to the chancel. He gives the following copy and translation of the epitaph:

William Blebury & Isabel sa feme
giserit ici, Dieu pour sa grace
de leurs alme eit merci ;
Qui pour lour almes et leurs
enfantz prieront, mil et trent
jours, de pardon averont.

In English thus :

“William Blebury and Isabel his wife lies here, God of his Grace have mercy on their souls, and they who shall pray for their and their children’s souls shall obtain a thousand and thirty days’ pardon.”

Needless to say this brass and the stone, in which it was imbedded, has also disappeared.

On the north wall of the Chancel is a large marble monument to Mary Winchcombe wife of Robert Packer, died 1719, and to Robert Packer died 1731. On the floor are ledger stones to Robert Packer, died 1681, Temperance his wife, died 1705, also to Elizabeth Jacob, wife to John Packer, she died in 1695. She was mother to a Robert Packer, daughter of Richard Stephens, and afterwards wife to Thomas Jacob of Norton, Wilts; also of Mrs. Mary Packer, died 1719.

On the south wall on a blue marble slab, with painted and gilt frame, and the Neville shield, on a saltire a rose, above is the following long inscription in Latin to Edward Nevill, son of Sir Henry Nevill, ambassador extraordinary to Henry IVth King of

France, who died in 1632. The Monument to Sir Henry Nevill the Grandfather of Edward, is in the north chapel of Waltham-St.-Lawrence Church. In the account of Waltham-St.-Lawrence, Lysons mentions Sir Henry the ambassador and states he had two sons, but does not include Edward the subject of the memorial tablet at Shellingford.

M S

D Edouardi
 Nevill Armig ex
 Flexuosâ Stemmatibus
 Nobiliter vetusta Serie
 Progerminati cui Pater D
 Henricus Nevill eques auratus
 Extraordinariâ Reginæ Elizab
 Ad Henricum IV Gall Regem le (*a* altered to *e*)
 Gatione perhonorifice functus
 Aliam Musarum et Encyclopædicam
 Nobilitatem adserentis inter
 Regalis Collegii Cîtebrigenensis
 Sodales unius quondam meritiss
 Hinc ad blandiorem prolificamq
 Conjugii sodalitatem protecti
 Tandem festine cuniculo ad
 Augustiorem adhuc atq inso
 lubilem beatæ Æternitatis
 Societatem evecti anno ætatis
 XXXI° Christi MDCXXXII° hoc
 Uxoræ et obstinatæ posthumæ
 Charitatis symbolum devotissimæ
 Mærens merenti P Alicia
 Uxor ejus.

Ashmole in his History and Antiquities of Berkshire gives the following translation :—

“ In English thus

“ Sacred to the Memory of Mr. Edward Nevil, Esq., sprung from
 “ a numerous Noble and Ancient Race, whose Father Henry
 “ Nevil, Kt., honourably perform'd an Extraordinary Embassy
 “ from Queen Elizabeth to Henry the Fourth, King of France ;
 “ vers'd in Poetry, and all the Liberal Sciences while Fellow of
 “ the King's College, Cambridge ; late united in the more pleas-
 “ ing and profitable Bonds of Matrimony, lastly elated to the

"more August and indissolvable Society of a Blessed Eternity,
 "in the Year of his Age 30, of Christ 1632. P. Alicia his
 "sorrowful Wife erected this most Devoted Symbol of Posthu-
 "mous Conjugal Affection to a Husband Worthy her Grief."

The Chancel arch (Fig. 35) is semi-circular headed Norman, with plain hoodmould and two plain recessed orders resting on a late form of chamfered abacus, and a main respond to inner, and engaged shaft to outer order. The capitals on the south side (Fig. 36B) are enriched with very nice scroll foliage, on the north (Fig. 36A) with stiff leaved foliage.

On the east wall of the nave, on south side of the Chancel arch, is a large monument with urn and the following inscription to the Rt. Hon. William Viscount Ashbrook, died 1780, and to Elizabeth his wife who died in 1808 :—

To William Viscount Ashbrook
 Who blessed with strong natural Parts, cultivated and improved by natural Study,
 With a quick Apprehension, corrected by a solid Judgment
 Would have conferred Dignity on any Trust or Employment in public Life
 But preferring the Tranquillity of Retirement to the Tumult of Business
 He devoted himself to innocent Amusements
 and the Exercise of Hospitality Charity Benevolence and all other amiable Virtues, which
[ennoble private Life]
 and are the only sure Foundations of social & domestic Happiness
 Whilst the Sweetness of his Disposition gained him the Love
 His unblemished Integrity preserved him the Respect of all that knew him.
 He was a kind and affectionate Father Husband and Brother
 In him the Rich have lost a sincere & disinterested Friend
 The Poor a compassionate and generous Benefactor.

On north of Chancel arch is another monumental tablet to William Flower, Viscount Ashbrook, who died unmarried in 1802. On north wall of nave is a large tablet with portrait and long Latin inscription to Sir Edward Hanne, who was physician-in-ordinary to Queen Anne. He married a daughter of John Packer.

On north of nave are three square-headed two-light Perpendicular windows, with cross transom, within slightly arched containing arches. On the south side at east end is a three-light Decorated window with three quatrefoils, two and one in the head. It is within a very widely splayed containing arch. Next comes a large square-headed four-light Perpendicular window, with cross transom and well moulded containing arch (Fig. 37). It has some ancient glass in the lower compartments. The canopies with numerous pinnacles on red and blue grounds alternately are still *in situ*. There are the heads of two crowned female and one male saint, a scroll with Sēs Johēs, some diamond quarries with oak leaves and acorns, etc.

To the west of the south doorway is another four-light Perpen-

dicular window, similar to that to the east of it. The tower arch (Fig. 38) is massive Early English, with chamfered edge to arch and jambs and undercut abacus. There is a small early west lancet with widely splayed arch. The font has a plain octagonal bowl and stem. It is of 15th century date. It has a very nicely carved Jacobean cover. The pulpit is comparatively plain and of the Georgian period.

On the nave floor is a small brass plate with the following inscription in capital letters :—

“ Here lyeth the body of Mary Knappe, who

“ departed this life y^e XXIII of Sepr 1621

“ when she had attained to y^e age of 16 yeares

“ Christ is to me Life Death is to me Advantage.”

The tower is Early English in two stages. There is a lancet window in the lower stage west side, then a stringcourse, and then a round-headed lancet on west, and a very long narrow lancet on north and south sides. The upper stage is embattled and there are quaint gargoyles at the centre of each face and the angles. The spire is slender and lofty and of no great age, as the original one was blown down some few years ago. The nave walls are embattled. The two large Perpendicular windows on south have labels on shields. Let into south wall is a shield with date 1625. Over the porch is a stone with rather modern looking carving, namely, “Carol rex 1625.” No doubt some repairs to the Church were carried out at this time. The south porch is of the Decorated period. The outer arch has the half-round and hollow on arch and jambs and hoodmould above. There is a well carved finial at the apex of the porch. Within is a two-light window on east and west. The south doorway (Fig. 39) is very fine Transitional-Norman, semi-circular headed, of the same date and type as those at Lambourne, Ashbury and Woolston. It has a chamfered hoodmould, with a series of 33 specimens of the dogtooth ornament on the chamfer which terminates on dragons' heads. These are on separate stones to the other part of the hoodmould, and it is possible that the portion with the dogtooth may be a later addition. There are two recessed orders. The outer (Fig. 40) has a sunk roll on the angle and bold zigzag on face and soffit of the arch, forming a series of lozenges above the roll. Round the inner order is a bold engaged roll. The abacus is of the late type with small roll on the lower part of the main portion, and with hollow and small roll to lower portion. The outer order is supported on banded shafts with

scroll foliage on the west, and lilies on the east capital. There are claws to the bases. The inner order has small engaged shafts with foliage and a cable band above on the capitals. The door is plain and old.

There is a Decorated buttress on south side at east end of nave. All the Decorated windows have the usual external dripstone. The south Chancel doorway (Fig. 41) is semi-circular headed with hollow and small roll on the hoodmould, and two recessed orders. On the outer a series of bold chevrons, those at the apex and on the east side enclosing leaves, set on an angle roll with hollow on the soffit. On the inner order is a roll on the angle with hollow on either side. These are supported on the abacus, which is of late character with the hollow on the main upper portion, and banded shafts, the inner engaged, to both orders with foliage on the capitals. At the east end of the Chancel are three flat buttresses carried up as far as the stringcourse, all being of the Transitional-Norman period. The Decorated window above has the usual hoodmould. The east on north window, formerly containing the tomb of John of Bleobury, has had the lower part filled up, though the original outer sill still remains.

The north doorway (Fig. 42) within a modern vestry is very interesting, semi-circular headed, and of the same date as the other doorways. The interior arch is much loftier than the outer one. This has a grooved and chamfered hoodmould, and then 12 large beak-heads, some with small holes pierced on the beaks, on an angle roll. This is supported on a chamfered abacus with some beading on the upper part, and low cylindrical shafts with the acanthus on the capitals. There is an inner order with engaged roll to arch and jambs. As has been mentioned before, these beak-heads occur in our County on doorways at Wantage School and Catmore, on the Chancel arch at Avington and on a voussoir in the Abbey Ruins at Reading. The Monster Heads occur at Charney Bassett and Avington.

(To be continued.)

Our readers will miss Captain Kempthorne's interesting articles on the "History of Sandhurst." Captain Kempthorne was ordered to the front. Some weeks ago he was reported missing, but news has been received that, though wounded, he is a prisoner in Germany and is recovering.—EDITORS.