THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, GUILDFORD.

By J. H. PARKER, C.B.

THIS church is an extremely curious and interesting one, from the early character of its original portion, and the manner in which it has been enlarged and altered at various periods; so that it contains specimens of every style of the architecture of England in the Middle Ages. The documentary evidence relating to it is very slight, but the church was built very near to the castle, and under its protection. A considerable grant of land here was given to the family of Testard, by William the Conqueror.[1] It is probable that they either originally built the church for the use of their tenants, or rebuilt the old Saxon church, which had been of wood, according to the usual custom of that age. At the time of the Domesday Survey there were in Guildford, 75 tenements, *lagæ*, in which lived 175 men, each of whom may be considered to represent a family of five, which gives a population of 875 persons at that time tenants of the Crown. Such a population would be certain to have a church, and the church would be either in the outer bailey of the castle—as was very usual at that time—or so near to the wall of the castle as to be safe under its protection, In the same manner, S. Thomas' Church, at Oxford, was built close to, and under the protection of, the castle of D'Oyley, and there are many other instances.

We have notices in the Patent Rolls of two rectors of this church—one in the second year of Edward III., the other in the sixteenth of Richard II.—and there is work in the church that may be of both of these periods. As usual in our parish churches, we have to depend on the construction of the fabric itself, and the architectural details for the history, which we obtain on the principle of comparison with well-

[1] In A.D. 1279, 7th Edward I., the Manor of Poyle or Puille (?) was held by Walter de la Puille, and had come into his possession as lands granted by William I. to the family of Testard.

known types. By this we see at once that the original fabric was small, and was of the early character usual in the eleventh century, and sometimes earlier, both in England and France, consisting of a rude imitation of Roman. The most usual period for the erection of such a structure is the first half of the eleventh century,[2] and the style may be called Anglo-Saxon, of which this is a very rude and probably early example; but the building materials being flints and chalk, we cannot attach much importance to their rough appearance. The portions remaining of the early church are chiefly the central tower, the walls of which are extremely rude work, built of chalk and flint, with clumsy flat pilaster strips, very near together, all built of flints. In the north and south walls, there are also small early windows in the middle of the thickness of these massive walls, and *splayed* as much on the outside as on the inside.[3] These small early windows are placed in an irregular manner, not opposite to each other, and neither of them has any reference to the arches under them. These small arches on each side have evidently been cut through the old walls, and the lower part of the pilaster-strips before mentioned is thus destroyed. These arches, from their architectural details, are evidently of the time of Henry I., or about the year 1100. The walls and windows may very well be fifty years earlier. The pilaster-strips extend to the upper part of the tower, which has later windows inserted in the walls. There are remains of this early character also in the walls of the eastern bay of the chancel.

In the upper part of the tower there are windows of various periods inserted, some rude early lancets of the time of Henry II. or III., others with square heads and foliation of the time of Henry VII.

The stairs to the tower are in a Norman stair turret between the apse of the choir and the south aisle; the steps ascend to the top of the vault of the choir, and then the passage to the tower is upon that vault. The interior of the tower is modernised, and so full of the bells that no early

[2] In the present instance it seems most probable that the wooden church of the Anglo-Saxons was replaced by a stone one in the time of William the Conqueror by the Testard family, to whom he had granted the land.

[3] This feature is usually characteristic of early work, and is reckoned by Rickman among the marks of Anglo-Saxon.

work can be seen. There is also an early example of a *squint* or *hagioscope* from the south transept chapel to the high altar.

I am aware that many well-informed persons consider the tower as of the time of King Alfred, and this involves the whole question, whether the English people were in the habit of building in stone before the eleventh century. I have long since come to the conclusion that they were *not*, and I see no reason to change my opinion. The Anglo-Saxon word for to build is *tymberen*, which implies that they were accustomed to build in wood only. I have never been able to find any remains that I could fairly place earlier than the first half of the eleventh century (with a very few exceptions, and excepting the remains of Roman work). Beda's account of the building of Benedict Biscop, at Yarrow, and Monk's Wearmouth, in Northumberland, show that they were quite exceptional buildings *in the Roman manner*. The small remains that we have of them are just enough to show that the existing buildings are *not* of that period, but have been rebuilt in the time of William Rufus, as recorded in the "Durham Chronicle," published by the Surtees Society, and edited by the late Mr. Raine. The construction of the present buildings agrees with that period, and there are some small portions of the earlier building used as old materials and built in. In the long interval between the years 500 and 1000[4] (in round numbers) it appears to

[4] The following passage from Radulphus Glaber, a contemporary writer, shows clearly that a great change took place immediately after the year 1000, and from that period the revival of building began, each nation competing with others. Each had some Roman building to serve as a type, and M. de Canmont has shown that the provincial character of the different provinces of Gaul in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, arose from copying the particular Roman building, that served each as an example. My friend Mr. Freeman, whose wonderful learning and great ability make his opinions very important, puts this great change half a century later in his very valuable History of the Norman Conquest. My experience and long observation have led me to a different conclusion. I consider the very rude buildings of the first half of the eleventh century, and the rapid development of each succeeding generation from that time, as proof that in the tenth century, the art of building in stone had almost died out, and all the other arts were at the lowest possible ebb. Immediately after the year 1000 the great revival began. The bad construction, the very wide joint of the masonry, and the rude appearance of the buildings of the first half of the eleventh century, make them appear much older than they really are. Many of the buildings also appear to have been built by carpenters rather than by masons, especially the towers on the bank of the Humber. Sir Charles Anderson pointed out long since that the towers called Anglo-Saxon, are far more numerous in the Danes' country in the east of England than in any other part. We do not find them in Denmark nor in Germany at all earlier than in England. Neither do we find any Norman keep in Normandy earlier than that of Gundulph in England. I believe Gundulph to have

have been the general custom in most parts of the world to live in wooden houses, and to use wood almost entirely for other buildings also. In the tenth century, we are told by cotemporary writers, that it was the general belief of the people that the world would come to an end at the year 1000. This led them to erect temporary buildings only, but immediately after that year, when they believed that the world was to last another thousand years, they began vigorously to build in stone, and that very substantially, though rudely at first. There were no masons—no skilled workmen, the people had everything to learn from imitating the Roman buildings then remaining. At first their construction was very clumsy, but they sometimes imitated the Romans in pounding their lime, mixing it with gritty sand and using it hot, by which they had the advantage of the great expansion of crystallisation of lime as it cools; and their walls are consequently as hard and as durable as natural rock, in many cases, but this was only by accident. They were ignorant of the principle, and many of their walls were as badly built as possible—no good mortar being used.

These early buildings were for the most part swept away by the Normans. Some antiquaries overlook the fact that the *first half* of the eleventh century was a great building era everywhere; and although we have more buildings of that period remaining in France than in England, there is reason

been the inventor of that particular style of castle or keep which was rapidly taken up and followed, because it exactly met the wants of the Normans in England at that period. Most of the keeps in Normandy are of the twelfth century. The castles of the time of the Conquest were of earthworks and wood only.

"Igitur infra supradictum millesimum tertio jam fere imminente anno, contigit in universo pæne terrarum orbe, præcipue tamen in Italia et in Galliis, innovari ecclesiarum basilicas, licet pleræque decenter locatæ, minime indiguissent. Æmulabatur tamen quæque gens Christi-colarum adversus alteram decentiore frui. Erat enim instar ac si mundus ipse executiendo semel, rejecta vetustate, passim candidam ecclesiarum vestem indueret. Tunc denique episcopalium sedium ecclesias pæne universas, ac cætera quæque diversorum sanctorum monasteria seu minora villarum oratoria, in meliora quique permutavere fideles."—Radulphus Glaber, *De Innovatione ecclesiarum in toto orbe*, in his *Histor.* l. iii. c. 4.

(*Translation.*) As the third year after the year 1000 was on the point of commencing, they began throughout nearly all the world, chiefly however in Italy and the Gauls, to renew the basilicas of the churches, although most of them were decently enough located and little required such an operation; but each Christian nation competed with others to enjoy a better place of worship. It was therefore as though the world were shaking itself to cast off its old age and put on a white robe of churches. Indeed, almost all the religious buildings, cathedrals, monasteries of saints, and smaller village chapels, or oratories, were changed by the faithful into something better.

On this subject see also Milman's History of Latin Christianity.

to believe that nearly all the rude towers that are called Anglo-Saxon, are of the eleventh century, some before and some after the Norman Conquest, which made no *immediate* change in the style of building. Norman workmen had been employed in England in the time of Edward the Confessor, and the same style continued to be used down to the year 1100. The well-known towers in the lower part of the city of Lincoln are of the latter half of the eleventh century, and after the Conquest. The date of Deerhurst is known by an inscription of the time of Edward the Confessor. This tower at Guildford is so very rude, that it *may* be of any period; but that arises from the building materials being chalk and flint. Some persons are very apt to overlook the necessary influence of the building materials in all cases. From the earliest ages the size of the stones used in building has been governed, to a great extent, by the quarry from which the stone was taken, and in the early part of the eleventh century the buildings always have a very rude character, which gives them the appearance of being much older than they really are, and this seems to me to be the case in the present instance.

The church had three apses—one to the chancel, the end of which has been cut off to widen the street, and a large perpendicular window brought from the old outer wall and inserted in the new end wall. The other two apses are to the aisles; these are of later character, of the time of Henry II., the period of the transition of styles, to which also belong the larger arches on the east and west sides of the tower, which are insertions in the old walls, replacing the small early arches. Each of the apses of the aisles belongs to a chantry chapel of considerable size, extending down the side of the choir and of the tower, with a wide arch of the time of Henry III. inserted under the earlier window over it, at the west end of the transept chapel, now opening into the aisle of the nave and showing that the roofs of the aisle were originally much lower than the present ones. The aisles were narrow, with lean-to roofs only, and have been rebuilt and enlarged at a later period. The two bays of the choir have different vaults—the one next the tower is of the time of Henry II., that of the western bay is of the time of Henry III. The vault of the apse of the south aisle of St. Mary's Chapel is later Norman; that of the northern apsidal chapel of

S. John the Baptist has been altered, and a window inserted in the time of Edward II. and another in the time of Richard II.

The pier-arches of the nave are of the transitional character of the time of Henry II., with pointed arches, square edged and moulded.[5] The pillars are round, and the capitals have a square abacus, and are scalloped. The actual work of these capitals is modern, but carefully copied from an old one which is preserved.

There is a round moulding of transitional Norman character at about six feet from the ground round the apses on the exterior, and along the wall of the transepts; but this does not extend along the wall of the nave aisle, indicating that wall to be of a later date. In the interior there is on the north side a similar moulding, which is continued along the wall of the nave aisle, but at a different level; this indicates that the north aisle was widened, and the outer wall rebuilt at an earlier period than the south aisle, which has not this moulding either inside or outside. The wide arches on the west side of the transept are of the time of Henry III., inserted when the aisle was widened; the windows over each of these arches show that the aisle was originally narrow and low, with a lean-to roof only. Windows were never made to look from one part of the church into another. The early windows in the tower show that there were no transepts originally, and these windows on the west side of the transepts of Henry II. also show that there were only narrow and low aisles at that time. The north doorway has good Early English mouldings of the early part of the reign of Henry III., and are evidence that the north aisle wall was rebuilt at that period.[6] One of the capitals near this is made

[5] The buildings of this period of transition between the Norman or Romanesque style, and the Gothic or Pointed, are so numerous and important, alike in this country and in France, that they ought to have a more specific name in English than "The Transitional Style." The French archæologists call it "The Plantagenet Style," and that is a good historical name for it. These buildings belong to the time of the Plantagenets, and in their own country of Anjou and Poictou, there are very good examples of the transition, especially the hospitals founded by Henry II. in each of the principal towns, in the earlier part of his long reign; and for the most part completed and dedicated before the end of it. The great hospital at Angers for example, will bear comparison with any other building of the same period for advance of style.

[6] Mr. Goodchild, the architect who conducted the restorations, states that he distinctly remembers finding the lower part of an external wall at about half the width of the present north aisle, just within the hot air flues, the gratings of which can be seen in the floor. This, therefore, makes certain what was at first

to correspond with it, and as usual the others all have the square abacus. Many of the windows are single lancets of the time of Henry III., others of the time of Edward II. or III. At the west end of the north aisle, is a small square window under the larger west window, and this is of the character called a "Leper's window;" it had, until the last few years, only an iron grating and a shutter, and no glass. It is not the usual position for a window of this class, and is supposed to indicate that there was a lepers' hospital near this end of the church.

Chantry chapels have been added and enclosed at various periods, as shown by the remains of the altars belonging to each; the two in the apses of the transept have been already mentioned, both of them must have been made in the time of Henry II. The later chantry chapels were each at the east end of the nave aisle, the altar must in each case have stood against the parclose screen under the wide arch at the west end of the transept chapel. There must have been two on the south side, as there are two piscinæ remaining, one of earlier date than the other; these piscinæ are opposite to each other against the piers of the wide arch before mentioned. On the south side we have the ambry only remaining. The piscina has been destroyed; but there is enough to show that there was only *one* altar on this side, and two on the southern side. Those who have been in Brittany, where the old arrangements remain unaltered, will know how numerous these chantry altars are, and the small space that each occupies; they sometimes go down both sides of the aisle. This ambry is in the sill of a decorated window of the time of Edward III., and shows that a chantry was founded at that time.[7]

The west door and window of the nave are of the time of Henry VII., and the opening under the west window of the south aisle was probably inserted at that time.

The roofs of nave and aisle are good open timber work of

only conjecture, from the common practice of building narrow aisles, with lean-to sloping roofs, in the early part of the twelfth century, and rebuilding the outer walls at double the width half a century or a century afterwards, with high gable roofs.

[7] We have in the Patent Rolls a notice of a rector in the second year of Edward III., which may perhaps bear reference to the Chantry Chapel, and another in the 16th of Richard II., which may be connected with another chantry. There is a window of this period in the west end of the south aisle, and under it, in the exterior, is a niche for an image.

the perpendicular style of the fifteenth century, with the corbels carved in the usual grotesque manner; they had long been concealed by plaster ceilings, and have been very judiciously brought to light. The exterior of the whole church is covered with flint and stone dressings well restored.

The divisions between the chapels were probably of wood only, what are called *parclose screens*, which were formerly common in our country churches, but are fast disappearing among the many modern *restorations*.

SUMMARY.

This church is built at the foot of the hill on which the castle stands, on steep sloping ground just above the river, and steep cliffs or vertical banks of hard chalk traverse the ground on which it is built. These have rather the appearance of having been the outer trenches of the earthworks of the castle, which would probably extend to the river. The bank nearest the river is a little to the west of the church, and now has a road in it; the next bank goes across the church, and there are steps up it from the nave to the choir, and from the aisles to the transepts. The old tower stands on the top of this bank, and it seems probable that the original small early church was of three bays only, with a western tower, and that the nave and aisles at a lower level were entirely an addition, not a rebuilding of earlier work.

It seems probable that the early church of stone, or rather flint and chalk, was built by the Testards immediately after the Conquest, and replaced an old one of wood, according to the custom of the earlier period. There probably would be a church at Guildford almost as soon as the castle was built; but as long as the castle itself was of wood, as Mr. Clark has shown to have been originally the case, the church would probably remain of wood also. The style of the early church is certainly not Norman, notwithstanding which it may very well have been built after the Conquest, or it may be of the first half of the eleventh century. The flat pilaster strips cut off by the early Norman arch, on each side of the tower, belong clearly to the earliest style of English architecture. The small windows in the middle of the wall splayed both outside and inside, are another indica-

tion of this early style. There are remains of two small windows in the wall on each side of the easternmost bay of the choir, which show that the original church extended at least as far as that, and had no aisles or side chapels. The first thing to be added were long narrow transepts, which appear to have extended to the present outer walls on each side. This was probably done soon after the year 1100 : the small windows over the aisle on the west side of each of the transepts belong to the same period, and the small arches cut through each side of the tower opening into these transepts.

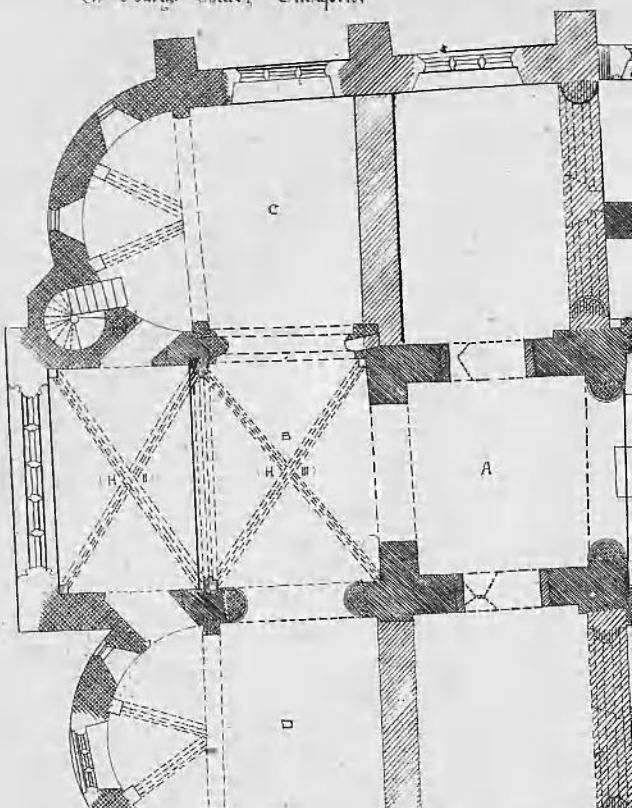
The two apsidal chapels on the east side of the transepts, one on each side of the choir, are another addition of the time of Henry II., or about A.D. 1160. The arches of the nave belong to the same period ; but the aisles were originally only half the width they are at present, and had lean-to sloping roofs, which passed under the windows on the east side of the transept. The outer wall of the aisle was rebuilt in the time of Henry III., or about 1230, on the north side, and 1250 on the south ; the aisles were then made of double the original width, and had high gable roofs instead of the low lean-to roofs. New chantry chapels were made afterwards in these aisles.

There is some reason to think that there was a large wooden porch or Galilee, at the west end along the whole of the west front ; the level of the ground has there been raised three or four feet. Towards the north end of the porch there is a niche for an image, and towards the south end of it an aperture through the wall, apparently a leper's window, and it would seem that this Galilee porch was used as a chapel for the lepers, who were not allowed to enter the church. But we have no evidence of a lepers' hospital at Guildford, though this has been commonly assumed ; and the name of Spital Street was supposed to be connected with it.

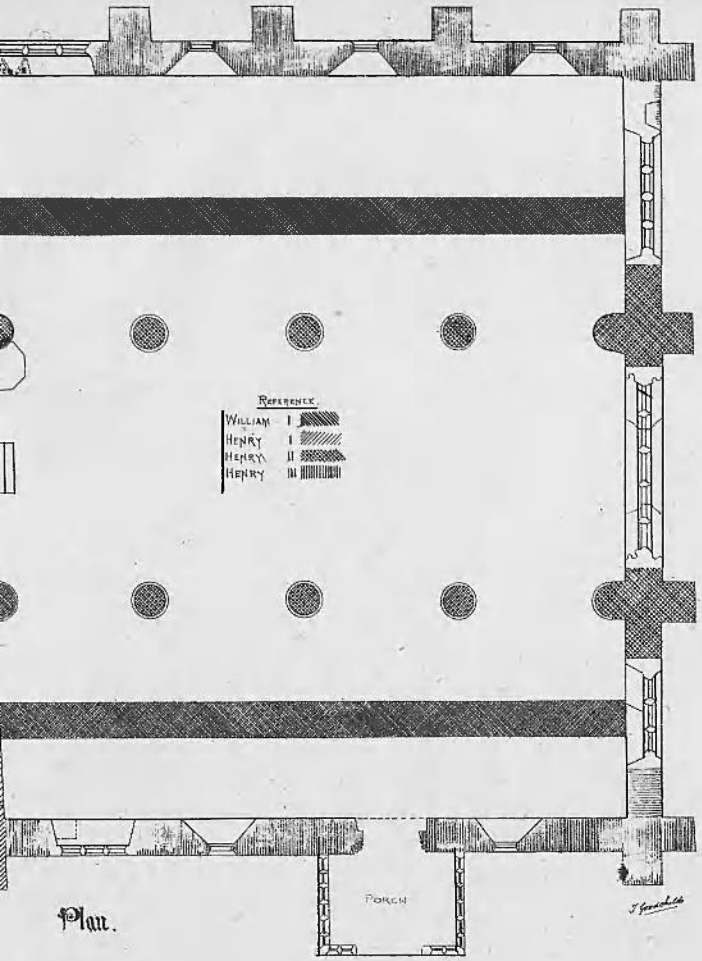
The following account of the paintings on the vault of the chapel is given by Mr. Carlos in the Archæologia, vol. xxvii, read Feb. 24, 1837. His account of Number 2 is evidently erroneous ; the subject is the well-known legend of St. Nicholas, always represented as in this instance :—

"The northern chapel has its chancel, a semicircular por-

St Marys Church Guildford.

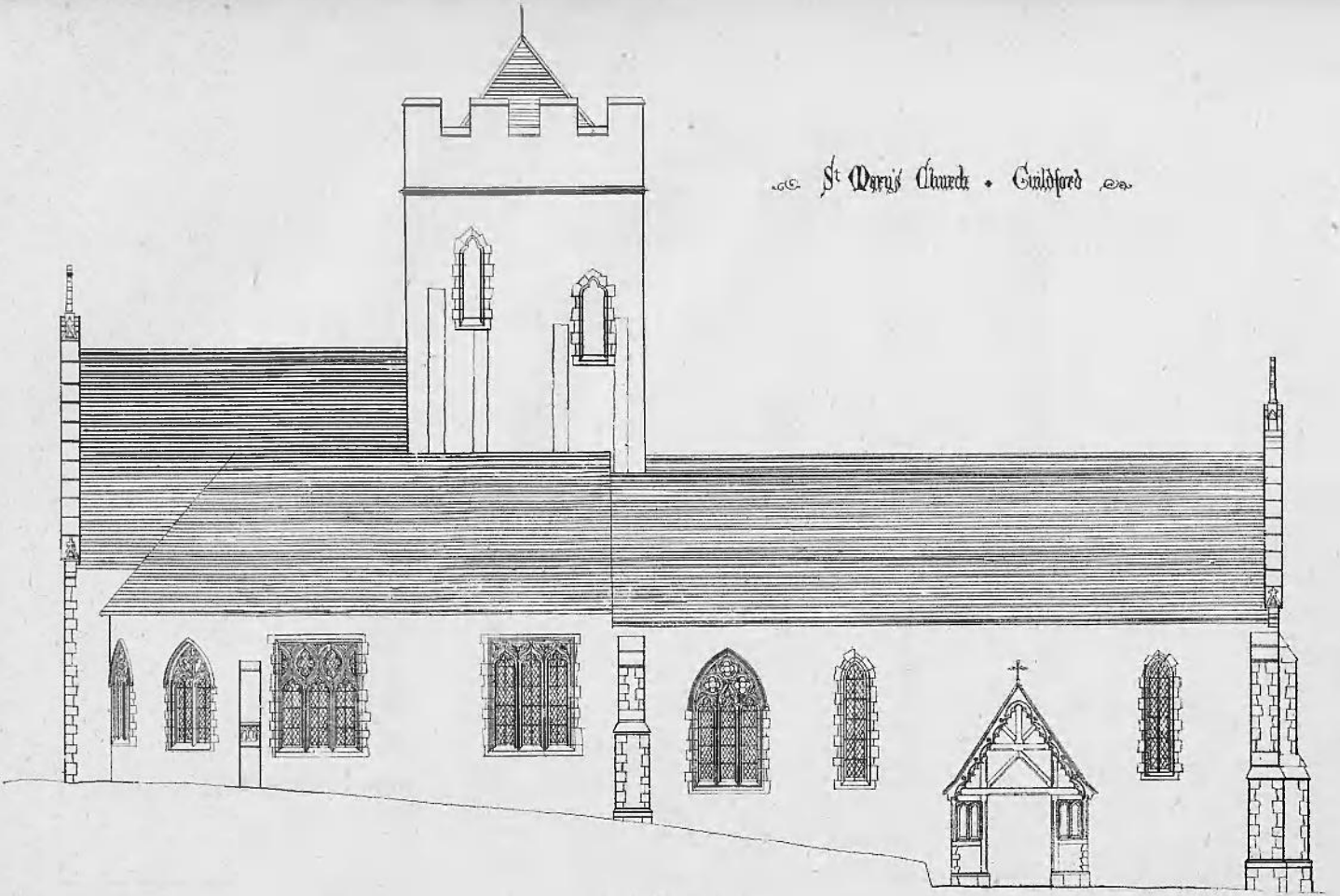


A Tower . B Choir C. St Marys Chapel D St Johns Chapel



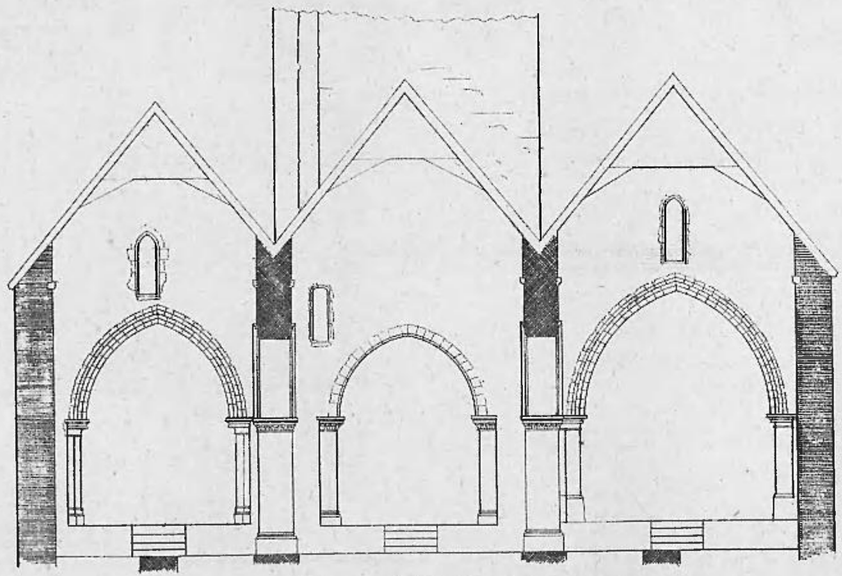
Plan.

St Mary's Church • Guildford



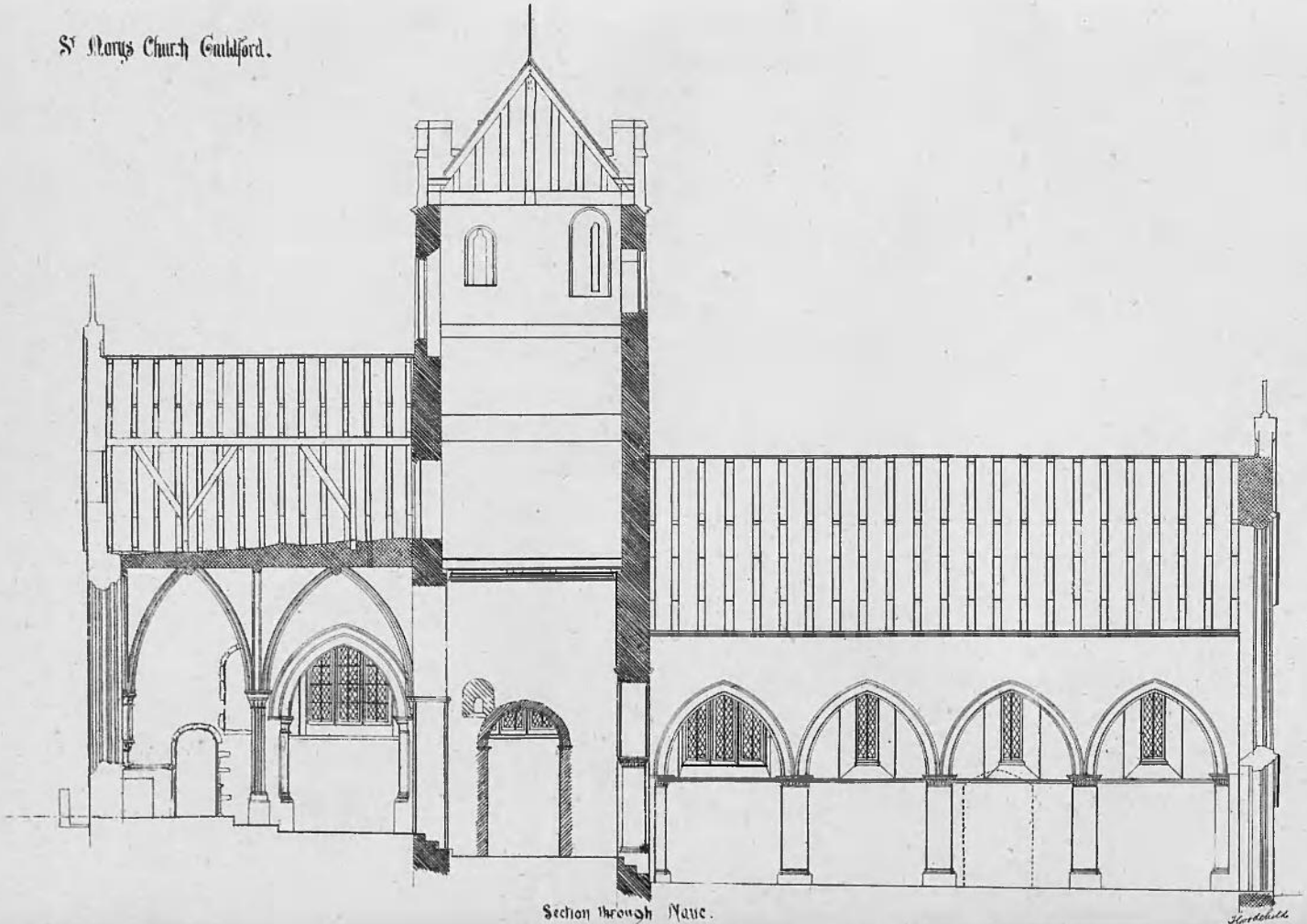
North Elevation

St Marys Church, Guildford



Section through Nave looking East.

St Mary's Church Guildford.



Section through Nave.

tion vaulted in three divisions; the ribs are stone, and the spandrils probably chalk. On the face of the vaulting, and on the spandrils of the arch which divides this portion of the chapel from its nave, are depicted the subjects here described.

"The seven subjects first described are depicted upon the soffit of the vault. An oval compartment in the centre bears a representation of the Godhead seated; His right hand raised in the attitude of benediction, the left sustaining a book or table, inscribed with the letters Alpha and Omega.

"The remaining subjects are upon the spaces intervening between the ribs of the vault, and occur in the following order, beginning from the south side.

"1. Represents Christ passing judgment. Before Him a pardoned man kneeling in prayer, behind whom are two others dragged to judgment by demons.

"2. A figure of Christ, before whom is a person placed within a font in a supplicating posture; a third figure is represented drawing water from a river by two buckets.

"3. Earthly judgment, represented in a group of five figures. A king seated, the accuser and witness standing, and a culprit suffering decapitation.

"4. Heavenly judgment. Several good souls represented as received into the bosom of our Saviour; a bad man condemned to torment, which he is suffering in a tub-like receptacle from a figure armed with a flesh-hook.

"5. The death of the wicked. A judge standing, holding a wand or rod [or sceptre ?], a scribe seated at a desk registering the sentence. Two figures extended dead upon the floor; a third drinking from a chalice.

"6. The death of the good. The least defaced of all the subjects. It represents a corpse placed upon the ground, attended by two priests; in the back-ground an altar upon which is placed a chalice; above, the hand of Providence issuing from the clouds.

"These six subjects are in circular compartments, the remainder of the soffit being filled with ornamental foliage and two angels with censers, so placed as to appear on each side of the figure of the Deity, first described.

"In the spandril to the right hand of the altar, an angel is represented weighing in scales the good and the evil actions of a soul, the body belonging to which is represented below in a

supplicating posture, the enemy of mankind placing his foot upon the evil scale. The corresponding spandril, considerably defaced, exhibits the departure of the damned, who are dragged away by demons, and driven by an angel with a sword. These subjects are on the face of the wall immediately over the opening to the semicircular chancel, and consequently face the nave of the chapel.

"The ribs of the vault and the architrave of the arch are painted in various patterns."