

## Long Wittenham Church.

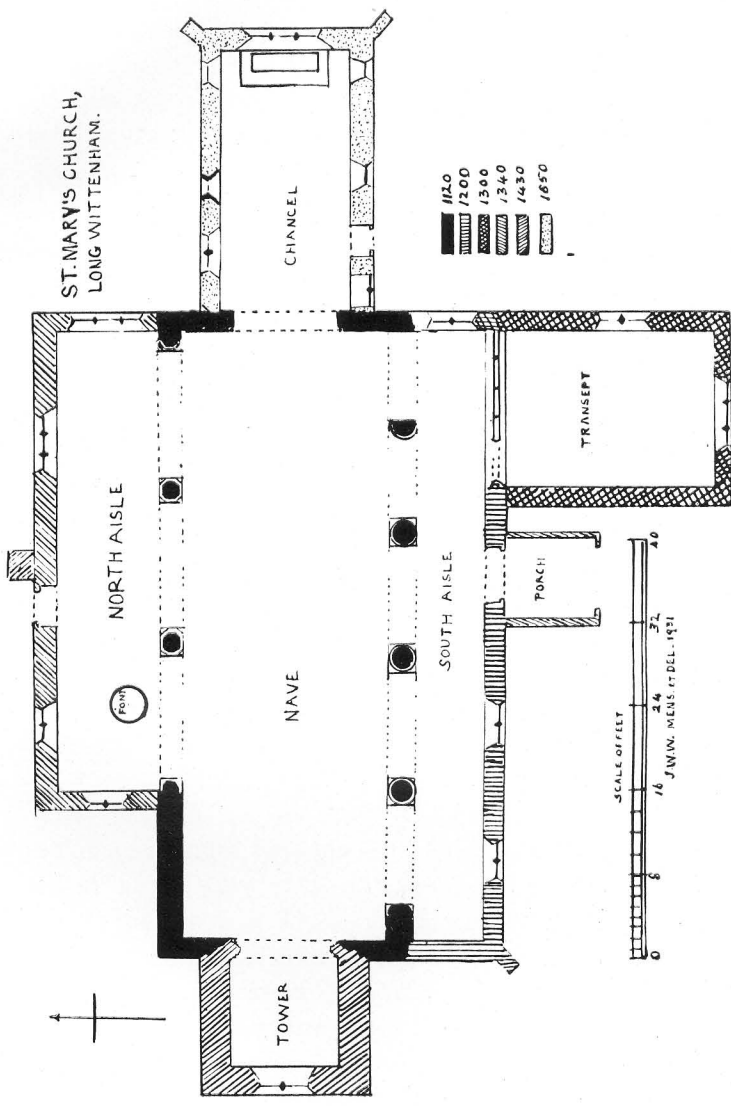
By J. W. WALKER, O.B.E., F.S.A.

**L**ONG WITTENHAM takes its name from a Saxon, who, in the sixth century, bringing with him his kinsfolk and henchmen, left the marshes and islands of the Elbe, and in his great flat-bottomed boat rowed up the river, now known as Thames, which led like an open highway to the land which he sought. Passing the commanding bluff of Sinodun with its ancient camp, he steered his vessel round the horseshoe bend of the river by Clifton Hampden, and landed on the well-watered flats on the right bank of the river, where he and his family took possession of the land and called the settlement after his own name, "Witta's ham," the enclosure of Witta.

In the first half of the seventh century Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester, attempted to convert Wessex to Christianity, and it is probable that his missionary priests, standing beneath the shadow of a great wooden cross, proclaimed the Gospel to their pagan hearers on the site of the old burial ground, where Celtic, Romano-British, and Saxon burials had taken place for many generations, and where, even now, fragments of cinerary urns of all these peoples are frequently found; thus they hallowed it as a Christian cemetery. There in the open the Eucharist was offered, and it was only in the course of time, when converts became more numerous, that a church was built, similar in structure to the neighbouring homesteads, of wood and wattle with a thatched roof, no distinction between nave and chancel, no dividing chancel arch, nor any seats for worshippers.

In the ninth century, an enormous swarm of Danes—called Vikings, sea-rovers, or creekmen—came over to plunder and to slay. They devastated the cultivated lands like savage wolves, hewing down the priests at the altars, driving mothers into slavery, tossing the babes from pike to pike in their grim sport, hunting and cutting down the men with battle-axe or spear, ravaging with fire and sword the villages they came to, driving out or massacring the natives, and burning or tearing down the churches. The petition "Deliver us from the fury of the

ST. MARY'S CHURCH,  
LONG WITTENHAM.



- 1120
- 1200
- 1300
- 1340
- 1430
- 1650

SCALE OF FEET  
0 8 16 24 32 40  
J. W. N. N. S. AT DEL. 1871

Northmen, O God " formed part of the daily prayer in those churches and among those households that remained.

As we know, this district was the battle-field on which the opposing armies met, and it was the men of Berkshire who now stepped upon the page of history, and under their great king Alfred overthrew the Danish host.

Whether the little church at Wittenham was destroyed in these conflicts we know not, but if so, another church arose to take its place, built of trunks of trees sawn in half lengthwise, and set upright against each other, securely fixed by cross-bars, and roofed with thatch.

No mention of a church is made in Domesday Book, but this does not prove that one was not in existence at that date. Before the Conquest the Manor of Long Wittenham was one of the possessions of Ealdgyth, daughter of Godwine, Earl of Wessex ; hence its name of Earl's Wittenham ; Ealdgyth was married to Edward the Confessor in 1045, but on her death in 1071 William the Conqueror bestowed the manor upon his Norman follower, Walter Giffard, whom he created Earl of Buckingham. The manor was then assessed at 13 hides and 1 virgate, with land for 16 ploughs ; on the demesne of the lord were 3 ploughs ; there were 29 villeins and 16 bordars, with 9 ploughs ; there were 6 serfs, and 163 acres of meadow. The whole manor was worth £20.

The advowson of the Rectory, along with several other churches and estates, was given by Walter Giffard, son of the first earl, to the prior of the Cluniac monastery of Longueville Giffard in the diocese of Rouen, in support of the priory of Newton Longville in Bucks, founded by his father. The prior sold the advowson for 100 marks in 1320 to Walter de Stapeldon, Bishop of Exeter, who six years previously had founded Stapeldon Hall in Oxford for scholars from Devon and Cornwall. The foundation soon came to be known as Exeter Hall ; and on April 12th, 1322, the Bishop gave to the Hall the rectory of Long or Earl's Wittenham towards its endowment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patent Rolls, 20 May, 15 Edward II, p. 2, m. 12.

Difficulties to the transfer were made by the Bishop of Sarum, in whose diocese was the church ; in 1333 papal letters were sent to carry out the scheme ; Roger bishop of Sarum wrote to John bishop of Exeter : " I discussed the matter with your predecessor but we could not agree about it. We will talk it over in the parliament summoned at Sarum. At Remmesbrie Park, 27th September, 1328." Pope John XXII wrote from Avignon, 8th August, 1333, that he wished Long Wittenham to be united to Stapeldon Hall, a suitable income being reserved for the Vicar<sup>a</sup> ; notice was given to the Bishop of Sarum, the Archdeacon of Berks, and Richard Pyn, Rector of Long Wittenham, to appear in that church on December 8th, 1333.<sup>a</sup>

Matters dragged on until April 9th, 1355, when in the porch of the parish church of St. Mary at West or Earl's Wyttenham, Robert de Trethewy, clerk of the diocese of Exeter, stated that he was proctor for the Rector and scholars of Stapeldon Hall, and, after showing the Pope's letters, took corporal possession of the church, then vacant by the death of the late Rector, Richard Pyn, and celebrated, and offered three silver pennies. On May 4th following, the above proctor, in the hospice of the official of the Court of Canterbury, appealed against an attempt of the Sarum officials to take possession of the vacant church of Wittenham, who sent thither as chaplain Nicholas Mountfortes, priest.

Finally, on August 1st, 1355, Robert Bishop of Sarum, having before him the letters of Pope John XXII, and John Bishop of Winchester, sole executor for uniting the parish church of West Wittenham to Stapeldon Hall, confirmed the appropriation of Long or West Wittenham, reserving 3s. 4d. a year to the Bishop of Sarum for the profit he used to have during vacancies, and 40d. to the Archdeacon of Berks, and 6s. 8d. to the Dean and Chapter of Sarum, for the same reason. He also ordered that Exeter College (as Stapeldon Hall had become) should within two years elect two fellows from the diocese of Sarum, and so on for ever. The consent of the Rector and scholars of Exeter College to this

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<sup>a</sup> Registrum Collegii Exoniensis, xxix.

<sup>a</sup> Calendar of Papal Registers, 6 1d. August, 1333.

# The Descent of the Manor of Long Wittenham.

Before the Conquest the Manor belonged to Ealdgyth, daughter of Godwine, Earl of Wessex, who in 1045 was married to Edward the Confessor, and on her death in 1071, William the Conqueror bestowed it on his cousin, Walter Giffard, son of Osbern de Bolebec.



arrangement is dated August 9th, 1355. Robert Wyville, Bishop of Sarum, ordained that the Vicar of West Wittenham should have the hall with the chambers annexed belonging to the Rectory, and the open space on the east extending in length from the public road on the south to the garden of Robert Kempe on the north, in width 6 roods of  $16\frac{1}{2}$  feet each ; and further the open space near the former on the west extending to the cemetery (so that the Vicar may construct a postern gate for his entry to the church) containing 4 roods less 3 feet ; and further 60 acres of arable, 2 acres of meadow, and a pasture in "le hurst" ; and further a tithe of milk, lambs, wool, calves, geese, flax, hemp, and oblations ; all in fact except the tithe of corn and hay. The Vicar was to keep up the books and vestments and pay procurations (the expense of visitations, provisions, a meat-meal, and a night's lodging), synodals (an acknowledgment of the holding of a benefice of the see), and a part of the tenth for Legates, and Nuncios, and voluntary subsidies. Dated at Sarum, 20th July, 1358.<sup>4</sup>

After obtaining possession of the advowson the Rector and fellows of Exeter College devoted considerable time and pains to managing their property. They had constantly to ride to Wittenham to see about their tithe barn being mended, and stone and slate being bought ; and more than once they had to get in their tithe in kind for themselves ; autumn, 1355, "2d. for bread, beer, and cheese when our priest of West Wyttenham made his agreement" ; autumn, 1363, "12d. for hiring two horses when the Rector and John Trewyse were at West Wittenham to arrange with the farmers for making a barn."<sup>5</sup>

Evidently the Vicar did not like paying the procurations when Cardinals came from Rome to England, as is shown by the following :—"summer, 1363, 25s. for Cardinals procurations for three years for the parish of West Wittenham ; 25s. for contumacy in paying the procurations too slowly ; 12s. for the expenses of

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<sup>4</sup> Register of Exeter College, Oxford. *Oxford Hist. Soc.*, p. xxix.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. li.

the Rector and one servant and one horse when the Rector was at Schereborn with the Bishop on this business ; 2s. for a horse hired on this business ; 3d. for mending the servant's shoes."

Taxes for the King appear about the same time :—" winter, 1385, 16s. 2d. to the Abbot of Malmysbure for the tenths of the King from Wyttenham " ; " Lent, 1386, 16s. 3d. to the King for half a tenth from our church of Wyttenham, and for the acquittance ; 4s. 5d. for expenses to a proctor in Parlyament." A tenth on Wyttenham was 32s. 2d. in the winter of 1416 ; and we hear of a tenth and a half in Lent 1417 ; in Lent, 1378, 3l. 4s. 10½d. is charged for two tenths.\*

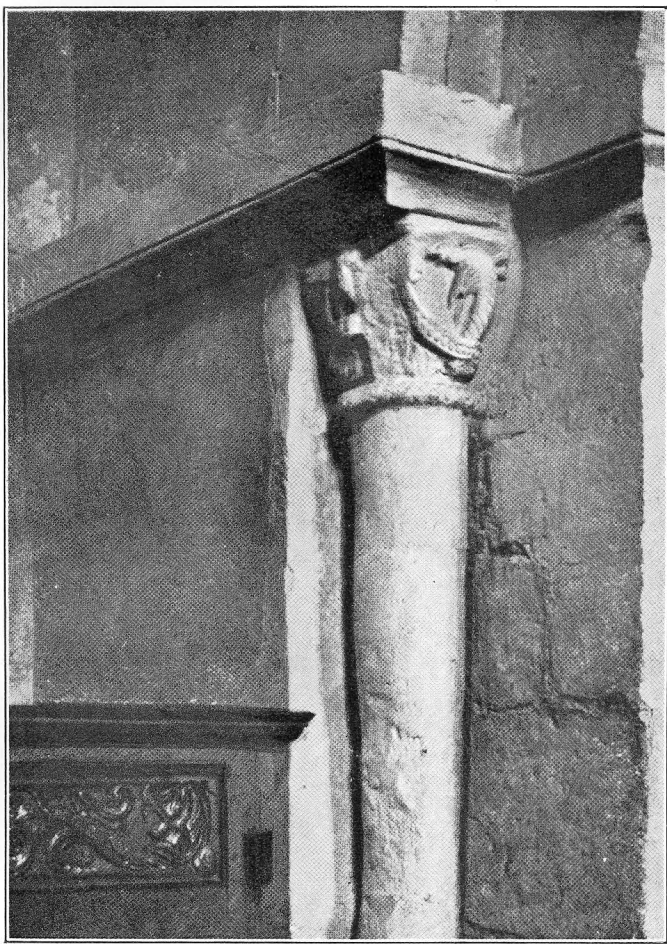
When the Norman lords got firmly settled on their new estates, it became a common practice for the landholder to build a church in each of his manors for the use of his tenants. Walter Giffard, third Earl of Buckingham, grandson of the first Earl, and Ermentrude his wife, were the builders of the first church of which we have any visible evidence now.

The church of Long Wyttenham was built about the year 1120, and was orientated due east and west. It consisted only of a short chancel and nave, of which the present chancel-arch, the western third of the north wall, and small portions of the west wall, still remain. The original dedication was to St. Mary, as is shown in the fourteenth century records of Exeter College, but in two eighteenth century documents it is wrongly described as St. Peter's Church, Long Wyttenham.

The long aisleless nave was lighted by narrow round-headed windows with a wide splay on the inner side, similar to that Norman window which still remains on the north side of the chancel. The round-headed chancel-arch of two plain recessed orders on the western side rests on plain jambs with a chamfered abacus, continued as a string-course on the east and west faces ; in each angle-nook is a circular shaft with a much-worn carved capital, the northern one displaying a ribbed and tailed dragon on the west and south faces ; the southern capital is carved with

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\* Ibid. lxviii.



*Shaft on North Side of Chancel Arch.*

an interlacing plait design ; below each is a rope moulding. The chancel, 18 feet in length, extended as far east as the present communion rails, and the nave, 57 feet 6 inches in length, was the same length as at present, reaching west to where the tower arch now stands. The nave was wider than the chancel, the external wall-face of the latter lining with the internal surface of the wall of the nave. It is still possible to see where the eastern end of the south wall of the nave was widened to contain the stair and passage to the rood-loft.

This was the form of the church of which we have definite evidence now ; and it sufficed for the needs of the villagers for nearly one hundred years ; but towards the end of the twelfth century, possibly due to the growth of the village, it was decided to enlarge the church by the addition of a south aisle, 6 feet 6 inches wide, to run the whole length of the nave.

Walter Giffard, third Earl of Buckingham, and lord of the manor of Long Wittenham, who had built the first stone church, died childless in 1164 ; his estates remained in the King's hands until 1191, when they were restored by King John to the descendants of Rohais, daughter of the first Earl, in the person of William, son of John the Marshall, who succeeded his father as Hereditary Marshall of England in 1173 ; by his marriage with Isabel de Clare, daughter and sole heiress of Richard de Clare, second Earl of Pembroke, known as " Strongbow," he became, in her right, entitled to the Giffard estates, including the manor of Long Wittenham. May we ascribe the building of this aisle as an act of devotion to commemorate the restitution of their possessions by the Earl and his Countess Isabel ?

In order not to interfere with the services of the church the side and end walls of the new aisle were first built, with narrow lancet windows, in the Early English style of architecture ; then a lean-to roof was added, and the final stage reached by opening up the new aisle to the nave by the removal of its south wall, into which pillars had been built on the line of the old Norman foundations, which served for the new bases to rest upon.

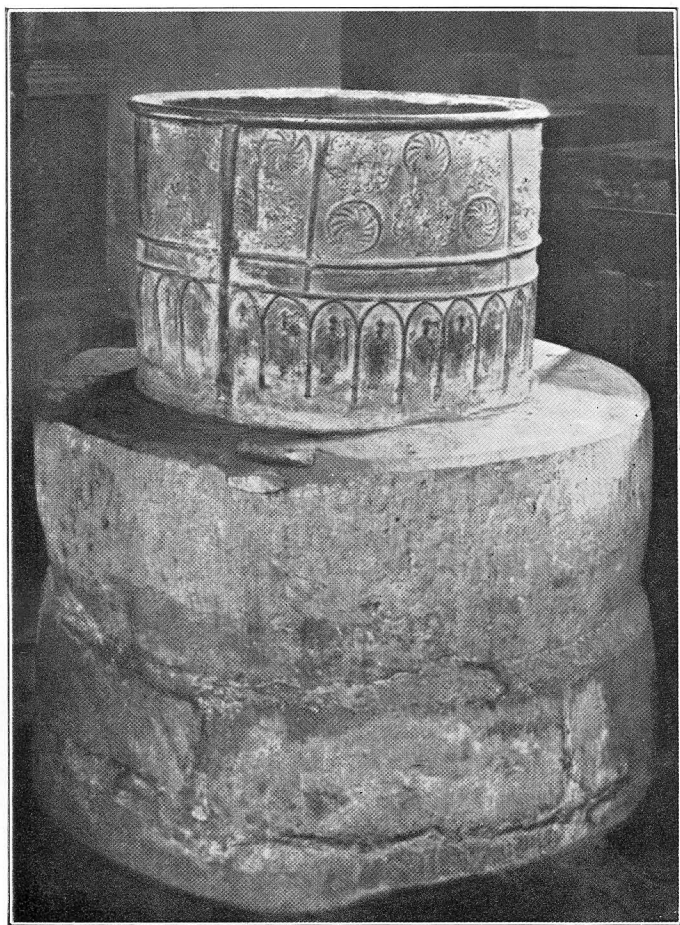
An arcade of four bays was erected, with pointed arches of two chamfered orders, standing on circular piers with moulded bases resting on square plinths, the capitals being enriched with boldly-carved foliage, typical of transitional-Norman work.

This aisle was known as St. Thomas' aisle, and was unquestionably so dedicated to commemorate St. Thomas a Becket, whose murder on December 29th, 1170, sent a wave of horror throughout Christendom, and caused many churches to be consecrated to his memory for some fifty years after that event.

Of this period is the present font ; it was made by casting two flat slabs of lead, embossed in the lower half with thirty figures of archbishops holding their right hands in benediction, their crosiers in their left hands, each standing beneath a pointed arch, which forms a complete arcade ; the upper half is divided into panels enriched with the so-called wheel of the sun, alternating with a star ornament within a scroll border ; the slabs were then bent into two half-circles and soldered together, thereby somewhat defacing the design. The font stands on a massive stone base of Transitional-Norman date. There is a very similar font at Warborough Church, Oxon ; with figures of archbishops in the same attitude, and with identical wheels of the sun and star ornaments to those embossed on the font at Long Wittenham. Both fonts, undoubtedly, came from the same workshop, and from the same moulds.

During the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century the churchwardens surrounded the font with a wooden case, packed with rubbish, to hide it from Cromwell's soldiers, and so prevent it from being melted down for bullets. Thus it remained hidden for a period of nearly two hundred years, until 1839, when it was restored, and the following inscription engraved in the bottom : " Restored A.D. 1839. J. C. Clutterbuck, Vicar."

The early progress of Gothic architecture in parish churches was marked by a general lengthening of the chancels. This may be seen at East Hagbourne in Berkshire, at Iffley in Oxfordshire, and in many other churches, where twelfth-century chancels were extended in the thirteenth by an eastern bay to secure



*The Font.*



*Piscina and Effigy of Gilbert de Clare.*

room for the altar and choir-stalls, which latter were then coming into fashion, and for which the small rectangular chancel offered a very restricted space.

This was what took place at Long Wittenham, following closely upon the building of the south aisle. An eastward extension of about 7 feet was made, a triple lancet window was placed at the east end, and a single lancet window in each north and south wall extension, which latter windows, though reset, are the existing evidence of this lengthening of the chancel, as are also the two plain piscina basins with drains in the sill of the south window, and the trefoil-headed one with drain west of it.

Then the church had rest for another hundred years. Gilbert de Clare, called "Gilbert the Red," Earl of Gloucester and of Hertford, lord of the Manor of Long Wittenham, and great-grandson of the builder of the south aisle, took the Cross in July, 1290, when he joined the Crusades to the Holy Land. He died at his castle at Monmouth, December 7th, 1295, and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. His second wife was the lady Joan of Acre, second daughter of King Edward the First, to whom he was married in May, 1290.

I suggest that it was to his memory that his widow erected the south chapel against the eastern portion of the south aisle, making it to resemble a southern transept.

The high-pitched roof is underdrawn and ceiled ; the south window is of three short trefoil-headed lights, and has a large foliated circle in the head ; the two-light window in the east wall is square-headed with ogee-moulded tracery. In this chapel the Countess Joan placed two memorials of her husband ; the first is the least conspicuous and the smallest sculptured monument in England, and as far as is known the only such example in this country ; it is placed in the south-east corner of the south wall, and consists of a piscina and monument combined ; a quatrefoil basin with a chamfered lip on which is carved the recumbent effigy of a cross-legged knight, only two feet in length, lying on his right side, his head resting on a pillow ; he is clothed in his armour, wearing a flat-topped helmet, short surcoat over chain-

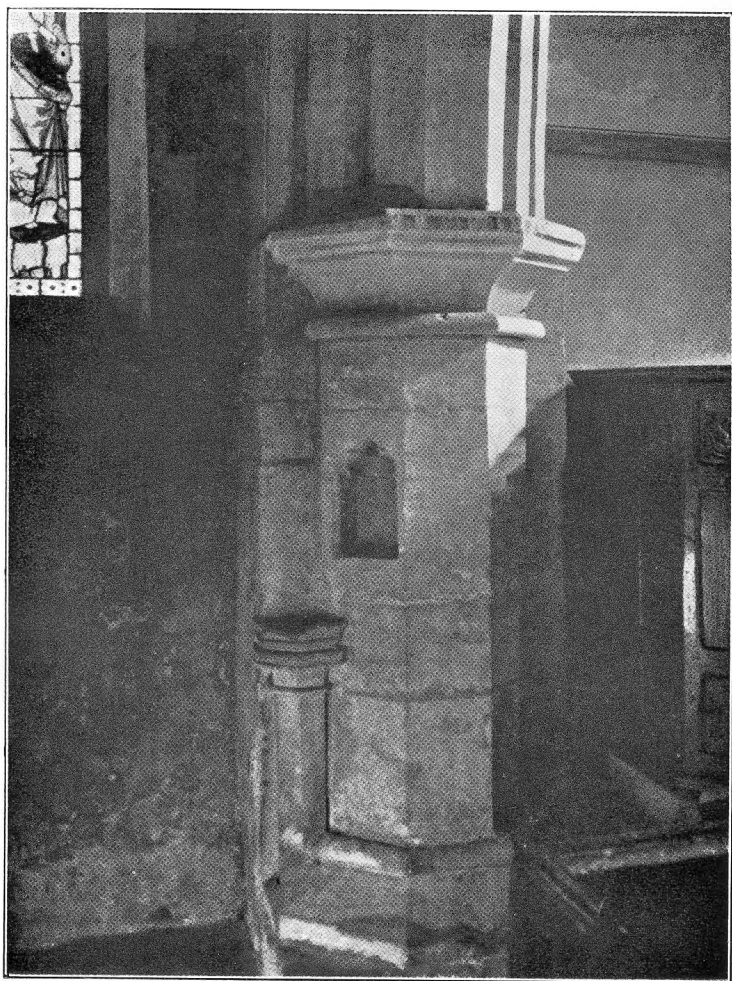
mail armour, and holds a drawn sword in his right hand, his small shield resting upon his breast, which may have borne the blazoned heraldic device of the Earl.<sup>7</sup> Above the trefoil-headed arch of the piscina are sculptured two angels hovering over the knight as he lies beneath, their expanded wings meeting near the point of the arch.

The widowed Countess also altered the position of the stair to the rood-screen, which stood in the wall of the south arcade of the nave near the chancel arch, and, in its place, constructed the tomb recess with its segmental pointed arch, moulded edges, and label on the south face, so that a memorial brass in memory of her husband might be placed therein. It may have been this brass, weighing 23 pounds, which the churchwardens, Thomas Butler and Robert Bateman, sold for 6d. a pound in 1727.

Some forty years later, about 1340, it became necessary to add a north aisle to the church, which was made 9 feet 6 inches in width, but did not extend to the full length of the nave, falling short of the extreme length by 14 feet at the west end, where the old Norman wall was not disturbed. The eastern two-thirds of this wall was pierced with three arches, so that the aisle was of three bays; the spacing of the arcade on the south side was disregarded, the result being that the piers of the two arcades are not opposite, and the discrepancy increased as the new arcade advanced eastward. The pointed arches of two chamfered orders without labels rest upon octagonal columns with semi-octagonal responds, bold moulded capitals and bases. Against the eastern respond of this arcade is a small pillar piscina with a moulded capital and drain standing on a semi-octagonal shaft, while in the north-west face of the respond a trefoil niche is carved out for the sacred vessels. In the north wall is a three-light window towards the east, another of two lights to the west of the moulded and pointed doorway, and a similar window in the west wall, all

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<sup>7</sup> The arms of Gilbert de Clare, 7th Earl of Hertford and 3rd Earl of Gloucester, *or three chevronels gules*, and those of Joan of Acre, his wife, daughter of King Edward I, *gules three leopards or* (Plantagenet) are carved on two shields on the gatehouse of Kirkham Priory, Yorkshire. Clare was overlord of Lord Roos the patron of that Priory.



*Pillar Piscina and Niche in Eastern Respond of North Aisle.*

of Geometrical Decorated design. The east window of this aisle of three cinquefoiled lights had tracery in an arched head when first placed in position, but sometime in the fifteenth century the tracery lights were removed, and the window was reduced to a square head with heavy mouldings on the exterior. It was filled with memorial glass in which was depicted a man in armour kneeling, and a woman in a green gown and yellow mantle, holding a shield on which were shown their arms, but as the shield had disappeared when Ashmole saw this window in 1666 it is impossible to say from the heraldry whom it commemorated.\*

Below the three-light window in this aisle is a tomb-recess with a moulded segmental arch, which is some thirty years later than the wall in which it is built, say about 1370. It may be that beneath it were buried the persons depicted in the glass of the east window, while on it would be either a recumbent effigy or a sculptured memorial brass.

It is not an Easter sepulchre, for that was always placed near the high altar in the chancel.

Shortly after the north aisle was added, the side and end walls of the south aisle were raised about three feet in height to adapt them for the present Geometrical Decorated windows which took the place of the original lancets. In one of these windows was a shield of arms of de Plessis—*argent, six annulets gules*.\* On the exterior of the western jamb of the window west of the door are carved two mass dials; at the same time a new doorway with a bold scroll hoodmould terminating in two heads, with a moulded arch and jambs, was built in the same style of architecture. This doorway was protected by an open timber porch with arched entrance, barge-boards with ogée mouldings, and open lights divided by nine columnar shafts on either side. A similar porch is at the entrance to Warblington Church, Hants.

Following upon these alterations the builders next turned their attention to the chancel. A new window of three lights,

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\* Ashmole's *Berks* I, 69.

\* see next page.

with the mullions carried straight through to the head without any foliation or tracery was inserted in the east wall of the chancel, as is shown in the old water-colour painting of the church, now hanging in the south transept chapel. The two small Norman windows, next the chancel arch, in the north and south walls,

John de Plessis, son of Hugh de Plessis, c. 1230, married Christine, widow of William de Sideham, daughter and heiress of Hugh de Sandford of Hook Norton, Oxon, who held two-thirds of a knight's fee and manor of West Wittenham, one-half of which, on the death of Hugh de Sandford, came to Christine and her husband, John de Plessis. Christine de Plessis died about 1240, and her husband took for his second wife in September, 1243, Margaret de Neuborg, sister and heiress of Thomas 6th Earl of Warwick, widow of John Marshall, 4th Earl of Pembroke, who died October, 1242. In right of his wife John de Plessis assumed the title of Earl of Warwick. The Countess died in June, 1253, and the Earl on 26 February, 1263.

John de Plessis was succeeded by his son, Hugh de Plessis, who died in 1292, leaving a son and heir Hugh, whose son Hugh was born about 1296, and succeeded his father in the estates in 1301, and was followed by another Hugh, born in 1321, who died childless about 1353, leaving a widow, Elizabeth, on whose death the de Plessis estates passed to Hugh's sister Eleanor, wife of John Lenneysey.

It may be that the arms of de Plessis were inserted in one of the new windows of the south aisle by Elizabeth, in memory of her husband Hugh, the last of the de Plessis, about 1355.

Almaric de Plessis, probably a son of John and Christine de Plessis, was Rector of Long Wittenham towards the end of the 13th century.

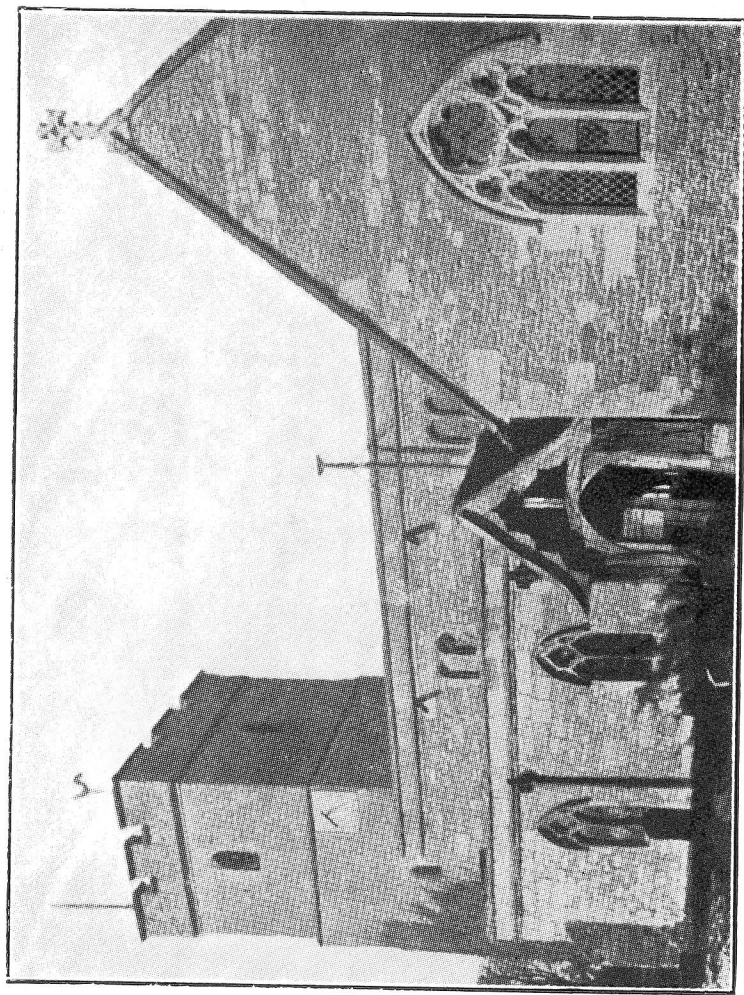
John de Plessis, son of Hugh de Plessy, Earl of Warwick ( <i>jure uxoris</i> ) died 26 February, 1263.	=	Christiana, daughter and heiress of Hugh de Sandford of Hook Norton and Kidlington, Oxon; widow of William de Sideham; married before 1234; died c. 1240.
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Hugh de Plessis of Hook Norton, succeeded in 1263, died in 1292.	=
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Hugh de Plessis, summoned to Parliament as a baron in 1299, died in 1300.	=
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Hugh de Plessis, born in 1296, died in 1337.	=	Millicent = 2 Richard de Stonleigh, died in 1360.
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Hugh de Plessis, died c. 1353, s.p.	=	Elizabeth = 2 Roger de Elmebrugge. Eleanor = John de Lenneysey.
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*Long Wittenham Church, South Side.*

which had survived from the first building, were removed, and in their places, the present two-light long and narrow cinque-foiled windows with quatrefoil openings in the head under segmental containing arches, were inserted; their transoms were brought down to form low-side windows, and below the transoms wooden shutters were fixed, which could be opened from the inside. The glass in the window on the south side contains within the quatrefoil a medallion enclosing a head of our Lord, with a cruciform yellow nimbus; the window in the north wall was filled with good white *grisaille* glass, having a design of vine-leaf foliage outlined in black, with a six-petalled red rose and white foliage in the head. Much of this glass remains, and in the rebuilding of the chancel in 1850 was carefully replaced.

In the south wall, east of the new window, a priest's doorway with grooved mouldings on the arch was inserted.

The fifteenth century was an era in which it became the fashion to erect a tower at the west end of churches, and Long Wittenham did not escape the prevailing practice.

A new tower, 75 feet in height, of three stages, without buttresses, with an embattled parapet, on the west side of which was carved within a sunken panel a small figure of the Virgin to whom the church was dedicated, was erected at the west end of the church in the second quarter of that century. The west window is of two lights with a head of tracery; in the belfry are single-light pointed windows filled with louvre-boards; and small square-headed lights in the ringing-chamber. Part of the Norman wall at the west end of the nave was removed to make communication with the new tower, and a lofty pointed arch with moulded responds was inserted.

By the removal of the west window of the nave to the tower it was found that the lighting of the church was impaired; to remedy this it was resolved, in the early part of the sixteenth century, to add clerestories to the nave; the walls above the arcades were raised (the height of the old walls can still be seen), and in the added sections three square-headed windows, each of two plain uncusped lights were placed on oak lintels. The old

high-pitched roof, the marks of which are apparent on the exterior of the tower, was taken down, and in its stead the present roof with moulded tie-beams, wall-posts on stone corbels, and curved braces with quatrefoil openings in the spandrels, was placed.

The church had then—say about 1540—attained to its present form and dimensions. From its original plan it had expanded east and west, north and south ; the chancel arch alone remained the one fixed point from which all the additions radiated.

In the seventeenth century the church was covered with many coats of whitewash internally, which concealed any medieval wall-paintings that may have existed. The Ten Commandments were painted on the south spandrel of the chancel-arch, and the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles Creed in the northern spandrel, in obedience to the 82nd Canon (1 James I, 1603).

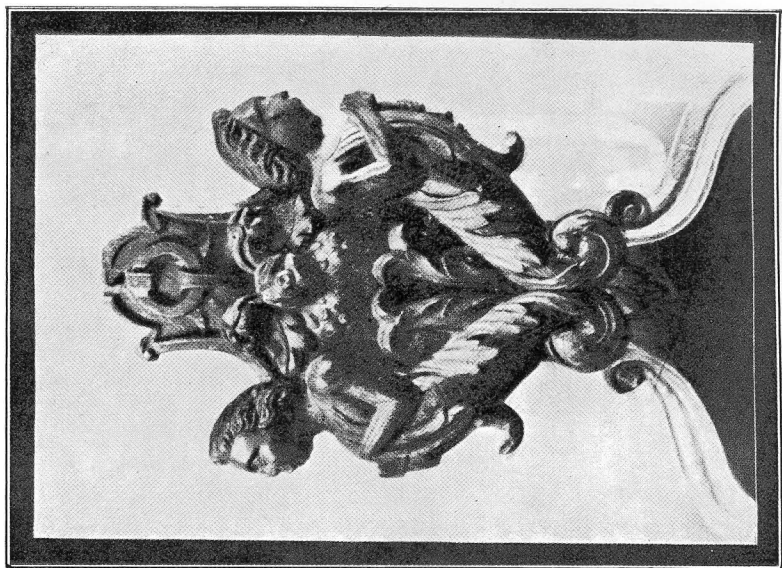
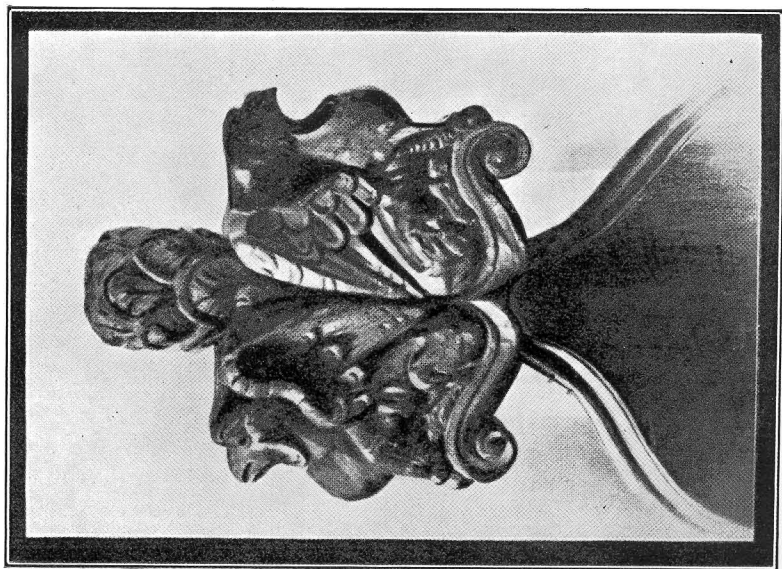
When Ashmole visited the church in 1666, he noted the King's Arms placed on the west side of the chancel-arch, beneath which was a Latin verse, and a figure of Death painted as a skeleton standing against a tomb of classical design, and below was this verse :—

“ Man is a Glass, Life is as Water, weakly walled about.  
Sin brought in Death, Death breaks the glass, so runs  
the water out.”

This also was in observance of the same Canon, which enjoined “ that chosen sentences be written upon the walls of Churches in places convenient.”

The upper panels of the octagonal pulpit of Jacobean date have dragon heads with foliated bodies carved upon them, the lower panels being plain. When first erected it had a sounding board, which was converted into a cover for the font about 1850.

From the middle of the sixteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth—a period of three hundred years—little or no structural change was made in the church ; although in 1837 a small door was broken through the south wall of the tower for the use of the ringers ; a partition was put up beneath the tower



*Poppyheads of Choir Stalls.*

arch between the belfry and the body of the church ; a staircase to the gallery was constructed ; the walls, arches and pillars were cleaned and re-coloured. The Commandments were cut in stone and placed by the Patrons at the east end of the chancel. In 1850 the chancel was restored by the Rector and Fellows of Exeter College, Oxford, who had been patrons since 1322. The work was commenced on July 30th, 1850, when, owing to the dilapidated state of the walls, a decision was made to rebuild the chancel, and it was then discovered that the western two-thirds of the north wall and its foundations were of twelfth century work. Buried beneath the foundations of the north wall were found the remains of a wooden coffin containing a skeleton ; the bones were replaced near the spot where they were found. As the new walls arose the priest's door and the windows, with the exception of the east window, the original character of which had been destroyed, and the middle lancet in the south wall, which was much dilapidated, were reset in their original positions. When the flat plaster ceiling was taken down it was found to conceal a gabled roof, which to some extent was copied in the new building.

The old glass was replaced in the western window of the north wall, and Mr. Beckensale of Abingdon presented some diamond-shaped quarries with a design of stiff stalks and three-veined leaves to fill the old Norman window in this wall ; this corresponds well with the old glass in the adjoining window.

During the restoration of the nave, three pre-Reformation altars were found used as paving stones at the east end of the north aisle. One was entire with the consecration crosses upon it, the other two were broken. They were taken up, and placed at the east end of the chancel, beneath the communion table.

The musicians' gallery at the west end of the church was taken down, but the marks of it are evident in the floor.

In 1624, George Hakewill, the Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, rebuilt the chapel of that College, and placed therein some handsome choir-stalls and desks, with richly carved poppy-heads, composed of grotesque figures ; and a screen across the

ante-chapel, the upper part of which consists of an arcade of four bays with semi-circular arches supported on Jacobean pilasters enriched with scroll-work on the face, back, and sides, with Ionic capitals ; the spandrels bearing carved cherub faces. The jambs of the wide doorway on the west bear the arms of the donor : *on a bend a mullet between six trefoils.*

In 1856, Exeter College Chapel was taken down and rebuilt by Sir Gilbert Scott. Hakewill's screen and one half of the choir stalls and desks were given to Long Wittenham Church by the Rector and Fellows of that College, the other half going to Merton Church, Oxfordshire, also under their patronage.

The stalls were placed in the chancel in 1875, and the screen was erected in April, 1888, across the north end of the south transept chapel, which is used as a vestry, and the old transept screen was placed beneath the lower arch at the west end of the nave.

On the wall of this chapel hangs a hatchment : *Ermine a lion or impaling azure a fess between three griffin heads of the same, on a chief a lion between three pellets gules*, the arms of Clutterbuck.

In 1927, the 14th century glass, which had been removed when new glass was inserted in the aisle windows, was collected, and, having been re-leaded, was placed in the east window of the south chapel.

There are two oil paintings in the church. The one on the north wall of the chancel, "The Last Supper," painted on boards, presented in 1902 by Mr. Edward Warren, who resided at "Crossways," has been an altar-piece. It is a copy of the painting in the south chapel of the choir of the church of St. Andrew, Antwerp, painted by Francis Franck of Antwerp, 1542-1620.

The large painting hung towards the west end of the north wall of the nave was presented by the family of the late Mr. E. J. Hayes. It is said to represent "Christ healing the sick of the palsy," but is more probably "The death of Joseph, husband of the Blessed Mary", a copy of the well-known painting in the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna by Carlo Maratti.

Around the font are preserved many fifteenth-century tiles with black-letter inscriptions now indecipherable, on a circular border.

When the survey of Church Goods was made in 1552, it was found that there were in "Long Wyttnam paryshe church a chalyce of sylver gylt, and three belles."<sup>1</sup>

The Church Plate consists of an Elizabethan cup with straight tapering sides, reel-shaped stem, and domed foot; it stands 6½ inches high. Round the bowl is the inscription "This Platli(sic) Belongeth to Long Wittenham Church." The cup bears the London hallmarks and date-letter, 1576-7. The Paten fits over the cup, and is 3¼ inches in diameter.

There are also a chalice and paten inscribed "St. Mary's Church, Long Wittenham, 1869"; another paten bearing a cross flory, dated 1905-6; a spoon with the London hallmark for 1883-4; a square wafer box 1873-4; a Pewter tankard-shaped flagon, 8½ inches high, inscribed "This Plate belongeth to Long Wittenham Church, 1717"; and a Pewter alms dish, bearing an inscription similar to that on the flagon. The churchwardens' accounts for 1716 record the purchase of these two vessels.

The six bells in the tower were recast by Lester and Pack in 1765, the first bearing the inscription, "James Prowse & John Stevens, ch. Wardens," and the second bell was recast in 1924, when the six bells were rehung on steel frames.

The registers exist from 1562 to 1627; those from 1628 to 1735 are missing, but they are complete from 1736 to the present time.

In the Churchwardens' Book the following accounts occur:—  
1839. Pd. for repairing the Pound, £2.14.8.; 1838 for sparrows and Polecats, £3.9.3.

We must not look upon this church, either as a whole or in parts, as the work of a single generation of men. To its founders, Walter Giffard and his wife Ermentrude, belonged the creative impulse which raised it from the ground. But we must not

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<sup>1</sup> Exchequer, Q.R. Church Goods, Berks, Ock Hundred.

forget those who in later days added to the fabric, or those by whose labour of restoration and repair the church has been preserved for the present generation. The story of Long Wittenham Church, at least eight hundred years old, will still go on. Changes will take place ; we only ask that they who make them will not wipe out the old record to make way for the new.

#### THE RECTORS AND VICARS OF LONG WITTENHAM.

Robert de Wytham, descended from Hubert de Wytham, who held the manor of Wytham in 1086.

Robert de Clifford, a younger son of the family of that name, resident at Shrivenham, co. Berks. Rector in 1232.

Drogo de Turberville, one of a family living at East Hendred in the 13th century.

Almaric de Plessis, probably a son of John de Plessis, who in right of his wife Christiana, daughter of Hugh de Sandford of Hook Norton, held two-thirds of a knight's fee with the manor of Long Wittenham, for the service of one knight's fee from the overlord, Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford.

William de Braybroke, rector 15 August, 1293, until 1320.

Richard de Pyn, entered Exeter College in 1326, presented to the rectory of Long Wittenham in 1330 ; in 1331, at the request of the King, he was to have the reservation of a benefice in the gift of the abbot and convent of Shaftesbury, value 15 marks, if without cure of souls, notwithstanding that he is rector of Long Wittenham. (*Cal. Papal Reg.*). He died 1355.

John Berford, chaplain of Exeter College, and Thomas "Capellanus Noster" (*Reg. Ex. Col.*) undertook the duties between the death of Richard de Pyn, the last Rector, and the institution of the first Vicar.

#### VICARS.

John Foliot, the first vicar, was appointed on the appropriation of Long Wittenham in the autumn of 1355. There is the following item in the College books : " autumn, 1355,

2d. for bread, beer, and cheese, when our priest of West Wyttenham made his agreement." On 24 December, 1360, he was instituted to the church of Slinfold in Sussex, in consequence of which the Bishop of Sarum compelled him to vacate Long Wittenham, on the 7th March following. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

John de Brendon, born 1305, presented by the College 7 March, and instituted by the Bishop of Sarum 9 April, 1361. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

John More, is mentioned in the Computi of the Rector of Exeter College from 1381 to 1398.

John Yeate, of Lyford, Berks, entered Exeter College in 1413, and was presented by his College to Long Wittenham in 1420, which he vacated in 1424 to become Vicar of Monckton-Farleigh.

John Shepherd, in 1434.

John Baker was resident at Exeter College from 1448 to 1454; obtained his B.A. 1449, and became Vicar of Wittenham in 1462; he died 1487. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

William "Chaplain" in 1487.

William Wellys "presbiter parochialis" in 1505. He was one of the benefactors of Exeter College.

Richard Northcot, M.A., 10 June, 1506, was appointed Vicar in 1511.

John Conner, from Gwithian, Cornwall; chorister of Magdalen, 1591; M.A., 1514; B.D., 1524; Vicar of St. Peter's in the East, Oxford; came to Wittenham about 1540; died 1569. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

John Best, S.T.B., resigned on 6 November, 1607.

Richard Raynolds, born in Devon, 1579; M.A., 1603; appointed Vicar of Long Wittenham in 1607; he was a great pluralist, and was, along with Long Wittenham, Vicar of Egloshayle, Cornwall, 1610, Rector of Stoke Fleming, 1614, and of Woodleigh, 1615, both in Devon. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*). He was sequestered in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly.

**William Prouse**, son of Richard P., mayor of Exeter, born 15 April, 1581; M.A., 1603; Vicar of Culham, 1614-45; of Long Wittenham, 6 October, 1617, until his death in 1645. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

**Brian Holland**, Exeter College; M.A., 1627; presented to Long Wittenham 10 February, 1644-5; he died at Wittenham and was buried there. (*Reg. Univ. Oxford*). It is said that the false teeth and silver coffin plate of this Vicar were found in the churchyard in 1850.

**John Bickle**, son of Richard B., of Totnes, Devon, born 1649; M.A., 1673; instituted to Long Wittenham, 1672, which he vacated in 1685 on his appointment as Vicar of Mongewell, Oxon. Ann, his wife, was buried in the chancel of Long Wittenham Church in 1713.

**Thomas Farr**, son of Jonathan F., born 1655; M.A., 1685; instituted as Vicar in 1686; he bought the patronage of St. Giles' Church, Horspath, co. Oxon, worth £80 p.a., which he held with Long Wittenham. He left six children behind him, all of whom turned out wild and extravagant; he died at the Vicarage in 1722, aged 67, and a monument to his memory is in the church, where he was buried.

**George Stubbes**, son of John S., Rector of Little Hinton, Wilts, born 17 September, 1681; M.A., 1707; instituted Vicar in 1722, and Rector of Pusey in 1724; of Tolleshunt Knights', 24 October, 1734; of St. Laurence Newland, 27 January, 1737, both in Essex; all of which he held in plurality. He died at Tarrant Gunville, Dorset, and was buried there 30 July, 1742.

**Ralph Bridcoacke**, son of John B. of Swainford, B.C.L., 1730, became Vicar, 17 September, 1740; he was a Fellow of New College, and resigned Long Wittenham in 1749.

**Robert Speed**, son of John S., doctor, of St. Cross, Southampton; M.A., 1736; B.D., 1752; proctor, 1745; was also a Fellow of New College; he was instituted as Vicar 10 October, 1749, and resigned in 1765 on becoming Vicar of Hornchurch, Essex, where he died in 1786.

William Tonkin, Fellow of Exeter College, became Vicar 20 May, 1765, and resigned 2 August, 1771.

Francis Upton, son of the Rev. James Upton of Bishop's Hull, Somerset, born at Taunton 1719; M.A., 1744; B.D., 1755; Curate of Merton, Oxon, 1745; Vicar of Wittenham 1771, and Rector of Seavington with Dinnington in 1765, having leave to hold Wittenham with them; he died 30 March, 1778, aged 58; and was buried in the College Chapel. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Sampson Newbury, son of Sampson N. of Zele in Tawton, Devon, born in 1731; M.A., 1757; Curate of Merton, 1765; Vicar of Wittenham from 1778 to 1785; he died 7 March, 1794. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

John Sarraude, son of John S. of Faringdon, Berks, and Rector of Elvington, Yorkshire, born 1745; M.A., 1769; B.D., 1780; appointed Vicar of Wittenham, 18 July, 1785; which he resigned in 1788; Vicar of Bossall, Yorkshire, 1796; and instituted to the Rectory of Sutton on Derwent, Yorkshire, 14 April, 1798, on his father's resignation; he died at Sutton 30 July, 1808. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Henry Richards became Vicar in 1788; he was a Fellow of Exeter College, and was elected Rector 23 July, 1797; he died 19 December, 1807). (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Stephen George Francis Triboudet Demainbray, son of Dr. S. T., Astronomer Royal, 1768-82. He was of Huguenot extraction; born at Ealing 7 August, 1759, and educated at Harrow; M.A., 1782; B.D., 1793; instituted as Vicar of Long Wittenham 9 August, 1794, which he vacated by presentation to Broad Somerford 4 February, 1799. He succeeded his father as Astronomer Royal in 1782, which post he held until 1840. His death took place at Broad Somerford 6 July, 1854, age 94. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Thomas Smyth Glubb, son of Thomas G., born at Nether Stowey, Somerset, 1759; M.A., 1785; B.D., 1795; Curate of Merton, 1787; instituted to Long Wittenham (under the value of £80) 20 August, 1799; he was also Bursar of Exeter College

for nearly 20 years and his accounts were in such disorder that the College suffered considerable loss. He died 4 April, 1823. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Peter Johnson, son of John Tossel J. of Ashreigney, Devon, born 17 April, 1787; M.A., 1812; B.D., 1823; presented to Long Wittenham on the death of his predecessor 1 July, 1823 (then worth £137 16s. 8½d.); he resigned 28 May, 1825; from 1843 until 1858 he was a Prebendary of Exeter. He died 16 July, 1869. (*Reg. Ex. Col.*).

Robert Bateman Paul, son of Richard P.; born at S. Columb Major 21 March, 1798; M.A., 1822; instituted to Long Wittenham 7 February, 1826; which he resigned 1 August, 1829, on preferment to Llantwit Major. He rebuilt the Vicarage; Exeter College gave £811 towards the cost; the Vicar raising £379 under Gilbert's Act. He died at Stamford 6 June, 1877.

James Charles Clutterbuck, son of Robert C.; born at Watford 11 July, 1801; educated at Harrow; M.A., 1827; instituted to Long Wittenham 14 January, 1830, where he died 8 May, 1885.

Evelyn Giborne Hodgson, second son of Adam H., of Walton-on-Hill, Lancs.; Vice-Warden of S. Paul's College, Darlington, N.S.W., 1878-1885; instituted to Long Wittenham 10 July, 1885, which he resigned 17 June, 1887.

Edward Ilbert Crosse, son of Robert J. C., born at South Molton, Devon, 1854; solicitor 1878-82; M.A., 1878, Exeter College, Oxford; instituted to Long Wittenham 9 November, 1887; resigned July, 1890.

Thomas John Puckle, son of Thomas Broadhurst P., born at Pirbright, Surrey, 1854; M.A., 1880; Curate of St. Michael's, Wakefield, 1880-83; Vicar of Wrenthorpe, Wakefield, 1883-90; instituted to Long Wittenham 18 September, 1890, where he remained until he accepted the Curacy of St. Luke's, New Chesterton, 24 June, 1896; Vicar of St. Peter's Barnsley, 1905-13. Died at Ryde 7 December, 1920, aged 66.

Edward Richard Gardiner, son of a clergyman, born 30 December, 1844 ; M.A., New College, Oxford, 1880 ; Vicar of Fawley, Oxon, 1888 ; instituted to Long Wittenham November, 1896 ; died at Long Wittenham 1 September, 1902, and was buried there.

Thomas Daniel Hopkyns, son of Thomas H., born in Paddington, 22 March, 1849 ; educated at King's College School, London ; Pembroke College, Oxford, B.A. 1872, M.A. 1874 ; Rector of St. Andrew with All SS. Chichester, 1879-90 ; Freeman of the City of London, 1871 ; instituted to Long Wittenham 13 February, 1903 ; which he resigned in April, 1925 ; died at Oxford 6 October, 1930.

Hubert Cecil Roberts, son of Canon W. A. R., born at Nasik, Bombay, 21 May, 1888 ; educated at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and Exeter College, Oxford ; M.A., 1916. He held curacies at Northampton, Newbury, and Marlow, prior to his institution to Long Wittenham 29 December, 1925.

Mr. C. R. Peers, C.B., F.B.A., President of the Society of Antiquaries, has very kindly given me his advice on one or two disputed architectural details ; to Sir Frederic Hallett, O.B.E., I am indebted for much help, and for bringing to my notice some deeds relating to the appropriation of the Vicarage ; I must also acknowledge the help that Mr. H. J. Hewett has given me. Miss Hopkyns has kindly placed her father's notes on the church and vicars at my disposal. To all these friends I tender my sincere thanks for their generous assistance.

The illustrations accompanying this article are from photographs taken for the late C. E. Keyser, Esq., F.S.A., to illustrate his articles on Berkshire Churches which appeared in this Journal.