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

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(Continued from page 70).

Resuming our journey, and returning through Sutton Courtenay, we arrive in about three miles at the pretty village of Drayton, situate on the main road from Abingdon through Steventon to Newbury, formerly one of the main routes between the north, Oxford and Southampton, and other important centres in the south of England. There does not appear to be much of historical interest in connection with the village and parish of Drayton. At an early date the Manor was granted to the Abbey of Abingdon, and after the dissolution of the monasteries to Sir Anthony St. Leger, K.G., by whom it was sold to the Southcote family. There is an old house at the east end of the village, belonging to the Eystons of Hendred, which formerly had a chapel, but this has unfortunately been gutted.

Drayton was formerly a chapelry attached to St. Helen's, Abingdon, but Lysons, in the *Magna Britannia*, informs us that before his time the Vicars had ceased to officiate there, nor did they exercise the right of appointing a curate, and that it had practically become a separate parish, but it was not till 1867 that, by an Order in Council, Drayton was formally separated from the Mother Church, and the patronage is now in the safe hands of the Lady Wantage. It is not therefore surprising to find that, as in similar cases previously cited, the chapel appendant to St. Helen's, Abingdon, was built, or perhaps rebuilt, in the early part of the 13th century. It is dedicated to St. Peter, and consists of a nave, north aisle, south porch, with transept or chapel and Chancel with vestry on the north side. The Church (Fig. 33) was drastically treated in 1872, the Chancel and south chapel being rebuilt at that time, and many interesting features recorded in the *Ecclesiastical Topography* as existing in 1850 having been then destroyed.

According to Mr. J. H. Parker, who described this Church, he calls the Chancel Early English, but goes on to state that it has Norman walls, and small northern windows on the north side, "square-headed loops widely splayed." "At the east end is a good triplet, under one arch, with bold mouldings." This has been renewed, and the Norman walls and windows are things of the past. One relic of the Norman period has survived in the very fine and plain old tub-shaped font, a good example among many similar ones in the Berkshire Churches. The south chapel and south wall of the nave are of early 13th century date, and no addition appears to have been made till the 15th century, when the west tower was built and the north aisle attached to the old nave. The vestry on north of Chancel was joined up to the aisle by a modern organ chamber in 1872. The south porch is a modern erection.

Let us now commence our description of the Church from the interior of the Chancel (Fig. 34). As has been stated, the Chancel has been rebuilt. The east window, a triple lancet under single containing arch, is new, and probably a copy of the original recorded by Parker. On the south side are two double lancets under single containing arches, which are also new. On the north side, between Chancel and vestry, is a small oblong window of 13th century date, and there is a low side window moved from its original position. There is a three-light perpendicular window on the east side of the vestry, and a large tabernacle niche on the north side much renewed, probably moved from the east end of the south aisle. A very fine

old chest is preserved here. The Chancel arch is new. Above it on the Chancel side is a sculpture of an angel holding a scroll. When Mr. Parker visited the Church to secure his notes for the Ecclesiastical Topography he observed that "the roodloft with its groining and painting is nearly perfect on both sides, but has a modern front and is used as a gallery." This, as has been the case in so many other instances, has been moved, no doubt at the time of the 1872 renovation. Part of it, with red and green colouring on the upper cornice, now stands at the west end of the aisle. Why was it degraded to this situation? On the north side of the nave opening to the aisle are four four-centred arches supported on clusters of four engaged shafts to each pier and three to each respond with the typical capitals of late 15th century work. There are four three-light windows in the north, and one two-light in the west wall, all of the Late Perpendicular character. On the floor of the aisle, near the north wall, is the following brass inscription, very nicely engraved :—

Here Lieth the body
of John Terrald the
son of the saide Averi
bur. june - 12 - 1632 - age - 25.

A large ledger stone adjoining commemorates his father, Avery Tyrrell.

In the south wall, near the east end of the aisle, is a very nice trefoil-headed piscina with plain basin of 14th century date.

On the south side of the nave (Fig. 35) is a three-light, and farther west a four-light window, both insertions of the late 15th century period. The nave roof is low pitched and the aisle roof a lean-to. They are partially old. In the nave are numerous old oak benches with two trefoils within the panels on the ends. There is an old oak poor's box on a shaft. The tower arch is lofty Perpendicular, the inner order supported on brackets with slender shafts resting on heads. The west window is of three lights. At the west end of the nave is the old Norman font (Fig. 36), large, plain, and tub-shaped. This is no doubt a relic of the original Chapel, and is a good specimen of the type of font found in many of our County churches. In the south wall of the nave to the west of the Chapel is the lower portion of a beautiful Early English piscina (Fig. 37). The head is gone, but a row of the dogtooth ornament runs down each side and along the sill below. The basin is plain. It has at some time been walled-up, In the south-east

angle of the nave is a fine Jacobean pulpit with very beautifully carved panels. The arch opening from the nave to the south Chapel was originally Early English, but it has been much renewed ; with a roll moulding on the hoodmould, and two chamfered orders, the inner resting on brackets supported on the heads of a knight on the east, and of a bishop (new) on the west side. The abacus is undercut. There is a widely splayed lancet in the east and west wall of the Chapel, the south window being modern. In the south wall is a double recess (Fig. 38A) much renewed, with continuous undercut hoodmould and two trefoil-headed arches, supported on a central circular shaft and capital. There is a plain basin within the eastern recess. On the east wall to the south of the window is a prettily carved bracket for image. In the north wall to the east of the arch is a large, shouldered arched aumbrey (Fig. 38B) still retaining its old oak door and contemporary iron work.

Now let in to the sill of the east window is the most interesting feature of the Church, namely, the beautiful alabaster reredos, discovered, while digging a vault in the year 1814. Five and a half panels remain, and all still retain the rich colour and gilding with which they were originally embellished. They are somewhat uneven in size, and portions have been broken away, but they appear to have all been about 15 inches high by 10 inches in width.

Of the first, from the north, only about one half remains (Fig. 39). It represents the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and was probably the last, or last but one, of the full series of subjects of the original reredos. The Virgin is portrayed bare headed with golden hair, cloak and long flowing robe, within a richly painted aureole. An angel holds the upper part, while below kneels an aged bearded man with uplifted hands and holding a stole, with an angel standing behind him. Can this be the donor of the reredos? The right hand portion of this panel has been destroyed.

Next to it comes the Annunciation. Kneeling on the left is the Archangel Gabriel, with cloak, flowing robe, flat cap and dark green wings. He holds a scroll in the left hand, which is twined round the lily with triple head and growing in a vase in the centre. On the right is the Blessed Virgin, crowned and with golden hair, with cloak and flowing robe and hands on her breast, standing by a fald stool and beneath an embattled canopy with gold frieze as a background. By her shoulder is an uncertain object, apparently terminating in the form of a dove, as the upper part of this panel is gone ; but from an almost parallel example at Douai, figured No. V^A

in the Illustrated Catalogue of the Exhibition of English Mediæval Alabaster Work held in the Rooms of the Society of Antiquaries in 1910, there can be no doubt that here was the figure of the Almighty with the inspiring stream proceeding from His mouth and resting on the shoulder of the Virgin.

Next comes the beautiful subject of the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 40). On the left is the Blessed Virgin, with golden hair enclosed within a fillet above the forehead, having a white and blue robe and white cloak. She is sitting up on a couch under a projecting embattled canopy, with the star attached to it above her head. Seated in her lap is the Infant Saviour, with the upper part of His body bare. He is giving the Benediction with the right hand, while the left is held out and rests on the top of the chalice which is being presented to Him by one of the Magi, who kneels on his right knee at the foot of the couch. He is bareheaded and richly vested, and has placed his golden crown on the ground by his side. He has a circular object in the left hand. The other two Magi are standing on the other side of the couch, with right hands raised in attitude of Benediction; the one on left crowned, with black hair and beard, with ermine on his robe round the neck, golden girdle, and red fold to his cloak. He holds a boat-shaped object in his left hand. The third of the Magi is a young man, also crowned, in tight fitting tunic with gold belt. The object in his left hand has been broken off. In front of the couch is Joseph as an aged bearded man, kneeling on his right knee, holding his staff in the right and supporting his head on the left hand. Showing beneath the couch is the manger, and the heads of the ox and the ass, an anachronism which is almost always perpetuated in the conventional treatment of this subject. In the Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Society of Antiquaries' Rooms, already referred to, Nos. 22 and 28 are almost exact replicas of our subject. In the description of these, Balthasar is the kneeling figure presenting the cup, Melchior is holding the boat-shaped object containing the frankincense, and Caspar, the young man, holding a chalice. In the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, Vol. XXVII, Second Series, p. 260, is an illustration of another almost identical representation. At the Church of Montreal, in the Department of the Yonne, France, are sculptures on the Reredos of the Annunciation and Adoration of the Magi treated exactly as those above mentioned, though of later date. This and other alabaster retables in France are claimed to be of English workmanship.

At Yarnton Church, Oxfordshire, are preserved four panels, out of six, of a reredos found under an old house at St. Peter's in the East, Oxford. They represent The Adoration of the Magi, the Betrayal, Christ bearing His Cross, and a Pieta or Mater Dolorosa. The other two, now in private possession, portray the Blessed Trinity, and St. Katherine refusing to sacrifice to an idol. They are of the same date as those at Drayton, and the Adoration of the Magi is almost a replica, but with slight variations, of our example just described. No colour is now visible on the Yarnton sculptures.

The next panel represents the betrayal of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the centre is our Lord with gilded beard, long robe and open cloak, turning round with right hand in attitude of Benediction, and looking reproachfully on St. Peter, who is in the act of sheathing his sword. Kneeling below is Malchus holding his ear in his left hand and a lantern in the right. He is in a close-fitting tunic. Our Lord is no doubt, as in other instances, in the act of restoring his ear and healing him. In front of our Lord is Judas Iscariot, about to betray his Master with a kiss, and behind him are two soldiers, one holding the cloak of our Lord with the left hand, and drawing a sword with the right. Two more soldiers are introduced behind our Lord, and sitting down in the right-hand corner is a small figure with a bag over his shoulder, possibly containing the thirty pieces of silver. At Yarnton the treatment is very similar, though St. Peter is in the act of cutting off Malchus' ear, and five soldiers are introduced. The small figure holding the bag is omitted, nor does he occur in the examples of the same subject figured 5, 20 and 92 in the Illustrated Catalogue.

The next panel represents the Scourging (Fig. 41), and though somewhat damaged is highly enriched with colour and gilding. In the centre stands our Lord, clad only in a loin cloth, and fastened by a rope to a pillar, on which is painted a chevron design. Two men behind and one in front are beating Him with scourges, while another one in lower right-hand corner holds the rope, by which He is fastened to the pillar, in the right and a small baton or sceptre in the left hand. A panel in the Douai Museum, figured 100 in the Illustrated Catalogue, furnishes us with a similar representation of this subject.

The last panel of our series portrays the Entombment. In the centre is the dead body of our Lord being laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea, who stands at the foot, while another bearded figure, probably Nicodemus, with hand on his breast, occupies the

space at the head of the tomb. Seated on the ground in front is St. Mary Magdalene, with golden tresses, holding our Lord's right hand, and with the alabastrum in front of her. On the other side of the tomb is the Virgin Mother with hands clasped and gazing at her dead son. There are three other women in the background. A great deal of the original colour and gilding remains.

In the Illustrated Catalogue these sculptured tables are divided up chronologically into four classes. It is singular that no mention is made of the Drayton reredos (it is referred to by Prior and Gardner in their "*Mediæval Figure Sculpture in England*," p. 502), but comparing the details with those of other classified examples, and judging from the costumes and various architectural features introduced, we may place this in the second class, and date it about 1410, or early in the 15th century. Several extracts from wills and other early documents are cited, which prove that the majority of these alabaster tablets were worked at Nottingham, a convenient centre for the beds of gypsum or alabaster which abound in that locality and the adjoining counties of Derby and Stafford.

On the exterior of the Church there is not much of interest. The south doorway (Fig. 42A) is of the Early English period, with chamfered hoodmould and plain chamfered arch and jambs. On these are incised two votive crosses on the west and a sundial on the east side. The lancet windows to the chapel (Fig. 43) have exterior hoodmoulds. On the south of the Chancel is a small semi-circular-headed doorway (Fig. 42B) with hoodmould, chamfered edge to arch and jambs, and chamfered hoodmould. It is of early 13th century date. The east window (Fig. 44) is partly old with continuous hoodmould terminating on masks and a roll moulding round the lancets and down the mullions. The north aisle windows have external labels. There is a small four-centred arched doorway of the same late 15th century date. The tower (Fig. 45) is embattled with two-light belfry windows, small single light on north and south of middle stage, and west doorway within square frame, and quatrefoils within the spandrels. There is a quaint little turret with three small oblong openings and conical top, on the south-east side. There are eight bells, on which, under the guidance of the late Vicar, the Rev. F. E. Robinson, the President of the Diocesan Guild of Ringers, whose prowess as a campanologist was well-known not only in the three Counties, but throughout England, every possible variety of change ringing had been successfully carried out. One tablet records the thousandth peal which he completed on

these bells. There is a very fine yew tree on the north side of the Church.

A drive of two miles will bring us to Milton, up to now a quiet country village, but it is being rapidly involved in the vortex of the great munition works which have been recently inaugurated at Didcot. At an early period the Manor and Church appear to have been acquired by the great Abbey of Abingdon. After the Reformation the Manor was granted to Lord Wriothsley, and soon afterwards it passed into the family of Calton. In 1768 it was purchased by a Mr. Barrett, the ancestor of the present owner. Milton House was built by Inigo Jones, and reference to it and the old glass in the chapel will be made later on. A very interesting paper was read by Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A., on the occasion of the visit of the Newbury and District Field Club in 1908, and this is published in the Transactions, Vol. v., p.p. 164-168. From this we learn that in 1688 William, Prince of Orange, slept here, and that while here he received information of the flight of King James II. We also learn that Peter the Great paid a visit here to the great Admiral Benbow, and interesting details are given of the wool industry which flourished in this part of the country during the Middle Ages. There is also a very amusing article on the history of the parish in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1798, Part I., pp. 113, 114. The river Ock runs through the village, and there must have been from early times a mill of sufficient importance to provide the name of the parish.

The Church (Fig. 46) is dedicated to St. Blaise, Bishop of Segeste, or Sebaste, in Armenia, who suffered martyrdom early in the fourth century. He was adopted as the Patron Saint of Woolcombers in England, and is usually represented holding an iron comb, the instrument with which he was tortured before his death. Only three other Churches in England are dedicated to him, viz., St. Blazey, Cornwall; St. Blaise, Devonshire; and St. Mary and St. Blaise, Boxgrove, Sussex. A full account of the legendary history, and of the ceremonial adopted at various centres of the woollen industry in his honour, is given in an article by Mr. H. Ling Roth in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, second series, Vol. xxvii., p. 7. The dedication of the Church at Milton suggests that the woolcombers in early times carried on an important trade in this parish, probably under the supervision of the Abbot and Monks of Abingdon, and that one of the prosperous woolmen may have rebuilt and re-dedicated the Church at the end of the 13th century.

The Church is described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as "a pretty tight little country church, built of stone long before the dissolution of monasteries." It consists of a west tower, nave with south porch, north aisle, Chancel and vestry, and organ chamber on the north side. It was almost entirely rebuilt in 1851, very little of the ancient edifice being preserved. When Mr. J. H. Parker took his notes for the *Ecclesiastical Topography* there was an aisle composed of brick on the north side, and most of the windows were of the Decorated style. The present tower, which is covered with roughcast, is embattled with late two-light belfry windows, a single oblong light in middle stage, and a two-light Decorated window (Fig. 47) with quatrefoil in the head in the lower west stage. A stone corbel head is let into the wall above it. There is a debased west doorway. It seems to have been reconstructed in the 17th century, and a panel let in to the north side has the date 16 on it, the last two figures having been obliterated. The arch opening to the nave is of this date. The western part of the nave roof above the present plaster ceiling is said to be old, and to exhibit traces of fire, which appears to have originated in the tower. The south porch (Fig. 48A) is described by Parker as "late and bad," and was probably at that time concealed by debased work. It is built of stone, and a very interesting example of the Decorated period. The outer arch has two fluted orders. The roof is composed of large stone slabs, and there is a cross arch (Fig. 48B) and triangular rib above dividing it into two bays. The inner doorway is also of the Decorated period with chamfered hoodmould, and plain chamfered arch and jambs. The old octagonal font is now in the Rectory garden. Everything else in the Church is of the 1851 date, except some old glass preserved in two windows on the north side of the vestry. It is very fragmentary and of at least two different dates. In the west window (Fig. 49) in the upper compartments are (1) the head of a man with red hair and beard, (2) a beautiful head of a female with rich crown and rays to the nimbus, probably the Blessed Virgin. In the heads of the lower main lights are (1) a squirrel, (2) a beautiful 15th century finial, and (3) a bird flying. In the east window (Fig. 50) are in the upper compartments (1) an inscription of six lines in Dutch, (2) a child on either side of a large capital I surmounted by a wreath, (3) a portion of the subject of the Adoration of the Magi, of 15th century date. The infant Saviour with cruciform nimbus is giving the Benediction. Below Him are the hand and part of the robe of the Blessed Virgin, and the drapery of

the couch on which she is lying. There is a diapered background and a curtain supported by rings on a pole at the head of the couch. (4) A diamond quarry with a plant having three white roses on it. In the upper part of the lower lights are (1) the head of a rich 15th century canopy, (2) an animal's head, a crest, of the later Dutch series, and some scroll work below, (3) a cup of the later series, and below the name "LETTICE" within a circle, and a mitred Abbot holding an indistinct object in the right and his crozier in the left hand, on a scroll is the inscription "Ss gelsinus Abbas Aug., A^o 1059" (I cannot identify him), (4) some fragments, and on a shield a merchant's mark, and below the name of the merchant, "Peeter Crafsbeec" [ke]. Mr. Money tells me that Peter Crossbecy was a member of a family of importance from early times in this part of Berkshire, but I have not ascertained why this particular individual should have adopted this Dutch variation of the name, (5) has some early fragments and a bird pluming.

Close to the Church are the gates and beautiful grounds of Milton House (Fig. 51). The main central portion was built by, and is considered a good example of the work of, Inigo Jones. It was considerably enlarged by Mr. John Briant Barrett, who purchased the property in 1768, and is the ancestor of the present owner. Being a Roman Catholic, he built the present chapel in what was intended to be the Gothic style, though the result can hardly be deemed satisfactory. He, however, collected some very beautiful stained glass, which is worthy of a detailed description.

In the east wall are two lancet lights, each containing three subjects under trefoil-headed canopies. These, and probably some of the fragments in the windows on the north side (Fig. 52), are reputed to have been brought from Steventon Church. In the lower panel of the north-east window (Fig. 53) is the Annunciation. In the centre is the lily and vase, on the left is the Archangel Gabriel, with nimbus, clothed in a white robe, and kneeling and holding a scroll on which is the inscription: "Ave gracia plena." On the right stands the Virgin, nimbed, and with white robe and cloak. Her right hand is raised, and descending towards her head is the Holy Dove. There is rich canopy work above. The size of each of these panels is about 14ins. by 11ins. The next panel is rather obscured by a bar placed across it to hold the casement together. Here is a representation of the Virgin and Child. On the left is the Blessed Virgin offering the breast to the Infant Saviour, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in her lap. On

the right is Joseph, as an old man, and above an angel and the blazing star. On either side is a shield, viz., on left, sable a chevron between three talbot's heads erased ermine, and the inscription: "Pray for the soul of John Belson, Esq., 1772." On that on right is gules on a chief indented argent, three escallops of the first, impaling the Belson shield, and the inscription: "Pray for the Soul of Mary Barrett, 1768." The upper panel is made up of various fragments. In the head is a lion rampant, and below, the head and shoulders of a female figure with golden crown, Below are the letters I N R I, and below, part of a shield with two black cats on a white ground. Below again, is a small Flemish subject and parts of a border with a fleur-de-lis pattern.

In the south-east window (Fig. 54) are also three subjects. In the lowest is the Resurrection. Unfortunately the central portion has been destroyed, but the sepulchre, the right leg of our Lord, and the Cross and banner remain. On one side is a soldier holding a spear, and on the other and below, three more soldiers, one holding a battle-axe. In the next panel is the Ascension. Kneeling round a patch of ground, on which are the footprints of our Lord, are the Virgin in the centre, and twelve apostles, St. Peter with the tonsure being in front on the left. Possibly the aged bald-headed man facing St. Peter may be intended for Cleopas, being thus introduced in addition to the proper number of eleven apostles at this time. All are nimbed, and are gazing up at the feet of our Lord disappearing into the cloud. The canopy, cinque-foiled, seems to be original. On the left is a shield, viz., Barrett impaling gules a fireball argent, and on a chief argent three cocks of the first, and the following inscription: "Pray for the Soul of Leticia Barrett (Pigou) 1749." On the other side is a lozenge-shaped panel made up of eight fleur-de-lis and one leaf. In the upper panel is a larger figure of our Lord seated on a throne, with cruciform nimbus, yellow hair and beard, red robe and white cloak. He holds the orb in the left hand, but the right, which was no doubt in the attitude of Benediction, is not now visible. All these sacred panels are very good, of English workmanship, and of early 15th century date.

On the north of the Chapel are three large windows, mainly filled with Flemish glass. There are, however, rich canopies, borders, and a few very pretty quarries with foliage, etc., of the 15th century date. In the centre picture is the Incredulity of St. Thomas (Fig. 55), with very large figures, with yellow and red garments, of our Lord and the Apostle. There has been much patching here,

and the glass is remarkably thin and fragile, and in a very unsafe condition. A shield with the Garter and Royal Arms (?) of George III. is inserted at the top. In the windows on either side are several scenes in the life of St. Julian Hospitator (Fig. 56). The most noticeable are a hunting scene, where he shoots the stag, which turns round and utters the curse that he will be the murderer of his father and mother, his leaving home to avoid the curse, his boldness in fighting against the enemies of his new master, and with his sword upraised on the point of murdering his father and mother, who after many wanderings have found him, and are, by direction of his wife, asleep in his bed. In the scene where he and his wife are kneeling before the Pope, either his marriage, or the absolution for his crime may be intended. This glass is of great excellence, and it is hoped that care will be taken by the present genial owner and his sister, to protect it from further injury.

ERRATUM, P. 39. SUTTON COURTENAY CHURCH.

The inscription recording the benefaction of Edmund Scorier is on the north wall of the north aisle.

ROMAN COINS FROM STANFORD.—During the past year I have seen three Roman coins found at Stanford-in-the-Vale. The first was found on Mr. Puzey's farm, and bears the inscription : (obv.) CAISAR MAGNVS MAXIMVS, head, r ; (rev.) SPES PVBLICA, wreath. The other two are from the Roman site at Chinham farm. They are : (1) (obv.) FL[AVIVS] IVL[IVS] CONSTANTINVS NOB[ILIS] C[ÆSAR], head, l ; (rev.) CAESAR P.L. SAL. L.P. P.S. N.C. PLON. (2) a coin possibly of Arcadius, but it was too illegible to make out.

G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD.

Stanford-in-the-Vale.

THE ENGLAND OF SHAKESPEARE.—The following announcement appears in *Truth* : The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield has written a new book, entitled "The England of Shakespeare," which Messrs. Methuen has just published. The author's aim has been to describe the state of the country, the people, the towns and villages, the court and the capital, the literature and drama of the age, and the state of religion in the time when Shakespeare lived and wrote. There are twelve illustrations in the book.