

HORLEY CHURCH "RESTORATION."

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SINCE the visit of the Society to Horley, on the 30th June, 1877, and the description of Horley Church in our *Collections*,¹ a "restoration" of the structure has been commenced and is now (January, 1881) approaching completion. It therefore becomes interesting to see how far the theory as to the history of the structure, deduced from its appearance at that time, has been verified or refuted by the building itself, when freed from plaster and accumulations of later years. It will be a satisfaction to our readers to learn that, though nothing has been discovered to corroborate the theory then propounded as to the successive erection of the parts of the building, nothing whatever has appeared tending to raise any doubt of its correctness. Indeed, it may be said that nothing of importance has been discovered, and it is therefore only necessary to note what has been done, and the present state of the building.

The whole interior of the church has been cleared out, and the level of the floor lowered, necessitating new plinths, upon which the bases of the nave piers rest; these are square, with angle-scrolls. Hot water pipes, proceeding from a furnace at the west end, are being laid down.

The nave roof has been made good, or renewed, whereby its former clumsiness has disappeared.

¹ *Surrey Archæological Collections*, Vol. vii, p. 169.

The poor, very modern, varnished deal gallery in the aisle, in which stood the organ and choir (the latter, if they could sit, which is not certain, could not possibly have knelt), has disappeared, as also the pewing throughout the church, including the dated pews in the chancel, the rising seats for school children at the east end of the aisle, and likewise the lower part of the 15th-century screen that parted off the eastern end of the aisle which probably formed the Chapel of St. Katherine, from the rest of the aisle. This screen, it will be recollected, showed traces of its original colouring of red and green.

Remains of a simple pattern, in red-brown, painted on the east respond, exist, but other remains of colour which were discovered in the chancel have not been preserved.

The timber tower standing, it will be remembered, within the walls of the aisle, at its west end, has happily been preserved and repaired, though its destruction was at one time advocated; the arch from it into the nave has been opened again; but the late-17th-century screen on its east side is gone.

The fine peal of bells have been rehung in new frames, at a considerable expense.

An unhappy wooden porch at the west end of the nave, though possessing neither antiquity nor comeliness to commend it, has been preserved.

The excellent north door remains uninjured, even though, in consequence of the mouldings being somewhat decayed, it must have been a temptation to the restorer. On scraping off the whitewash a good many incised line-and-dot devices became apparent.

The whole of the windows in the north aisle (see general view and full-page wood engravings) were of Early Decorated date, and contained some of the best tracery existing in the county; and with the exception of one, the monials of which were somewhat decayed, they were in excellent preservation, and fit to last for another 500 years; but the whole of them have been entirely destroyed and replaced by copies. An original painting by one of the old masters may be worth a thousand pounds, while a modern copy, however carefully

and cleverly made, is not worth a tithe of the sum. The heads of these windows contained more or less perfect, stained glass,¹ of the original date; that in the centre being rich ruby glass. Early Decorated glass is decidedly uncommon in England, and of the few fragments remaining in the county of Surrey I do not recollect any so good. This old glass has disappeared, either having been broken up by ignorant or careless workmen, or sold to form an addition to the Pickwick museum of some collector of curiosities. I think I am only acting as foreman of a jury of Surrey archæologists, in presenting, as a wanton and barbarous act, the destruction of these windows and their glass.

The windows on the south side of the nave have been destroyed and the tracery recopied (perhaps not exactly), though they possessed as little as possible of interest. The miserable window at the east end of the chancel² has alone been preserved, owing its preservation to the stained glass (poor stuff) which it contains, and which was set up as a memorial of the former Vicar.

The transept-like chapel on the south of the nave is to be utilised as a vestry and organ chamber, though the modern stained glass which its window contains will thereby be concealed.

¹ See Woodcuts in our Vol. vii, pp. 172, 173.

² See general view of the church, *ut supra*.