

## Notes on the Discoveries made in the Nave and Aisles of Repton Church during the late Restoration.

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SOME years ago I was permitted to bring before the members of the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society a short description of the crypt of Repton Church;\* and certain happy accidents now enable me to extend the information then obtained westwards into the nave and its aisles, in respect to the early changes which took place, and eventually brought them to their present state.

The late restoration of the church, under Sir A. Blomfield's direction, was by him placed in the careful hands of Mr. John Thompson, builder, of Peterborough, for execution, to which gentleman I owe thanks for the use of the very careful plan and drawings made for him by his clerk, Mr. Garwood, and permission to place them before the Society.

I would here say that not having the opportunity to see the remains while open, but only to judge from the drawings, my suggestions in regard to their succession and order are but probable approximations.

Such order seems to be reduceable into :—

- 1st.—A stone structure with transepts and crossing, with arches of plain square orders. This a structure later than the stone chancel of Saxon date.
- 2nd.—The introduction of Norman pillars and arches at least from crossing into both transepts, as evidenced by

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\* "Journal of the D. A. & N. H. S.," Vol. V., pp. 165-172, with plates.

the lower parts of two of the circular shafts still in place, but *wanting bases*.

- 3rd.—The discovery of the walls of this crossing at present on its north-west and south sides.
- 4th.—The finding of the remains of a south doorway to a narrow aisle, of Transitional or Early English date, inside west end of present aisle.
- 5th.—So much of the foundation of the *east* wall of an enlarged south transept of like date (?) as extended from the site of the removed south wall of the older Norman transept up to that line still represented by the south wall of that chapel at present.
- 6th.—The laying open in west end of present north aisle of nave of the wall of an older aisle, of the same relative width as that of the present south one, where, indeed, it appears as a foundation along both the west end and south wall.
- 7th.—That the present sexagonal plan of pillars was adopted precisely as was the case at St. Chad's Church, Lichfield, to enable the aisles to present a succession of gables, and the great timber which supported the dividing gutter to rest in the side so presented.

The Norman north transept remained perfect after the Early English period, for it left the crossing so dark that a pointed window was forced into the narrow slip existing between the east wall of such transept and the north-east angle of the crossing; and, indeed, the lower part of the east wall of this transept, less the return of its north wall, remains at present; whilst their solid walls and narrow Norman arches remained until about the commencement of this century.

The like arch to south of crossing would prove the existence of a like transept there. But the remains laid open by Mr. Thompson in the present chapel are most interesting, from being limited in length to *just so much* as filled in the vacant space between such removed transept and the new south line of desired chapel. Whether or no a like-pointed window had existed cannot be discovered without the removal of plaster on east respond. As in

most cases where a founder builds an aisle, he generally formed a transept or some special work in its east end for his mortuary chapel. This has led me to place its date in connection with the remains of that door and aisle brought to light inside the south aisle, rather than later.

The erection of that very considerable alteration of both aisles whose remains were found in the north aisle, and whose foundations can still, with care, be traced under the wall of present south one, very probably led to the destruction of the first north transept.

The remains of floors exposed are very instructive. From comparison with the plans of other churches of Saxon date, we might reasonably suppose that the lines of its side walls would have been present in some shape below and between the present arcade pillars. But no such fragments appear to have been seen. It is, however, certain from the bases that the two western nave pillars are somewhat later than those eastward of them.

The remains of the floors seen, prove that in so far as that whose level agreed with the level surface of the top step of stairs to crypt, that so far as it presented itself westwards, so much, at least, must have been included in the Saxon and Norman churches, while similar results followed in regard to the tile floor discovered above it. It is impossible not to feel grieved that no one was present who could have obtained the removal of the few additional shovelfuls of earth that would have shed so much further light on the whole matter; and it seems strange to have to thank the builder for his admirable drawings of such remains as of necessity came in his way.

The singular side chapels which once existed on north-east and south sides of the crypt here, were also present in the crypts of Wing and Brixworth churches, as may be seen on the diagram plans sent for comparison. In all three cases these side chapels, though destroyed, are very distinctly represented by the openings which in either case led into them. So similar are they in their arrangement as to suggest possible connection in their use, date of erection, and perhaps even the same master mason engaged in their erection.