

SCREENS AND ROOD-LOFTS
IN THE PARISH CHURCHES OF OXFORDSHIRE.

By F. E. HOWARD.

INTRODUCTION.

Although many works on church screens and rood-lofts have appeared during the past few years, as yet no account of the screenwork of Oxfordshire has been published. It is true that a useful list of most of the surviving examples is to be found in *English Church Furniture*,¹ and that given in *Rood-screens and Rood-lofts*² is even fuller, but hitherto no one has attempted to compile a complete descriptive list of all the ancient screens now in the county, such as those for Somerset, Devon and Cornwall which form important sections of Mr. F. B. Bond's work. These county inventories both serve as records of what now remains and also are useful to those who wish to study the best and most interesting screens with as few wasted journeys as possible. A complete series for all the English counties is most desirable.³ This paper is the result of several years' study of its subject, but it is quite possible that one or two screens have escaped notice. It is, however, believed that it includes every example of pre-reformation screenwork that has not met with destruction at the hands of reformers, rebels or restorers.

I. GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE SCREEN AND ROOD-LOFT.

The design of a screen or rood-loft is naturally affected by the plan of the church in which it is erected. Most Oxfordshire churches have aisled naves and unaisled

¹ *English Church Furniture*. By J. C. Cox and A. Harvey, 1907.

² *Rood-screens and Rood-lofts*. By F. B. Bond and Dom Bede Camm, 1909.

³ Mr. Aymer Vallance's papers on mediaeval screens and rood-lofts in Derbyshire, Kent, Middlesex and Lancashire (*Memorials of Old Derbyshire*, etc.) are important contributions to this series.

chancels, and the rood-screen stands under the chancel-arch. After the fourteenth century the rood-screen was almost invariably used for the support of a rood-loft. Occasionally the chapels in the eastern bays of the aisles¹ were enclosed by screens, and such a parclose existed until recently in the church at Stanton St. John, but one of the screens has been removed to the tower-arch. The screens of the Fermor aisle at Somerton once formed a similar parclose. Many have been destroyed, leaving no traces behind them, for the two screens were generally fastened together at right angles, and supported themselves independently of the piers of the arcade.²

When the chancel is aisled, it is divided from its side chapels by screens, but the rood-loft rarely runs continuously across the church as in Devon.³ At Hanborough the three sections of the screen, across the nave and aisles, are each of a different design and date; usually the chancel-screen alone carried a loft.

A large number of churches have central towers and the chancel-screen is sometimes in the eastern⁴ and sometimes in the western⁵ tower-arch. At Thame the loft appears to have been carried round three sides of the central tower, leaving the western arch open.

The arrangement of the rood-loft screen in the unaisled churches was very beautiful. The loft was carried across the nave from wall to wall, serving as a canopy over the two altars which usually stood against the east wall of the nave on each side of the chancel-arch.⁶

Chantry chapels enclosed on all sides by screenwork are not unknown in the parish churches of Oxfordshire. At Burford there is a wooden chantry chapel, erected

¹ Chapels such as these should not be designated "chantry chapels" unless they contain tombs, or if there is documentary evidence of a chantry having been founded in connection with them by private individuals or by guilds. No church was without at least two side altars for low mass. The necessity for these side altars arose chiefly from the ancient custom of permitting an altar to be used only once daily for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. See Mr. J. Bilson's paper *The Architecture of the Cistercians, etc.* *Archæological Journal*, lxi, 210.

² At Deddington the screens of the aisle-chapels supported lofts which were used for the support of lights, as appears from the will of W. Pope, 1523. "Item. I bequeathe to the torchis, the belles, Our Ladie beame, St. Thomas beame, to everyche one of them iijs. iiijd." Marshall's *History of Deddington*.

³ Except at Ewelme.

⁴ At Thame and Stanton Harcourt and once at Beckley and Witney.

⁵ Once at Cuddesdon, Horley, Iffley and Kidlington.

⁶ As at Combe and Kidlington.

beneath one of the nave arches, like those in the greater churches, but it was extensively restored under Street. The remains of a similar chapel, built of stone, may be seen at Chipping Norton, but the work was renewed by Bruton at the restoration.

II. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF THE SCREEN AND ROOD-LOFT.

(a) CONSTRUCTION.

Oxfordshire is fortunate in possessing several early screens, including the well-known thirteenth-century rood-screen at Stanton Harcourt (plate xv).¹

Screens of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are characterised by their massive square framework, boarded lower panels and heavily moulded tracery, and above all by the delicately turned shafts which form the grille in the upper part. They were intended simply as a division between the nave and the chancel, protecting the high altar from intrusion, and they invariably had a pair of doors: the screens at Chinnor and Stanton Harcourt still retain their original doors and ironwork. The doors are generally hung to open into the chancel, the north door opening first. This shows that they were intended to be opened from within the chancel. The screens were not meant to support rood-lofts, for at Chinnor (fig. 10) three mortises in the head of the screen show that the rood, with its figures of our Lady and St. John the Evangelist, stood directly on the screen. Unfortunately the head of the screen at Stanton Harcourt is cased in with modern woodwork, so that it is impossible to ascertain whether there was a similar arrangement in this case: at Cropredy the head of the screen seems to be modern.

The beautiful stone screen at Broughton also dates from the first half of the fourteenth century and does not seem to have supported a rood or rood-loft, for its cornice is sharply weathered. In this case there was probably a rood-beam above it (plate iv).

The wooden screens at Wardington, Thame and

¹ The plates and figures illustrating this paper are arranged in alphabetical order.

Newington are of later fourteenth-century date. The shafts of the Cropredy screen (plate VIII, no. 1) show that the art of turning was on the decline. At Thame (plate XVI) they are not turned, but cut to an octagonal section, the capitals and bases are poor, and the annulet, which is such a charming feature of the shafts at Stanton Harcourt and Chinnor, is omitted. The construction is stronger, however, for the shafts are cut out of stout uprights, running through from transom to head, instead of being dowelled to the tracery as in the earlier work. At Wardington (plate V, no. 2) the moulded mullions are still dowelled to the tracery and the same method of construction is found in the chancel-screen at Newington (fig. 23), which is some years later. This screen appears to have been made in the latter part of the fourteenth century and it once carried a rood-loft. The curious way in which the mouldings of the head are mitred and returned shows that moulded joists were framed between the head of the screen and a bressummer at the same level, but some three or four feet in front of it. The ends of the bressummer would have been built into the side walls of the nave, or perhaps supported on posts. Two carved brackets of Georgian date on each side of the doorway occupy the position of arched braces, the existence of which is suggested by the unusual section of the uprights. The floor of the loft was probably of thick boards resting on the moulded joists, and it may be conjectured that the parapet was either filled in with painted boarding between the bressummer and a handrail at a convenient height above it, or by tracery similar to that in the openings of the screen below.

A few of the fifteenth-century screens are constructed in the same manner as the early work, with thick tracery and uprights treated as shafts. The late screen at Thame (plate XVII), has exquisitely carved shafts similar to those of the Charlton-on-Otmoor rood-screen (plate VI), which is evidently the work of the same hand, although the construction is very different. At Ewelme the uprights are of iron, square in section, with wooden capitals and bases.

However, nearly all the surviving fifteenth-century screens are constructed entirely with straight moulded

posts and beams, with no curved work except the fretted tracery and, in some cases, the arched soffit to the rood-loft. This type of screen is found in many English counties and reached its highest state of excellence in Wales. Compared with the Welsh screens those of Oxfordshire are severe and unattractive, and the tracery and carving is certainly not so good, but several of them, although simple, are of exceptional beauty. It would be difficult to find more delightful work than the screens at Hanborough (plates 1x and x and figs. 14 and 15), which retain their old colouring and part of the rood-loft; and the screens at Barford St. Michael (plate 11), Brize Norton, Milcombe and Great Rollright (plate x11) must have been very fine before the removal of their lofts.¹ The parclose screens at Stanton St. John and Somerton (plate xiv) are also extremely good.

These later screens are not always provided with doors. Some have low wooden gates and others may have had iron ones. A screen with no traces of any barrier to the chancel entrance is rarely found.

There are usually two doorways in the screenwork enclosing a side altar so that a procession could enter and leave it in an orderly manner. This is the reason why the pair of doors at the west end of the chapel at Witney (plate xix), are hung to open inwards, while those towards the east are hung to open outwards. A similar example may be seen in the south parclose at Cropredy (plate viii, no. 2).

The framing of the later screens is generally much lighter than that of the fourteenth-century examples. The uprights, which had been hitherto of a square section, merely beaded or chamfered on the angles, are moulded and reduced to a section like that of a window mullion. The main uprights at each end and on each side of the doorway often have an additional member to their mouldings, and sometimes they are decorated with little buttresses terminating in pinnacles² as at Milcombe, Hanborough and Lower Heyford (fig. 8). The sill is generally quite plain except for a slight weathering, but

¹ These four screens are disfigured with wretched modern paint.

² These occur in fourteenth-century work at Thame; and in the parclose screens

of Dorchester the uprights themselves are treated as buttresses with moulded weatherings.

in most cases it has required renewal. The transom is usually moulded, and at Brize Norton (fig. 7) it is decorated with a little trail of foliage. The head is often simply moulded but sometimes a trail of vine-leaves fills its principal hollow moulding; that of the north-aisle screen at Hanborough (fig. 7) is left square, and the moulded mullions butt against it.

This description applies to both rood and parclose screens in their present mutilated condition, but it must be remembered that in the fifteenth century there were very few churches without a rood-loft.¹ The parish churches of Hanborough, Great Rollright, Rousham and Warborough have alone retained any part of the rood-loft (if we except the screen at Charlton-on-Otmoor, which is of an unusual type), and even these have lost the rood-loft front upon which it is known that the most beautiful work was lavished.

From these examples it may be concluded that the construction of the loft of a typical Oxfordshire screen differed widely from that employed in the West of England or in East Anglia. The loft is carried by two beams,

¹ There are records of the building of a rood-loft in the parish church at Henley, including a list of subscribers.

Feby. 10th H. 8 (1519).—At this day the goodman Kenton confesseth that he hath in keeping of hys chyldren bequest to the use and making of the Rode-loft newe xxvs.

At the same day Thomas Fynamore graunteth to the same use vjs. viijd.

Mr. Warden also gevyth to the same use vjs. viijd.

John Jesope gevyth to the same use xs.

Humfrey Parke gevyth iijs. iiijd.

John Pates gevyth iijs. iiijd.

John Arderne gevyth iijs. iiijd.

John Marshe gevyth xxd.

Nich'as Stokley gevyth iijs. iiijd.

John Huges gevyth

Nich'as Rychmong gevyth xijd.

William Widmore gevyth xijd.

Thos. Stone and John Ansley ijs.

Thomas Ymfrey gevyth iijs. iiijd.

Robert Burges

Robert Hames bochr. gevyth xijd.

Henry Lok gevyth xxd.

David Sawelton gevyth ijs.

John Fowle gevyth

John Heywod gevyth xxd.

Lewys Rede gevyth

William Whateham gevyth viijd.

John Benyson xijd.

Thomas Arderne xvjd.

William Boxwell

William Arche viijd.

The churchwardens' accounts for Thame record the erection of a loft for the organs in 1447-1448 (see p. 166) and another loft in the Dormer aisle in 1548 (2 Ed. VI).

1548.

Itm. payd to Harry Cowper for xvc. bords for to mak ye loft on Master Dormer's Ile xijd.

The writing of scriptures on the rood-loft at Henley is mentioned in the Bridgeman's Account.

1550.

Itm. that we must be alowyd for wretynge of the roode-loft that we payd to Wyllm. Bramley xs.

The destruction of the Thame rood-loft in 1560 (3 Elizabeth) is also recorded.

1560.

It'm pay'd to Gybbens for pullynge downe ye Roode-lofte ijd.

See F. G. Lee's *History, etc. of Thame* and J. S. Burn's *History of Henley-on-Thames*.

practically independently of the screen. One of these beams is fixed a foot or two above the head of the screen, from which short struts rise to support it at intervals.¹ The other beam or bressummer is fixed at the same level a few feet to the west, and the ends are built into the nave wall or supported on posts, the mortises for which can be seen in the bressummers of the Hanborough screen (plate x, no. 1). Between these two beams, joists of flat section were framed, to support the floor of the rood-loft, but in every case, except at Charlton-on-Otmoor, the boards have been taken up. The struts and joists are concealed by a panelled and coved soffit, rising sometimes from the head of the screen, and sometimes from a beam fixed about a foot away from it, and butting against the bressummer. The ribs which support the coving are sometimes cut to a circular sweep struck from one or two centres, but sometimes they are straight. The construction of the very simple loft of the aisle-screen at Rousham (fig. 25) is like that of the Newington chancel-screen but the projection is towards the east: the joists, however, are not moulded but are concealed by a horizontal soffit which has been renewed in deal.

The complete destruction of all the rood-loft parapets is most unfortunate, but it is possible to recover a fairly accurate idea of their appearance from the mortises which can be seen along the bressummers at Hanborough. These indicate that a row of uprights, spaced about the same distance apart as those of the screen below, was tenoned between the bressummer and a handrail three or four feet above it. The heads of the openings may have been decorated with tracery like the screen at Sheringham, Norfolk, but none of the remaining rood-lofts had solid wooden panels to their parapets, for in this case there would be a groove from mortise to mortise, into which the panel would have fitted. The remains of the rood-loft in Oxfordshire are so scanty that there is no proof that such close-panelled rood-loft fronts did not exist. Rood-lofts with painted panels of saints would

¹ The mortises for these struts in the head of the screens at Milcombe and Hanborough chancel-screen are all that is left of their once beautiful rood-lofts. At

Barford St. Michael, Brize Norton, Heyford and Woodstock modern casings and cornices have been nailed on, perhaps to hide these untidy holes.

naturally be condemned by the reformers, but no fault could be found with the open traceried fronts,¹ after the use of the loft had been rendered impossible by the removal of its flooring.

None of the screens of the local type show any signs of having an eastward projection to their lofts, and in some cases the tympanum in the chancel-arch formed the eastern parapet. The aisle-screens at Hanborough and Rousham had a handrail on one side only.

The screens which have been described are obviously of local workmanship and they offer such an extraordinary variety of detail that it seems probable that they are the work, not of gilds or regular screen-makers, but of local carpenters. They are roughly put together, the tracery is often rudely carved, and there is nothing in their construction that would be beyond the skill of a village craftsman with the screens of neighbouring churches for models. But there are a few screens in the county which are of exceptional type.

Such are the once vaulted screens of Adderbury (plate i), Bloxham (plate iii), Deddington (plate ix) and Somerton (plate xiii). The former agrees in every detail with the Kentish screens at Eastchurch and Shoreham, and may well have been the work of a craftsman from that county, especially as there is a screen in Winchester cathedral church, before the lady-chapel, which seems to belong to the same group. The screens at Bloxham and Somerton are probably of local origin, but that at Deddington is more like Northamptonshire work. The parclose screens round the chancel of Burford church on the borders of Gloucestershire (fig. 9) resemble the work of that country rather than the Oxfordshire screens. The screen at Steeple Aston (fig. 3) is very unusual; it is arched, but evidently the soffit of the rood-loft was horizontal. It is remarkable for its iron stanchion-bars and for the absence of boarding in the lower panels. The sister screens of Thame and Charlton-on-Otmoor (plates xvii and vi) are of a type which is met with in many places, and they show strong foreign influence. They are remarkable for

¹ Some pieces of tracery, attached to the recently-destroyed pulpits at Northmoor, may have formed part of such a rood-loft parapet.

their linen-fold panels, flamboyant tracery and beautifully carved shafts with octagonal caps and bases. The stops to the latter are worked quite in the flamboyant manner, but it is probable that these screens are the work of Englishmen, for they are very restrained when compared with the Breton examples which they otherwise resemble.

(b) DECORATION.

TRACERY.

At Stanton Harcourt, c. 1250, the tracery takes the form of a series of well-moulded trefoil arches, cut out of a board, 1 foot $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, with hood-mouldings planted on. At Chinnor, c. 1300, the tracery is 1 foot $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and no less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness (fig. 11). The design is geometrical with elaborately under-cut mouldings. The curvilinear tracery of the former rood-screen at Cropredy, c. 1340, is 1 foot 1 inch deep and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick; some of the patterns are exquisite, but the mouldings are much simpler. The south-aisle screen at Wardington is a little later and its curvilinear tracery is barely two inches thick, with a simple hollow moulding on one side only (fig. 32). The lines of the mullions are continued through the tracery, and at Thame (plate xvii) the mullions themselves run right up to the head of the screen, cutting the complicated tracery into sections. The older method of construction is followed in the early Perpendicular screen at Newington, the rectilinear tracery being two inches thick (fig. 24).

In the later work the tracery is reduced to seven-eighths or even five-eighths of an inch in thickness and the lesser uprights are forked over it. It is rarely more than eleven inches deep and in some cases it is only worked on one side. The early fifteenth-century work is often very stiff and heavy, but it soon becomes lighter and more delicate, and the design less restrained. Carved cusps, finials and foliated spandrels often add to its beauty. It is possible to trace several leading motives in the work of this period but they do not form any guide to the date

of the work. There is the rectilinear motive with two,¹ four² or six³ upper lights, sometimes grouped in pairs,⁴ which in their turn are comprised beneath a single arch.⁵ In the tracery of some screen intersecting straight⁶ or curved⁷ lines form the leading motive. Frequently the design of the tracery consists of an arch with cusps, and pierced, cusped, or carved spandrels above it,⁸ while sometimes there are two arches of different forms, one below the other, the space between them being filled in with curvilinear tracery.⁹ Sometimes one of these arches is reversed, forming a St. Andrew's cross like the tower arches at Wells.¹⁰ Another common motive is an arch with two quatrefoil-circles in the spandrels.¹¹ Similar quatrefoil-circles are a striking feature of the tracery of several other screens.¹²

The foliated arches over the doorways have frequently survived.¹³ They were generally no deeper or thicker than the tracery.

The tracery of the exceptional screens is of various types. At Deddington, Somerton and Charlton-on-Otmoor the arched tracery-heads are out of rectangular panels with the grain running vertically. The screens at Bloxham and Steeple Aston have two orders to their tracery for an additional arched member emphasises the main lines.

CARVING.

TRAILS.—A carved trail of vineleaves generally decorated each of the main horizontal timbers. Such carving occurs on the transom of the screen at Brize Norton,

¹ Two parclose screens at Kidlington, Witney.

² Southleigh, Swalcliffe, Woodstock, Hanborough, Hornton, Rousham, Langford.

³ Ewelme (parclose screens), Bicester.

⁴ Barford St. Michael, Hanborough (N. aisle).

⁵ Lower Heyford, Stanton St. John, Kidlington (in N. aisle), Great Rollright (two designs).

⁶ Kidlington (south aisle), Woodeton.

⁷ Kidlington (across the chancel).

⁸ Thame (south aisle), Kidlington (between N. aisle and chancel), Somerton (lower panels of parclose), Brize Norton, Southleigh (N. aisle).

⁹ Kidlington (between N. aisle and chancel), Barford St. Michael (lower panels), Somerton (parclose, two different designs).

¹⁰ Combe, Milcombe (two designs), Brize Norton (lower panels).

¹¹ Kidlington (between S. aisle and chancel), Yelford, Hanborough (S. aisle) and Great Rollright with a Catherine wheel instead of a quatrefoil.

¹² Stanton St. John (now in tower), Brize Norton (lower panels), Milcombe (upper panels).

¹³ Several at Kidlington, three at Hanborough, Barford St. Michael, Woodeton, Heyford.

the heads of the screens at Lower Heyford, Milcombe, Hanborough (chancel-screen), Great Rollright, Westcot Barton, and the bressummers of the north and south aisle-screens at Hanborough (plates ix and x), the chancel-screens at Charlton-on-Otmoor and Adderbury and the remains of the rood-loft at Warborough. The earliest work is thin and rather stiff in design and it is cut out of a flat board. In the later screens the form of the leaves is very complicated, birds and insects are introduced and the foliage bulges forward. There is none of the crispness of the Devonshire carving about the Oxfordshire work, for the modelling is very timid, but, compared with modern efforts, its superiority is unquestionable. The trail at Charlton-on-Otmoor (plate vi, no. 2) is exquisite.

CRESTINGS.—The crestings are usually of the Tudor flower type, and in some cases they are of excellent design. Many varieties can be seen on the Hanborough screens, but in most cases they have been destroyed on the removal of the rood-loft. Those at Kidlington have been renewed in cast iron.¹

PATERAE.—Square flowers sometimes take the place of a trail but they are seldom satisfactory. Those nailed on to the screens at Kidlington, which seem to be ancient, are exceptionally ugly. Those on the bressummer at Charlton-on-Otmoor are very small but they are well carved.

BOSSSES.—The intersection of the ribs of the rood-loft coving are covered by carved bosses. The ribs of the south-aisle screen at Hanborough butt against a large boss with four leaves, and a smaller square boss once masked the joints. Those of the north-aisle screen intersect, and have good square bosses, and four separate carved leaves to hide the mitres. The work at Hanborough is simple and bold. The bosses of the coving at Great Rollright are far more elaborate: more delicate still are the round bosses of the vaulting at Adderbury.

¹ The cast-iron crestings of the screens at Ewelme have been recently removed.

PAINTING.

There is not the slightest doubt that every screen in the county was, or was intended to be, coloured.¹ Traces of red or green can be seen on almost every screen in spite of Georgian paint, Victorian stain and varnish, and modern scraping or furniture polish.

The most usual scheme seems to be green and vermilion counterchanged sometimes with white fillets and often applied upon a white ground. The coving of the rood-loft is generally painted a deep azure with red and gold ribs, while the carving is almost always gilded. The bead-mouldings of the bressummer are sometimes painted with a twist of dark green and gold, and the carved trails have frequently green stems and gold leaves, while the grapes are half green and half gold. There are no traces of floral painting like that of the Norfolk screens, but at Bloxham and Stanton Harcourt there are a few remains of the painted panels of saints which must have been a common ornament of a pre-reformation Oxfordshire screen. In some cases only traces of red paint remain, and although red shows more distinctly than green against the old oak, it is quite possible that red, with gilded carving, was a not uncommon scheme.

Few screens have retained their old colouring unrestored. The modern paint on the screens of Bloxham, Great Rollright, Westcot Barton, Swalcliffe, Barford St. Michael, Brize Norton and Milcombe is extremely crude in tone and in no case is it of value as a restoration. The beautiful tints and the texture of the old colour on the screens of Hanborough, Charlton-on-Otmoor, and the fragment at Hornton show how impossible it is to get similar effects with modern oil paint. The ancient paint on the south chapel parclose screen at Burford and the sanctuary-screen at Cassington is not so successful, but it has suffered from the effects of time.

¹ The following item may refer to the painting of the rood-loft front of the screen at Thame which is one of the latest in Oxfordshire.

1547.
It. payd to ye paynt' for payntyng
ye rayle before ye rood and ye rector's stool
vij*d*.

III. NOTES ON THE ROOD, THE USE OF THE ROOD-LOFT, THE TYMPANUM, THE LENTEN VEIL AND QUIRE STALLS IN OXFORDSHIRE.

THE ROOD.

Built into the east wall of the south porch of Langford church is a stone figure of Christ as a crucified king, which appears to date from the eleventh century. This may have been built into the wall above the small tower-arch, serving as the rood of the Saxon church, of which the tower alone remains.

Part of the rood is said by Skelton and Bloxam to have existed in Great Rollright church at the beginning of last century but it has now disappeared.

A small parchment roll of the time of Edward III, containing a list of benefactors to the rood at Henley-on-Thames, is printed in J. S. Burn's *History of Henley* :

De Scta Crucis, tall de Henle die ven'is pxt ant fm sci michis Anno
rr E tercii (sc'do)

Johnes le telor	ijs.
Johnes (Mortua)	xijd.
Willms Lucas	iiijd.
Galfridus Sely	viijd.
Th de (Culh'm)	iiij.
Walts Moryon	vijd.
Will le Selne	ijd.
Galfridus de Mourton	xijd.
Henr	vj.
Will	xijd.
Henr atte Steplond Phure	ijs.
Adm Clemenc	vid. xijd.
Henr le Coupe	vjd.
Wills le Reade	vjd.
Henr Tovey	vid. xijd.
Ric Bevane	iiijd.
Joh Altesor	iiijd.
Rog'us Aleyne	vjd.
Rob. Brown	vjd. ijs.
Th Nichole	xijd.
Th Huberd	xxd.
Willms Dreu	xijd. lvs.
Henr Reede Phure	vjd.
Joh atte Wyfold	vjd.
Willms le Granger	vjd.

Walt. la	xiid. lvs.
Th le Wastover	iiijd.
Johnes de Hurle	vjd.
Endorsed	
Walt. Lucas	xxd.
Adm. Lea	vjd.
Johnes atte Wyfold	vjd.
Pistator	xiiijd.
Augi la Geneve solu	vjd.
Walt. Morion solu	vjd.
Sm xxjs. id.	

All roods were ordered to be destroyed in 1548 but in the reign of Mary it was again ordered that the rood should be re-erected in its rightful place, which had been usurped by the royal arms.

Thus we find the following items in the churchwardens' accounts at Thame :

1556.

It'm p'd for a Rode w^t Mary and John xviijs.
It'm p'd to the paynter in p^t of payment iijs. iiijd.

It'm Rec. in money gathered in the church for the
Rode viijs. xd.

It'm p'd for the exchange of the Roode and for ye image
of O^r Lady at ye hye awter end xvjs. iiijd.

Traces of the rood can be seen in various churches. At Northleigh the blank spaces in the painting of the Last Judgment give the exact form and position of the rood and its attendant figures, which were once fixed against the east wall of the nave, and at Charlton-on-Otmoor the mortises for the rood remain in the bresummer of the rood-loft, showing that in this case the figures stood out a few feet in front of the Last Judgment painting which formed a background for them.

THE USES OF THE ROOD-LOFT.

One of the chief purposes of the rood-loft was to give access to the figures of Christ crucified, our Lady and St. John the Evangelist which were an invariable ornament of a pre-reformation church.

In Lent these images were hidden by a veil and the rood-loft made this duty much simpler to perform. Such a veil is mentioned in an inventory of the goods in Thame church in 1447.

Before the cross there was invariably a lamp burning in its honour. This, the principal rood light, is frequently mentioned in old records.

Will of John Devyn 1470

Itm lego sustentationeni luminis s'te crucis in eccl'ia p'dicta 3s. 4d. Henley-on-Thames).

Among the corporation records at Henley is a memorandum :

"That the lamp burning before the altar in the church belongs to the Commonalty, and that a rent of 6s. 6d. is issuing out of a croft called the Church Croft for its support, that it once hung before the cross called the Roode and ought to be lighted at five in the morning and burn till five in the afternoon."

In Burford church is an inscription to the memory of John Spicer :

"I pray you all for charite
Hertely that ye pray for me
To our Lord that sytteth on hye
Full of grace and of mercye
To whiche rode soler in this churche
Upon my cost I dede do wurche

W^t a laumpe brennyng bright
To worschyp God bot day and nyght
And a gabul window dede do make
In helthe of soule and for Christ sake
Now Ihu that dydyt on a tre
On us have mercy I prie.

Amen."

Less important were the lights which stood in a row along the top of the handrail of the rood-loft. These were candles standing in bowls with prickets, and were lighted during high mass.

Thame Churchwardens' Accounts.

1521.

It reed of a man that will not be named for fynding of a candyll brennyng before the rode in the rode loft eu'ry sonday in the yere at the saking of hye masse xvjd.

1558.

P'd for skowrynge the boolls of the candlestikks before the Roode, iiijd.

At the great festivals there seems to have been a great display of lights in the rood-loft, for we frequently find such items as the following in parish accounts.

Henley—24 Henry VIII, 1533.

The Chargys of Lyghts.

It payde to Stone for *xixli.* wax for the rode lyght at Cristemas *viijs.* *ixd.* and for the same light at estr *vli.* of wax *iis.* *vjd.* and for the makynge of the same *ijs.*

In another account of the time of Henry VIII, Payd for the rode lyght agenst Crystmas for *xiiijli* waxe p'ce the *li.* *vd.* *ob.*¹ *sm.* *vs.* *xjd.* *ob.*

Some items in the Thame accounts show that special collections were made at Christmas and Easter for the sustentation of the rood-lights :

1447-8.

It (received) off Agnes Ffrogmore to ye Rode lyght *xijd.*²
It off Peres evens for wast *iiij* torches *xiijd.*³
It of ye same Peres to ye Rode lyght *iiijd.*²
It Recevyt at Cristynmas for ye Rode lyght *xiijs.* *vid.*
It off John Elys to ye Rode lyght *xijd.*²

1501-2.

Itm rec. of the p'yshonys for the rode light at Cristemasse *xiijs.*
Itm rec. of the p'yshonys for the rode lirt at Ester *xxjs.*

1535.

Itm receyved at Estr of the perishe for the Roodlyght . . . *xxiijs.* *xd.*

There is also documentary evidence of the use of the rood-loft as a music gallery. The accounts for the making of two organ lofts in Thame church are still in existence.

1477-80.

Custus Solar p. Organ.

It'm sol. Thome Carpenter s. pr factura ij solarior p.
organis situands in grosso *viijs.* *viijd.*
It' sol. Petro marmyon p. i magno ligno maeremij p. dict'
solario *iijs.* *ivd.*
It' sol. p. vij p' uis peciis meremij pro ca ij. *xiiijd.*
It' sol. p. ij lignis meremii ad dict' opus *xd.*
It' sol. p. ij planks ad id'm opus *xijd.*
It'm in certs clavis viz. *iiij* peny nayle and *vd.* nayle, *viijd.*
It'm in asseribus viz. *cc* and *i* qrt' ad idem opus . . *vjs.*
It sol. Will'mo Smyth p'hengs hoks and ij barres ferri ad
id'm ops *xxiijd.*
SMA *xxiijs.* *ijjd.*
Et sic p. p'te noue Thame *xijs.* *iijd.* *q^t*
S'ma SOLAR. p' ORGAN p. Nova. Thame. . . *xijs.* *iijd.* *q^t*

¹ Price 5½d. per lb.

² I suspect that these items refer to the principal light.

³ This item, of course, has nothing to do with the rood-light, but it is suggestive when taken in conjunction with the next one.

Another item records the sale of the old organs to Staunton church, which is probably Stanton St. John.

1523.

It' reed of the p'son of Staunton for the old organs in
p'te of payme't of l. xliijs. ivd. restvj. viij.

There are several references to the organs in the records of Henley church.

1521.

That Rd Brookham Warden payd to Browne, the organ maker xiiij*l*. to be repaid ageyn of the churchmen and xx*d*. for the carriage whereof reed viij*l*. xvijs. x*d*. ob.

1526.

Indre witnesseth that the Warden and Bridgmen have bought a payer of organese of Sr. Richard Haynton Clerk, and ower Lady Masse priest in the Churche of St. Lawrens at Reading under man' and forme following, that is to wyt: the sayd Sr. Richard byndeth hymself in iiij marks sterling for the keepyng of the sayd orgayne in tewin by the space of vij yere next following.

1528.

Itm for by. of colys on estur eve and a rope for the gret orgyns, ijd. ob

1533.

For the chauntry Prsts Sr. Edmund Schaw vi*l*. and for Sr Harry Robbinson vj*l*. and for Sr. John South the pleying of the organs vj*l*. xiijs. iiij*d*.

That one at least of these organs stood on the rood-loft is proved by an extract from the "Bridgemen's" account for the year 1555.

Itm pd to the orgayne maker for mending the orgayns
in the quyerexxs. iij*d*.
Itm for mending the other great orgayns in the Rode
lofteviijs. viij*d*.

This use of the rood-loft has been revived in the church of St. John the Evangelist and in the chapel of St. John's Hospital in Oxford. In the beautiful but incomplete church at New Hinksey it is also intended that the organ should be placed on the loft.

The rood-loft of an Oxfordshire parish church was rarely wide enough to use as a chapel, but at Deddington there is a piscina about two feet above the head of the screen which proves that there was an altar in the loft at one time.

In parish churches the loft was not used as a pulpitum for the singing of the Epistle, the Grail, the Alleluia and

Gospel as in the greater churches. Generally the approach to the loft was partly by means of a ladder and partly by a few steps in the thickness of the wall. Even in the great church of Adderbury the steps are very difficult to ascend, for the treads average about four inches wide while the risers range from nine inches to a foot in height. The ascent of the deacons with the taperers and thurifer would certainly not be an edifying ceremony.

One other use of the loft is certain. It formed a convenient stage from which to ring the sanctus bell. There are many instances of sanctus bell gables over the chancel arch,¹ and at Wardington the guides for the ropes have survived.

THE TYMPANUM.

Until recently the tympanum was regarded as an invention of the Hanoverian period, for the display of the royal arms. As a matter of fact it is of very early origin and may be a survival of one of the two veils mentioned by Durandus, namely, that dividing the clerks from the people.

Judging from the number of examples which survived until the middle of the nineteenth century,² the practice of filling in the chancel arch with a boarded or plastered partition must have been extremely common in Oxfordshire, but the sole survivor is that in the small church at Warborough.

The tympanum was generally painted, the invariable subject being the Last Judgment,³ an appropriate background for the rood which sometimes stood some feet in front of it but was often fixed against the east wall of the nave. Most of the surviving Doom paintings⁴

¹ Barford St. Michael, Bloxham, Brize Norton, Combe, Headington, Holton, Great Milton, Wardington, Tadmarton are instances. Where there was a central tower the sanctus bell may have hung in the belfry and in other cases hand bells were in use.

² Ambrosden, Bloxham, Bodicote, Bucknell, Chalgrove, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Chesterton, Drayton St. Leonard, Odding-

ton, Sandford, Steeple Barton, Sydenham, Yarnton.

³ At Piddington there was a post-reformation of the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Old Testament antetype to the Passion of Our Lord.

⁴ Beckley, Bloxham, Cassington, Combe, Cropredy, Fulbrook, Northleigh, Short hampton, Southleigh.

appear to have been painted partly on the wall above the chancel-arch and partly on the tympanum, which was generally flush with the western face of the wall, but in some of the earlier instances the tympanum was fixed flush with the eastern side, and the chancel-arch formed a frame around the paintings upon it. Frequently the paintings were continued for a short distance along the side walls of the nave.¹

The tympanum is a necessity if the nave is dark and the chancel brilliantly lighted, for if it be omitted the rood will be almost invisible, or at least only a silhouette against the brightness beyond. This was never tolerated in pre-reformation days, when the rood was never of dark fumed oak, but always painted and gilded.

THE LENTEN VEIL.

The Lenten veil appears to have been the second of the two veils which divided the church into three parts in the time of Durandus, namely that hanging between the clerks and the sanctuary.² It is sometimes asserted that the Lenten veil hung in the chancel-arch, but this seems to be incorrect. The mistake appears to have arisen from confusion between the Lenten veil and the veil which hid the rood in Lent. In an inventory of the goods in the parish church of Thame for the year 1447 both these veils are mentioned in the same item, leaving little doubt as to their respective positions:³

It' a white weyle for the Croce in lent time and an' white weyle to be hanging in the chancel befor the hye Awt' in lentyn time.

In some churches there was a sanctuary-screen to which the veil hung in Lent, and that in Cassington is still in position. It is so lightly constructed that it cannot have been intended for a rood-loft screen, and moreover, it is too wide to fit in the chancel arch. Generally, however,

¹ As at Shorthampton and Southleigh.

² See Mr. F. B. Bond's *Rood-screens and Rood-lofts*, 96-97.

³ *Ordinarius Totius Anni Cisterciensis*
"Velum quadragesimale: Post completorium, cruces pannis albis cooperiantur

et linteis; et cortina ante presbiterium tendatur qui sic remaneat privatus diebus per quadragesima usque ad feriam iiij ante pascha et tunc post completorium deponitur."

the veil was suspended from a beam or rope, and where a convenient tie-beam occurred there is no doubt that it was used for this purpose. In a few cases there are corbels built into the north and south walls to support a beam, and those at Kelmscot are pierced, probably for the rope from which the Lenten veil hung, but more often there are no indications of its supports. However, it would be quite simple to fit up a movable beam with its ends resting on the wall plates, and it is likely that this method was the one usually employed.

THE QUIRE STALLS.

There was but one row of stalls on each side of the chancel, returned at the west end to form seats against the screen, leaving the central part unencumbered. This arrangement is due to the admission of the laity to the chancel during part of the mass.¹ Existing illuminations prove that this custom was usual in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,² for it is impossible to believe that the cleverly characterised figures of worshippers kneeling around the high altar can be merely a conventional representation of a congregation in the nave.

Moreover, the custom was general in post-reformation days, for in 1638 bishop Montague caused a meeting of the clergy to be held at Ipswich, for the parts adjoining, where he prescribed these following orders; that is to say, "First, after the words of exhortation pronounced by the minister (standing at the Communion table, the parishioners yet standing in the body of the church), 'Draw near,' etc. all which intend to communicate should come out of the church into the chancel. Secondly, that all being come in, the chancel door should be shut, and not opened until the Communion be done," etc.³ This custom survived until recently at Bampton in this county.⁴

¹ The fact of the admission of the laity to the chancel during mass throws light upon three points which would be otherwise inexplicable: (a) The great length of the chancel of a typical Oxfordshire church; (b) its almost complete isolation from the nave; (c) the opacity of the local type of rood-screen.

² For instance "L'Exposition de la Messe." Alcuin Club Collections.

³ *Hieurugia Anglicana*.

⁴ I am indebted for this fact to the Rev. F. Brown of Steeple Aston.

Considerable fragments of the old quire-stalls survive at Bampton, 'Dorchester, Kidlington (plate x, no. 2), Marston, Swinbrook and Thame (plate xvii), while those at Cassington and Merton are said to have been brought from Christ Church and Exeter College, Oxford, respectively.

IV. A DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF SCREENS AND ROOD-LOFTS IN THE PARISH CHURCHES OF OXFORDSHIRE.¹

ADDERBURY. There is a fine early fifteenth-century rood-screen of three arched bays, retaining its original doors, but uncoloured. The vaulting and loft are modern and the marks of the former loft in the side walls show that the design is not a faithful restoration, but a few bosses in the vaulting and part of the

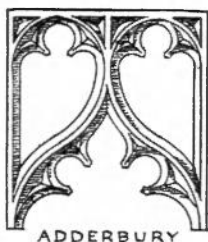


FIG. 1.

trail of vine leaves on the bressummer are ancient. It is certainly not a local work, but it greatly resembles a group of screens, of which examples exist at Eastchurch, Sheppey, Shoreham and other Kentish churches and in Winchester cathedral church.

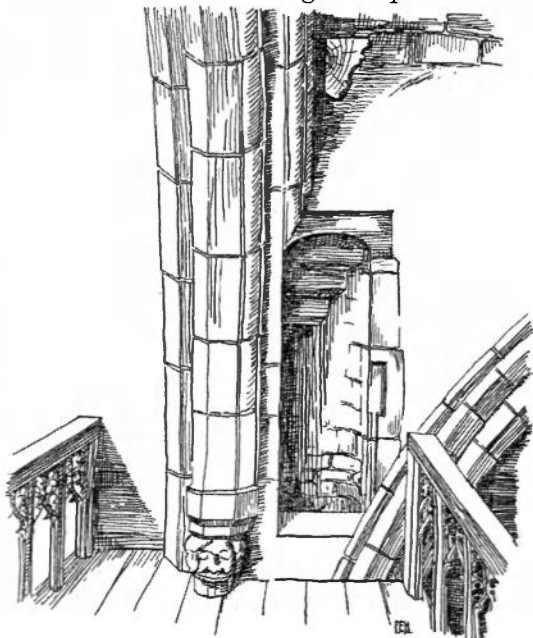


FIG. 2. ADDERBURY.

The old rood-loft front was probably like that of

¹ Unless otherwise described, the screens are of the usual local type, with rectangular framing and closely-spaced mullions. The

measured drawings are reproduced to a scale of half an inch to one foot, and the details of tracery are one-eighth full size.

the Winchester screen. The rood-beam has been cut away, but the ends still protrude from the walls of the nave about nine feet above the rood-loft floor (plate 1 and figs. 1 and 2).

AMBROSDEN. There is no screen in the church at present, but there was a low stone screen in 1823.

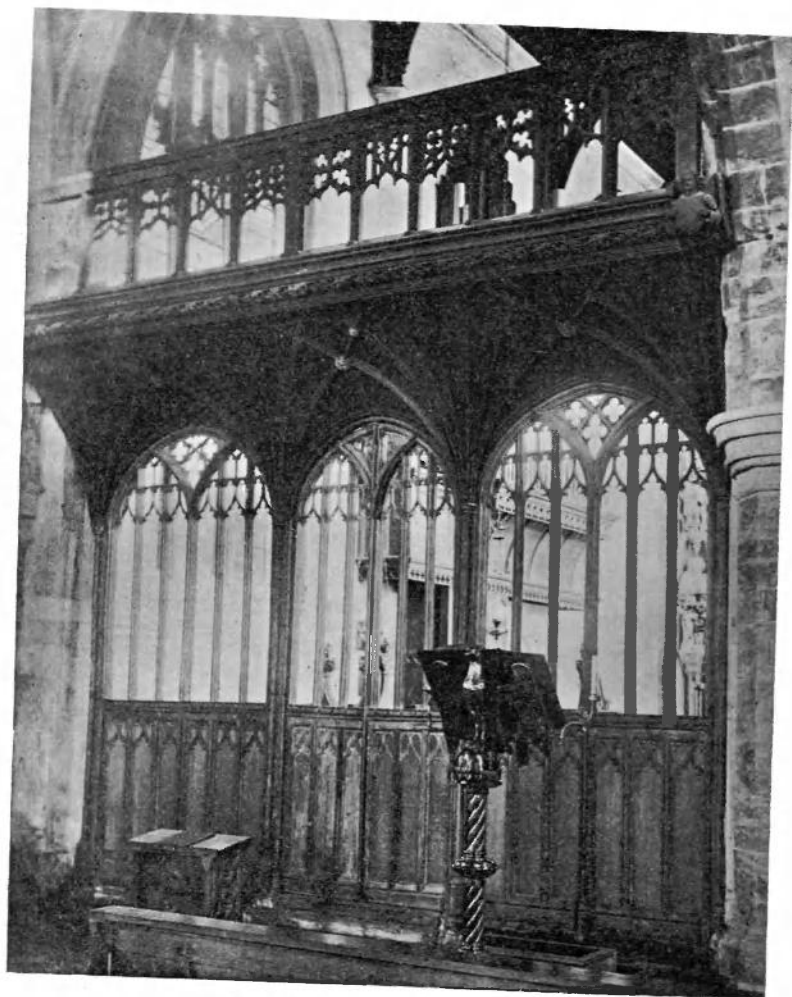
"The rood-beam remains in the church, and in a staircase on the north side leading to the roof is the door which opened on to the rood-loft. Over the entrance to the chancel are the royal arms, the creed, the decalogue and the Lord's prayer. The nave is separated from the chancel by a low stone screen." Dunkin, *History of Ploughley*, 6. In the same work is a plate showing the western gallery with a large post-reformation painting of the Resurrection above it.

ASTHALL. A low stone wall, three feet ten inches high, and ten and a half inches thick, with a moulded coping, separates the beautiful north chantry chapel from the chancel. It probably dates from the last decade of the thirteenth century (plate 11, no 1).

ASTON, NORTH. The present screen is modern, but there was a "Grecian" screen with a tympanum in 1846. The latter may have been mediaeval.

"The chancel-arch is blocked up above, and a Grecian screen inserted, painted in perspective." *Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford*, 85.

ASTON, STEEPLE. There is an interesting chancel-screen of unusual type, but it was much restored (in deal) by Plowman in 1842, and the head and the arches over the doorway are entirely modern. It is the only screen in the county with open lower panels, and the iron stanchion-bars are also unique. It appears to have been cut short and the jambs, which are moulded on the outer faces, do not fit closely against those of the chancel-arch in the usual manner. It is possible that the screen originally stood in front of the chancel-arch, and that it was the full width of the nave. The missing bays cannot have been traceried, for in that case there would be grooves left in the existing jambs, but most probably they were plain rectangular panels in which were hung the dorsals of the altars on each side of the nave. The rood-loft



ADDERBURY. THE ROOD-SCREEN.

doorway has been discovered within the last few years, and it proves that the loft was supported directly on the head of the screen with a horizontal soffit, as at Rousham.

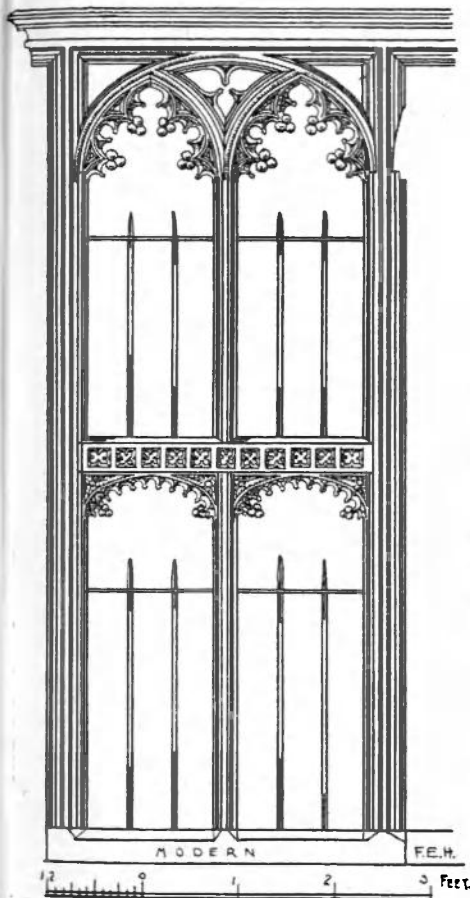


FIG. 3. STEEPLE ASTON. PART OF ROOD-SCREEN.

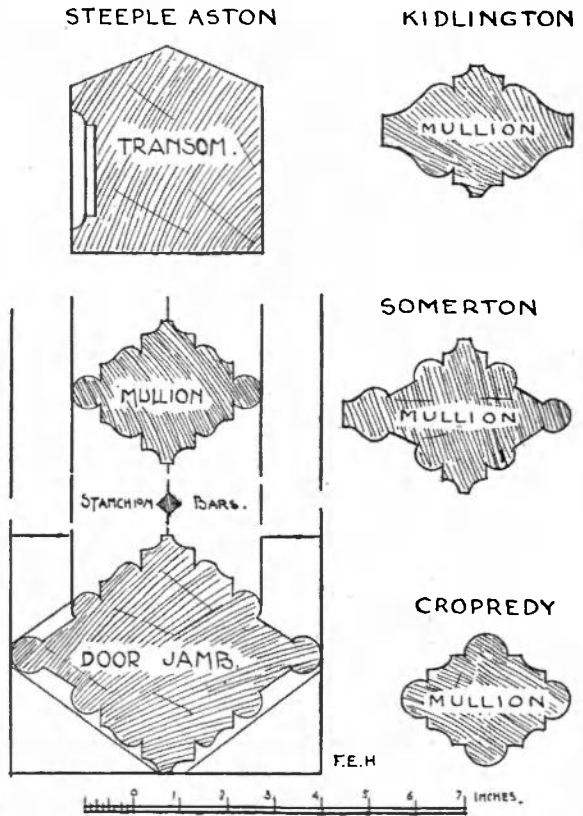


FIG. 4.

When the grain and varnish were removed a short time ago, the mediaeval colour (said to have been vermilion and perhaps blue) also disappeared in the process (figs. 3 and 4).

BARFORD ST. MICHAEL. The good fifteenth-century rood - screen with tracery in both upper and lower panels is only two and three-quarter inches thick, but the rood-loft door and the marks of the beam over the screen in the chancel-arch prove that it once had a coved rood-loft. The paint is modern and so is the cornice-moulding. The doors appear to be late Georgian work (plate II, no. 2).

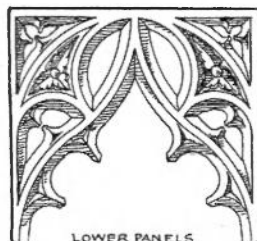
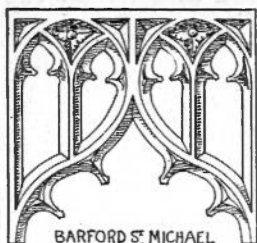


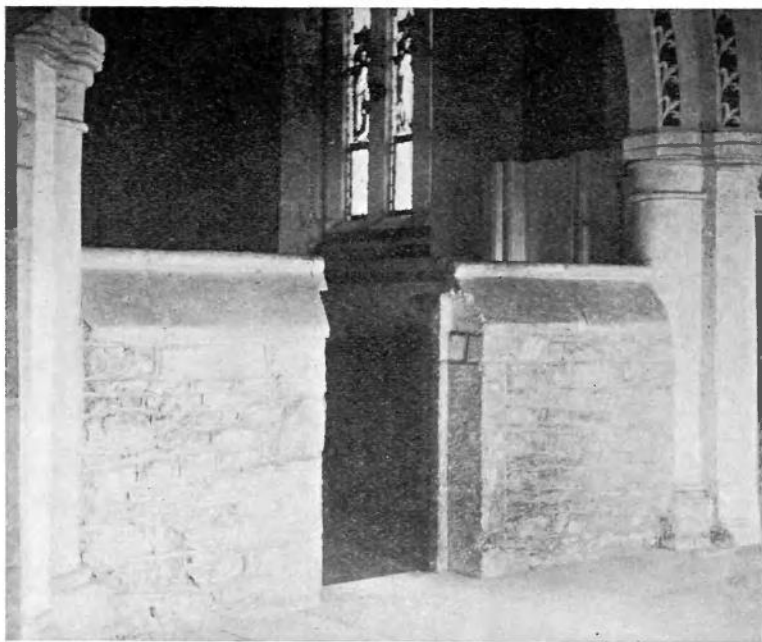
FIG. 5.

BARTON, STEEPLE. In 1846 there was a tympanum, probably of the mediaeval period, with post-reformation paintings, but it is now destroyed.

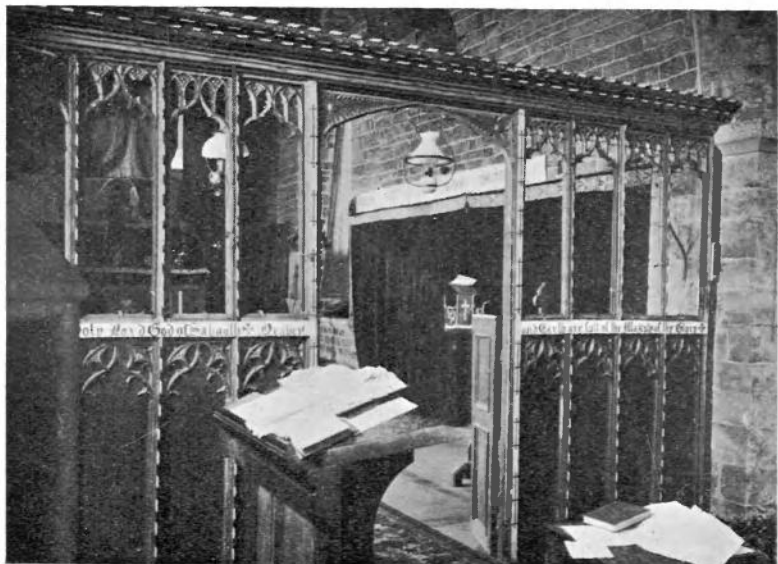
"The chancel arch is boarded up, and the arms of James II, supported by curious figures with wings, are painted on this boarding with the date, 1686, and this text under them in black letter 'My son, feare thou the Lord and the King and medle not with them that are given to change.' This boarding might better be removed from the arch but the painting should be preserved and placed against the blank wall." Ibid. 95.

BARTON, WESTCOT. The chancel-screen has exceptionally wide tracery heads, and each bay is sub-divided by a small mullion. The colouring is modern, and certain parts of the screen, such as the head and the ugly arch over the doorway, are also of recent date. The jambs are moulded on the side which should fit against the chancel-arch, and the original arrangement may have been like that suggested as a solution to the problems of the Steeple Aston screen. The chancel floor has been raised and the head of the screen is now some distance above the sill of the rood-loft doorway. The loft was probably constructed like that at Rousham, but the rood-loft parapet must have been elaborate to harmonise with the tracery below (fig. 6).

BECKLEY. The marks left by the removal of the screen may be seen in the jambs of the eastern arch of the central



NO. 1. ASTHALL. LOW SCREEN ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CHANCEL.



NO. 2. BARFORD ST. MICHAEL. CHANCEL SCREEN.

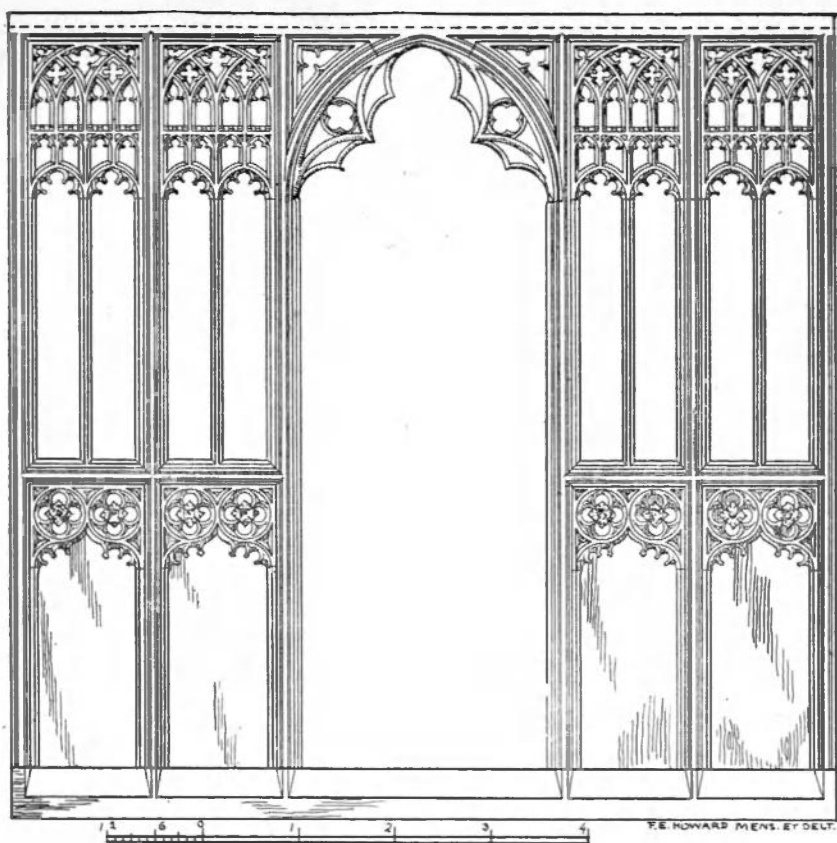


FIG. 6. WESTCOT BARTON.

tower. Over the western arch are paintings of the Last Judgment, and figures of SS. Peter and Paul. There is an indecipherable inscription, but the paintings are probably of the fifteenth century. The royal arms of George III are painted on the older work.

The blocked doorway above the arch seems to have led to the roof-space of the former nave.

BEGBROKE. The jambs of the fine Norman chancel-arch are cut away to receive the head of the screen, of which there are no other traces.

BICESTER. There is a parclose screen between the transept and north chapel, much disfigured by modern

glazing, and stained and varnished. There are two ranges of traceried openings above the plain lower panels and consequently the screen is unusually lofty. It appears to date from the middle of the fifteenth century. The rood-loft stairs are well built.

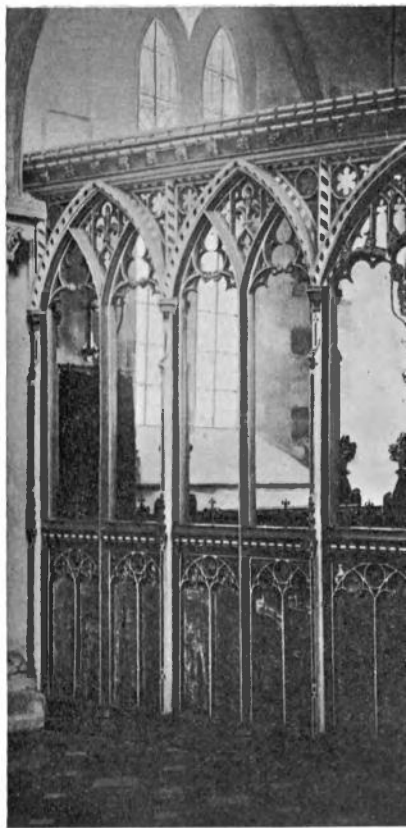
BLOXHAM. The rood-screen, although once vaulted, is probably local work. It was much restored some years ago when the tympanum was destroyed and the spandrels of the screen patched up with stiff tracery. Its position was altered and the whole of the work repainted in violent tones, with the exception of the lower panels, which retain interesting paintings of the four Doctors of the Church, paired with the evangelistic symbols. The other panels are much defaced but traces of figures clad in white are visible in some cases. These paintings are very simple, but they do not compare unfavourably with some of the Devonshire work, to which they are nearly akin. Above the chancel-arch are the remains of the Last Judgment painting, but a large part, including that painted on the tympanum, has been utterly destroyed (plate III).

BODICOTE. A well-preserved screen, with its rood-loft and tympanum, has been destroyed since 1842.

"The rood-loft or ancient gallery in which the holy rood was placed, between the nave and the chancel, remains perfect and should be carefully preserved, as such relics of antiquity are far from common; the arch above is plastered up: this plastering might be removed with advantage, which would effectually throw open the chancel without destroying the rood-loft as has been too frequently done in similar cases." Beesley's *History of Banbury*.

BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN. The painting of the royal arms above the chancel arch is dated 1895. This is the latest example in the county.

BRIZE NORTON. A good screen of local type, but much restored and with modern colouring, still remains in the chancel-arch. Both upper openings and lower panels have tracery, but the arch over the doorway and the deal cornices are not ancient (figs. 7 and 8).

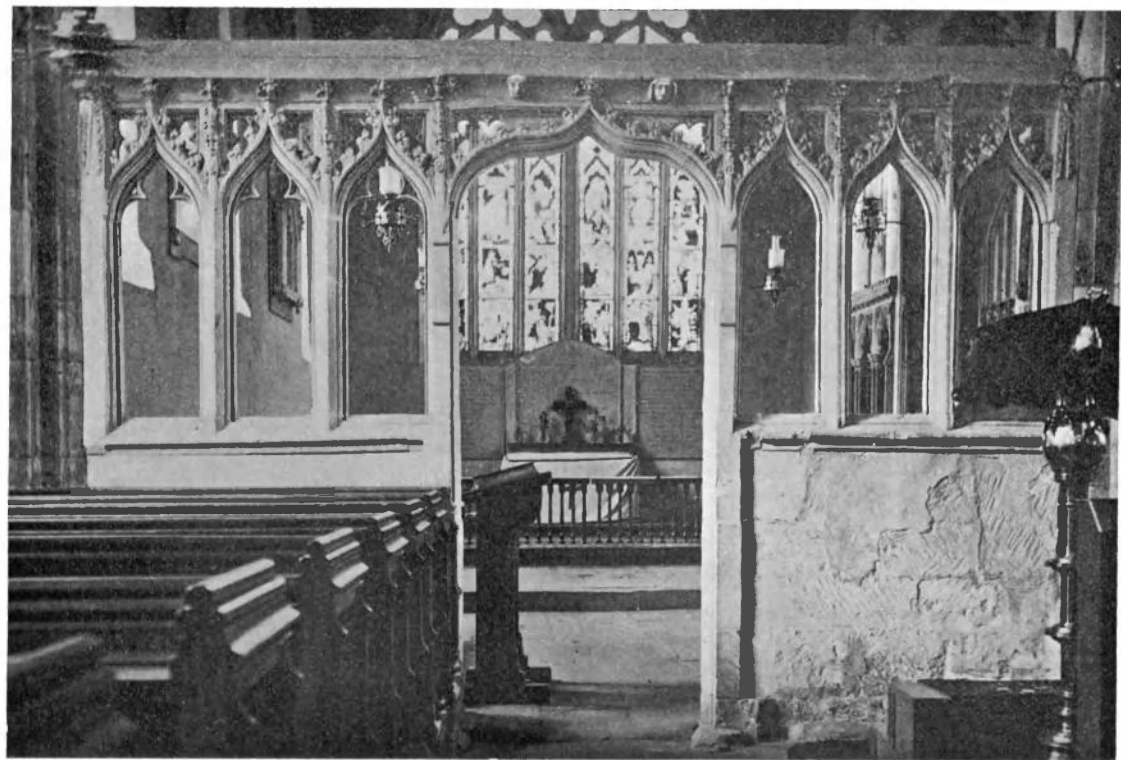


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PLATE III.

BLOXHAM. ROOD-SCREEN.



BROUGHTON. STONE CHANCEL SCREEN.

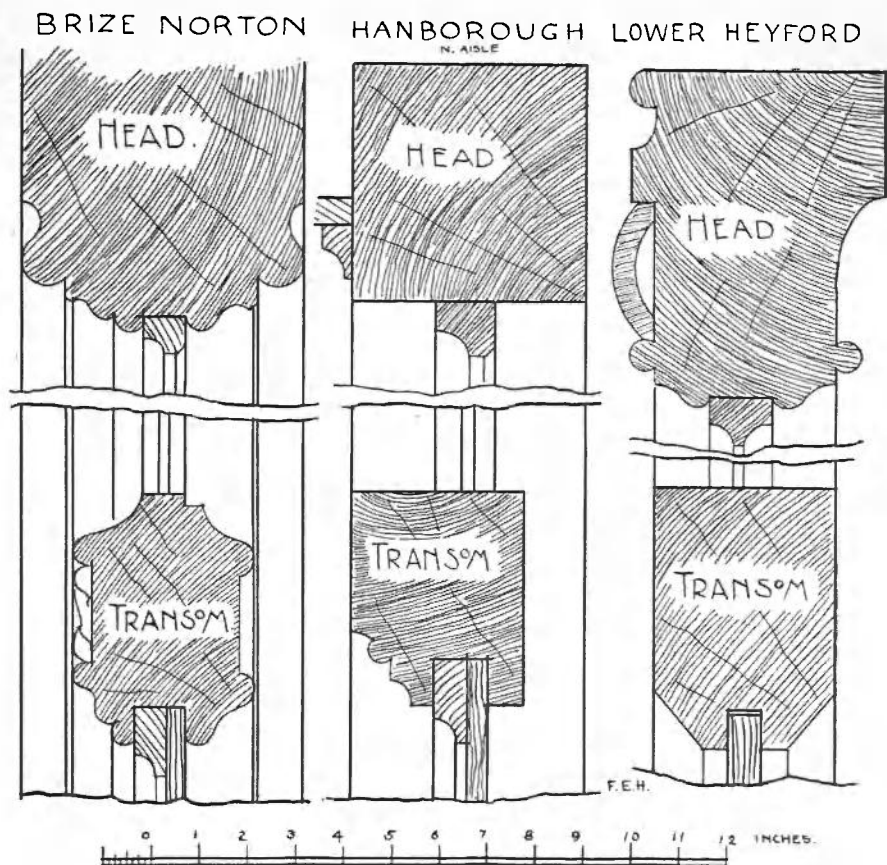


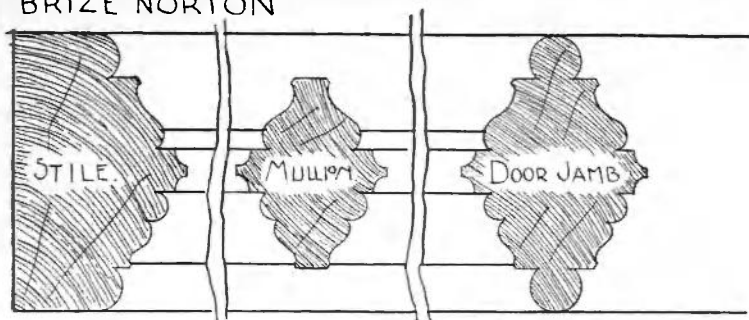
FIG. 7.

BROUGHTON. The stone chancel-screen is a beautiful piece of fourteenth-century work with good carved crockets and pinnacles. The lower part of the screen is perfectly plain, which suggests that two side altars may have once stood against it on either side of the doorway (plate iv).

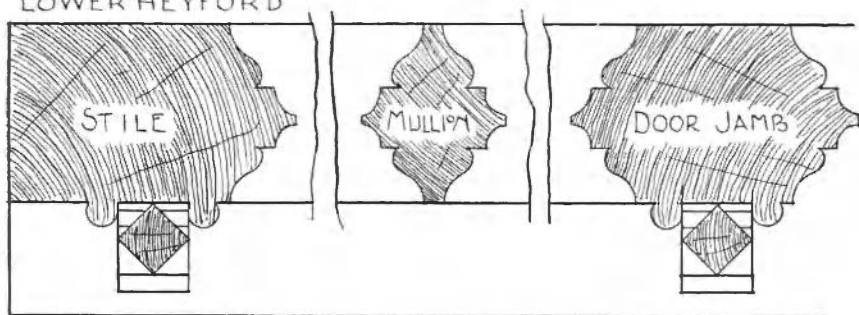
BUCKNELL. There appears to have been a tympanum and rood-loft in 1823.

"In the northern wall may be plainly discovered the entrance from the belfry stairs into the rood-loft, the back of which is now ornamented with the royal arms and the commandments." *Dunkin's History of Ploughley*, i, 182.

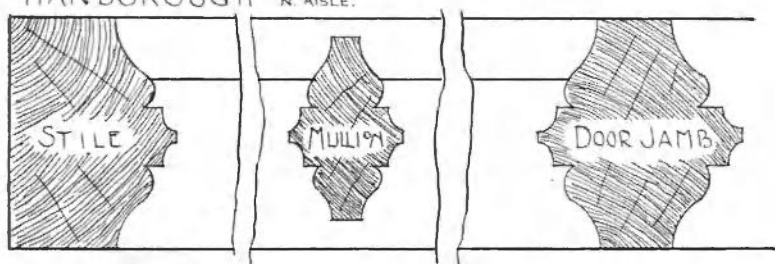
BRIZE NORTON



LOWER HEYFORD



HANBOROUGH N. AISLE.



MILCOMBE RODSREEN

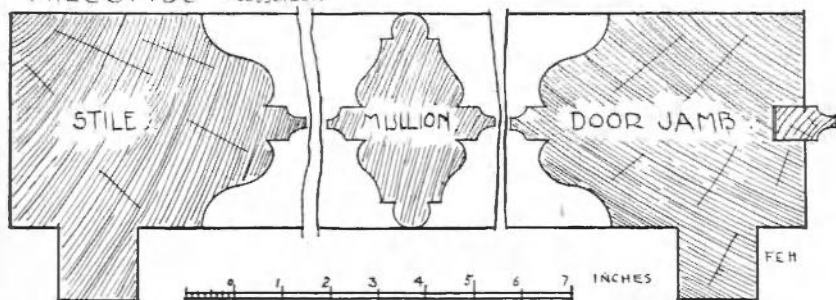
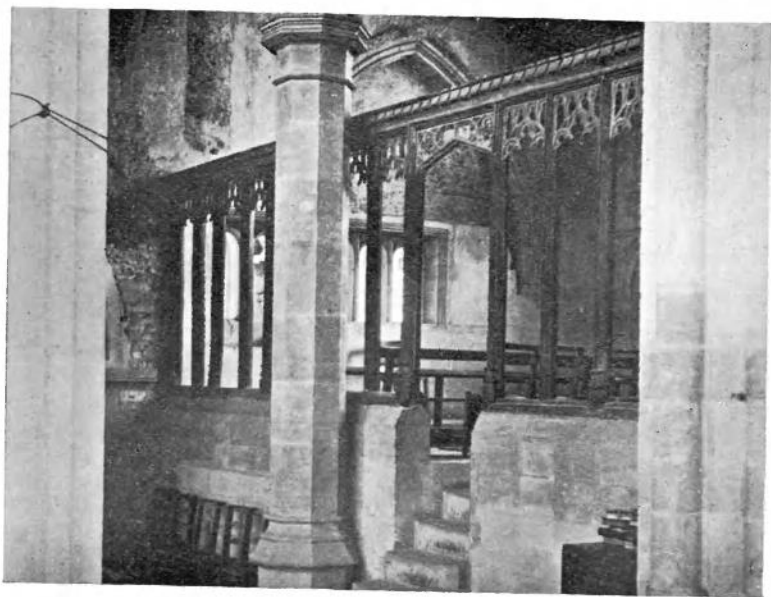
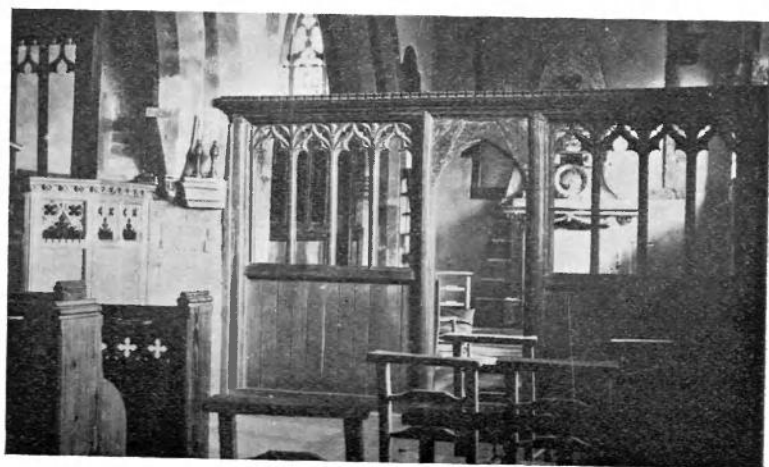


FIG. 8.



NO. 1. BURFORD. SCREEN OF ST. THOMAS'S CHAPEL.



NO. 2. WARDINGTON. SOUTH AISLE SCREEN.

BURFORD. The four sections of screenwork (fig. 9) which enclose the chancel on the north and south sides seem to be Gloucestershire work. They are altogether on a larger scale than the Oxfordshire type of parclose screen, and each traceried head is carved on a separate piece of wood with the grain running vertically. They have been much restored.

The piece of screenwork (plate v) which encloses the raised chapel on the south side of the church retains its old colouring. The lower part is plain stonework, but the upper part is of oak in good preservation. The tracery

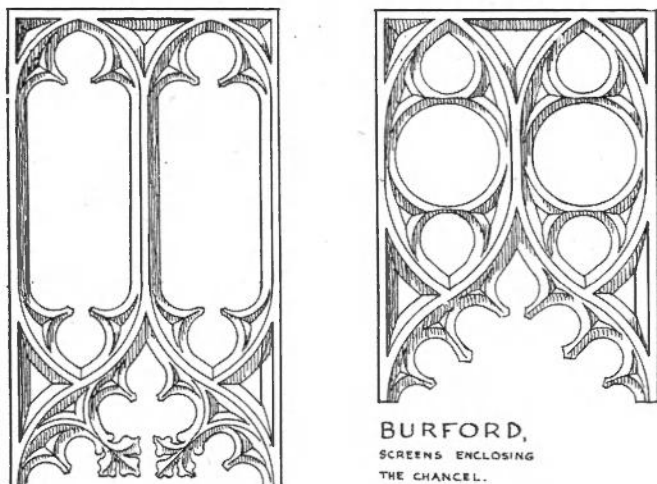


FIG. 9.

and the arch over the doorway are original and so is the head, which is battlemented.

The chantry chapel under the eastern arch of the north arcade is very interesting, but it has been severely restored.

The two aisle-screens are fragmentary. They include some deeply-moulded geometrical tracery, which is, however, of fifteenth-century date, but most of the north-aisle screen is post-reformation work.

CASSINGTON. The small sanctuary-screen is the only one of its kind in the county. The lower part is covered

with rectilinear tracery, some of the panels being pierced, perhaps for use as squints. The uprights are widely spaced and the tracery is only five and a quarter inches deep. The colouring is ancient, but the shades of red and green employed have darkened with age.

Above the western arch of the central tower, beneath which the rood-loft screen formerly stood, are faint traces of the Last Judgment painting. The blocked door, high up in the wall over the arch, seems to have led to the roof-space above the ceiling of the Norman church.

Fourteenth-century windows have been inserted in the side walls of the nave to light the altars which once stood on each side of the chancel-arch, beneath the rood-loft.

The post-reformation stalls are excellent work said to have been brought here from Christ Church, Oxford.

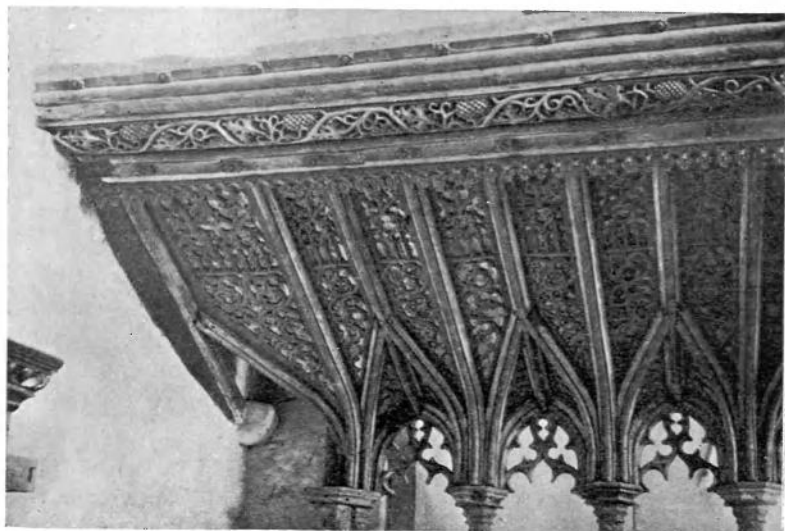
CHALGROVE. The jambs of the fourteenth-century chancel-arch have been cut away for the screen, of which nothing is left. Around the soffit of the arch are the marks left by the framework of the tympanum.

The altar-rails ought not to have been removed from their proper place, to form a low chancel barrier. This has also been done at Cropredy, Eynsham and Berrick Salome.

CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR. The rood-screen, which retains its old colouring and the vaulting to its rood-loft, is the finest in Oxfordshire. It shows strong continental influence and greatly resembles the rood-screen at Thame. Although vaulted the screen is not arched, and the beautiful carved shafts are cut out of the uprights which run from transom to head. The modern casing of the latter hides any indications of an eastern overhang to the rood-loft, but it appears from a plate in Dunkin's *History of Ploughley* that the tympanum formed its eastern parapet. The lower panels are carved in linen-fold patterns, painted vermilion on a leaf-green ground. The tracery is flamboyant with boldly projecting cusps, while very delicate flamboyant work decorates the panels of the vaulting. The ribs of the latter are red and gold, and the panels deep blue with golden tracery. The bressummer has



CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR. CHANCEL SCREEN FROM THE EAST.



CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR. DETAIL OF VAULTING, WEST SIDE.

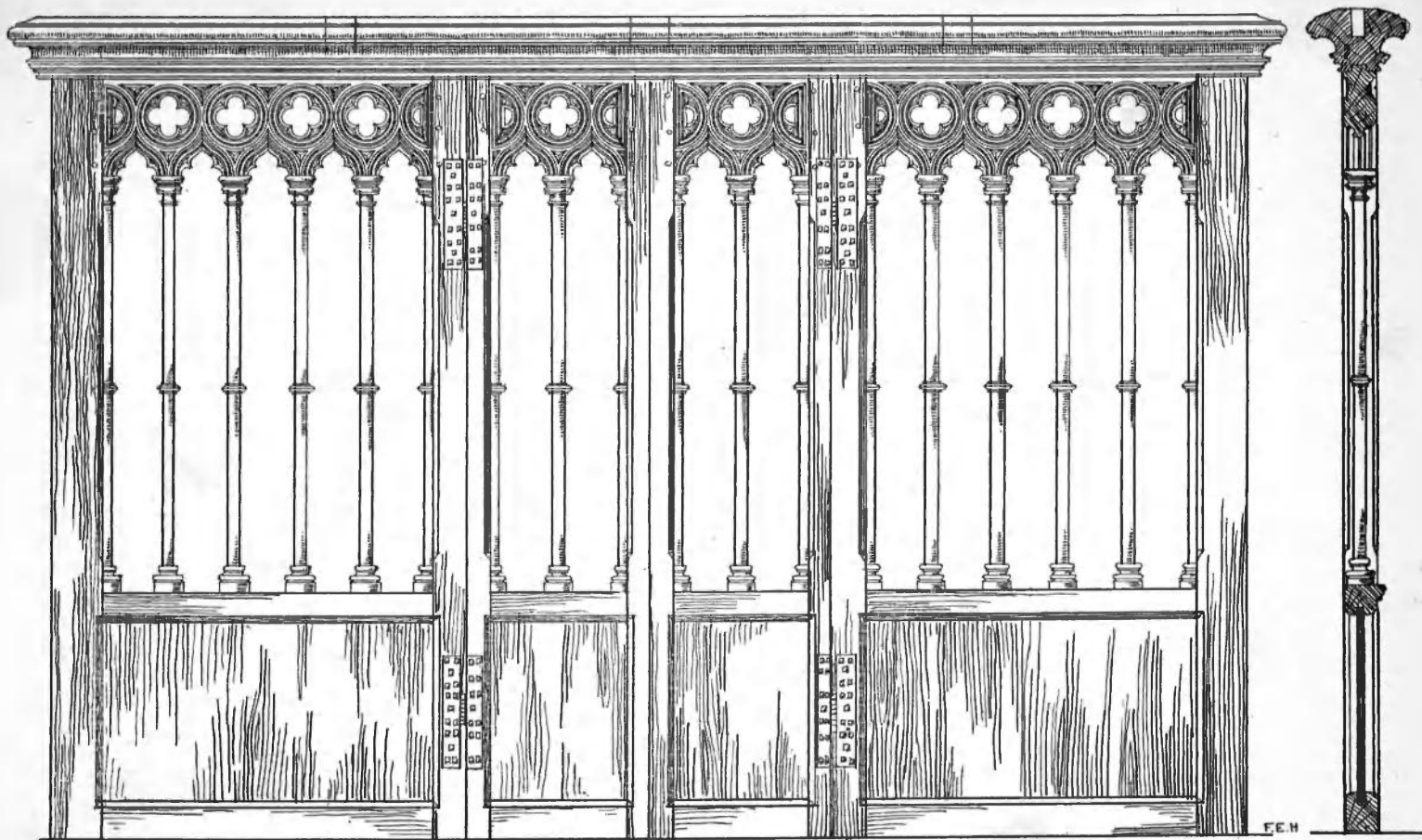


FIG. 10. CHINNOR. ROOD-SCREEN (HALF-INCH SCALE).

several bead-mouldings, which, as usual, have a gold and green "barber's poling" and there is also a gilded trail of excellent design. The wide mortises in the top of the bressummer show that the rood-loft front must have been very elaborate, although of open-work. It looks as if there were two little niches, one above the other, on each of the uprights, while the panels between may have been treated as niches with larger figures. The other mortises show that the rood with its "Mary and John" stood on pedestals rising behind the parapet. Although the screen is so elaborate the rood-loft door is quite insignificant and the ascent to the loft was probably by means of a ladder (plate vi).

The cross of evergreens standing on the rood-loft is renewed every year. The new cross has been brought to the church in procession every May-day for many years, and the custom is perhaps of very early origin, but it must differ widely from that in use before the reformation.

CHESTERTON. There was a stone rood-screen and perhaps a tympanum in 1823. The rood-loft appears to have been destroyed a few years before this.

"The pulpit and reading-desk were formerly placed against the farthest arch where the iron that supported the hour-glass still continues; but on the demolition of the rood-loft, were removed into the corner. . . . A decayed stone screen divides the chancel from the body of the church, and over the entrance is a painting of the king's arms, and on either side of it a table of the decalogue." Ibid 245, 247.

CHINNOR. The rood-screen is a fine example of early fourteenth - century work, with the original massive wrought-iron hinges. The lower part is perfectly plain but above the moulded transom there are delicately turned shafts and elaborately moulded geometrical tracery. The head is also richly moulded but the upper member on each side is modern. Mortises

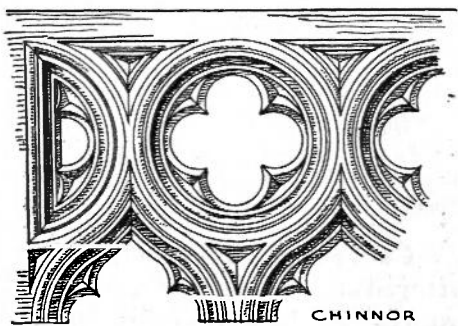


FIG. II.

in the top of the screen show that the rood stood directly upon it and that there was no rood-loft until the fifteenth century, when one was contrived some distance above the screen, as the position of the doorway proves.

In the wall of the nave, on the south side of the screen, is a piscina, marking the position of a former side altar beneath the rood-loft.

CHIPPING NORTON. The remains of the reredos of a chantry chapel, enclosed by stone screenwork, were discovered and renewed at the restoration under Bruton.

COMBE. The screen is destroyed, but a few fragments of its tracery have been recovered and have recently been placed in the church. There is an exceedingly interesting series of fifteenth-century wall-paintings, including a well-



FIG. 12.

preserved Last Judgment, part of which must have been painted on the tympanum, for it is cut off abruptly by the chancel-arch. On the north side of the latter is a painting of the Crucifixion of our Lord with SS. Mary and John, serving as a reredos to one of the side altars; and on the south side is a fourteenth-

century niche with the angel of the Annunciation on the wall beside it, showing that the south chapel was dedicated to our Lady. The rood-loft stairs are exceptionally well built.

The stairs and paintings clearly indicate the form of the old screen (plate vii).

"1846. The rood-screen has some good tracery remaining of Decorated forms but is Perpendicular." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 154.

"The ancient rood-screen which stretched right across the church before the chancel-arch, was destroyed and burnt by the direction of the Rev. Wm. Barrett (chaplain 1850-61)." *Account of Long Combe*, Rev. Spencer Pearce, M.A.

CROPREDY. The rood-loft was destroyed about 1840, but the screen itself, which is of the fourteenth century, now stands in a mutilated state on the north side of the chancel. The tracery is rich

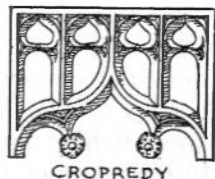


FIG. 13.

curvilinear work, and the screen must have been one of the finest in the county (plate viii).

There are remains of an unusually good Last Judgment painting on the wall above the chancel arch, and the bay of the nave roof above the rood is also painted.

Two screens of much later date enclose a chapel in the south chancel aisle. The initials A. D. carved along the transoms may be those of the founder of the chantry (plate viii).

CUDDESDON. The position of the rood-loft door indicates that the screen stood in the western arch of the central tower.

DEDDINGTON. The rood-screen is excellent work of the fifteenth century, but the modern vaulting is very poor and misleading.¹ The lower panels have good tracery, and the design of that in the upper part with crocketed ogee arches and trefoils is unusual. The screen appears to have been vaulted on the western side only, for there are good old carved spandrels above the tracery on the eastern side, showing that if the rood-loft had an eastern projection the soffit must have been horizontal (plate ix).

In the eastern wall of the nave, about three feet above the level of the head of the screen, is a niche which may be the piscina of an altar on the rood-loft.

Stairs, once leading to the lofts of parclose screens, are visible in the window recesses of both north and south aisles.

DORCHESTER. There are remains of the good fourteenth-century screens² which once enclosed the quire, but they have been severely restored.

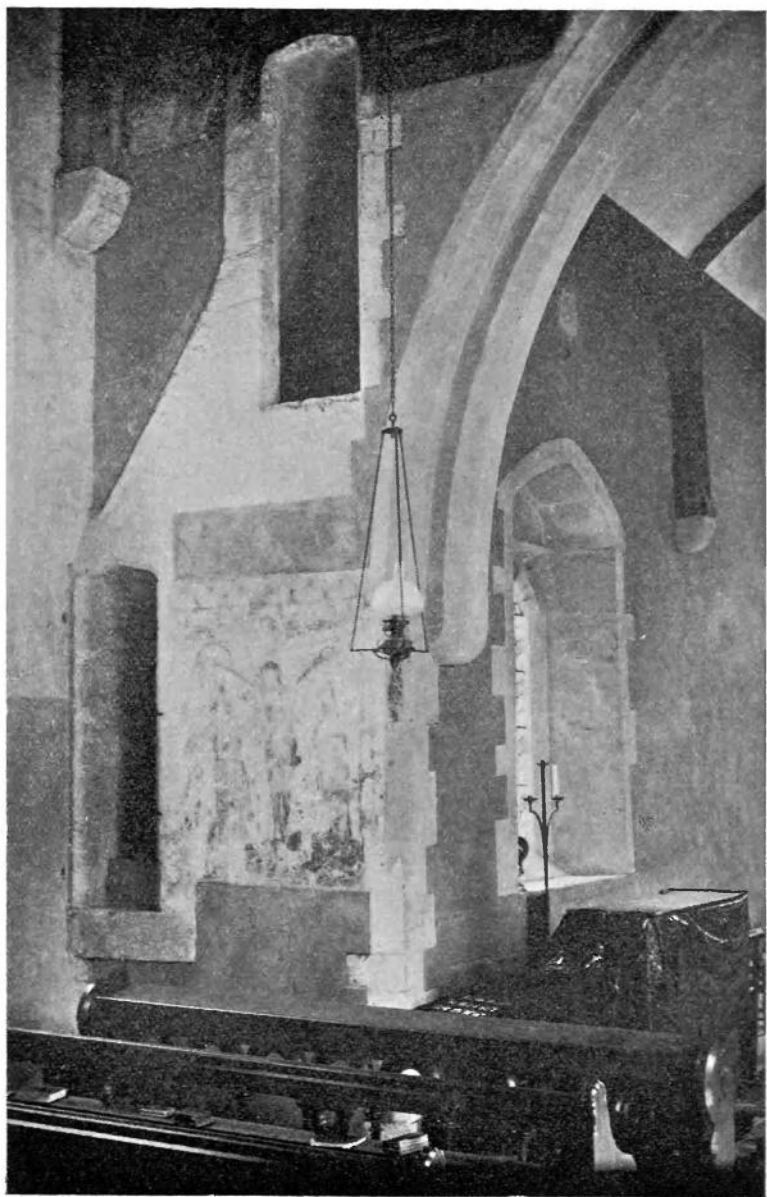
DRAYTON ST. LEONARDS.

"On the chancel-arch are the arms of King George II, which a few years back were placed beneath the arch, as was usual at the time of their being ordered." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 327.

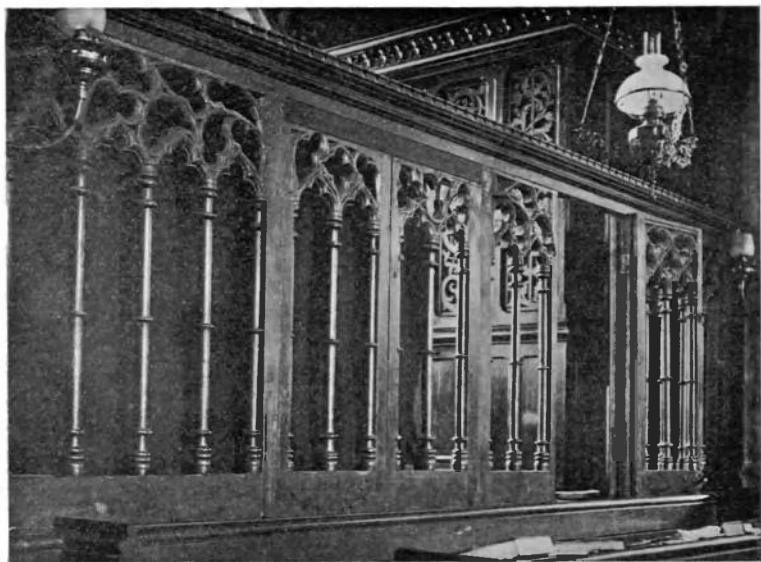
¹ The springers of the vaulting, which are ancient, are carved in the solid. At Charlton-on-Otmoor the ribs are mitred

together at the springing, as in the Devonshire work.

² See Mr. F. B. Bond's *Rood-screens and Rood-lofts*, 60, for measured drawing.



COMBE. ROOD-LOFT STAIR AND PAINTED REREDOS OF A SIDE ALTAR.



CROPREDY. REMAINS OF THE ROOD-SCREEN.



CROPREDY. PARCLOSE SCREENS ROUND SOUTH AISLE CHAPEL.

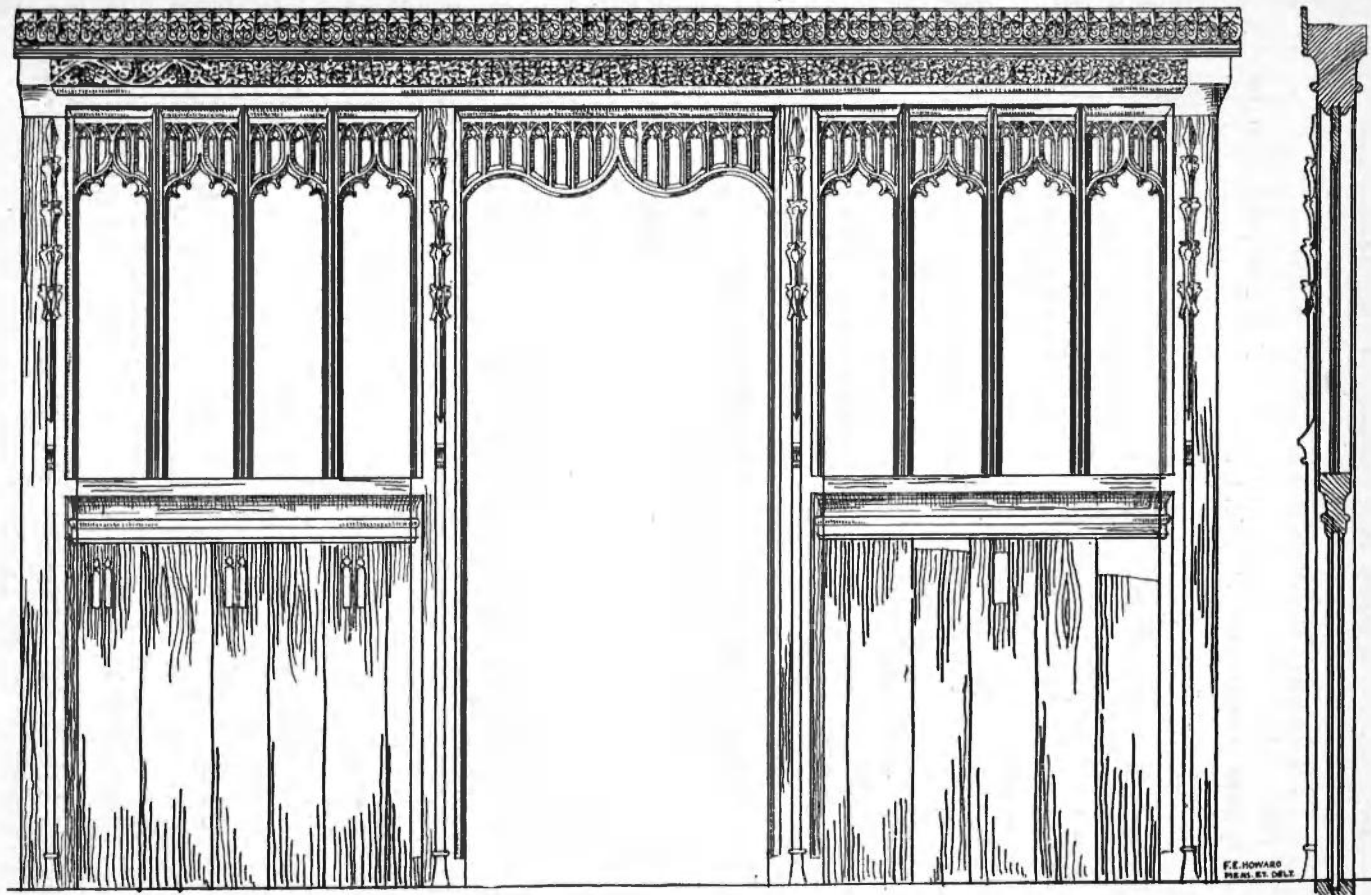


FIG. 14. HANBOROUGH. ROOD-SCREEN.

DUNSTEW. Screen destroyed since 1846.

"Across the chancel-arch, a screen of early Perpendicular work, the pattern quite Decorated." Ibid. 88.

ELSFIELD. Post-reformation screen destroyed since 1846.

"The screen, Debased, about James I, painted stone colour." Ibid. 194.

ENSTONE. Rood-loft destroyed in nineteenth century.

"In the church of Enstone are considerable remains of the ancient rood-loft." Bloxam, *Principles of Gothic Architecture*, ii, 41.

EWELME. The good fifteenth-century rood-loft screen runs across both aisles and nave, but the rood-loft has been destroyed. The central part has been reduced in height since 1823. The doors are original and two pairs retain their old padlocks and bolts. The mullions are of wrought-iron, with wooden capitals and bases. The screens were painted drab, but that on the chancel-screen has been removed, showing the ancient vermilion paint.

Four richly moulded parciose screens with rectilinear tracery divide the chancel from its aisles.

EYNSHAM. The altar rails have taken the place of the lower part of a screen which survived in 1846.

"There are the remains of a Perpendicular screen, but the upper part is all cut away." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 139.

FRITWELL. The screen and rood-loft have been destroyed since 1823.

"Considerable portions of a highly decorated rood-loft which separated the nave from the chancel are yet remaining." Skelton, *Antiquities of Oxfordshire*.

FULBROOK. Part of the Doom painting remains above the chancel arch.

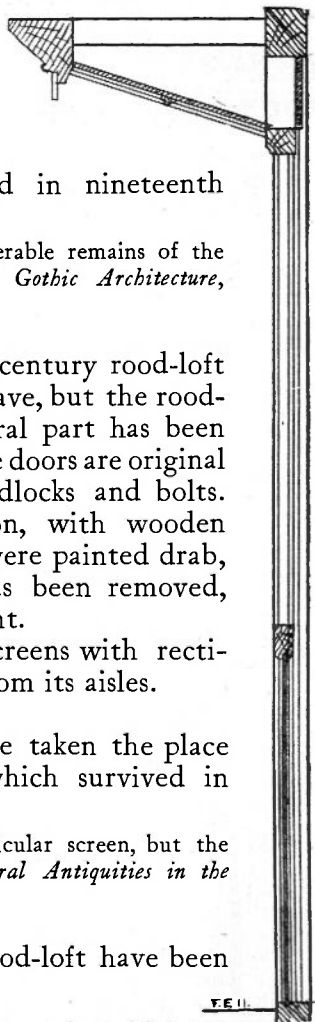


FIG. 15.

SECTION OF
HANBOROUGH
SOUTH AISLE
SCREEN.

GARSINGTON. Rood-screen destroyed since 1846.

"The rood-screen is of rather late Perpendicular work and the reading-desk is made up of parts of the rood-screen." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 336.

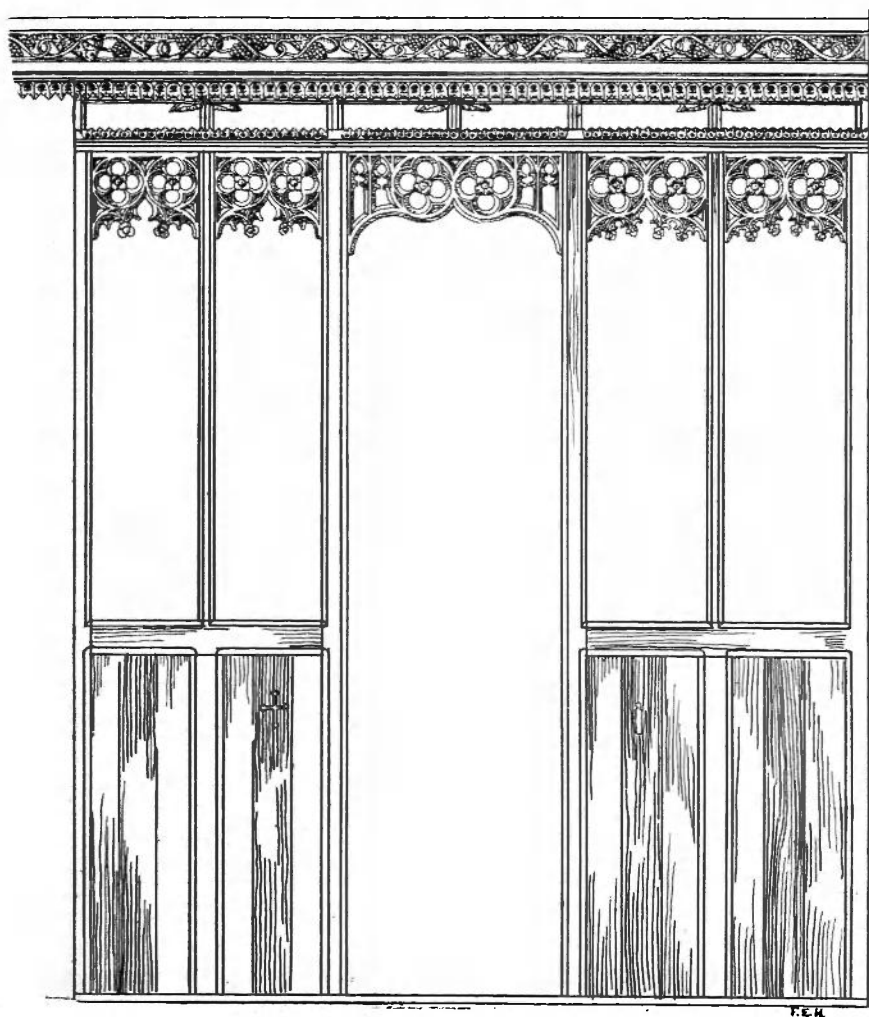


FIG. 16. HANBOROUGH. SOUTH AISLE SCREEN (HALF-INCH SCALE).

GREAT MILTON. (See MILTON).

GREAT ROLLRIGHT. (See ROLLRIGHT).

GREAT TEW. (See TEW).

HANBOROUGH. The rood-loft formerly ran across both chancel and aisles but only the aisle sections retain their coving. The roodscreen seems to have been lowered, and the only traces left by the removal of its rood-loft are the mortises along the top of the head. All the screens retain their beautiful old colouring, and an exceptionally large amount of carving. The mortise for an upright post which once supported the end of the bressummer of the north aisle-screen should not be overlooked. The south aisle screen is the earliest, and that in the north aisle is much later and far more elaborate. Small openings are cut in the lower two panels of the screens (plates ix and x and figs. 7, 8, 14, 15, 16).

HEYFORD, LOWER. The fifteenth-century chancel-screen is excellent work but it has been severely restored. The lower panels are plain except for a small trefoiled piercing. The tracery and the trail on the head of the screen are exceptionally good. A modern iron strap which strengthens the head conceals any traces of mortises in connexion with the destroyed rood-loft. The stairs to the latter are formed in a turret decorated with a niche (figs. 7, 8, 17 and 18).

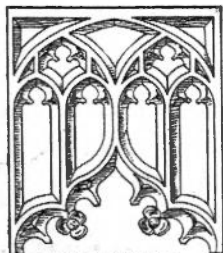
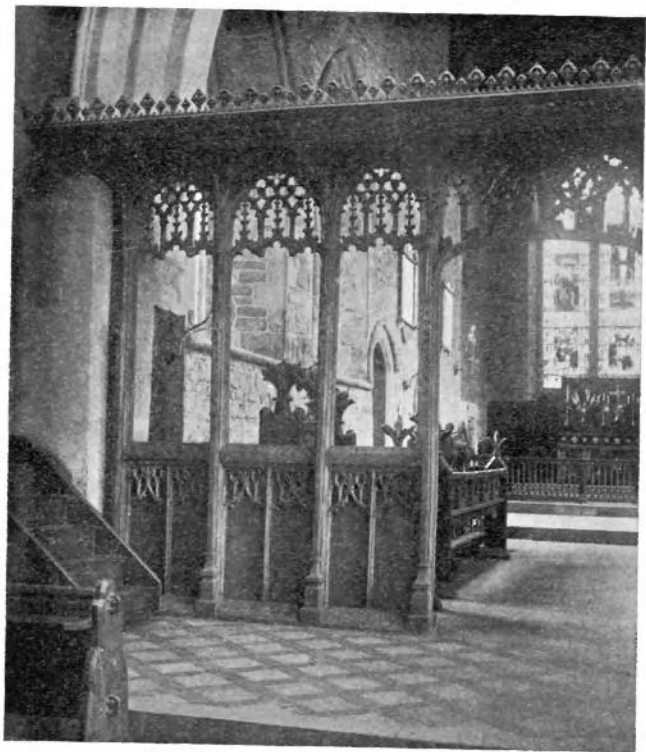


FIG. 17.

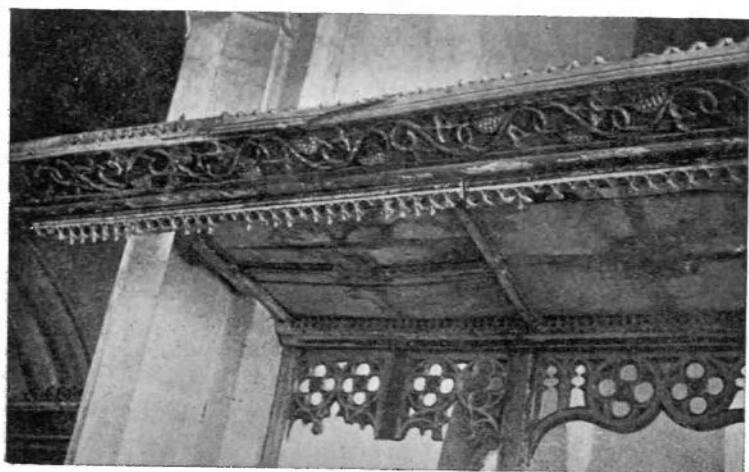
HOOK NORTON. There are traces of the screen in the jambs of the chancel arch. The destruction of this fine screen and rood-loft took place comparatively recently. The rood-loft doorways are carefully wrought.

"Few churches retain so much of the rood-loft as may here be seen intersecting the nave and the chancel; the beautiful Gothic tracery with which this interesting elevation is decorated remains in a very perfect state, and the stone staircase, ascended from the nave, leads to the very floor on which the rood was erected." Skelton's *Oxfordshire*, 1823.

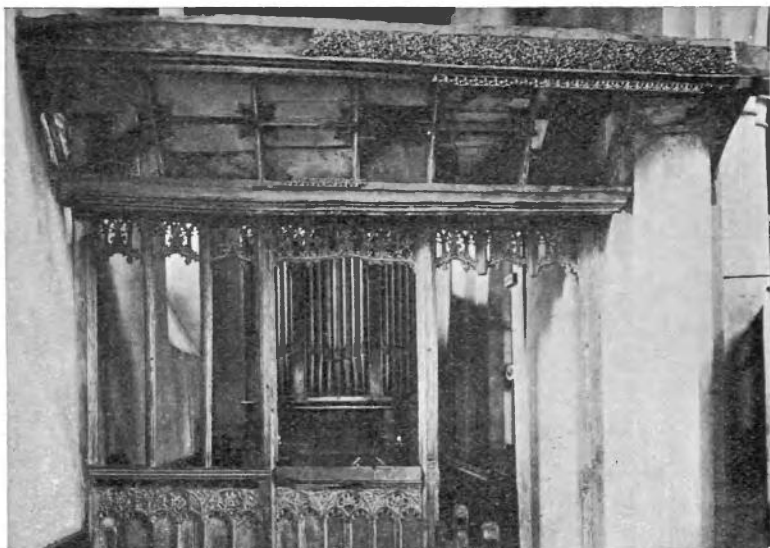
HORNTON. A fragment of the lower part of the fifteenth-century rood-screen still exists in this neglected church.



NO. I. DEDDINGTON. ROOD-SCREEN.



NO. 2. HANBOROUGH. SOUTH AISLE SCREEN, DETAIL OF COVING.



NO 1. HANBOROUGH. NORTH AISLE SCREEN.



NO. 2. KIDLINGTON. SCREEN ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CHANCEL,
WITH REMAINS OF THE STALLS.

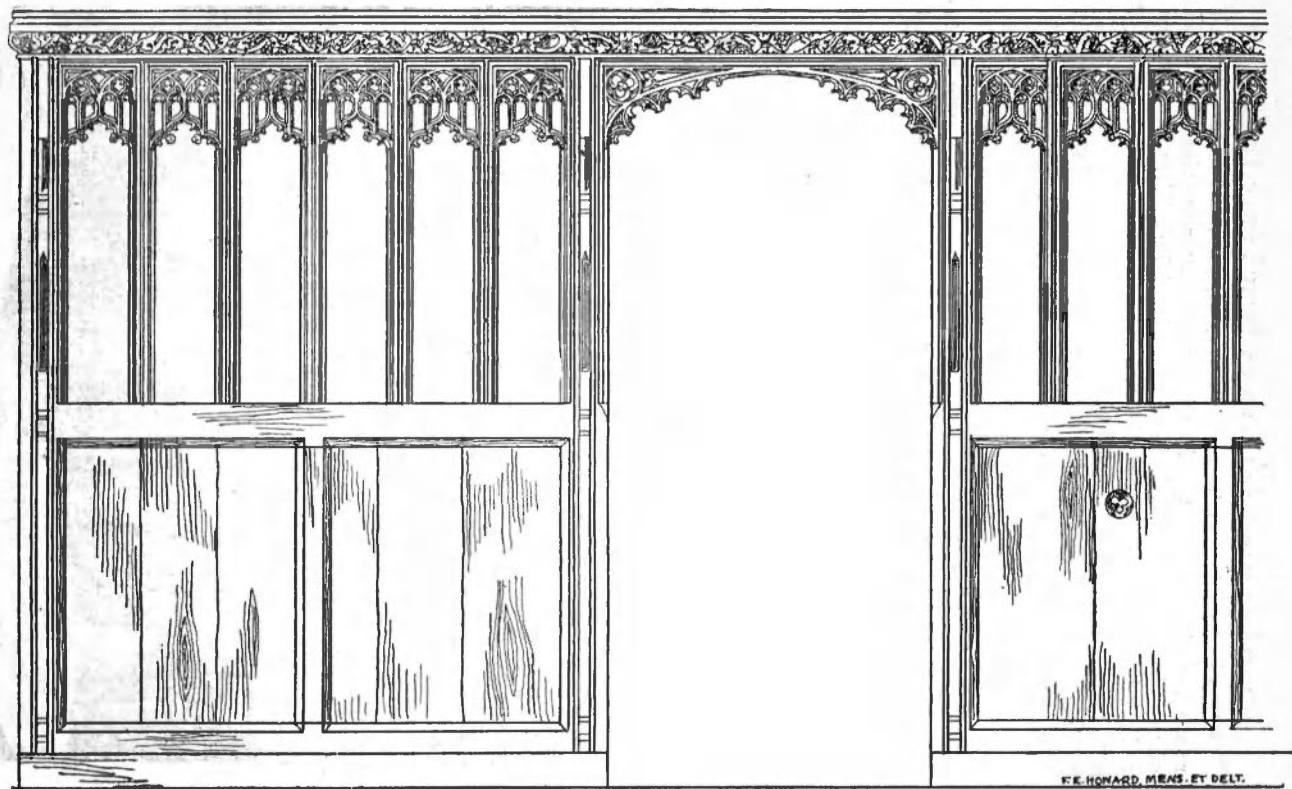


FIG. 18. LOWER HEYFORD. ROOD-SCREEN (HALF-INCH SCALE).

A parclose screen has been destroyed since 1842.

"The south aisle contains a chantry chapel, the wood screen of which remains, and is a fine example of early fifteenth-century carving; the whole of this aisle, walls, roof and screen are painted in brilliant parti-colours and gilt." Beesley's *History of Banbury*.

IFFLEY. The screen was destroyed in the last century. There is an illustration of it in Skelton's *Oxfordshire*.

ISLIP. The screen has been destroyed since 1846.

"Parts of the old rood-screen remain, with the linen pattern panel, marking it to be of about the time of Henry VIII. Other parts are in the vestry but are plain and mutilated." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 3.

KIDDINGTON. A fourteenth-century rood-screen has been destroyed since 1846. The traces of altars on each side of the chancel-arch with their piscinae and the stairs to the rood-loft, contrived in the window recess, are very interesting.

"Part of the rood-screen remains with good Decorated mouldings in oak." *Ibid.* 127.

KIDLINGTON. Seven early fifteenth-century screens enclose the chancel and its aisles. The chancel-screen does not seem to be in its right place, for there are indications of a screen with a loft and altars beneath it in



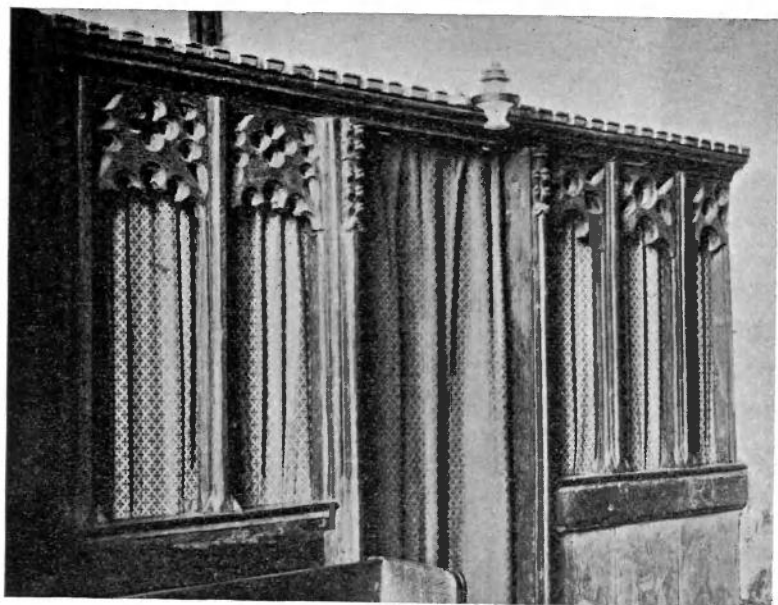
FIG. 19.



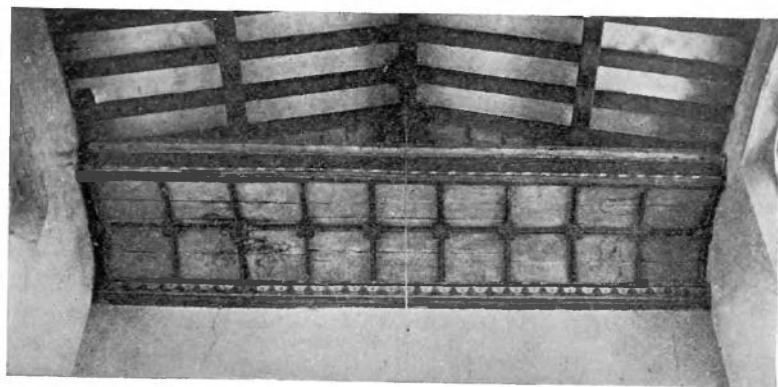
FIG. 20.

the western arch of the central tower. It is unfortunate that the screens should have been so thickly coated with stain and varnish, and the cast-iron cresting is also a mistake (plate x).

Attached to the screens on each side of the chancel are the remains of the old quire-stalls, but they have



NO. 1. MOLLINGTON. CHANCEL SCREEN, NOW IN THE TOWER ARCH.



NO. 2. GREAT ROLLRIGHT. ROOD-LOFT COVING OVER THE CHANCEL ARCH.

been cut up and mutilated. The beautifully carved bench-ends which stand in front of them were removed from the nave.

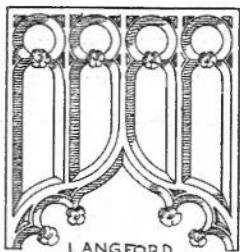


FIG. 21.

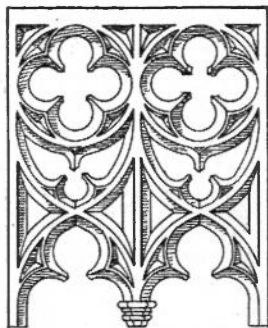
LOWER HEYFORD. (See HEYFORD).

MARSTON. There are remains of the sixteenth-century quire-stalls. In the tower arch is a quaint post-reformation screen with fret balusters.

MERTON. Screen destroyed since 1823.

"The chancel is separated from the nave by an indifferent screen." Dunkin's *History of Ploughley*.

MILCOMBE. The beautiful fifteenth-century chancel-screen has tracery both in its upper and lower panels, and there is a good carved trail along the head. The inverted position of some of the little birds carved among the foliage shows that it was reversed when the screen was restored and the colour renewed. The low wooden gates are partly ancient.

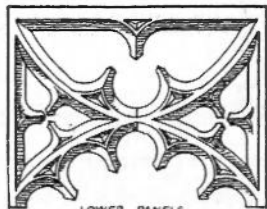


MILCOMBE UPPER PANELS

MILTON, GREAT. Post-reformation chancel-screen destroyed since 1846.

"A rood-screen, put up since the Reformation, and formed of turned balusters, divides the chancel from the nave." *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 304.

MOLLINGTON. The chancel-screen, which retains some of its old



LOWER PANELS

FIG. 22.

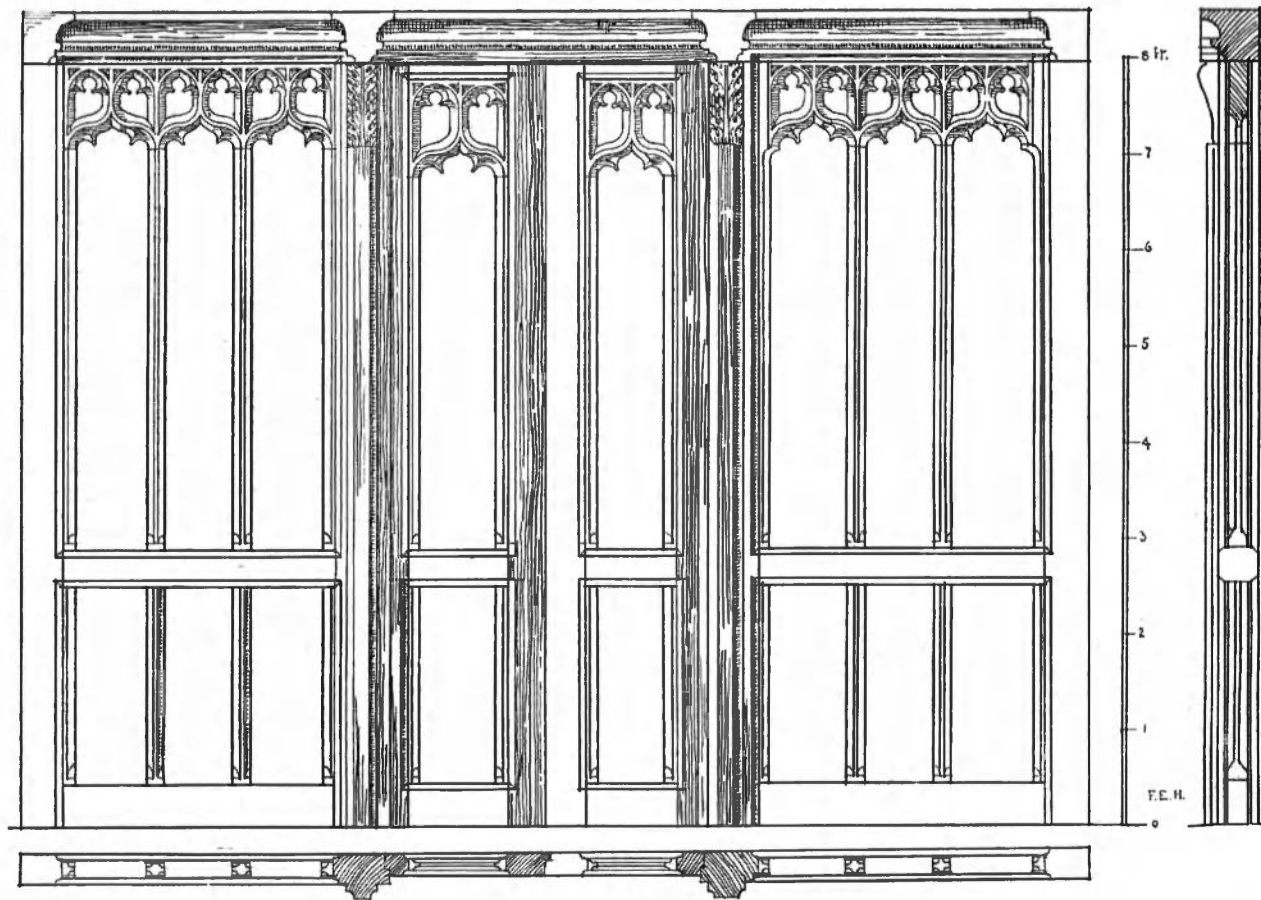


FIG. 23. NEWINGTON. CHANCEL SCREEN.

painting has been cut to fit in the tower arch. It is exceptionally rude work of the fifteenth century. The head is battlemented (plate xi).

NEWINGTON. The chancel-screen is much restored, but its open lower panels may be a restoration of the original arrangement. It dates



NEWINGTON

FIG. 24.

from the latter part of the fourteenth century and its rectilinear tracery is very massive, like that of the Decorated screens, but there are moulded mullions instead of turned shafts. The returned mouldings of the head should be noticed, as they afford a clue to the original construction of the rood-loft. The

doors are partly old (figs. 23 and 24).

NORTH ASTON. (SEE ASTON).

NORTHLEIGH. The modern stone chancel-screen replaces a "Grecian" erection, which in its turn was the successor of a mediaeval stone screen supporting the wall over it, for there has never been a chancel-arch.

The painting of the Last Judgment is extremely interesting. The blank spaces left where the rood was fastened against the wall indicate the exact size of the figures of Christ crucified, our Lady and St. John.

Good post-reformation screenwork encloses the Perrot chapel on the north side of the church.

NORTHMOOR. Until recently the remains of the screen were worked up into the two pulpits standing on either side of the chancel-arch. Some of the tracery may have formed part of the decoration of the rood-loft parapet. None of this work remains in the church but a piece of the tracery still exists in a cottage at Stanton Harcourt.

ODDINGTON. The chancel-screen and tympanum have been destroyed since 1823.

"The arch leading into the chancel is filled up to the top of the wood screen; the latter is divided into three arches decorated with tracery, painted and gilt." Dunkin's *History of Ploughley*.

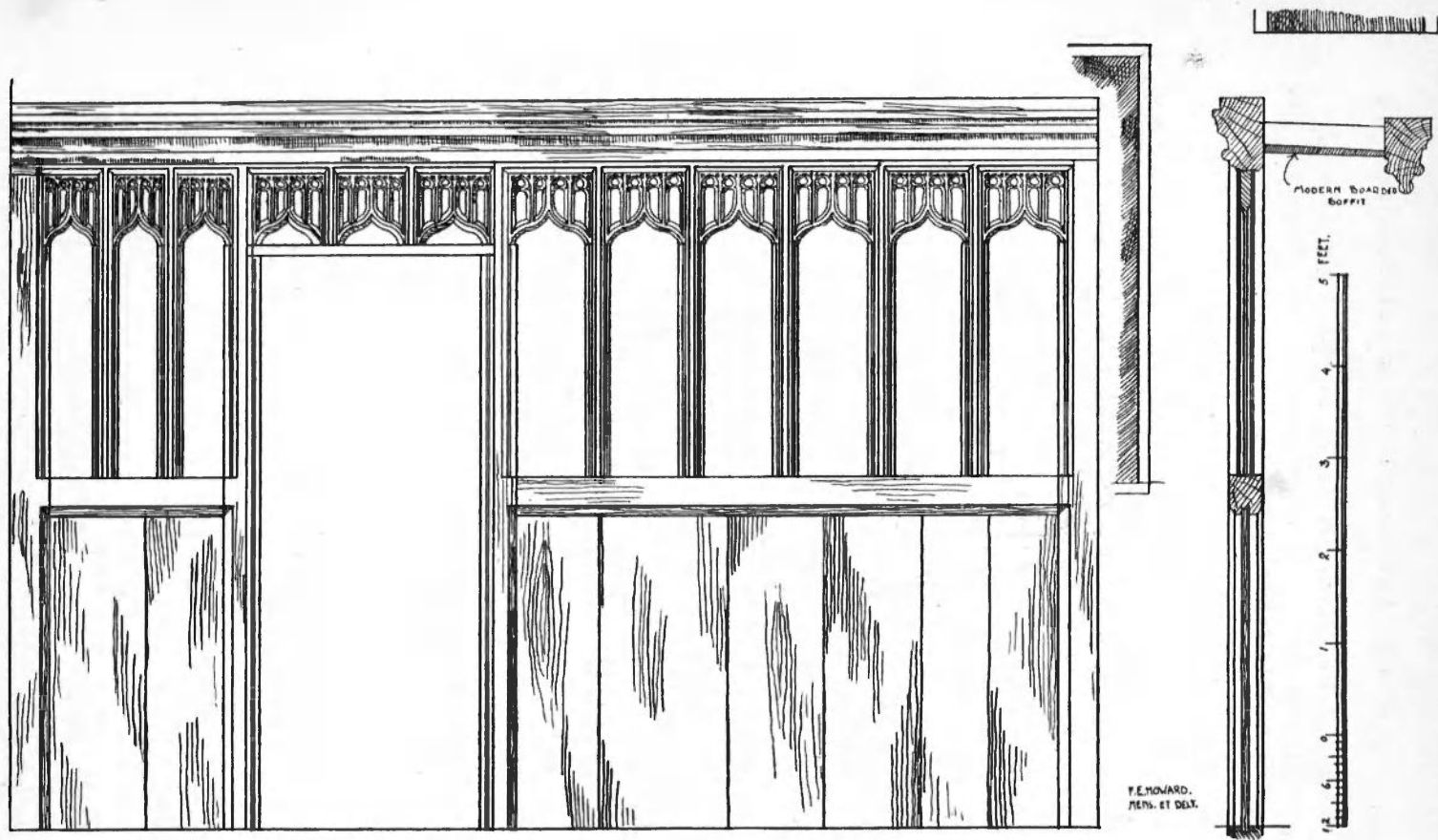


FIG. 25. ROUSHAM. SOUTH-AISLE SCREEN.

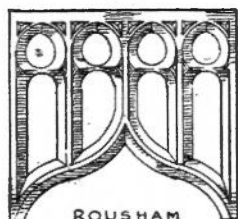


GREAT ROLLRIGHT. CHANCEL SCREEN.

OXFORD. No example of mediaeval screenwork exists in any of the parish churches, except at St. Michael's church, where there are fragments of a late fourteenth-century parclose screen between the chancel and north aisle. The work is not unlike that at Newington, but the rectilinear tracery is stiffer, and the cusps sharply pointed. The screen and rood of St. Margaret's (Bodley), the rood-loft of the church of St. John the Evangelist (Bodley) and the stone rood-loft in the chapel of St. John's Hospital (Comper) are modern work of the best kind.

ROLLRIGHT, GREAT. The fifteenth-century rood-screen has very beautiful tracery in the upper and lower panels. That over the doorway is also ancient. There is a trail and a cresting on each side of the head. High up over the chancel-screen is part of the rood-loft¹ consisting of a rich coving between two moulded beams. The colouring of both screen and loft is modern (plates xi, no. i and xii).

ROUSHAM. The fifteenth-century aisle-screen is very plain but it has retained part of its loft. The bressummer crosses the aisle at the same level as the head of the screen, but a short distance to the east, and there are no traces of the mortises in the top of the beam which would be left if there had been a parapet on that side. Such mortises may be seen along the head of the screen, showing that



ROUSHAM

FIG. 26.

ROUSHAM. S. AISLE SCREEN

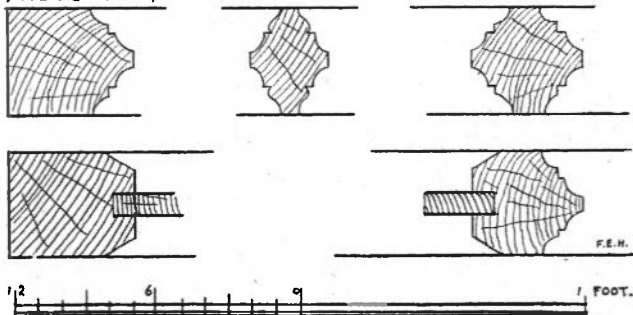


FIG. 27.

¹ Mr. Aymer Vallance believes this to be a canopy over the rood.

there was no westward projection, but the rood-loft front was flush with the face of the screen below. The doorway is placed to one side of the screen, perhaps to allow of an altar standing against it. There are traces of red paint in the crevices of its mouldings (figs. 25, 26, 27).

SANDFORD ST. MARTIN. Some fragments of a fifteenth-century rood-screen remain.

SHORTHAMPTON. Among the interesting paintings in this little church are the remains of the Last Judgment above the chancel-arch and a representation of Hell Cauldron on the south wall.¹

SHUTFORD. The fifteenth-century chancel-screen is peculiarly moulded, especially the tracery, which is of unusual design. There are traces of old colour, chiefly red.

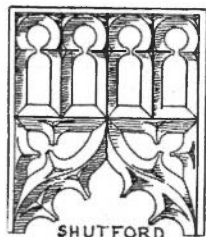


FIG. 28.

SOMERTON. The chancel screen is exceptionally good, but the loft and vaulting have been removed and the lower part is modern. It has two transoms with a band of elaborate open tracery between them, and there are a few traces of red and green paint. The east side is perfectly plain. The rebates for a pair of low doors may be seen, worked on the lower part of the jambs (plate XIII).

Two fine screens of the latter part of the fifteenth century separate the south aisle from the nave, but they once formed a parclose round an aisle chapel (plate XIV).

A post-reformation screen with excellent turned columns and a modillioned cornice completes the enclosure of the Fermor aisle.

SOUTHLEIGH. The early fifteenth-century chancel-screen has been much restored but the tracery is ancient.

Over the chancel arch is a fine and well restored painting of the Last Judgment, and on the south nave wall is the Weighing of Souls.

¹ *Archaeological Journal*, lxiii, 157, *Wall-paintings in Shorthampton Church*, by Mr. P. M. Johnston.



SOMERTON. CHANCEL SCREEN.

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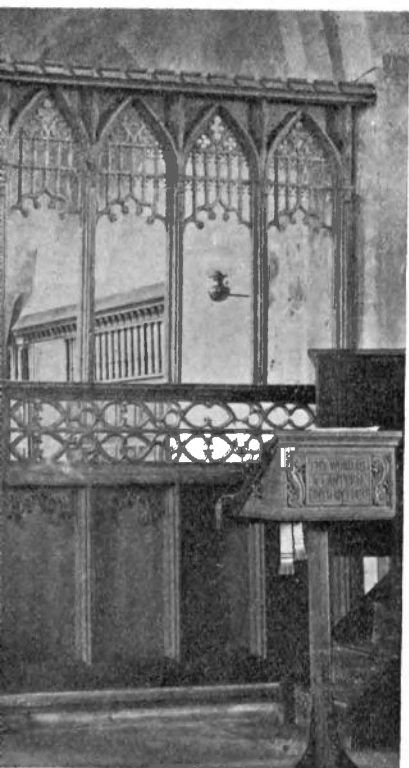
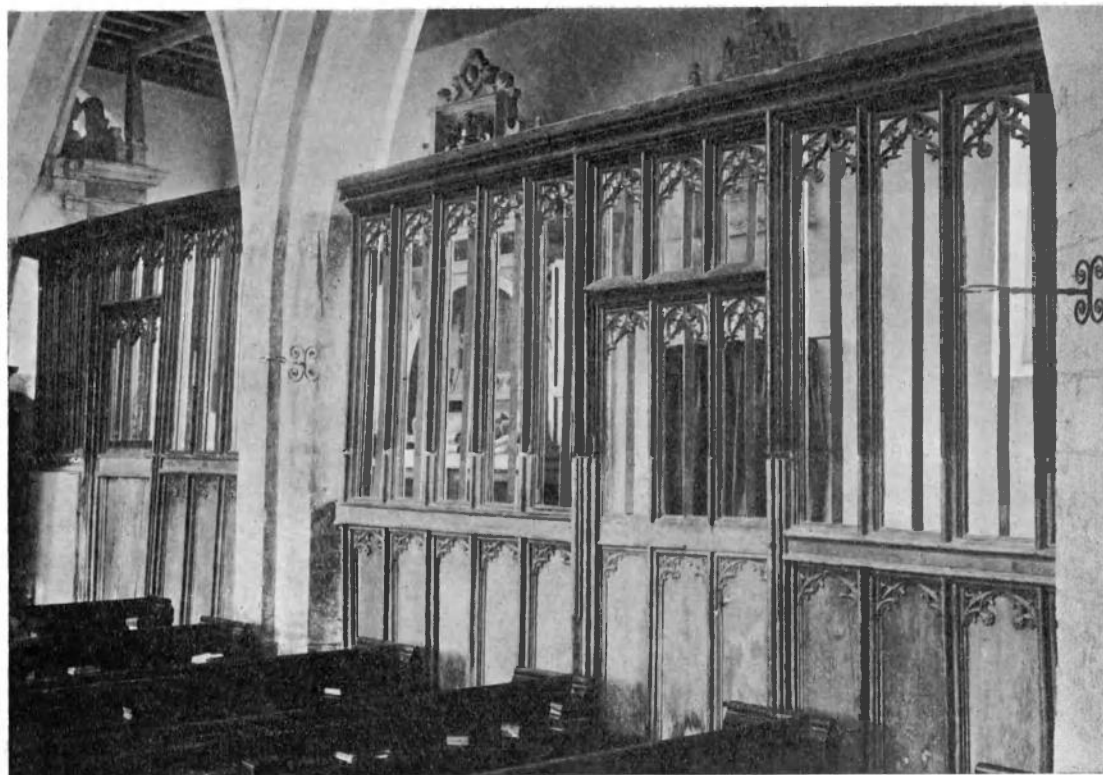


PLATE XIII.

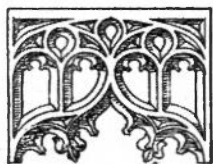


SOMERTON. PARCLOSE SCREEN.

The north-aisle screen is in better preservation, retaining irregular piercings in its lower panels. The desks attached to it are probably modern.

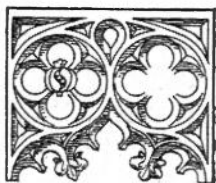
STANTON HARCOURT. The well-known thirteenth-century rood-screen is remarkable for the curious piercings in its lower panels, which appear to date from the fifteenth century. Unfortunately the head of the screen is cased in with modern woodwork, hiding all traces of mortises for the rood, or in connection with the loft which may have been erected in later times. The doors, with their padlock, bolt, and hinges are original. There are many traces of red paint, and on the south side is a painting of a saintly figure with a crown and wimple (plate xv).

STANTON ST. JOHN. The two beautiful screens once formed a parclose in the north aisle but one of them has



STANTON ST JOHN

FIG. 29.



STANTON ST JOHN

FIG. 30.

been removed to the tower arch. The delightful colouring was scraped off a few years ago, but traces remain showing that the principal colours were red and green counter-changed.¹

There is a fragment of old tracery, probably the arch over the doorway of the rood-screen, now worked into one of the clergy stalls.

STEEPLE ASTON. (See ASTON).

STONESFIELD. A massive screen, supporting the wall above it, separates the north chapel from the chancel. An opening is formed in the lower part, perhaps to allow

¹ A plan showing the original arrangement is given in *Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 232.

of a tomb standing beneath the screen. The only carving is the tracery, which is very rudely cut.

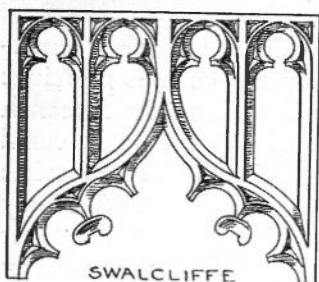


FIG. 31

SWALCLIFFE. There is a well-preserved fifteenth-century rood-screen with rectilinear tracery in the upper part and the old doors and hinges. An elaborate pediment of strapwork has been removed from the screen but is still in the church. The colouring is modern.

SWINBROOK. It is said that a few beams are all that remain of the rood-screen and coving which existed in 1840. It forms the frontispiece of Talbot Bury's *Ecclesiastical Woodwork*. The old stalls have survived.

SYDENHAM. There appears to have been a rood-loft and tympanum in 1841 but both have been destroyed.

"A third-pointed rood-screen and loft remain, but are disfigured with plaster and whitewash." F. G. Lee, *History of Thame*.

TEW, GREAT. The screenwork with linen-fold panel and foliated tracery in the north aisle is so thickly coated with grain and varnish that it is difficult to tell its date. The tracery is cast in plaster, but this is not unknown even in mediaeval work. At any rate it should not be allowed to disappear like so many other screens in Oxfordshire.

THAME. The screen in the north arch of the central tower is of the fourteenth century and seems to have been the rood-screen at one time. The elaborately moulded tracery retains traces of red and green paint. The head of the screen is much cut about, probably owing to the construction of a loft above it in 1447-1448 (plate xvi).

The chancel-screen is of the early sixteenth century and has carved shafts and linen-fold panels like that of Charlton-on-Otmoor, but the construction is more like that of the fourteenth-century screens. Along the top of the head is a row of wedge-shaped mortises showing that



STANTON HARCOURT. ROOD-SCREEN, FROM THE EAST.

To face page 198.

PLATE XV.

braces rose from the top of the screen to support the western brestsummer of the loft. The screen and the stalls which are good examples of the way in which the chancel was arranged "in times past," show traces of having been painted a dark brownish-red, but this colour is probably post-reformation. Originally the loft must have been continuous round three sides of the central tower (plate xvii).

The south-aisle screen (plate xviii) retains an upright, an arched head to the doorway and a few traceried heads of early fifteenth-century date, but most of the work is modern.

WARBOROUGH. The screen is destroyed, but a part of the rood-loft, consisting of two beams with coving between them, still survives, although painted drab and raised above its original position.

The lath-and-plaster tympanum is mediaeval and shows faint traces of its paintings. The arms of the Prince of Wales are painted on the eastern side. This tympanum, the only example now left in the county, probably owes its preservation to the absence of a chancel-arch.

WARDINGTON. Some of the moulded framework of the old screen is incorporated in the present modern one, and the moulded cornice of the latter looks like a fourteenth-century bressummer.

Part of the south chancel-screen is also ancient, but all the tracery is modern.

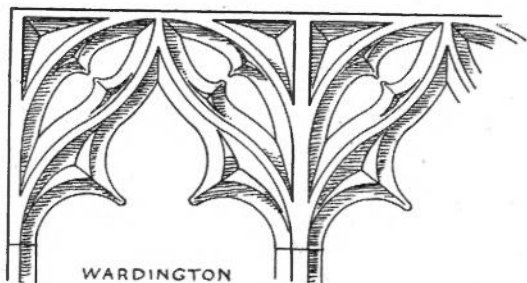


FIG. 32.

The south-aisle screen, although much restored, is an excellent example of simple fourteenth-century work. There are no doors, but there is a massive arch with solid spandrels over the doorway. There are traces of the old colouring (plate v, no. 2).

WESTCOTT BARTON. (See BARTON).

WITNEY. A long fifteenth-century screen separates the north chapel from the north aisle. There are two transoms with an open traceried panel between them, and tracery decorates both upper and lower panels. The doors and hinges are ancient and a good deal of the old vermilion and green paint can be seen in the crevices (plate xix).

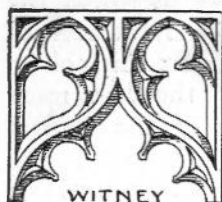


FIG. 33.

WOLVERCOTE. The screen disappeared in the wanton destruction of the old church some years ago. The Rev. F. Brown of Steeple Aston rescued a few fragments of its cresting.

"Across the chancel-arch are the remains of what has been a good Perpendicular rood-screen." *Archaeological Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford*, 98.

WOOD-ETON. There is a little fifteenth-century screen, now painted drab, which has some good tracery and a cusped arch over the doorway.

WOODSTOCK. The fifteenth-century chancel-screen with its old doors and hinges is in good preservation but it has lost its colour. It is exactly like that at Swalcliffe.

"In 1678 Lord Lovelace erected a gallery for the corporation upon the site of the rood-loft." *Ibid.* 116.

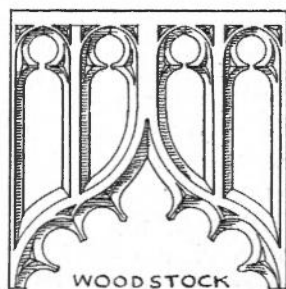
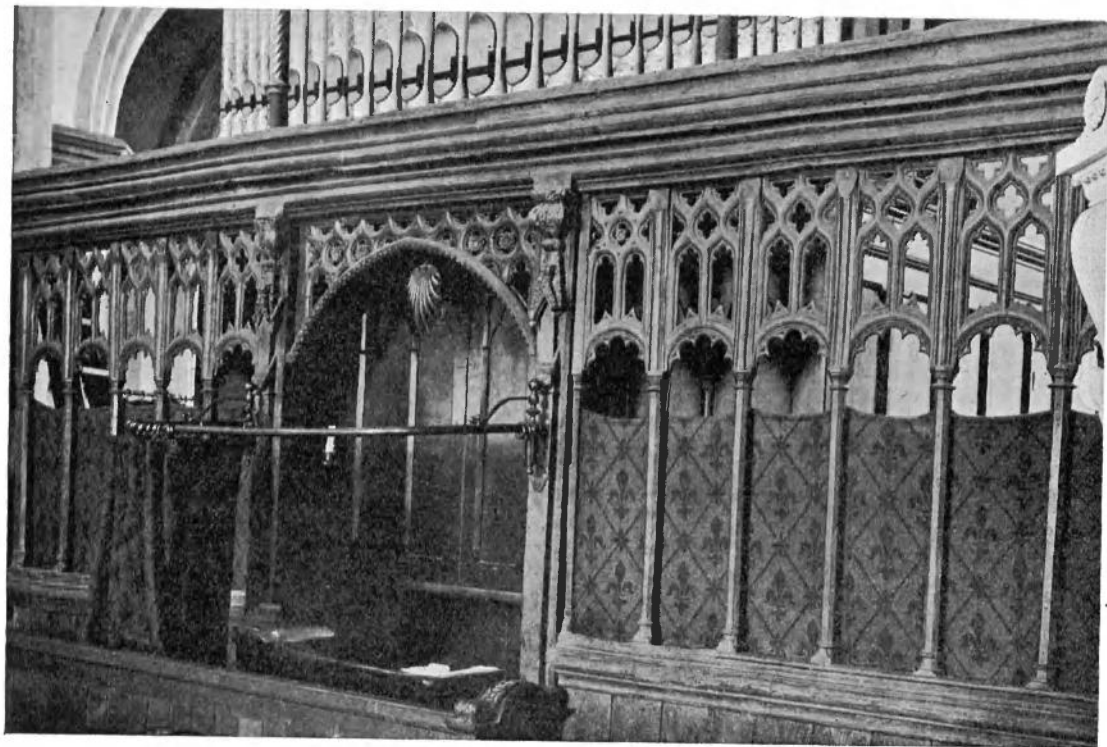


FIG. 34.

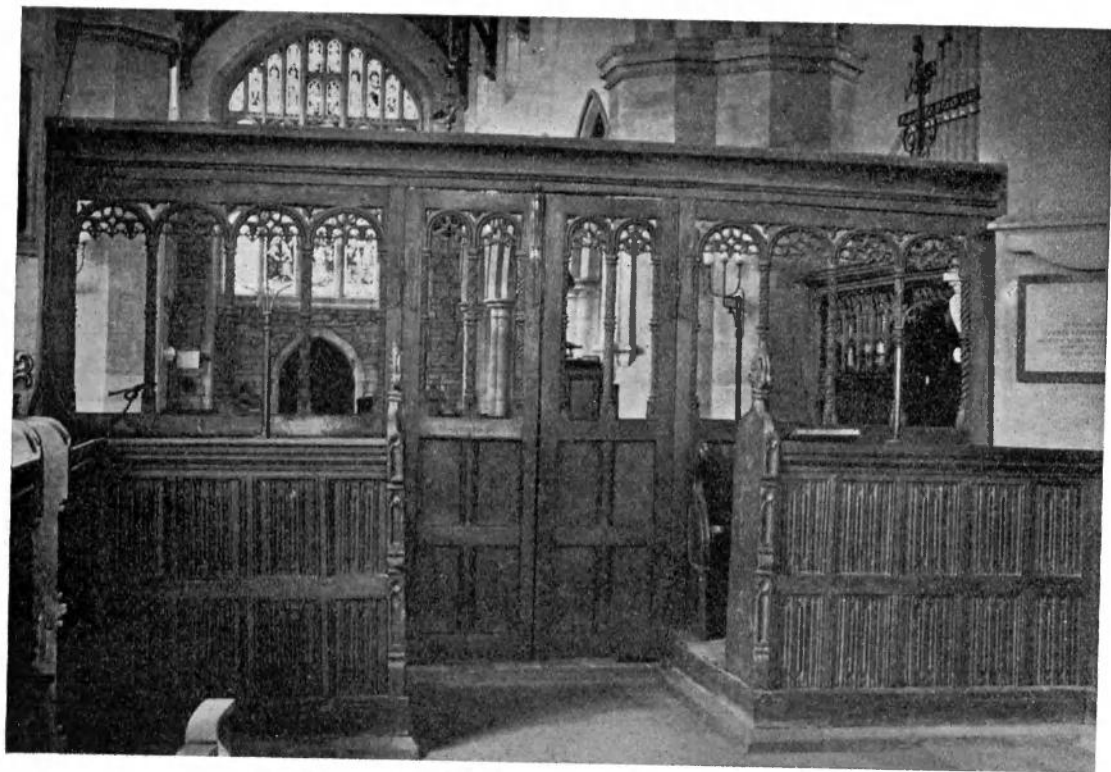
WROXTON. There is a fifteenth-century rood-screen with Jacobean additions.

YARNTON. Traces of the old screen and two tympana of different dates may be seen around the chancel-arch.

An exceptionally rich Jacobean screen divides the



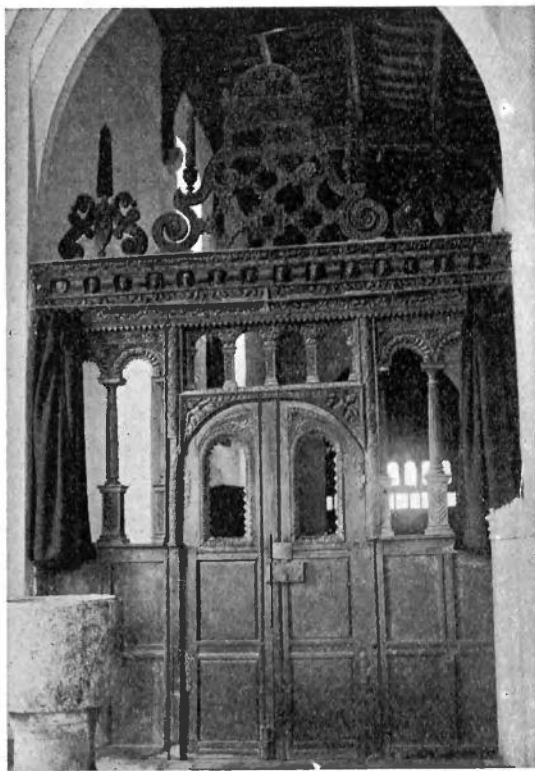
THAME. SCREEN IN THE NORTH TOWER ARCH,



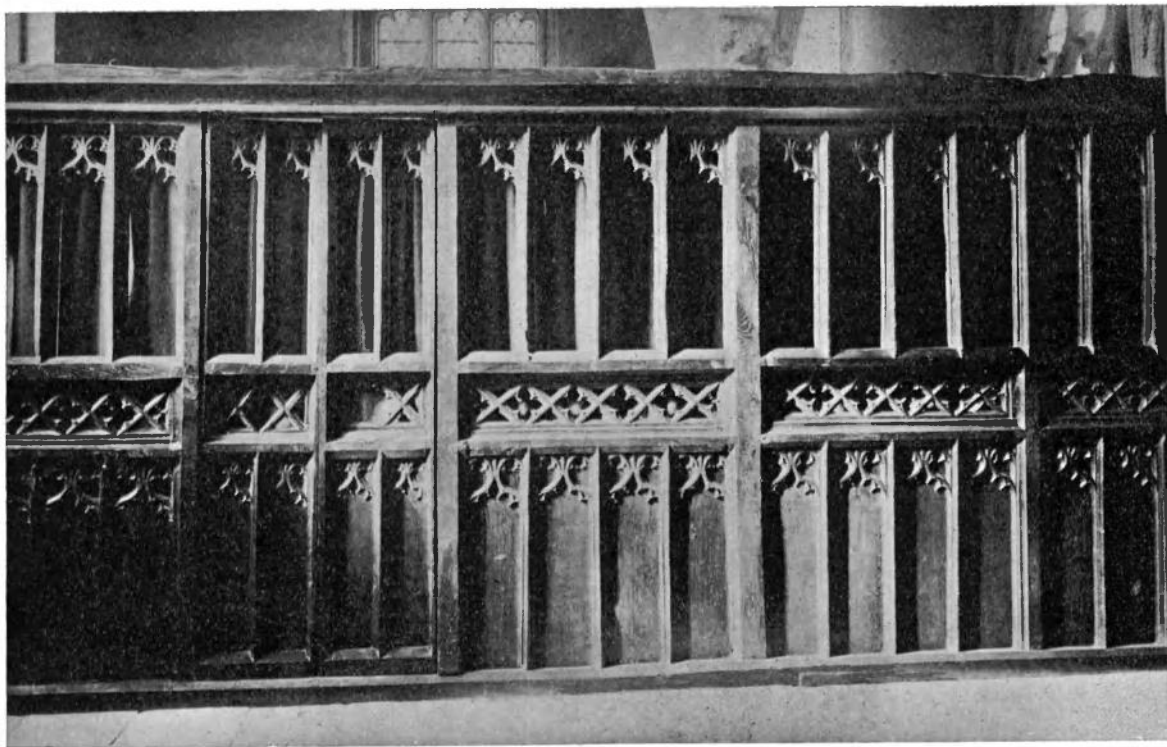
THAME. CHANCEL SCREEN AND STALLS, FROM THE EAST.



NO. I. THAME. AISLE SCREEN.



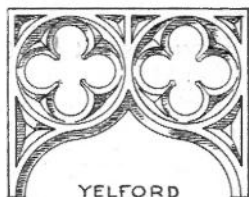
NO. 2. YARNTON. SCREEN TO THE SOUTH CHAPEL.



WITNEY. PARCLOSE SCREEN SEPARATING A CHAPEL FROM THE NORTH AISLE.

Spencer chapel from the south aisle. Some of its carving has been removed to the tower screen, which is made up of various fragments, perhaps from an old state pew (plate xviii, no. 2).

YELFORD. In this little church there is a well-moulded chancel-screen, with geometrical tracery in its upper panels. It is probably of late fifteenth-century date.



YELFORD

FIG. 35.