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Notes on the Churches of Fyfield, Besselsleigh, Appleton, Cumnor, Mooton, and Sunningwell.

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On the north side of the nave to the east of the arches opening to the aisle, and attached to the north wall, is a somewhat rare piece of sculptured stone work. Parker in the Ecclesiastical Topography calls it a credence table, and when his notes were taken in 1850, it seems to have been at the east end of the Chancel. It has a flat stone slab, with three quatrefoils and a shield on the front, and is supported on an octagonal stem with panelling on the front portion. It is 3 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in height, and the upper table is 1 ft. 6 ins. in breadth, by 1 ft. 8 ins. in depth. It is a good example of Perpendicular work of the second half of the 15th century. It is well illustrated on plate 39 of the Glossary of Gothic Architecture and is dated 1500, and in the Text (published in 1845) it is stated (p. 115 note) as having been "lately removed from its original position in the north-east corner and turned into an altar." There is another stone credence table at St. Cross, Winchester.

There are four arches between the nave and north aisle, the two eastern opening into the chantry of St. John the Baptist, founded by John Golafré the younger in 1442. The arches have two recessed orders and are supported on octagonal columns with well moulded capitals, and are no doubt part of John Golafré's new work. The screens enclosing the chapel, and some very interesting stalls with rich poppyheads were destroyed by the fire, but new screens of good design have been introduced. There is an illustration of the Screens and Stall work in the Glossary of Gothic Architecture, plate 128.

It is uncertain how far the north aisle is John Golafré's work. The north doorway (already described) dates from soon after 1200, and there is one Decorated window on the north side. It has been suggested that these were moved from the original north wall of the nave, though on the other hand, there may have been an aisle or chapel here, before Sir John Golafré founded his chantry. The nave arcade, the east and west windows and the large square-headed window on the north are of course his work. In the south wall near the east end is a small plain piscina, and here is the blocked-up doorway to the rood-loft staircase. There is also some early masonry here, probably a relic of the early 13th century Church. On the south-east face of the east respond of the arcade is a pretty little canopied niche with pedestal for an image.

Against the north wall is the monument of John Golafré, the founder in 1442. It has been much injured by the fire, and it is in contemplation to restore it. It is a large table tomb with the effigy of the knight on the upper slab, and a cadaver or emaciated figure, "memento mori," below. He is portrayed in plate armour with bare head resting on a pillow, supported by an angel on either side. The arms are broken away, and his feet, also much mutilated, rest on two dogs, an embattled cornice is carried round the verge of the upper table, which is supported on delicate angle pilaster shafts with graduated buttresses attached, and with a similar shaft on the south face dividing it into two open compartments. There is a shield, now effaced, at the top of each shaft. Within this enclosure lies the cadaver, or emaciated figure, as a representation of the knight after death. The effigy is on a raised slab, and has the shroud or winding sheet starting from a flat cap on the head, and spread out beneath the body. The figure is very carefully sculptured, but unfortunately the right arm is broken off.

These cadaver effigies are not common, and mostly of the 15th

century, and were no doubt introduced in accordance with the wishes of the deceased to emphasize the moral lesson, that however great a man might be in his life time, after death he could carry none of his splendour away with him. Most of the examples commemorate distinguished ecclesiastics, notably :—

Archbishop Chichele, at Canterbury Cathedral.

Bishop Fox and Bishop Gardiner, at Winchester Cathedral.

Bishop Beckington, at Wells Cathedral.

Bishop Fleming, at Lincoln Cathedral.

Abbot Wakeman, at Tewkesbury Abbey.

Thomas Huxey, Treasurer, at York Minster.

Thomas Heywood, Dean, at Lichfield Cathedral.

William Sylke, sub-Chanter, and
William Parkhouse, Canon, } at Exeter Cathedral.

William Weston, Prior, at St. James, Clerkenwell.

Robert Johnson, sub-Dean, at All Saints, Derby.

Sir Sampson Maverell, at Tideswell, Derbyshire.

John Baret, at St. Mary's, Bury St. Edmunds.

Man and Wife (late), at Denardiston, Suffolk.

We also find on the splendid monument of the Duchess of Suffolk at Ewelme Church, Oxfordshire, the effigy of the Duchess in her robes on the table of the tomb, and her emaciated figure in winding sheet enclosed within the space below. Other examples of these cadaver effigies are recorded at St. Saviour's, Southwark ; St. John's College, Cambridge ; Feniton Church, Devonshire ; St. Peter's Church, Bristol ; Tenby Church (? Tully, Bishop of St. David's) ; and in the wall at St. Peter's Church, Drogheda. At St. Stephen's Church, near Canterbury, the effigy of Lord Chief Baron, Roger Marwood, is portrayed as a cadaver lying on a mattress, this being a post-Reformation example.

The example at Tideswell most closely parallels our monument at Fyfield, as the only other instance of a soldier being thus commemorated ; though only the cadaver is represented, the flat slab above not now having the effigy of the knight in armour. He died in 1462. Associated with the cadaver of William Sylke at Exeter Cathedral (he died in 1508) is the following abbreviated morality : " Sum quod eris, fueramque quod es, pro me precor, ora." " I am what thou wilt be, and I was what thou art. I beseech you pray for me." It is known that the monument of Archbishop Chichele was erected in his life time, and it is probable that most of the examples above cited were designed before the decease of the indi-

viduals they commemorated. At Ashby Folville Church, Leicestershire, is an alabaster slab to a lady with an incised emaciated figure commemorating the deceased. Several letters on this subject will be found in "Notes and Queries," Series I., Vols. V. and VI.

There are numerous examples among the brasses, which will be referred to in connection with the instance at Appleton. One, however, at Sherborne St. John in Hampshire, specially illustrates our subject. Here is a portraiture of Bernard Brokas d. 1488, kneeling before a cross, and below is his emaciated figure in a shroud. In the crypt at St. Paul's Cathedral is the effigy of Dr. Donne in his shroud, and there is a record of the manner in which during his life time he posed for this special portraiture. He died in the year 1631.

But to resume our account of the Church, on the north wall to the east of the Golafré monument is a stone bracket for image with a series of shields round the upper face. There is also a mural tablet with the arms properly blazoned of Perrot impaling those of his wife Anne, daughter and heiress of George and Mary Dale. On the floor are numerous ledger stones to members of the White family, amongst them (1) to Jane daughter of John Malet, and wife of Charles White, she died in 1661; (2) to Charles White, died 1662, and of Thomas White, died 1720, aged 30. His epitaph informs us that he was

"A Gentleman of a courteous and civil deportment, and of an obliging friendly temper, a true lover of his Country & of y^e established Church, an humble penitent before God. and a charitable benefactor to men, of which his bountifull legacy to the poor of this Parish will be a lasting testimony."

The present font has a modern bowl, but round the stem are a series of canopies of Decorated character. The old circular bowl and other fragments are now in the Churchyard, near the west end of the Church.*

A drive of about two miles through Tubney, with a modern

* The Churches of Fyfield, Appleton and Besselsleigh were visited by the Newbury District Field Club in 1911, and that of Cumnor in 1907, and a short description will be found in the Proceedings, Vol. V., pp. 143-5 and 191-4.

Church and a noble elm, will bring us to Besselsleigh or Besilsleigh as it is variously called. The Parish which both in area and population is one of the smallest in the County, is of some importance from the distinguished families who owned and resided in it. At the time of the Domesday Survey, Leie, as it was then called, belonged to the Abbot and Convent of Abingdon. Lysons states that the Manor belonged anciently to the family of Legh, and that it came by marriage to the Besils family in 1350. From the Besils it passed to the Fettiplaces, the owners of many important properties in Berkshire, and the adjoining counties. They in their turn sold it in 1624 to William Lenthall, the Speaker in the Long Parliament, of Burford Abbey, Oxfordshire, in whose family it still remains.

Leland in his *Itinerary*, vol. vii., gives a voluminous note on this place as follows :—"Bleselles Legh a litle Village is a 3 Mile from Hinkesey Fery in the Highe way from Oxford to Ferendune, *alias* Farington. At this Legh be very fayre Pastures and Woods. The Blesells hathe bene Lords of it syns the tyme of Edward the First or afore, and there they dyd enhabite. The Place is all of Stone, and stondithe at the West End of the Paroche Church. Blesells were Lords also of Rodecote apon the Ryver of Isis by Ferendune, wher hathe been a stronge Pile, and now a Mansion Place. The Blesells cam out of Province in Fraunce, and were Men of Activyte in Feates of Armes, as it apperithe in Monuments at Legh how he fawght in Listes with a strange Knight that chalengyd hym, at the whiche Deade, the Kynge and Quene at that tyme of England were present. The Blesells were countyd to have Pocesseyons of 400 Marks by the Yere. The last Heire Male of them was a lyve in hominum memoria. Legh and Rodecote cam by marriage of an Heire Generall of the Blesells onto Fetiplace."

Mr. H. W. Taunt, of Oxford, in his notes on the Manor, gives most of the above quotation, and adds the following :—"Sir Peter Besells in his will (1424) bequeathed lands for the maintenance of the bridges at Abingdon and Culham, for which he had previously given the stone to build, and curiously leaves £600 as a fund from which to make restitution for any injury done by himself or his ancestors to any one, and specifies that if the money is not required it shall be given to the poor. His body he left to be buried in the Church of the Preaching Friars in St. Ebbes, Oxford, to whom he gave £120 to make six windows in their north aisle. The manor in 1516 was in the possession of William Besils, and if, as it appears,

that name is the same as the early Saxon owner Bestle, it implies a connection with one family for some 900 years."

Mr. Taunt adds a further note on the house as follows :—"The old mansion was a fine building forming a quadrangle, and in the Speaker's time was visited by Cromwell, and other leading men, who are said to have been frequent guests. In pulling down the old building a room or cell was discovered which had evidently been used as a place of concealment, it was in the basement of the house, but the only access to it was by a chair lowered by pulleys from the top of the building. It was probably a Priest's Hole, but the tradition of the neighbourhood makes Cromwell to have been concealed in it. The large well-known picture of Sir Thomas More and his family was one of the treasures of this house. The present Manor House is modern, Elizabethan in style, and stands in a pleasant situation in the park. It contains some of the gems from the Priory at Burford, among them being the Pardon granted by Charles II. to Speaker Lenthall."

In Ashmole's "History and Antiquities of Berkshire," in his account of Bessils-Leigh, after mentioning that one of the Besils was High Sheriff in 1431, and Besil Fetiplace in 1583, we find the following quaint note :—

"Many years after it was purchased by that weak Tool of a Rebellious Parliament (William Lenthall Esq., Speaker), who at his Death was an eminent Instance of sincere Repentance, when he signed a Recantation and Abhorrence of his former Errors, which in some Measure may be rather imputed to his Folly, than any ill Design : From him in the Third Generation, it came to the present Possessor, and Lord of the Manor, John Lenthall, Esq. ; In this House was preserved a Picture of Sir Thomas More, K^t, and his Family drawn by the Hand of the celebrated Hans Holbein, which is now removed to his Seat, the Priory of Burford in Oxfordshire, and is by length of Time, and Negligence, much decayed."

The mansion appears to have been partly re-built by Speaker Lenthall. Nothing now remains except one of the stone gateposts and a small portion of the offices.

The Church (Fig. 25), dedicated to St. Laurence, stands in an isolated situation to the west of the Faringdon and Oxford Road, and is commensurate with the size of this small parish. It is a plain aisleless structure, with nave, having a western bellcote (Fig. 26) and south porch, and Chancel of the same height and width as the nave. Of the original Norman edifice, probably the lower part of

the walls, with the south doorway, and piscina in the Chancel remain. About the year 1270 the east and west windows (Fig. 27) were inserted, and rather later the Decorated window (Fig. 28) on the north of the Chancel was introduced. The other windows (Fig. 29) are all square-headed of late 15th century date. The Church, according to the inscription over the entrance into the Chancel, "was restored in the year MDCXXXII., and repaired by the Honourable William Lenthall, Master of the Rolls, MDCLVII." This is the inscription as given by Ashmole. The present inscription is somewhat different, and runs as follows:—"This Church was beautified and repaired in the year 1632, by the Honourable William Lenthall, Master of the Rolls and Speaker of the Parliament of England, and again by his descendant William John Lenthall in 1788." These dates do not suggest a very careful treatment of the ancient structure. It was again restored in 1888 by E. K. Lenthall, Esq., the then Lord of the Manor.

* Let us now endeavour to describe the principal architectural features in the Church, starting from the interior of the Chancel (Fig. 30). The east window has three trefoil-headed lancets (Fig. 31) within a containing arch enriched with a cinquefoiled fringe. On the north side is a two-light Decorated window with quatrefoil in the head, and on the south is a two-light square-headed late Perpendicular window. In the east splay is a small niche, and there is a plain sedile below. The piscina (Fig. 32A) has a projecting Norman scalloped basin with a trefoil-headed canopy of 15th century date. On the south wall is a memorial tablet to William Lenthall, third son of the Speaker, who died in 1639. The Chancel roof is plastered and underdrawn. The only division between the Chancel and nave is a plaster partition above the Rood Beam. On the east side of this is a shield with the arms of the Lenthalls, and on the west side is the inscription recording the restorations of the Church. Some nice Jacobean pendants have been fixed under the beam. The oak pulpit with sounding board and some of the pews belong to the 18th century restoration. The rood loft stairs were in a projection, now blocked up, on the north side of the nave. There are two two-light square-headed windows on south, and one on north, side of nave, all of late 15th century date. The west window has three trefoil-headed lancets within plain containing arch. On the south side is the plain interior semi-circular arch (Fig. 33) of the main doorway. It is more lofty than the outer arch, and a relic of the Norman Church. The font (Fig. 32B) is of the 18th century date

of stone, with festoons and flowers on the circular bowl, and three bands on the slender shaft supporting it. Several of the old encaustic paving tiles remain. On the nave walls are some hatchments to members of the Lenthall family, with their armorial bearings, sable a bend fusily argent. The nave roof has been restored, but may be partly old. There is not much to note on the exterior. The double bellcote on the west gable of the nave probably dates from the 13th century, but has suffered from the later restorations. The roof is high-pitched and carried from end to end without a break. It is covered with large Stonesfield slates. Several low buttresses support the walls. The Perpendicular windows have square labels, and the hoodmoulds of the east and west windows seem to have been added at this later date. On the north side of the nave are walled up the lower jambs of the former Norman doorway. There is a plain projection on the north side for the rood loft staircase now blocked up. The south doorway is semi-circular Norman, with plain arch and jambs. It is within a timber and plaster porch (Fig. 34), which is of 15th century date, though much altered by the later restorations. The ironwork on the south door is old. There is a small segmental-headed doorway on the south side of the Chancel of the same date as the Perpendicular windows. It is rather singular that the important owners of, and residents in, this parish should have been satisfied to have worshipped in so small and plain a Church. The Besils were no doubt a wealthy family, as evidenced by the liberal bequests made by Sir Peter Besells in 1424. He, and probably other members of his family, had their place of burial at the Church of the Preaching Friars at Oxford, which may partly account for the fact of there being no memorials of this family remaining at Besselsleigh, though the quotation from Leland's Itinerary seems to imply that in his time there were some monuments in the Church, and these may have been removed by the Lenthalls, as in a similar case at Bampton Church, Oxfordshire, where Sir Thomas Horde allocated and partly re-built a chapel on the east side of the south transept and destroyed the monuments of the Mores which had previously been erected there. The Fetiplaces during their occupation of the property do not appear to have expended any money on their Parish Church.

Less than a mile away, as the crow flies, but double that distance by road, is the old-fashioned village of Appleton, with many ancient edifices, and three moated mansions. There were three Manors within the parish, and Lysons, in the "Magna Britannia," informs

us that the chief Manor, which had belonged to Roger de Stokes, had been granted to Giles de la Mote, Groom of the King's Chambers, in 1308. It then passed through female heirs to the families of Fitz Warine, Caston and Petyt, and afterwards to John Fetiplace, whose son sold it in 1600 to the Hanleys, from whom it was purchased in 1660 by an ancestor of the Southbys, who till recently continued to hold it and reside here, in the interesting old moated house close to the Church. This possesses "considerable and surprising remains" of late transitional Norman work of the end of the twelfth century. The most interesting portion of it is the fine semi-circular-headed entrance doorway (Fig. 35) with hoodmould, five engaged half-round arch mouldings, and rounded undercut abacus. There are three engaged shafts on each side; a fourth, the inner but one on each side, which was detached, has been broken away. All the capitals remain, and are enriched with stiff-leaved foliage. It is of the same date, and probably the work of the same masons, as those at the west and north sides of Fyfield Church. It has been illustrated in Lysons' "Magna Britannia" and Parker's "Domestic Architecture." Within the house are two plain semi-circular arches with half round on the hoodmould, and chamfered edge to arch and jambs and undercut abacus (Fig. 36) of the same date opening to the offices of the early part of this interesting structure. It has been very much altered in later times. Lysons regrets that he cannot ascertain the name of the owner of the Manor at the period when this house was built.

The second Manor was called "Tinteynes," and of this the moated enclosure still remains. This belonged to the Besils, and with their property at Besselsleigh passed through a female heir to the Fetiplaces. It afterwards came by purchase to the Southby family.

The third Manor, called Eton or Eaton juxta Cumnor, was in the possession of the St. Hilary family, but passed through a female heir to Aylmer, Lord St. Amand, was afterwards the property of Sir John Golafré, and at a later period of Sir Thomas White, who gave it to his newly founded College of St. John the Baptist at Oxford.

(To be continued).