



History of the Parish of Beenham.

By Mary Sharp.

(Continued from page 49.)

In the following year 1840, a village school was built on Glebe land, paid for partly by a grant from the National Society and by private subscriptions, which has since been enlarged. It became a County School 1892, but the buildings still belong to the Trustees and are rented by the County Council.

The succeeding vicars were Henry Cherry, William Bushnell, the eldest son of John Bushnell, and Thomas Hext Bushnell his second son, who was appointed in 1855. It was in his time that the present Church as it now stands was built. The single nave was no longer large enough for the Parish, and when it came to building side aisles it seemed a good opportunity to remodel the Church entirely, so as to make it (as far as human hand could do so) more worthy of its sacred use.

Mr. Woodyer was chosen as architect, and friends came forward to help with funds. The difficulties were, however, not entirely financial. The Lord of the Manor was an absentee and Beenham House was let, the whole of the rest of the property being at the same time leased to that conscientious farmer and churchwarden who had so strongly objected to the removal of the whitewash from the Chancel windows. He liked no better the idea of a new church, but understanding at last that no contribution to the building fund was asked for or expected from him, his opposition reduced itself to a refusal to allow his large square, deal-boarded pew to be interfered with. It happened that, shortly before the time of which we are speaking, the same difficulty had occurred in a neighbouring village, where the chief man in the Parish had his pew in a gallery, which was to be pulled down. Failing to get his consent to its removal, the architect had taken away the whole of the rest of the gallery, leaving the pew like a large cage on four legs with a ladder staircase, up which the chief man's daughter climbed every Sunday morning

when she came to Service. He himself never entered the Church again till the day of his funeral, when he did not occupy his pew. When, therefore, our churchwarden's objection seemed insuperable it was proposed to leave him his pew on these terms when the rest of the church was re-seated. But that pleased him less still. "I know the trick of that and I won't have it, you are not going to do me as they did Mr. Smith at Freshfield." So he had to give way like a wise man and said no more about it. The new nave with two low aisles was finished and was opened by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, November 5th, 1859. The Early English Chancel and the brick tower of the intermediate Church still remained. Perhaps this was the most interesting phase in the Church's history, for something of three successive buildings could be seen together to record the experiences of the past as well as the taste of the present. But the Chancel, besides being in bad repair, was actually too small for the needs of the choir and the services, and when Colonel William Dickson succeeded to the property on his brother's death he at once undertook its alteration. The new Chancel was re-opened on the 24th of September, 1871, and the result was the Church as we now see it (1913). It must be left to posterity to pass judgment on its architectural merits or demerits.

In 1864, during Thomas Bushnell's incumbency, a bad form of typhus fever broke out on Beenham Hill, and three Sisters of Mercy from East Grinstead came to live in the cottage to nurse and tend the invalids; their services were most devoted and valuable. Two of them caught the fever and had to be taken home and two of the cottagers died.

In 1878 a working man's Club was built by the Vicar on Glebe land as a moveable structure and lectures and entertainments were started in connection with it.

OF THE CHURCH PLATE.

None of this is of pre-Reformation date, as is well known an exhaustive search for and confiscation of such valuable articles was made during the reign of Edward VI., and but very little escaped the Royal Commissioners. A silver flagon is of 1602-3, and a pewter flagon with initials T.C. is supposed to be of 1610. A silver chalice ornamented with the Sacred Monogram enclosed in rays is of 1817, and a silver paten has the same ornament date 1805, also bearing an inscription as follows: "1852. The Parish of Beenham, Berks. The Rev. John Bushnell, A.M., Vicar, Joseph Call and

Joseph Matthews, Church Wardens. There is a silver cover to the paten date 1824.

THE CHURCHYARD.

This is enclosed with a wooden post and rail fence, which was formerly kept in repair by the ratepayers of the Parish, each one, according to the value of his or her holding, having the charge of one or more panels. A board hangs in the Vestry with the names of those responsible for the repairs. Besides three handsome table monuments, two of them to the Dickson family and one to the wife of the late Mr. Gill (formerly agent to the property under Colonel Dickson), there are two others of earlier date. One, near the south-eastern corner of the ground, bears the following inscription on its surface :—

Here lyeth the body of William Bigg, Esqr., son of John Bigg, Esq., by Katherine his wife, of Haynes Hill in the County of Wilts, and Grandson to the Lady Phœbe Bigg, sole heiress of the Right Honble. James Lee, Earl of Marlborough, who was Secretary of State to King James the first. He died of an ague May VIth, Anno Domini 1740, in the 62nd year of his age.

This monument was erected at the expence of his sorrowful Relict Henrietta Maria Bigg out of grateful
to his memory.

On another monument of the same kind, nearer the Church, is the following :—

Sacred to the Memory
of Tho. Englefield,
late of Aldermaston, Gent,
who died Nov. 6, 1801,
Aged 19 years.

Also of Tho. Englefield
and Mary his wife,
his Father and Mother.
He died Oct., 1758,
She died March 6. 1790.

Bearing witness to the fact, proved also by the Vicar's tithe books that descendants of the family of Englefield of Englefield still dwelt in the neighbourhood.

Under a tree at the south-west corner of the enclosure by the pathway leading to a little gate, are two crosses to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Pearson, formerly tenants at Beenham House, they stand on a strip of ground added to the churchyard from Glebe land in 1869. Further north and west of the tower another cross marks the grave of Emily Bushnell, wife of the Rev. Thomas Bushnell a former vicar. Continuing the circuit of the churchyard, close

against the northern boundary fence there is a monument to the Rev. John Bushnell and his family, and by the side of it a slab, raised upon four stone posts, bears an inscription round its margin in Latin to the effect that John Douglas, D.D., lies buried below.

Two coped stone monuments near the vestry door are memorials of — Matthews and his wife. Close by the south porch entrance to the Church is a row of carved head and foot stones belonging to the graves of the two families of Iremonger and Smallbone. They date from early in 1700 and are interesting specimens of English monumental art of the period. They are decorated with figures of cherubs and angels in high relief.

In spite of the addition to the space already mentioned, with the increase of the population the churchyard became overcrowded, and in 1898 Mr. Henry Waring made a free gift to the Parish of a plot of land on the opposite side of the lane to the east of the Churchyard as a burying ground. It was consecrated by the Bishop of Oxford on May 9th of the same year.

(To be continued.)

Feet of Fines for Berkshire.

Transcribed by L. J. Acton Pile.

(Continued from page 83, Vol. 19).

HILARY TERM 22 GEO. II. *(continued).*

(1301) Francis Dandridge, Esq., and Francis Lassar and Sarah, w; lands in Didcot. £60.

(1302) John White and Thomas Gammett and Sarah Wall: house, etc., and lands in Downend in psh Chieveley. £100.

(1303) Adam Bailey and Francis Rance and Henry Moore the elder and Henry Moore the younger; house, etc., and lands in Hurst. £60.

(1304) Edward Collins and Mary Tubb, spinster, and William Bowles, gent, and John Field and Mary, w; house, etc., and land in Grove in psh Wantage and West Hanney. 760.

(1305) Edward Ware and Edward Pamfilius Hearne and Edward Hearne and Sarah, w; land in Marcham. £60.