

THE CHURCH SCREENS OF DORSET.

By E. T. LONG.

The county of Dorset, unlike its neighbours Somerset and Devon, is not famous for its church woodwork, and the remains of screens are comparatively few and unimportant. There can be little doubt that originally every church possessed its rood-screen, and frequently parclose and chantry-screens as well; but the destroying hand of fanatic and 'restorer' has been very busy in this county. It is painful to reflect that during the last century several fine screens have been completely swept away, and among others we may specially mention those at Cranborne, Iwerne Minster, Okeford Fitzpaine and Hawkchurch, the first three of which retained the rood-loft practically intact. Also we must not forget the shameful vandalism perpetrated at Wimborne Minster in 1855, when the fine Jacobean screen and stalls were mutilated, and the canopies of the stalls completely destroyed on the plea of obstructing the view so dear to Victorian restorers. However, in spite of much grievous vandalism and ignorant restoration, Dorset still retains a few examples of screenwork which deserve careful study, and which contain features differentiating them markedly from the screens of the adjacent counties. One outstanding feature is the stone screens, which are located principally in the north of the county. These stone screens are all closely related, and consist of a plain solid base against which the lateral altars stood, and narrow openings above with cusped arches and central doorway. There is usually an embattled cornice on the top. These screens are to be found at Bradford Abbas, Thornford, Batcombe, Nether Compton and Cerne. The best is probably that at Nether Compton, which has traces of colour; and it is the oldest, since it seems to date from the latter part of the fourteenth century. At Cerne and Nether Compton there were formerly no chancel-arches, and the screens were surmounted by a stone

tympanum. At the restoration the tympanum was removed and a chancel-arch erected. At Thornford the hooks of the door remain. Wool and Knowle have mural screens consisting of triple arcades, and the lateral openings at Knowle were formerly filled with breast-high walls against which the altars were placed. The noble abbey church of Milton retains the massive stone pulpitum, but the upper part has been largely rebuilt. It is of very plain construction, and has two flights of steps.

The first thing to be noted with regard to wooden screens is the fact that they are practically all of square-framed type, as opposed to the Devon and Somerset screens, which for the most part are of the arched form. It is true that both these counties contain a few rectangular examples, particularly the latter county; but the finest and most characteristic are arcuated. So much so is this the case that the only arched example now remaining in Dorset is at Trent; and, as this parish belonged to Somerset until 1896, the screen too being in every sense a product of that county, it is hardly fair to consider it an exception to the general rule. Of course it is quite likely that some at least of the destroyed screens were of the arched type, especially those on the Devon and Somerset border. The majority of the surviving screens are late, and probably were erected at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century. At Winterborne Monkton, however, are the remains of a screen which dates from the latter part of the fourteenth century, and has tracery which is almost flamboyant. The treatment of the wainscot varied considerably: linenfold pattern as at Fontmell Magna and Winterborne Came, applied tracery as at Affpuddle and Portesham, and formerly at Cranborne, plain boarding as at Gillingham, and occasionally painted figures as at Spettisbury and in the now destroyed screen at Stock Gaylard. Sometimes the wainscot was in two tiers, as at Affpuddle, and in the post-reformation screen at Sydling St. Nicholas. The remains of figure-painting are very small, though probably several of the larger churches formerly had screens adorned with saintly figures. Hilton possesses twelve well-preserved panels of the apostles, which originally came from Milton Abbey, and are of considerable artistic merit as well as archaeological interest.

In the convent chapel at Spettisbury is part of the base of a screen from the desecrated chapel at Whitford near Axminster, which retains some fourteenth-century figure-painting, much anterior to any existing work in Devon, to which county this screen, of course, really belongs. There are single panels at Stock Gaylard and Sturminster Marshall, but the latter comes from Northamptonshire. The tracery heads are each composed of separate pieces of timber, which are grooved into the uprights. The most common form of these heads is the cusped ogee, as at Affpuddle, Dorchester All Saints and Portesham, and the bays are generally quite narrow. The tracery at Fontmell Magna differs considerably from the usual type, and is essentially renaissance work. Though it cannot be included under church woodwork, mention should be made of the fine screen in the refectory at Milton Abbey, which bears the date 1498, and the rebus of abbot Milton, a mill and a tun. Although so few rood-screens now remain, the rood-stairs have survived in a large number of cases. There are very perfect specimens at Holwell, Stourton Caundle and Affpuddle; at Belchalwell the loft was approached from the tower-stairs, and the upper door still remains. The same arrangement occurs at Burton Bradstock. At Stourton Caundle corbels for supporting the brestsummer of the loft remain at the south side. Corbels for this purpose are also found at Chesilborne, Holwell and Yetminster. The rood-loft at Winterborne Tomson has been utilized as a west gallery, and is of considerable interest and value. Several carved and painted panels from the destroyed loft are preserved at Okeford Fitzpaine, while Trent retains the lierne vaulting on which the loft stood. The three wooden figures of apostles at Upwey, supposed to have come from the rood-loft, are in reality Flemish, and were brought from the continent about a hundred years ago—so the late rector informed the writer.

Dorset is fortunate in possessing some good post-reformation screens, which all date from the first half of the seventeenth century. Parts of the fine screen erected at Wimborne *c.* 1608 still remain, but are greatly mutilated. The screen and stalls here were erected when the quire was restored, after the fall of the spire in 1600,

and were excellent specimens of Jacobean woodwork, but their evident and marked excellence did not preserve them from the ignorance of the Victorian restorers in 1855. Judging from a woodcut in the last edition of Hutchins, the stalls must have been among the finest pieces of Jacobean woodwork in the country, and their loss cannot be too deeply deplored.¹ The remains of the stalls have been made up into wooden quire stalls without canopies. Folke church was, with the exception of the tower, rebuilt on an extended scale in 1628, and is an interesting example of seventeenth-century Gothic, with many delightful details. The sumptuous contemporary fittings remain for the most part in spite of injudicious restoration. The screen, pulpit, font, altar-rails and bench-ends are all of excellent workmanship.

The chapter house at Forde Abbey was fitted up as a private chapel by Edmund Prideaux, Cromwell's attorney general, in 1649, and contains an exceedingly rich screen of classical design. Iwerne Courtney and Melcombe Bingham have excellent parclose screens, both due to the liberality and piety of Sir Thomas Freke. The latter is dated 1619. The screen in the tower-arch at Sydling St. Nicholas is a very pleasing example of late seventeenth-century craftsmanship, and retains its doors. The small church at West Stafford, restored in 1640, has an excellent screen of that date; while at Ibberton there is some seventeenth-century screenwork in the tower arch, with turned balusters, but it is in rather a dilapidated condition, and has been much pulled about and altered.

With regard to the post-reformation screenwork, the most striking feature is the great superiority of the later renaissance over the Jacobean. This is, no doubt, true of all parts of the country, but nowhere is it more emphasized than in Dorset. It is true that there is excellent Jacobean work at Iwerne Courtney, while the parclose screens of Long Burton are very tolerable specimens of the period, but those of Folke and West Stafford are very crude as to details, though the general effect is quite pleasing.

¹ Illustrations of the screen and canopied stalls, as they were before the 'restoration,' may be seen in N. Whittuck's *Views of*

Wimborne Minster, published by Henry Herbert, Wimborne, 1839.

From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards the work tends to improve, and this excellence is maintained through the eighteenth, and even into the early part of the succeeding century. At Cruwys Morchard in Devon there is an exceedingly good chancel-screen erected in 1814. In Dorset the later renaissance is represented by good screens at Forde Abbey, Sydling St. Nicholas and Winterborne Thompson. The Forde screen recalls the beautiful work in the London city churches, to which it is slightly anterior.

With regard to the type of rood-loft which was most prevalent in Dorset, it is naturally somewhat difficult to come to a definite conclusion, since only one ancient example has survived to the present day, i.e. Winterborne Tomson, and even that is not *in situ*. It is, however, very probable that the base of the loft was not usually supported on vaulting or arched coving, since the screens seem generally to have been of the rectangular type. It seems most likely that the floor of the loft rested on a simple horizontal coving, the under surface of which would be divided into panels by ribs with bosses at the intersections. There are good examples of this type of coving at Milborne Port (Plate I, 2) and Winsham just across the Somerset border. The brestsummer would be decorated with a vine-trail or like ornament, as is proved by the existing remains at Okeford Fitzpaine and the still intact brestsummer at Winterborne Came. The vaulting at Trent is of an entirely Somerset type, and it is improbable that this type ever was extensively employed in Dorset. The stone screens were without doubt provided with timber lofts which usually, most probably, rested directly on the plain cornice. At Batcombe, however, the cornice is embattled, and here, possibly, the loft was fixed slightly above the top of the screen, and supported on the brestsummers which would in consequence be embedded in the lateral walls of the nave and chancel. At Cerne Abbas and Nether Compton the space above the screen was formerly filled in with masonry, and therefore the loft can have projected only towards the west. The space above some of the wooden screens was also occupied by a tympanum composed of boarding, or plaster-work framed in timber. Such a tympanum survived at Whitcombe until the restoration

of the church in the early nineties. At Milborne Port there are no traces of any eastern projection, and it is probable that here there was a tympanum filling the chancel-arch, but all traces of it have disappeared. The county is fortunate in possessing at Okeford Fitzpaine several richly carved panels, which, from the description given by Hutchins, we know to have formed part of the front and back wainscot of the sumptuous loft which existed there until the latter part of the eighteenth century. There are four from the west side and three from the east. They are all well carved, and retain considerable traces of colour decoration. It should be noted that they are all close panels, and not pierced like some of the Welsh and East Anglian examples. At Affpuddle there are two late large traceried panels, now incorporated in the reading-desk, which, in all probability, formed part of the loft-front. Sometimes, no doubt, the wainscot of the loft would be formed of linen-fold panels, and very possibly the panels now incorporated in a modern vestry-screen at Bere Regis originally served this purpose.

The fascinating little church of Winterborne Tomson was restored in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and contains its contemporary fittings, which are very excellent. The west gallery, however, consists of the rood-loft from the previous church, and is of great interest and value, as showing the type of loft which would be prevalent in the smaller churches, whereas the work at Okeford Fitzpaine is of a much more elaborate nature, and would be confined, doubtless, to the larger and richer parish churches of the county. At Winterborne Tomson the floor of the loft is supported on a series of small plain beams resting on the top beam of the screen and the brestsummer.

There are no means of ascertaining the exact position of the rood and its attendant figures, but, as the majority of Dorset churches are rather low and generally devoid of a clerestory, they were most probably placed on the rail of the loft-front, or on the top of the brestsummer, or perhaps, even actually on the floor of the loft. There are practically no references to screens or the like in any medieval Dorset wills which have survived to the present day, and the ancient churchwardens' accounts, where they exist, are

equally silent. The will of William Mesurer of Poole is almost the only exception known to the writer. This will, which is dated 1517, 'bequeathed to the making of the new rood-loft and tower of the said church all such money as rested unpaid at the hour of his death of the £20 he promised to the edifying this fabric, and appointed his body to be buried in Our Lady aisle in this parish church' (Hutchins). We also incidentally know that this screen, like the majority of rood-screens, possessed doors. This fact comes to light in the autobiography of that blasphemous fanatic Thomas Hancock, who was appointed rector of Poole in 1547. When describing a fracas which occurred in the church, between himself and some of the Catholic parishioners on the feast of All Saints in that year, apropos of saying the Office of the Dead for the Commemoration of All Souls, he remarks: 'The maior Morgan Reade by name . . . thrust me into the qwier and pulled the qwier dorse fast too.'

FLAMBOYANT AND RENAISSANCE INFLUENCES.

One of the most interesting studies for the ecclesiologist is the appearance of foreign influences in church art in England during the first half of the sixteenth century. Until that date, Gothic art in this country had for many generations pursued a course differing in many respects from that of the continental countries, or even of Ireland and Scotland. There is no equivalent to perpendicular on the other side of the channel, or, with a few trifling exceptions, north of the Cheviots. The intense grace and charm of the flamboyant, as exemplified in Normandy, or in Scotland at Stirling, Linlithgow, Aberdeen and St. Andrews and many other places, finds very little counterpart in England. To all intents and purposes, flamboyant in this country is confined to a few examples of church fittings scattered over the length and breadth of the land from Kent to Cumberland, and from Yorkshire to Devonshire. Kent has the charming screen at Lullingstone, while Surrey has portions of flamboyant screenwork at Chelsham. In the Midlands there is similar work at Dunstable in Bedfordshire, and Charlton-on-

Otmoor and Thame in Oxfordshire. Further north we have the fascinating screens at Swine in Yorkshire, and the noble pulpitum at Hexham, and some screenwork at Carlisle cathedral. Devon has Breton-like screens at Brushford, Colebrooke and Coleridge. When we come to Dorset, we find here also interesting work of the flamboyant and renaissance. Burton Bradstock and Loders have panelling with flamboyant tracery, while at Whitchurch Canonorum the stalls, though partly modern, retain some excellent standards and panelling which are much more French than English. At Fontmell Magna the screen now in the tower-arch, but formerly in the south aisle, is a delightful piece of early renaissance work, especially as regards the tracery-heads with their roundels and quaint monsters, which are just the sort of work we should expect to find in Normandy at the same period. At no great distance from Fontmell Magna is Tarrant Hinton, where, on the north of the chancel, is an Easter Sepulchre with pure François Premier detail. It bears the initials of Thomas Troteswell, rector of the parish, who died in 1532, so that the work can scarcely be much later than that date. Its original use is put beyond any shadow of doubt by the inscription, in bold Roman lettering along the cornice: 'Venite et videte locum, ubi positus erat Dominus.' The round-headed arch which is found in some late perpendicular work is probably due to renaissance influence, and examples of it are to be seen in all parts of Dorset, e.g. the south aisle windows at Abbotsbury, the south doorway at Frome Vauchurch, the chancel-arch at Hinton St. Mary, the west doorway at Pulham, and the north arcade at Winterborne St. Martin. It may be added that in all these cases the mouldings seem to point to the fact that the work is not later than 1560, and in no sense can be attributed to the Jacobean revival. Probably the renaissance influences came from France via Southampton and Winchester. Bishop Fox of Winchester was responsible for much renaissance work at the cathedral, the hospital of St. Cross and at Basingstoke, and like work may be seen at Christchurch Priory. Doubtless both Fontmell Magna and Tarrant Hinton owe their renaissance work to this French influence, if not actually to French workmen. The flamboyant work must be due to a slightly earlier

influence, probably during the first decade of the century, while the renaissance was, most likely, hardly felt at all in these parts before the third decade, and no doubt received a considerable impetus as a result of the all too brief *entente cordiale* established by the 'field of the cloth of gold.' Probably the use of the apsidal termination which is found in several early sixteenth-century churches is due to foreign influence. The following churches among others show this termination: the chapel of the Holy Ghost at Basingstoke; the chapel of the Vyne near Basingstoke; the parish churches of Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs., and Wrexham, Denbigh; as well as the domestic chapel at Hengrave Hall, Suffolk. At Wrexham the apse was added to an older church, and the original east window was converted into a chancel-arch. The flamboyant woodwork at Hexham and Carlisle is most likely due to Scottish influence. Unfortunately this foreign influence received a rude shock at the reformation, from which it never recovered, and English art like English religion had to pay the penalty of enforced insularity for many generations. In fact it can be truly said, without undue exaggeration, that it was not until the extreme end of the nineteenth century that the broken thread was again taken up, and church art in England found in Mr. J. N. Comper a worthy successor to those supreme craftsmen who, in the first half of the sixteenth century, employed their skill and genius in beautifying the house of God. Mr. Comper has inherited the ability and genius of his fellow countrymen north of the Cheviots who raised the glorious fabrics of the parish church at Stirling, the collegiate church of the Holy Trinity at Edinburgh, and King's College chapel at Aberdeen. Dorset possesses, in the church at St. Giles, an excellent example of Mr. Comper's genius, and the screens there are certainly the finest examples of church woodwork in the county, either modern or medieval. As modern work is considered outside the scope of the present paper, the writer is obliged to be content with this passing and very inadequate tribute to their manifold glories.

We will now proceed to give a description of the surviving screenwork of Dorset in alphabetical order, dealing first with the stone examples.

STONE SCREENS.

BATCOMBE.

This church was largely rebuilt in 1864, but the stone rood-screen was fortunately retained and is in good preservation. It bears a close resemblance to the other examples in this part of the county, and consists of a solid base, with narrow openings above with quatrefoil heads, and an embattled cornice. It is constructed of Ham Hill stone, and has been carefully restored. The base is quite plain, and the west side shows traces of the lateral altars; grooves for half door remain. At each end are engaged crocketed pinnacles and slight traces of colour.

BRADFORD ABBAS.

The screen here, like that at Batcombe, has a solid base with traces of the lateral altars, and narrow openings above with cusped arches and pierced trefoil spandrels; the central doorway is also cusped with trefoiled spandrels. The cornice is plain, and it seems probable that the wooden loft rested directly on it. This screen dates from the end of the fourteenth century, when the present church was rebuilt. We may add that this church contains some fine bench-ends, a good panelled timber roof painted with red and white roses, and remains of the rood-stairs on the south side of the chancel-arch.

CERNE ABBAS.

The screen is late perpendicular and originally supported a solid stone wall, there being no chancel-arch. However, at the restoration, the stone wall was removed and a chancel-arch constructed, while the screen was provided with a cornice. The base is plain, and clearly formed a background for the lateral altars. The screen has been much restored and the original effect lost.

NETHER COMPTON.

This screen (plate I, 1,) is an excellent piece of work, and seems to date from the latter part of the fourteenth century.



[Photo : F. E. H.]

NO. 1. NETHER COMPTON : CHANCEL SCREEN.



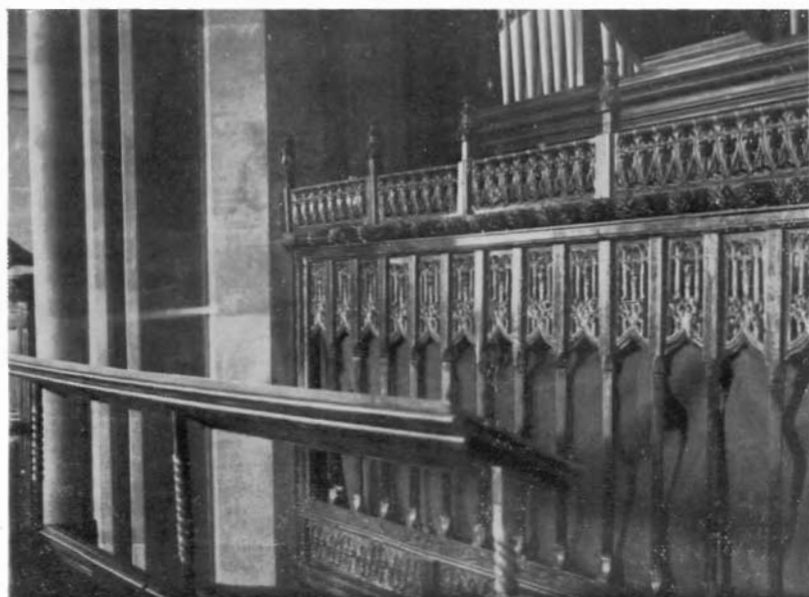
[Photo : F. S.]

NO. 2. MILBORNE PORT : CHANCEL SCREEN.



[Photo : E. V. T.]

NO. 1. MILTON ABBEY : EAST SIDE OF PULPITUM.



[Photo : E. V. T.]

NO. 2. DORCHESTER ALL SAINTS : NORTH PARCLOSE SCREEN.

There are traces of colour. The base as usual is plain and solid and the outline of the altars is clearly defined. The upper part, on the north side, consists of an open arcade, but the south side has one large opening in which, it is possible, a wooden reredos for the altar was placed originally; but of this no traces remain. The space above the screen was formerly filled with masonry. There are traces of the rood-stairs on the north side of the chancel-arch.

KNOWLE.

This is a thirteenth-century example of a mural screen, and consists of a plain triple arcade. Formerly the lateral openings were filled with a wall breast-high, but this has unfortunately been removed, and the original effect quite spoiled.

MILTON ABBAS.

The noble abbey church of St. Sampson still possesses its massive stone pulpitum (plate II, 2,) at the west end of the choir, but the upper part is largely modern work. The west side, as it now exists, is severely plain with central doorway and stringcourse above. Probably the upper part was originally much more ornate with sculptured figures or subjects, as is the case with the flamboyant screen in the collegiate church of Lincluden in Scotland. The loft is approached by two flights of stone steps, on either side of the choir entrance. The loft is wide and spacious. The east side is plain, and has been largely re-constructed with odd pieces of material. On the east front of the loft are thirteen sculptured shields which, apparently, originally formed part of a chantry-chapel in the south transept, judging from the account given by Hutchins. They were probably placed in their present position after the destruction of the chapel by Wyatt in 1789, when irrevocable harm was done to the fittings of the church by that arch-vandal under the name of 'restoration.' Two ancient paintings now stand on each side of the door, on the east side, one of which represents king Athelstan founding the Abbey, and the other a queen with a hawk. Possibly these came from the loft, but it seems more probable that they formed part

of the wainscot of the canopies of the stalls. The canopies, though much renewed, are in part original. The arms on the shields are :

1. Gules, a cross patonce or.
2. Azure, three double keys. Abbotsbury abbey.
3. Or, a chevron in a bordure engrailed sable. Stafford.
4. Milton abbey.
5. Athelstan.
6. England.
7. Gules, three lions or.
8. France and England in a bordure. Thomas of Woodstock.
9. Argent and gules.
10. Gules, a cross engrailed or.
11. Gules, an escutcheon or within an orle of martlets argent. Chidiok.
12. Sherborne abbey.
13. Gules, three lucies hauriant argent. Lucy.

SHERBORNE ABBEY.

At the east end of the south quire-aisle, there are considerable portions of the base of a stone screen imbedded in the wall which now separates the chapel of our Lady-at-bow from the aisle. It is, of course, difficult to say for certain whether this screen is *in situ*, but at any rate such a supposition is by no means improbable. The existing remains are probably late fifteenth-century work. It consists of two detached portions. The west side is decorated with a series of slightly recessed niches with cusped heads. The east side of the screen has been recently uncovered during the process of gutting the eastern chapels preparatory to the restoration. It is quite plain, as is the case in the rest of the Dorset stone screens. The north portion consists of two bays, and measures 4 ft. 4 in. in length, and 3 ft. 4 in. in height. The south portion has two bays and is 4 ft. 10 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. The extra six inches is accounted for by the fact that there is a piece of plain stonework attached to the south end.

THORNFORD.

The screen here has considerable affinity to its neighbour at Bradford Abbas, and was evidently copied from it. The detail however is inferior, and it is considerably later. One of the door hinges is *in situ*, which shows that the screen was originally provided with doors.

WOOL.

Here is a mural screen of thirteenth-century date, consisting of a triple arcade. It is undoubtedly the oldest screen in Dorset, and shows the transition from the narrow Norman chancel-arch to the wide early English and decorated examples. Doubtless the lateral arches were originally filled up solid breast-high, as at Knowle.

WORTH MATRAVERS.

In a squint on the south of the chancel-arch were some fragments of stone tracery, which probably formed part of the screen. Traces of colour remained. These fragments were discovered by a former rector in a farmhouse in the neighbourhood, and placed by him in the church. On making recent enquiries no traces of this screenwork could be found.

WOODEN SCREENS.

I. PRE-REFORMATION.

AFFPUDDLE.

Part of the rood-screen is now in the tower-arch. It is early sixteenth-century, but has been much pulled about. The cresting is of cast iron! The wainscot is now in two tiers, but the lower has Jacobean panelling like that behind the altar. The upper division has cusped arches. The frame of the doorway is modern. The middle rail is chamfered. Above are ogee-cusped arches,

with dagger-shaped quatrefoils in the spandrels. The top beam is plain. There was formerly a tympanum in the chancel arch. The screen is spoilt by varnish. In the altar-rails are eleven tracery-heads from the screen, and two modern ones. The reading-desk incorporates what is probably part of the panelling of the rood-loft with tracery. The rood-stairs remain in the south wall of the nave.

BERE REGIS.

The vestry-screen at the west end of the north aisle is largely composed of early sixteenth-century panelling—mostly linenfold. It is quite likely that this panelling originally formed part of the rood-screen, or of a parclose, though it may, on the other hand, have belonged to the old seating in the nave, some of which is still in use. The latter theory seems rather improbable, since it does not resemble any of the old benching which still remains, and which is of an essentially local type. These panels may quite well have formed the wainscot, or loft-front of the rood-screen. They would be well adapted for either position. There are two stone corbels on the piers of the nave arcade, one bay west of the chancel arch, and it is possible that these may have supported the brestsummer of the loft. As the rood-stairs are situated on the north side of the chancel arch, the loft must, in this case, have extended the whole width of the first bay of the nave arcade, and would have been therefore of imposing dimensions. Owing to the smallness of the chancel arch, there would be no eastern projection of the loft.

BROADWINDSOR.

A considerable portion of the rood-screen and loft remained in position until 1818, when it was removed to the belfry, and remained there, apparently, until the drastic restoration of 1868, when it was cleared away, along with other ancient and interesting features. As far as can be ascertained, there are now no traces of the screen in existence. Its loss cannot be too deeply deplored.

BUCKHORN WESTON.

In several recent publications it is stated that portions of the rood-loft remain here. The present writer, on visiting the church in 1919, could find no traces of screen-work. There are, however, six panels with seventeenth-century painting now in the tower, but formerly forming part of the west gallery. The subjects are: the Agony in the garden; the Nativity; David; St. Cecilia; and landscapes with angels blowing trumpets. It is possible that these panels were originally in the front of the rood-loft, and that the present paintings cover work of pre-reformation date.

BURTON BRADSTOCK.

There are now no remains of the screen *in situ*. The approach to the rood-loft was by means of the tower-stairs, which are contained in a large turret at the south-west angle. The tower is, of course, central. Over the west arch of the crossing are slight traces of colour, which are, in all probability, the remains of a painting of the Doom. The two modern reading-desks in the chancel incorporate some interesting medieval panels with purely flamboyant tracery, closely resembling those now forming part of the chest at Loders church. Seven of the panels remain, four on the south and three on the north. It is possible that these panels formed part of the destroyed screen. On the other hand, they may have originally formed part of a chest, such as we know were imported from the continent in considerable numbers, during the later medieval period. Several other churches in the neighbourhood of Bridport show foreign work, as has been mentioned above in the introduction.

CAUNDLE STOURTON.

Hutchins says that the lower part of the rood-screen was standing when he wrote in 1774, but all traces have now disappeared. The rood-stairs remain intact, in the north-east angle of the nave, and in the south wall are two stone corbels which, doubtless, supported the breast-summer of the loft. There is a small window in the

south-east angle of the nave, which served to light the loft. As it opens into the south chapel it was never glazed, but was formerly fitted with a single iron stanchion.

CRANBORNE.

Until the year 1855 this church possessed an excellent wooden rood screen. In that year, the screen was pulled down and stored in a neighbouring barn by the then Lord Salisbury. Some years later the barn was destroyed and the remains of the screen were removed piecemeal by the villagers. At the present time only one small fragment can be traced. This was discovered by the vicar in a carpenter's shop. It is about one foot in length, by three inches in breadth, and consists of two tracery heads. These heads are plain and rounded. The whole is covered with brown paint, but traces of the original colouring can be detected in places. Apparently the background was white picked out with red and gold. The loss of this fine screen cannot be too deeply deplored, especially as it had survived the fanaticism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only to fall before the onslaught of the Victorian restorers.

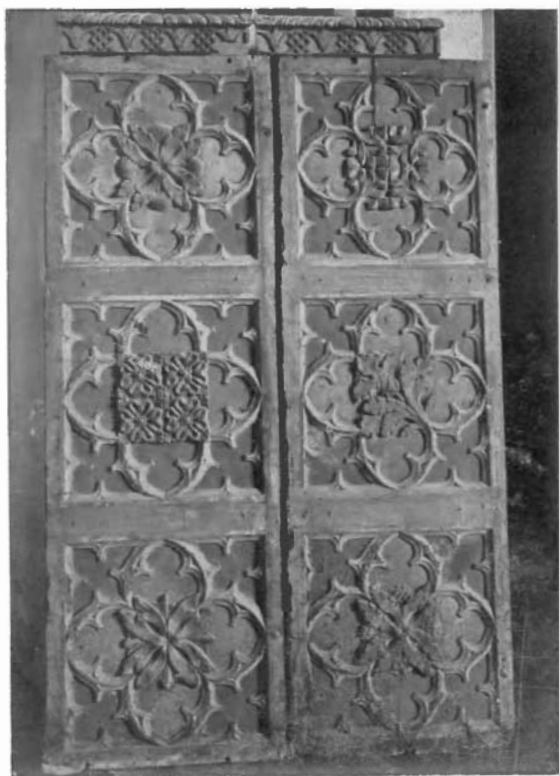
DORCHESTER ALL SAINTS.

This church was rebuilt in 1845 succeeding an edifice erected in 1613, which in its turn replaced a pre-reformation church. Behind the choir stalls are two pieces of screenwork identical in design (Plate II, 2). These must have belonged to the pre-reformation fabric. The wainscot in two tiers is Jacobean, and resembles some bench-ends in the church. The standards are not framed up, being cut short at the wainscot. The upper part is late perpendicular, and has tracery-heads, with crocketed ogee arches. The top beam is ornamented with detached leaves. There is a large cresting with pinnacles, which are clumsy, and evidently do not belong to their present position. At present both screens are smothered in thick brown paint.



[Photo : F.E.H.]

NO. I. FONTMELL MAGNA : TRACERY HEAD OF SCREEN.



[Photo : F. S.]

NO. 2. OKEFORD FITZPAINE : REMAINS OF THE ROOD LOFT.



FOUR PANELS IN OAK CHEST.

{Photo: R.G.B.

FONTMELL MAGNA.

In the tower-arch is a good wooden screen of early sixteenth-century date, formerly in the south aisle before the church was rebuilt (Plate III, 1). The wainscot is of linen-fold panels, and the lights above have tracery of rather curious design, and in two of the lights are roundels, each containing a man's head in early sixteenth-century garb, with monsters in the spandrels formed by the roundels. The door is old, but it is probable that originally it formed part of the screen proper, as both door-posts are modern. The base-beam is modern; but the top beam is original and has banded stiff foliage. On the top beam is the following inscription in sixteenth-century lettering: 'Water King and Esbell his wif.' The dimensions of the screen are: length 11 ft. 10 in., height of wainscot 3 ft. 8 in., total height 7 ft. 6 in. The tracery has considerable renaissance detail, and the whole screen is an interesting example of the beginning of the classical revival.

GILLINGHAM.

Between the chancel and the north chapel is a portion of a perpendicular screen, of rather commonplace design. It has been much restored. The wainscot is plain, and the upper part consists of tracery-heads with cusped arches. Both base and top beams are almost entirely modern. The standards are massive, and are the best feature of the screen. In the last edition of Hutchins it is stated that it originally formed part of the rood-screen; but it was probably always a parclose.

HILTON.

On the north and south walls of the tower of this church are twelve painted panels of the apostles, omitting St. Bartholomew and including St. Paul. These panels were, apparently, originally on the pulpitum of Milton Abbey, and were removed to Hilton towards the end of the eighteenth century. The figures are about four

feet in height, and the panels fully six feet. The painting is well executed, and there is much expression in the faces, especially that of St. Peter, which is very fine and evidently a portrait. As usual, he has the priestly tonsure. The figures have a checkered background, and stand on pedestals. The names are on the scrolls above the figures. Red, white and blue (now faded to grey) predominate. When Hutchins wrote in 1774 there were six other panels, with the following saints: our Lady, St. Bartholomew, St. Martin, St. Benedict, St. Nicholas and St. Sampson. It is much to be regretted that these have disappeared. The remaining twelve are in good preservation. There are traces of the rood-stairs on the south side of the chancel arch.

IWERNE MINSTER.

Part of the floor of the rood-loft was in position above the chancel-arch as late as 1869, but all traces have now disappeared.

LODERS.

In the chancel there is a curious old chest (plate IV), which at first sight appears to be one of those chests which were largely imported from Flanders in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A closer examination of it, however, reveals the fact that much of it is of seventeenth-century date, of typically English workmanship, and the flamboyant panels were obviously never intended for their present position. As in the case at Burton Bradstock, there is some reason to believe that they were originally a portion of the wainscot of the screen, or even of the front of the loft. Loders belonged to the abbey of Montebourg in Normandy, and the arms of France and the dauphin respectively appear on two of the panels. These panels are four in number, and the tracery is suggestive of the screens at Brushford, Colebrooke and Coleridge in Devonshire. The ends of the chest are each composed of two small panels, with the linenfold ornament. The whole framework of the chest, as well as the back and cover, are obviously seventeenth-century work. It may be added

that there is at least one authentic case, in which panels of a screen have been utilised to form a portion of a chest, viz. at Denton in Norfolk, where the front of the church chest consists of a series of painted panels depicting twelve saints. In this latter case the chest dates no further back than 1848.

MILTON ABBAS.

In one of the bays of the north arcade of the quire, there was formerly a small chantry-chapel surrounded by wooden screens. The screen towards the aisle had been painted to resemble marble, but the following black-letter inscription remained, until the chapel was entirely destroyed by Wyatt in 1789: '*Benedic D'ne domum istam, que dedicata est in hon. . . . Sti Johannis Baptiste, venientium in loco isto exaudi glorie sue. S.S.*' The loss of this chapel cannot be too greatly deplored.

OBORNE.

Only the chancel of this small church remains, the nave having been pulled down *c.* 1860. It is an interesting example of sixteenth-century work, and is dated 1533. The chancel-arch has been blocked, but a large beam remains which, in all probability, formed part of the rood-loft. It is quite plain.

OKEFORD FITZPAINE.

This church retained its sumptuous rood-screen and loft, until the early part of the nineteenth century. Only a few fragments now remain of its ancient glory. These are four panels from the front of the loft (plate III, 2), each having three quatrefoils, with paterae in the centre one above the other, also three panels with cusped ogee heads, which seem to have come from the east side of the loft. The front panels are considerably higher than the others. All the panels bear traces of gold, red and blue. A few pieces of the cornice enrichments remain, with trailing vine

and traces of colour. There is a good description in Hutchins of the loft, as it appeared prior to its destruction. The following appears in the third edition of Hutchins: 'This archway (i.e. the chancel-arch) was spanned by the horizontal beam, or floor of the rood-loft, the fragment of a very rich erection. It consisted towards the nave of a massive and well moulded projecting cornice, sheltering a row of square panels formed of upright moulded divisions. Each panel was ornamented with tracery, the principal feature being a central quatrefoil, the inner feathering of which coalesced and unitedly formed square central paterae. Beneath the panels was a projecting sub-cornice, the principal member being a large hollow moulding filled with a rich roll or "trayle" of carved foliage entwined round a central stem: one portion consisting of the leaves, tendrils and fruit of the vine; the other having leaves of a different pattern, and roses at intervals instead of grapes. But little of the lower portion of the screen remained at the time of the late restoration. Two upright beams which formed the doorway were richly moulded. Above the beam towards the chancel, was the back of the rood-loft, which rose some five feet in height, divided by tracery into upright panels, with foliated heads. The sub-cornice on this side had a rich suite of mouldings, and ornaments at intervals with paterae of foliage.'

From the above description it is fairly obvious that the screen was of the rectangular type, and that the underside of the loft consisted of a horizontal coving on both sides, like the still existing examples at Milborne Port and Winsham, just across the Somerset border. At Milborne Port only the western coving remains, and there are no traces of any eastern projection. The east bay of the north aisle was formerly separated from the other part by a handsome screen, which was unfortunately removed towards the end of the eighteenth century, and of which no traces now remain.

PORTESHAM.

The rood-screen remains in tolerable preservation, but has suffered much from injudicious restoration. The base-beam is modern, as is the panelling on the north side.

The wainscot has rather meagre tracery on the panels, in the upper part of which holes have been bored. The middle rail is plain. The doors remain, and have ogee tracery-heads on the panels. The upper part of the screen has thick moulded muntins, and tracery heads with ogee foliated arches, with quatrefoils in the spandrels. The top beam has a deep moulding. In the spandrels of the doorhead are Tudor roses. Both top beam and middle rail have a poor modern cresting. The rood-stairs remain on the north of the chancel-arch.

PULHAM.

In the squints on either side of the chancel-arch are inserted some pieces of wooden tracery of excellent design, which formerly belonged to the rood-screen. Beyond these two fragments, nothing now remains of the screen; but, judging by what has survived, it must have been a fine piece of work. Both fragments show traces of gilding and painting.

SANDFORD ORCAS.

Until 1896 this church was in Somerset. It retains in the tower arch an excellent late perpendicular screen, with the doors intact, which is said to have come from Sherborne Abbey. The base-beam is modern, and the top beam is disfigured by a clumsy modern cornice. It is framed up with massive moulded standards. The wainscot has cusped ogee heads breaking into foliage above, the whole being contained beneath two cusped heads. The middle rail of the screen is plain; but that of the doors has foliage. The lights have narrow ogee heads with foliage above, surmounted by two trefoils. The doorhead is level with the spring of the screen-lights, and is capped by ogee heads similar to the rest. Below is a four-centred arch with cusped roundels, containing each a conventional flower in the spandrels. The door-lights have plain trefoil heads. The west side of the wainscot has ogee arches without foliage.

SHAFTESBURY ST. PETER.

Behind the altar of this church are two traceried panels which may very likely have formed part of the wainscot of a destroyed screen, of which no other remains now exist. There are no traces of a rood-stair in the aisle walls.

SHERBORNE : ALMSHOUSES CHAPEL.

The chapel of the ancient hospital of St. John Evangelist and St. John Baptist is divided from the ante-chapel by a fifteenth-century wooden screen. The doors remain. The upper part of the lights has ogee heads, and the lower part below the transom is solid. There is a good cornice on both sides, with trailing oak-leaf. Over the ante-chapel is a gallery, for the use of the female inmates. The screen is not improved by having the lights filled with appalling tinted glass. The gallery-rail is seventeenth-century work.

SPETTISBURY.

In the modern convent chapel is preserved part of the base of a painted fourteenth-century screen (plate V, 1), which came from Whitford chapel in Devon. It is of rough and massive construction. On the panels are four figures : our Lady, St. Katherine, a king and a bishop. The background of the figures is checkered. On the uprights is a rude floral design. The figures stand on brackets like those at Hilton. Red is the predominant colour, and the robes are striped with dark blue. The base is gone, but the middle rail remains. Length 9 ft., and height 4 ft. 10 in.

STANTON ST. GABRIEL.

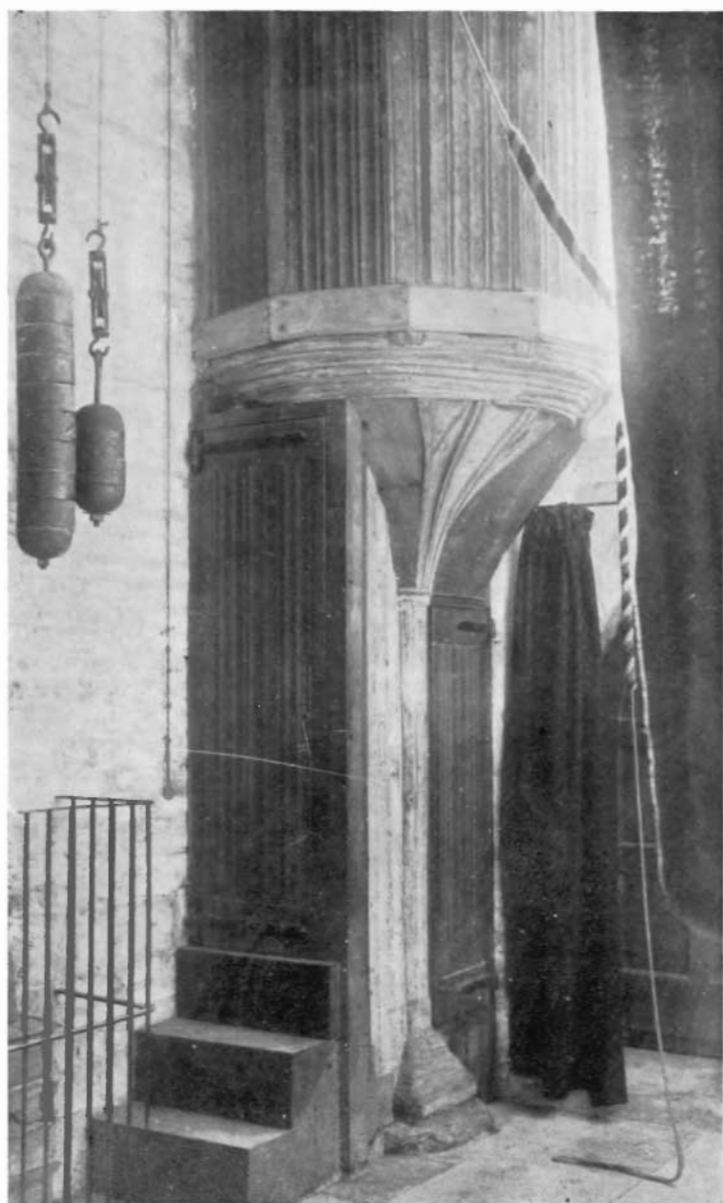
The ruins of the ancient church stand in a lonely position near the sea. In 1841 the present church was erected a mile and a half inland. The old rood-beam was transferred to the new building, and erected at the entrance



[Photo : B. T.]
NO. 1. SPETTISBURY : SCREEN PANELS IN CONVENT CHAPEL.



[Photo : E. V. T.]
NO. 2. TRENT : CHANCEL SCREEN.



[Photo : F. S.
STRATTON : WOODEN STAIR NOW IN THE TOWER.

to the chancel. It has been much restored. The cornice and standards at either end are modern. Both sides of the beam are ornamented at regular intervals with conventional flowers, attached to a banded roll-moulding. The beam is in good preservation, and probably dates from the latter part of the fifteenth century.

STEEPLE.

There are no remains of the screen existing in the church, but a small portion of cornice enrichment is on loan at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. It consists of an oak leaf trail, rather coarsely executed, as might be expected in that remote spot. There are some remains of red and gold. Length 3 ft. 10 in. and width $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.

STOCK GAYLARD.

In the vestry is preserved a single painted panel, with a figure in scarlet robe with ermine tippet holding a book. It probably represents St. Jerome. This panel was discovered during the restoration of the church in 1885. It was found embedded in the north wall of the nave, near the chancel arch. There can be little doubt that it formed part of the rood-screen. The panel is much decayed and the face almost obliterated, but it is an interesting example of figure-painting, which is so rare a feature of Dorset screenwork. During the restoration some remains of the rood-beam were discovered, and the present beam is a conjectural restoration of the original.

WEST STOUR.

There are no remains of the screen *in situ* at present, and the nave having been rebuilt c. 1840, and the chancel-arch tampered with at the same time, it is impossible to say whether the rood-loft was approached by the usual stone stair or by some other means. The west gallery contains in its front eleven traceried panels, which may

quite possibly have formed part of the wainscot or loft-front of the destroyed screen. These panels have ogee-headed tracery, surmounted by a lofty finial, terminating in a fleur-de-lys or a conventional flower. The central panel has in the upper part a quaint face carved, with protruding tongue, rather like one of the poppy-heads of the late fifteenth-century bench ends at Gillingham. Beneath the gallery is to be found a door, with open tracery in the upper portion, and probably of late fifteenth, or early sixteenth-century date. There can be but little doubt that this is the original screen-door. The lower part of the door has been cut off to adapt it to its present use. The wainscot is quite plain, while the upper part is supplied with rather stiff and clumsy tracery. The door is of two narrow bays. The whole is now thickly coated with varnish, but it is likely that remains of the original colour exist beneath. In the belfry there is a moulded beam with two decayed shields on it. It is quite probable that this beam belonged originally to the destroyed screen, and formed either the top beam or brestsummer.

STRATTON.

The approach to the belfry in the tower of this church is made by means of a remarkable wooden staircase, contained in an octagonal wooden case, at present fixed in the south-west corner of the tower (plate VI). It is extremely doubtful, whether so elaborate an erection served originally its present purpose, since in the smaller type of towers in this district it was usual to employ a simple wooden ladder when the stair-turret was omitted, as is the case here. The church at Stratton was completely rebuilt, with the exception of the tower, in 1891, and consequently it is very difficult, if not impossible, to know for certain whether there was originally a stone staircase leading to the rood-loft. Hutchins makes no mention of a stair in the wall, and no one who recollects the old building has any memories of this feature. If there was no such staircase, it seems probable that in this wooden turret we have an almost unique survival, as far as England is concerned, of a wooden rood stair, such as may still be seen at Lambader and

other places in Brittany, as well as at Moulineaux in Normandy and Villemaur in the department of the Aube.¹ In England, it was usual to have the approach to the rood-loft in the thickness of the wall, thus treating it as an internal part of the fabric, rather than a portion of the actual screen. There are, however, several cases where there are no traces of such a feature having ever existed, although in each instance there is or was certainly a rood-screen and loft. The noble church of Sall in Norfolk is perhaps the best instance of this; but there unfortunately all traces of the wooden staircase have disappeared. The Stratton turret is supported on a carved wooden pillar, from which springs some fan-vaulting. The panels of the turret are in two tiers, and are adorned with the linenfold pattern. Those at the top are modern, and it seems probable that the turret has been increased in height in order to serve its present purpose. The date of the work is early sixteenth-century, it has been carefully restored, and the upper panels harmonise with the old ones below. The turret has served as an approach to the belfry for a considerable period, and was already in its present position when Hutchins wrote in 1774. The whole effect of the work is charming, and it is undoubtedly one of the most interesting remains of medieval woodwork in Dorset, whatever may have been its original use.

STURMINSTER MARSHALL.

There is a much restored fifteenth-century pulpit, which was placed here by the present vicar, after it had been ignorantly discarded from Brigstock church, Northants. Along with it came a panel with a painting of Henry VI. This panel, which belongs to the latter part of the fifteenth century, must have originally, in all probability, formed part of the wainscot of a screen. It is in fair preservation, and has special interest at the present time, when efforts are again being made at Rome to procure the canonisation of the saintly monarch, after an interval of more than four hundred years.

¹ The wooden stair remains at Llanwnnog, co. Montgomery.

TRENT.

Here is a magnificent rood-screen (plate V, 2) of five bays, with elaborate tracery of the usual Somerset type, but having a transom, in which respect it resembles the screens at High Ham and Queen Camel in Somerset, though it is not so lofty or well proportioned. It is practically intact, except that the north end-bay has been deprived of its tracery, to accommodate a doorway in the east wall of the nave, and the south end-bay has lost half of the tracery. The detail of the lights is very similar to Queen Camel; but here, the screen being lower, the doorhead rises higher than the level of the transom. The lierne vaulting is intact on the west side only, and displays an unusual feature in the girdle-rib which intersects the lierne ribs, and runs round the lierne vaulting half-way up its height. The cornices are very sumptuous (plate VII, 1), and contain three rows of enrichment with a top cresting, all of which retain much colour and gilding. The lowest cresting has been repaired with plaster. The wainscot is ornamented with a sort of foliated canopy design, similar to that on the screen of St. Decuman's in Somerset. The doors are intact, though the upper part has been repaired. There is now no trace of the rood-stairs, since the walls have been much pulled about and modernised. There is no doubt that this is the finest and most perfect screen remaining in Dorset, though, as we pointed out above, Trent was only transferred to this county in 1896, before which it was included in Somerset. This church also retains some fine bench-ends, and the remains of a rich fifteenth-century pulpit, similar to those at Queen Camel and Long Sutton. Part of it has been renewed in deal. This pulpit at present serves as a reading-desk. Both screen and pulpit are probably copied from those at Queen Camel; but the detail in each case is inferior and rougher in execution.

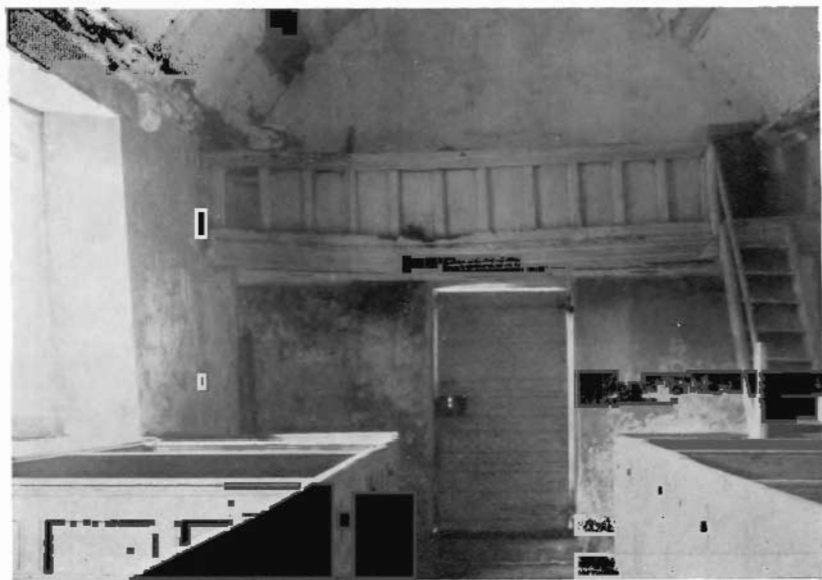
WAREHAM ST. MARY.

The rood-screen here, which was a fine and lofty erection, was destroyed in 1720, as we learn from Hutchins.



[Photo : F. H. C.]

NO. I. TRENT : CORNICE ENRICHMENT.



[Photo : F. E. H.]

NO. 2. WINTERBORNE TOMSON : REMAINS OF ROOD LOFT.



[Photo: M.C.]

FORDE: SCREEN IN THE CHAPTER-HOUSE.

WHITCOMBE.

There is no chancel-arch in this church, but, until about thirty years ago, there was a plastered tympanum, which was at that time unfortunately removed. The beam, which formerly supported this tympanum, still remains *in situ*. It is roughly cut and devoid of all ornamentation. It is probable that the foot of the rood was fastened to this beam, and that the tympanum formed a painted background to the sacred figures. Occasionally the rood was painted on the tympanum, as at Ludham, Norfolk, and this may have been the case here. Part of the rood-stair survives in the north wall of the nave, and the jamb of the doorway has traces of colour.

WINTERBORNE CAME.

Here is a good, but much-restored chancel-screen of early sixteenth-century date. There is no chancel-arch, and no traces of rood-stairs. The base-beam is modern. The wainscot has linenfold panels, those on the north being modern, as is also the greater part of the middle rail. The doors remain, and are of the same design as the rest of the screen, except that the linenfold is carried up a little higher on the wainscot. The upper part of the screen has diamond-shaped muntins, and ogee tracery-heads which are rather flat. With the exception of those in the doors, both muntins and tracery-heads are modern. The tracery-heads are picked out in gold. The top beam is original, and has good mouldings. Along the front of the beam is an Elizabethan black-letter text: 'Let us hear the conclusion of all things Fear God and keep his Commandments for that toucheth all men for God judgeth all things.' The brestsummer of the loft has been placed on the summit of the top beam. This was doubtless done after the destruction of the loft, in accordance with the Elizabethan injunctions. The front of the beam has several roll-mouldings, and one row of enrichment consisting of a vine-trail. It is likely that the black-letter text is painted over another inscription, asking prayers for the donor, or referring

to the Sacrifice of Calvary and the saving merits of the Holy Cross.

WINTERBORNE MONKTON.

Some remains of a fine fourteenth-century screen were discovered in 1870. The base, which consisted of an oak framework with three plain panels on either side, was too decayed to be preserved; but the tracery-heads have been incorporated in the wainscot of the modern screen, erected in 1870. These heads are most interesting, since they are probably the earliest wooden screenwork in the county. The tracery is decorated in style, approaching flamboyant. The mouldings are deep and excellent. In the modern pulpit are incorporated two linenfold panels of early sixteenth-century date.

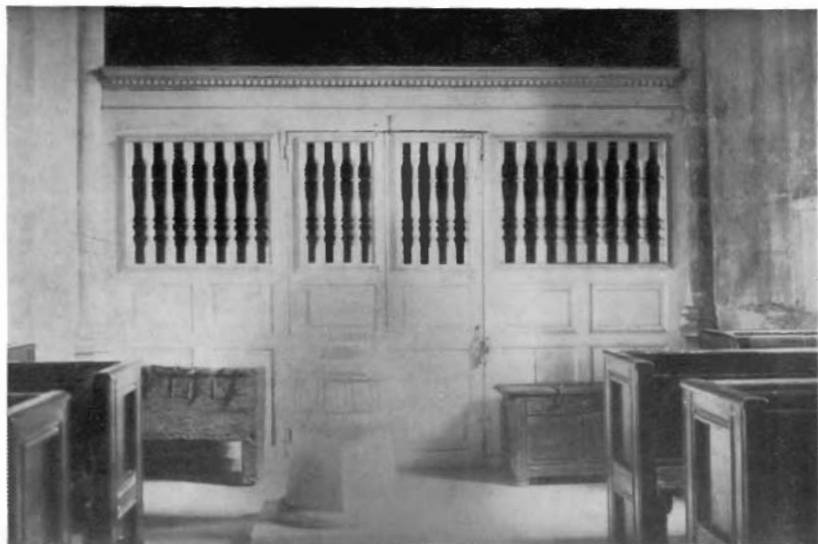
WINTERBORNE STICKLAND.

In the church, between the chancel and the north chapel, are the remains of a late perpendicular screen of the usual rectangular form. It was discovered during a recent restoration, and probably dates from the early part of the sixteenth century. The wainscot has been removed, and it has no tracery. The cornice is of a somewhat unusual design, and is similar to the wall-plate of the restored chancel roof, which is probably contemporary with the screen. At present the screen is built into the wall, with no arch above; but, as the chapel only dates from the eighteenth century, the screen is evidently not *in situ*.

WINTERBORNE TOMSON.

Though this little church was extensively renovated in the eighteenth century by archbishop Wake, the pre-reformation rood loft (plate VII, 2) was retained, and utilized as a west gallery, and such it remains, but in a most dilapidated condition. It seems to have escaped the notice of the local antiquaries, and was quite unknown until the present writer visited the church in November 1923. The brestsummer





[Photo : E. V. T.]

NO. I. SYDLING ST. NICHOLAS : TOWER SCREEN.



[Photo : E. V. T.]

NO. 2. WINTERBORNE TOMSON : CHANCEL SCREEN.

is well moulded on its western side, but the inner surface is quite plain and vertical. There is a narrow groove running the whole length of the underside, and in this, doubtless, was fixed a row of pendent brattishing, which has quite gone. The top beam of the screen remains, with the mortices for the uprights and muntins. It is nicely moulded, and resembles the brestsummer in general effect. Both beams have hollow and roll-mouldings. The loft-floor, at any rate now, rests simply on plain beams placed at intervals, and running east and west, being supported by the top beam and brestsummer respectively. The front of the loft consists of a row of plain panels divided by uprights which are equally devoid of ornament. The top rail has roll mouldings. There are no traces of an eastern parapet, and it is probable that there was originally a boarded tympanum on this side, which occupied the whole space between the top of the screen and the roof, or chancel-arch (if there was such a feature). The dimensions are roughly as follows: extreme length 15 ft. 6 in., height of parapet 2 ft. 2 in., width of loft 2 ft. 10 in. The north (originally south) end of the parapet has been removed, to serve as an approach to the gallery; and this was probably done in the eighteenth century, as the stairs seem to be of that date. It is impossible to say definitely how the loft was originally approached. There are no traces of stairs in the north and south walls. The whole loft is, unfortunately, in a very dilapidated condition, and liable to collapse at any time. The whole surface has been covered with several coats of yellow paint and whitewash, and no traces of the original colour-scheme remain. The soffit is plastered now, but originally the under surface may have been panelled, though of this there are no traces. It is much to be hoped that something may be done before it is too late to preserve this most precious relic of the medieval screenwork of Dorset.

WYKE REGIS.

The screens have entirely perished here, but there are indications of the position of the rood-loft. There is no structural division between the nave and the chancel,

and the aisles terminate one bay short of the east end. On the pier dividing the second and third bays of both the arcades is a large corbel, which, not improbably, served as a support for the loft. If the screen occupied this position, the body of the church was roughly divided into two equal portions of three bays.

YETMINSTER.

As recently as 1890 the base of the rood-screen remained *in situ*. Since that date all traces of it have disappeared. It is probable that it was swept away during the restoration of the chancel in the nineties. It was, apparently, a good piece of perpendicular work, and its destruction is greatly to be deplored. Two corbels for the rood-beam remain on either side of the chancel arch, but that on the north is a restoration. There are some good early sixteenth-century bench-ends in the nave; and both nave and aisles have excellent painted timber roofs. It has been stated as a fact, on more than one occasion, that the rood-loft here was of most imposing dimensions, and extended right across the church, the whole width of the east bay of nave and aisles. The evidence adduced in support of this theory seems to the present writer very unconvincing, and the theory itself highly improbable.

WOODEN SCREENS.

2. POST-REFORMATION.

CHESILBORNE.

In the tower-arch of this remote church there is a very plain seventeenth-century screen. It is devoid of ornament, and the wainscot consists of absolutely plain panels, without any division into bays. The upper portion has a series of square muntins without cap or base. The base-beam, middle rail and top beam are all equally plain, and unrelieved even by mouldings. The doorway is in the centre, but there is no door. It is probable that the screen has always occupied this position. The belfry is

approached by a quaint wooden staircase, which is probably contemporary with the screen.

FOLKE.

This church was, with the exception of the tower, completely rebuilt in 1628, and it still contains most of the excellent woodwork erected at that time. The screen is of three bays with pointed arches, each having a pendant at the apex. The wainscot, which is in two unequal tiers, seems to be modern. The doors only reach the level of the wainscot, and have each a round-headed opening in the panels, fitted with iron stanchions. The standards and front of the arches are well carved with Jacobean designs, including roundels. The entablature is plain, and surmounted by large ornaments and scroll-work in the centre. The dimensions are: total height 8 feet, length 16 feet, height of wainscot 3 feet. The east side of the screen is somewhat plainer. In the central arch of the north arcade of the nave is a wooden arch closely resembling the screen. It is probable that it formed part of a manorial pew.

FORDE ABBEY.

The ancient chapter-house of this Cistercian abbey was fitted up as a private chapel by Edmund Prideaux, Cromwell's attorney general, in 1649, and still retains the magnificent screen (plate VIII) erected at that time. It consists of three bays, of which the central is occupied by the doors. Each of the side bays is subdivided into two with plain round arches, which rest on moulded square shafts and responds, with well carved capitals. The entablature has dentil ornamentation, and is surmounted by a rounded pediment, broken in the centre by a shield. The pediment has dentil ornamentation. The standards have bunches of flowers and elaborate capitals. The wainscot is plain, but the middle rail is richly carved. The doors have plain wainscot and middle rail, and the upper part consists of a plain open frame. The space above the doorhead is filled with openwork, consisting of an elaborate floral design, which is most effective.

IBBERTON.

In the tower-arch of this church are the remains of a seventeenth-century screen. It is of very mediocre design, and much decayed. The wainscot consists of plain panelling, and the upper part has turned balusters, surmounted by a plain cornice. The door remains, but it does not seem to be in its original position, and the whole screen shows signs of having been much pulled about and dislocated.

IWERNE COURTNEY.

The nave and aisles of this church were rebuilt in the first quarter of the seventeenth century by Sir Thomas Freke, who erected a chapel, at the east end of the north aisle, for his own use, and enclosed it on the west and south by excellent wooden screens. That on the west retains the doors with original lock and hinges. There is an elaborate entablature, supported on lions and heads of men, and surmounted by scroll-work and ornaments, while in the centre is a shield of arms, of Freke on the west, and Taylour on the south. The wainscot is in two tiers of plain panelling. Above, the screens consist of lights with curious stiff tracery, having a chained bull's head in each light (the crest of Freke). The lights are divided by turned balusters, with square bases and capitals, the latter being very elongated. The entablature is ornamented with trailing flowers. With the exception of the armorial bearings, the screens are identical in design, and they are in good preservation. This is probably one of the best pieces of post-reformation screenwork in the county.

LONG BURTON.

Quite recently, two portions of Jacobean screenwork were recovered from the vicarage stable here, and after being carefully restored, were erected in the church at Easter 1921. Each portion consists of two bays, and there is no doubt that originally they were placed in the two arches which separate the chancel from the north chapel.

At present only one portion has been replaced in its original position, and the other has been placed in the tower-arch. This second portion contains the door, which is treated in the same way as the other bays. The base-beam and cornice are modern, as is the frame, but almost all the rest is original, and has been conservatively restored. The wainscot consists of two tiers, the lower having plain moulded panels, while the upper has fluted fan-shaped ornaments. The middle rail and uprights have strap-work, as has the top beam. The north side of the wainscot is plain. The space above the wainscot has iron stanchions, and on the top are more stanchions with arrow-heads. These upper stanchions are shaped to the arch, rising gradually to the centre. The dimensions are : total height, 6 ft. 3½ in., length 5 ft. 4 in., height of wainscot 3 ft. 6½ in. The dimensions of the portion in the tower-arch were originally the same, but the length has been slightly increased, to adapt it to its present position. In the north chapel, there are two wooden shield-bearing angels, which, until the restoration, were fixed to the front of the west gallery. It is possible that originally they occupied some position on the front of the rood-loft.

MELCOMBE BINGHAM.

Between the nave and the south chapel is a wooden screen erected by Sir Thomas Freke in 1619. It has plain wainscot, while the middle rail is ornamented with interlaced circles on the north side. The upper part consists of turned balusters banded. The top beam is ornamented on both sides with alternate circles and squares. On a shield on the south are the initials S.T.F., and on the north the date 1619. The standards have deep continuous moulding. The doorway is at the west end, but it is doubtful whether there was ever a door. In this chapel are two Jacobean benches with carved backs. Sir Thomas Freke, who died in 1633, was a considerable benefactor to church fabrics in Dorset. Besides rebuilding the nave of Iwerne Courtney and erecting screens there and at Melcombe Bingham, he also rebuilt the chapel of Melcombe Horsey, about a mile from the parish church. This chapel is now desecrated and used for secular purposes.

WEST STAFFORD.

This church was considerably restored and embellished c. 1640, and to this date belongs the fine screen. The wainscot consists of three tiers of panelling, the two lower being plain, while the top is carved with the interlaced circles so common in woodwork of this period. The upper part consists of round arches of wide span, with turned mullions. There are no doors, but the doorway has a fine arch supported on corbels. The south end of the screen is cut short one bay from the wall, to accommodate the pulpit. It is probable that this arrangement is original. The cornice is well carved on both sides. The muntins on the south side have been removed, and the east side of the top tier of the wainscot on the south is plain, while the north is carved on both sides.

SYDLING ST. NICHOLAS.

There is a charming classical screen (plate IX, 1) in the tower-arch, which most likely belongs to the end of the seventeenth century. The design and details are purely classical, as opposed to the Jacobean style which was in vogue during the first half of the seventeenth century. It is now painted white throughout, and this may possibly have always been the case. The doors remain in position, and form one design with the screen. The base-beam, middle rail and top beam are quite plain, and are all original. The wainscot is in two tiers, and consists of plain panelling. The upper part of the screen has muntins, which are in the form of turned balusters with plain base and cap. The whole screen is really a charming piece of late renaissance work, and is fortunately in excellent preservation. It is probably *in situ*.

WIMBORNE MINSTER.

The remains of the Jacobean stalls and screenwork are so jumbled together since the vandalism of 1855, that it is difficult to decide exactly what does really belong to the screen. At the present time there is a low screen,

composed of portions of the wainscot of the stalls. This consists of round-headed arches with keystones, supported on turned columns, with some excellent carving above. There is, however, a portion of the old screen worked up into the modern tower-screen. This portion consists of part of the wainscot, and is of plain and massive construction. Of the upper part, which consisted of three open arches, there seem to be no remains, at any rate in the church. The mutilated stalls still retain their misericords with good carvings, and also some excellent elbow rests and desk fronts.

WINTERBORNE TOMSON.

This tiny church was restored in the early part of the eighteenth century by Archbishop Wake, and consists of apsidal chancel and nave, with no structural division. The fabric is now derelict and totally disused. It contains its contemporary fittings, which include altar-rails, screen, pulpit and pews. The screen (plate IX, 2) is a simple but well-designed piece of work, with plain wainscot in two tiers, with panels arranged vertically below and horizontally above. The pulpit is approached through an opening in the south end, and this seems an original arrangement. The middle rail and top beam have simple mouldings, but are otherwise devoid of ornament. The upper portion of each side is divided into two plain rectangular openings by a central muntin. There are no doors. The dimensions are: total length 16 feet, height 8 ft. 6 in., height of wainscot 4 ft. 8 in.

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