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Notes on the Churches of Sutton Courtenay, Appleford, Drayton & Milton.

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(Continued from page 42).

Before proceeding with our account of Sutton Courtenay Church it is necessary to correct three errors which occur in my paper in the last number of the Journal.

First, with regard to the Norman Chapel or Hall, I made a mistake in the orientation. The lancet window is at the west end, a larger and later window having been inserted in the east end. The principal doorway is on the south, and the smaller one on the north. There are blocked lancets still visible both in the north and south walls.

Secondly, as to the curious little low window on the south side of the Chancel. This was altered at the last restoration. It was originally splayed eastwards so as to command a view of the altar, and not of the Easter Sepulchre, as previously suggested. It is

small and on a low level, and its real use may still be left as a matter of conjecture.

Thirdly, as to the Scorier and Andrews bequests ; these have not been lost, and are still administered by the Charity Commissioners. The inscription recording the bequest of Edmund Scorier is on the *north* wall.

Having finished our survey of the interior, let us commence our notes of the exterior with the tower (Fig. 17), the earliest part of the building. It is in four stages, the two lower being of early Norman date. There is a flat buttress at the western angles on each side, terminating below the stringcourse between the second and third stages. The west doorway (Fig. 18) has been much modernised, with roll moulding on the hoodmould and angle of the arch, chamfered abacus, one shaft on each side with renewed foliated capital. There are numerous very deeply cut votive crosses on both jambs. In the second stage, divided by a stringcourse from the lower one, is a small early light on the north and south sides. On the west face is a much larger and more ornate window, probably inserted at the time of the erection of the third stage. It has a chamfered hoodmould and lozenge on face and soffit of the arch, which is supported on jamb shafts with foliated capitals. There is a plain inner order. This and the stage above are of late Norman date. In this third stage, divided by a plain stringcourse from the one below, is on the north, west and south sides, a very beautiful window (Fig. 19) with a hoodmould and semi-circular arch, enclosing two half arches, forming two lancets, all enriched with beading, and supported on a central shaft, with well-moulded capital, and a bold zig-zag down the outer jambs. This is on the south and west sides, the north being rather plainer. Above is a corbel table, with heads, mouldings, nailheads, etc. The upper stage was added early in the fourteenth century. It has a plain parapet with angle gargoyles, and two-light belfry windows with hoodmould and good tracery. The two upper stages of the tower are covered with roughcast.

The north doorway within an ugly modern porch is of the Decorated period with the characteristic hoodmould and a hollow and quarter round to arch and jambs. The nave and aisle roofs have plain parapets, not embattled ; there are some quaint gargoyle heads on the north side. The fine late Perpendicular windows in both north and south aisles (Fig. 20) have a chamfered edge, and deep hollow within the outer splays. The Decorated east window of the north aisle has the usual hoodmould, and the Perpendicular

window on north side of Chancel the undercut label. The three lancets (Fig. 21) on this same north side of Chancel have a groove round the containing arches. The east and south-east windows of the Chancel have the exterior hoodmoulds, and the south-west window of the Chancel and east window of the south aisle the distinctive 15th century labels. On south side of Chancel (Fig. 22) is a small segmental-headed doorway, and above it, but probably not in its original situation, a trefoil-headed niche. Below the west on south window of Chancel are the jambs of a blocked-up doorway. There are slender graduated buttresses to the aisles, those at the south-east and north-east angles being of the Decorated period. In the south wall near east end of south aisle is a stone with a rude sun-dial incised on it. The south porch (Fig. 23) is of brick and of the Tudor period, with a staircase turret at the north-east corner communicating with the parvise above. There is a two-light square-headed window with label above on east and west sides of the porch, and similar windows on the east, south and west sides of the parvise. There are graduated buttresses at the south angles. The outer arch is square-headed with label, with inner four-centred arch, and quatre-foils enclosing roses within circles in the spandrils. There is a stone oblong panel above (Fig. 24) enclosing a beacon on a pole with a ladder at the side. This should be the badge or rebus of the donor of the porch, which dates from the early part of the 16th century.

Mr. W. H. Rylands, F.S.A., shortly after a visit to the Church, sent to the Vicar the following notes in July, 1904:—"My first suggestion that the object represented is a beacon is, I think, correct; and also that there was no leg on the opposite side to the ladder, to act as a support; it would be represented thus" [here a rough sketch is given] "and no doubt, if the carving was quite clear, the little supports below would, in some form, be quite evident.

When placed on a mound, it is the crest of the Compton family (Earl of Northampton), but I have not been able to trace any connection of that family with Sutton Courtney; though of course it may have existed. Henry the Vth used three badges, an antelope, a swan, and a beacon; they are found grouped together on his tomb in Westminster Abbey; the beacon standing between the other two. In this the ladder is on the same side as in the carving on your Church. Henry V. reigned 1413-1422; in 1416 the building of Culham Bridge was commenced, the King, Henry V., granting his licence and protection. In 1430 an Act of Parliament was obtained about the bridges and roads. In 1441 the Guild and Fraternity of

the Holy Cross was founded at St. Helen's, Abingdon, for the care of the bridges and roads ; and it held some land at Sutton Courtney. In 1458 was written Richard Forman's account of the building of Culham Bridge ; and in 1553 the Hospital of Christ of Abingdon received a charter from the King, lands being obtained for the maintenance of the four bridges, of which Culham bridge was one.

Tradition from early times appears to have given to Henry V. the credit of founding the bridge ; it is so in Forman's account of the building dated 1458, and also Francis Little in his history of the foundation of the Hospital of Christ in Abingdon, written in 1627, says :—"The founder of our bridges and way was Henry, of that name the Fifth."

It seems to me that the badge carved over the south porch may well be that of Henry V., though at the same time it does not follow that it belongs to the same period as the porch itself, which is, I think, perpendicular, a style which covered a long period. It is perhaps difficult to say the reason for using this badge on the Church, if it does not now occupy its original position, there may have been other carvings with it now lost, or the King may in some way have been associated with the Church as well as the bridge." This description is very interesting but does not conclusively prove the origin and motive of the badge. The porch is of course much later, nearly one hundred years, than the time of Henry V., and I think the panel is of the same date, in its original situation, and not associated with other carvings. Sir William Compton, the wealthy protégé of King Henry VII., built the delightful old mansion at Compton Wynyates about this time, and it would be interesting if any connection between him and Sutton Courtenay, or possibly the Abbey of Abingdon, could be traced. On the other hand it may have been introduced to commemorate the King, who patronised the building of Culham Bridge, which affords the main avenue of communication between Sutton Courtenay and Abingdon and the outer world. I wish we could carry the matter further.

On either side of the porch is a stone bench, and in the north-east corner is a mutilated holy water stoup. The south doorway (Fig. 25) is of the Decorated period, with the characteristic hood-mould and a hollow and quarter-round moulding to the arch and jambs.

In the churchyard on the south side of the south porch is a large table tomb with panelled sides on the back and front. On east and west is one quatrefoil enclosing shield with trefoil-headed panel on

either side. On north and south sides are five panels with quatre-foils enclosing roses within circles. There is a large stone upper slab with bevelled edge, much mutilated or weather worn. It is of 15th century date.

Like other important parishes in North Berkshire, for example, Hanney, Uffington, Stanford-in-the-Vale and Longworth, Sutton Courtenay had its hamlets with chapels built towards the end of the 12th century, and a drive of a little over a mile will bring us to Appleford, where the Chapel dedicated to St. Peter and Paul, though much renewed contains much of interest. It was almost rebuilt in 1885-1886, mainly at the expense of Mr. Walter Justice, one of the last members of a family who had been connected with the village for many generations, but fortunately some of the ancient features have been preserved. It consists (Fig. 26) of west tower and spire, nave with south porch, and chancel with vestry on the north side.

In the Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography, Diocese of Oxford, published in 1849, Mr. J. H. Parker describes this as "a small poor church of mixed styles, with a wooden bell-cot on the west gable." This was removed at the 1885-6 restoration, the nave was lengthened, and the tower and spire, which are good examples of modern work, were erected. The nave is of late Norman work, as indicated by the two doorways, and the Chancel is Early English of the early part of the 13th century. The north doorway (Fig. 27) is semi-circular headed plain late Norman, with chamfered edge to arch and jambs and late form of chamfered abacus. It is now walled up. The lower part of the trefoil-headed lancet, mentioned by Parker, remains in the west wall. The south doorway within a porch (Fig. 28) is also late Norman, with plain semi-circular arch and jambs having the chamfered edge and the late chamfered abacus. There is a rude sun-dial incised on the west, and a votive cross on the east jamb. There is a plain Early English lancet window (Fig. 29) in the east wall of the Chancel, and on the south side a two-light square headed late Perpendicular window. There is also a blocked Early English doorway with chamfered arch and jambs. Farther west, and in the usual situation, is a low side window, oblong, with cross transom, and the lower portion walled up. In the interior, is on north of Chancel a widely splayed lancet (Fig. 30) opening into the modern vestry. In the south wall of the Chancel is a very interesting pillar piscina (Fig. 31) with a detached shaft, and a capital with beaded foliage forming

the basin. The arch above is pointed and much renewed. It may be compared with a contemporary example at Finchampstead, and the somewhat earlier ones at Englefield and Sonning.

The font (Fig. 32) is of very great interest. It is tub shaped, the bowl is octagonal above and round below. "The octagonal part has each face terminated by a large scallop at the bottom." There is a bracket or lip attached to the top on the north and south faces, and another, somewhat mutilated, with small holes pierced in it, on the east side. It stands on a circular plinth. It is of trans-Norman date of the end of the 12th century. The brackets are very uncommon and I know of no other instance. It is composed of a hard white stone.

There are numerous tablets and memorials to members of the Justice family, dating from the 17th century, both inside and outside the Church.

(To be continued.)

History of the Parish of Beenham.

By Mary Sharp.

(Continued from Vol. 22, No. 2, page 54.)

By 1730 we find that most of the tithes in Beenham were compounded for a money payment, and also that the tithes so compounded were farmed out, that is to say that the Vicar, instead of receiving them direct, let them to the highest bidder or bidders. For some reason not given "The Tithes of the Underwood were never let." One parishioner also, a certain Richard Butler, still continued, at the time of which we are speaking, to pay his tithes in kind. In December, 1730, the following entry occurs:—"Rec^d. of Rich^d. Butler for his Privy Tithes, viz. :—

The white of 4 cows	...	...	8d.
4 Calves, 3 sold at 35/-, 1 killed	...	£1	4s. 6d.
Wintering 20 sheep	...	...	1s. 8d.
1 Pig	...	...	1s. 6d.
Fall of a colt	...	...	1s.