

BECCLES.

SOUTH PORCH.

A DAY'S EXCURSION AMONG THE CHURCHES OF SOUTH-EAST NORFOLK.¹

By CHARLES E. KEYSER, M.A., F.S.A.

It is always a delight to the lover of English ecclesiastical architecture to be able to find a district where all the churches may possess features of exceptional interest. In some instances purely agricultural areas, somewhat removed from the busy hum of commercial life, still retain their parish churches but little altered since they were first built in the eleventh or early twelfth centuries, and, owing to a lack of wealth or prosperity, but little affected by that sweeping tide of restoration which has done so much to destroy the architectural sentiment and interest in so many early buildings.

Such a district I visited first in 1877, and again in 1905, and it seems to present features not generally known, and worth bringing under the notice of the Institute.

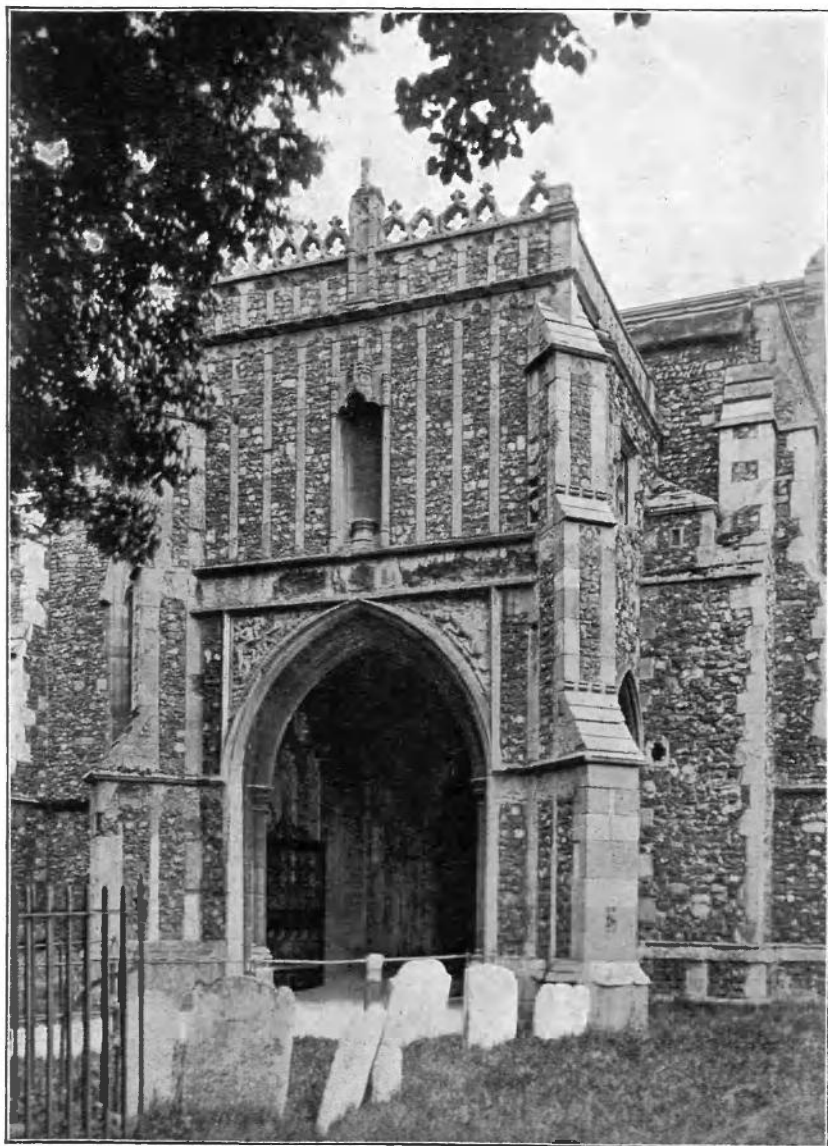
The hundred of Clavering occupies the south-eastern corner of the county of Norfolk, being bounded on the south and east by the river Waveney, which separates it from the sister county of Suffolk. The parishes are fairly close together, and the churches, as a rule, are more interesting for their antiquity than for their size; but I trust that a brief survey of ground, which it would take a day to traverse either on foot or on wheels, together with the illustrations which accompany this paper, will confirm my view that the churches are well worthy of the attention bestowed upon them.

We find that just before the Norman Conquest, almost the whole of this district belonged to Stigand, the great Saxon archbishop of Canterbury. Later on, the Bigods, earls of Norfolk, and other distinguished personages,

¹ Read before the Institute February 6th, 1907.

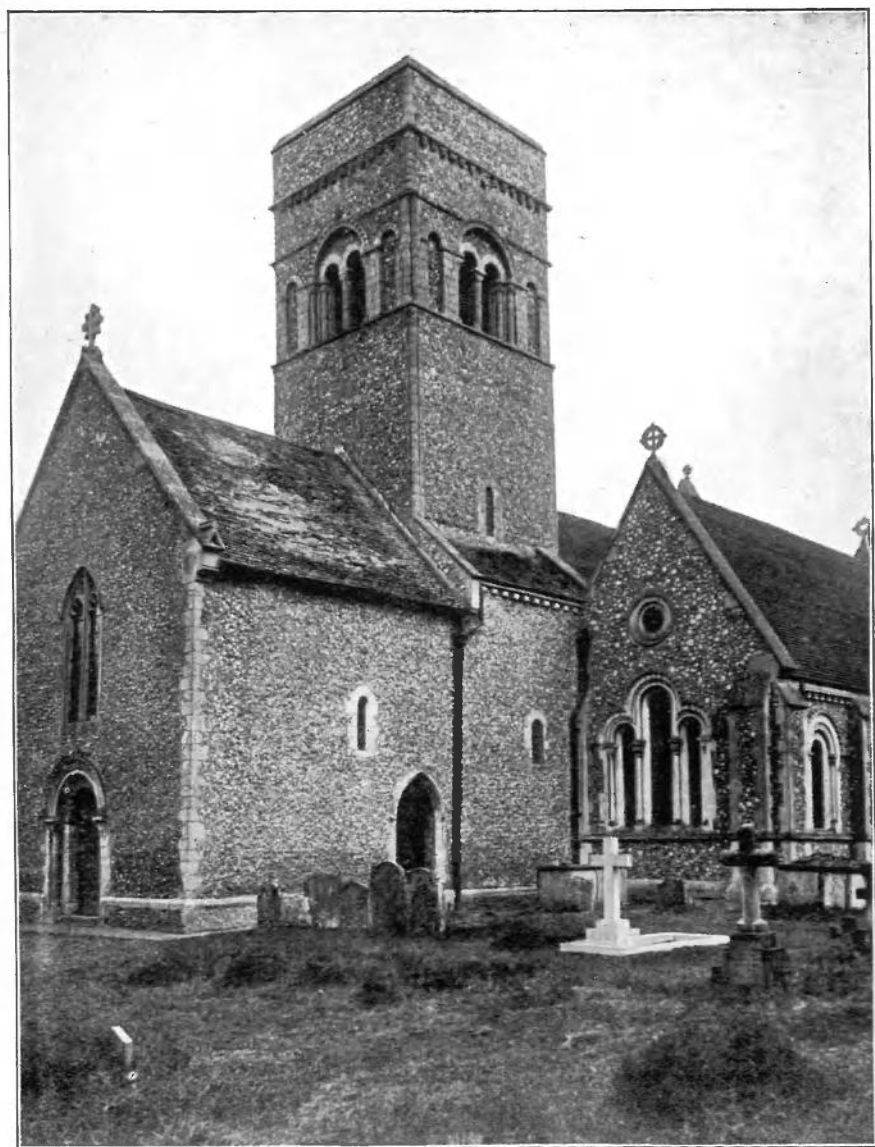
became possessors of the manors and other property in the hundred; and to their munificence, no doubt, the building of these early churches was mainly due.

The most convenient place to put up, so as to be able to make an early start, is the little market town of Beccles, situate on the south, or Suffolk, side of the river Waveney. The church is well known for its fine detached belfry tower and noble south porch (Plate I), both built of beautifully squared stone, and dating from the fifteenth century. The interior is rather bare, the fine rood-screen and other ornamental details having been destroyed by fire some few years ago; but the continuous nave and chancel arcade, with clerestory above, and the seven-light east and west windows, are fine examples of the perpendicular style. Most of the aisle windows are also of this date, but there are three on the north side of the decorated period. The bowl of the font, which is of Purbeck marble, and has two pointed arches on each face, is probably of early thirteenth-century date, and forms the oldest portion of the church. The south porch, with its numerous niches formerly filled with images, and with a parvise above, is an unusually elaborate specimen of fifteenth-century work. The ceiling is groined, and there are three carved bosses: that in the centre with a representation of the Assumption of the Virgin; that on the east with a large head, perhaps the Jaws of Hell, devouring a human figure; and that on the west with buildings, perhaps intended for the Heavenly Mansions. There are numerous shields commemorating the families at whose cost this addition to the church was erected, and crowned M's recording the dedication of the church to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A series of shields also runs round the west doorway which seem to be charged with the implements of the Passion and the Trinity banner. On the north side of the nave is another porch (Plate II) built of flint and ashlar with parvise above, and on the spandrils of the outer arch is on one side a wild man with a club, and on the other a dragon, with a niche above, while the interior is groined, and on one of the bosses are two serpents. The north doorway is earlier than the porch, and has well-moulded orders and a row of roses in a hollow of the hoodmould. The detached tower, in four stages, with



BECCLES.

NORTH PORCH.



GILLINGHAM.

VIEW FROM THE SOUTH WEST.



GILLINGHAM.

INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST.

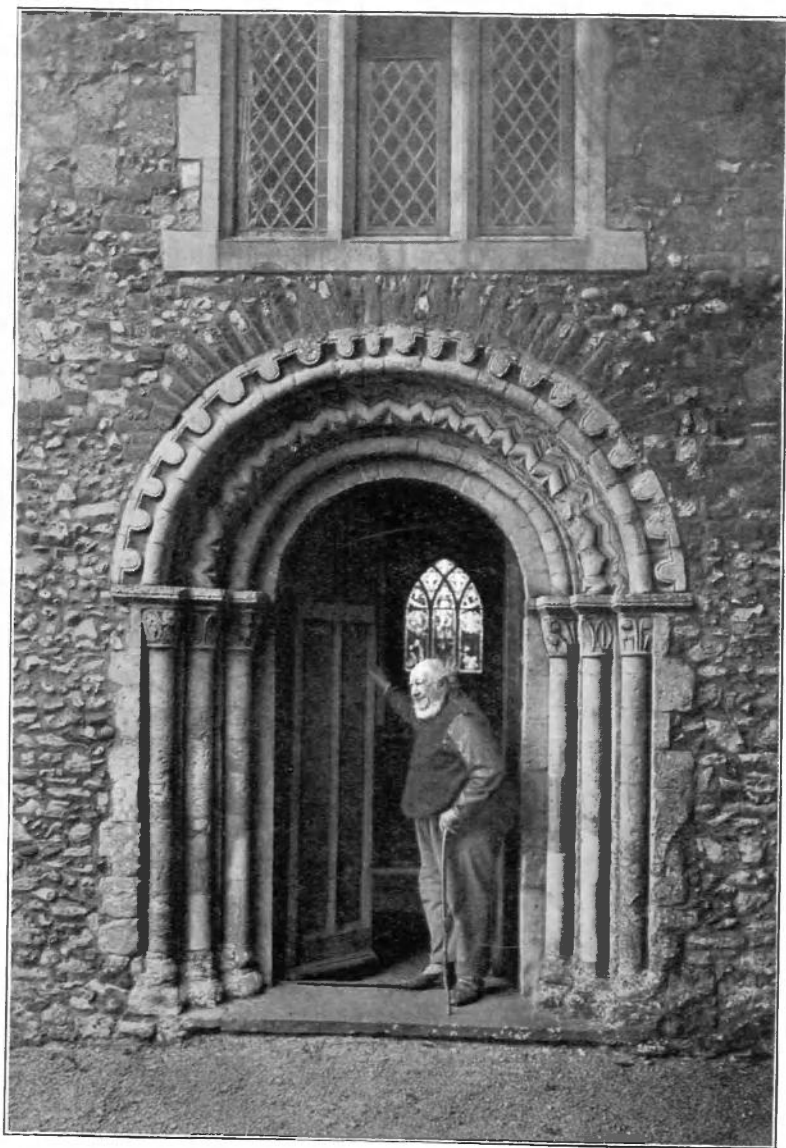
numerous richly-ornamented windows and many shields commemorating the former benefactors of the church, contains three beautiful canopied niches on the west face.

There are numerous other interesting details; but we must not delay, but cross the river. About a mile on the other side stands Gillingham. Here were originally two parish churches, and slight remains of two more chapels or churches are still in existence. The two churches of St. Mary and All Saints stand side by side, about sixty yards apart, separated by the private drive leading up to the Hall. Of All Saints there now remains only a flint tower of fifteenth-century date, almost entirely concealed by ivy; but in the present parish church of St. Mary we find a very singular and early building, much injured by excessive and injudicious restoration (Plates III and IV). The key is kept under a tombstone in the churchyard, and it is not very easy to gain admittance. The church consists of a west tower with an annexe for a baptistery on the west side, a nave with modern north and south aisles, a chancel and a semicircular apse. The tower rests on four massive and plain semicircular headed arches: it is of rather narrow dimensions, though the carving on the window openings, etc., is very rich in detail, and probably of early date. There is a corbel table of heads round the upper portion, while on the belfry stage is a double-light window resting on central and side shafts, and a blind semicircular arch on either side. On the north, which is the most elaborate side, we note the zigzag in the arch, and on the hoodmould of the containing arch the double cone and scallop ornament. On the east side is the bold zigzag in the arch, and the out-turned semicircles or scallops, commonly called the cheese-moulding, which is peculiar to the eastern counties, on the containing arch, and the indented ornament on the blind arch on each side. On the west side are a series of labels and a roll in the arch, and on the south the roll moulding only. On the middle stage on the north is a small window with several courses of incised zigzag. The western annexe was no doubt used as a baptistery, and there is a holy water stoup on the west side of the western tower arch. Good Norman arches with roll

mouldings open from the nave to the chancel, and from the chancel to the apse, which retains its stone groining. At the west end are preserved two panels of the fifteenth-century rood-screen which have a diaper pattern on a red ground and gilding on the spandrils. The arches to the aisles are modern with somewhat elaborate carving in the Norman style. To the annexe and western portion of the nave are two Norman windows on the south and one on the north side. A two-light perpendicular window has been inserted in the west wall. There are three doorways to the western portion: that on the south side has a plain pointed arch and hoodmould, and is an insertion of the fourteenth or fifteenth century; the west doorway is of early Norman date with the billet on the hoodmould, a half-round and bold engaged roll to the angle of the outer order, and a plain inner order and jambs: the outer order has a chamfered abacus, and a massive shaft with a cushion capital. The north doorway is also Norman with a hoodmould chamfered both ways and the alternate billet on each face, the half-round on the face and a bold raised zigzag on the angle of the outer order, a plain inner order and jambs, a chamfered abacus and one shaft to the outer order with the early scroll ornament on the capital. The exterior of the apse has been much restored and the windows renewed.

A drive of two miles brings us to Aldeby, a cruciform church, once partly used as the church of a small priory attached to the great monastery at Norwich (Plate V). The old clerk here is quite a character, and only too delighted to show the church to the intelligent visitor. It is somewhat irregular in its design, and now consists of a central tower, nave, north transept, south chapel and chancel.

The church presents us with good specimens of every style of architecture. The east window of the chancel is early decorated, of three lights, with a hoodmould supported on jamb shafts. A very good piscina and two sedilia of the same date are to be seen in the south wall. The piscina has a trefoiled fringe, and the sedilia have cinquefoiled fringes within the arches. In the south chapel is the matrix of a brass, showing the outline of a figure in grave clothes. On the north of the chancel are two



ALDEBY.

WEST DOORWAY.

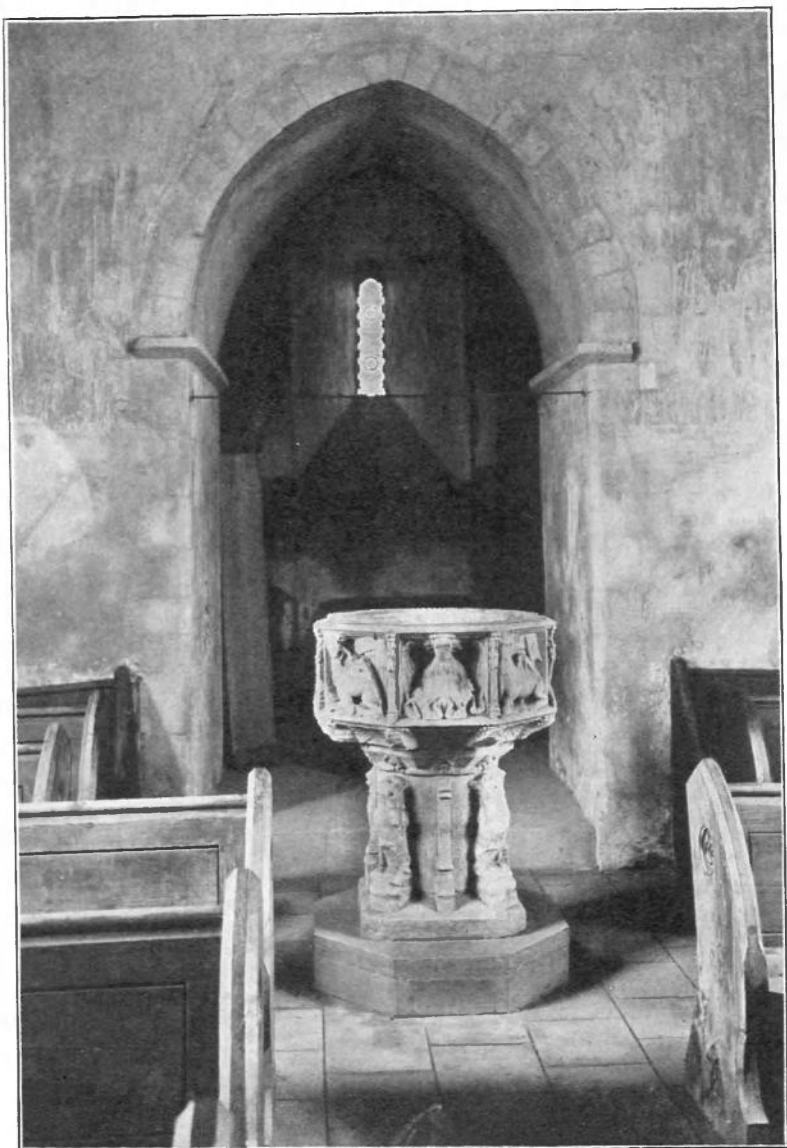
windows, the east of three lights of fifteenth-century date, the west of two lights of the decorated period, but renewed. The tower and tower arches are stated to have been rebuilt in 1633, but that on the east is lofty and probably the original decorated one. The north transept was built in the thirteenth century, and has lancet windows in the west and east walls. In the former is a semicircular recess, and in the latter a recess of late fourteenth-century work, within which was found a mural painting now covered with whitewash. The north window is early decorated, of three lights, while the windows of the south chapel have been renewed. There is a turret on the south-west side of the tower, with an entrance in the chapel. The nave is the earliest part of the church, and one Norman window remains on the north side ; the other windows, one on the north and four on the south, are of the perpendicular period of varied design, and the west window is decorated, of three lights. The font is a fine one of fifteenth-century date, with octagonal bowl, having roses within quatrefoils on the main, and shields on the alternate faces, and eight engaged shafts attached to the angles of the stem. A handsome perpendicular porch stands on the south side, with shields on the spandrels above the outer doorway, charged with the implements of the Passion and the Trinity banner, and with a niche for an image above the arch. The inner south doorway is of earlier date, with hoodmould and delicate mouldings, and seems to belong to the transitional period and to date from about the year 1370. The belfry windows of the tower are of decorated character, and were probably preserved when the tower was rebuilt in 1633.

The most interesting feature in the church is the west doorway, a good specimen of Norman work, of about the middle of the twelfth century. It has a hoodmould and four recessed orders ; on the hoodmould in a hollow are a series of scallops or half-roundels ; the outer order has a roll on the angle, the next a recessed and raised zigzag, the next a roll, and the inner is plain. There is a chamfered abacus, and three engaged shafts to the outer orders. Of the outer capitals, that on the north side represents a quaint head with long ears and beaded

foliage coming from the mouth, that on the south has scroll ornament; while the two inner capitals on each side have leaves and foliage.

A drive of three miles brings us to Toft Monks, where the church, which is mainly Early English with some later insertions, stands in an isolated situation. It consists of a west tower, nave and chancel. The tower is an octagonal Early English structure with a later parapet; on the upper stage, a series of lancets, all of which are blind, with the exception of the centre lancet on each side, form continuous arcading round the tower; on the middle stage lancets and circular openings succeed one another alternately, and on the lower stage there is a single lancet at the west end; the tower arch is low Early English; further lancets are to be found on the north and south of the chancel, and a blocked doorway of the same date stands on the north side of the nave. The south porch is of fifteenth-century date, with a niche over the outer arch. The nave windows are also mainly of this period. The nave roof is high pitched, with some decorative floral colouring on some of the rafters. The chancel arch is perpendicular, and there is a fine canopied piscina on the south side of the chancel. The font is octagonal, of handsome perpendicular work, with the evangelistic emblems on the main, and angels holding shields on the alternate faces of the bowl, and lions attached to the stem (Plate VI).

A drive of another two miles brings us to Haddiscoe, where the church possesses several features of special interest. It consists of a west tower (Plate VII), nave, north aisle, and chancel, and exhibits some Norman details of unusual excellence. The windows are of fourteenth and fifteenth-century date, and many have been renewed. There is a double piscina on the south of the chancel, with two basins and two canopied arches resting on central and side shafts. The chancel arch is decorated, but has been altered in later times; the arcade between the nave and aisle consists of five arches, of which the east central and west have three recessed orders carried down to the ground, probably of fourteenth century date, while the other two are plain pointed transitional Norman. Above are four small quatrefoil windows; on the east face of the



TOFT MONKS.

THE FONT.



HADDISCOE.

WEST TOWER.



HADDISCOE.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

west pier are two trefoiled niches for lamps. The nave roof is high pitched and probably old. The font, which has been scraped, has an octagonal bowl with the evangelistic emblems and angels holding musical instruments alternately and lions attached to the stem, and is probably of fifteenth-century date. On the north wall of the nave facing the doorway, and between the two west arches, is the upper part of a large painting of St. Christopher; the head and shoulders of the saint and the top of his staff remain, and the Infant Saviour with cruciform nimbus, giving the benediction with the right hand and holding the orb in the left, is seated on the shoulder of the saint; the colour has mainly disappeared, but the eyes, etc., have been rather unfortunately touched up; the painting seems to be of the same character and date as that at Fritton, just across the river in Suffolk. The tower arch is very narrow, plain, round-headed Norman work with a chamfered hoodmould. There is a deeply splayed west window. The tower is a circular flint structure, and with the exception of the battlements and upper portion, which are of much later date, is Norman work, and divided by a stringcourse into four stages. In the upper part is a stringcourse with the billet ornament and a corbel table, probably of thirteenth-century date, and on each cardinal face is a double belfry light with two triangular-headed arches resting on a central baluster and side engaged shafts. A double row of the billet ornament runs as a hoodmould to each arch, carried down the outside of the shafts. The triangular arches appear to be of Saxon date, but the accessories are of the later Norman type; there are heads at the apex of each arch, which are also later than the arches themselves. On the two middle stages are small single early Norman windows, and a somewhat larger one restored externally on the west side of lower stage. The nave roof is low pitched, and retains its old lead covering. The south porch is of perpendicular date, with well moulded outer arch and niche for an image above: the inner doorway¹ (Plate VIII) has a hoodmould and two recessed orders: the former is flat with an outer course

¹ Figured by Cotman in his *Architectural Etchings*.

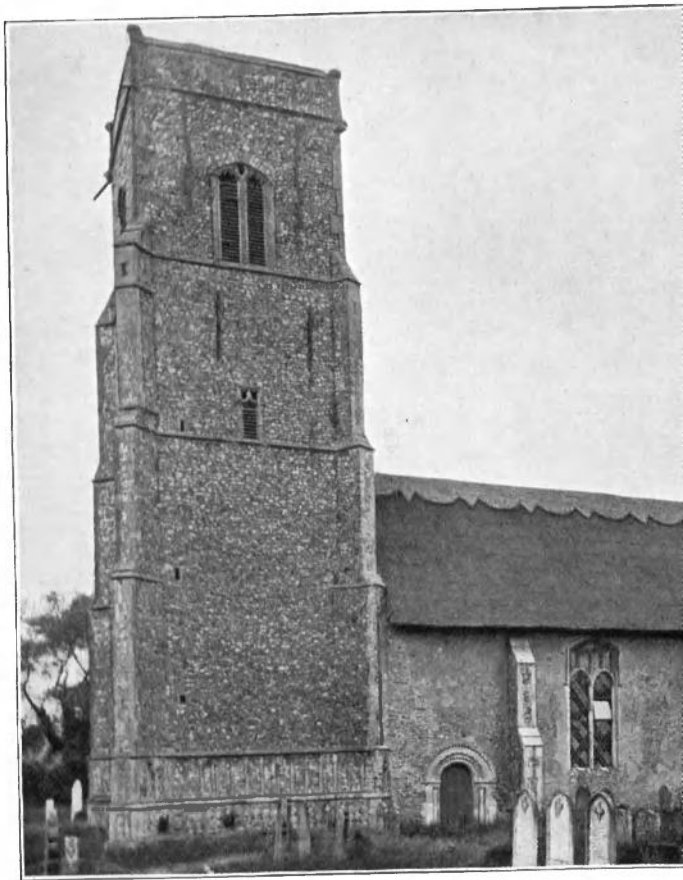
of the saw-tooth and an inner of the chevron ornament, while on the outer order are a series of half-rounds or scallops and an engaged roll at the angle, and on the inner order there are three courses of incised zigzag: the abacus is grooved and chamfered: the hoodmould is continued with a band of the ornamental star down the jambs to the ground, and one shaft on each side carries cushion capitals with some shallow ornament, and a cable band below. The iron-work of the door is old and very good, and above the doorway is a large semicircular-headed niche, with an outer flat course of the beaded star and other ornaments, continued with a series of roundels divided by foliage down the jambs. The arch has the roll resting on banded shafts, two bands on each side ornamented with foliage, and with similar bands forming the capitals and bases. Within the arch is a figure seated on a throne, bareheaded and very richly vested with stole, chasuble and dalmatic: both hands are upraised, and hold what appear to be short sceptres: this figure is about three feet high, and is no doubt intended to represent our Lord, as in other similar instances. There is a portion of a sculpture above His head much mutilated, which may have portrayed the *dextera Dei* emerging from a cloud or some other subject symbolising the divine presence. On the north of the north aisle is another fine Norman doorway with hoodmould and three recessed orders; the hoodmould has the alternate billet ornament, continued down the outer jambs to the ground, while on the outer order are the half-roundels or scallops, and a roll on the angle: on the middle order is an angle roll, and on the inner a series of diamonds or lozenges. Part of the original grooved and chamfered abacus remains, but the shafts have disappeared. On each side of the chancel near the west end are two circular openings, now blocked up, possibly intended for windows.

The motorist might find time to cross the Waveney from here and visit St. Olave's Priory, where some excavations have been recently carried out, Fritton church, with its semicircular apse, a considerable descent from the nave to the chancel, and its very interesting mural paintings of SS. Christopher and John the Baptist, and to pass thence to Herringfleet, with a fine circular Norman tower and



THORPE-BY-HADDISCOE.

VIEW FROM THE NORTH WEST.



THURLTON.



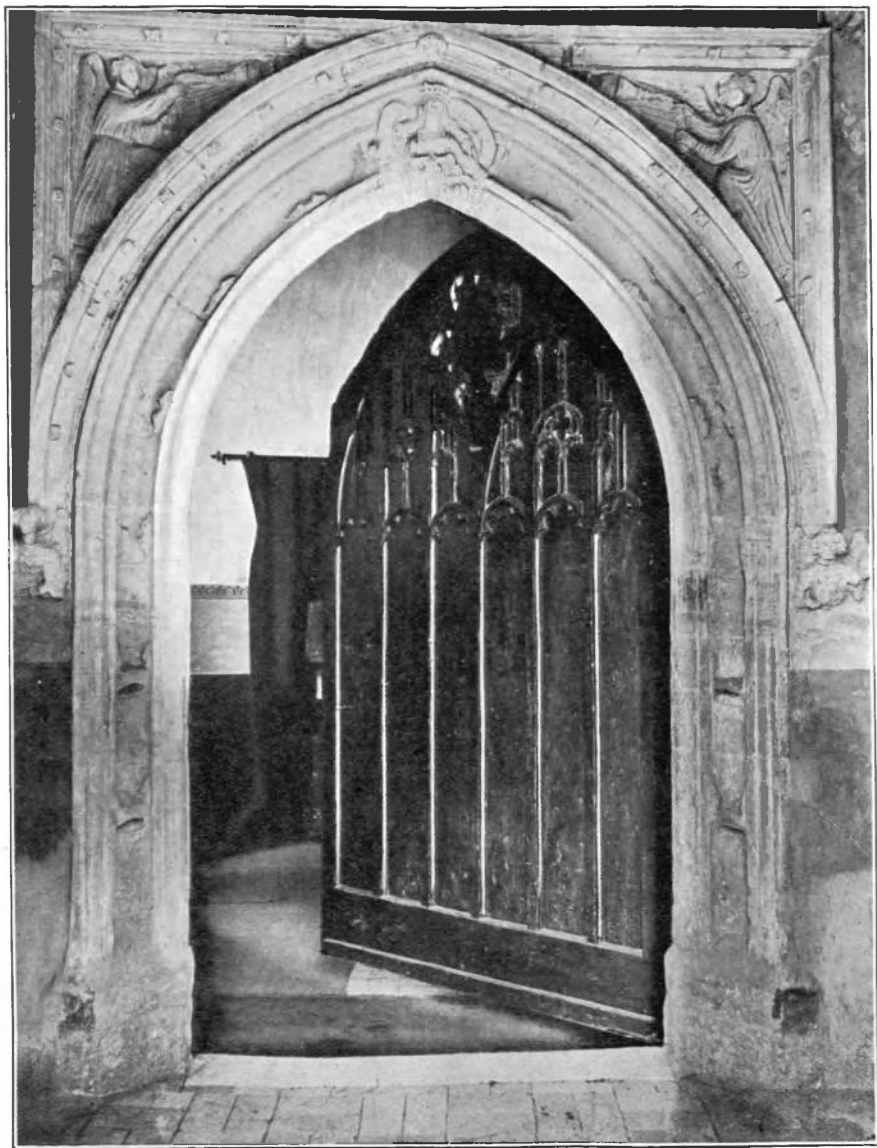
VIEW FROM THE SOUTH.

ornate doorway, but we who are travelling round at a more sober pace must be content to find our way direct to Thorpe St. Matthias or Thorpe-by-Haddiscoe, as it is usually called, a distance of somewhat over a mile (Plate IX).

Here is a simple church, consisting of west tower, nave, and chancel. The chancel is of brick, rebuilt in churchwarden times; the chancel arch has an outer roll moulding, perhaps transitional Norman, resting on perpendicular respond shafts; a single lancet, and a two-light window of same date are on the north of the nave, and two two-light perpendicular windows on the south; within the splay of the east window on the north are the steps to the rood-loft. The tower arch is low, plain, and has a semicircular head, with chamfered abacus, probably very early work. On the south side in west wall of the nave are two pointed arched recesses, probably of Early English date. The Norman font with massive square bowl on a central stem and four circular side shafts, bears four shallow semicircular headed arches on each face. The nave roof is thatched, and on the north is a Norman doorway with plain arch and jambs and chamfered abacus, while the south porch is perpendicular with well-moulded outer arch and two-light east and west windows, now blocked. The south doorway is Norman, with half round hoodmould, and a roll on the angle of the arch. The jambs have been altered. The west tower, built of flint, is the most interesting feature in the church. It is circular in form and built in four stages, with later battlements; the upper stage is Norman, with a double arched belfry light on each cardinal face having central banded and side shafts with roll mouldings. On the next stage are some masonry strips, and some small blocked early windows, and on the next some semicircular lights with the flat roll on the arch. It is probable that the lower part of the tower is of pre-Norman date.

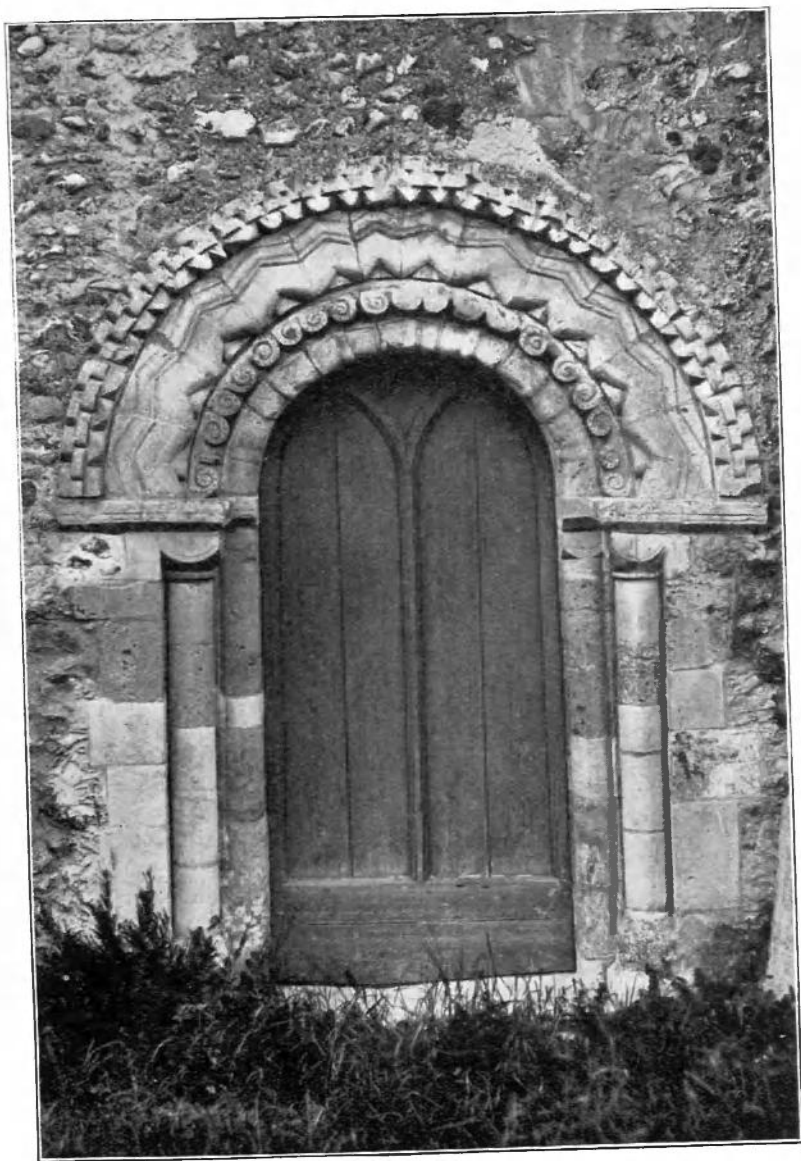
Another mile will bring us to Thurlton church, which, next to Beccles, is the largest in our excursion (Plate X). It consists of a west tower, nave and chancel, and, like the other churches in the district, is built entirely of flint, with a covering of roughcast, some of which remains on the walls of the nave and chancel. The east window of

the chancel is perpendicular, of three lights; there is a two-light decorated window on south; and on the south and on the north there is a perpendicular window of two lights. The chancel arch is also of this period, indeed the church appears to have been entirely rebuilt in the fifteenth century, the south doorway, a relic of the former Norman church, having fortunately been preserved. The rood screen is a very beautiful specimen of fifteenth-century work, the carving of the canopies and other decorative portions being excellent. The panels and several mouldings retain the colour and gilding with which they were originally enriched, though some of the decoration has been renewed; some traces of colouring remain on the jambs of the chancel arch. The nave windows are all of perpendicular character, one on the south being a high side window. The tower arch is fine and lofty, and there is a three-light west window. The font, with octagonal bowl, having shields on the main, and Tudor roses on the alternate faces, with angels on the cornice below and lions on the stem, is no doubt of late fifteenth-century date. On the north wall is a very large representation of St. Christopher; the groundwork of the picture seems to have been in red, and the whole is surrounded by a border of roses: the saint, as usual, is moving from west to east, and grasps the tree, which he uses as a staff, plunged into the water in his left hand, while his right is raised, probably in the act of protesting against the weight of his burden: he has a beard, and wears a turban and flowing garment, his left arm being bare to the elbow, and his legs to the knees: his feet are hidden in the water, in which six quaint fishes are disporting themselves. The Infant Christ is seated behind his head with turban, flowing hair, and a garment with a cross on the breast. He is giving the benediction with the right hand, and holding the orb, on which is the cross and banner, in His left. This is a very fine and large representation of this familiar subject, but unfortunately the colouring has almost perished. On the opposite south wall was found the lower part of a painting of St. George and the Dragon, which has been whitewashed over; but the vicar promises to bring it to light again.



THURLTON.

NORTH DOORWAY.



THURLTON.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

The north doorway (Plate XI) within a porch is very fine fifteenth-century work, with square label above. On the label and hoodmould are numerous small roses, and in a hollow in the arch and down the jambs a series of crowns much mutilated. At the apex of the arch is a sculpture of the Blessed Trinity, with the Almighty seated and holding a small figure of Christ on the Cross between His knees. The label and hoodmould terminate on an angel holding a scroll on each side, and in the spandril space on either side is a large angel swinging a censer. The whole composition has been richly coloured, and the door, with very elegant panelling, is of the same date. The porch is of flint, with east and west windows, the outer arch with square label and shields in the spandrils, and canopied niche with pedestal for an image above. The tower, of carefully dressed flints, is fine and lofty, in three stages, with panelled upper cornice, two-light belfry windows, and small windows in the middle stage, receding angle buttresses, and fine flint and ashlar panelling round the base, all of the fifteenth-century period. The nave and chancel roofs are thatched. The south doorway¹ (Plate XII) is a relic of the old Norman church, and a very fine example of that style. It has a hoodmould and three recessed orders: on the former are two rows of the out-turned scallops or cheese moulding and a row of ornamented nail heads or cones on the chamfer, while on the outer order is a band of small and bold raised zigzag, on the next a series of beaded scrolls or erozier heads, on the inner, the double cone with bands at intervals on the face, and zigzag on the soffit. There is a chamfered abacus with the quarter round moulding on the main portion, one shaft to the two outer, and engaged shafts to the inner order, all with cushion capitals.

There is an excrescence for the rood-loft staircase on south side east end of nave, and a plain doorway on the south of the chancel.

A journey of about a mile will bring us to Norton-sub-Course, where we find a very interesting church of the early part of the fourteenth century, consisting of a west tower, nave and chancel. The tower is circular and stands to the north of the centre of the

¹ Figured by Cotman in his *Architectural Etchings*.

nave. The upper windows are new, but some small lancets in the lower stages show it to be a relic of a church existing at least as early as the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The north doorway, which is blocked, is a good specimen of late decorated work, with a hoodmould and various mouldings continued without imposts to the ground. The south doorway is very similar with hoodmould on heads, three recessed orders with the quarter round and other mouldings all continued without imposts down the jambs to the ground. There is also a good doorway of the same date on the south of the chancel. A stringcourse runs along the exterior of the chancel walls. The windows are all excellent decorated work, the east being especially fine, of five lights with four tiers of quatrefoils in the head. The other windows are all of two lights, somewhat varied in their design, but all elegant examples of this style; externally they have labels or hoodmoulds. Internally the chancel windows have containing arches supported on slender jamb shafts. There is no chancel arch, but the division between the nave and chancel is marked by a tie beam. The roofs are underdrawn. On the south of the chancel is a very beautiful piscina and three sedilia, all of the decorated period¹ (Plate XIII).

The former has two basins under two pointed arches with cinquefoiled fringe, resting on central and side shafts and quatrefoil above, all enclosed in an ogee headed hoodmould, with rich finial and head terminations, while the latter are also very beautiful, the eastern seat being on a higher level than the other two. They have flat segmental headed arches with cinquefoiled fringe, and continuous hoodmould with ogee head and finial above each sedile on head terminations. They are supported on two slender shafts, and engaged shafts on east and west, all with well moulded capitals. On the north side is a founders' tomb or Easter sepulchre with a flat arch.

There are considerable remains of old glass; in the south chancel window is a seraph with his feet on a wheel and several shields, one having gules two lions

¹ Figured by Cotman in his *Architectural Etchings*.



NORTON-SUB-COURSE.



PISCINA AND SEDILIA.

passant guardant or ; another, azure three mitres or, for the diocese of Norwich ; another gules, a chevron or, between three leopards' heads argent, impaling sable, a chevron ermine between three bulls' heads argent. The upper and lower doorway of the rood-loft staircase remain in the north wall, while in the north wall of the nave are three niches, probably for images, and there is another on the east splay of a window on the south side ; and a small canopied piscina marks the site of an altar on the south side near the east end of the nave. The interior arches of the north and south doorways are segmental headed.

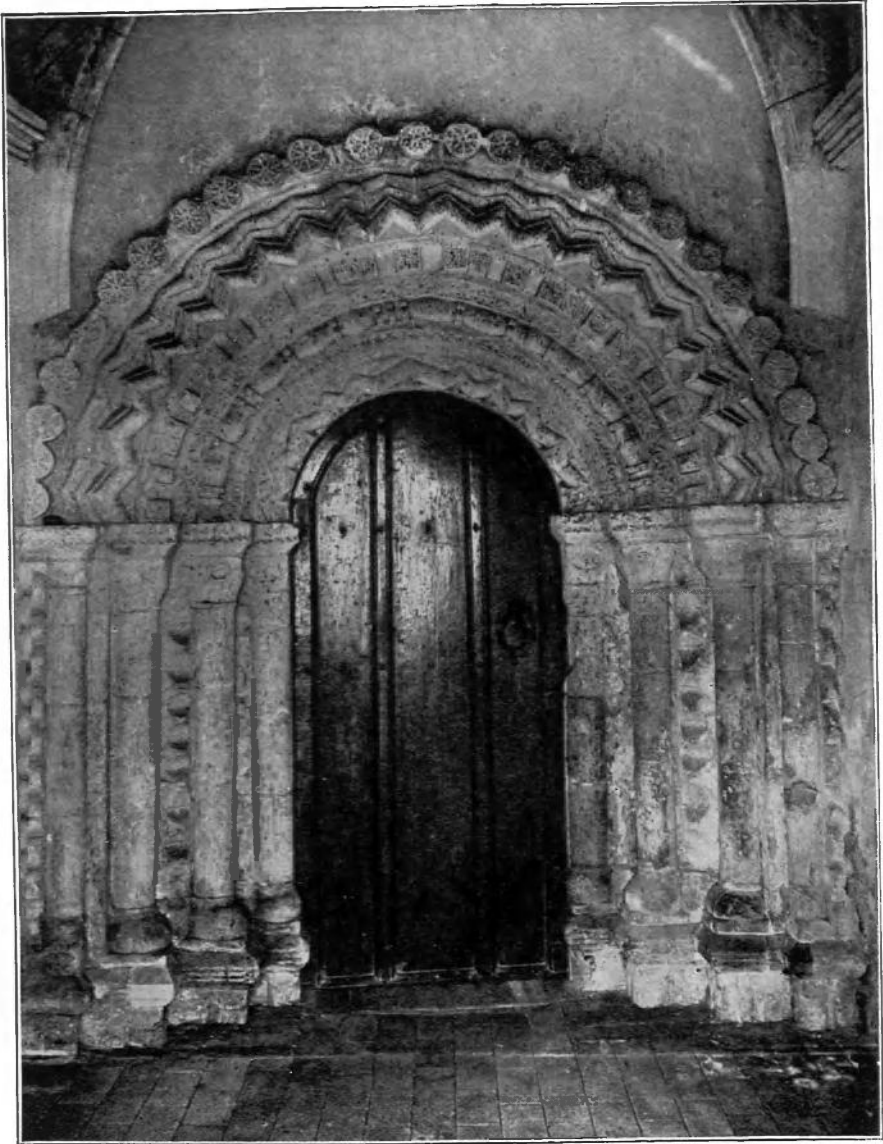
The font is a relic of the thirteenth century church, having an octagonal bowl of Purbeck marble with two arches on each face and a plain stem of white stone. The tower arch is low with chamfered abacus, and between it and the nave there is a blocked pointed arch.

Another mile and a half on our round brings us to Heckingham, where the church has a west tower, nave, north aisle and apsidal chancel. It is a difficult matter to obtain the key of this church, but there is nothing of interest in the interior, which has been smothered with whitewash. The apse has been much altered, the east and main north and south windows having been renewed. There is a lancet in north-east and south-east face on either side of the east window. The chancel arch on semi-octagonal responds is decorated. The lower rood-loft doorway remains on the north side at the east end of the nave. Three massive plain arches of nondescript character stand between the nave and the aisle, which latter has been much altered and repaired in brick. There is a two-light decorated window at the east end and another one on the north side. The font has a massive square bowl supported on shafts with foliated capitals, and is probably Norman. The tower has been altered, the lower part is round, the upper octagonal with lancet lights. Most of the other windows are of brick, but the west of lower stage is a single-light perpendicular one.

On the north of the north aisle is a portion of a blocked semicircular headed Norman doorway with bold raised zigzag in the arch, chamfered abacus and plain jambs ; on the west side is the abacus with quarter-

round moulding, and shaft with scalloped and foliated capital, to a former outer order. The nave is thatched, as is the south porch, which is of brick, of late fifteenth-century date, with outer arch of brick and shields above and blocked east and west windows. The roof is of the same date. The south doorway within the porch is a grand example of Norman work.¹ (Plates XIV and XV.) It has a hoodmould and four recessed orders. On the hoodmould is a series of twenty-six raised roundels, each with eight lines or spokes radiating from the centre, suggesting a wheel with a small circular bead between each spoke. They are connected by a band, but are irregularly arranged and vary in size. To the outer order is a band of raised zigzag, a hollow and another course of bold raised zigzag; to the next a series of square labels, very irregular in size and pierced with numerous small holes on the chamfered face of the arch; on the next two intersecting lines with bands at intervals form a series of saltires within square panels; then comes a good example of the double cone, the cones being separated by single, double, and in one instance triple, bands; then another band of the saltire on the face and the beaded ornamental star on the soffit of the arch moulding: on the inner order is a bold raised zigzag with nail-heads within the chevrons. There is a grooved and chamfered abacus with the indented pattern between the groove and the chamfered portion. Four engaged shafts stand on each side with large capitals, cushion shaped, and with scroll, leaves and other ornaments, some with a cable band below. The bases are well moulded and rest on a sort of subsidiary shafts about a foot from the ground level. They have some ornamentation, the cable, chevron, indented, etc. The hoodmould is continued down the outer jambs with a double row of the cheese moulding on each side, while on the jamb between the two middle shafts on each side are carved a series of sunk ovals with incised lines to give them the appearance of leaves. The sculpture is no doubt rude, but the effect is fine, and exemplifies the labour bestowed on the doorways in the twelfth century, even in so small and remote a parish as this must

¹ There is an excellent illustration in Cotman's *Architectural Etchings*.



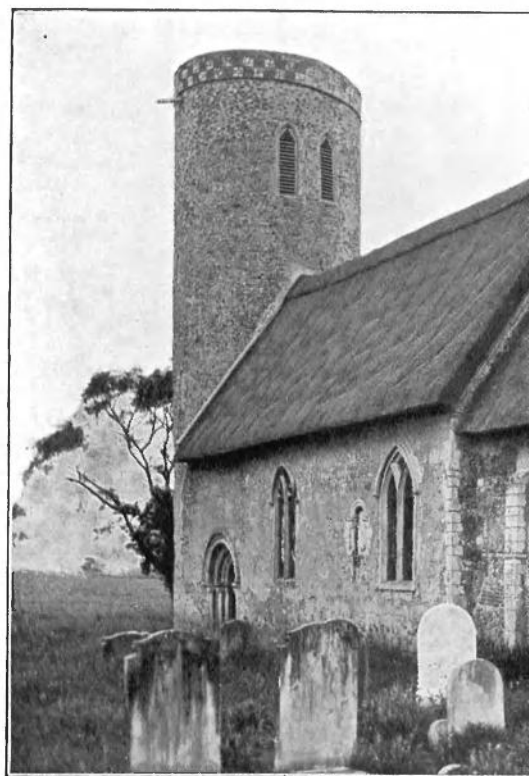
HECKINGHAM.

SOUTH DOORWAY.



HECKINGHAM.

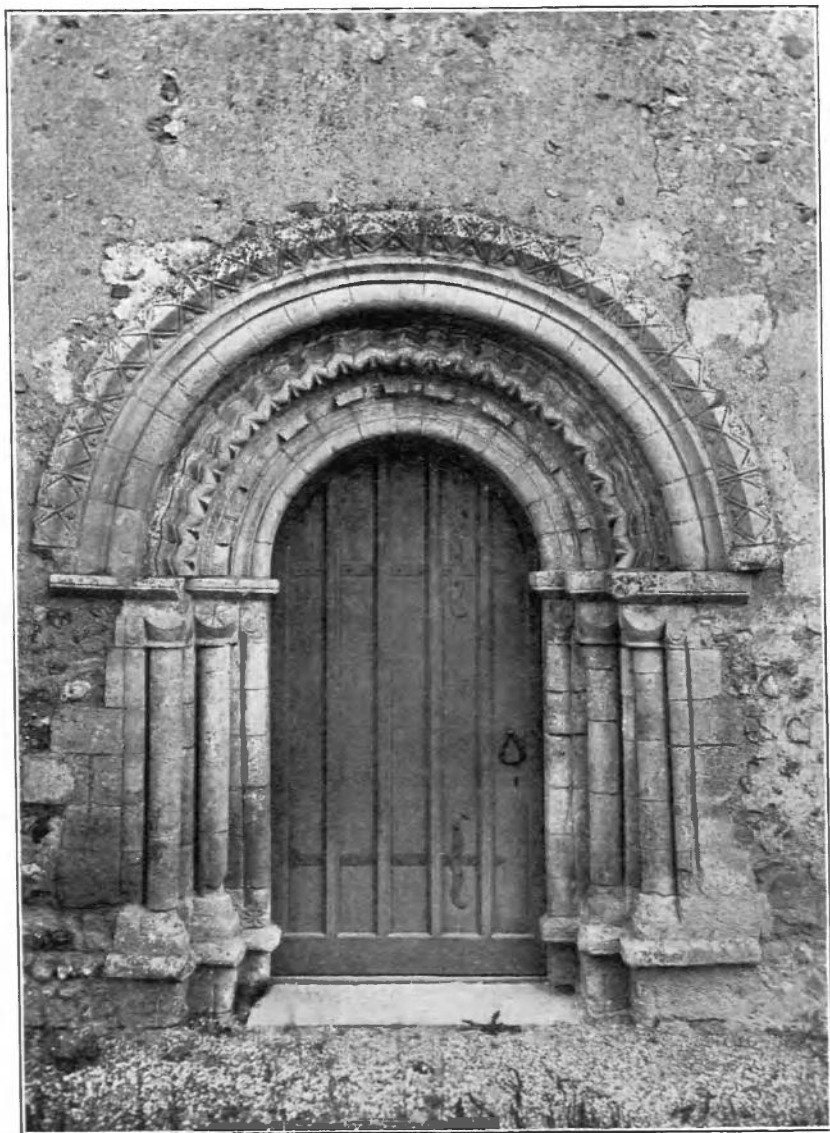
DETAILS OF SOUTH DOORWAY.



HALES.



VIEW FROM THE SOUTH EAST.



HALES.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

always have been. On the south of the nave is a three-light perpendicular window containing some old glass and a single Early English lancet. The eastern apse has been much altered, but the flat buttresses remain.

Resisting the temptation of continuing westward to Chedgrave, where there are fine Norman doorways, and to Loddon, with many interesting features in the church, we now turn southwards, and in two miles arrive at Hales (Plate XVI), where again great difficulty and delay will be experienced in obtaining the key; but fortunately the interesting features are on the exterior.

The church consists of a west tower, nave, chancel and apse, and is entirely of the Norman period with later insertions. The apse is semicircular and very interesting, but unfortunately a two-light window has been inserted in the east wall, and single lancets on the north and south of the apse and chancel. Round the two latter are several flat buttresses, and across these and round the walls is carried a stringcourse with the star ornament carved on it. This forms a base moulding to a series of blind arches, some in pairs and some single, semicircular headed, with half-rounds on the angle of the arch, chamfered abacus and plain jambs. One pair on the north side has numerous circular and semicircular discs on the flat face of the arch, while on the south of the nave is a similar arch, perhaps originally a window, but now closed up. The roofs of the apse, chancel and nave are thatched. On the south side of the latter are inserted two two-light windows, rather modern looking, in the decorated style, and on the north of the nave is a cinquefoiled lancet, and a two-light nondescript decorated window. The tower is circular, with numerous lancet openings, one on the west having a semicircular head. In addition to the apse the two noble doorways make this church especially worthy of a visit¹: that on the south side (Plate XVII) is very fine with hoodmould and four recessed orders, which do not correspond with the shafts. On the face and chamfer of the hoodmould we find a series of lozenges formed by two intersecting zigzag lines, with fir cones and pellets within the outer chevrons;

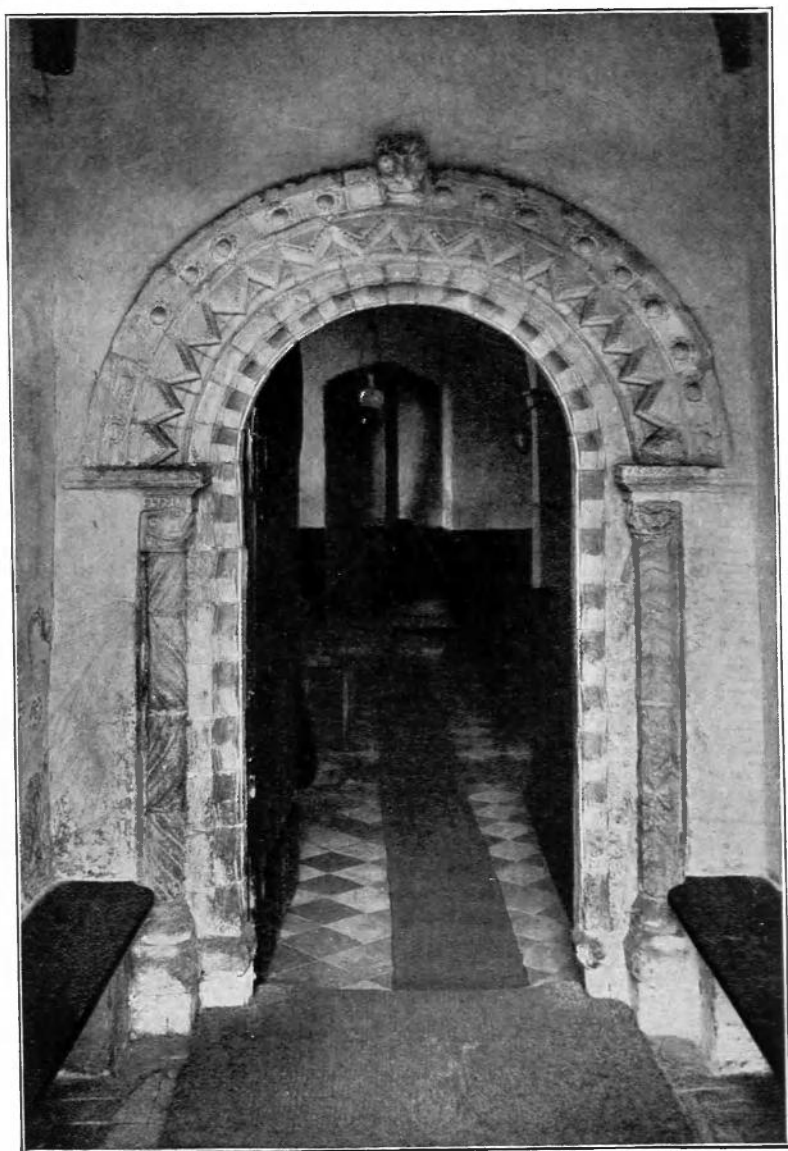
¹ Both are illustrated in Cotman's *Architectural Etchings*.

on the outer order is a hollow and bold roll on the angle, on the next recessed and raised zigzag, and a nail-head within each chevron on the lower side; on the next is a small zigzag band and a series of pairs of square labels or billets with beading on them, and on the inner order a hollow and angle roll. There are a grooved and chamfered abacus, and two massive shafts, with a smaller engaged shaft, between and on either side of them, with cushion capitals, and several votive crosses on the shafts. A band of the star ornament is carried down the inner jamb on each side, and the same moulding appears on and below the bases, which terminate about one foot from the ground on blocks of masonry with engaged shafts at the angles. The north doorway is even finer (Plate XVIII), and similar in its details to the noble example at Heckingham, which we have just described. It has a hoodmould and four deeply recessed orders, on the former of which we find a series of seventeen raised roundels, most of them having the eight spokes radiating from the centre, as at Heckingham, but only three have the beading between the spokes, while a few have an eight-rayed star instead of the wheel. They are joined by a band ornamented with the zigzag, and on the chamfered portion of the hoodmould are a series of eight-rayed stars within square panels. On the outer order is a course of raised and recessed zigzag with bold raised zigzag with the nail-heads within the chevrons at the angle. On the next course are a series of eight-rayed stars on the face of the order, and bold double cones divided by single beaded, and in three instances by double beaded, bands on the angle. On the next order are a band of small triple zigzag on the face, and an eight-rayed star on the chamfer, and on the inner order recessed and bold raised zigzag with the nail-heads within the chevrons, and a grooved and chamfered abacus with a bit of bunch foliage above the capitals. There are two bold jamb shafts on each side to the middle orders with scalloped bases. The capitals are elaborately carved with bunch foliage, the star, cable, etc., the outer on the east being the most elaborate. On the jambs below the hoodmould and outer order are several varieties of the star ornament, but the inner jambs are plain. The bases rest on blocks of masonry with engaged shafts at the angles,



HALES.

NORTH DOORWAY.



KIRBY CANE.

SOUTH DOORWAY.

as in the south doorway, and at Heckingham. As I was unable to enter the church, I shall not attempt to describe the interior, but there does not appear to be much of interest; the arch between the nave and chancel is clearly an insertion of the decorated period, and the walls are bountifully overlaid with whitewash, which appears to be in special favour in this district.

A journey of a little over two miles will bring us to Kirby Cane, where the church stands close to the old Hall. It consists of a west tower, nave, north aisle, chancel, and north chapel. The interior walls have been recently embellished with a new coat of whitewash, and this delight of the average churchwarden has here been applied to a ridiculous extent. The east window is of three lights, rather poor decorated work. On the south are two two-light windows of the same type, and on a higher level two small semicircular-headed lights of rather uncertain date. On the north of the chancel are two arches, but that on the east is blocked by a large table tomb, which has received such a dose of whitewash as to obliterate most of its details. The chancel arch is probably of decorated date, but has received the same liberal treatment. On the south of the nave at the east end is a two-light decorated window, and within the east splay are the steps to the rood-loft, with an upper doorway opening to the nave. Farther west is a two-light perpendicular window with segmental head. The pulpit is Jacobean. Three arches on massive octagonal columns open to the north aisle. Here on the north is a double-light and single lancet, the east window being blocked, and the west debased. The tower arch is plain, semicircular-headed, the west window being of two lights of the decorated period. The font is of fifteenth-century date, with octagonal bowl, having a head within an eight-foil on the east, west, and north sides, and shields on the alternate faces. Heads and roses are carved below the bowl, and shafts are attached to the stem. The south doorway within a porch is good Norman work, of a different type to those at Hales and Heckingham, and probably of later date¹ (Plate XIX). The interior arch

¹ Illustrated in Cotman's *Architectural Etchings*.

has a roll moulding to the arch and down the jambs, and is more lofty than the exterior one. This has a hoodmould and two recessed orders. On the hoodmould we find a series of sixteen roses or sunflowers, with large ball-shaped centre on the chamfer, and a monster head at the apex. On the outer order is a course of beaded and raised zigzag, with the points set on an engaged angle roll. On the inner order is a course of bold out-turned zigzag, with a small zigzag band on each side continued round the arch and down the jambs to the ground. There is a grooved and chamfered abacus to the hoodmould and outer order, and one shaft on each side supporting the latter, the west ornamented with the cable, the east with the chevron moulding. On each capital is a quaint bearded head. The bases rest on blocks of masonry, as at Hales. The south door is ancient. The porch, with blocked east and west windows, is perpendicular, and has been beautified with bluewash. The outer arch is perpendicular, with a niche above. On the south of the chancel is a blocked doorway of fourteenth-century date. The tower, of rude flints, is circular, with late battlements and single belfry windows, and with some masonry strips to the lower part. There is a blocked decorated doorway on north of north aisle, with a niche of the same date above it.

A short mile will bring us to Stockton, where the spacious church consists of a west tower and spire, nave and chancel (Plate XX). The east window is perpendicular, of three lights, and there are two two-light windows of the same date on either side of the chancel, in which are some remains of contemporary glass (Plate XXI). On the north is a hand holding a pedestal and orb. On the south the Blessed Virgin, crowned, and holding the Infant Saviour, and a figure in ermine, holding a circular object in the right hand: the head is gone. There are some borders and several diamond quarries. No chancel arch exists, but some portions of the old screen remain incorporated with the choir stalls. In the nave are two three-light perpendicular windows on the north, and a similar three-light, two two-light decorated windows, and a single lancet on south. There are considerable remains of old glass. In the east window on north are two shields, one,



STOCKTON.

INTERIOR LOOKING EAST.



STOCKTON.

ANCIENT GLASS.

gules a cross patee argent, the other, or on a cross sable, five scallop shells argent for Bigod. In the south-east is the cross of St. George, twice, the head of an archangel, and various borders. On either splay of the west window on the north is an early inscription within a canopied border. Each begins with the words "Pray for the good estate and welfare," and that on west ends thus, "which made this christofee," showing that there was formerly a painting of St. Christopher on the wall close by. The inscriptions seem to be of fifteenth-century date. The font is curious, with a large octagonal bowl, having two trefoiled niches on each main face, and an emblem of the Evangelists on the alternate face. The stem is slender, and only a part of the original. The tower arch is pointed, massive, and plain. The nave and chancel roofs are very fine, high pitched, with elaborate wall plate, etc. The terminations, probably angels, to the main beams have all been cut away. There are some fine poppyheads to the nave benches. The west tower is circular, covered with stucco, and with lancets in the upper stage. The spire of lead is modern. The north doorway within the present vestry is plain decorated. The south doorway within a porch is late decorated with hoodmould and several mouldings on the arch carried down the jambs.

A run of about three miles will bring us back to Beccles, but, should the traveller be voracious, he can continue his journey to Bungay, stopping *en route* at Mettingham. Here is an interesting church with some mural painting, a good font, a fine Norman north doorway, of the usual eastern counties type, and with a curious representation of the Crucifixion, scratched on the east jamb, and three crosses and perhaps a female figure on the west. A little off the road is Mettingham Castle, with a fine gatehouse. At Bungay are the remains of the Norman castle of the Bigods, two churches, St. Mary's and Trinity, the latter with undoubted Saxon work in the tower, and a very interesting old house, date *circa* 1500, with carvings under the oriel windows, representing David killing the bear and his victory over Goliath, and Samson killing the lion, and Dalilah cutting off his hair. There are other sculptures, all of the same character as those on an old house at Halesworth.