

## Medieval Domestic Architecture in Berkshire.

By E. T. LONG, F.S.A.

(Continued from Vol. 44, No. 1).

### II. THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

**B**ERKSHIRE does not possess many examples of thirteenth century domestic architecture, but what it lacks in quantity is made up in quality. Work of the period is found at Bisham, Brimpton, Charney Basset and East Hendred. There are also foundations of thirteenth century work on the site of the Bishop of Salisbury's manor house at Sonning, which were excavated twenty-five years ago by the late Mr. C. E. Keyser, so long President of this Society, and the late Sir Harold Brakespear, of which more anon. With the exception of the chapel at Brimpton all the surviving examples belong to the second half of the century. At Brimpton and East Hendred the thirteenth century work is confined to the domestic chapels, though it is possible that in the case of the latter some portions of the rest of the house may be of this period. As has been pointed out earlier in this paper the chapel was by no means an invariable feature of the medieval house and it is, therefore, particularly worthy of note that Berkshire should possess three examples of the thirteenth century with the remains of what may be another at Bisham.

Though subsequent alterations, additions and reconstruction have somewhat obscured the original plans at Bisham and Charney Basset it is still possible to form a fairly clear idea of the thirteenth century lay-out in both cases. The surviving architectural detail, especially at Bisham, is particularly good.

*Bisham "Abbey"* is, in some respects at any rate, the most interesting medieval house in the county. Its history is very peculiar and has been obscured by inaccurate descriptions. Even its name is misleading since the existing house was never a monastic establishment, though associated with and in close proximity to a priory of Augustinian Canons. Before attempting to describe the fabric something must be said to elucidate the origin and subsequent history of the place.

At the time of Doomsday (1086) the manor of Bisham belonged to Henry de Ferrers, whose grandson, Robert de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, granted it in the reign of Stephen to the Templars. On the suppression of the Templars in 1307 Edward II conferred their possessions here during pleasure on Robert de Hanstede and soon afterwards to Roger de Winkfield. The overlordship had remained with the Ferrers family until 1266 when it was granted to Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, was

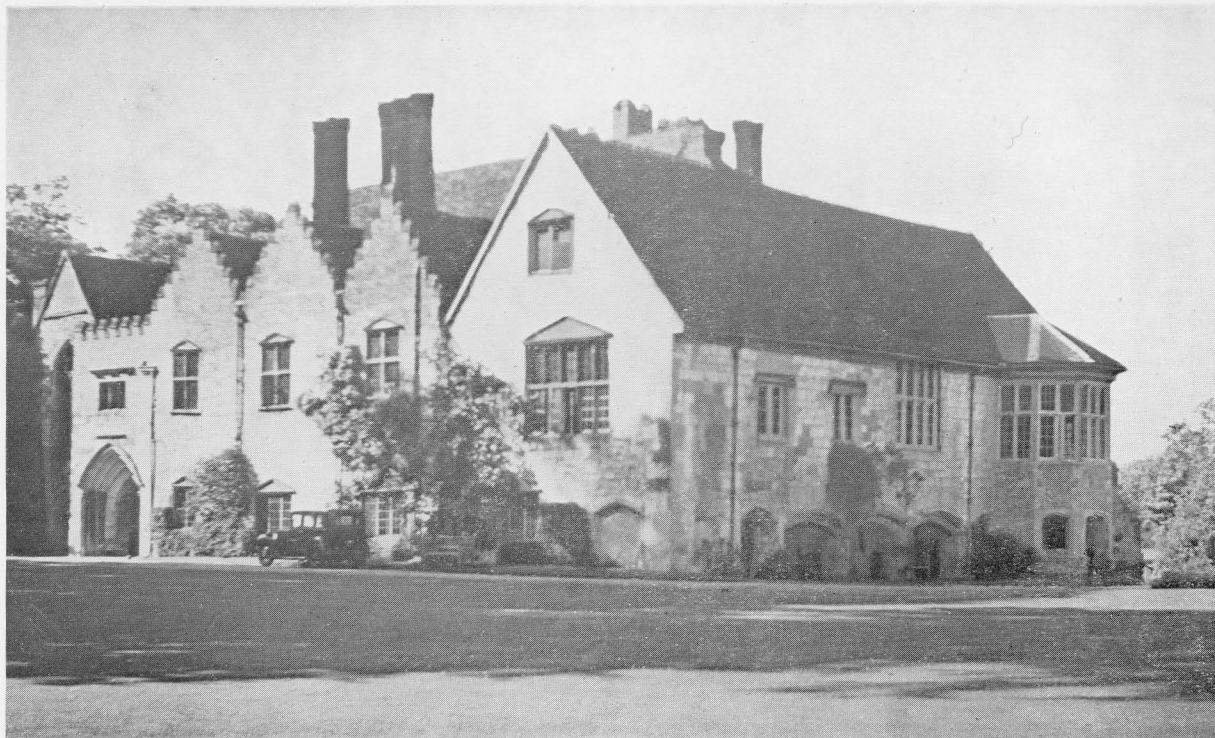
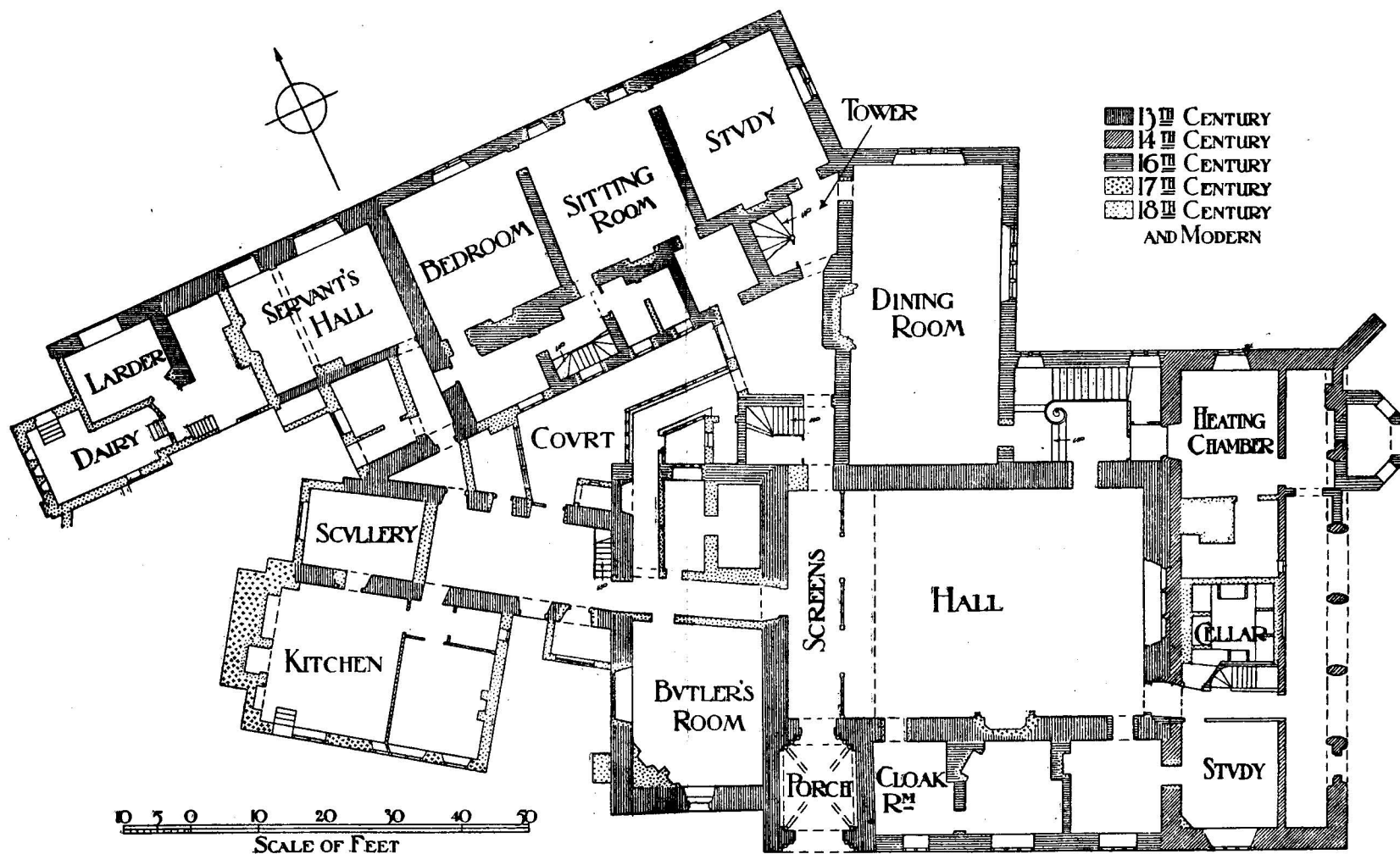


PLATE IV.  
Bisham "Abbey" from South-east.

*Photo: P. S. Spokes.*

holding it in 1316 and on his execution in 1322 it was granted to Hugh le Despenser, who was beheaded in 1326 when the manor was escheated to the Crown. Finally it was conferred a few years later on William, Lord Montagu, who was created Earl of Salisbury in 1337. In this same year the new Earl founded here a priory of Augustinian Canons in close proximity to, but quite distinct from, his manor house. The Montagus retained the overlordship until it passed as a result of the marriage of Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas, to Richard Neville, son of Ralph, Earl of Westmorland, in 1425. Richard was declared Earl of Salisbury in 1429 in right of his wife. Their son was the Kingmaker, who married Anne Beauchamp, only daughter and heiress of Richard Earl of Warwick, on whose death the earldom was conferred on his son-in-law. Richard, Earl of Salisbury, was beheaded at Pontefract after the battle of Wakefield in 1460 and buried in the conventual church at Bisham. The mutilated alabaster effigy<sup>1</sup> from his tomb is now in Burghfield Church in Berkshire, where it was identified by the late Mr. F. E. Howard. It is not known how it came to be at Burghfield. The Kingmaker was killed at the battle of Barnet in 1471 and buried at Bisham. His lands were divided between the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, brothers of Edward IV and husbands of his daughters Isabel and Anne. Bisham fell to the former and was subsequently held by his son Edward, Earl of Warwick, who was beheaded in 1499. Henry VIII restored Edward's possessions to his sister Margaret, wife of Sir Richard Pole, and created her Countess of Salisbury. In 1539 this virtuous lady, who had been governess to the Princess Mary was arrested and subsequently attainted because the King was unable to lay his hands on her son, Cardinal Reginald Pole, who had denounced Henry VIII for his tyranny and persecution of the Church. The old lady was beheaded in 1541. Bisham was then granted to Henry's discarded wife, Anne of Cleves who held it for eleven years when she was ordered to exchange it for some other manor of equal value in order that Edward VI might confer it on Sir Philip Hoby, who made considerable alterations and additions to the house, which were completed after his death in 1558 by his brother Sir Thomas, who was English Ambassador to France. The estate remained in the Hoby family for more than two centuries until the death in 1766 without issue of the Very Rev. Sir Philip Hoby, Dean of Ardfert and Chancellor of St. Patrick's, Dublin, who bequeathed Bisham to his maternal first cousin John Mill, who assumed the name of Hoby. Sir John died without issue in 1780 and his widow shortly afterwards sold the property to George Vansittart. On the death of the latter's grandson in 1885 Bisham passed to his cousin, Edward Vansittart Neale, to whose grand-daughter it now belongs. The Augustinian Priory was suppressed among the smaller religious houses in 1536 and its

<sup>1</sup> See also *Berks. Arch. Jour.* XLII (1938), 42-3.



PLAN OF BISHAM ABBEY

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subsequent history must be unique in this country. In the following year it was refounded as a Benedictine Abbey by Henry VIII, who transferred thither the Abbot and monks of Chertsey. This new foundation, which was on a larger scale than its predecessor, only lasted a few months, being suppressed in 1538. The church and most of the other buildings were soon demolished and there is now nothing visible, though it is known that some of the foundations remain beneath the lawn to the north-east of the house. Within the conventual church many illustrious dead were buried including the founder's widow and several of their descendants, also Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury and his wife, Richard Neville, the Kingmaker, and his grandson Edward, Earl of Warwick.

And now for the house itself. (See Plan facing p. 103). The oldest surviving work belongs to the second half of the thirteenth century and though subsequent alterations and additions have changed the general appearance of the building it is still fairly easy to determine the original plan of the Templars' house. There can be little doubt that the majority of the residences of the Templars and the Knights Hospitallers were of secular rather than monastic character and this is borne out by their house at Bisham, which would appear to have been a typical manor house of the period. The only important difference would seem to be that the chapels of such houses were perhaps more imposing and prominent than those of the ordinary manor places. This was probably the case at Bisham, but here subsequent alterations have obliterated this feature and there is some uncertainty as to its position. The house consisted of a large hall approached by an imposing porch which gave access to the screens with the offices at the lower end and the solar above. The kitchen was situated beyond the buttery and pantry. All these features can be clearly identified. To the north-west of the original kitchen is a semi-detached structure, now the servants' hall, which retains thirteenth century walling and is the only surviving portion of the original house which is correctly orientated, a fact which makes it not improbable that this was the chapel. In the second half of the fourteenth century considerable additions were made to the house by the Montagus. These additions were at the upper end of the hall and consisted of a quadrangle with a cloister walk on each side and chambers of two storeys. The Hobys removed three sides of the quadrangle leaving only the range abutting on the hall which contained the great chamber on the first floor. Very little seems to have been done in the fifteenth century, but the wooden screen with gallery above at the lower end of the hall is of this period and about the same time an upper floor was inserted in the solar block.

The following extract from a surveyor's report made in 1552, when the Hobys came into possession, is of interest as showing the final form of the medieval fabric and also because it proves that the house was quite distinct from the priory. "The mansion house . . . wherein the saide late Countes of Sarem sometyme

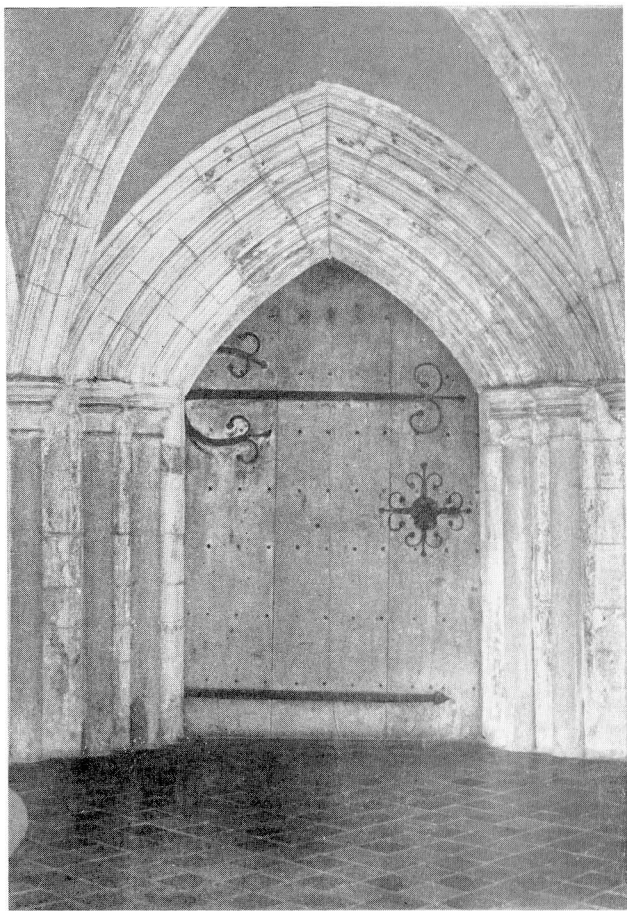
inhabited, is situate nere unto the Ryver of Tamys and adjoininge to the seite of the late monasterie there . . . wherein is conteyned a hall with a chembney, and at the lower end of the same is a pantery, a buttery, a kechyne, a larder and a lytell woodyarde. At the over end of the same assendinge by a fayre half pace is a greate chamber with an inner chamber and VI other chambers and logging uppon a quadrante, and underneath these chambers at the foote of the said half pace is a wyne seller (and) a quarante cloyster with certeyne small loggings on every side of the same . . ." ("Travels and Life of Sir Thos. Hoby," *Camd. Misc.*, X. App. XVIII).

The report refers to the prior's lodgings as then standing "sette between the Tamys and the Mancon howse of the late Countes of Sarem," but the church had been already demolished as there is a reference to "the churchyarde and soyle where the Abbey halle and church late stood."

Sir Philip Hoby began the refashioning of the house before 1557 and the work was apparently finished by 1562 by his brother and successor, Sir Thomas, who kept a diary in which the progress of the tower is briefly recorded. Three sides of the fourteenth century quadrangle were demolished, the great chamber was refenestrated and provided with a moulded plaster ceiling and a semi-octagonal bay window. Rooms in two storeys were added on the south side of the hall between the great chamber and the porch, a dining room with library above and staircase hall in the north of the medieval hall and to the west of the dining room a tower and north range of rooms. The present kitchen block is mainly of seventeenth century date. Little has been done to the fabric since then, but the rooms in the north range were redecorated in the latter part of the eighteenth century, to which period belongs most of the fenestration of this portion of the house. In 1859 there was much repair and redecorating of the interior and the existing fenestration of the hall is of this date.

Chalk is generally employed in the thirteenth century work, but there is flint chequer work in the solar block and in some walling at the west end of the buildings. The fourteenth century portions are of chalk and the Hoby additions mainly in brick except for some walling of the staircase hall, which is probably reused material from the priory. The additions between the porch and the great chamber are carried up in three stepped gables at right angles to the hall. The roofs are tiled.

It is now time to consider briefly the surviving remains of thirteenth century. The hall is approached by a spacious porch with chamber above. The outer doorway has a pointed arch of three orders and a hood moulding with jamb shafts having moulded caps. There is a plain quadripartite vault with moulded ribs. The inner doorway (*Plate* No. II) is also of three orders with Purbeck marble angle shafts having moulded caps. The bases of the angle shafts are concealed by the modern tiled floor. The original door remains with contemporary hinges and escutcheon.



*Photo : E. T. Long*

PLATE II.

Bisham Abbey: Door to hall with contemporary ironwork.

The hall measures 52ft. 2in. by 33ft. 4in., the screens being 7ft. 8in. wide. The plain braced rafter roof is probably original though considerably restored in the nineteenth century. At the restoration it was found that some of the rafters in the centre of the roof were blackened by smoke which goes to prove that originally the hall had an open central fire. We know from the report of 1552 that the hall then had a chimney and this was probably a fifteenth century addition. The present fireplace on the south side is of early seventeenth century date, imported from elsewhere, but it is quite probable that the chimney is medieval, at any rate in part.

There are considerable remains of the original fenestration which was blocked by the later additions to the house. In the east wall is a large blocked window consisting of three lancets under a single segmental rere arch. On the splays are restored mural paintings, including a figure of St. Peter, all originally of late thirteenth century date. There are traces of lancets in the side walls. The present fenestration is modern and consists of one window in the east wall and two in the west gable. The central service doorway remains in use and still leads to the kitchen; the others are blocked. The wooden screen with the gallery above is of the fifteenth century and has a stone base ornamented with quatrefoils in the central portion. There is early seventeenth century panelling round the lower part of the walls of the hall. The former buttery and pantry beneath the solar exhibit little in the way of original features, but there is a segmental headed window at the south end.

The solar was much altered in the fifteenth century and subsequently, but it retains a large pointed two light window in the south wall with geometrical tracery. The roof is ancient and may be original. The insertion of an upper floor towards 1500 has radically altered the proportions of this part of the house. The original kitchen lay beyond the solar block and the present scullery incorporates portions of it. The wide connecting passage has an upper storey with an original lancet window towards the south. It is possible that this upper storey may have served as a dormitory for the servants. There was, apparently, always access to it from the solar. The present servants' hall joins the kitchen at an angle and is approached through a passage with thirteenth century doorways at either end. The north and east walls are of the thirteenth century and exhibit chequer work in flint and chalk. The remainder is post-medieval and it is uncertain how far west it originally extended. The fact that it is correctly orientated makes it possible that this was the original chapel in the Templars' time, but it cannot be clearly identified in the surveyor's report of 1552.

The great chamber and its undercroft will be described in the fourteenth century section of this paper.

At *Brimpton* there is an interesting early thirteenth century manorial chapel now desecrated and used as a barn. It appears



to have been always a detached structure and the adjacent house, now a farm residence, has no traces of medieval work.

The chapel, which is of flint with stone quoins and tiled roof, measures externally 35ft. 5in. by 20ft. The original features consist of the north doorway and a lancet in the north and south walls, the latter being blocked. The north doorway has a rounded head enclosing a tympanum with a cross paty on a scale pattern background. The east window and the south doorway are fourteenth century insertions. The former consists of three trefoiled ogee-headed lights under a two-centred arch. The latter has a two-centred arch with hood moulding and wave moulded jambs. The west window is blocked.

The manor house at *Charney Bassett* was originally a grange of Abingdon Abbey. In spite of much refashioning and reconstruction at various dates the house retains important remains of late thirteenth century work. It would appear to have consisted originally of a central hall and two transverse wings with the front towards the west. The wings are now in a line with the central block on the west, but there is reason to believe that formerly the south wing may have extended slightly further in this direction. The central range was rebuilt in the sixteenth century and the fenestration altered on at least two occasions. In modern times this portion was extended somewhat on the east side. The north wing has been rebuilt since 1850 and now exhibits no ancient features with the exception of a quatrefoil opening in the west gable which occupied a similar position in the original structure. The south wing has been very little altered and has a chapel on an undercroft projecting from the east end. The first floor of this wing consists of the solar with a good king post roof, which may well be contemporary. There is an original two-light window in the east wall (*Plate No. III*) and a pair of coupled lancets on the south. In the west wall, which seems to be a sixteenth century rebuilding, are three square headed windows. There is a good sixteenth century fireplace with a four-centred arch. At the south-west angle is a blocked doorway, which communicated with a triangular projection probably serving as the garderobe. The present cramped position of this doorway affords strong evidence that the west wall must have originally projected somewhat further. There is a diagonal buttress at the south-east angle with a gabled top (*Plate No. III*). The solar was originally approached by stone steps from the yard at the back, but the doorway now communicates with a modern passage attached to the central block. The solar measures 30ft. by 16ft. The undercroft has a ceiling composed of exceptionally massive timbers. There is a double lancet window in the east wall and a plain square headed opening on the south, both original. The fenestration of the west wall consists of two two-light windows with square heads, the northern probably of the sixteenth century and the southern modern. There is a late



*Photo : E. T. Long*

PLATE III.

Charney Basset : Solar and Chapel from the south-east.

thirteenth century fireplace in the north wall with a shouldered lintel, to the east of which is a doorway, formerly external, but now opening into a modern corridor. To the west of the fireplace is a doorway with a depressed head formerly leading to the hall.

The chapel has a plain two-light east window and on the south a lancet with trefoiled head and hood moulding. There is a piscina on the south and an aumbry in the north wall. A plain doorway in the west wall communicates with the solar. The roof is probably an eighteenth century reconstruction. The dimensions are 12ft. 5in. by 9ft. 10in. The undercroft has a plain round-headed doorway in the east wall and is lighted by narrow rectangular slits. A doorway in the west wall communicates with the undercroft of the solar. The central block, which originally measured 36ft. by 17ft., has been so much refashioned in modern times that it retains few evidences of antiquity beyond the plain roof of sixteenth century date. Such of the walling as is old is probably Tudor work. Before the last restoration it exhibited sash windows, which have been replaced by stone mullioned lights.

The north wing probably contained the kitchen and offices, as is still the case, and before its rebuilding exhibited a thirteenth century double lancet in the upper part of the north wall and part of an original chimney as well as the quatrefoil opening in the west gable, which has been reset.

The materials are rubble with some ashlar and the roofs are covered with stone slates. Some of the outbuildings are of considerable antiquity and possibly medieval.

The village of *East Hendred* is one of the most interesting in Berkshire and possesses a wealth of ancient buildings set in most picturesque surroundings under the Downs. The manor of Arches has not changed hands by purchase since the twelfth century and for the past five hundred years has been in the possession of the Eyston family, who acquired it by marriage with the heiress of the Stowes about 1440.

The core of the present house is probably of the fifteenth century and was originally H-shaped with the hall in the centre. It is mainly of timber-framed construction, but the exterior is stuccoed and the fenestration modern. A large wing was added on the east side early in the nineteenth century. Attached to the east end of the south wing is a thirteenth century chapel which has always been used for Catholic worship, the Eystons, who were connected by marriage with the family of St. Thomas More, having consistently adhered to the old religion. The chapel was looted by the soldiers of William of Orange in 1688 and the medieval fittings were probably destroyed at that time. Extensive renovation and refitting in the nineteenth century has left the interior singularly dull and disappointing.

The exterior is thickly stuccoed, but the material is presumably rubble with ashlar dressings and the roof is tiled. The side walls

are over three feet in thickness, but the east wall is considerably less and may have been rebuilt entirely; the gable, at any rate, is of brick and modern. There are diagonal buttresses with one set-off at the east end and another of similar character on the south. The modern east window is of two lights and early fourteenth century in style. An original lancet, widely splayed internally, remains in both the lateral walls. There are three, modern windows in the south wall. The south doorway within a slightly projecting porch has a depressed head and a continuous chamfer. Above the porch is a projection which served as the base of a chimney. The chapel now extends further west than was originally the case and incorporates part of what may have been the solar block. In the modern west gallery is a small Tudor fireplace with four-centred head which connected with the former chimney over the porch. As there is no trace of a substantial west wall it seems probable that the chapel was separated from the adjacent portion of the house by a timber partition since removed. There is a piscina in the usual position and the windows exhibit portions of old glass, mostly foreign and of seventeenth century date, but in the northern lancet is an English roundel containing the initials of Hugh Faringdon, last Abbot of Reading. The roof has modern boarding, which may conceal ancient timbers.

The manor of *Sonning* belonged to the Bishops of Salisbury—in whose diocese Berkshire was included until 1837—from the eleventh century until 1574 when it was surrendered to the Crown in exchange for other estates. During this long tenure the Bishops maintained a residence here, which in course of time attained imposing dimensions. Leland, who visited Sonning in 1541 notes that there “yet remaineth a fair olde house there of stone even by Tamese ripe longging to the Bishop of Saresbyri and thereby is a fair parke.” After the alienation of the manor in 1574 the great house gradually fell into decay and was eventually succeeded by another erected to the south of it and largely constructed of old materials. Both houses have long disappeared, but the foundations of the episcopal residence were laid bare in 1912-14 by the late Mr. C. E. Keyser and the late Sir Harold Brakespear. These foundations were subsequently again covered over and so remain, but an account of the excavations and a plan of the medieval house as then revealed was published by these two gentlemen in the *Berks., Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 22 (1916), 1-21.

The earliest work found *in situ* dated from the thirteenth century when the house would appear to have consisted of a range running parallel to and on the south bank of the Thames with a first-floor hall, chapel and solar and kitchen and offices beneath. This probably comprised the whole house at that time. There was much enlargement in the fourteenth century, and this was probably due to Bishop Robert Wyvill, who obtained a licence to crenellate

in 1337. The house was defended by a moat on three sides and by the river on the north. In the fifteenth century a new hall with porch and oriel was added at right angles to the thirteenth century block, possibly by Bishop Richard Beauchamp, who was surveyor of the King's works at Windsor in 1473. This new hall measured 74ft. by 36ft. There is, however, some evidence for believing that this later hall may have been first erected in the fourteenth century and only remodelled in the fifteenth century. The later kitchen was a detached structure to the south of the hall. By the end of the fifteenth century, if not before, the house had become quadrangular and was approached from the west across a fore-court measuring 180ft. by 143ft., and surrounded by a brick wall with a gatehouse opposite the hall.

The thirteenth century portion which eventually formed the north range was about 80ft. by 30ft. with a cross building at the east end and a garderobe at the north-west angle. The undercroft of the hall was divided into two compartments, the eastern of which was probably the kitchen and the western a cellar. The ground floor of the cross building had a small chamber in the north-east angle and next to this a passage with a door at either end and to the south a vice to the chamber above. The hall probably occupied the whole of the space over the kitchen and cellar and was approached by an external stair at the south-east angle. The cross building probably contained the chapel on the north and the solar on the south, the dividing wall running east and west.

### III. FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

The remains of fourteenth century domestic architecture in Berkshire are not very extensive but as in the case of the thirteenth century work, several of the surviving examples are of considerable importance.

At Bisham a portion of the additions made to the Templars' house by the Montagu Earls of Salisbury has survived, though refashioned in the sixteenth century. Cumnor Place, a former grange of Abingdon Abbey, was unfortunately, pulled down early in the nineteenth century and practically nothing remains *in situ* except a fireplace, but some of the windows and doorways are now at Wytham. Dean Court Farm in the same parish has been much pulled about at various times, but retains fourteenth century details in the solar wing. At Denchworth there is a late fourteenth century window, which has been recently discovered. The manor house at Fyfield, though greatly altered in Elizabethan times has some good features of about 1330, while the house known as the "Abbey" at Sutton Courtenay still exhibits, despite nineteenth century vandalism, the hall and other portions of a mid-fourteenth century house. Last, but not least, we have the glorious barn at Great Coxwell, one of the most notable in the whole country.

The fourteenth century additions at *Bisham* consisted of a quadrangular extension to the east of the hall of the original house. The work dates from about 1375 and is probably due to William Montagu, Earl of Salisbury, son of the founder of the priory, who died in 1397. Only the west side of the quadrangle remains, the others having been pulled down by the Hobys in the sixteenth century. This range (*Plate No. IV*) contains the great chamber and a room beyond it on the first floor with an undercroft and a cloister beneath. The cloister walk is 6ft. wide with four segmental arches resting on massive octagonal piers. The Hobys refashioned this portion of the house and inserted an elaborate plaster ceiling at the level of the wall plate and provided new windows including a semi-octagonal oriel on the east. Towards the south end of the west wall is the head of a late fourteenth century window, the only relic of the original fenestration. The magnificent timber roof remains above the plaster ceiling and is of arched collar braced type with short king posts. There are two fireplaces in the great chamber, one Elizabethan and the other modern. The oriel contains interesting heraldic glass of various dates as follows:—

- 14th century. Montagu impaling Grandison (*Plate No. V*). William Montagu, 1st Earl of Salisbury (created 1337), Founder of Bisham Priory in 1337, married in 1327 Katherine, daughter of William, 1st Lord Grandison.
- 15th century. Quartered shield of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury (created 1429), K.G. Father of the Kingmaker. Patron of Bisham Priory and buried there.
- 16th century. Pole impaling the quartered arms of Clarence (*Plate No. VI*). Margaret Plantagenet, daughter of George, Duke of Clarence was restored in 5. Henry VIII as Countess of Salisbury, being the only sister and heir of Edward, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury. Beheaded in 1541.
- 17th century. 1. Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter (created, 1605. K.G. 1701.) married firstly in 1564 Dorothy Neville (*d.* 1609), daughter and coheir of John, 4th Lord Latimer. Her arms are borne in pretence on this shield which is encircled with the Garter and therefore dates between 1601 and 1609. He married secondly in 1623 Frances Brydges, Lady Smith, daughter of William, 4th Lord Chandos.
2. Robert Cecil, "The little great Secretary," second son of William, 1st Lord Burghley and brother of Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter. He was created Earl of Salisbury in 1605. K.G. 1605.

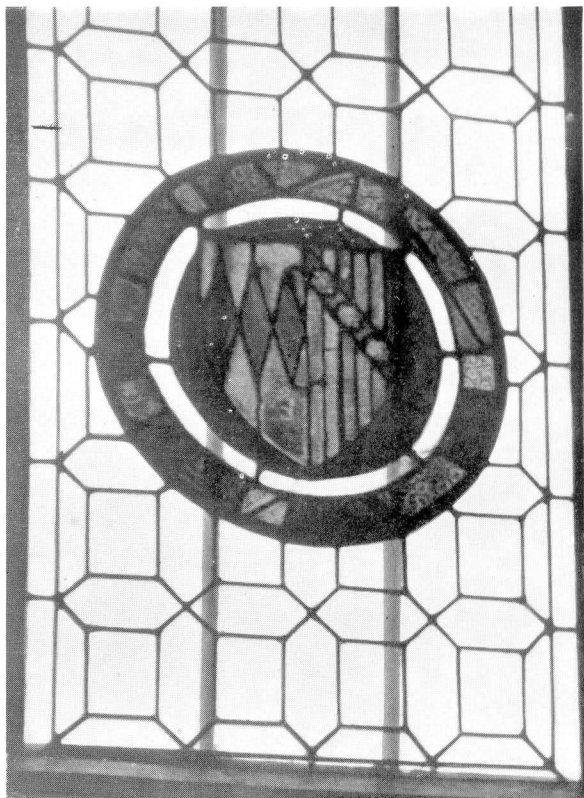


Photo : P. S. Spokes

PLATE V.

Bisham "Abbey."

*Silver a fesse indented of three gules, impaling :*

*Paly silver and azure on a bend gules three eagles gold.*

For marriage of William Montagu 1st Earl of Salisbury (cr. 1337), Founder of Bisham Priory, 1337, with Katherine daughter of William 1st Lord Grandison.

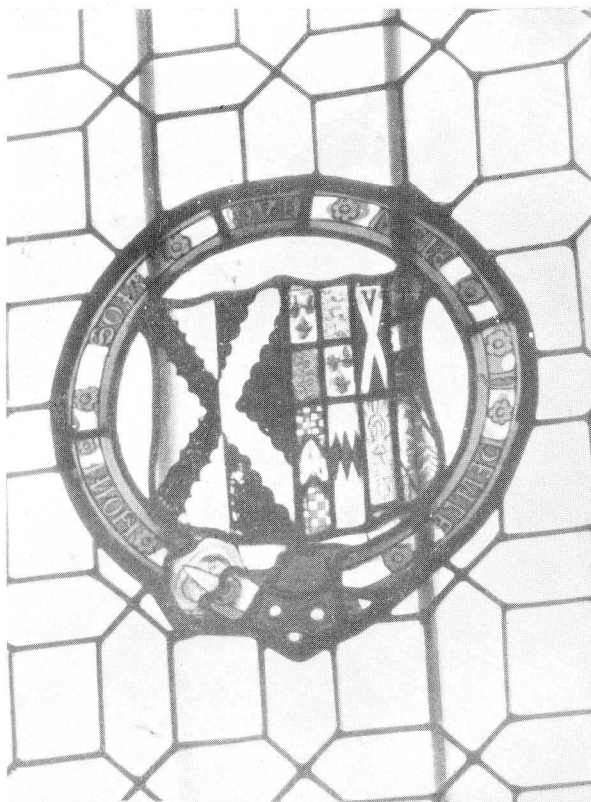


Photo : P. S. Spokes.

PLATE VI.

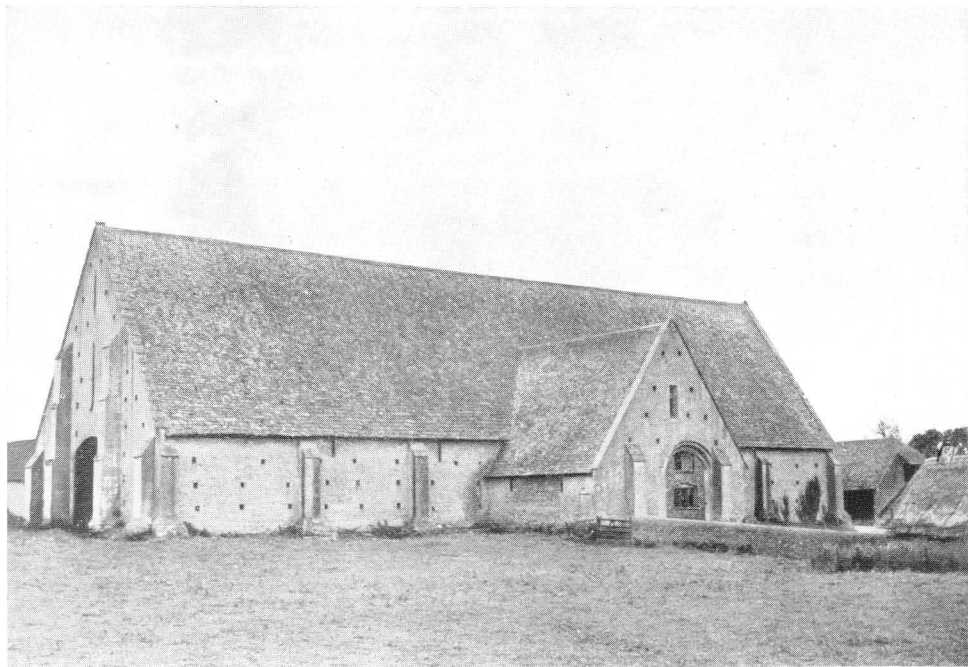
Bisham "Abbey."

Sir Richard Pole. *Party gold and sable, a saltire engrailed countercoloured, impaling :—*

- Quarterly 1. Clarence. 2. Nevill, Earl of Salisbury.  
3. Beauchamp. 4. Newburgh (Warwick). 5. Montagu.  
6. Monthermer. 7. Clare quartering Despencer.

For Margaret Plantagenet, daughter of George, Duke of Clarence ; restored 5. Hen. 8 as Countess of Salisbury, being only sister and heir of Edward Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, and daughter of Isabel, daughter and heir of Richard Nevill Earl of Salisbury, son and heir of Alice daughter and heir of Thomas Montagu Earl of Salisbury. She was beheaded 1541. [Sandford, *Geneal. Hist. of Kings of Eng.* (1707), pp. 441-448.]





*Photo : E. T. Long*

PLATE VII.

Great Coxwell : Barn belonging to the grange of Beaulieu Abbey.



*Photo : E. T. Long*

PLATE VIII.

Wytham Church : Windows from Cumnor Hall.

At *Great Coxwell* there is a magnificent barn, which belonged to a grange of Beaulieu Abbey here. The adjacent house is mainly sixteenth century and later, but may contain traces of earlier work. The barn is of rubble with ashlar-faced buttresses and a stone slated roof. There is a projecting transept in the centre of each side with a large segmental-headed doorway with a moulded label (*Plate No. VII*). The interior is divided into nave and aisles by massive wooden posts framed into the roof and standing on square stone bases about 6ft. high.

*Dean Court Farm at Cumnor*, is a small fourteenth century house of L-shaped plan, which has been considerably altered since its erection about 1330. It is of rubble with ashlar dressings and is roofed with stone slates in the south wing and tiles on the main block. The house appears to have been refashioned in Tudor times and altered again on more than one occasion. The main block runs east and west and probably contained the hall, kitchen and offices, but it has been so much pulled about that no original features are now visible. The fenestration is eighteenth century and later. The south wall is about 2ft. 6in. thick and the north rather less. The roof so far as it is visible in the attics would appear to be of the sixteenth century. The south wing, which probably contained the solar on the first floor, has been less altered. In the west wall of the upper room is a blocked two-light window with trefoiled heads and a transom. The sill of this window is almost at floor level owing to the raising of the ceiling of the undercroft. The roof, now concealed by a flat plaster ceiling, has been reconstructed, but it retains ancient principals and purlins and is of couple close type. The undercroft, now a parlour, has a blocked and mutilated window consisting of two plain lancets with a circle above. The walls of the solar wing are 2ft. 9in. in thickness.

*Cumnor Place*, a former grange of Abingdon Abbey, was unfortunately destroyed in 1810 and some of the materials utilized to rebuild Wytham Church. It was a singularly interesting medieval house mainly of fourteenth century date and its loss cannot be too deeply deplored. At the dissolution of Abingdon Abbey the house was granted for life to the last Abbot, *Thomas Rowland, alias Pentecost*. After his death about 1541 it was conferred on George Owen, the King's physician, whose son, William, leased it to Antony Forster, who eventually acquired the property. It would appear that Forster made considerable alterations to the house before his death in 1572. It was during his tenure that the unfortunate Amy Robsart met her mysterious and tragic end here in 1560. A description of the house before its destruction occurs in Bartlett's *Cumnor Place* (1850).

The house stood to the west of the church and was of quadrangular plan with an outer court to the north. The main entrance was by a vaulted passage in the centre of the north range. The

hall was on the west and measured 44ft. by 22ft. with the screens at the south end. The walls of the hall were low and the heads of the windows were carried up into small gables. The solar was at the south end of the hall and the chapel occupied part of the south range, measuring 22ft. by 15ft. The only part now *in situ* is the base of the outer wall of the east range with a stone fireplace, the lintel of which is ornamented with sunk quatrefoils.

Three of the hall windows, somewhat cut down, are in the south wall of the nave of Wytham Church and the east window was that of the solar; all are of two-lights and fourteenth century date (Plate No. VIII). A doorway at the entrance to the churchyard, one on the north side of the tower and another leading from the churchyard to the garden are also from Cumnor and date from the sixteenth century. The entrance to the kitchen garden from the road at Wytham with continuous ovolo moulding belonged to the entrance passage in the north range. Its fellow is now attached to the lodge at the south-east of the park. A two-light window on the north side of the nave is probably also from Cumnor.

The manor house at *Fyfield* was probably erected by Sir John Golafre, who married the heiress of the Fyfields about 1335 and the surviving original work is of this period. In 1554 it came into the possession of Sir Thomas White, Alderman of London, who presented it in the following year to St. John's College, Oxford, which he founded and it still belongs to this society. The house was for long leased to Sir Thomas' family and was refashioned at the end of the sixteenth century. There was considerable restoration in 1868.

The house originally consisted of hall with projecting porch, a kitchen on the west with the solar above and some structure, now destroyed, at the east end of the hall. In Elizabethan times the hall was divided into two rooms and the walls raised to provide two storeys above and a large wing added to the west of the solar range.

The porch has an inner doorway ornamented with ball flower and above is a timber framed stage containing a small chamber with a wooden two-light window. In the west wall of the hall are three service doorways and in the north-east angle are two doorways, which formerly communicated with a wing now no longer in existence, which may have contained the chapel. The kitchen contains little in the way of original features but the solar above is in a very unaltered state save for the large wooden window at the south end, which is probably Elizabethan. The solar is timber framed, but the kitchen is of stone construction. There is a fine open roof with tie beam supported by carved braces and queen posts supporting a collar and cusped wind braces.

*Sutton Courtenay* "*Abbey*," though belonging to the monks of Abingdon, was never in any sense a monastic establishment. Though now quadrangular in plan it was originally L-shaped and

belongs to the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Early in the sixteenth century the east and south ranges were added and the northern extended eastwards, thus completing the quadrangle. The walls are mainly of rubble masonry, now heavily stuccoed, and the roofs are tiled. The upper storey of the east range overhangs and is of timber framed construction.

The hall occupies the west range and measures 40ft. by 24ft. The west front of the hall was terribly disfigured early in the nineteenth century when the original two-light windows, which were carried up into small gables as at Cumnor Place, were destroyed, the walls raised in front of the eaves and embattled and large ugly windows reaching to the ground inserted. An illustration in volume II of Turner and Parker's "Domestic Architecture in the Middle Ages" shows the exterior before mutilation. The screens are at the south end and are entered by doorways with two-centred heads and moulded labels. The windows on the east side of the hall are apparently of the sixteenth century. The hall retains its magnificent timber roof in two bays and of arched collar braced construction. The solar occupies the first floor of the western portion of the north range and has a two-light window with flowing tracery and transom in the west wall. In the north wall is a contemporary two-light window with a square head. The ancient roof is concealed by a plaster ceiling. The proportions of the solar have been spoilt by the insertion of modern partitions and it is at present uncertain how far east the north wing originally extended. The eastern portion may be fifteenth century work. There is a projecting stone chimney stack with octagonal shaft towards the east end of the north wall, which serves a late Gothic fireplace on the first floor. The undercroft of the solar has two-light square-headed windows of fifteenth century date on the north and west. The solar is approached by a stair from the north-east angle of the hall, which may well be the original arrangement. The west end of the south range is of the fourteenth century and has a window in the west wall similar to that of the solar.

Several medieval sewers have been found in the grounds suggesting an elaborate system of sanitation.

*To be continued.*